

## Unemployment rate in the OECD area drops below the pre-pandemic rate to 5.2% in February 2022

Two years since the COVID-19 pandemic began, **the unemployment rate in the OECD area fell to 5.2% in February 2022 (from 5.3% in January), dropping for the first time below the pre-pandemic rate recorded in February 2020 (see Figure 1) and reaching the lowest level since the start of this data series in 2001.** The number of unemployed workers in the OECD area also continued to fall, reaching 34.9 million, 0.7 million below its pre-pandemic level.

**“The latest drop in unemployment is a continuation of a positive trend and welcome news for OECD countries. However, with increasing global uncertainty and geopolitical tensions, we will continue to monitor the situation closely,”** said OECD Chief Statistician Paul Schreyer.

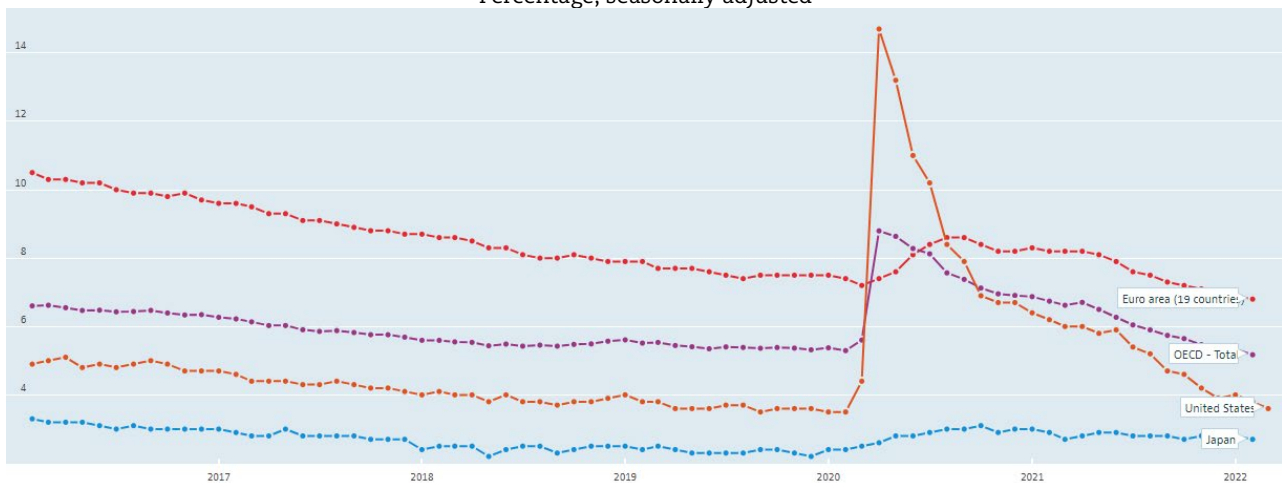
The February decline in the OECD area unemployment rate was shared across both women and men as well as between younger workers aged 15 to 24 and workers aged 25 and above (Tables 2 and 3).

In the euro area, the unemployment rate fell further to 6.8% in February (from 6.9% in January), with declines of 0.2 percentage point or more in Finland, Greece, the Netherlands and Spain and a rise only in Estonia (Table 1). The youth unemployment rate in the euro area fell also to 14.0% from 14.3% in January, continuing its downward trend.

The unemployment rate fell markedly in Canada, Korea, Sweden and Turkey, and more modestly in Australia, the United States and Japan. By contrast, it increased in Colombia, Czech Republic and Mexico. More recent data show that in March 2022 the unemployment rate further declined, by 0.2 percentage point, in the United States (to 3.6%) and Canada (to 5.3%, its lowest level since comparable data became available in 1976).

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<sup>(1)</sup>**  
Percentage, seasonally adjusted

