

February 2005

Euro-zone unemployment up to 8.9%

EU25 stable at 8.9%

Euro-zone¹ seasonally-adjusted unemployment² stood at 8.9% in February 2005, compared to 8.8% in January³, reports Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. It was 8.9% in February 2004. The **EU25**⁴ unemployment rate was 8.9% in February 2005, unchanged compared to January. It was 9.0% in February 2004.

In February 2005, the lowest rates were registered in **Ireland** (4.3%), **Luxembourg** (4.4%), **Austria** (4.6%), the **United Kingdom** (4.6% in December 2004) and the **Netherlands** (4.7% in December 2004). Unemployment rates were highest in **Poland** (18.1%), **Slovakia** (16.2%), **Greece** (10.5% in September 2004) and **Spain** (10.3%).

Amongst the Member States thirteen recorded a decrease in their unemployment rate over a year, one remained stable and eleven reported an increase. The largest relative decreases were observed in **Lithuania** (11.6% to 8.9%), **Estonia** (9.9% to 8.0%), **Malta** (7.8% to 6.8%) and **Slovakia** (18.5% to 16.2%), while **Cyprus** (5.0% to 5.6%), **Portugal** (6.3% to 6.9%) and the **Netherlands** (4.3% in December 2003 to 4.7% in December 2004) registered the highest relative increases.

In February 2005 compared to February 2004, the unemployment rate for males fell from 7.5% to 7.4% in the **euro-zone** and decreased from 8.1% to 7.9% in the **EU25**. The female unemployment rate grew from 10.6% to 10.7% in the **euro-zone**, and was unchanged at 10.2% in the **EU25**.

In February 2005, the unemployment rate for under-25s was 18.5% in the **euro-zone** and 18.8% in the **EU25**. In February 2004 it was 18.0% and 18.8% respectively. The lowest rates for under-25s were observed in **Denmark** (7.4% in January 2005), the **Netherlands** (7.4% in December 2004) and **Ireland** (7.9%), and the highest in **Poland** (37.6%), **Slovakia** (28.8%), **Greece** (26.3% in September 2004) and **Italy** (24.0% in December 2004).

Eurostat estimates that, in February 2005, 12.8 million men and women were unemployed in the **euro-zone** and 19.1 million in the **EU25**. These are seasonally-adjusted figures in line with ILO criteria.

In February 2005, the **US** unemployment rate was 5.4% and the **Japanese** rate was 4.6%.

Unemployment (%) in February 2005 - in ascending order

IE	LU	AT	UK	NL	DK	CY	SI	HU	SE	MT	PT	BE	EE
4.3	4.4	4.6	Dec 04 4.6	Dec 04 4.7	Jan 05 5.0	5.6	Jan 05 5.8	6.3	6.5	6.8	6.9	8.0	8.0
IT	CZ	Euro-zone	EU25	LT	FI	LV	DE ⁵	FR	ES	EL	SK	PL	
Dec 04 8.0	8.3	8.9	8.9	8.9	9.0	9.6	9.7	9.8	10.3	Sep 04 10.5	16.2	18.1	

1. Euro-zone: Belgium, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal and Finland.
2. *Eurostat's unemployment rates*

Eurostat compiles "harmonised" unemployment rates for Member States. These unemployment rates are based on definitions recommended by the International Labour Organisation (ILO). "Harmonised" means that the national micro data concerning the individuals and households are treated by Eurostat in the same fashion throughout the EU so as to allow comparability between the Member States.

The Eurostat definition of unemployed people are those aged 15 to 74 and who, following the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition:

 - 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 rate are estimates based on results of the European Union Labour Force Survey which is a 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 national monthly series on registered unemployment.

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. Before the aggregation, missing national data are estimated using the most recent trends of the series.

Further information on the methodology of the monthly unemployment rate statistics can be found on the annex to News Release 67/2002 of 4 June 2002.

Registered unemployed data are national administrative data compiled on a purely national basis and purposes. There are no European-wide rules on definition and coverage. Therefore the ensuing unemployment rates cannot be compared from one country to another. National legislation on the definition of unemployment and therefore its calculation can change in individual states. The conditions to receive unemployment benefits and assistance vary from one country to another. This affects the willingness of people to register themselves and the published unemployment rates.

Member States may also publish other rates than register based unemployment rates, for example based on national Labour Force or corresponding surveys. Although still internationally comparable, these rates may vary to a minor extent from those published by Eurostat due to different methodological choices.

