

The employment rate in the OECD area rose to 67.4% in the second quarter of 2021

The employment rate, which is the percentage share of the working-age population with jobs, rose to 67.4% (from 66.9% in the previous quarter) in the **OECD area** in the second quarter of 2021. Increases were reported in more than four-fifths of OECD countries. There was also an increase in the **OECD area** labour force participation rate – the share of the working-age population that is either employed or unemployed – to 72.2%, up from 71.8% in the first quarter of 2021 (see Table 4). In the second quarter of 2021, the **OECD area** employment rate rose at broadly the same pace for **women** (to 60.1%, from 59.6% in the first quarter of 2021) and **men** (to 74.7%, from 74.3%), while it increased faster for **youth** (aged 15 to 24), from 39.9% to 40.8%, than for other age groups.

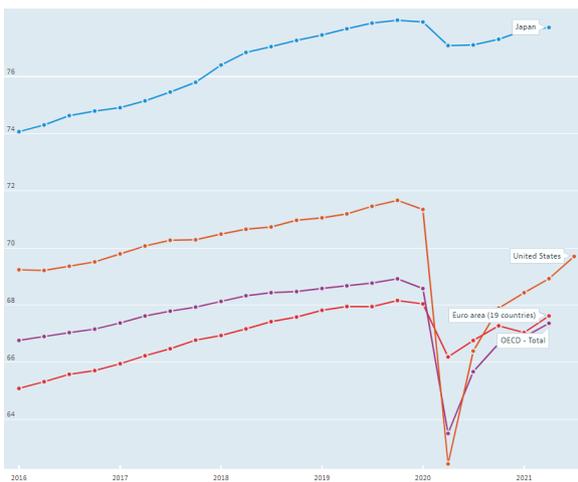
While this quarter's rise in employment suggests a continued overall recovery towards pre-pandemic rates (see Table 1), care is needed in interpreting the latest **OECD area** employment rate. Methodological changes to the EU Labour Force Survey¹ blur the comparison between the fourth quarter of 2020 and subsequent quarters for EU countries. In addition, a large part of the increase in the third and, to a lesser extent, fourth quarter of 2020 reflects the return to work of furloughed workers in **Canada** and the **United States**, where they are recorded as unemployed, whereas in most other countries, including European member states, they are recorded as employed.

In the **euro area**, the employment rate increased to 67.6% in the second quarter of 2021, from 67.0% in the first quarter, with increases of 1.0 percentage point or more in about half of the countries, including rises of more than 2.0 percentage points in **Greece** (to 56.4%) and **Slovenia** (to 71.7%). Diverging from the majority, there was a noteworthy fall in the employment rate for **Estonia** (from 74.1%, to 72.9%)

The employment rate increased by 0.4 percentage point in the **United Kingdom** (to 75.1%), and by more than 1.0 percentage point in **Denmark** (to 75.4%), **Iceland** (to 79.3%) and **Norway** (to 75.9%). By contrast, it declined by 0.6 percentage point in **Switzerland** (to 78.6%).

In **Mexico**, the employment rate increased by a further 1.5 percentage points (to 61.1%), while it declined in **Costa Rica** (to 55.6%, from 56.0%) and **Colombia** (to 59.6%, from 60.8%), after three quarters of recovery. The rate increased slightly in **Japan**, to 77.7%, only 0.3 percentage point below the pre-pandemic rate (the fourth quarter of 2019), while the employment rate for **Australia** (up by 0.9 percentage point) reached 75.3%, exceeding the pre-pandemic rate by 1.0 percentage point. In spite of increases, the employment rate in the **United States** (up to 68.9%, from 68.4%) and **Canada** (up to 72.4%, from 72.1%) remained respectively 2.7 and 1.7 percentage points below the pre-pandemic rate. Nevertheless, more recent data for the third quarter of 2021 show that the employment rates increased further in the **United States** (to 69.7%) and **Canada** (to 73.8%).

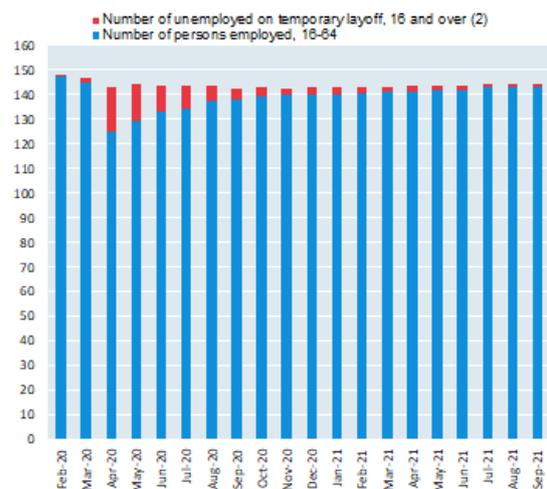
Employment rates (persons aged 15-64) for selected OECD countries and country aggregates⁽¹⁾
As a percentage of the working-age population



(1) Break in time series for the euro area between Q4 2020 and Q1 2021 resulting from [changes in the EU Labour Force Survey](#). This break also affects, to some extent, aggregates for the OECD-Total.

Visit the interactive [OECD Data Portal](#) to explore these data further.