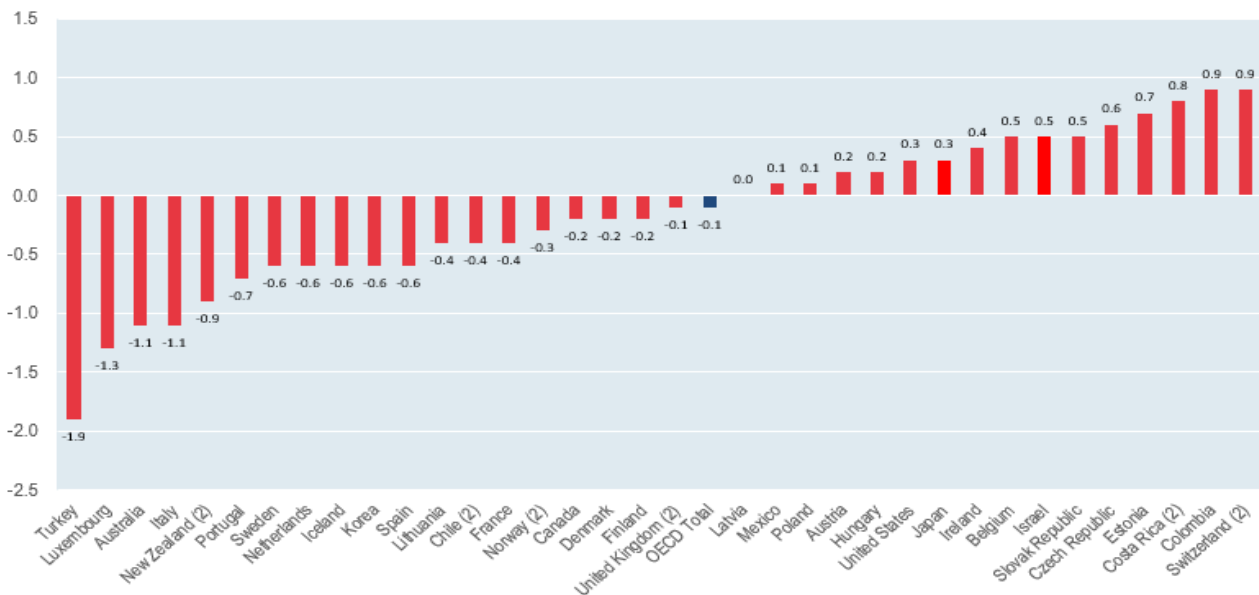


(1) Breaks between December 2020 and January 2021 for some EU Member States resulting from [changes in the EU Labour Force Survey](#). These breaks can affect, to some extent, aggregates for the euro area and OECD Total.

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. Changes in unemployment rate for OECD area and selected OECD countries<sup>(1)</sup>**  
between February 2020 and February 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 Chile, Costa Rica and Norway change between February 2020 and January 2022; for the United Kingdom, change between February 2020 and December 2021; for New Zealand, change between fourth quarter 2019 and fourth quarter 2021; Switzerland, change between fourth quarter 2019 and third quarter 2021.

**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](mailto:news.contact@oecd.org); for technical questions contact [stat.contact@oecd.org](mailto:stat.contact@oecd.org)

