

Unemployment rate in the OECD falls further to 5.1% in March 2022

The unemployment rate in the OECD fell further to 5.1% in March 2022, from 5.2% in February. This represents a continuation of a positive trend for the OECD and the 11th consecutive month of falling or stable unemployment, keeping it below the pre-pandemic rate of 5.3% recorded in February 2020 (Figure 1).

Indeed, the unemployment rate was below the pre-pandemic rate in two-thirds of OECD countries in March, compared with just half of them in February (Figure 2). Moreover, the number of unemployed workers in the OECD continued to fall, reaching 34.6 million, 0.9 million below the pre-pandemic level.

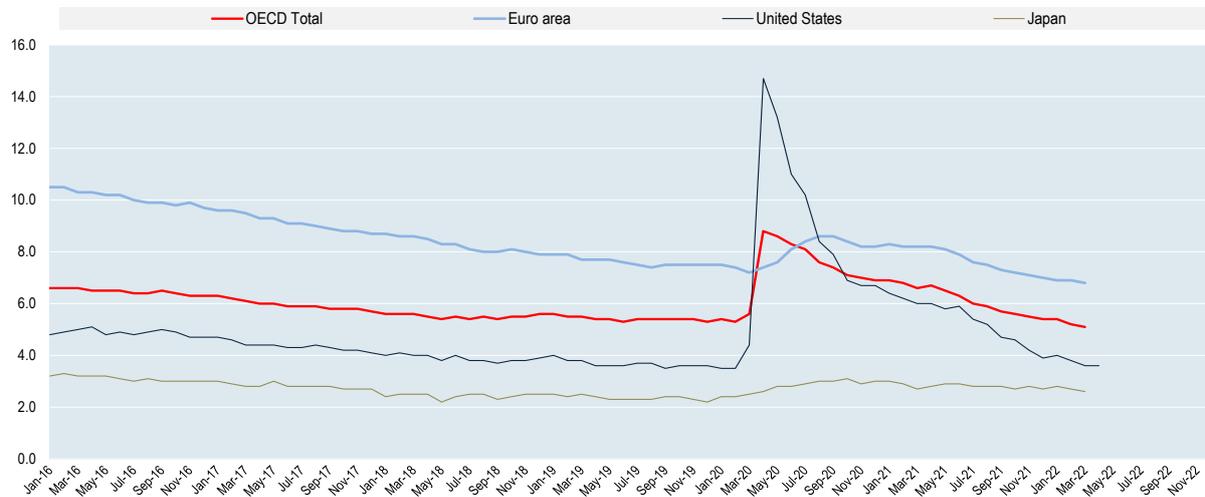
The March decline in the OECD unemployment rate was recorded for both women and men (Table 2), as well as for all age groups (Table 3).

In the euro area, the unemployment rate decreased further to 6.8% in March from 6.9% in February, with the largest declines recorded in Austria, Italy and Latvia. By contrast, the largest increase was observed in Ireland and slight increases were also recorded in Greece, Portugal and Spain (Table 1).

Outside the euro area, the unemployment rate fell markedly in Mexico, and more modestly in Canada, the Czech Republic, Iceland, Israel, Japan and the United States. However, unemployment increased in Turkey and more slightly in Colombia and Denmark. More recent data show that in April 2022 the unemployment rate stabilised at 3.6% in the United States while it slightly decreased in Canada (to 5.2%, its lowest level since comparable data became available in 1976).

It should be noted that the unemployment rate does not capture non-employed people who are outside of the labour force, either because they are not actively looking for a job or are not available for work.