Current deviations from 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, Sweden: 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.

The other Member States already comply with the definition. The remaining deviations will disappear as Member States adapt their surveys to the new definitions. The Netherlands and Sweden will adapt in 2005.
3. The unemployment rate for the EU25 for January 2005 has been revised. The rate published in News Release 32/2005 of 4 March 2005 was 8.8%. The rate published for the euro-zone remains the same.
4. EU25: Belgium (BE), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Ireland (IE), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK).
5. Provisional data.

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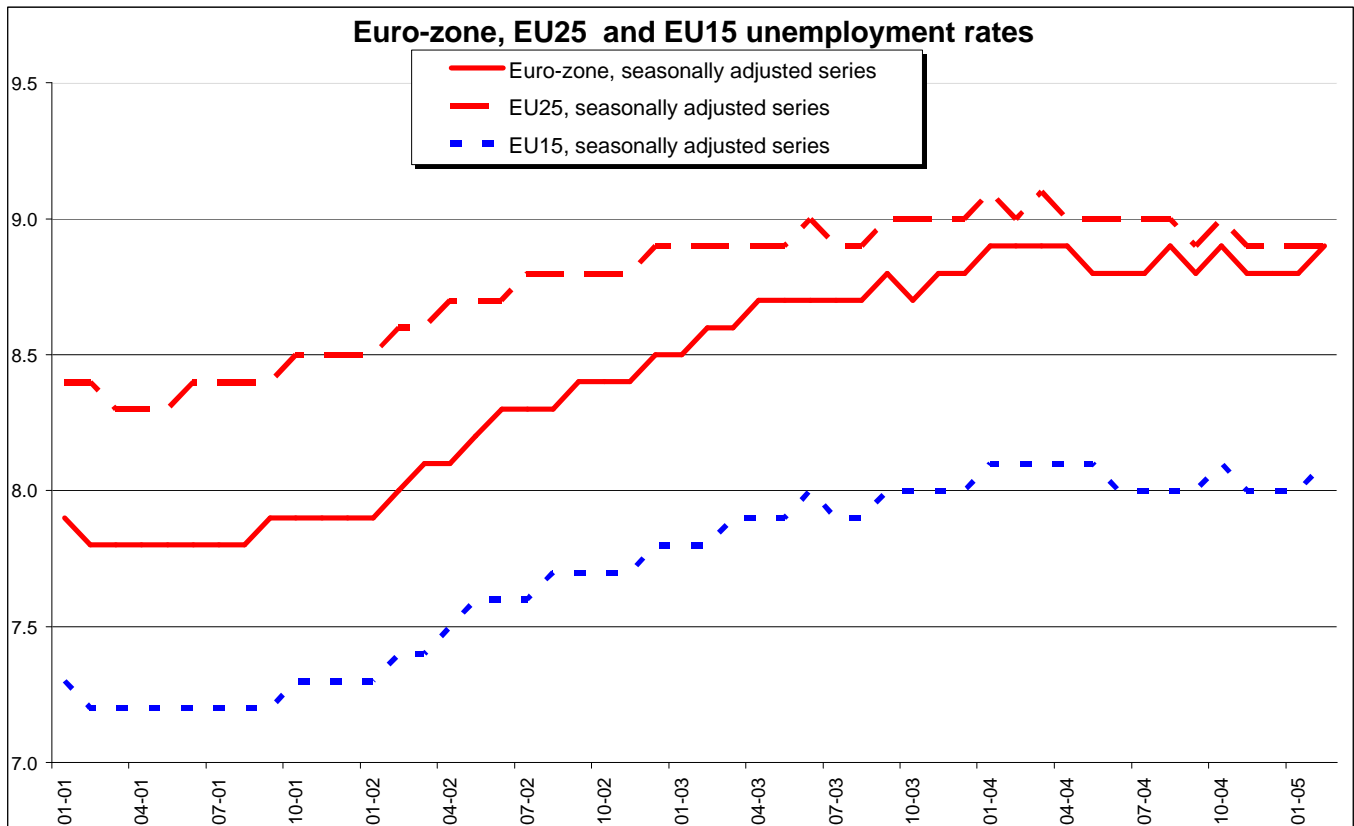
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**SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)
TOTAL MALES AND FEMALES**