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

	2020	2021	2021				2020	2021					2022	
			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4		Feb	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
OECD - Total	7.2	6.2	6.7	6.5	5.9	5.5	5.3	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.2	
G7	6.5	5.2	5.7	5.5	5.0	4.5	4.2	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.2	
European Union	7.2	7.1	7.5	7.3	6.8	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.2	
Euro area	8.0	7.7	8.2	8.1	7.5	7.1	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	6.9	6.8	
Australia	6.5	5.1	6.0	5.1	4.6	4.7	5.1	4.6	5.2	4.6	4.2	4.2	4.0	
Austria	6.0	6.2	7.0	6.7	5.6	5.3	4.6	4.9	5.8	5.2	4.8	4.9	4.8	
Belgium	5.8	6.3	6.7	6.3	6.3	5.8	5.1	6.2	5.9	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.6	
Canada <sup>(1)</sup>	9.6	7.5	8.4	7.9	7.2	6.3	5.7	7.0	6.8	6.1	6.0	6.5	5.5	
Chile	10.8	8.9	10.4	9.1	8.2	7.7	8.2	8.0	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.8	..	
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	12.5	
Costa Rica	19.6	16.4	18.8	18.0	15.3	13.7	12.5	15.0	14.4	13.7	13.1	13.3	..	
Czech Republic	2.6	2.8	3.3	3.1	2.7	2.2	1.8	2.6	2.4	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.4	
Denmark	5.7	5.1	5.9	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.8	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.6	
Estonia	6.9	6.2	7.0	6.7	5.9	5.3	5.2	5.7	5.2	5.3	5.5	5.7	5.9	
Finland	7.7	7.7	8.0	8.1	7.5	6.9	6.7	7.7	6.7	6.8	7.2	7.0	6.5	
France	8.0	7.9	8.1	8.2	7.8	7.5	7.8	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.5	7.5	7.4	
Germany <sup>(2)</sup>	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.7	3.5	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.1	3.1	
Greece <sup>(2)</sup>	16.4	14.8	16.4	16.0	13.7	13.1	15.8	13.1	13.1	13.4	12.8	12.8	11.9	
Hungary	4.1	4.1	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.5	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.7	
Iceland	6.4	6.0	6.9	6.2	5.0	4.6	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	
Ireland	5.9	6.3	7.4	6.9	5.5	5.2	4.8	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	
Israel	4.3	5.0	5.1	5.3	5.0	4.4	3.4	5.0	4.8	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.9	
Italy	9.3	9.6	10.2	9.8	9.1	9.0	9.6	9.0	9.2	9.0	8.9	8.6	8.5	
Japan	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.4	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.7	
Korea	3.9	3.7	4.3	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.8	3.6	2.7	
Latvia	8.1	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.2	
Lithuania	8.5	7.1	7.6	7.5	6.7	6.7	7.4	6.5	6.8	6.7	6.6	7.0	7.0	
Luxembourg	6.7	5.5	6.3	5.5	5.2	4.9	5.9	5.1	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.7	4.6	
Mexico <sup>(3)</sup>	4.4	4.1	4.4	4.3	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.5	3.7	
Netherlands	4.9	4.2	4.7	4.4	4.1	3.8	4.0	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.6	3.4	
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	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.3	3.2	..	
Poland	3.2	3.4	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.1	2.9	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0	3.0	
Portugal	7.1	6.6	6.8	6.9	6.4	6.1	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.2	5.8	5.8	5.8	
Slovak Republic	6.7	6.8	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.6	6.0	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.5	
Slovenia <sup>(2)</sup>	5.0	4.8	5.3	4.6	4.5	4.6	4.2	4.6	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.2	4.1	
Spain	15.5	14.8	15.7	15.4	14.6	13.4	13.7	14.2	13.8	13.4	13.1	12.8	12.6	
Sweden	8.5	8.8	9.2	9.2	8.6	8.2	7.9	8.7	8.4	8.2	7.9	8.0	7.3	
Switzerland	4.8	..	5.4	5.3	5.0	..								
Turkey	13.1	12.0	13.0	12.6	11.3	11.1	12.6	11.3	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.2	10.7	
United Kingdom	4.6	4.4	4.9	4.7	4.3	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.1	4.1	3.9	..	..	
United States <sup>(4)</sup>	8.1	5.4	6.2	5.9	5.1	4.2	3.5	4.7	4.6	4.2	3.9	4.0	3.8	

..: not available

Notes:

(1) Canada: Unemployment rate for March 2022 was 5.3%.

