

Unemployment rate in the OECD area stabilises at pre-pandemic rate of 5.3% in January 2022

The monthly unemployment rate in the OECD area was stable at 5.3% in January 2022, the same rate that was recorded in February 2020 just before the pandemic (see Figure 1) and **the lowest level since the start of the series in 2001**. The number of unemployed workers in the OECD, at 35.9 million remained only 0.3 million above the pre-pandemic level.

In January, **the OECD area unemployment rate for women declined to 5.5%** (from 5.6% in December), **while it was stable among men at 5.2%** (see Figure 2). Nevertheless, just half of OECD countries reported a lower unemployment rate for men than women.

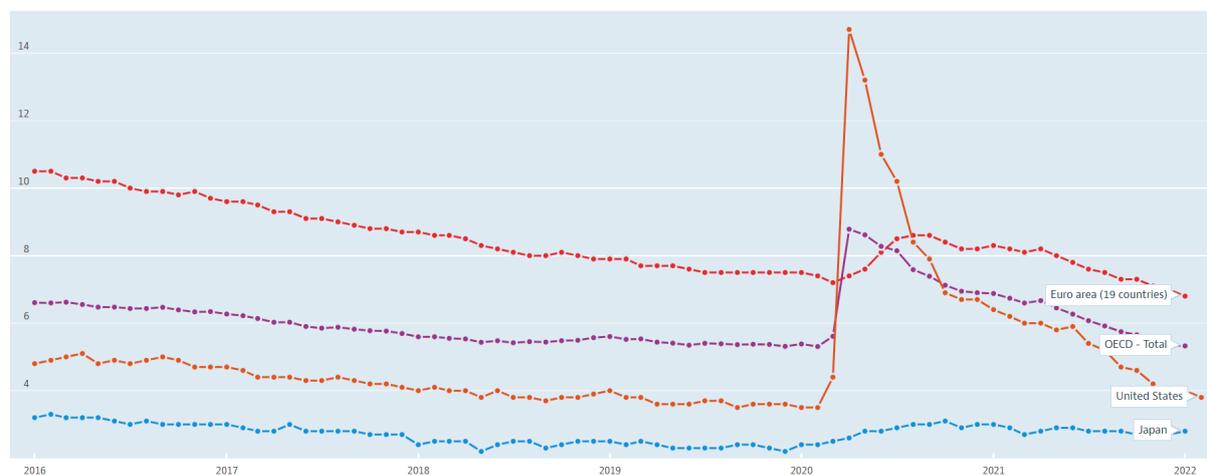
The OECD area youth unemployment rate (people aged 15 to 24) increased to 11.3% in January 2022, from 11.2% in December.

In the euro area, the unemployment rate fell further in January, to 6.8% from 7.0% in December 2021, with declines of 0.2 percentage point or more in Estonia, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Slovenia and Spain and rises of 0.2 percentage point or more in Greece, Lithuania and Portugal (see Table 1). In the euro area, the youth unemployment rate fell to 13.9% from 14.2% in December, continuing its downward trend.

The unemployment rate in January fell by 0.3 percentage point in Mexico and by 0.2 percentage point in Israel and Korea, while it increased by 0.5 percentage point in Canada, 0.3 percentage point in Colombia, 0.2 percentage point in Denmark, and 0.1 percentage point in both Japan and the United States. More recent data show that in February 2022 the unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage point in the United States (to 3.8%).

It should be noted that the unemployment rate conceals the extent of the unmet labour demand as some non-employed people may be “out of the labour force”, and hence not captured by the unemployment rate, either because they are not actively looking for a job or are not available to work.