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

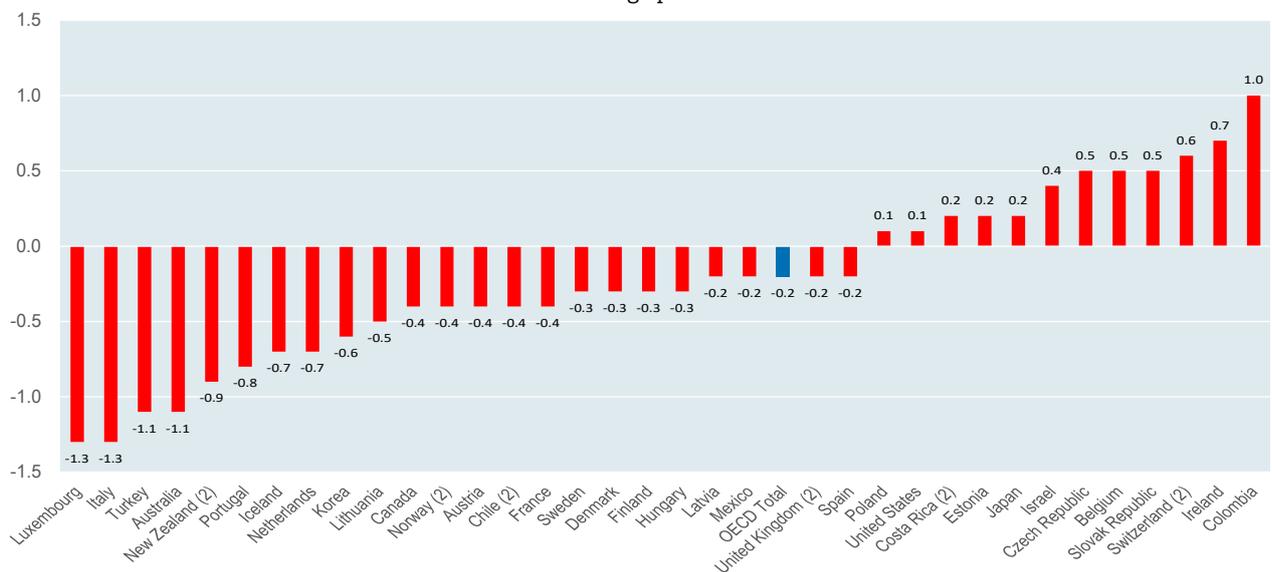


(1) Breaks between December 2020 and January 2021 for some EU Member States resulting from [changes in the EU Labour Force Survey](#). These breaks can affect, to some extent, aggregates for the euro area and OECD Total.

The fall in the OECD 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. Changes in unemployment rate for OECD and selected OECD countries⁽¹⁾
between February 2020 and March 2022
Percentage points



(1) Germany, Greece and Slovenia, which experienced a methodological break between December 2020 and January 2021 in their unemployment series, were excluded from the chart.

(2) For Costa Rica, Chile and Norway change between February 2020 and February 2022; for the United Kingdom, change between February 2020 and January 2022; for New Zealand, change between fourth quarter 2019 and first quarter 2022; Switzerland, change between fourth quarter 2019 and fourth quarter 2021.