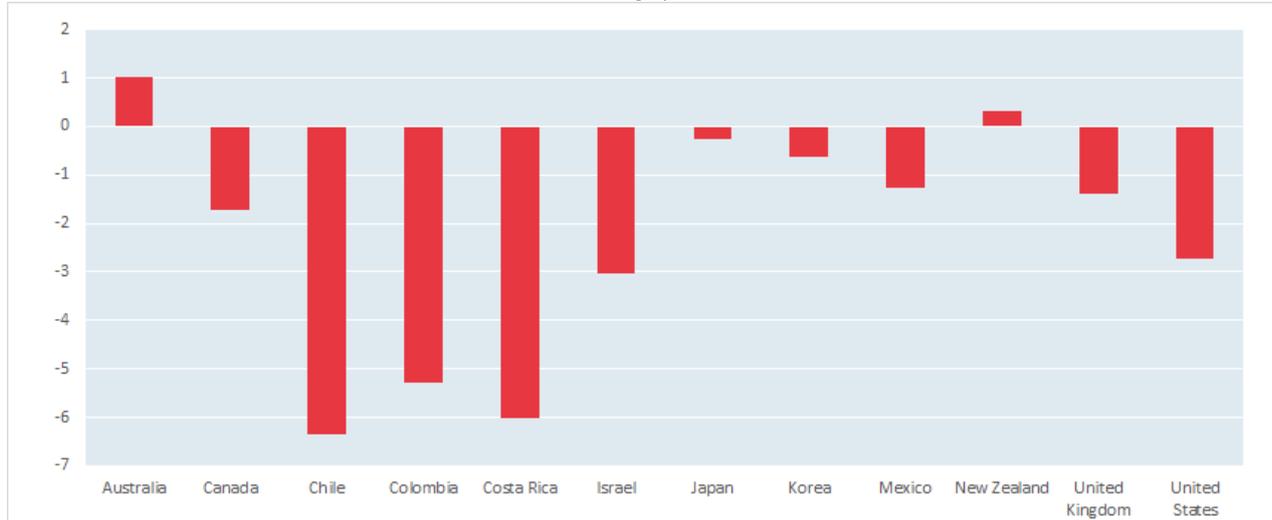
Persons employed and persons unemployed on temporary lay-off in the United States⁽¹⁾
Millions of persons



(1) The chart provides a more comparable view of movements in US employment statistics with movements in most other OECD countries, where furloughed workers are included in official employment statistics. It should however not be interpreted as alternative official statistics for the United States. In this chart, the number of employed covers age group from 16 to 64, while the number of unemployed on temporary lay-off covers age group 16 and over.
(2) US Current Population Survey data.

¹ Changes to the [European Union Labour Force Survey \(EU LFS\)](#) from 2021 onwards result in time series breaks between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021 for EU countries. More details on the main methodological changes to the EU LFS can be found [here](#).

**Changes in employment rates (persons aged 15-64) for selected OECD countries
between Q4 2019 and Q2 2021**
Percentage points



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Table 1: OECD employment rates and levels (15-64)