Figure 1. Unemployment rates for selected OECD countries and country aggregates⁽¹⁾
Percentage, seasonally adjusted

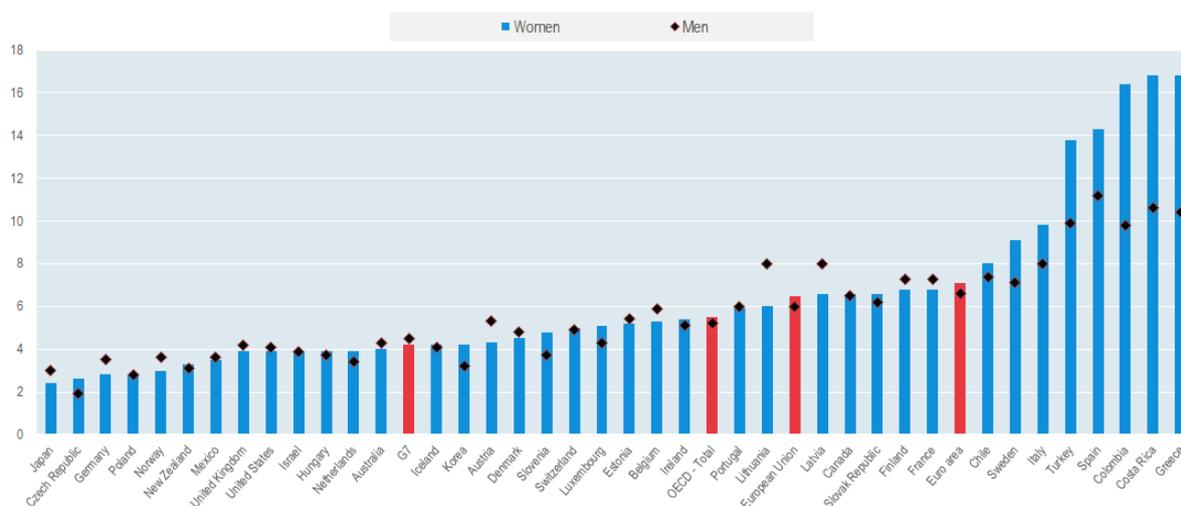


(1) Breaks between December 2020 and January 2021 for some EU Member States resulting from [changes in the EU Labour Force Survey](#). These breaks can affect, to some extent, aggregates for the euro area and OECD Total.

The fall in the OECD area unemployment rate when compared with the April 2020 peak should be interpreted with caution, as it largely reflects the return of temporary laid-off workers in the United States and Canada, where they are recorded as unemployed, unlike in most other countries, including European member states, where they are recorded as employed.

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

Figure 2. Unemployment rates for women and men in January 2022⁽¹⁾
Percentage, seasonally adjusted



(1) December 2021 for Chile, Costa Rica, Norway and Turkey; November 2021 for the United Kingdom; fourth quarter of 2021 for New Zealand and third quarter of 2021 for Switzerland.

Contacts: For further information readers are invited to contact the OECD's Media Relations Division on (33) 1 45 24 97 00 or e-mail news.contact@oecd.org; for technical questions contact stat.contact@oecd.org

Next release: Tuesday, 12 April 2022

Table 1: OECD Unemployment rates
 Percentage of the labour force, seasonally adjusted

