

67/2012 - 2 May 2012

March 2012

Euro area unemployment rate at 10.9%

EU27 at 10.2%

The **euro area**¹ (EA17) seasonally-adjusted² unemployment rate³ was 10.9% in March 2012, compared with 10.8% in February⁴. It was 9.9% in March 2011. The **EU27**¹ unemployment rate was 10.2% in March 2012, stable compared with February⁴. It was 9.4% in March 2011.

Eurostat estimates that 24.772 million men and women in the **EU27**, of whom 17.365 million were in the **euro area**, were unemployed in March 2012. Compared with February 2012, the number of persons unemployed increased by 193 000 in the **EU27** and by 169 000 in the **euro area**. Compared with March 2011, unemployment rose by 2.123 million in the **EU27** and by 1.732 million in the **euro area**.

These figures are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

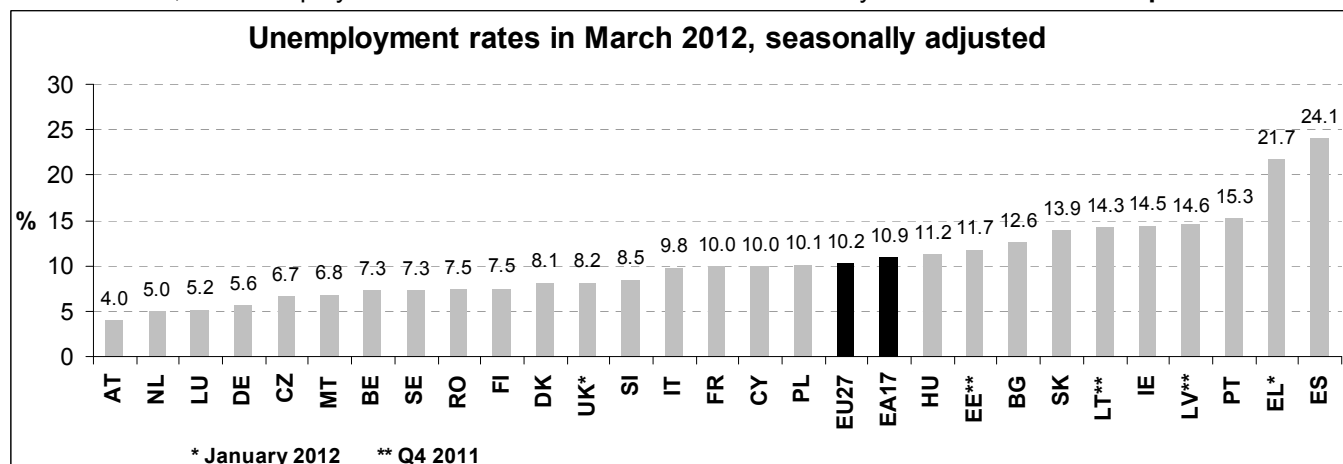
Among the Member States, the lowest unemployment rates were recorded in **Austria** (4.0%), the **Netherlands** (5.0%), **Luxembourg** (5.2%) and **Germany** (5.6%), and the highest in **Spain** (24.1%) and **Greece** (21.7% in January 2012).

Compared with a year ago, the unemployment rate fell in eight Member States and increased in nineteen. The largest falls were observed in **Lithuania** (17.5% to 14.3% between the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2011), **Latvia** (17.1% to 14.6% between the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2011) and **Estonia** (13.9% to 11.7% between the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2011). The highest increases were registered in **Greece** (14.7% to 21.7% between January 2011 and January 2012), **Spain** (20.8% to 24.1%) and **Cyprus** (6.9% to 10.0%).

Between March 2011 and March 2012, the unemployment rate for males increased from 9.7% to 10.8% in the **euro area** and from 9.3% to 10.2% in the **EU27**. The female unemployment rate rose from 10.2% to 11.2% in the **euro area** and from 9.6% to 10.3% in the **EU27**.

In March 2012, 5.516 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the **EU27**, of whom 3.345 million were in the **euro area**. Compared with March 2011, youth unemployment increased by 303 000 in the **EU27** and by 163 000 in the **euro area**. In March 2012, the youth unemployment rate was 22.6% in the **EU27** and 22.1% in the **euro area**. In March 2011 it was 21.0% and 20.6% respectively. The lowest rates were observed in **Germany** (7.9%), **Austria** (8.6%) and the **Netherlands** (9.3%), and the highest in **Greece** (51.2% in January 2012) and **Spain** (51.1%).

