

29
MEMBER
COUNTRIES

Paris, 11 May 1999

OLIS : 12-May-1999

Dist. : 12-May-1999

PAC/COM/NEWS(99)45

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Netherlands
New Zealand
Norway
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Turkey
United Kingdom
United States

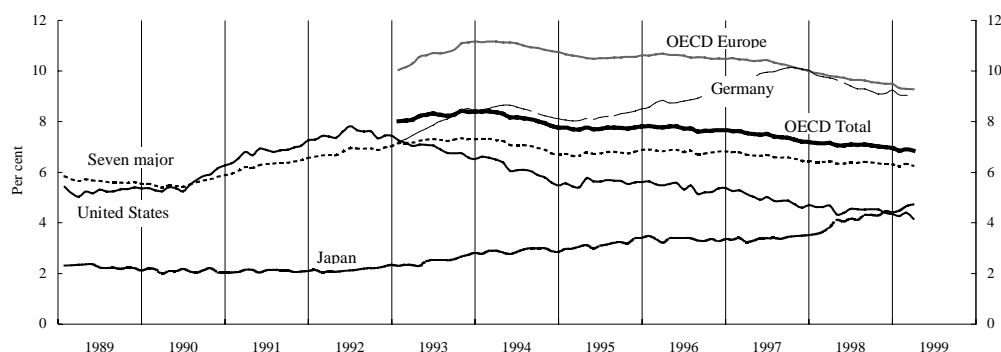
Standardised Unemployment Rates (1)

The OECD-area unemployment rate on a standardised basis was 6.8 per cent in March (2), 0.1 percentage points lower than in February, and 0.4 percentage points lower than a year earlier. The unemployment rate fell to 4.2 per cent in the United States, to 4.7 per cent in Denmark, to 10.6 per cent in Finland, to 6.9 per cent in Ireland, and to 17.4 per cent in Spain. The unemployment rate was stable at 7.8 per cent in Canada, at 7.4 per cent in Australia, at 4.6 per cent in Austria, at 9.1 per cent in Belgium, at 11.4 per cent in France, at 9.0 per cent in Germany, at 2.8 per cent in Luxembourg and at 4.2 per cent in Portugal. It rose to 4.7 per cent in Japan and to 7.5 per cent in Sweden.

(1) The standardised unemployment rates for the European Union (EU) Member countries are from the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). The OECD is responsible for the calculation of the standardised unemployment rates for the non-EU countries. The latter have been adjusted when necessary, and as far as the available data allow, to bring them as close as possible to ILO (and Eurostat) guidelines for international comparisons of labour force statistics. The standardised rates are, therefore, more comparable between countries than the unemployment rates published in national sources. For further details, see the Technical Note to the table.

(2) Based on a sample of 24 OECD countries for which data are available or have been estimated. From this Press Release, standardised unemployment rates are also published for the Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland.

