

May 2008

Euro area unemployment stable at 7.2%

EU27 up to 6.8%

The **euro area**¹ (EA15) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate² stood at 7.2% in May 2008, unchanged compared with April³. It was 7.5% in May 2007. The **EU27**¹ unemployment rate was 6.8% in May 2008, compared with 6.7% in April³. It was 7.2% in May 2007.

Eurostat estimates that 16.171 million men and women in the **EU27**, of which 11.199 million in the **euro area**, were unemployed in May 2008. Compared with April 2008, the number of persons unemployed increased by 42 000 and 67 000 respectively. Compared with May 2007, unemployment was down by 0.9 million in the **EU27** and by 0.2 million in the **euro area**.

These figures are published by **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**.

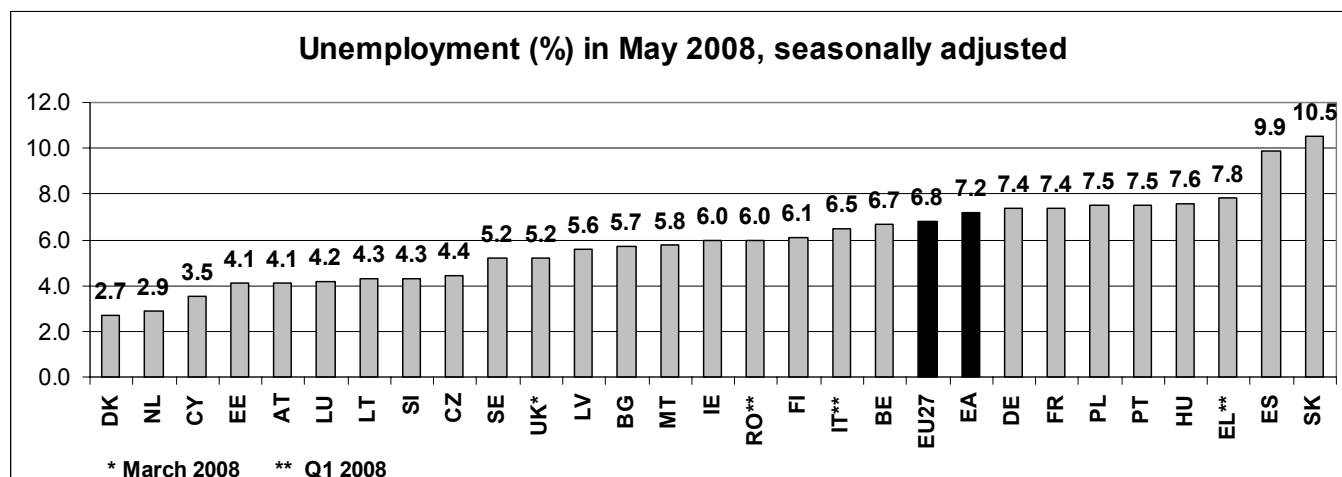
Among the Member States, the lowest unemployment rates were registered in **Denmark** (2.7%) and the **Netherlands** (2.9%), and the highest in **Slovakia** (10.5%) and **Spain** (9.9%).

Over the last year, twenty-one Member States recorded a fall in their unemployment rate and six an increase. The largest falls were observed in **Poland** (9.8% to 7.5%) and **Bulgaria** (7.1% to 5.7%), and the highest increases in **Spain** (8.1% to 9.9%) and **Ireland** (4.8% to 6.0%).

The unemployment rate for males remained stable at 6.6% between May 2007 and May 2008 in the **euro area** and fell from 6.6% to 6.3% in the **EU27**. The female unemployment rate declined from 8.5% to 8.0% in the **euro area** and from 7.9% to 7.3% in the **EU27**.

In May 2008, the youth unemployment rate (under-25s) was 15.0% in the **euro area** and 14.9% in the **EU27**. In May 2007 it was 14.8% and 15.5% respectively. The lowest rates were observed in the **Netherlands** (5.6%) and in **Denmark** (5.8%), and the highest in **Spain** (23.9%), **Greece** (22.7% in the first quarter 2008) and **Italy** (20.8% in the first quarter 2008).

