

February 2008

Euro area unemployment stable at 7.1%

EU27 down to 6.7%

The **euro area**¹ (EA15) seasonally-adjusted unemployment rate² stood at 7.1% in February 2008, unchanged compared with January³. It was 7.6% in February 2007. The **EU27**¹ unemployment rate was 6.7% in February 2008, compared with 6.8% in January³. It was 7.4% in February 2007.

Eurostat estimates that 15.970 million men and women in the **EU27**, of which 10.909 million in the **euro area**, were unemployed in February 2008. Compared with January 2008, the number of persons unemployed decreased by 130 000 and 59 000 respectively. Compared with February 2007, unemployment was down by 1.5 million in the **EU27** and by 0.7 million in the **euro area**.

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

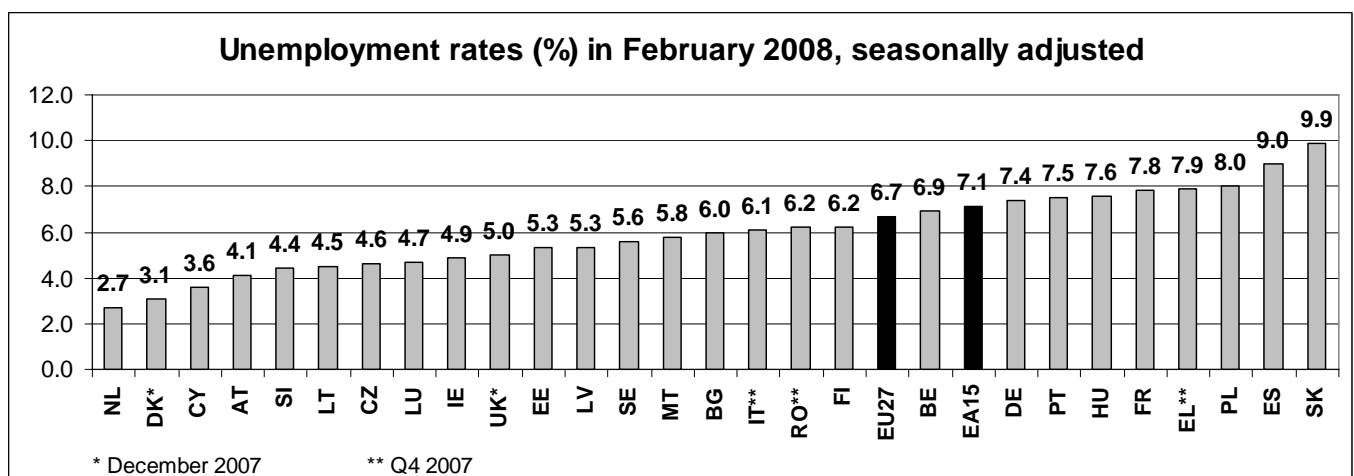
Among the Member States, the lowest unemployment rate was registered in the **Netherlands** (2.7%) and the highest in **Slovakia** (9.9%).

Over the last year, twenty-two Member States recorded a fall in their unemployment rate, four an increase and one remained stable. The largest falls were observed in **Poland** (10.8% to 8.0%), **Bulgaria** (7.7% to 6.0%) and **Slovakia** (11.5% to 9.9%), and the highest increase in **Spain** (8.1% to 9.0%).

The unemployment rate for males fell from 6.7% to 6.3% between February 2007 and February 2008 in the **euro area** and from 6.8% to 6.2% in the **EU27**. The female unemployment rate declined from 8.7% to 8.0% in the **euro area** and from 8.1% to 7.3% in the **EU27**.

In February 2008, the youth unemployment rate (under-25s) was 14.4% in the **euro area** and 14.6% in the **EU27**. In February 2007 it was 15.0% and 15.8% respectively. The lowest rates were observed in the **Netherlands** (5.1%) and **Austria** (7.7%), and the highest in **Greece** and **Italy** (both 21.8% in the fourth quarter 2007).

In February 2008, the unemployment rate was 4.8% in the **USA** and 3.9% in **Japan**.



1. The euro area (EA15) consists of Belgium, Germany, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Italy, Cyprus, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Portugal, Slovenia 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. 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).
According to the definition set by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition, unemployed persons:
 - 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.Eurostat restricts this definition to people aged 15 to 74.
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 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; first results from the Labour Force Survey are available 90 days after the end of the reference period for most Member States. Technical details on the calculations for each Member State can be found on the Eurostat internet site under Data / Population and social conditions / Labour market / Employment and unemployment / LFS main indicators, together with more detailed tables.
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 other 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, United Kingdom: Unemployment is restricted to persons aged 16-74. In Spain 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 January 2008 unemployment rates published in News Release 26/2008 of 29 February 2008 for the EA15 and the EU27 remain unchanged. As a regular update of the calculation process, the most recent EU Labour Force Survey data have been included for several Member States. This has caused a revision in the monthly unemployment rates of more than 0.1 percentage points for Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia.
4. 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.
5. Quarterly data.