STANDARDISED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES

Per cent of civilian labour force
Seasonally adjusted

	1996	1997	1998	1998			1999	1998					1999			
				Q.1	Q.3	Q.4		Q.1	MAR	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR
Canada	9.7	9.2	8.3	8.6	8.3	8.0	7.8	8.4	8.3	8.3	8.0	8.0	8.0	7.8	7.8	7.8
United States	5.4	4.9	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.2
Japan	3.4	3.4	4.1	3.7	4.2	4.4	4.6	3.8	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7
Australia	8.5	8.5	8.0	8.0	8.1	8.0	7.4	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.6	8.0	7.4	7.5	7.4	7.4
New Zealand	6.1	6.6	7.5	7.1	7.5	7.7	..	7.1	..	7.5	..	..	7.7	..	..	..
Austria	4.3	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6	4.6
Belgium ⁽²⁾	9.7	9.4	9.5	9.6	9.5	9.2	9.1	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.3	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.1	9.1
Czech republic	3.9	4.7	6.5	5.7	6.7	7.5	..	..	6.7	..	..	7.5	..	..	..	..
Denmark	6.8	5.6	5.1	5.5	5.1	4.7	4.8	5.4	5.1	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.7	4.9	4.8	4.7
Finland	14.6	12.7	11.4	11.9	11.2	10.8	10.7	11.9	11.2	11.0	10.9	10.8	10.7	10.7	10.7	10.6
France	12.4	12.3	11.7	11.9	11.7	11.6	11.4	11.8	11.7	11.7	11.6	11.6	11.5	11.4	11.4	11.4
Germany	8.9	9.9	9.4	9.8	9.3	9.1	9.0	9.7	9.3	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.2	9.0	9.0	9.0
Hungary	10.1	8.9	8.0	8.5	7.7	7.4	..	..	7.7	..	..	7.4	..	..	..	..
Ireland	11.6	9.9	7.8	8.4	7.6	7.3	7.1	8.2	7.7	7.5	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.0	6.9
Italy ⁽²⁾	12.0	12.0	11.9	11.8	11.9	11.8	..	11.8	11.9	11.9	11.9	11.8	11.8	11.7	..	..
Luxembourg	3.0	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.7	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.8
Netherlands	6.3	5.2	4.0	4.5	3.7	3.6	..	4.4	3.7	3.7	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.5	3.6	..
Norway	4.9	4.1	3.3	3.3	3.2	2.9	..	..	3.2	..	..	2.9	..	..	..	..
Poland	12.3	11.2	10.6	10.4	10.7	10.8	..	..	10.7	..	..	10.8	..	..	..	..
Portugal	7.3	6.8	4.9	5.8	4.6	4.4	4.3	5.8	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.2
Spain	22.2	20.8	18.8	19.4	18.7	18.2	17.6	19.2	18.7	18.6	18.5	18.1	18.0	17.8	17.6	17.4
Sweden	9.6	9.9	8.3	8.7	8.1	7.6	7.5	8.4	8.2	7.7	7.6	7.7	7.5	7.7	7.3	7.5
Switzerland	3.9	4.2	..	4.0	..	..	..	4.0	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
United Kingdom	8.2	7.0	6.3	6.4	6.3	6.3	..	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.4	6.3	..	..
OECD-Total ⁽¹⁾	7.7	7.4	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.0	6.9	7.2	7.1	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.0	6.9	6.9	6.8
Major seven	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.3	6.2
OECD-Europe ⁽¹⁾	10.6	10.3	9.7	9.9	9.6	9.5	9.3	9.8	9.6	9.6	9.5	9.5	9.5	9.3	9.3	9.3
EU-15	10.8	10.6	9.9	10.2	9.9	9.7	9.6	10.1	9.9	9.8	9.7	9.7	9.7	9.6	9.6	9.6
EU-11	11.6	11.6	10.9	11.2	10.8	10.6	10.4	11.1	10.8	10.7	10.6	10.6	10.6	10.5	10.4	10.4

1. Only the countries listed are included in the area totals (with an additional estimation for Greece). Monthly figures include Secretariat estimates for countries which only compile quarterly rates. 2. Data revised by Eurostat.

Technical Note: The Standardised Unemployment Rates, compiled for 24 OECD countries, are based on definitions of the 13th Conference of Labour Statisticians (generally referred to as the ILO guidelines). Under these definitions, the unemployed are persons of working age who, in the reference period, are without work, available for work and have taken specific steps to find work. The uniform application of the definitions results in estimates that are more internationally comparable than those based on national definitions. National unemployment data in some countries only include persons registered at government labour offices. Under the ILO definition, persons without work who are seeking employment through other means can also be classified as unemployed and

registrants can be excluded if they worked or were not available for work. The Standardised Unemployment Rates for the European Union (EU) Member countries are produced by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat). The OECD is responsible for the collection of data and calculation of Standardised Unemployment Rates for non-Eurostat countries. The Standardised Unemployment Rates shown here are calculated as the number of unemployed persons as a percentage of the civilian labor force (i.e. the unemployed plus those in civilian employment). For a more detailed description of the methods of the OECD's Standardised Unemployment Rates, see the OECD publication Quarterly Labour Force Statistics.