	2020	2021	2021				2020	2021					2022
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Feb	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov		Dec	Jan
OECD - Total	7.2	6.2	6.7	6.5	5.9	5.5	5.3	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.5	5.3	5.3
G7	6.5	5.2	5.7	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.2	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.4
European Union	7.2	7.0	7.5	7.3	6.8	6.5	6.7	6.9	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.3	6.2
Euro area	8.0	7.7	8.2	8.0	7.5	7.1	7.4	7.5	7.3	7.3	7.1	7.0	6.8
Australia	6.5	5.1	6.0	5.1	4.6	4.7	5.1	4.5	4.6	5.2	4.6	4.2	4.2
Austria	6.0	6.2	7.1	6.7	5.6	5.3	4.6	6.0	4.9	5.8	5.2	4.8	4.9
Belgium	5.8	6.3	6.6	6.4	6.2	5.9	5.1	6.3	6.2	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.6
Canada	9.6	7.5	8.4	7.9	7.2	6.3	5.7	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.1	6.0	6.5
Chile	10.8	8.9	10.4	9.1	8.2	7.7	8.2	8.2	8.0	7.8	7.7	7.7	..
Colombia	15.9	13.4	14.4	13.9	12.8	12.5	11.3	12.2	12.9	13.0	12.4	12.2	12.6
Costa Rica	19.6	16.4	18.8	18.0	15.3	13.7	12.5	15.3	15.0	14.4	13.7	13.1	..
Czech Republic	2.6	2.8	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.2	1.8	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.2
Denmark	5.7	5.1	5.9	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.8	4.7	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.7
Estonia	6.9	6.2	7.0	6.6	5.9	5.4	5.2	5.8	5.7	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.3
Finland	7.7	7.7	8.0	8.1	7.5	6.9	6.6	7.1	7.7	6.7	6.8	7.2	7.1
France	8.0	7.9	8.0	8.2	7.9	7.3	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.5	7.3	7.2	7.0
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	3.8	3.5	3.9	3.6	3.4	3.2	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.1
Greece ⁽²⁾	16.4	14.8	16.4	16.0	13.7	13.3	15.7	13.9	13.1	13.3	13.6	13.0	13.3
Hungary	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.5	4.2	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.8
Iceland	6.4	6.0	6.9	6.3	5.1	4.5	4.9	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.2
Ireland	5.9	6.3	7.4	6.9	5.5	5.2	4.8	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.3
Israel	4.3	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.0	4.4	3.4	5.0	5.0	4.8	4.4	4.1	3.9
Italy	9.3	9.6	10.1	9.8	9.1	9.1	9.6	9.1	9.1	9.3	9.1	9.0	8.8
Japan	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8
Korea	3.9	3.7	4.3	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.6
Latvia	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.3
Lithuania	8.5	7.1	7.6	7.5	6.7	6.7	7.4	6.7	6.5	6.8	6.7	6.6	7.0
Luxembourg	6.7	5.6	6.2	5.9	5.3	5.0	5.7	5.2	5.2	5.0	4.9	5.0	4.7
Mexico ⁽³⁾	4.4	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.8	3.6	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.5
Netherlands	4.9	4.2	4.7	4.4	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.6
New Zealand	4.6	3.8	4.6	4.0	3.3	3.2							
Norway	4.6	4.3	4.8	5.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	4.0	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.3	..
Poland	3.2	3.4	3.8	3.6	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8
Portugal	7.1	6.6	6.8	6.9	6.4	6.2	6.6	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.3	5.8	6.0
Slovak Republic	6.7	6.8	7.1	7.0	6.6	6.4	6.0	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4
Slovenia ⁽²⁾	5.0	4.8	5.3	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.2
Spain	15.5	14.8	15.6	15.4	14.7	13.4	13.8	14.7	14.3	13.9	13.4	13.0	12.7
Sweden	8.5	8.8	9.2	9.2	8.6	8.2	7.8	8.8	8.8	8.5	8.2	8.0	8.1
Switzerland	4.8	..	5.4	5.3	5.0	..							
Turkey	13.1	12.0	12.9	12.2	11.7	11.2	12.8	11.8	11.5	11.2	11.3	11.2	..
United Kingdom	4.6	4.4	4.9	4.7	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	..	..
United States ⁽⁴⁾	8.1	5.4	6.2	5.9	5.1	4.2	3.5	5.2	4.7	4.6	4.2	3.9	4.0

..: not available

Notes:

(1) Provisional data for Germany from February 2021.

(2) Germany, Greece and Slovenia: data prior to January 2021 are not compliant with the new Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework Regulation.

(3) Mexico: April, May and June 2020 monthly figures are based on the INEGI Encuesta Telefónica de Ocupación y Empleo (ETOE) phone survey. These data are not strictly comparable with the results for earlier months. Data from July 2020 are based on the new Encuesta Nacional de Ocupación y Empleo (ENOE) survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

(4) United States: Unemployment rate for February 2022 was 3.8%.

Table 2: Unemployment rates by sex
Percentage of the labour force of each group, seasonally adjusted