In March 2012, the unemployment rate was 8.2% in the **USA**. In February 2012 it was 4.5% in **Japan**.



1. The euro area (EA17) consists of Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia 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. Non-seasonally adjusted and trend data can be found in the statistical database on the Eurostat website.
3. 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 plus 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 Member States 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; results from the Labour Force Survey are available 90 days after the end of the reference period for most Member States.
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 rates based on national Labour Force Surveys or corresponding surveys. These rates may vary from those published by Eurostat due to a different definition or methodological choices.
Current deviations from the definition of unemployment in the EU Labour Force Survey:
Spain, Italy and United Kingdom: Unemployment is restricted to persons aged 16-74. In Spain and Italy the legal minimum age for working is 16. Employment data used for Italy includes also those above 74.
4. Compared with the rates published in News Release 52/2012 of 2 April 2012, the February 2012 unemployment rates for the EA17 and for the EU27 remain unchanged. Among Member States, the rate has been revised by between 0.2 and 0.4 percentage points for Spain and Italy. The revisions are primarily caused by the inclusion of the most recent EU Labour Force Survey data in the calculation process and updates to the seasonally adjusted series.
The following LFS data are used in the calculations of the monthly unemployment rates published in this News Release:
For Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Romania, Finland and Sweden monthly data up to and including March 2012.
For Greece monthly data up to and including January 2012.
For the United Kingdom monthly data up to and including December 2011 and January-February 2012 (3-month rolling average).
For Spain quarterly data up to and including Q1 2012.
For Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, France, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia and Slovakia quarterly data up to and including Q4 2011.
5. Italy has implemented a method to produce monthly unemployment data purely based on the LFS. For the moment, these data should be considered provisional.
6. Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: quarterly data for all series.
Cyprus, Romania and Slovenia: quarterly data for youth unemployment.
7. For Germany, Austria and Finland the trend component is used instead of the more volatile seasonally adjusted data.

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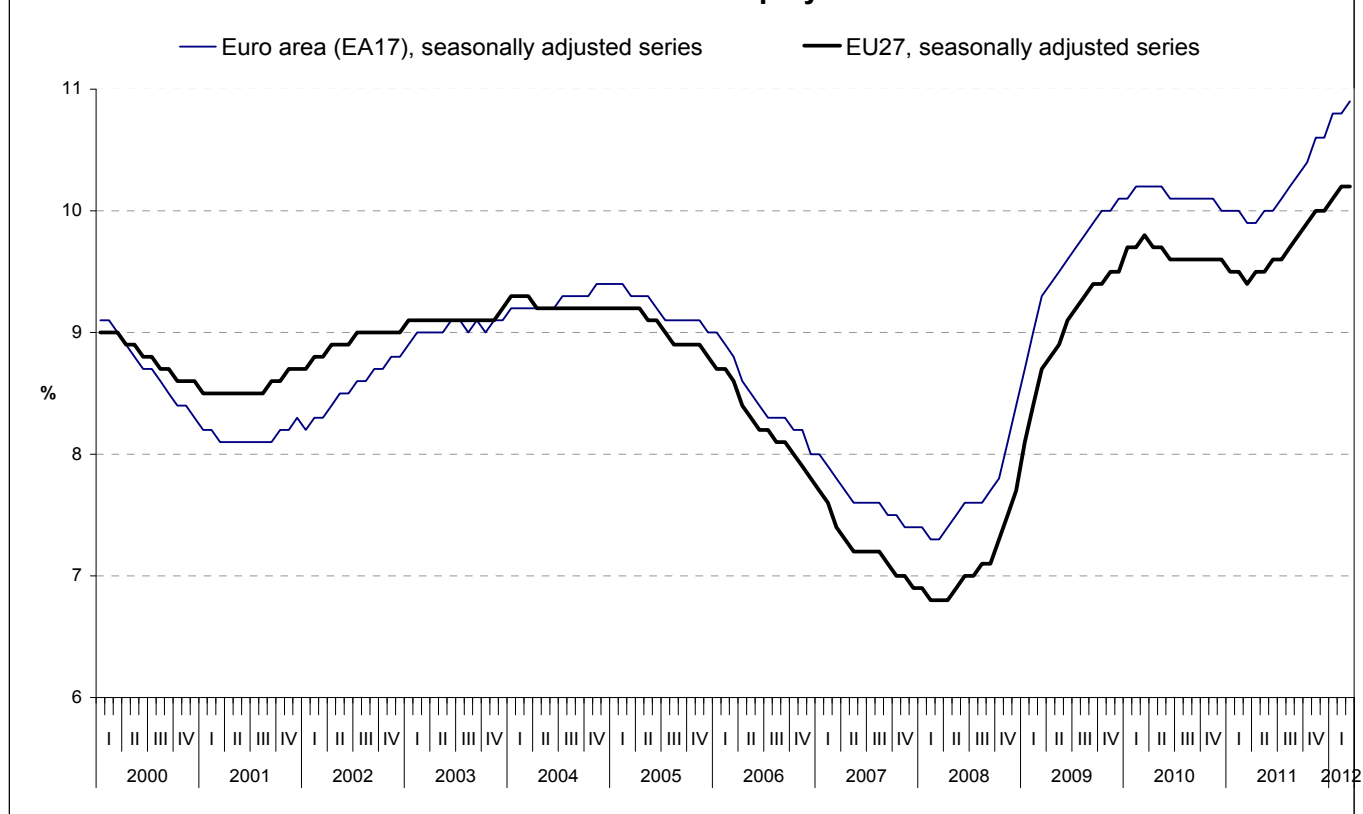
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Selected Principal European Economic Indicators: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>