	Employment rates											Levels Thousands Q2 - 2021
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2019	2020				2021		
					Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	
OECD - Total	67.7	68.3	68.7	66.1	68.9	68.6	63.5	65.7	66.7	66.9 (b)	67.4	585,815
Major Seven	70.6	71.4	72.0	69.7	72.3	72.0	67.2	69.3	70.1	70.3 (b)	70.7	337,452
European Union	66.7	67.7	68.4	67.6	68.6	68.5	66.8	67.4	67.8	67.7 (b)	68.0	192,819
Euro area	66.3	67.3	68.0	67.1	68.2	68.0	66.2	66.8	67.3	67.0 (b)	67.6	147,042
Australia	73.0	73.8	74.3	72.7	74.3	74.5	70.6	72.1	73.5	74.4	75.3	12,486
Austria	72.2	73.0	73.5	72.4	73.6	73.1	71.4	72.6	72.5	71.7 (b)	71.9	4,184
Belgium ⁽¹⁾	63.1	64.5	65.3	64.7	65.2	65.2	64.4	64.8	64.4	63.8 (b)	65.0	4,761
Canada	73.2	73.5	74.2	70.0	74.1	73.0	64.7	70.2	72.0	72.1	72.4	17,772
Chile	63.9	64.1	64.1	55.8	63.7	63.2	51.4	52.7	56.2	57.4	57.3	7,715
Colombia	66.9	66.4	65.2	57.5	64.9	63.3	51.0	56.2	59.7	60.8	59.6	19,635
Costa Rica	59.8	61.0	61.6	54.8	61.6	62.0	49.7	52.4	55.3	56.0	55.6	1,892
Czech Republic	73.6	74.8	75.1	74.4	75.1	74.9	74.2	74.2	74.1	73.8 (b)	73.8	5,042
Denmark ⁽¹⁾	73.2	74.1	75.0	74.4	75.3	75.2	73.9	74.0	74.6	74.2 (b)	75.4	2,784
Estonia	74.1	74.8	75.3	73.7	75.9	75.7	72.2	72.9	74.1	74.1 (b)	72.9	608
Finland	70.0	72.1	73.0	72.1	73.3	73.3	70.9	71.8	72.3	71.9 (b)	72.7	2,467
France	64.7	65.3	65.6	65.3	65.9	66.0	64.4	65.1	65.6	66.5 (b)	67.0	27,185
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	75.3	75.9	76.7	76.2 (u)	76.8	76.3 (bu)	76.0 (u)	76.0 (u)	76.3 (u)	75.5 (b)	75.9	40,212
Greece	53.5	54.9	56.5	56.3	56.9	56.7	55.3	56.3	56.8	54.3 (b)	56.4	3,760
Hungary	68.2	69.3	70.1	69.7	70.2	69.9	68.8	69.9	70.0	72.0 (b)	72.9	4,534
Iceland ⁽¹⁾	86.1	85.1	84.1	80.3	83.7	83.0	79.6	81.6	77.0 (b)	77.8 (b)	79.3	183
Ireland ⁽¹⁾	67.7	68.7	69.6	67.8	70.0	69.9	65.9	67.5	67.6	66.8 (b)	68.5	2,247
Israel	69.0	69.0	68.9	66.8	68.6	68.6	66.6	66.1	65.8	65.4	65.6	3,661
Italy	58.0	58.5	59.1	58.1	59.3	59.2	57.0	57.7	58.5	57.2 (b)	57.7	21,992
Japan	75.3	76.9	77.7	77.3	78.0	77.9	77.1	77.1	77.3	77.6	77.7	57,563
Korea	66.6	66.6	66.8	65.9	67.1	66.8	65.3	65.7	65.6	65.7	66.4	24,273
Latvia	70.1	71.8	72.3	71.6	72.5	72.0	71.9	71.3	71.3	69.0 (b)	69.7	826
Lithuania	70.4	72.4	73.0	71.6	73.1	73.0	71.7	70.7	71.1	70.8 (b)	71.7	1,300
Luxembourg	66.3	67.1	68.0	67.3	67.7	66.9	67.1	66.9	68.0	68.4 (b)	69.7	303
Mexico ⁽³⁾	61.1	61.5	62.2	..	62.4	62.6	..	56.9	59.2	59.6	61.1	52,276
Netherlands	75.9	77.2	78.2	77.8	78.2	78.4	77.3	77.6	77.8	79.8 (b)	80.8	9,033
New Zealand	76.9	77.5	77.5	76.8	77.4	77.6	76.7	76.3	76.5	77.1	77.7	2,585
Norway	74.0	74.8	75.3	74.7	75.4	75.4	74.5	74.3	74.5	74.7 (b)	75.9	2,645
Poland	66.1	67.4	68.2	68.7	68.6	68.8	67.9	68.7	69.3	69.7 (b)	70.0	16,216
Portugal	67.8	69.7	70.5	69.0	70.6	70.2	67.9	68.5	69.5	69.0 (b)	70.1	4,625
Slovak Republic	66.2	67.6	68.4	67.5	68.3	67.9	67.4	67.4	67.4	67.8 (b)	68.9	2,501
Slovenia	69.3	71.1	71.9	70.9	71.5	72.0	70.0	70.4	71.1	69.1 (b)	71.7	957
Spain	61.1	62.4	63.3	61.0	63.5	63.1	58.9	60.6	61.1	61.5 (b)	62.1	19,338
Sweden ⁽¹⁾	76.9	77.4	77.1	75.5	77.0	76.1	75.2	75.2	75.4	74.5 (b)	75.4	4,842
Switzerland	79.8	80.1	80.5	79.9	80.7	80.5	79.1	79.8	80.3	79.2 (b)	78.6	4,464
Turkey	51.6	52.0	50.3	47.5	50.4	49.0	45.4	47.8	47.9			
United Kingdom	75.0	75.6	76.2	75.4	76.5	76.3	75.7	75.0	74.7	74.7	75.1	30,993
United States	70.1	70.7	71.4	67.1	71.7	71.3	62.4	66.4	67.9	68.4	68.9	141,734

b: Break in time series

u: Low reliability

Note: Breaks in time series between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021 for Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the European Union and euro area resulting from [changes to the EU LFS](#).

(1) Breaks in the Labour Force Survey for Belgium in Q1 2017; for Denmark in Q1 2016 and Q1 2017; for Ireland in Q3 2017; for Sweden in Q3 2018; for Germany in Q1 2020; and for Iceland in Q4 2020. Some of these breaks also affect, to some extent, aggregates for the European Union, euro area and OECD-Total.

(2) Germany: due to technical issues with the introduction of the new German system of integrated household surveys, data for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 2020 are provisional.

(3) Mexico: Q2 2020 figures are not available. Estimations based on the monthly INEGI Encuesta Telefónica de Ocupación y Empleo (ETOE) phone survey were used in the compilation of Q2 2020 figures for the OECD-Total. Data from Q3 2020 are based on the New Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo (ENOE) survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Table 2: OECD employment rates (15-64) by gender
Employment as a percentage of corresponding working age population, seasonally adjusted

