

March 2004

## Euro-zone unemployment stable at 8.8%

### EU25 steady at 9.0%

**Euro-zone**<sup>1</sup> seasonally-adjusted unemployment<sup>2</sup> stood at 8.8% in March 2004, unchanged compared to February<sup>3</sup>, **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**, reports today. It was also 8.8% in March 2003. The **EU25**<sup>3</sup> unemployment rate was 9.0% in March 2004, unchanged compared to February<sup>4</sup>. It was also 9.0% in March 2003.

Following the enlargement of the **EU** on 1 May 2004, Eurostat publishes for the first time today unemployment series for the **EU25**.

In March 2004, lowest rates were registered in **Luxembourg** (4.1%), **Ireland** and **Austria** (both 4.5%), **Cyprus** (4.7%), the **Netherlands** (4.7% in February), and the **United Kingdom** (4.7% in January). The unemployment rates were highest in **Poland** (19.0%), **Slovakia** (16.5%), **Lithuania** (11.5%) and **Spain** (11.1%).

Twelve Member States recorded an increase in their unemployment rate over a year, ten a decrease and three remained the same. The **Netherlands** (3.4% in February 2003 to 4.7% in February 2004), **Sweden** (5.3% to 6.4%) and **Luxembourg** (3.4% to 4.1%) recorded the most important relative increases, while the largest relative decreases were observed in **Lithuania** (13.3% to 11.5%), **Estonia** (10.2% to 9.3%) and the **United Kingdom** (5.0% in January 2003 to 4.7% in January 2004).

In March 2004 compared to March 2003, the unemployment rate for males in the **euro-zone** grew from 7.7% to 7.8%, and the female unemployment grew from 10.1% to 10.2%. In the **EU25** the unemployment rate for males fell from 8.3% to 8.2%. Over the same period the female rate fell from 10.0% to 9.9%.

In March 2004, the unemployment rate for under-25s was 17.0% in the **euro-zone** and 18.0% in the **EU25**. In March 2003 it was 16.8% and 18.2% respectively. The lowest rates for under-25s were observed in **Austria** (7.3%), **Ireland** (8.2%) and the **Netherlands** (8.8% in February 2004), and the highest in **Poland** (39.7%), **Slovakia** (29.5%), **Italy** (27.1% in January 2004) and **Greece** (27.1% in December 2003).

Eurostat estimates that, in March 2004, 12.4 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 March 2004, the **US** unemployment rate was 5.7% and the **Japanese** rate was 4.7%.

#### Unemployment (%) in March 2004 - in ascending order

LU	IE	AT	CY	NL	UK	DK	HU	SE	SI	PT	EU15	CZ	IT
4.1	4.5	4.5	4.7	2004.02 4.7	2004.01 4.7	5.9	6.0	6.4	6.5	6.9	8.0	8.4	2004.01 8.5
BE	Euro-zone	FI	EU25	MT	DE	EE	EL	FR	LV	ES	LT	SK	PL
8.6	8.8	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.3	9.3	2003.12 9.3	9.4	10.7	11.1	11.5	16.5	19.0

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 and Candidate Countries. 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.

*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.

*France:* Persons (without a job, who are available for work and) whose only job search method in the past 4 weeks is their status of registration at the public employment service are included in unemployment.

*Italy:* Persons (without a job, who are available for work and) whose only job search method in the past 4 weeks is a renewal of their registration at the public employment service are included in unemployment. Employment includes persons on unpaid leave with a duration longer than 3 months, while these persons should be considered as unemployed or inactive.

*Malta, Poland:* Persons who have found a job to start later within a period of at most 3 months are included in unemployment regardless of their availability.

*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.

*Austria:* Persons without a job who expect to start or to return to their job in more than 3 months time and are available for work are included in unemployment.

These remaining deviations will disappear as Member States adapt their surveys to the new definitions. Italy, Malta, Austria and Poland will adapt in 2004 and the Netherlands and Sweden in 2005. Belgium, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Greece, Ireland, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland already comply with the definition.
3. 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).
4. The unemployment rates for the euro-zone and EU15 for February 2004 remain the same as published in News Release 45/2004 of 1 April 2004.