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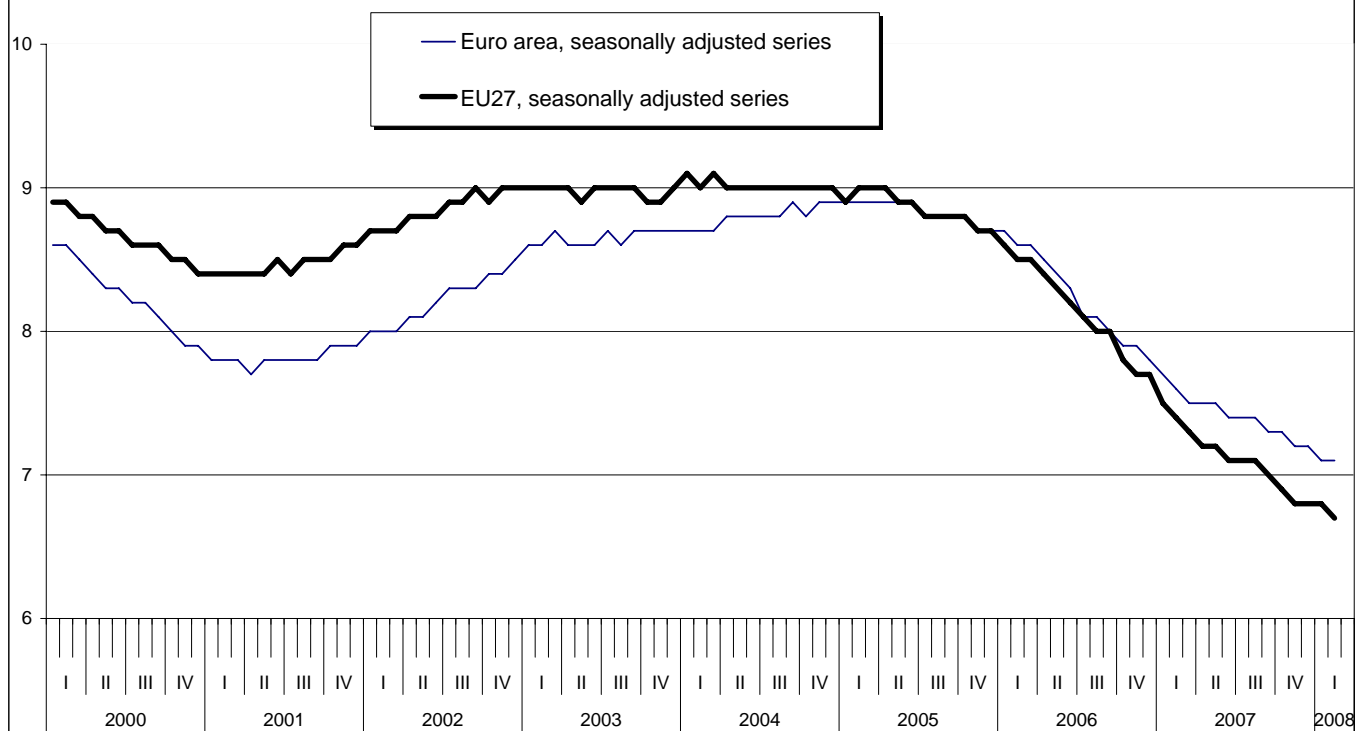
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Selected Principal European Economic Indicators: **<http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>**

Euro area and EU27 unemployment rates (%)



SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%) TOTALS

	Feb 2007	Aug 2007	Sep 2007	Oct 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008
EA15	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.1
EU27	7.4	7.1	7.0	6.9	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.7
BE	7.8	7.3	7.1	7.1	7.1	7.0	7.0	6.9
BG	7.7	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.0	5.9	6.1	6.0
CZ	5.8	5.1	5.0	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.7	4.6
DK	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.3	3.2	3.1	:	:
DE	8.7	8.3	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.8	7.6	7.4
EE	4.8	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.6	4.5	5.2	5.3
IE	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.7	4.9
EL⁵	8.6	8.2	8.2	7.9	7.9	7.9	:	:
ES	8.1	8.3	8.3	8.5	8.6	8.7	8.8	9.0
FR	8.7	8.2	8.1	8.0	7.9	7.9	7.8	7.8
IT⁵	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	6.1	:	:
CY	4.1	3.9	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.7	3.6
LV	6.6	6.0	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.3
LT	4.7	4.1	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.5
LU	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.7
HU	7.2	7.4	7.3	7.7	7.8	7.9	7.6	7.6
MT	6.6	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.1	5.8	5.8	5.8
NL	3.5	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.8	2.7
AT	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.3	4.3	4.2	4.1	4.1
PL	10.8	9.3	9.0	8.9	8.6	8.2	8.3	8.0
PT	8.2	8.0	7.9	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5
RO⁵	6.6	6.3	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.2	:	:
SI	5.4	4.7	4.6	4.6	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.4
SK	11.5	11.2	11.1	10.6	10.4	10.3	10.1	9.9
FI	7.1	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.4	6.2
SE⁴	6.6	5.8	5.9	5.9	5.9	5.7	5.6	5.6
UK	5.5	5.2	5.2	5.1	5.0	5.0	:	:
NO	2.7	2.5	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.4	:	:
US	4.5	4.7	4.7	4.8	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.8
JP	4.0	3.8	4.0	4.0	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9