	Women							Men						
	2019	2020				2021		2019	2020				2021	
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
OECD - Total	61.6	61.3	56.3	58.3	59.4	59.6 (b)	60.1	76.4	76.0	70.8	73.1	74.0	74.3 (b)	74.7
Major Seven	67.3	67.1	62.0	64.3	65.3	65.4 (b)	65.9	77.4	77.0	72.5	74.3	75.0	75.3 (b)	75.6
European Union	63.2	63.2	61.6	62.2	62.7	62.6 (b)	62.9	73.9	73.7	71.9	72.7	72.9	72.8 (b)	73.1
Euro area	63.2	63.2	61.5	62.0	62.6	62.2 (b)	63.0	73.1	72.9	70.9	71.5	71.9	71.9 (b)	72.3
Australia	70.2	70.5	66.3	68.2	69.4	70.7	71.7	78.5	78.5	75.0	76.1	77.6	78.1	79.0
Austria	69.3	68.8	67.3	68.7	68.6	67.3 (b)	67.6	78.0	77.5	75.5	76.6	76.3	76.0 (b)	76.1
Belgium	61.7	61.3	60.8	61.2	60.8	59.6 (b)	61.4	68.6	69.2	68.1	68.4	67.9	68.0 (b)	68.7
Canada	71.4	69.9	61.1	67.1	68.9	68.8	69.1	76.9	76.2	68.2	73.3	75.0	75.3	75.7
Chile	54.5	54.0	42.5	43.9	46.2	47.9	47.8	72.8	72.3	60.4	61.5	66.0	66.8	66.9
Colombia	52.8	51.3	38.8	42.7	46.6	47.8	46.4	77.4	75.8	63.5	70.2	73.5	74.3	73.2
Costa Rica	48.1	48.5	35.9	38.6	42.8	42.4	41.8	74.9	75.1	63.1	65.9	67.5	69.3	69.0
Czech Republic	68.0	67.7	67.0	66.8	66.8	66.4 (b)	66.3	81.9	81.8	81.2	81.4	81.1	80.9 (b)	81.1
Denmark	72.3	72.0	70.8	71.1	71.8	71.0 (b)	72.9	78.3	78.3	76.9	76.8	77.3	77.3 (b)	77.9
Estonia	73.3	73.0	68.7	70.4	71.9	71.5 (b)	70.4	78.6	78.3	75.8	75.5	76.2	76.7 (b)	75.5
Finland	72.4	72.2	69.3	70.6	70.8	70.7 (b)	71.7	74.2	74.3	72.4	72.9	73.9	73.1 (b)	73.7
France	62.9	62.7	61.5	61.9	62.7	63.8 (b)	64.1	69.0	69.4	67.5	68.4	68.6	69.3 (b)	69.9
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	73.0	73.3 (bu)	73.1 (u)	73.0 (u)	73.4 (u)	71.7 (b)	72.3	80.6	79.2 (bu)	78.9 (u)	78.9 (u)	79.1 (u)	79.1 (b)	79.5
Greece	47.8	48.0	46.5	47.3	48.2	45.4 (b)	47.4	66.1	65.6	64.2	65.3	65.6	63.3 (b)	65.5
Hungary	63.1	62.8	61.3	62.6	62.7	66.5 (b)	67.8	77.4	77.1	76.4	77.2	77.5	77.6 (b)	78.0
Iceland ⁽¹⁾	81.5	80.3	76.6	79.7	74.7 (b)	73.3 (b)	76.4	85.8	85.5	82.4	83.4	79.1 (b)	82.1 (b)	82.0
Ireland	64.6	64.5	60.6	62.1	62.5	62.2 (b)	63.8	75.5	75.4	71.3	73.1	72.9	71.7 (b)	73.1
Israel	66.3	66.5	64.3	64.4	64.2	63.9	64.2	71.0	70.8	68.9	67.8	67.5	66.8	67.0
Italy	50.2	50.1	47.8	48.6	49.5	48.2 (b)	48.7	68.4	68.3	66.3	66.8	67.4	66.3 (b)	66.8
Japan	71.4	71.4	70.2	70.2	70.8	71.1	71.3	84.4	84.3	83.8	83.8	83.7	84.0	84.0
Korea	58.1	57.8	56.1	56.4	56.6	56.7	57.6	75.9	75.6	74.4	74.7	74.5	74.5	75.1
Latvia	70.9	70.4	70.4	70.1	69.8	66.8 (b)	68.3	74.1	73.7	73.5	72.5	72.8	71.3 (b)	71.1
Lithuania	73.0	72.1	70.7	70.3	70.9	70.1 (b)	71.4	73.1	73.8	72.6	71.1	71.4	71.6 (b)	72.0
Luxembourg	63.6	63.0	64.3	63.9	64.7	64.7 (b)	66.5	71.6	70.8	69.9	69.8	71.2	72.0 (b)	72.7
Mexico ⁽³⁾	47.5	48.0	..	41.9	44.4	44.7	46.3	78.7	78.5	..	73.1	75.3	75.8	77.2
Netherlands	74.2	74.4	73.2	73.9	74.2	76.3 (b)	77.7	82.2	82.5	81.3	81.3	81.4	83.3 (b)	84.0
New Zealand	73.0	73.1	72.1	71.4	71.9	72.7	73.5	81.8	82.2	81.2	81.2	81.2	81.5	81.9
Norway	73.2	73.4	72.5	72.4	72.3	73.2 (b)	74.2	77.4	77.3	76.4	76.1	76.5	76.2 (b)	77.6
Poland	61.2	61.5	60.3	61.6	62.4	62.8 (b)	63.5	75.9	76.1	75.4	75.8	76.3	76.5 (b)	76.6
Portugal	67.9	67.4	65.2	66.6	67.2	66.4 (b)	67.6	73.5	73.3	70.9	70.5	71.9	71.9 (b)	72.9
Slovak Republic	62.3	62.0	61.6	61.5	61.6	63.2 (b)	65.0	74.2	73.7	73.0	73.2	73.2	72.4 (b)	72.7
Slovenia	69.2	69.2	66.7	67.6	67.6	65.7 (b)	68.1	73.7	74.5	73.0	73.0	74.2	72.2 (b)	75.0
Spain	58.3	58.0	53.6	55.4	56.0	56.6 (b)	57.2	68.8	68.2	64.2	65.9	66.2	66.4 (b)	67.1
Sweden	75.4	73.9	73.0	73.6	73.5	72.5 (b)	73.6	78.5	78.2	77.3	76.7	77.2	76.5 (b)	77.1
Switzerland	76.7	76.3	74.8	75.9	76.6	74.8 (b)	74.1	84.6	84.6	83.3	83.7	83.8	83.4 (b)	83.1
Turkey	31.9	30.6	28.5	30.1	29.6	68.7	67.4	62.1	65.2	66.0
United Kingdom	72.4	72.5	71.9	71.7	71.5	71.6	72.0	80.6	80.2	79.6	78.4	77.9	77.8	78.2
United States	66.8	66.6	57.3	61.6	63.2	63.7	64.3	76.7	76.2	67.8	71.3	72.8	73.3	73.7