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

	2020	2021	2021			2022	2020	2021				2022		
			Q2	Q3	Q4			Q1	Feb	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
OECD - Total	7.2	6.2	6.5	5.9	5.5	5.2	5.3	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.1	
G7	6.5	5.2	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.2	4.2	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.1	
European Union	7.2	7.1	7.3	6.8	6.5	6.3	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2	
Euro area	8.0	7.7	8.1	7.5	7.1	6.9	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.0	6.9	6.9	6.8	
Australia	6.5	5.1	5.1	4.6	4.7	4.1	5.1	5.2	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.0	
Austria	6.0	6.2	6.7	5.6	5.3	4.6	4.6	5.8	5.2	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.2	
Belgium	5.8	6.3	6.3	6.3	5.8	5.6	5.1	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.6	
Canada ⁽¹⁾	9.6	7.5	7.9	7.2	6.3	5.8	5.7	6.8	6.1	6.0	6.5	5.5	5.3	
Chile	10.8	8.9	9.1	8.2	7.7	7.8	8.2	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.8	..	
Colombia	15.9	13.4	13.9	12.8	12.5	12.3	11.3	13.3	12.2	12.9	12.5	12.2	12.3	
Costa Rica	19.6	16.4	17.8	15.2	13.6	13.5	13.3	14.2	13.6	13.1	13.4	13.5	..	
Czech Republic	2.6	2.8	3.1	2.7	2.3	2.4	1.8	2.4	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.5	2.3	
Denmark	5.7	5.1	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.4	4.5	
Estonia	6.9	6.2	6.7	5.9	5.3	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.8	5.4	5.4	
Finland	7.7	7.7	8.1	7.5	6.9	6.6	6.7	6.7	6.8	7.2	7.0	6.5	6.4	
France	8.0	7.9	8.2	7.8	7.5	7.4	7.8	7.5	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.4	7.4	
Germany ⁽²⁾	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.2	3.0	3.5	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	
Greece ⁽²⁾	16.4	14.8	16.1	13.6	13.1	12.9	15.8	13.1	13.4	12.8	13.0	12.8	12.9	
Hungary	4.1	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.5	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.8	3.7	3.2	
Iceland	6.4	6.0	6.0	5.2	4.6	4.4	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3	
Ireland	5.9	6.3	7.0	5.5	5.2	5.3	4.8	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.5	
Israel	4.3	5.0	5.3	5.0	4.4	3.9	3.4	4.8	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	
Italy	9.3	9.6	9.8	9.1	9.0	8.5	9.6	9.2	9.0	8.8	8.6	8.5	8.3	
Japan	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.4	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6	
Korea	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.0	3.3	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.6	2.7	2.7	
Latvia	8.1	7.6	7.8	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.0	
Lithuania	8.5	7.1	7.5	6.7	6.7	7.0	7.4	6.8	6.7	6.6	7.0	7.0	6.9	
Luxembourg	6.7	5.5	5.5	5.2	4.9	4.6	5.8	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.5	
Mexico ⁽³⁾	4.4	4.1	4.3	4.0	3.8	3.5	3.5	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.5	3.7	3.3	
Netherlands	4.9	4.2	4.4	4.1	3.8	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.4	3.3	
New Zealand	4.6	3.8	4.0	3.3	3.2	3.2								
Norway	4.6	4.3	4.9	4.0	3.5	..	3.5	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.1	3.1	..	
Poland	3.2	3.4	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	3.0	
Portugal	7.1	6.6	6.9	6.4	6.1	5.7	6.5	6.4	6.2	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	
Slovak Republic	6.7	6.8	7.0	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.0	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.5	
Slovenia ⁽²⁾	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.1	4.2	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.0	
Spain	15.5	14.8	15.4	14.6	13.6	13.4	13.7	13.8	13.5	13.4	13.3	13.4	13.5	
Sweden	8.5	8.8	9.2	8.6	8.2	7.7	7.9	8.4	8.2	7.9	8.0	7.4	7.6	
Switzerland	4.8	5.1	5.2	5.0	4.7	..								
Turkey	13.1	12.0	12.4	11.3	11.3	11.4	12.6	11.2	11.3	11.4	11.5	11.1	11.5	
United Kingdom	4.6	4.4	4.7	4.3	4.1	..	4.0	4.1	4.1	3.9	3.8	..	..
United States ⁽⁴⁾	8.1	5.4	5.9	5.1	4.2	3.8	3.5	4.6	4.2	3.9	4.0	3.8	3.6	

..: not available

Notes:

(1) Canada: Unemployment rate for April 2022 was 5.2%.

(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 April 2022 was 3.6%.