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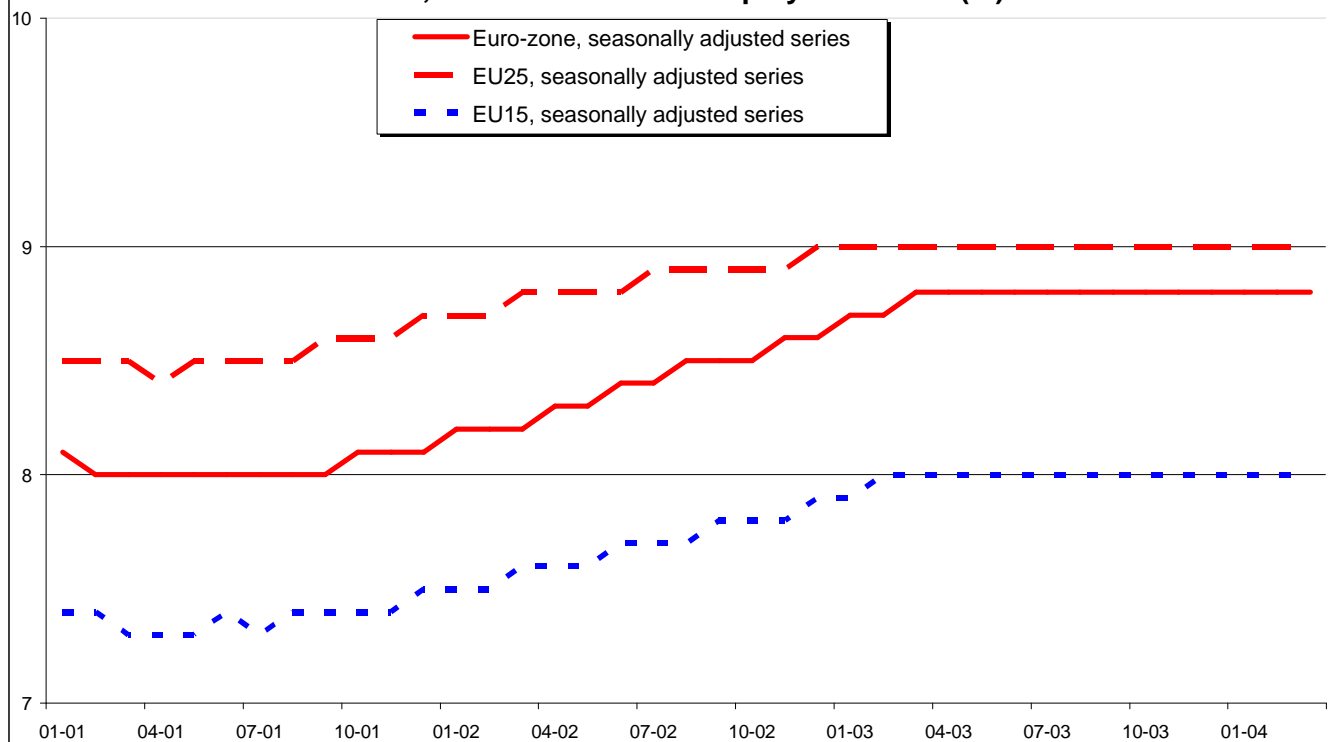
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### Euro-zone, EU25 and EU15 unemployment rates (%)



### SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

#### TOTAL MALES AND FEMALES

	2003.03	2003.09	2003.10	2003.11	2003.12	2004.01	2004.02	2004.03
<b>Euro-zone</b>	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	<b>8.8</b>
<b>EU25</b>	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	9.0	<b>9.0</b>
<b>EU15</b>	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.0	<b>8.0</b>
<b>BE</b>	7.9	8.2	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.4	8.5	<b>8.6</b>
<b>CZ</b>	7.6	8.0	8.1	8.1	8.1	8.2	8.3	<b>8.4</b>
<b>DK</b>	5.4	5.8	5.9	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.9	<b>5.9</b>
<b>DE</b>	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.3	9.2	9.2	9.3	<b>9.3</b>
<b>EE</b>	10.2	10.0	9.9	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.4	<b>9.3</b>
<b>EL</b>	9.4	9.2	9.3	9.3	9.3	:	:	:
<b>ES</b>	11.4	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.2	11.1	11.1	<b>11.1</b>
<b>FR</b>	9.3	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.4	<b>9.4</b>
<b>IE</b>	4.5	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	<b>4.5</b>
<b>IT</b>	8.8	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	:	:
<b>CY</b>	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	<b>4.7</b>
<b>LV</b>	10.7	10.4	10.4	10.5	10.5	10.6	10.6	<b>10.7</b>
<b>LT</b>	13.3	12.4	12.2	12.1	11.9	11.7	11.6	<b>11.5</b>
<b>LU</b>	3.4	3.8	3.9	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	<b>4.1</b>
<b>HU</b>	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	<b>6.0</b>
<b>MT</b>	7.8	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.6	8.8	9.0	<b>9.0</b>
<b>NL</b>	3.5	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.5	4.7	:
<b>AT</b>	4.3	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	<b>4.5</b>
<b>PL</b>	19.3	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1	19.1	<b>19.0</b>
<b>PT</b>	6.3	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.8	6.8	<b>6.9</b>
<b>SI</b>	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.5	<b>6.5</b>
<b>SK</b>	17.5	16.7	16.6	16.5	16.6	16.6	16.6	<b>16.5</b>
<b>FI</b>	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	<b>8.9</b>
<b>SE</b>	5.3	5.7	5.9	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.4	<b>6.4</b>
<b>UK</b>	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.7	:	:
<b>US</b>	5.8	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.7	5.7	5.6	<b>5.7</b>
<b>JP</b>	5.3	5.2	5.2	5.2	4.9	5.0	5.0	<b>4.7</b>

: Data not available  
Source: Eurostat

## SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

### MALES

	2003.03	2003.09	2003.10	2003.11	2003.12	2004.01	2004.02	2004.03
<b>Euro-zone</b>	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	<b>7.8</b>
<b>EU25</b>	8.3	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	<b>8.2</b>
<b>EU15</b>	7.2	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	7.3	<b>7.3</b>
<b>BE</b>	7.6	8.0	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.2	8.2	<b>8.3</b>
<b>CZ</b>	5.9	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.6	<b>6.6</b>
<b>DK</b>	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	<b>5.5</b>
<b>DE</b>	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.5	9.5	<b>9.6</b>
<b>EE</b>	10.4	10.0	9.9	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.4	<b>9.3</b>
<b>EL</b>	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8	:	:	:
<b>ES</b>	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	<b>8.2</b>
<b>FR</b>	8.2	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	8.4	<b>8.4</b>
<b>IE</b>	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.8	4.8	4.8	<b>4.8</b>
<b>IT</b>	6.9	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	6.6	:	:
<b>CY</b>	3.8	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.2	<b>4.2</b>
<b>LV</b>	10.5	10.1	10.2	10.3	10.3	10.4	10.5	<b>10.5</b>
<b>LT</b>	12.9	11.7	11.4	11.3	11.0	10.8	10.6	<b>10.4</b>
<b>LU</b>	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.9	2.9	<b>3.0</b>
<b>HU</b>	6.2	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.1	6.1	6.1	<b>6.1</b>
<b>MT</b>	6.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.1	7.1	7.2	<b>7.2</b>
<b>NL</b>	3.4	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.4	4.5	:
<b>AT</b>	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	<b>4.3</b>
<b>PL</b>	18.7	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.5	18.4	<b>18.3</b>
<b>PT</b>	5.4	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.0	<b>6.1</b>
<b>SI</b>	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.0	5.9	5.9	6.0	<b>6.0</b>
<b>SK</b>	17.3	16.4	16.3	16.2	16.3	16.3	16.2	<b>16.1</b>
<b>FI</b>	9.3	9.0	9.0	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1	<b>9.0</b>
<b>SE</b>	5.6	6.0	6.2	6.6	6.4	6.6	6.9	<b>6.7</b>
<b>UK</b>	5.6	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.3	5.1	:	:
<b>US</b>	6.1	6.4	6.2	6.2	5.9	5.7	5.7	<b>5.8</b>
<b>JP</b>	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.0	5.2	5.4	<b>4.9</b>