b: Break in time series

u: Low reliability

Note: Breaks in time series between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021 for Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the European Union and euro area resulting from [changes to the EU LFS](#).

(1) Breaks in the Labour Force Survey for Germany in Q1 2020 and for Iceland in Q4 2020. These breaks also affect, to some extent, aggregates for the European Union, euro area and OECD-Total.

(2) Germany: due to technical issues with the introduction of the new German system of integrated household surveys, data for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 2020 are provisional.

(3) Mexico: Q2 2020 figures are not available. Estimations based on the monthly INEGI ETOE phone survey were used in the compilation of Q2 2020 figures for the OECD-Total. Data from Q3 2020 are based on the New ENOE survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Table 3: OECD employment rates by age
Employment as a percentage of corresponding working age population, seasonally adjusted

	Youth (15-24)					Prime-age workers (25-54)					Older workers (55-64)						
	2019		2020			2019		2020			2019		2020			2021	
	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q1	Q2		
OECD - Total	42.4	42.0	34.9	39.9 (b)	40.8	78.9	78.6	73.9	76.8 (b)	77.2	62.3	62.0	58.6	60.7 (b)	61.1		
Major Seven	46.9	46.5	39.3	44.7 (b)	45.5	81.8	81.6	77.0	79.7 (b)	80.0	65.6	65.3	62.1	64.1 (b)	64.4		
European Union	33.3	32.8	30.8	31.3 (b)	32.5	80.7	80.5	79.0	79.6 (b)	80.3	59.6	59.8	59.1	60.0 (b)	60.2		
Euro area	33.9	34.0	30.9	32.3 (b)	33.6	79.8	79.6	77.9	78.7 (b)	79.4	60.6	60.4	59.8	60.4 (b)	60.8		
Australia	60.1	60.0	52.3	59.7	62.0	81.7	81.8	78.5	81.6	82.1	64.5	64.5	62.4	64.6	65.5		
Austria	51.6	50.8	49.2	48.7 (b)	49.5	85.5	85.0	82.7	82.9 (b)	83.1	54.4	54.3	54.3	53.9 (b)	55.2		
Belgium	26.4	26.3	23.2	22.2 (b)	24.1	80.6	80.5	80.1	79.3 (b)	80.7	52.3	52.9	53.4	53.6 (b)	54.4		
Canada	57.7	54.8	40.8	52.1	53.3	83	82.2	74.7	81.4	81.7	62.9	62.6	56.6	62.7	62.3		
Chile	25.7	27.2	16.6	19.5	20.3	75.5	74.7	62.2	69.4	68.9	66.7	63.5	51.8	56.7	55.7		
Colombia	40.4	38.6	28.1	37.3	35.5	76	74.5	60.9	71.9	70.5	61.5	59.8	48.1	55.1	54.7		
Costa Rica	31.2	32.7	22.5	26.2	27.7	74.7	74.5	62.1	69.2	68.0	58.0	57.4	44.5	50.5	49.9		
Czech Republic	27.3	26.4	25.1	24.3 (b)	24.7	87.3	87.4	86.4	85.9 (b)	85.9	67.4	67.2	68.1	68.8 (b)	68.5		
Denmark	55.6	54.4	52.9	51.7 (b)	54.1	82.7	83.0	81.6	81.8 (b)	83.3	71.6	71.0	71.2	71.8 (b)	71.7		
Estonia	40.2	40.6	33.7	34.9 (b)	33.6	84.9	84.1	81.7	84.3 (b)	82.7	73.8	72.8	70.1	69.1 (b)	69.1		
Finland	44.6	43.3	39.3	42.4 (b)	43.4	83.3	83.4	81.7	81.8 (b)	82.4	67.1	68.0	67.0	67.2 (b)	68.3		
France	29.3	29.5	26.7	29.9 (b)	31.2	81.3	81.4	80.4	81.6 (b)	82.1	53.9	53.9	53.4	55.6 (b)	55.5		
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	48.5	49.2 (bu)	48.3 (u)	47.5 (b)	48.5	85.5	84.8 (bu)	84.9 (u)	84.3 (b)	84.7	73.3	72.2 (bu)	71.8 (u)	71.5 (b)	71.7		