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

	Women							Men						
	2020	2021	2021	2022	2022			2020	2021	2021	2022	2022		
			Q4	Q1	Jan	Feb	Mar			Q4	Q1	Jan	Feb	Mar
OECD - Total	7.4	6.4	5.7	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.3	6.9	6.0	5.3	5.1	5.2	5.1	5.0
G7	6.6	5.1	4.4	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.0	6.4	5.3	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.1
European Union	7.5	7.4	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.6	7.0	6.8	6.3	6.0	6.1	6.0	5.9
Euro area	8.3	8.1	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.7	7.4	6.8	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.5
Australia	6.4	5.0	4.8	3.8	4.0	3.8	3.7	6.6	5.2	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2
Austria	5.9	6.1	5.3	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.1	6.1	6.3	5.3	4.8	5.3	4.8	4.4
Belgium	5.5	5.9	4.8	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6	6.0	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.6
Canada	9.5	7.2	6.0	5.8	6.6	5.3	5.5	9.6	7.7	6.6	5.8	6.5	5.7	5.2
Chile	11.0	9.2	8.0	8.2	8.3	8.2	..	10.6	8.6	7.5	7.5	7.4	7.5	..
Colombia	20.1	17.5	16.3	15.7	16.4	15.0	15.8	12.8	10.4	9.7	9.9	9.8	10.1	9.7
Costa Rica	25.7	22.0	17.3	17.5	17.6	17.5	..	15.6	12.7	11.1	10.8	10.5	10.8	..
Czech Republic	3.0	3.4	2.7	3.0	2.9	3.2	2.8	2.2	2.3	1.9	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.0
Denmark	6.0	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.7	5.4	5.0	4.6	4.5	4.7	4.4	4.3
Estonia	6.7	5.6	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.1	7.1	6.8	5.7	5.9	6.4	5.7	5.7
Finland	7.4	7.1	6.5	6.4	6.8	6.1	6.3	8.1	8.2	7.2	6.9	7.2	6.9	6.6
France	8.0	7.8	7.4	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	8.1	8.0	7.6	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.2
Germany ⁽¹⁾	3.4	3.2	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	4.2	3.9	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.2
Greece ⁽¹⁾	19.9	19.0	17.3	16.6	17.2	16.3	16.3	13.7	11.4	9.7	10.0	9.7	10.0	10.2
Hungary	4.2	4.2	4.0	3.4	3.9	3.6	2.7	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	3.7
Iceland	6.3	6.5	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	6.6	5.7	4.6	4.2	4.3	4.2	4.2
Ireland	5.9	6.2	5.2	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.8	5.8	6.3	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.3
Israel	4.1	4.9	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.5	5.0	4.5	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.5
Italy	10.3	10.7	10.0	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.2	8.6	8.7	8.2	7.6	7.8	7.5	7.6
Japan	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.0	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	2.7
Korea	4.0	3.8	3.7	3.2	4.2	2.6	2.8	3.9	3.6	3.2	2.9	3.2	2.8	2.6
Latvia	7.1	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.6	9.1	8.5	8.0	7.8	8.0	7.8	7.5
Lithuania	7.7	6.6	5.8	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.8	9.3	7.6	7.6	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
Luxembourg	6.8	6.0	5.2	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.8	6.5	5.0	4.6	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.2
Mexico ⁽²⁾	4.2	4.1	4.0	3.5	3.4	3.8	3.2	4.6	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.4
Netherlands	5.1	4.5	4.1	3.7	3.9	3.6	3.6	4.6	4.0	3.6	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.1
New Zealand	5.0	3.9	3.3	3.3	..	..	..	4.3	3.7	3.1	3.1	..	..	..
Norway	4.4	4.0	3.3	..	2.9	2.8	..	4.8	4.6	3.7	..	3.4	3.4	..
Poland	3.3	3.4	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.1	3.4	3.1	3.0	3.1	3.0	3.0
Portugal	7.4	6.9	6.3	6.2	6.0	6.2	6.4	6.8	6.3	5.9	5.2	5.5	5.1	5.0
Slovak Republic	7.1	7.0	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.6
Slovenia ⁽¹⁾	5.7	5.4	5.1	4.6	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.7
Spain	17.4	16.7	15.3	15.1	15.0	15.1	15.3	13.9	13.1	12.0	11.8	11.8	11.8	11.9
Sweden	8.5	9.1	8.8	8.3	9.0	7.3	8.5	8.5	8.5	7.7	7.1	7.1	7.4	6.8
Switzerland	5.0	5.3	4.6	..	..	..	..	4.7	4.9	4.8	..	..	..	..
Turkey	14.8	14.7	14.1	13.7	13.7	13.4	13.9	12.4	10.7	9.9	10.2	10.5	9.9	10.3
United Kingdom	4.3	4.3	3.9	..	3.6	4.8	4.7	4.2	..	4.0
United States	8.4	5.2	4.2	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.6	7.8	5.5	4.2	3.8	4.1	3.8	3.6