: Data not available

Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

	Youth (under 25's)				Males				Females			
	Feb-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Feb-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08	Feb-07	Dec-07	Jan-08	Feb-08
EA15	15.0	14.5	14.4	14.4	6.7	6.4	6.3	6.3	8.7	8.1	8.1	8.0
EU27	15.8	14.7	14.7	14.6	6.8	6.3	6.2	6.2	8.1	7.4	7.4	7.3
BE	19.5	18.1	18.8	18.7	6.8	6.4	6.3	6.3	9.0	7.8	7.8	7.7
BG	16.1	13.9	13.8	13.4	7.2	5.3	5.5	5.4	8.2	6.5	6.8	6.7
CZ	11.9	8.7	8.9	9.1	4.4	3.6	3.7	3.5	7.5	6.1	6.0	5.9
DK	7.7	8.4	:	:	3.7	2.9	:	:	4.5	3.5	:	:
DE	11.2	10.5	10.1	9.8	8.7	7.9	7.7	7.4	8.7	7.7	7.6	7.5
EE ^b	10.6	9.2	:	:	5.7	5.2	6.1	6.1	3.9	3.9	4.3	4.3
IE	8.7	9.0	9.3	9.6	4.5	5.0	5.3	5.6	4.0	3.9	4.0	4.1
EL ^b	24.5	21.8	:	:	5.3	5.1	:	:	13.3	12.2	:	:
ES	17.3	19.0	19.4	19.8	6.1	7.1	7.3	7.6	10.9	10.9	10.9	10.9
FR	20.5	18.1	18.0	17.9	8.1	7.3	7.2	7.1	9.3	8.5	8.6	8.5
IT ^b	20.1	21.8	:	:	5.0	4.8	:	:	7.8	8.0	:	:
CY ^b	10.0	9.5	:	:	3.6	3.3	3.2	3.2	4.8	4.4	4.2	4.2
LV ^b	12.6	8.7	:	:	7.3	5.6	5.8	5.7	5.8	5.1	4.9	4.8
LT ^b	9.0	8.1	:	:	4.8	4.4	4.6	4.6	4.7	4.2	4.4	4.3
LU	18.5	16.6	15.9	16.4	4.1	4.1	3.8	3.9	6.0	5.3	5.7	5.7
HU	17.5	19.7	19.2	19.4	7.0	7.6	7.3	7.2	7.4	8.3	8.1	8.1
MT	14.0	11.3	11.1	11.0	6.0	5.2	5.2	5.1	7.9	7.2	7.1	7.0
NL	6.4	5.5	5.2	5.1	3.0	2.6	2.4	2.4	4.0	3.2	3.1	3.1
AT	8.7	8.2	8.0	7.7	4.0	3.7	3.6	3.5	5.1	4.8	4.8	4.7
PL	24.0	18.6	18.8	18.2	10.0	7.8	7.7	7.4	11.7	8.8	9.1	8.7
PT	17.3	15.8	15.5	15.3	6.8	6.0	5.9	5.9	9.7	9.4	9.3	9.2
RO ^b	20.3	18.9	:	:	7.5	7.1	:	:	5.5	5.1	:	:
SI ^b	10.7	10.6	:	:	4.6	3.7	3.8	3.7	6.3	5.4	5.3	5.2
SK	21.4	18.9	18.5	18.2	10.5	8.8	8.6	8.4	12.7	12.0	11.9	11.8
FI	17.3	16.1	16.0	15.9	6.6	6.0	5.7	5.5	7.5	7.0	7.0	7.0
SE [†]	20.9	18.5	18.4	18.3	6.4	5.4	5.3	5.2	6.9	6.1	6.0	6.0
UK	14.6	13.8	:	:	5.7	5.3	:	:	5.2	4.7	:	:
NO	8.4	6.8	:	:	2.7	2.6	:	:	2.7	2.2	:	:
US	9.8	11.8	11.7	11.3	4.7	5.1	5.1	4.9	4.3	4.9	4.7	4.7
JP	:	:	:	:	4.0	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.0	3.7	3.7	3.8

: Data not available Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS (in millions)

	Feb 2007	Aug 2007	Sep 2007	Oct 2007	Nov 2007	Dec 2007	Jan 2008	Feb 2008
EA15	11.603	11.318	11.217	11.176	11.098	11.032	10.968	10.909
EU27	17.513	16.757	16.577	16.454	16.285	16.147	16.100	15.970

Number of unemployed persons in the Euro area and EU27 (in millions)

