

December 2008

## Euro area unemployment up to 8.0%

EU27 up to 7.4%

The **euro area**<sup>1</sup> (EA15) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate<sup>2</sup> was 8.0% in December 2008, compared with 7.9% in November<sup>3</sup>. It was 7.2% in December 2007. The **EU27**<sup>1</sup> unemployment rate was 7.4% in December 2008, compared with 7.3% in November<sup>3</sup>. It was 6.8% in December 2007.

Eurostat estimates that 17.911 million men and women in the **EU27**, of which 12.472 million were in the **euro area**, were unemployed in December 2008. Compared with November 2008, the number of persons unemployed increased by 309 000 in the **EU27** and by 230 000 in the **euro area**. Compared with December 2007, unemployment went up by 1 665 000 in the **EU27** and by 1 397 000 in the **euro area**.

These figures are published by **Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities**.

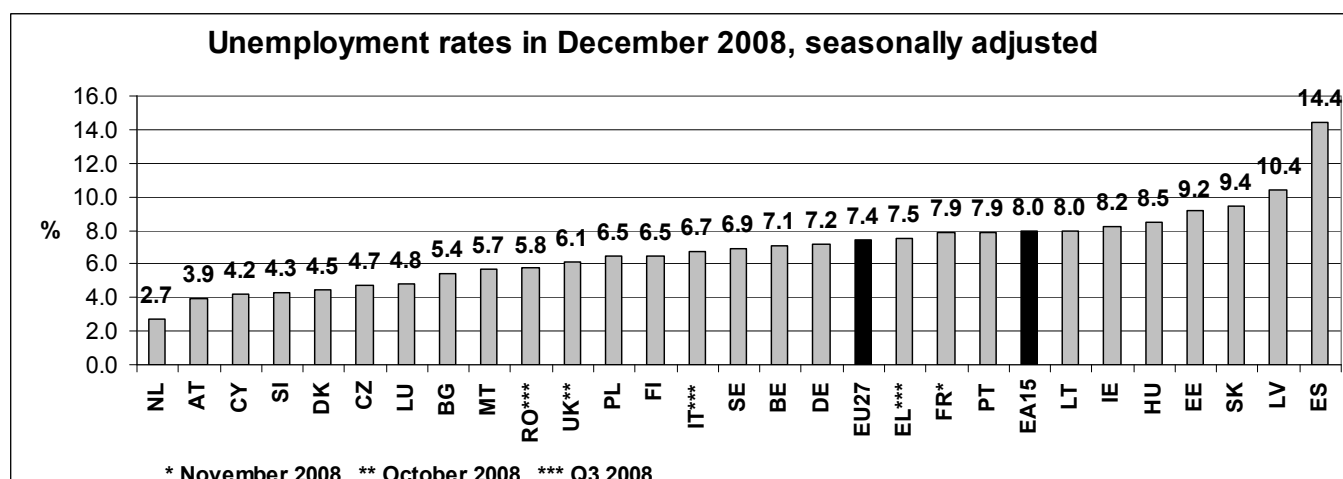
Among the Member States, the lowest unemployment rates were recorded in the **Netherlands** (2.7%) and **Austria** (3.9%), and the highest in **Spain** (14.4%) and **Latvia** (10.4%).

Compared with a year ago, nine Member States recorded a fall in their unemployment rate and fourteen an increase, while in four Member States it remained stable. The largest falls were observed in **Poland** (8.2% to 6.5%) and **Slovakia** (10.3% to 9.4%), and the highest increases in **Spain** (8.7% to 14.4%) and **Estonia** (4.1% to 9.2%).

The unemployment rate for males rose from 6.4% to 7.6% between December 2007 and December 2008 in the **euro area** and from 6.3% to 7.2% in the **EU27**. The female unemployment rate increased from 8.1% to 8.5% in the **euro area** and from 7.4% to 7.7% in the **EU27**.

In December 2008, the youth unemployment rate (under-25s) was 16.4% in the **euro area** and 16.6% in the **EU27**. In December 2007 it was 14.5% and 14.7% respectively. The lowest rates were observed in the **Netherlands** (5.3%) and **Austria** (6.9%), and the highest in **Spain** (29.5%) and **Hungary** (22.5%).

In December 2008, the unemployment rate was 7.2% in the **USA**. In November it was 3.9% in **Japan**.