..: not available

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(2) 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		2022			2020	2021	2021		2022		
			Q4	Q1	Jan	Feb	Mar			Q4	Q1	Jan	Feb	Mar
OECD - Total	15.2	12.8	11.5	11.1	11.3	11.1	10.9	6.2	5.3	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4
G7	13.8	10.6	9.3	9.1	9.4	9.0	8.9	5.6	4.5	3.9	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.5
European Union	17.3	16.7	14.8	14.0	14.2	14.0	13.9	6.3	6.2	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5
Euro area	17.7	16.9	14.8	14.1	14.3	14.0	13.9	7.0	6.8	6.4	6.2	6.2	6.2	6.1
Australia	14.3	11.3	11.1	8.9	9.0	9.3	8.3	5.0	4.0	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.1	3.2
Austria	11.7	11.0	9.5	8.2	9.1	8.7	6.9	5.3	5.6	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.3	3.9
Belgium ⁽¹⁾	15.9	18.2	15.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	5.0	5.3	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0	5.0
Canada	20.0	13.6	10.7	11.4	13.6	10.9	9.8	7.9	6.5	5.6	4.9	5.4	4.6	4.6
Chile	24.7	20.0	16.9	17.2	16.7	17.2	..	9.6	7.9	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	..
Colombia	27.3	24.1	22.4	23.5	23.8	24.2	22.5	13.7	11.4	10.7	10.3	10.5	10.0	10.4
Costa Rica	42.4	39.4	35.7	35.1	35.5	35.1	..	15.8	12.5	10.1	10.0	9.9	10.0	..
Czech Republic	7.9	8.2	7.1	6.9	6.4	7.3	6.9	2.3	2.5	2.0	2.2	2.1	2.3	2.1
Denmark	11.6	10.9	10.2	10.1	10.0	10.1	10.3	4.7	4.1	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.5	3.5
Estonia	18.3	16.9	17.3	18.8	19.5	18.4	18.4	6.0	5.4	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.4	4.4
Finland	20.8	17.1	14.9	13.7	15.0	13.9	12.2	6.0	6.5	5.9	5.7	6.0	5.5	5.7
France	21.4	18.9	16.6	16.3	16.2	16.4	16.3	6.6	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3
Germany ⁽²⁾	7.1	7.0	5.8	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.5	3.5	3.2	2.9	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6
Greece ⁽²⁾	35.4	35.5	31.9	31.2	35.6	30.8	27.2	15.5	13.8	12.2	12.0	12.0	11.9	12.2
Hungary	12.4	13.4	12.8	10.5	11.7	10.6	9.2	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2	2.8
Iceland	11.9	12.3	9.1	9.4	9.3	9.4	9.4	5.5	5.0	3.9	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.4
Ireland	15.9	14.7	12.1	12.7	13.0	12.7	12.3	4.6	5.1	4.1	4.1	4.0	3.9	4.4
Israel ⁽³⁾	7.9	7.7	7.5	6.3	5.8	6.5	6.5	3.7	4.5	4.1	3.1	3.3	3.2	2.9
Italy	29.5	29.9	27.1	24.5	24.8	24.2	24.5	8.1	8.3	7.9	..	..	..	..
Japan	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.2	4.8	3.8	4.0	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.5
Korea	10.5	8.5	7.7	7.7	8.0	7.5	7.6	3.6	3.4	3.2	2.7	3.4	2.4	2.4
Latvia	14.8	14.8	12.3	10.3	10.8	10.3	9.8	7.7	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.0	6.9
Lithuania	19.5	14.4	10.6	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	7.7	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6
Luxembourg	22.7	17.7	15.6	14.3	14.6	14.4	14.0	5.4	4.4	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7
Mexico ⁽⁴⁾	8.1	8.1	7.6	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.3	3.7	3.4	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.1	2.8
Netherlands	10.6	9.4	8.0	7.3	7.6	7.3	7.1	3.7	3.2	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.6	2.5
New Zealand	12.4	10.5	8.8	9.6	..	..	..	3.3	2.7	2.2	2.1	..	..	..
Norway	11.5	10.9	9.5	..	8.8	8.1	..	3.6	3.3	2.6	..	2.3	2.3	..
Poland	10.9	11.9	9.6	9.2	9.3	9.1	9.1	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6
Portugal	22.9	23.1	21.8	20.8	20.6	20.2	21.6	6.0	5.5	5.1	4.7	4.8	4.7	4.7
Slovak Republic	20.3	20.6	19.1	18.9	19.0	18.9	18.8	5.8	6.1	5.9	5.8	5.9	5.8	5.8
Slovenia ⁽¹⁾⁽²⁾	14.4	13.1	10.1	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	4.4	4.2	4.2	3.8	3.9	3.8	3.7
Spain	38.3	35.0	31.4	29.9	30.4	29.8	29.6	14.0	13.4	12.3	12.2	12.1	12.2	12.3
Sweden	23.2	24.8	24.1	22.2	21.7	22.2	22.7	6.7	6.8	6.2	5.8	6.2	5.5	5.7
Switzerland	8.6	8.9	8.4	..	..	..	..	4.3	4.6	4.2	..	..	..	..
Turkey	24.9	22.8	21.4	21.1	21.3	20.7	21.2	11.1	10.1	9.5	9.7	9.8	9.4	9.8
United Kingdom	13.8	12.3	11.2	..	11.3	..	..	3.3	3.4	3.1	..	2.8	..	..
United States	15.1	9.7	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.2	7.1	4.7	3.6	3.1	3.3	3.2	2.9