Euro area and EU27 unemployment rates



SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%) TOTALS

	Mar 2011	Sep 2011	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012
EA17	9.9	10.3	10.4	10.6	10.6	10.8	10.8	10.9
EU27	9.4	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.2	10.2
BE	7.0	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.3
BG	11.1	11.1	11.3	11.6	11.8	12.2	12.5	12.6
CZ	6.9	6.5	6.5	6.6	6.7	6.7	6.8	6.7
DK	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.1
DE⁷	6.2	5.8	5.7	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6	5.6
EE⁶	13.6	11.4	11.7	11.7	11.7	:	:	:
IE	14.1	14.7	14.7	14.8	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.5
EL	15.7	19.0	19.7	20.6	21.2	21.7	:	:
ES	20.8	22.4	22.7	23.0	23.2	23.5	23.8	24.1
FR	9.6	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.0	10.0
IT⁵	8.1	8.7	8.8	9.2	9.3	9.5	9.6	9.8
CY	6.9	8.3	9.0	9.3	9.5	9.6	9.8	10.0
LV⁶	16.2	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.6	:	:	:
LT⁶	16.3	15.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	:	:	:
LU	4.7	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.2	5.2
HU	10.7	10.9	10.9	10.9	11.0	11.3	11.1	11.2
MT	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.7	6.8	6.8	6.8
NL	4.2	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.9	5.0
AT⁷	4.2	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.1	4.1	4.1	4.0
PL	9.4	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.1	10.1
PT	12.4	13.0	13.6	14.0	14.6	14.8	15.0	15.3
RO	7.0	7.7	7.3	7.6	7.5	7.2	7.1	7.5
SI	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.5
SK	13.3	13.6	13.9	14.0	14.1	14.0	14.0	13.9
FI⁷	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.5
SE	7.7	7.3	7.5	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.3
UK	7.7	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.2	:	:
IS	7.3	6.9	7.7	5.6	6.2	6.6	7.1	7.5
NO	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	:	:
US	8.9	9.0	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.3	8.2
JP	4.6	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.5	:

: Data not available Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

	Youth (under 25's)				Males				Females			
	Mar-11	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Mar-11	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Mar-11	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12
EA17	20.6	21.7	21.9	22.1	9.7	10.6	10.6	10.8	10.2	11.0	11.1	11.2
EU27	21.0	22.4	22.5	22.6	9.3	10.0	10.1	10.2	9.6	10.2	10.3	10.3
BE	18.9	17.0	17.0	17.1	7.3	7.2	7.3	7.3	6.7	7.3	7.3	7.3
BG	26.7	31.1	32.3	32.8	12.0	13.7	13.9	14.1	10.1	10.6	10.8	11.1
CZ	17.6	18.8	19.1	19.0	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.8	8.1	7.8	7.8	7.8
DK	13.7	14.6	14.7	15.1	7.6	8.0	8.1	8.3	7.4	7.8	7.7	7.8
DE ⁷	8.8	8.1	8.0	7.9	6.4	5.9	5.9	6.0	5.9	5.2	5.2	5.2
EE ⁶	20.4	24.9*	:	:	14.2	12.6*	:	:	12.9	10.7*	:	:
IE	28.7	31.4	31.3	30.3	17.2	17.8	17.8	17.6	10.2	10.9	10.8	10.7
EL	40.9	51.2	:	:	13.1	18.8	:	:	19.2	25.6	:	:
ES	44.9	50.3	50.9	51.1	20.2	23.0	23.4	23.6	21.5	24.0	24.3	24.6
FR	23.3	22.2	21.9	21.8	9.0	9.7	9.7	9.8	10.2	10.3	10.3	10.3
IT ⁵	28.3	32.9	33.9	35.9	7.4	8.7	8.7	9.0	9.1	10.5	10.9	11.0
CY ⁶	18.8	28.8	28.8	28.8	6.8	10.4	10.5	10.7	6.9	8.7	8.8	9.1
LV ⁶	30.4	27.3*	:	:	17.8	16.8*	:	:	14.6	12.3*	:	:
LT ⁶	32.0	34.3*	:	:	19.1	16.2*	:	:	13.5	12.4*	:	:
LU	14.7	16.6	16.9	17.4	3.5	4.0	4.1	4.1	6.3	6.4	6.5	6.7
HU	25.4	28.4	28.1	28.4	10.9	11.2	10.9	11.0	10.6	11.4	11.3	11.4
MT	13.6	14.7	14.4	13.6	5.9	6.1	6.1	6.0	7.2	8.0	8.1	8.2
NL	6.9	9.0	9.4	9.3	4.3	5.0	4.9	5.0	4.1	5.0	4.9	5.0
AT ⁷	8.7	8.9	8.7	8.6	4.2	3.7	3.7	3.5	4.2	4.5	4.6	4.7
PL	25.7	27.2	27.2	26.7	9.0	9.4	9.5	9.4	9.9	11.0	10.9	10.9
PT	27.6	35.1	35.4	36.1	12.0	14.9	15.1	15.5	12.9	14.7	14.8	15.1
RO ⁶	22.9	24.8*	:	:	7.5	7.8	7.5	8.0	6.3	6.6	6.7	6.8
SI ⁶	16.3	16.5	16.5	16.5	8.1	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.0	9.1	9.0	8.8
SK	32.9	34.0	34.1	33.9	13.3	13.9	13.8	13.7	13.3	14.2	14.1	14.1
FI ⁷	20.4	19.7	19.6	19.4	8.5	8.2	8.2	8.2	7.4	6.8	6.8	6.9
SE	24.0	22.4	23.5	22.8	7.3	7.8	7.8	7.7	8.2	7.3	7.2	6.9
UK	19.6	21.9	:	:	8.2	8.7	:	:	7.0	7.6	:	:
IS	15.9	17.2	15.2	19.2	8.8	6.0	7.6	7.8	5.8	7.3	6.5	7.1
NO	8.7	7.6	:	:	3.6	3.7	:	:	2.9	2.7	:	:
US	17.5	16.0	16.5	16.4	9.4	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.3	8.2	8.1
JP	:	:	:	:	5.0	4.9	4.7	:	4.1	4.4	4.3	:

* Data for Q4 2011 : Data not available Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (in millions)

	Mar 2011	Sep 2011	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012	Mar 2012
EA17	15.633	16.304	16.515	16.753	16.872	17.056	17.196	17.365
EU27	22.649	23.593	23.834	24.110	24.262	24.437	24.579	24.772
EA17 - youth	3.182	3.226	3.254	3.318	3.297	3.310	3.319	3.345
EU27 - youth	5.213	5.358	5.412	5.500	5.480	5.483	5.490	5.516

