

First estimate for the fourth quarter of 2008

Euro area and EU27 employment down by 0.3%

Stable in both areas compared with the fourth quarter of 2007

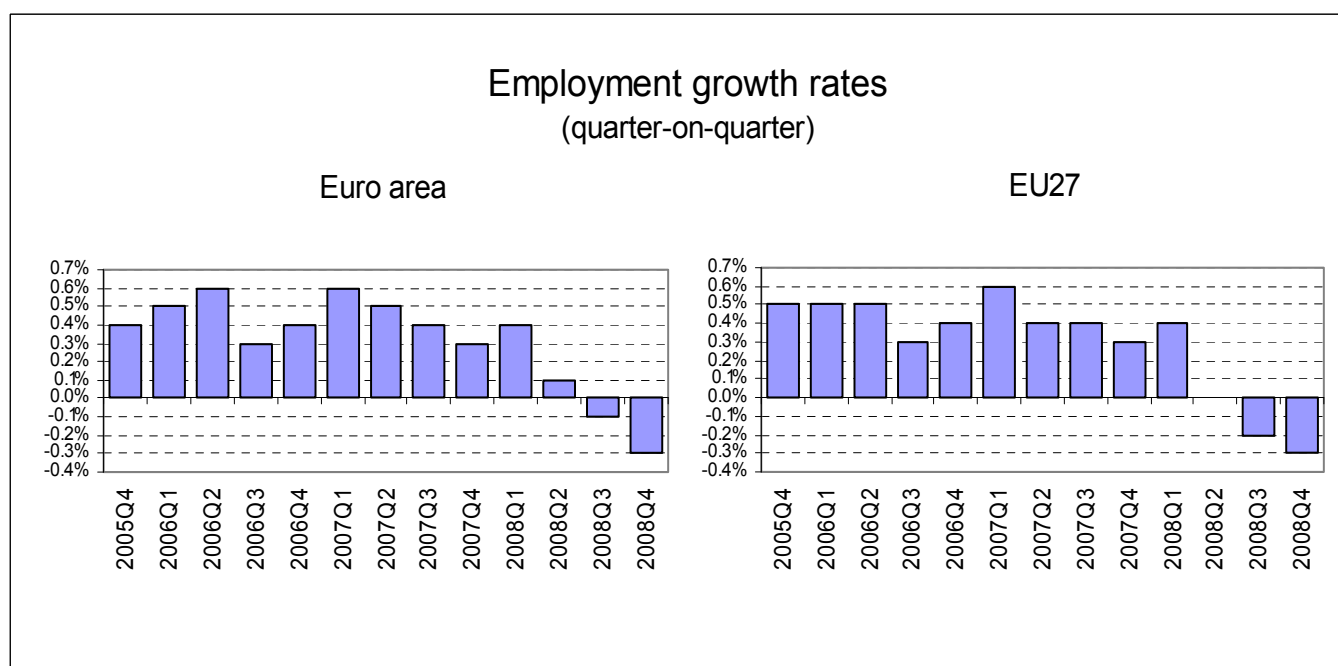
The number of persons employed in the **euro area**¹ (EA15) fell by 0.3% (453 000 persons) in the fourth quarter of 2008 compared with the previous quarter, according to national accounts estimates published by **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**. In the same period, the number of persons employed in the **EU27**¹ also decreased by 0.3% (672 000 persons). In the third quarter of 2008, employment declined by 0.1% in the **euro area** and by 0.2% in the **EU27**. These figures are seasonally adjusted.