(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 March 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			2020	2021	2021		2022		
			Q3	Q4	Dec	Jan	Feb			Q3	Q4	Dec	Jan	Feb
OECD - Total	7.4	6.4	6.1	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4	6.9	6.0	5.7	5.3	5.1	5.2	5.0
G7	6.6	5.1	4.9	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	6.4	5.3	5.1	4.6	4.4	4.5	4.2
European Union	7.5	7.4	7.2	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.5	7.0	6.8	6.5	6.2	6.2	6.0	5.9
Euro area	8.3	8.1	7.9	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.7	7.4	7.2	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.4
Australia	6.4	5.0	4.7	4.8	4.2	4.2	4.0	6.6	5.2	4.5	4.6	4.1	4.3	4.2
Austria	5.9	6.1	5.5	5.3	4.8	4.3	4.7	6.1	6.3	5.8	5.3	4.9	5.4	4.9
Belgium	5.5	5.9	5.6	4.8	4.6	4.5	4.5	6.0	6.6	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.6
Canada	9.5	7.2	6.8	6.0	5.9	6.6	5.3	9.6	7.7	7.6	6.6	6.0	6.5	5.7
Chile	11.0	9.2	8.7	8.0	8.1	8.3	..	10.6	8.6	7.8	7.5	7.4	7.4	..
Colombia	20.1	17.5	16.7	16.3	15.7	16.4	15.0	12.8	10.4	9.9	9.8	9.7	9.8	10.1
Costa Rica	25.7	22.0	19.9	17.4	16.8	17.6	..	15.6	12.7	12.2	11.3	10.6	10.4	..
Czech Republic	3.0	3.4	3.2	2.7	2.5	2.6	3.1	2.2	2.3	2.2	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.8
Denmark	6.0	5.2	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	5.4	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7
Estonia	6.7	5.6	5.2	4.9	5.3	5.1	5.2	7.1	6.8	6.7	5.7	5.6	6.4	6.6
Finland	7.4	7.1	7.1	6.5	6.8	6.8	6.1	8.1	8.2	7.9	7.2	7.6	7.3	6.9
France	8.0	7.8	7.7	7.4	7.5	7.5	7.5	8.1	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.6	7.4	7.3
Germany <sup>(1)</sup>	3.4	3.2	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	4.2	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.4
Greece <sup>(1)</sup>	19.9	19.0	17.8	17.3	16.6	17.0	15.9	13.7	11.4	10.4	9.7	9.7	9.5	8.6
Hungary	4.2	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.6	3.9	3.6	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.6	3.7	3.6	3.7
Iceland	6.3	6.5	5.1	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.9	6.6	5.7	5.0	4.5	4.3	4.1	4.0
Ireland	5.9	6.2	5.4	5.2	5.2	5.4	5.4	5.8	6.3	5.5	5.2	5.1	5.1	4.9
Israel	4.1	4.9	4.9	4.3	4.1	3.9	4.1	4.5	5.0	5.1	4.5	4.1	3.8	3.7
Italy	10.3	10.7	10.4	10.1	9.8	9.9	10.0	8.6	8.7	8.1	8.2	8.2	7.7	7.4
Japan	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.4	2.4	2.4	3.0	3.1	3.1	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0
Korea	4.0	3.8	3.1	3.7	4.3	4.2	2.6	3.9	3.6	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.2	2.8
Latvia	7.1	6.6	6.0	6.6	6.8	6.6	6.6	9.1	8.5	8.8	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.8
Lithuania	7.7	6.6	6.0	5.8	5.9	6.0	5.9	9.3	7.6	7.4	7.6	7.4	8.0	8.0
Luxembourg	6.8	6.0	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.0	5.0	6.5	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.6	4.4	4.3
Mexico <sup>(2)</sup>	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.3	3.5	3.8	4.6	4.1	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.7
Netherlands	5.1	4.5	4.4	4.1	4.0	3.9	3.6	4.6	4.0	3.8	3.6	3.6	3.4	3.3
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	3.3	3.0	2.9	..	4.8	4.6	4.3	3.7	3.6	3.4	..
Poland	3.3	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.0	2.9	3.0	3.1	3.4	3.2	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.0
Portugal	7.4	6.9	6.8	6.3	5.9	6.0	6.3	6.8	6.3	6.1	5.9	5.7	5.5	5.2
Slovak Republic	7.1	7.0	6.8	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.7	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.7
Slovenia <sup>(1)</sup>	5.7	5.4	4.2	5.1	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.2	3.9	3.7	3.6
Spain	17.4	16.7	16.3	15.1	14.8	14.4	14.1	13.9	13.1	13.0	11.9	11.6	11.4	11.2
Sweden	8.5	9.1	8.9	8.8	8.7	9.0	7.3	8.5	8.5	8.4	7.7	7.3	7.1	7.4
Switzerland	5.0	..	5.0	..	..	..	..	4.7	..	4.9	..	..	..	..
Turkey	14.8	14.7	14.3	14.1	14.0	13.7	13.4	12.4	10.7	9.9	9.7	9.7	9.9	9.3
United Kingdom	4.3	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.7	..	..	4.8	4.7	4.4	4.2	4.1	..	..
United States	8.4	5.2	4.9	4.2	3.9	3.9	3.9	7.8	5.5	5.3	4.2	3.9	4.1	3.8

..: 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.