	Feb 2004	Aug 2004	Sep 2004	Oct 2004	Nov 2004	Dec 2004	Jan 2005	Feb 2005
Euro-zone	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.9
EU25	9.0	9.0	8.9	9.0	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9
EU15	8.1	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.1
BE	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0
CZ	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3
DK	5.6	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0	:
DE^o	9.5	9.7	9.5	9.9	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.7
EE	9.9	9.1	8.8	8.5	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.0
EL	10.7	10.5	10.5	:	:	:	:	:
ES	11.1	10.7	10.6	10.5	10.4	10.4	10.3	10.3
FR	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.8
IE	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3
IT	8.2	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.0	8.0	:	:
CY	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.5	5.6	5.6
LV	9.9	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.6
LT	11.6	10.6	10.3	10.0	9.6	9.3	9.1	8.9
LU	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4
HU	5.8	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.3
MT	7.8	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.9	6.8
NL	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	:	:
AT	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.6
PL	19.1	18.7	18.6	18.6	18.4	18.3	18.2	18.1
PT	6.3	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9
SI	6.2	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	:
SK	18.5	17.8	17.7	17.5	17.1	16.8	16.5	16.2
FI	9.0	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.9	9.0
SE	6.3	6.2	6.6	6.2	6.4	6.4	6.2	6.5
UK	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	:	:
US	5.6	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.2	5.4
JP	5.0	4.8	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.6

: Data not available
Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

MALES

	Feb 2004	Aug 2004	Sep 2004	Oct 2004	Nov 2004	Dec 2004	Jan 2005	Feb 2005
Euro-zone	7.5	7.4	7.5	7.7	7.7	7.5	7.5	7.4
EU25	8.1	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.1	7.9	7.9	7.9
EU15	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.2	7.2	7.0	7.1	7.0
BE	7.1	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.1
CZ	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.4
DK	5.3	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.8	:
DE^b	8.6	8.5	8.7	9.5	9.4	8.7	8.9	8.5
EE	10.7	10.2	9.9	9.6	9.4	9.3	9.2	9.1
EL	6.9	6.5	6.5	:	:	:	:	:
ES	8.1	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5
FR	8.7	8.8	8.8	8.7	8.7	8.8	8.8	8.9
IE	5.0	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.7
IT	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.4	:	:
CY	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.5	4.5	4.6
LV	9.5	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.0
LT	11.3	10.2	9.7	9.3	8.7	8.3	8.0	7.8
LU	3.3	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7
HU	5.7	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.2	6.2	6.2
MT	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.4
NL	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.3	:	:
AT	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9
PL	18.5	17.9	17.8	17.8	17.6	17.5	17.3	17.2
PT	5.5	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.2	6.2
SI	5.8	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.4	:
SK	17.9	16.6	16.3	16.0	15.6	15.2	14.9	14.6
FI	9.0	8.7	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8
SE	6.8	6.3	6.8	6.3	6.6	6.5	6.3	6.6
UK	5.1	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.0	:	:
US	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.3	5.6
JP	5.4	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.8	5.0

FEMALES

	Feb 2004	Aug 2004	Sep 2004	Oct 2004	Nov 2004	Dec 2004	Jan 2005	Feb 2005
Euro-zone	10.6	10.7	10.5	10.4	10.2	10.5	10.4	10.7
EU25	10.2	10.3	10.1	10.1	9.9	10.1	10.0	10.2
EU15	9.3	9.4	9.2	9.1	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.4
BE	8.7	8.7	8.8	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.1
CZ	10.1	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5
DK	5.9	5.6	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.3	:
DE^b	10.5	11.1	10.4	10.4	9.6	10.6	10.5	11.2
EE	9.0	7.9	7.7	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.0	6.9
EL	16.3	16.3	16.3	:	:	:	:	:
ES	15.4	14.7	14.7	14.5	14.4	14.4	14.3	14.3
FR	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.6	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.8
IE	4.1	3.9	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.7
IT	10.8	10.4	10.4	10.3	10.3	10.3	:	:
CY	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.9	6.9	7.0
LV	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.4	10.3	10.3	10.3	10.2
LT	11.8	11.0	10.8	10.7	10.5	10.4	10.2	10.0
LU	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.6
HU	5.8	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.4
MT	9.5	7.3	7.5	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.6
NL	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.0	5.1	5.3	:	:
AT	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.3
PL	19.9	19.6	19.6	19.5	19.4	19.3	19.3	19.2
PT	7.3	7.9	8.0	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.7	7.7
SI	6.7	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.2	6.2	:
SK	19.3	19.2	19.2	19.2	18.9	18.6	18.3	18.0
FI	9.0	9.0	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.9	9.1	9.2
SE	5.8	6.0	6.5	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.1	6.4
UK	4.2	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.1	:	:
US	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.2
JP	4.5	4.7	4.2	4.5	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.2

