The OECD-area unemployment rate on a standardized basis was 8.0 per cent in January 1994, up 0.1 percentage points from December 1993; this compares with a 7.6 per cent rate a year earlier. For OECD-Europe the unemployment rate rose by 0.1 percentage points, reaching 11.1 per cent in January 1994. Among non-European OECD countries for which monthly data are available, unemployment rose in two countries and fell in two between December 1993 and January 1994. In the United States the unemployment rate rose from 6.3 to 6.6 per cent; however, this increase is more than accounted for by changes in survey methods. In Canada the unemployment rate rose to 11.3 per cent, while it fell to 2.7 per cent in Japan and to 10.4 per cent in Australia. Over the same period, the unemployment rate rose in three of the seven European economies for which monthly data are available; it remained constant in three, and fell in one. The unemployment rate rose to 19.6 per cent in Finland, to 6.4 per cent in Western Germany and to 8.8 per cent in Sweden. The unemployment rate was unchanged in Belgium at 9.7 per cent, in France at 12.2 per cent and in the United Kingdom at 9.9 per cent; it fell to 15.5 per cent in Ireland.

The unemployment rate fell in five of the seven OECD countries for which February data are available and was stable in the other two. The unemployment rate fell from 6.6 to 6.4 per cent in the United States, from 11.3 to 11.0 per cent in Canada, from 10.4 to 10.3 per cent in Australia, from 8.8 to 8.3 per cent in Sweden and from 9.9 to 9.8 per cent in the United Kingdom. The unemployment rate was stable in February at 9.7 per cent in Belgium and at 15.5 per cent in Ireland.

(1) Standardized unemployment rates are based on national statistics but have been adjusted when necessary, and as far as the available data allow, to bring them as close as possible to ILO guidelines for international comparisons of labour force statistics. The standardized rates are, therefore, more comparable between countries than the unemployment rates published in national sources. For further details, see the Technical Note to the table.

(2) The new methodology, which removes a previous bias in the recording of the female unemployment rate, has been estimated to increase measured unemployment by 0.5 percentage points.

(3) Since January 1993 data for Sweden are not seasonally adjusted.