### FEMALES

	2003.03	2003.09	2003.10	2003.11	2003.12	2004.01	2004.02	2004.03
<b>Euro-zone</b>	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	10.1	<b>10.2</b>
<b>EU25</b>	10.0	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9	<b>9.9</b>
<b>EU15</b>	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	<b>8.9</b>
<b>BE</b>	8.3	8.5	8.6	8.6	8.7	8.8	8.8	<b>8.9</b>
<b>CZ</b>	9.6	10.0	10.1	10.2	10.2	10.4	10.5	<b>10.7</b>
<b>DK</b>	5.7	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.4	<b>6.4</b>
<b>DE</b>	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.9	8.9	<b>9.0</b>
<b>EE</b>	10.0	10.0	9.9	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.4	<b>9.2</b>
<b>EL</b>	14.3	14.1	14.4	14.4	14.4	:	:	:
<b>ES</b>	16.3	15.7	15.6	15.6	15.5	15.4	15.4	<b>15.4</b>
<b>FR</b>	10.5	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.7	<b>10.7</b>
<b>IE</b>	4.1	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	4.2	<b>4.2</b>
<b>IT</b>	11.7	11.5	11.4	11.4	11.4	11.3	:	:
<b>CY</b>	4.9	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.3	5.3	<b>5.4</b>
<b>LV</b>	10.8	10.6	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.8	<b>10.8</b>
<b>LT</b>	13.7	13.1	12.9	12.8	12.7	12.6	12.6	<b>12.5</b>
<b>LU</b>	4.7	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	<b>5.6</b>
<b>HU</b>	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.7	5.7	<b>5.7</b>
<b>MT</b>	10.5	11.8	12.0	12.1	12.1	12.3	12.8	<b>12.9</b>
<b>NL</b>	3.7	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.6	4.8	:
<b>AT</b>	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	<b>4.8</b>
<b>PL</b>	20.1	19.9	19.9	19.9	19.9	19.9	19.9	<b>19.8</b>
<b>PT</b>	7.3	7.3	7.5	7.5	7.6	7.8	7.7	<b>7.7</b>
<b>SI</b>	7.1	7.3	7.2	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.0	<b>7.0</b>
<b>SK</b>	17.7	17.0	17.0	16.9	16.9	17.0	17.0	<b>17.1</b>
<b>FI</b>	8.9	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	8.8	<b>8.8</b>
<b>SE</b>	4.9	5.3	5.6	5.5	5.6	5.4	5.8	<b>6.0</b>
<b>UK</b>	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.2	4.2	:	:
<b>US</b>	5.6	5.8	5.7	5.5	5.6	5.6	5.5	<b>5.6</b>
<b>JP</b>	4.8	4.7	4.9	5.0	4.7	4.6	4.5	<b>4.4</b>