Greece	14.9	14.4	13.5	12.2 (b)	12.5	71.1	71.0	69.4	67.0 (b)	70.2	43.6	43.2	43.9	44.5 (b)	48.4		
Hungary	28.1	28.7	26.2	27.4 (b)	27.5	84.3	83.4	82.0	86.0 (b)	86.8	57.6	58.5	59.0	61.4 (b)	62.5		
Iceland ⁽¹⁾	69	68.9	63.7	61.0 (b)	61.1	88.4	87.4	84.2	82.2 (b)	83.4	79.8	79.3	77.9	78.7 (b)	79.4		
Ireland	42.6	42.5	33.2	37.2 (b)	39.4	80.4	80.3	77.1	77.1 (b)	79.5	62.8	62.5	61.4	60.6 (b)	61.2		
Israel						80.2	79.6	78.1	76.7	76.9	67.9	68.7	68.2	67.0	67.0		
Italy	18.6	18.2	16.0	16.2 (b)	17.4	70.8	70.6	68.4	68.8 (b)	69.6	54.3	54.4	54.1	53.1 (b)	53.5		
Japan	47.9	47.2	45.8	46.9	46.4	86.1	86.1	85.2	85.8	85.8	76.8	77.0	76.4	77.1	77.0		
Korea	27.0	25.8	24.7	25.5	27.6	76.5	76.1	74.5	74.7	75.2	67.0	67.3	66.2	65.7	66.2		
Latvia	33	30.7	29.9	26.5 (b)	27.3	83	82.4	82.0	79.8 (b)	80.2	68.1	68.8	69.0	66.8 (b)	67.9		
Lithuania	31.7	31.7	28.6	29.7 (b)	27.7	85.4	85.4	84.0	83.5 (b)	84.0	68.7	68.4	66.8	66.5 (b)	69.4		
Luxembourg	26.2	25.0	24.2	29.6 (b)	32.1	84.4	83.3	84.1	83.8 (b)	85.3	43.9	43.9	43.4	46.3 (b)	47.2		
Mexico ⁽³⁾	41.3	41.6	..	39.0	40.9	72.7	72.8	..	69.9	71.2	56.5	56.3	..	50.9	53.2		
Netherlands	65.4	65.7	60.4	69.7 (b)	71.5	85.1	85.3	85.0	85.6 (b)	86.6	70.4	71.2	70.8	70.7 (b)	71.8		
New Zealand	55.6	57.3	55.0	55.7	57.9	84.6	84.1	83.9	83.9	84.1	76.5	77.8	76.0	76.9	77.3		
Norway	50.8	50.2	49.3	50.3 (b)	52.9	83.2	83.8	82.1	82.4 (b)	83.0	73.4	73.2	72.7	73.7 (b)	74.3		
Poland	32.4	31.5	27.7	26.6 (b)	26.4	83.0	83.1	82.7	84.3 (b)	84.9	49.8	50.4	50.9	53.8 (b)	54.3		
Portugal	27.8	27.5	22.3	22.5 (b)	23.3	85.4	85.2	82.9	84.0 (b)	84.9	60.7	59.9	59.3	61.1 (b)	63.8		
Slovak Republic	24.5	24.2	22.1	20.6 (b)	20.1	81.6	81.2	80.2	81.2 (b)	82.8	58.1	57.0	58.1	58.8 (b)	59.8		
Slovenia	32.1	32.6	23.4	23.6 (b)	27.0	88.9	88.8	87.8	86.3 (b)	88.7	48.2	49.1	50.5	51.9 (b)	53.9		
Spain	22.6	22.3	16.5	19.0 (b)	19.9	76.0	75.3	70.8	73.9 (b)	74.9	54.6	55.3	53.6	55.1 (b)	55.3		
Sweden	43	41.8	39.7	39.0 (b)	41.3	86.4	85.9	84.8	83.7 (b)	84.7	77.3	77.0	77.2	76.3 (b)	76.8		
Switzerland	61.1	60.6	58.0	59.6 (b)	59.2	87.7	87.5	86.4	86.1 (b)	85.7	73.4	73.4	73.1	72.0 (b)	71.9		
Turkey	33.1	31.8	26.1			59.8	58.9	55.6			33	32.2	30.6				
United Kingdom	55	55.0	53.6	50.3	51.7												
United States	51.3	51.0	38.7	48.9	49.8	80.4	80.2	71.5	76.6	77.0	63.8	63.5	57.1	61.0	61.6		

b: Break in time series
u: Low reliability

Note: Breaks in time series between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021 for Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the European Union and euro area resulting from [changes to the EU LFS](#).

(1) Breaks in the Labour Force Survey for Germany in Q1 2020 and for Iceland in Q4 2020. These breaks also affect, to some extent, aggregates for the European Union, euro area and OECD-Total.

(2) Germany: due to technical issues with the introduction of the new German system of integrated household surveys, data for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 2020 are provisional.