In May 2008, the unemployment rate was 5.5% in the **USA** and 4.0% in **Japan**.



1. The euro area (EA15) consists of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia and Finland.
The EU27 includes Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).
2. Eurostat produces harmonised unemployment rates for individual EU Member States, the euro area and the EU. These unemployment rates are based on the definition recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The measurement is based on a harmonised source, the European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS).
Based on the ILO definition, Eurostat defines unemployed persons as persons aged 15 to 74 who:
 - are without work;
 - are available to start work within the next two weeks;
 - and have actively sought employment at some time during the previous four weeks.
 The *unemployment rate* is the number of people unemployed as a percentage of the labour force. The labour force is the total number of people employed and unemployed.
The numbers of unemployed and the monthly unemployment rates are estimates based on results of the LFS which is a continuous household survey carried out in all countries on the basis of agreed definitions. These results are interpolated/extrapolated to monthly data using national survey data and/or national monthly series on registered unemployment. The most recent figures are therefore provisional; first results from the Labour Force Survey are available 90 days after the end of the reference period for most Member States. Technical details on the calculations for each Member State can be found on the Eurostat internet site under Data / Population and social conditions / Labour market / Employment and unemployment / LFS main indicators, together with more detailed tables.
Monthly unemployment and employment series are calculated first at the level of four categories for each Member State (males and females 15-24 years, males and females 25-74 years). These series are then seasonally adjusted and all the national and European aggregates are calculated.
Member States may publish other rates such as register based unemployment rates, or other rates based on national Labour Force Surveys or corresponding surveys. These rates may vary from those published by Eurostat due to different definition or methodological choices.
Current deviations from the definition of unemployment in the EU Labour Force Survey:
Spain, United Kingdom: Unemployment is restricted to persons aged 16-74. In Spain the legal age limit for working is 16.
Netherlands: Persons without a job, who are available for work and looking for a job are only included in unemployment if they express that they would like to work.
3. The unemployment rate for the euro area for April 2008 has been revised. The rate published in News Release 74/2008 of 30 May 2008 was 7.1%. The rate published for the EU27 remains unchanged. As a regular update of the calculation process, the most recent EU Labour Force Survey data have been included for several Member States. This has caused a revision in the monthly unemployment rates of more than 0.1 percentage points for Bulgaria, France, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Poland, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland.
The following LFS data are used in the calculations of the monthly unemployment rates published in this News Release:
 - For Germany, Finland and Sweden up to and including May 2008.
 - For the Netherlands up to and including Mar-Apr-May 2008 (3-month rolling average).
 - For the United Kingdom up to and including Feb-Mar-Apr 2008 (3-month rolling average).
 - For Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia up to and including 2008Q1.
 - For Ireland and Malta up to and including 2007Q4.
4. Provisional data: the Swedish Labour Force Survey was amended in April 2005 to take further account of the EU harmonised methodology. This break in the series may affect the reliability of the seasonal adjustment.
5. Greece, Italy and Romania: quarterly data for all series.
Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia: quarterly data for youth unemployment.
6. Luxembourg unemployment data are significantly revised downwards as a result of revisions in the LFS data for 2007.

