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February 2012

Euro area unemployment rate at 10.8%

EU27 at 10.2%

The **euro area**¹ (EA17) seasonally-adjusted² unemployment rate³ was 10.8% in February 2012, compared with 10.7% in January⁴. It was 10.0% in February 2011. The **EU27**¹ unemployment rate was 10.2% in February 2012, compared with 10.1% in January⁴. It was 9.5% in February 2011.

Eurostat estimates that 24.550 million men and women in the **EU27**, of whom 17.134 million were in the **euro area**, were unemployed in February 2012. Compared with January 2012, the number of persons unemployed increased by 167 000 in the **EU27** and by 162 000 in the **euro area**. Compared with February 2011, unemployment rose by 1.874 million in the **EU27** and by 1.476 million in the **euro area**.

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

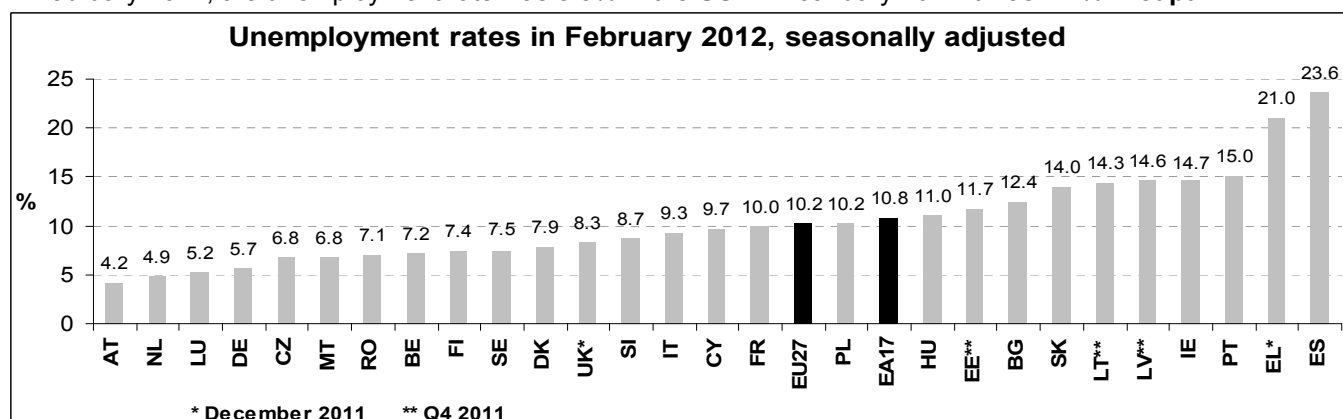
Among the Member States, the lowest unemployment rates were recorded in **Austria** (4.2%), the **Netherlands** (4.9%), **Luxembourg** (5.2%) and **Germany** (5.7%), and the highest in **Spain** (23.6%) and **Greece** (21.0% in December 2011).

Compared with a year ago, the unemployment rate fell in eight Member States, increased in eighteen and remained stable in **Romania**. The largest falls were observed in **Lithuania** (17.5% to 14.3% between the fourth quarters of 2010 and 2011), **Latvia** (17.0% 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** (14.3% to 21.0% between December 2010 and December 2011), **Spain** (20.6% to 23.6%) and **Cyprus** (6.7% to 9.7%).

Between February 2011 and February 2012, the unemployment rate for males increased from 9.7% to 10.7% in the **euro area** and from 9.4% to 10.1% in the **EU27**. The female unemployment rate rose from 10.3% to 11.0% in the **euro area** and from 9.6% to 10.2% in the **EU27**.

In February 2012, 5.462 million young persons (under 25) were unemployed in the **EU27**, of whom 3.272 million were in the **euro area**. Compared with February 2011, youth unemployment increased by 262 000 in the **EU27** and by 106 000 in the **euro area**. In February 2012, the youth unemployment rate was 22.4% in the **EU27** and 21.6% in the **euro area**. In February 2011 it was 21.0% and 20.5% respectively. The lowest rates were observed in **Germany** (8.2%), **Austria** (8.3%) and the **Netherlands** (9.4%), and the highest in **Spain** (50.5%) and **Greece** (50.4% in December 2011).