(3) Mexico: Q2 2020 figures are not available. Estimations based on the monthly INEGI ETOE phone survey were used in the compilation of Q2 2020 figures for the OECD-Total. Data from Q3 2020 are based on the New ENOE survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Table 4: OECD labour force participation rates (15-64)

Labour force as a percentage of corresponding working age population, seasonally adjusted

	Participation rate										
	2017	2018	2019	2020	2019	2020				2021	
					Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2
OECD - Total	72.1	72.5	72.8	71.3	72.9	72.6	69.6	71.3	71.8	71.8 (b)	72.2
Major Seven	74.5	74.9	75.4	74.6	75.5	75.4	73.7	74.6	74.7	74.7 (b)	75.0
European Union	72.7	73.1	73.4	72.9	73.5	73.4	71.7	73.2	73.2	73.2 (b)	73.4
Euro area	73.1	73.4	73.6	72.9	73.7	73.5	71.6	73.3	73.2	73.0 (b)	73.5
Australia	77.4	78.0	78.5	77.9	78.5	78.7	76.0	77.7	79.0	79.2	79.5
Austria	76.4	76.8	77.1	76.6	77.0	76.7	75.7	77.0	76.9	77.2 (b)	77.0
Belgium ⁽¹⁾	68.0	68.6	69.1	68.6	68.7	68.7	67.9	69.2	68.3	68.3 (b)	69.5
Canada	78.2	78.2	78.7	77.4	78.8	78.0	74.6	78.3	78.8	78.7	78.8
Chile	68.9	69.4	69.3	62.7	69.1	69.0	58.5	60.2	63.4	64.2	63.2
Colombia	74.1	73.7	73.2	68.8	72.8	71.6	64.2	68.7	70.8	71.1	70.2
Costa Rica	65.9	68.1	70.1	68.3	70.7	71.1	65.4	67.3	69.3	69.2	68.1
Czech Republic	75.9	76.6	76.7	76.4	76.7	76.5	76.2	76.4	76.5	76.4 (b)	76.3
Denmark ⁽¹⁾	77.9	78.2	79.1	79.0	79.5	79.1	78.2	79.1	79.5	79.0 (b)	79.4
Estonia	78.8	79.1	78.9	79.3	79.4	79.6	78.0	79.3	80.3	79.7 (b)	78.5
Finland	76.8	77.9	78.3	78.3	78.6	78.6	77.0	78.7	78.8	78.2 (b)	79.1
France	71.5	71.9	71.7	71.0	71.8	71.6	69.4	71.7	71.4	72.3 (b)	72.8
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	78.3	78.7	79.2	79.2 (u)	79.4	79.1 (bu)	79.1 (u)	79.3 (u)	79.4 (u)	78.6 (b)	78.8
Greece	68.3	68.2	68.5	67.4	68.3	67.1	66.9	67.7	67.7	64.8 (b)	67.4
Hungary	71.2	72.0	72.6	72.8	72.7	72.6	72.3	73.2	73.2	75.3 (b)	76.1
Iceland ⁽¹⁾	88.7	87.5	87.3	85.2	86.9	85.9	84.0	86.8	83.9 (b)	84.2 (b)	84.7
Ireland ⁽¹⁾	72.7	73.0	73.3	71.9	73.6	73.5	69.3	72.6	72.1	71.9 (b)	73.5
Israel	72.1	72.0	71.7	69.9	71.3	71.2	69.6	69.5	69.3	68.9	69.5
Italy	65.5	65.7	65.7	64.1	65.6	65.0	62.2	64.9	64.3	63.5 (b)	64.2
Japan	77.6	78.9	79.7	79.7	79.9	80.0	79.4	79.6	79.9	80.0	80.2
Korea	69.2	69.3	69.5	68.6	69.6	69.3	68.2	68.3	68.6	68.6	69.1
Latvia	77.0	77.7	77.3	78.2	77.6	78.1	78.5	78.2	78.0	75.4 (b)	75.9
Lithuania	76.0	77.3	78.1	78.6	78.4	78.8	78.3	78.2	78.8	77.5 (b)	78.0
Luxembourg	70.2	71.1	72.0	72.2	71.9	71.4	71.8	72.5	73.0	72.6 (b)	74.1
Mexico ⁽³⁾	63.4	63.7	64.6	..	64.7	65.0	..	59.9	62.2	62.5	64.0
Netherlands	79.8	80.3	80.9	80.9	81.0	81.1	80.4	81.0	81.1	83.5 (b)	84.1
New Zealand	80.9	81.2	80.9	80.6	80.8	81.1	80.2	80.5	80.7	80.9	81.2
Norway	77.3	77.9	78.3	78.2	78.4	78.5	78.0	78.0	78.2	78.9 (b)	80.2
Poland	69.6	70.1	70.6	71.0	70.7	71.0	70.2	71.0	71.7	72.3 (b)	72.6
Portugal	74.7	75.1	75.5	74.3	75.7	75.2	72.3	74.7	75.0	74.2 (b)	75.4
Slovak Republic	72.1	72.4	72.7	72.4	72.6	72.3	72.1	72.6	72.7	73.2 (b)	74.1
Slovenia	74.2	75.1	75.3	74.6	74.7	75.3	73.9	74.3	75.0	72.9 (b)	75.1
Spain	73.9	73.7	73.8	72.2	73.9	73.5	69.7	72.7	73.1	73.1 (b)	73.5
Sweden ⁽¹⁾	82.5	82.8	82.9	82.5	82.9	82.3	82.2	82.7	82.9	82.4 (b)	83.2
Switzerland	84.0	84.2	84.3	84.1	84.3	84.1	83.3	84.3	84.8	83.9 (b)	83.2
Turkey	58.0	58.5	58.4	54.9	58.2	56.2	52.9	55.2	55.1		
United Kingdom	78.6	78.9	79.3	79.1	79.5	79.6	79.1	79.0	78.9	78.6	78.9
United States	73.3	73.6	74.1	73.0	74.3	74.3	72.0	72.7	73.0	73.0	73.3

b: Break in time series

u: Low reliability

Note: Breaks in time series between the 4th quarter of 2020 and the 1st quarter of 2021 for Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the European Union and euro area resulting from [changes to the EU LFS](#).