1. 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 month for which data are available. Thus News Releases with data for months up to December 2008 comment on EA15 series, while Releases with data for January 2009 onwards will comment on EA16 series.
2. 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 all countries 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 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 age limit for working is 16.  
*Netherlands:* 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.
3. The November 2008 unemployment rates for the euro area and the EU27 have been revised. The rates published in News Release 3/2009 of 8 January 2009 were 7.8% for the euro area and 7.2% for the EU27. Among Member States, the rate has been revised by more than 0.1 percentage points for Bulgaria, Estonia, Spain and Latvia. 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, Finland and Sweden up to and including December 2008.  
For the Netherlands up to and including October-November-December 2008 (3-month rolling average).  
For the United Kingdom up to and including September-October-November 2008 (3-month rolling average).  
For Spain up to and including 2008Q4.  
For Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Slovakia up to and including 2008Q3.
4. Greece, Italy and Romania: quarterly data for all series.  
Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia: quarterly data for youth unemployment.
5. Provisional data: the Swedish Labour Force Survey was amended in April 2005 to take further account of the EU harmonised methodology. This break in the series may affect the reliability of the seasonal adjustment.

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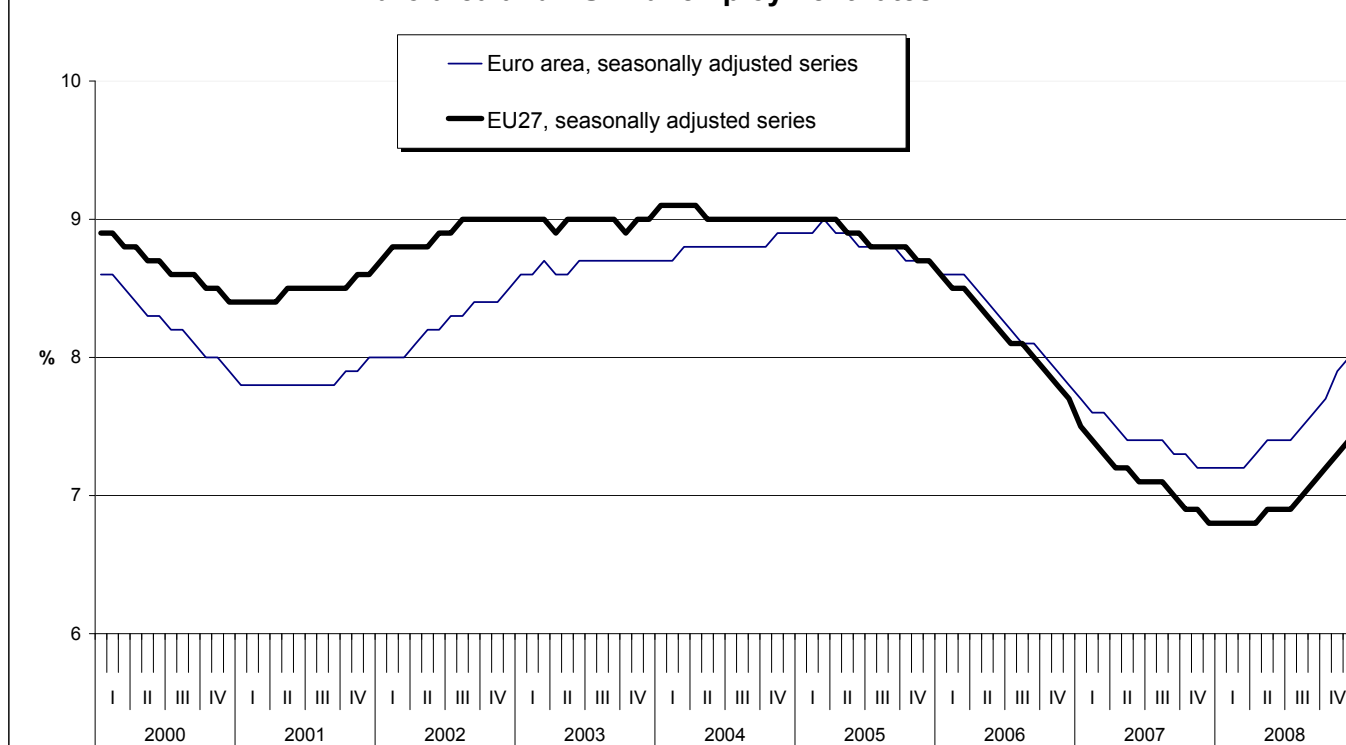
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Selected Principal European Economic Indicators: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>