**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	Dec	Jan	Feb	Q3			Q4	Dec	Jan	Feb		
OECD - Total	15.2	12.8	12.1	11.5	11.2	11.3	11.1	6.2	5.3	5.1	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.4		
G7	13.8	10.6	10.1	9.3	9.2	9.4	9.0	5.6	4.5	4.4	3.9	3.7	3.7	3.6		
European Union	17.3	16.7	15.8	14.8	14.5	14.3	14.0	6.3	6.2	6.0	5.7	5.6	5.5	5.4		
Euro area	17.7	16.9	15.9	14.8	14.5	14.3	14.0	7.0	6.9	6.7	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.0		
Australia	14.3	11.3	10.4	11.1	9.4	9.0	9.3	5.0	4.0	3.6	3.5	3.2	3.3	3.1		
Austria	11.7	11.0	10.1	9.5	8.2	9.2	9.0	5.3	5.6	5.1	4.8	4.4	4.4	4.3		
Belgium <sup>(1)</sup>	15.9	18.2	18.7	15.5	15.5	..	..	5.0	5.3	5.2	5.0	5.0	4.9	5.0		
Canada	20.0	13.6	11.6	10.7	11.1	13.6	10.9	7.9	6.5	6.5	5.6	5.1	5.4	4.6		
Chile	24.7	20.0	17.5	16.9	16.7	16.6	..	9.6	7.9	7.4	7.0	6.9	7.0	..		
Colombia	27.3	24.1	23.8	22.4	21.1	23.8	24.2	13.7	11.4	10.7	10.7	10.6	10.5	10.0		
Costa Rica	42.4	39.4	37.8	35.5	35.7	35.4	..	15.8	12.5	11.6	10.2	9.6	9.8	..		
Czech Republic	7.9	8.2	7.4	7.1	7.5	7.2	7.8	2.3	2.5	2.4	2.0	1.9	2.0	2.1		
Denmark	11.6	10.9	10.1	10.2	10.0	10.1	10.2	4.7	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.7	3.7		
Estonia	18.3	16.9	16.1	17.5	18.4	19.7	19.3	6.0	5.4	5.1	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.8		
Finland	20.8	17.1	14.2	15.0	13.7	15.1	14.1	6.0	6.5	6.7	5.9	6.4	6.0	5.5		
France	21.4	18.9	18.8	16.6	16.7	16.3	16.4	6.6	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4		
Germany <sup>(2)</sup>	7.1	7.0	6.4	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.7	3.5	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8		
Greece <sup>(2)</sup>	35.4	35.5	30.7	32.0	28.9	33.1	31.1	15.5	13.8	12.8	12.1	12.0	11.9	11.0		
Hungary	12.4	13.4	13.7	12.8	11.6	11.8	10.7	3.5	3.4	3.2	3.2	3.1	3.2	3.2		
Iceland	11.9	12.3	8.8	8.7	9.0	9.1	9.1	5.5	5.0	4.4	3.9	3.7	3.6	3.6		
Ireland	15.9	14.7	11.6	12.2	12.7	13.0	12.6	4.6	5.1	4.6	4.1	4.0	4.0	3.9		
Israel <sup>(3)</sup>	7.9	7.7	8.7	7.5	6.2	5.8	6.5	3.7	4.5	4.7	4.1	3.8	3.3	3.2		
Italy	29.5	29.9	27.9	27.1	26.2	24.8	24.2	8.1	8.3	7.9	7.9	7.9	..	..		
Japan	4.5	4.6	4.3	4.8	5.2	4.8	3.8	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.5	2.6	2.6		
Korea	10.5	8.5	6.9	7.7	7.4	8.0	7.4	3.6	3.4	2.9	3.2	3.6	3.4	2.4		
Latvia	14.8	14.8	15.0	12.4	11.5	10.9	10.3	7.7	7.1	6.9	7.0	7.2	7.1	7.0		
Lithuania	19.5	14.4	13.3	10.6	10.6	11.5	11.5	7.7	6.6	6.2	6.4	6.3	6.6	6.6		
Luxembourg	22.7	17.7	16.5	15.6	15.7	14.7	14.5	5.4	4.4	4.2	4.0	4.0	3.9	3.8		
Mexico <sup>(4)</sup>	8.1	8.1	7.2	7.6	7.5	6.8	6.7	3.7	3.4	3.4	3.1	3.2	2.9	3.2		
Netherlands	10.6	9.4	8.9	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.3	3.7	3.2	3.1	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.6		
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	9.2	8.8	..	3.6	3.3	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.3	..		
Poland	10.9	11.9	10.9	9.6	9.4	9.2	9.1	2.7	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.6	2.6		
Portugal	22.9	23.1	22.9	21.7	20.7	20.4	19.9	6.0	5.5	5.3	5.1	4.8	4.8	4.8		
Slovak Republic	20.3	20.6	19.9	19.1	19.1	18.9	18.8	5.8	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.9		
Slovenia <sup>(1)(2)</sup>	14.4	13.1	12.3	10.1	10.1	..	..	4.4	4.2	3.9	4.2	4.1	3.9	3.8		
Spain	38.3	34.9	31.8	31.3	31.3	30.6	29.8	14.0	13.4	13.3	12.2	11.9	11.6	11.4		
Sweden	23.2	24.8	24.5	24.1	23.4	21.7	22.1	6.7	6.8	6.6	6.2	6.0	6.2	5.5		
Switzerland	8.6	..	8.6	..	..	..	..	4.3	..	4.5	..	..	..	..		
Turkey	24.9	22.8	21.2	21.4	21.4	21.3	20.7	11.1	10.1	9.6	9.3	9.3	9.4	8.9		
United Kingdom	13.8	12.3	11.7	11.2	11.1	..	..	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.1	3.0	..	..		
United States	15.1	9.7	9.4	8.4	8.2	8.3	8.3	7.1	4.7	4.5	3.6	3.3	3.3	3.2		