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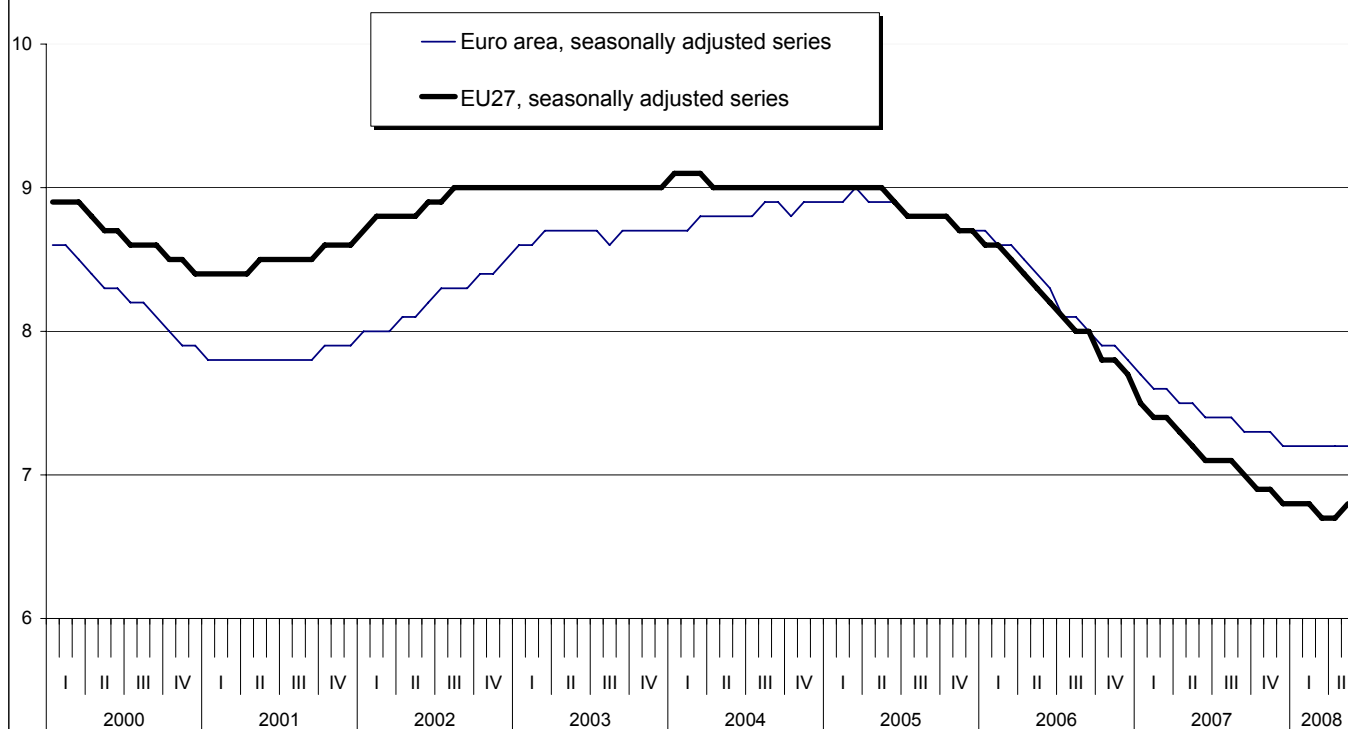
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Selected Principal European Economic Indicators: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>

Euro area and EU27 unemployment rates (%)



SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%) TOTALS

	May 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	March 2008	April 2008	May 2008
EA15	7.5	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2
EU27	7.2	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.8
BE	7.8	7.1	7.0	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.7
BG	7.1	6.0	5.9	6.3	6.2	6.1	5.7	5.7
CZ	5.5	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4
DK	3.8	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.7	2.7
DE	8.5	8.0	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.4	7.4	7.4
EE	5.0	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.1
IE	4.8	4.8	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.8	6.0
EL⁵	8.4	8.0	8.0	7.8	7.8	7.8	:	:
ES	8.1	8.6	8.8	9.0	9.2	9.4	9.6	9.9
FR	8.4	7.9	7.8	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.4
IT⁵	6.1	6.3	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.5	:	:
CY	4.1	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.5
LV	5.9	5.5	5.5	6.1	6.0	6.0	5.5	5.6
LT	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3
LU⁶	4.1	3.9	3.9	4.2	4.3	4.1	4.2	4.2
HU	7.1	7.7	7.9	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.6
MT	6.5	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.8
NL	3.3	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9
AT	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
PL	9.8	8.6	8.2	8.0	7.7	7.5	7.6	7.5
PT	8.1	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.4	7.4	7.5
RO⁵	6.6	6.2	6.2	6.0	6.0	6.0	:	:
SI	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.3	4.3
SK	11.3	10.6	10.5	10.5	10.4	10.3	10.5	10.5
FI	6.9	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.1
SE⁴	6.3	6.1	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.6	5.4	5.2
UK	5.3	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.2	:	:
NO	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.4	2.5	2.4	2.5	:
US	4.5	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.8	5.1	5.0	5.5
JP	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.0