	Women							Men						
	2020	2021	2021		2021		2022	2020	2021	2021		2021		2022
			Q3	Q4	Nov	Dec				Jan	Q3	Q4	Nov		Dec	Jan
OECD - Total	7.4	6.4	6.1	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.5	6.9	6.0	5.8	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2
G7	6.6	5.1	4.9	4.4	4.4	4.2	4.2	6.4	5.3	5.1	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.5
European Union	7.5	7.4	7.2	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.5	7.0	6.7	6.5	6.2	6.2	6.1	6.0
Euro area	8.3	8.1	7.9	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.7	7.4	7.1	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.6
Australia	6.4	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.2	4.0	6.6	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.1	4.3
Austria	5.9	6.1	5.5	5.3	5.2	4.8	4.3	6.1	6.3	5.8	5.3	5.3	4.9	5.3
Belgium	5.5	6.1	5.7	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.3	6.0	6.5	6.7	6.3	6.3	6.0	5.9
Canada	9.5	7.2	6.8	6.0	5.6	5.9	6.6	9.6	7.7	7.6	6.6	6.6	6.0	6.5
Chile	11.0	9.2	8.7	8.0	8.0	8.0	..	10.6	8.6	7.8	7.5	7.5	7.4	..
Colombia	20.1	17.5	16.7	16.3	16.1	15.7	16.4	12.8	10.4	9.9	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.8
Costa Rica	25.7	22.0	19.9	17.4	17.4	16.8	..	15.6	12.7	12.2	11.3	11.3	10.6	..
Czech Republic	3.0	3.4	3.2	2.6	2.7	2.4	2.6	2.2	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.8	1.9	1.9
Denmark	6.0	5.2	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.3	4.5	5.4	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.8
Estonia	6.7	5.6	5.2	5.0	4.7	5.4	5.2	7.1	6.8	6.6	5.7	6.0	5.6	5.4
Finland	7.4	7.1	7.1	6.6	6.7	6.9	6.8	8.1	8.2	7.9	7.3	6.9	7.6	7.3
France	8.0	7.8	7.8	7.2	7.2	7.0	6.8	8.1	8.0	7.9	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.3
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5
Greece ⁽²⁾	19.9	19.0	17.9	17.3	17.8	16.6	16.8	13.7	11.5	10.3	10.1	10.2	10.1	10.4
Hungary	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.7	3.9	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7
Iceland	6.3	6.5	5.0	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	6.6	5.7	5.1	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.1
Ireland	5.9	6.2	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.8	6.3	5.5	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.1
Israel	4.1	4.9	4.9	4.3	4.2	4.1	3.9	4.5	5.0	5.1	4.5	4.5	4.1	3.9
Italy	10.3	10.7	10.4	10.1	10.1	9.7	9.8	8.6	8.7	8.2	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.0
Japan	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.9	3.0	2.9	3.0
Korea	4.0	3.8	3.1	3.7	3.4	4.3	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.1	3.2	3.1	3.3	3.2
Latvia	7.1	6.6	6.0	6.6	6.8	6.8	6.6	9.1	8.5	8.8	8.0	7.9	8.0	8.0
Lithuania	7.7	6.6	6.0	5.8	5.7	5.9	6.0	9.3	7.6	7.4	7.6	7.7	7.4	8.0
Luxembourg	6.8	6.2	5.8	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.1	6.5	5.1	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.3
Mexico ⁽³⁾	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.0	4.3	3.5	4.6	4.1	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6
Netherlands	5.1	4.5	4.4	4.1	3.9	4.0	3.9	4.6	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.6	3.4
New Zealand	5.0	3.9	3.4	3.3				4.3	3.7	3.3	3.1			
Norway	4.4	4.0	3.6	3.2	3.2	3.0	..	4.8	4.6	4.3	3.6	3.6	3.6	..
Poland	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.0	3.0	2.9	2.8	3.1	3.4	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.8
Portugal	7.4	6.9	6.9	6.3	6.4	5.8	5.9	6.8	6.3	6.0	6.0	6.1	5.8	6.0
Slovak Republic	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.6	6.2	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.2
Slovenia ⁽²⁾	5.7	5.4	4.2	5.1	5.2	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.7
Spain	17.4	16.7	16.4	15.1	15.1	14.7	14.3	13.9	13.1	13.1	11.9	11.8	11.5	11.2
Sweden	8.5	9.1	8.9	8.8	8.5	8.7	9.1	8.5	8.5	8.4	7.7	8.0	7.3	7.1
Switzerland	5.0	..	5.0	..				4.7	..	4.9	..			
Turkey	14.8	14.7	14.3	14.0	14.3	13.8	..	12.4	10.7	10.4	9.9	9.7	9.9	..
United Kingdom	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.9	..	..	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.2	4.2	..	..
United States	8.4	5.2	4.9	4.2	4.2	3.9	3.9	7.8	5.5	5.3	4.2	4.2	3.9	4.1

..: not available

Notes:

(1) Provisional data for Germany from February 2021.