..: not available

Notes:

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

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

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

(4) 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		2022	2021	2022		
			Q3	Q4			Q1	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
OECD - Total	46,898	41,020	39,385	36,876	35,314	36,096	36,142	35,184	34,605
G7	24,658	19,872	19,149	17,277	16,260	16,605	16,802	16,258	15,720
European Union	15,270	14,958	14,541	13,887	13,476	13,719	13,594	13,459	13,374
Euro area	12,924	12,619	12,294	11,712	11,355	11,571	11,441	11,350	11,274
Australia	878	701	627	640	565	576	582	563	551
Austria	271	284	259	244	213	222	223	221	195
Belgium	291	324	326	303	295	299	295	294	296
Canada	1,897	1,520	1,470	1,298	1,193	1,236	1,342	1,136	1,100
Chile	938	806	747	721	739	717	731	739	..
Colombia	3,731	3,330	3,193	3,074	3,016	2,963	3,036	2,983	3,027
Costa Rica	468	401	375	331	329	320	325	329	..
Czech Republic	137	150	143	121	126	115	122	133	123
Denmark	171	155	145	141	139	139	141	136	139
Estonia	48	43	41	37	40	38	41	39	39
Finland	209	212	207	191	186	203	196	182	180
France	2,381	2,365	2,341	2,251	2,244	2,270	2,255	2,248	2,228
Germany ⁽¹⁾	1,664	1,536	1,488	1,394	1,307	1,365	1,335	1,306	1,280
Greece ⁽¹⁾	761	678	640	613	605	597	598	608	609
Hungary	198	196	188	186	174	177	184	180	157
Iceland	13	13	11	10	9	10	9	9	9
Ireland	139	158	142	136	139	135	137	135	146
Israel	177	206	210	188	166	175	166	168	164
Italy	2,296	2,371	2,260	2,251	2,116	2,209	2,151	2,122	2,074
Japan	1,922	1,946	1,917	1,877	1,860	1,870	1,910	1,880	1,790
Korea	1,108	1,037	890	971	862	1,077	1,038	780	770
Latvia	79	71	69	68	67	69	68	67	66
Lithuania	126	105	99	99	103	97	102	103	103
Luxembourg	21	18	17	16	15	16	15	15	14
Mexico ⁽²⁾	2,340	2,372	2,328	2,231	2,065	2,276	2,056	2,180	1,959
Netherlands	465	408	399	370	339	369	354	336	327
New Zealand	132	110	98	93	94	..	..	..	..
Norway	131	123	115	101	..	96	91	90	..
Poland	537	580	555	536	524	532	524	522	526
Portugal	358	337	332	318	295	302	298	292	296
Slovak Republic	186	188	186	182	180	182	182	180	178
Slovenia ⁽¹⁾	51	48	47	47	42	46	43	42	41
Spain	3,531	3,430	3,399	3,152	3,130	3,113	3,107	3,120	3,164
Sweden	467	488	480	456	428	443	448	410	425
Switzerland	238	252	245	235	..	..	..	..	..
Turkey	4,040	3,927	3,722	3,790	3,845	3,859	3,900	3,741	3,894
United Kingdom	1,551	1,512	1,448	1,374	..	1,336	1,296	..	..
United States	12,948	8,623	8,225	6,832	6,245	6,319	6,513	6,270	5,952

..: not available

Notes:

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

(2) 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.

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

The OECD 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 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**.