## Euro area and EU27 unemployment rates



### SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%) TOTALS

	Dec 2007	Jun 2008	Jul 2008	Aug 2008	Sept 2008	Oct 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2008
<b>EA15</b>	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.9	<b>8.0</b>
<b>EU27</b>	6.8	6.9	6.9	7.0	7.1	7.2	7.3	<b>7.4</b>
<b>EA16</b>	7.2	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.6	7.8	7.9	<b>8.0</b>
<b>BE</b>	7.1	7.0	7.2	7.2	7.3	7.1	7.0	<b>7.1</b>
<b>BG</b>	6.1	5.7	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.3	<b>5.4</b>
<b>CZ</b>	4.7	4.4	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.4	4.5	<b>4.7</b>
<b>DK</b>	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.8	4.1	<b>4.5</b>
<b>DE</b>	7.9	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1	<b>7.2</b>
<b>EE</b>	4.1	4.7	5.6	6.4	7.1	7.8	8.5	<b>9.2</b>
<b>IE</b>	4.7	6.0	6.3	6.6	6.9	7.4	7.9	<b>8.2</b>
<b>EL<sup>4</sup></b>	8.0	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.5	:	:	:
<b>ES</b>	8.7	11.0	11.3	11.7	12.3	13.1	13.7	<b>14.4</b>
<b>FR</b>	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.9	:
<b>IT<sup>4</sup></b>	6.4	6.8	6.7	6.7	6.7	:	:	:
<b>CY</b>	3.8	3.7	3.8	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0	<b>4.2</b>
<b>LV</b>	5.7	6.3	6.9	7.3	7.8	8.3	9.2	<b>10.4</b>
<b>LT</b>	4.3	5.2	5.9	6.3	6.2	6.4	7.1	<b>8.0</b>
<b>LU</b>	4.1	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.6	<b>4.8</b>
<b>HU</b>	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.9	8.0	8.2	<b>8.5</b>
<b>MT</b>	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.8	5.6	5.7	5.8	<b>5.7</b>
<b>NL</b>	2.8	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	<b>2.7</b>
<b>AT</b>	3.9	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.8	3.8	<b>3.9</b>
<b>PL</b>	8.2	7.1	6.9	6.8	6.6	6.5	6.5	<b>6.5</b>
<b>PT</b>	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	7.8	<b>7.9</b>
<b>RO<sup>4</sup></b>	6.2	5.7	5.8	5.8	5.8	:	:	:
<b>SI</b>	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.2	4.3	4.3	<b>4.3</b>
<b>SK</b>	10.3	9.8	9.4	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.2	<b>9.4</b>
<b>FI</b>	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.5	6.5	<b>6.5</b>
<b>SE<sup>5</sup></b>	5.9	5.8	5.9	6.1	6.4	6.6	6.9	<b>6.9</b>
<b>UK</b>	5.1	5.5	5.7	5.8	5.9	6.1	:	:
<b>NO</b>	2.5	2.6	2.4	2.4	2.5	2.7	2.9	:
<b>US</b>	4.9	5.6	5.8	6.2	6.2	6.6	6.8	<b>7.2</b>
<b>JP</b>	3.8	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.0	3.7	3.9	:

: Data not available      Source: Eurostat

## SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

	Youth (under 25's)				Males				Females			
	Dec-07	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08	Dec-07	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08	Dec-07	Oct-08	Nov-08	Dec-08
EA15	14.5	15.9	16.2	<b>16.4</b>	6.4	7.2	7.4	<b>7.6</b>	8.1	8.3	8.4	<b>8.5</b>
EU27	14.7	16.1	16.4	<b>16.6</b>	6.3	6.9	7.1	<b>7.2</b>	7.4	7.5	7.6	<b>7.7</b>
BE	18.1	18.1	17.9	<b>18.1</b>	6.4	6.7	6.7	<b>6.8</b>	8.0	7.5	7.5	<b>7.4</b>
BG	14.2	11.4	11.6	<b>12.0</b>	5.8	5.2	5.2	<b>5.3</b>	6.5	5.3	5.4	<b>5.5</b>
CZ	9.0	10.3	10.9	<b>11.4</b>	3.6	3.5	3.6	<b>3.8</b>	6.1	5.6	5.7	<b>5.8</b>
DK	5.9	9.9	10.5	<b>11.1</b>	2.9	3.6	4.0	<b>4.5</b>	3.3	4.1	4.3	<b>4.5</b>
DE	10.6	9.6	9.7	<b>9.9</b>	8.0	7.3	7.3	<b>7.4</b>	7.8	6.9	6.9	<b>6.9</b>
EE <sup>4</sup>	7.5	21.9	21.9	<b>21.9</b>	4.2	8.5	9.5	<b>10.6</b>	4.0	7.1	7.5	<b>7.8</b>
IE	9.4	16.9	17.9	<b>18.4</b>	5.3	8.8	9.4	<b>9.9</b>	3.9	5.6	5.8	<b>6.1</b>
EL <sup>4</sup>	21.8	15.5*	:	:	5.1	5.0*	:	:	12.1	11.2*	:	:
ES	19.3	28.0	28.7	<b>29.5</b>	7.1	12.1	12.9	<b>13.7</b>	11.0	14.4	14.9	<b>15.3</b>
FR	17.8	20.2	20.7	:	7.2	7.5	7.6	:	8.4	8.2	8.3	:
IT <sup>4</sup>	21.7	20.6*	:	:	5.1	5.4*	:	:	8.2	8.4*	:	:
CY <sup>4</sup>	9.8	10.3	10.3	<b>10.3</b>	3.3	3.4	3.5	<b>3.8</b>	4.4	4.6	4.5	<b>4.7</b>
LV <sup>4</sup>	8.6	16.7	16.7	<b>16.7</b>	5.8	8.7	10.1	<b>12.1</b>	5.6	7.8	8.2	<b>8.6</b>
LT <sup>4</sup>	7.4	18.1	18.1	<b>18.1</b>	4.3	6.5	7.8	<b>9.4</b>	4.2	6.2	6.4	<b>6.5</b>
LU	15.4	16.8	16.9	<b>17.5</b>	3.1	3.6	3.7	<b>3.9</b>	5.3	5.8	5.9	<b>6.0</b>
HU	19.8	20.8	21.5	<b>22.5</b>	7.5	8.0	8.2	<b>8.4</b>	8.2	8.0	8.3	<b>8.6</b>
MT	12.0	11.7	12.1	<b>11.8</b>	5.3	5.7	5.8	<b>5.7</b>	7.0	5.8	5.9	<b>5.8</b>
NL	5.3	5.5	5.4	<b>5.3</b>	2.6	2.7	2.7	<b>2.7</b>	3.2	2.9	2.8	<b>2.8</b>
AT	7.6	7.1	6.9	<b>6.9</b>	3.6	3.6	3.6	<b>3.6</b>	4.4	4.1	4.1	<b>4.2</b>
PL	18.3	16.8	17.2	<b>17.4</b>	7.6	5.8	5.8	<b>5.8</b>	8.9	7.4	7.4	<b>7.3</b>
PT	16.1	16.1	16.3	<b>16.1</b>	6.2	6.7	6.9	<b>7.0</b>	9.4	9.1	8.9	<b>8.9</b>
RO <sup>4</sup>	18.8	18.9*	:	:	7.1	6.7*	:	:	5.1	4.8*	:	:
SI <sup>4</sup>	11.5	11.5	11.5	<b>11.5</b>	4.0	4.1	4.2	<b>4.1</b>	5.4	4.6	4.5	<b>4.5</b>
SK	19.3	20.5	20.9	<b>21.3</b>	8.9	8.3	8.5	<b>8.8</b>	12.1	10.2	10.1	<b>10.1</b>
FI	16.0	16.9	16.9	<b>17.0</b>	6.1	6.3	6.4	<b>6.4</b>	6.9	6.7	6.7	<b>6.7</b>
SE <sup>5</sup>	19.0	21.6	22.5	<b>22.0</b>	5.5	6.4	6.7	<b>6.9</b>	6.2	6.8	7.0	<b>6.9</b>
UK	13.6	16.1	:	:	5.4	6.6	:	:	4.7	5.3	:	:
NO	6.7	8.1	8.3	:	2.5	2.9	3.1	:	2.4	2.6	2.7	:
US	11.6	13.8	13.9	<b>14.7</b>	5.0	7.2	7.4	<b>7.9</b>	4.8	5.9	6.1	<b>6.4</b>
JP	:	:	:	:	3.9	3.9	4.0	:	3.7	3.5	3.8	:

: Data not available      Source: Eurostat      \* Data for 2008 Q3

## SEASONALLY ADJUSTED NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (in millions)

	Dec 2007	Jun 2008	Jul 2008	Aug 2008	Sept 2008	Oct 2008	Nov 2008	Dec 2008
EA15	11.075	11.501	11.533	11.627	11.799	12.028	12.242	<b>12.472</b>
EU27	16.246	16.586	16.668	16.798	17.000	17.314	17.602	<b>17.911</b>

### Euro area and EU27 unemployed (in millions)