: Data not available

Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

	Youth (under 25's)				Males				Females			
	May-07	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08	May-07	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08	May-07	Mar-08	Apr-08	May-08
EA15	14.8	14.6	14.8	15.0	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.6	8.5	8.0	8.0	8.0
EU27	15.5	14.7	14.8	14.9	6.6	6.2	6.3	6.3	7.9	7.3	7.3	7.3
BE	20.6	17.1	17.6	17.2	6.8	6.3	6.2	6.2	9.0	7.4	7.5	7.4
BG	15.2	14.1	13.9	13.9	7.0	5.7	5.2	5.2	7.3	6.5	6.3	6.3
CZ	12.4	10.1	10.5	10.9	4.5	3.3	3.4	3.4	6.9	5.8	5.8	5.7
DK	7.7	6.6	5.7	5.8	3.5	2.6	2.5	2.5	4.2	3.3	2.9	2.9
DE	11.1	9.8	9.8	9.9	8.6	7.4	7.5	7.5	8.5	7.5	7.4	7.4
EE ⁵	10.8	7.5	:	:	5.7	3.7	3.7	3.6	4.3	4.8	4.6	4.6
IE	9.5	13.1	13.5	14.2	4.9	6.4	6.6	6.7	4.5	4.8	4.7	4.9
EL ⁵	23.0	22.7	:	:	5.2	5.1	:	:	12.9	11.7	:	:
ES	17.9	21.4	22.9	23.9	6.1	7.8	8.2	8.6	10.8	11.4	11.6	11.7
FR	19.9	17.6	17.6	17.5	7.8	7.2	7.1	7.1	9.1	8.0	7.9	7.8
IT ⁵	19.2	20.8	:	:	4.9	5.1	:	:	7.8	8.6	:	:
CY ⁵	10.2	9.2	:	:	3.5	3.2	3.1	3.0	4.8	4.2	4.3	4.1
LV ⁵	9.9	11.0	:	:	6.1	6.5	5.9	6.0	5.8	5.5	5.1	5.1
LT ⁵	7.3	9.7	:	:	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.1	4.8	4.3	4.3
LU ⁵	15.1	14.6	15.2	15.6	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.9
HU	16.9	19.7	19.6	19.7	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.3	8.2	8.1	8.2
MT	13.9	10.8	10.7	10.8	6.0	5.1	5.1	5.2	7.6	6.7	6.8	6.8
NL	6.0	5.5	5.5	5.6	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.8	3.1	3.1	3.0
AT	8.6	8.2	8.3	8.4	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.7	5.0	4.7	4.7	4.6
PL	22.0	17.0	17.1	17.3	9.2	6.8	6.9	6.8	10.6	8.3	8.5	8.3
PT	16.6	15.7	15.6	15.6	6.7	6.3	6.3	6.4	9.7	8.6	8.7	8.7
RO ⁵	20.9	18.4	:	:	7.3	7.2	:	:	5.6	4.3	:	:
SI ⁵	9.3	11.2	:	:	3.8	4.2	3.7	3.9	6.0	5.1	5.0	4.9
SK	20.6	19.0	18.6	18.3	10.1	8.8	8.8	8.8	12.8	12.2	12.6	12.6
FI	16.2	15.9	16.0	16.3	6.5	5.9	5.8	5.7	7.3	6.7	6.6	6.6
SE ⁴	20.1	17.6	16.8	15.4	6.1	5.3	5.1	5.0	6.6	6.0	5.8	5.5
UK	14.7	14.1	:	:	5.6	5.4	:	:	5.0	4.8	:	:
NO	7.0	6.7	6.7	:	2.5	2.4	2.5	:	2.4	2.4	2.4	:
US	10.1	11.3	11.0	13.0	4.6	5.2	5.1	5.6	4.4	5.0	4.8	5.3
JP	:	:	:	:	3.9	3.8	4.0	4.2	3.6	3.9	3.9	3.7

: Data not available Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (in millions)

	May 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008	March 2008	April 2008	May 2008
EA15	11.425	11.185	11.137	11.118	11.081	11.070	11.132	11.199
EU27	17.039	16.381	16.272	16.218	16.114	16.064	16.129	16.171

Euro area and EU27 unemployed (in millions)