(1) Breaks in the Labour Force Survey for Belgium in Q1 2017; for Denmark in Q1 2016 and Q1 2017; for Ireland in Q3 2017; for Sweden in Q3 2018; for Germany in Q1 2020; and for Iceland in Q4 2020. Some of these breaks also affect, to some extent, aggregates for the European Union, euro area and OECD-Total.

(2) Germany: due to technical issues with the introduction of the new German system of integrated household surveys, data for Q1, Q2, Q3 and Q4 2020 are provisional.

(3) Mexico: Q2 2020 figures are not available. Estimations based on the monthly INEGI ETOE phone survey were used in the compilation of Q2 2020 figures for the OECD-Total. Data from Q3 2020 are based on the New ENOE survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Note: Employment and unemployment statistics during the COVID-19 crisis

The broad comparability of unemployment data across OECD countries is achieved through the adherence of national statistics to International Guidelines from the International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) – the so-called ILO guidelines.

Departures from these guidelines may however exist across countries depending on national circumstances (e.g. statistical environment, national regulations and practices). Typically, these departures have only a limited impact on broad comparability of employment and unemployment statistics. However, the unprecedented impact of Covid-19¹ is amplifying divergences and affects the cross-country comparability of unemployment statistics in this news release.

This concerns in particular the treatment of persons on temporary layoff or employees furloughed by their employers. These are *persons not at work during the survey reference week due to economic reasons and business conditions* (i.e. lack of work, shortage of demand for goods and services, business closures or business moves).

According to ILO guidelines, ‘**employed**’ persons include those who, in their present job, were ‘not at work’ for a short duration but maintained a job attachment during their absence (ILO, 2013 and 2020). Job attachment is determined on the basis of the continued receipt of remuneration, and/or the total duration of the absence. In practice, formal or continued job attachment is established when:

- *the expected total duration of the absence is up to three months (which can be more than three months, if the return to employment in the same economic unit is guaranteed and, in the case of the pandemic, once the restrictions in place - where applicable - are lifted)*
- OR**
- *workers continue to receive remuneration from their employer, including partial pay, even if they also receive support from other sources, including government schemes.*

In turn persons are classified as ‘**not employed**’ if:

- *The expected total duration of absence is greater than three months or there is no or unknown expected return to the same economic unit*
- AND**
- *People in this condition do not receive any part of their remuneration from their employer.*

Not-employed persons are classified as ‘**unemployed**’ if they fulfil the criteria of active “job search”² and “availability” specified for the measurement of unemployment.

However, departures from these guidelines in national practices do exist. In particular, in North America persons on temporary layoff are considered to be “only weakly or not at all attached to their job and are to be counted as unemployed” (Sorrentino, 2000). In the United States, people on temporary layoff are classified as ‘unemployed’ if they expect to be recalled to their job within six months. If they have not been given a date to return to work by their employer and if they have no expectation to return to work within six months, they need to fulfil the “job search” criteria to be classified as ‘unemployed’. For the latest US figures “people who were effectively laid off due to

¹ Broad comparability is ensured during normal business conditions, while divergences are potentially exacerbated during economic and financial crisis, such as the Great Recession or the current Covid-19 crisis.

² Some not-employed persons may be classified as “inactive/out of the labour force” because, due to the pandemic, they are either not able to actively look for a job even if they are available to work or are not available to work because of family responsibilities as schools and care services are closed.

pandemic-related closures were counted among the unemployed on temporary layoff” without further testing for their return to their previous job (BLS, 2020). In Canada, persons in temporary layoff are also classified as ‘unemployed’ if they have a date of return or an indication that they will be recalled by their employers.

Conversely, persons on temporary layoff are classified as employed (not at work) in Europe, as recommended by the ILO Guidelines (Eurostat, 2016). In practice, formal job attachment is tested on the basis of (i) an assurance of return to work within a period of three months or (ii) the receipt of half or more of their wage or salary from their employer. Somewhat stricter than ILO guidance, absences during COVID-19 crisis whose duration is unknown are treated as absences longer than three months. Those failing to satisfy these two criteria are classified as unemployed if they are “available to start work” (over the next two weeks) and have actively searched for a job in the last four weeks. All other persons on layoff are classified as inactive.

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Methodological Notes for OECD Quarterly Employment Situation News Release

All rates and levels quoted are seasonally adjusted (s.a.). Data for EU countries and for some non-EU countries are seasonally adjusted by the OECD.

OECD Database: OECD Short-Term Labour Market Statistics

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

New methodology in the **EU Labour Force Survey** from 2021 with the entry into force of the Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework Regulation, resulting in [updated definitions of the labour status](#). A discussion on changes resulting from the implementation of the IESS regulation can be found in a Eurostat *Statistics Explained* [article](#)

The measures put in place by national governments to reduce the spread of the Coronavirus (Covid-19) may have impacted on the ability to field surveys, and so, in turn, on the quality of statistics typically produced. In addition, because of differences in national practices used to determine whether individuals are unemployed when under confinement, international comparability has also been affected. See the above **note on the divergence in employment and unemployment statistics during the Covid-19 crisis**.