: Data not available
Source: Eurostat

**SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)
UNDER 25 YEARS**

	Feb 2004	Aug 2004	Sep 2004	Oct 2004	Nov 2004	Dec 2004	Jan 2005	Feb 2005
Euro-zone	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	17.3	18.0	18.5	18.5
EU25	18.8	18.6	18.6	18.6	18.1	18.6	18.9	18.8
EU15	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.6	16.1	16.7	17.1	17.1
BE	20.2	19.6	19.5	19.5	19.5	19.4	19.3	19.2
CZ	20.3	21.1	21.2	21.3	21.2	21.0	20.9	20.8
DK	8.7	7.9	7.8	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.4	:
DE^b	15.4	15.8	15.7	15.7	13.6	15.9	17.4	17.1
EE	23.1	20.1	19.3	18.5	18.1	17.8	17.6	17.4
EL	27.8	26.3	26.3	:	:	:	:	:
ES	22.6	21.7	21.5	21.5	21.4	21.2	21.0	20.9
FR	21.7	22.2	22.2	21.8	21.9	22.0	22.1	22.2
IE	8.5	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.9
IT	23.1	23.1	23.1	24.0	24.0	24.0	:	:
CY	10.5	10.6	10.6	10.5	10.6	10.7	10.7	10.7
LV	18.8	19.0	19.1	19.0	18.8	18.7	18.6	18.5
LT	23.6	18.5	17.4	16.3	14.7	14.4	14.4	14.3
LU	12.4	13.1	13.0	12.8	12.8	12.9	12.8	12.9
HU	14.2	14.9	15.0	15.2	15.5	15.7	15.9	15.9
MT	18.0	16.0	15.8	15.8	15.7	15.7	15.5	15.2
NL	8.0	7.7	7.6	7.8	7.7	7.4	:	:
AT	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.8	9.9
PL	40.4	39.3	39.0	38.7	38.4	38.0	37.7	37.6
PT	15.0	16.0	16.1	16.1	15.9	15.9	15.9	15.9
SI	14.9	13.9	14.1	14.3	14.0	13.6	13.6	:
SK	34.0	31.1	31.1	30.8	30.3	29.7	29.2	28.8
FI	21.2	20.7	20.6	20.6	20.7	20.7	20.8	20.9
SE	15.9	15.0	17.5	16.4	17.1	16.4	16.6	18.1
UK	11.7	12.3	12.3	12.4	12.5	12.4	:	:
US	11.8	11.6	11.8	12.2	11.5	11.7	11.7	12.4
JP	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

25 YEARS AND OVER

	Feb 2004	Aug 2004	Sep 2004	Oct 2004	Nov 2004	Dec 2004	Jan 2005	Feb 2005
Euro-zone	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.7	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.6
EU25	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.5
EU15	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.8
BE	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.8
CZ	7.1	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.0
DK	5.1	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.7	:
DE^b	8.5	8.7	8.5	8.9	8.8	8.5	8.3	8.5
EE	8.2	7.7	7.6	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	6.9
EL	8.8	8.9	8.9	:	:	:	:	:
ES	9.6	9.3	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.0	9.0	9.0
FR	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.3
IE	3.9	3.8	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5
IT	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	:	:
CY	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.4	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.1
LV	8.7	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.4
LT	10.4	9.9	9.6	9.4	9.1	8.9	8.7	8.4
LU	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7
HU	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.4
MT	4.6	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3
NL	3.9	4.1	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2	:	:
AT	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
PL	16.0	15.8	15.8	15.7	15.7	15.6	15.5	15.4
PT	5.2	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.9
SI	5.1	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	:
SK	16.1	15.8	15.7	15.5	15.2	14.9	14.6	14.3
FI	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.3
SE	5.0	5.0	5.1	4.8	5.0	5.1	4.8	4.9
UK	3.4	3.1	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	:	:
US	4.5	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.1	4.2
JP	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

: Data not available
Source: Eurostat