(2) Germany, Greece and Slovenia: data prior to January 2021 are not compliant with the new Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework Regulation.

(3) Mexico: April, May and June 2020 monthly figures are based on the INEGI ETOE phone survey. These data are not strictly comparable with the results for earlier months. Data from July 2020 are based on the New ENOE survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Table 3: Unemployment rates by age group
Percentage of the labour force of each group, seasonally adjusted

	Youth (15-24)							Prime-age and Older Workers (25+)						
	2020	2021	2021		2021		2022	2020	2021	2021		2021		2022
			Q3	Q4	Nov	Dec				Jan	Q3	Q4	Nov		Dec
OECD - Total	15.2	12.8	12.2	11.5	11.6	11.2	11.3	6.2	5.3	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6
G7	13.8	10.6	10.1	9.2	9.3	9.1	9.3	5.6	4.5	4.4	3.9	3.9	3.7	3.7
European Union	17.3	16.7	15.9	14.8	14.8	14.3	14.0	6.3	6.1	6.0	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.5
Euro area	17.7	16.9	16.1	14.7	14.8	14.2	13.9	7.0	6.8	6.7	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.1
Australia	14.3	11.3	10.6	11.1	10.9	9.4	9.0	5.0	4.0	3.5	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.3
Austria	11.7	11.0	10.1	9.4	9.8	8.2	9.0	5.3	5.6	5.1	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.4
Belgium ⁽¹⁾	15.9	18.4	18.4	16.4	16.4	16.4	..	5.0	5.3	5.2	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.8
Canada	20.0	13.6	11.6	10.7	10.5	11.1	13.6	7.9	6.5	6.5	5.6	5.4	5.1	5.4
Chile	24.7	20.0	17.5	16.8	16.8	16.7	..	9.6	7.9	7.4	7.0	7.0	6.9	..
Colombia	27.3	24.1	23.8	22.4	21.8	21.1	23.8	13.7	11.4	10.7	10.7	10.6	10.6	10.5
Costa Rica	42.4	39.4	38.0	36.4	36.4	36.1	..	15.8	12.5	11.6	10.1	10.1	9.5	..
Czech Republic	7.9	8.2	7.4	7.0	6.5	7.3	6.8	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.0
Denmark	11.6	10.9	10.0	10.2	9.9	10.0	10.3	4.7	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7
Estonia	18.3	16.9	16.0	17.6	18.3	18.4	17.8	6.0	5.4	5.1	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.3
Finland	20.8	17.1	14.2	15.0	16.0	13.8	15.2	6.0	6.5	6.7	5.9	5.7	6.4	6.1
France	21.4	18.9	19.6	15.7	15.4	15.1	14.8	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.1
Germany ⁽²⁾⁽³⁾	7.1	6.9	6.4	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.7	3.5	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9
Greece ⁽³⁾	35.4	35.7	30.0	32.9	37.0	28.7	31.4	15.5	13.8	12.9	12.3	12.4	12.3	12.4
Hungary	12.4	13.4	13.7	12.8	12.4	11.6	11.6	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.3
Iceland	11.9	12.3	8.8	8.9	8.9	9.2	9.1	5.5	5.0	4.4	3.7	3.7	3.5	3.3
Ireland	15.9	14.7	11.6	12.3	12.5	12.7	13.0	4.6	5.1	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.0
Israel ⁽⁴⁾	7.9	7.7	8.7	7.5	7.8	6.2	5.8	3.7	4.5	4.7	4.1	4.0	3.8	3.3
Italy	29.5	29.9	27.9	27.3	27.5	26.6	25.3	8.1	..	7.9	..	..	..	..
Japan	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.8	5.0	5.2	4.8	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6
Korea	10.5	8.5	7.0	7.7	7.6	7.4	8.0	3.6	3.4	2.9	3.2	3.0	3.6	3.4
Latvia	14.8	14.8	15.0	12.4	12.3	11.5	10.9	7.7	7.1	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.1
Lithuania	19.5	14.4	13.3	10.6	10.4	10.6	11.5	7.7	6.6	6.2	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.6
Luxembourg	22.7	16.9	15.8	14.9	14.7	15.4	13.3	5.4	4.6	4.3	4.0	4.0	4.0	3.9
Mexico ⁽⁵⁾	8.1	8.1	7.2	7.7	7.6	7.5	6.8	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.2	2.9
Netherlands	10.6	9.4	8.9	8.0	7.8	7.8	7.6	3.7	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.8
New Zealand	12.4	10.5	9.9	8.8	..	..	..	3.3	2.7	2.2	2.2	..	..	..
Norway	11.5	10.9	10.5	9.5	9.5	9.2	..	3.6	3.3	3.0	2.5	2.5	2.4	..
Poland	10.9	12.4	10.7	10.9	11.0	11.2	10.8	2.7	2.8	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.3	2.3
Portugal	22.9	23.1	23.0	21.6	22.3	20.5	21.1	6.0	5.5	5.3	5.1	5.2	4.8	5.0
Slovak Republic	20.3	20.8	19.3	19.6	19.5	20.3	20.4	5.8	6.0	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.6
Slovenia ⁽¹⁾⁽³⁾	14.4	13.1	12.3	10.0	10.0	10.0	..	4.4	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.1	3.9
Spain	38.3	35.0	31.9	31.0	31.2	30.5	29.4	14.0	13.4	13.5	12.2	12.1	11.8	11.6
Sweden	23.2	24.8	24.5	24.1	24.3	23.5	21.7	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.2	6.2	6.0	6.3
Switzerland	8.6	..	8.6	..	..	..	..	4.3	..	4.5	..	..	..	..
Turkey	24.9	22.8	22.3	21.4	22.4	20.8	..	11.1	10.1	9.8	9.4	9.2	9.4	..
United Kingdom	13.8	12.3	11.7	11.2	11.2	..	..	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.1	..	..
United States	15.1	9.7	9.4	8.4	8.4	8.2	8.3	7.1	4.7	4.5	3.6	3.6	3.3	3.3

