The OECD-area unemployment rate on a standardized basis was 7.9 per cent in February 1994, down 0.1 percentage points from January; this compares with a 7.7 per cent rate a year earlier. For OECD-Europe the unemployment rate was constant at 11.1 per cent. Among non-European OECD countries for which monthly data are available, the unemployment rate fell in two countries, rose in one country and was constant in the fourth. In February, the unemployment rate fell to 6.4 per cent in the United States, and to 11.0 per cent in Canada. The unemployment rate was constant in Australia at 10.4 per cent, while it rose to 2.9 per cent in Japan. Over the same period, the unemployment rate rose in one of the seven European economies for which monthly data are available; it remained constant in three, and fell in three. The unemployment rate rose to 6.5 per cent in West Germany while it remained constant at 9.7 per cent in Belgium, at 12.2 per cent in France and at 15.5 per cent in Ireland. The unemployment rate fell to 18.3 per cent in Finland, to 8.3 per cent in Sweden and to 9.8 per cent in the United Kingdom. The unemployment rate in Portugal, where only quarterly data are available, rose from 5.9 per cent in November 1993 to 6.6 per cent in February 1994.

The unemployment rate fell in five of the seven OECD countries for which March data are available, it was stable in one and rose in the other. The unemployment rate rose from 6.4 to 6.5 per cent in the United States, while it was constant in Belgium at 9.7 per cent. The unemployment rate fell from 11.0 to 10.5 per cent in Canada, from 10.4 to 10.2 per cent in Australia, from 15.5 to 15.4 per cent in Ireland, from 8.3 to 7.8 per cent in Sweden and from 9.8 to 9.7 per cent in the United Kingdom.

(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.