

22/2017 - 31 January 2017

December 2016

Euro area unemployment at 9.6%

EU28 at 8.2%

The **euro area** (EA19) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate was 9.6% in December 2016, down from 9.7% in November 2016 and down from 10.5% in December 2015. This is the lowest rate recorded in the **euro area** since May 2009. The **EU28** unemployment rate was 8.2% in December 2016, stable compared to November 2016 and down from 9.0% in December 2015. This remains the lowest rate recorded in the **EU28** since February 2009. These figures are published by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**.

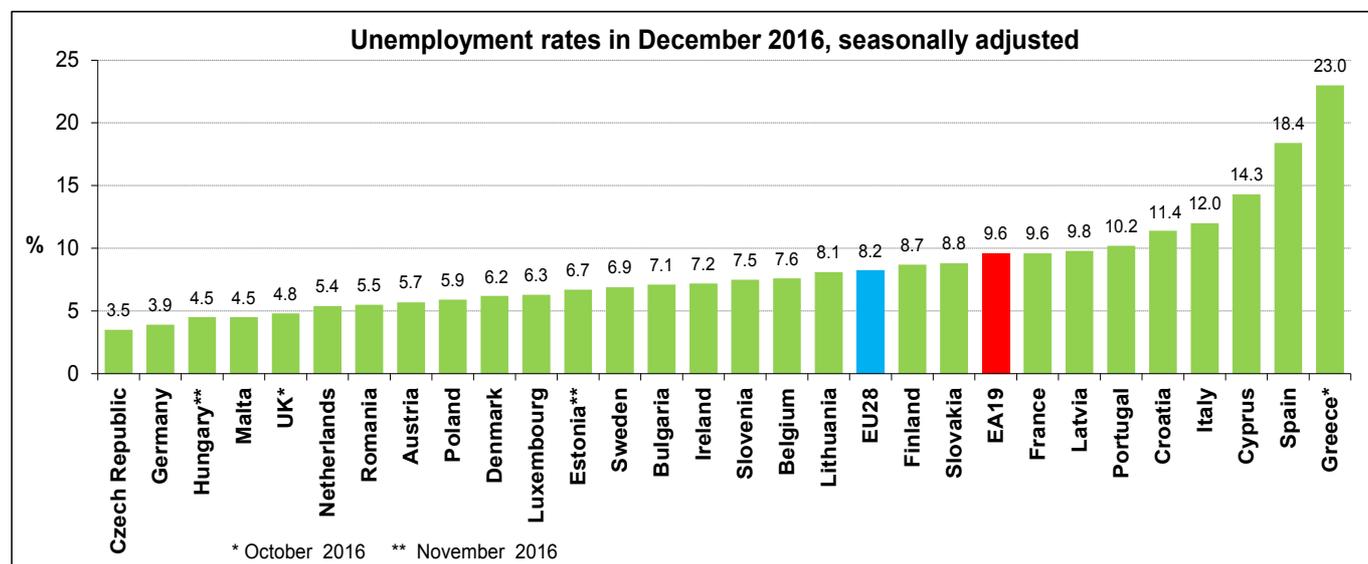
Eurostat estimates that 20.065 million men and women in the **EU28**, of whom 15.571 million were in the **euro area**, were unemployed in December 2016. Compared with November 2016, the number of persons unemployed decreased by 159 000 in the **EU28** and by 121 000 in the **euro area**. Compared with December 2015, unemployment fell by 1.839 million in the **EU28** and by 1.256 million in the **euro area**.

Member States

Among the Member States, the lowest unemployment rates in December 2016 were recorded in the **Czech Republic** (3.5%) and **Germany** (3.9%). The highest unemployment rates were observed in **Greece** (23.0% in October 2016) and **Spain** (18.4%).

Compared with a year ago, the unemployment rate in December 2016 fell in twenty-four Member States, while it increased in **Cyprus** (from 13.1% to 14.3%), **Italy** (from 11.6% to 12.0%), **Estonia** (from 6.6% to 6.7% between November 2015 and November 2016) and **Denmark** (from 6.1% to 6.2%). The largest decreases were registered in **Croatia** (from 15.0% to 11.4%), **Spain** (from 20.7% to 18.4%) and **Portugal** (from 12.2% to 10.2%).

In December 2016, the unemployment rate in the **United States** was 4.7%, up from 4.6% in November 2016 but down from 5.0% in December 2015.



Youth unemployment

In December 2016, 4.219 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the **EU28**, of whom 2.957 million were in the **euro area**. Compared with December 2015, youth unemployment decreased by 196 000 in the **EU28** and by 88 000 in the **euro area**. In December 2016, the youth unemployment rate was 18.6% in the **EU28** and 20.9% in the **euro area**, compared with 19.5% and 21.8% respectively in December 2015. In December 2016, the lowest rate was observed in **Germany** (6.5%), while the highest were recorded in **Greece** (44.2% in October 2016), **Spain** (42.9%) and **Italy** (40.1%).

Geographical information

The **euro area (EA19)** includes Belgium, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia, Slovakia and Finland.

The **European Union (EU28)** includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Methods and definition

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. In this news release unemployment rates are based on employment and unemployment data covering persons aged 15 to 74.

The **youth unemployment rate** is the number of people aged 15 to 24 unemployed as a percentage of the labour force of the same age. Therefore, the youth unemployment rate should not be interpreted as the share of jobless people in the overall youth population.

When data for the most recent month are not available for a Member State, EU and EA aggregates are calculated using the latest data available for that Member State.

Country notes

Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, Finland, Sweden and Iceland: the trend component is used instead of the more volatile seasonally adjusted data.

Denmark, Estonia, Hungary, Portugal, the United Kingdom and Norway: 3-month moving averages of LFS data are used instead of pure monthly indicators.

Revisions and timetable

The data in this News Release can be subject to revisions, caused by updates to the seasonally adjusted series whenever new monthly data are added; the inclusion of the most recent LFS data in the calculation process; update of seasonal adjustment models with complete annual data.

Compared with the rates published in News Release [4/2017](#) of 9 January 2017, the November 2016 unemployment rate has been revised downwards for both the EU28 (from 8.3% to 8.2%) and the EA19 (from 9.8% to 9.7%). Among Member States, rates have been revised by more than 0.1 percentage points (pp) downwards for Spain (by 0.5 pp), Denmark, Germany, Estonia (October data) and Malta (all four by 0.2 pp).

For more information

Eurostat [website section](#) on employment and unemployment

Eurostat [database section](#) on unemployment, including non-seasonally adjusted and trend data

Eurostat [Statistics Explained](#) article on unemployment

Eurostat [Statistics Explained](#) article on youth unemployment

Eurostat [metadata](#) on adjusted unemployment series

Eurostat €-indicators [release calendar](#)