..: not available

Notes:

(1) Belgium and Slovenia: For youth unemployment, quarterly data are shown.

(2) Provisional data for Germany from February 2021.

(3) Germany, Greece and Slovenia: data prior to January 2021 are not compliant with the new Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework Regulation.

(4) Israel: Data shown in this table are not seasonally adjusted.

(5) Mexico: April, May and June 2020 monthly figures are based on the INEGI ETOE phone survey. These data are not strictly comparable with the results for earlier months. Data from July 2020 are based on the New ENOE survey, combining telephone and face-to-face interviews.

Table 4: Unemployment levels
Thousands of persons, seasonally adjusted

	2020	2021	2021			2021			2022
			Q2	Q3	Q4	Oct	Nov	Dec		Jan
OECD - Total	46,898	40,998	43,073	39,540	36,812	37,866	36,663	35,919	35,869
G7	24,658	19,843	21,137	19,152	17,257	17,962	17,230	16,587	16,806
European Union	15,270	14,930	15,547	14,553	13,822	14,101	13,802	13,562	13,346
Euro area	12,924	12,591	13,111	12,325	11,670	11,914	11,656	11,439	11,225
Australia	878	701	712	627	639	706	637	574	580
Austria	271	284	304	259	245	270	241	223	225
Belgium	291	325	328	326	306	316	305	296	290
Canada	1,897	1,520	1,593	1,470	1,298	1,396	1,262	1,236	1,342
Chile	938	806	815	747	720	725	720	716	..
Colombia	3,731	3,330	3,514	3,193	3,076	3,207	3,056	2,965	3,038
Costa Rica	468	401	434	378	333	351	333	319	..
Czech Republic	137	150	164	143	120	130	116	114	118
Denmark	171	155	155	145	141	143	140	140	143
Estonia	48	43	46	41	37	36	37	38	37
Finland	209	212	224	207	192	185	188	203	197
France	2,381	2,365	2,465	2,375	2,216	2,264	2,209	2,176	2,114
Germany ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	1,664	1,506	1,555	1,447	1,381	1,394	1,379	1,369	1,361
Greece ⁽²⁾	761	680	742	642	623	620	642	607	614
Hungary	198	196	199	189	186	193	187	178	185
Iceland	13	13	13	11	10	10	10	9	9
Ireland	139	158	174	141	137	136	138	137	138
Israel	177	206	219	210	189	204	187	175	166
Italy	2,296	2,371	2,433	2,269	2,279	2,311	2,284	2,243	2,192
Japan	1,922	1,946	2,000	1,917	1,877	1,840	1,920	1,870	1,910
Korea	1,108	1,037	1,038	890	971	924	911	1,077	1,038
Latvia	79	71	73	69	68	67	68	69	68
Lithuania	126	105	110	99	99	100	99	97	102
Luxembourg	21	18	19	17	16	16	16	16	15
Mexico ⁽³⁾	2,340	2,372	2,473	2,330	2,239	2,232	2,197	2,288	2,068
Netherlands	465	408	417	399	370	382	359	369	354
New Zealand	132	110	114	98	93				
Norway	131	123	142	115	100	105	100	96	..
Poland	537	577	625	534	507	513	509	498	488
Portugal	358	337	356	331	319	330	325	303	309
Slovak Republic	186	185	191	182	176	177	175	177	174
Slovenia ⁽²⁾	51	48	47	47	47	48	47	45	43
Spain	3,531	3,430	3,573	3,431	3,117	3,222	3,102	3,027	2,952
Sweden	467	488	512	480	457	469	459	444	451
Switzerland	238	..	262	245	..				
Turkey	4,040	3,927	3,941	3,861	3,779	3,750	3,792	3,794	..
United Kingdom	1,551	1,512	1,600	1,448	1,374	1,382	1,374	..	..
United States	12,948	8,623	9,491	8,225	6,832	7,375	6,802	6,319	6,513

..: not available

Notes:

(1) Provisional data for Germany from February 2021.

(2) Germany, Greece and Slovenia: data prior to January 2021 are not compliant with the new Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework Regulation.