: Data not available

Source: Eurostat

## SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

### UNDER 25 YEARS

	2003.03	2003.09	2003.10	2003.11	2003.12	2004.01	2004.02	2004.03
<b>Euro-zone</b>	16.8	16.7	16.8	16.8	16.8	16.9	16.9	17.0
<b>EU25</b>	18.2	18.1	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0	18.0
<b>EU15</b>	15.6	15.6	15.5	15.5	15.5	15.6	15.6	15.6
<b>BE</b>	20.8	22.2	22.1	22.0	22.0	22.1	22.2	22.1
<b>CZ</b>	17.5	19.0	19.7	19.7	19.8	20.1	20.2	20.0
<b>DK</b>	9.8	10.6	10.8	10.7	10.9	10.6	10.5	10.5
<b>DE</b>	10.4	10.0	9.9	9.7	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.9
<b>EE</b>	23.6	22.3	21.8	21.5	21.3	21.0	20.7	20.4
<b>EL</b>	25.7	26.6	27.1	27.1	27.1	:	:	:
<b>ES</b>	22.9	22.5	22.7	22.7	22.6	22.6	22.5	22.5
<b>FR</b>	19.9	20.3	20.5	20.5	20.6	20.6	20.6	20.7
<b>IE</b>	8.1	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.2	8.2
<b>IT</b>	27.2	26.8	26.7	26.8	27.0	27.1	:	:
<b>CY</b>	10.3	10.9	10.9	10.7	10.6	10.4	10.1	10.2
<b>LV</b>	18.2	16.9	16.9	16.9	16.9	17.0	17.1	17.2
<b>LT</b>	27.9	26.7	26.1	25.8	25.3	24.7	24.7	24.3
<b>LU</b>	9.8	10.6	10.9	11.2	11.0	11.0	11.1	11.6
<b>HU</b>	13.4	13.0	13.0	12.9	12.9	12.8	12.8	12.8
<b>MT</b>	18.6	20.4	20.6	20.7	20.5	20.7	21.2	21.4
<b>NL</b>	6.6	6.8	7.0	7.3	7.6	8.2	8.8	:
<b>AT</b>	7.1	7.4	7.4	7.3	7.4	7.3	7.2	7.3
<b>PL</b>	41.7	40.6	40.4	40.3	40.1	40.0	39.9	39.7
<b>PT</b>	13.8	14.9	15.3	15.4	15.8	16.1	16.0	15.9
<b>SI</b>	15.7	16.4	16.4	16.0	15.7	15.8	15.8	15.8
<b>SK</b>	34.5	31.7	31.2	30.8	30.5	30.2	29.9	29.5
<b>FI</b>	21.1	22.1	22.1	21.9	21.6	21.4	21.2	21.0
<b>SE</b>	11.7	13.3	13.7	15.3	14.3	14.1	16.2	16.1
<b>UK</b>	12.4	12.3	11.8	11.8	11.7	11.7	:	:
<b>US</b>	11.8	12.8	12.3	12.1	11.7	12.0	11.8	11.7
<b>JP</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

### 25 YEARS AND OVER

	2003.03	2003.09	2003.10	2003.11	2003.12	2004.01	2004.02	2004.03
<b>Euro-zone</b>	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8
<b>EU25</b>	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8
<b>EU15</b>	6.9	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.9	7.0	7.0
<b>BE</b>	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.1
<b>CZ</b>	6.4	6.8	6.8	6.9	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.2
<b>DK</b>	4.7	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2
<b>DE</b>	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.2	9.2	9.3
<b>EE</b>	8.6	8.5	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.9
<b>EL</b>	7.5	7.3	7.4	7.4	7.4	:	:	:
<b>ES</b>	9.8	9.7	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.7	9.7
<b>FR</b>	8.0	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.2	8.1	8.1
<b>IE</b>	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8
<b>IT</b>	6.9	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7	:	:
<b>CY</b>	3.6	3.8	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1
<b>LV</b>	9.6	9.5	9.5	9.6	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.8
<b>LT</b>	11.7	10.8	10.7	10.6	10.5	10.3	10.2	10.1
<b>LU</b>	2.8	3.1	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.3
<b>HU</b>	5.0	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.2	5.2
<b>MT</b>	4.6	4.9	5.0	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.3
<b>NL</b>	2.9	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.8	:
<b>AT</b>	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.1
<b>PL</b>	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.1	16.1	16.1	16.0
<b>PT</b>	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.6
<b>SI</b>	5.5	5.6	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4
<b>SK</b>	14.7	14.3	14.3	14.3	14.4	14.5	14.5	14.5
<b>FI</b>	7.4	7.1	7.1	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2	7.2
<b>SE</b>	4.4	4.6	4.9	4.8	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.1
<b>UK</b>	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.4	:	:
<b>US</b>	4.8	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.6
<b>JP</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:

: Data not available

Source: Eurostat