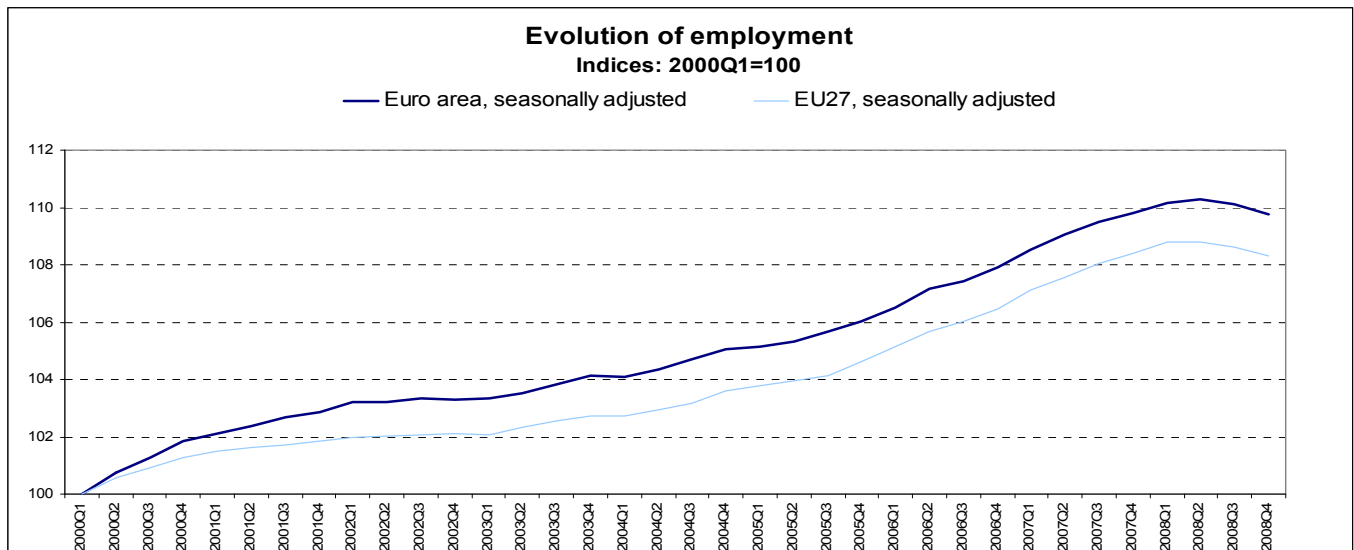
Compared with the same quarter of the previous year, employment remained stable (0.0%) in both the **euro area** and the **EU27** in the fourth quarter of 2008, after +0.6% in both areas in the third quarter of 2008.

Over the whole year of 2008, employment grew by 0.8% (1 137 000 persons) in the **euro area** and also by 0.8% (1 760 000 persons) in the **EU27**, compared with +1.8% in both zones in 2007.

Eurostat estimates that, in the fourth quarter of 2008, 225.3 million men and women were employed in the **EU27**, of which 145.4 million were in the **euro area**. These figures are seasonally adjusted.

These quarterly data on employment provide a picture of labour input consistent with the output and income measures of national accounts.





- The euro area (EA15) consisted of 15 Member States up to 31 December 2008: Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia and Finland. From 1 January 2009 the euro area (EA16) also includes Slovakia.
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).
As part of Eurostat's guidelines for the dissemination of data when the EU or euro area is enlarged, the aggregate data series commented on refer to the official composition of the euro area in the most recent quarter for which data are available. Thus News Releases with data for quarters up to 2008Q4 comment on EA15 series, while Releases with data for 2009Q1 onwards will comment on EA16 series.

Methodological information:

Estimates of employment in the European quarterly national accounts are compiled in accordance with the European System of Accounts 1995 (ESA95). National accounts measure employment alongside other variables such as GDP, output, compensation of employees, etc. ESA95 (chapter 11) defines employment in line with International Labour Organisation criteria.

Employment covers employees and self-employed working in resident production units (i.e. the domestic employment concept). Unless otherwise stated, all employment estimates in this release use *persons* as the measurement unit. ESA95 acknowledges other possible measures for employment: jobs, full-time equivalents and total hours worked.