(3) Mexico: April, May and June 2020 monthly figures are based on the INEGI ETOE phone survey. These data are not strictly comparable with the results for earlier months. Data from July 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 Canada and the United States 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

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

² Some people not in employment 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.

to 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.

References

BLS (2020), Frequently asked questions: The impact of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic on The Employment Situation for March 2020, U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, March 2020, Washington DC. <https://www.bls.gov/cps/employment-situation-covid19-faq-march-2020.pdf>

Eurostat (2016), EU Labour Force Survey Explanatory notes, Eurostat, March 2016, Luxembourg. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/EU-LFS-explanatory-notes-from-2016-onwards.pdf>

ILO (2013), Resolution concerning statistics of work, employment and labour underutilization, 19th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS), Geneva. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/normativeinstrument/wcms_230304.pdf

ILO (2020), COVID-19: Guidance for labour statistics data collection, International Labor Organisation (ILO), Geneva. https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---stat/documents/publication/wcms_741145.pdf

C. Sorrentino (2000), International unemployment rates: how comparable are they?, Monthly Labor Review, June 2000, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), Washington DC. <https://www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/06/art1full.pdf>

[Methodological Notes for OECD Unemployment Rates News Release](#)

The OECD area unemployment rate is calculated as the total number of unemployed people in all OECD countries as a percentage of the total labour force (i.e. the unemployed plus those in employment); this is equivalent to an average of unemployment rates of all OECD countries weighted by the labour force of each country. Rates and levels are seasonally adjusted (s.a.).

For countries for which unemployment data for the most recent month or quarter are not available, the latest available data are used to compile data for the OECD area total.

OECD Online Database: [OECD Short-Term Labour Market Statistics](#)

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** with the entry into force in 2021 of the Integrated European Social Statistics (IESS) Framework Regulation, resulted in [updated definitions of the labour status](#). These changes may affect comparisons for several EU countries between December 2020 and subsequent months. Information, by European country, on the status of the implementation of IESS regulation as well as on possible resulting breaks in time series 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 **note above on the divergence in employment and unemployment statistics during the COVID-19 crisis**.