..: 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			2021		2022	
			Q2	Q3	Q4	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb
OECD - Total	46,898	41,028	43,279	39,404	36,818	36,657	35,971	35,951	34,880
G7	24,658	19,872	21,179	19,149	17,293	17,260	16,628	16,874	16,339
European Union	15,270	14,958	15,569	14,545	13,875	13,851	13,679	13,488	13,267
Euro area	12,924	12,620	13,161	12,298	11,700	11,685	11,530	11,336	11,155
Australia	878	701	712	627	640	638	576	582	563
Austria	271	284	304	259	245	241	223	225	224
Belgium	291	324	327	326	303	301	299	295	294
Canada	1,897	1,520	1,593	1,470	1,298	1,262	1,236	1,342	1,136
Chile	938	806	814	747	721	721	717	731	..
Colombia	3,731	3,330	3,514	3,193	3,075	3,055	2,964	3,037	2,985
Costa Rica	468	401	434	378	333	333	319	322	..
Czech Republic	137	150	163	143	120	116	115	119	130
Denmark	171	155	155	145	141	140	139	142	141
Estonia	48	43	46	41	37	37	38	41	42
Finland	209	212	224	207	192	188	203	197	182
France	2,381	2,365	2,469	2,339	2,253	2,237	2,271	2,257	2,251
Germany <sup>(1)</sup>	1,664	1,536	1,589	1,488	1,405	1,405	1,383	1,361	1,341
Greece <sup>(1)</sup>	761	678	742	644	612	632	596	589	556
Hungary	198	196	199	188	186	187	178	184	179
Iceland	13	13	13	11	10	10	10	10	10
Ireland	139	158	175	141	136	137	136	137	135
Israel	177	206	219	210	188	186	175	166	168
Italy	2,296	2,371	2,437	2,261	2,254	2,260	2,213	2,155	2,125
Japan	1,922	1,946	2,000	1,917	1,877	1,920	1,870	1,910	1,880
Korea	1,108	1,037	1,038	890	971	911	1,077	1,038	780
Latvia	79	71	73	69	68	68	69	68	67
Lithuania	126	105	110	99	99	99	97	102	103
Luxembourg	21	18	18	17	16	16	16	15	15
Mexico <sup>(2)</sup>	2,340	2,372	2,474	2,330	2,239	2,197	2,288	2,067	2,193
Netherlands	465	408	417	399	370	359	369	354	336
New Zealand	132	110	114	98	93				
Norway	131	123	142	115	101	101	96	92	..
Poland	537	580	608	555	536	536	532	524	522
Portugal	358	337	356	332	318	323	302	298	297
Slovak Republic	186	188	191	186	183	182	183	182	181
Slovenia <sup>(1)</sup>	51	48	47	47	47	47	45	43	42
Spain	3,531	3,430	3,587	3,400	3,122	3,112	3,046	2,975	2,924
Sweden	467	488	512	480	456	458	442	448	410
Switzerland	238	..	262	245	..				
Turkey	4,040	3,927	4,108	3,733	3,723	3,728	3,756	3,757	3,579
United Kingdom	1,551	1,512	1,600	1,448	1,374	1,374	1,336	..	..
United States	12,948	8,623	9,491	8,225	6,832	6,802	6,319	6,513	6,270

..: 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-19<sup>1</sup> 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”<sup>2</sup> 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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 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**.