The methodology used by Eurostat for this release is the same as for the European quarterly national accounts (for details see Eurostat press release 77/2006 of 14 June 2006, annex I). Estimates of employment in national accounts may differ from results of other statistics and surveys, in particular the labour force survey. For further details see press release 77/2006 of 14 June 2006, annex II. The estimate of 2008 Q4 employment growth presented in this release is based on Member States' data, as available, including confidential figures for the Netherlands. For this quarter it covers 97% of employment in the euro area and 88% in the EU27.

More data on European quarterly national accounts are available on Eurostat's website ("Data" / "Economy and finance" / "National Accounts"). Additional general information on European national accounts is also available in the metadata files linked to the tables.

Release policy:

Eurostat publishes a first quarterly estimate of employment in national accounts 75 days after the end of the reference period ('t+75 days'). There is a second estimate after t+100 days, published together with the second regular GDP release (scheduled for 7 April 2009). There is no specific employment News Release at t+100 days. As compared to the first employment estimate, the second one is based on more information and includes breakdowns by economic activity (6 NACE categories).

Euro area and EU employment figures for earlier quarters are revised in both first and second employment estimates.

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Employment growth rates*

	Percentage change compared with the previous quarter				Percentage change compared with the same quarter of the previous year			
	2008				2008			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
EA15	0.4	0.1	-0.1	-0.3	1.5	1.1	0.6	0.0
EU27	0.4	0.0	-0.2	-0.3	1.5	1.1	0.6	0.0
EA16	0.4	0.1	-0.1	-0.3	1.5	1.1	0.6	0.0
Member States								
Belgium	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.0	1.9	1.7	1.7	1.2
Bulgaria	:	:	:	:	4.8	3.4	3.0	2.1
Czech Republic	0.3	0.1	0.1	-0.1	2.0	1.6	1.0	0.2
Denmark	0.6	0.0	-0.4	-0.6	1.9	1.7	0.4	-0.5
Germany	0.6	0.2	0.2	0.1	1.7	1.5	1.4	1.0
Estonia	2.2	-2.3	0.3	:	2.0	-0.5	-0.3	-0.2
Ireland	-0.2	-0.9	-0.6	:	2.4	0.3	-1.1	:
Greece	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.1	1.0
Spain	0.3	-0.3	-0.9	-2.1	1.7	0.3	-0.8	-3.0
France	0.2	0.0	-0.1	-0.2	1.2	0.8	0.4	-0.1
Italy	0.0	0.1	-0.3	-0.1	0.9	0.8	-0.2	-0.2
Cyprus	:	:	:	:	2.4	2.7	3.5	:
Latvia	-0.1	-0.5	-2.1	-2.8	5.6	3.4	0.2	-5.4
Lithuania	-0.3	-0.6	0.2	-0.6	0.9	-0.6	-1.0	-1.2
Luxembourg	1.2	1.1	1.0	:	5.2	5.0	4.5	:
Hungary	:	:	:	:	-1.7	-2.0	-0.9	-1.1
Malta	:	:	:	:	2.8	2.9	2.4	1.9
Netherlands	0.4	0.3	0.0	c	1.9	1.7	1.2	c
Austria	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.0	1.5	1.4
Poland	:	:	:	:	7.0	5.4	3.7	3.0
Portugal	0.3	0.0	-0.6	0.3	0.9	1.2	-0.2	-0.1
Romania	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
Slovenia	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.4	3.3	3.1	2.9	2.2
Slovakia	0.7	0.0	1.4	-0.1	2.8	2.9	3.2	2.1
Finland	0.6	0.3	-0.4	0.2	2.3	1.9	0.8	0.8
Sweden	:	:	:	:	1.7	1.3	0.7	0.0
United Kingdom	0.3	0.0	-0.3	-0.2	1.5	1.2	0.4	-0.2
EFTA countries								
Norway	0.7	0.8	0.7	-0.3	4.1	3.5	3.2	1.9

: Data not available

c: confidential

* Percentage change in the number of persons employed in resident production units compared with the previous quarter based on seasonally adjusted data. Percentage change compared with the same quarter of the previous year based on non-seasonally adjusted data.