In February 2012, the unemployment rate was 8.3% in the **USA**. In January 2012 it was 4.7% 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 31/2012 of 1 March 2012, the January 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 Belgium, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Malta. The rate has been revised upwards by 0.5 percentage points for Slovenia, and by 0.7 percentage points for Bulgaria and Slovakia. The revisions are primarily caused by the inclusion of the most recent EU Labour Force Survey data in the calculation process and the annual update of seasonal adjustment parameters.
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 February 2012.
For Greece monthly data up to and including December 2011.
For the United Kingdom monthly data up to and including November-December 2011 and January 2012 (3-month rolling average).
For Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Spain, 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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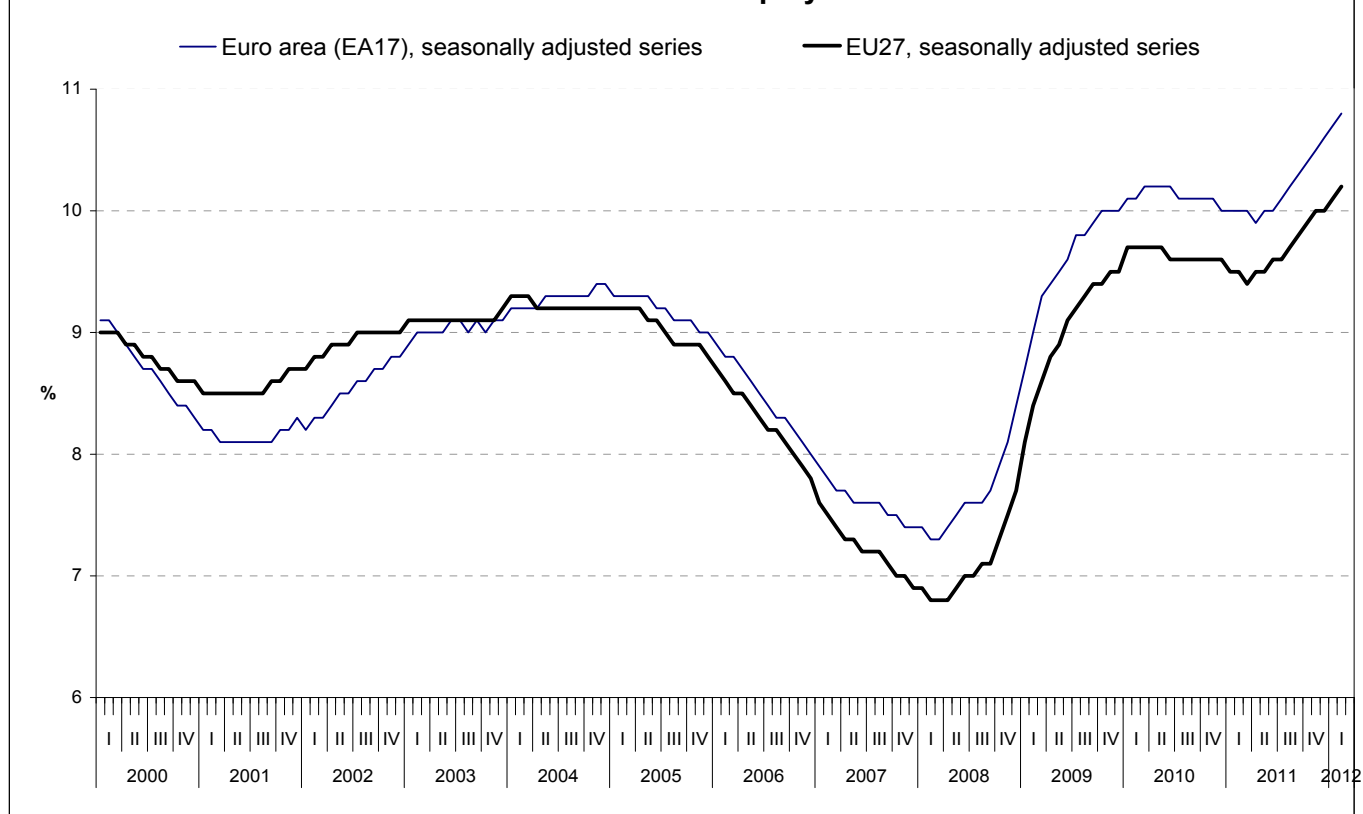
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Selected Principal European Economic Indicators: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/euroindicators>

Euro area and EU27 unemployment rates



SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%) TOTALS

	Feb 2011	Aug 2011	Sep 2011	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012
EA17	10.0	10.2	10.3	10.4	10.5	10.6	10.7	10.8
EU27	9.5	9.7	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.0	10.1	10.2
BE	7.1	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.2	7.1	7.2	7.2
BG	11.1	11.1	11.1	11.3	11.6	11.8	12.2	12.4
CZ	6.9	6.6	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.7	6.7	6.8
DK	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.7	7.8	7.8	7.9	7.9
DE⁷	6.3	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7	5.7
EE⁶	13.6	11.5	11.5	11.7	11.7	11.7	:	:
IE	14.2	14.7	14.7	14.7	14.8	14.7	14.7	14.7
EL	14.9	18.5	19.0	19.7	20.6	21.0	:	:
ES	20.6	22.0	22.4	22.7	22.9	23.0	23.3	23.6
FR	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.8	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.0
IT⁵	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.5	8.8	8.9	9.1	9.3
CY	6.7	7.8	8.3	9.0	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.7
LV⁶	16.3	14.8	14.8	14.6	14.6	14.6	:	:
LT⁶	16.3	15.3	15.3	14.3	14.3	14.3	:	:
LU	4.7	5.0	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.1	5.1	5.2
HU	10.8	10.9	10.9	10.9	10.9	11.0	11.3	11.0
MT	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.5	6.8	6.8	6.8
NL	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.8	4.9	4.9	5.0	4.9
AT⁷	4.4	3.8	4.0	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.2
PL	9.4	9.7	9.8	9.9	10.0	10.1	10.1	10.2
PT	12.3	12.7	13.0	13.6	14.0	14.6	14.8	15.0
RO	7.1	7.5	7.7	7.3	7.6	7.5	7.2	7.1
SI	8.1	8.1	8.3	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7
SK	13.4	13.5	13.6	13.9	14.0	14.1	14.0	14.0
FI⁷	8.0	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.5	7.4
SE	7.6	7.4	7.3	7.5	7.5	7.5	7.6	7.5
UK	7.7	8.3	8.3	8.4	8.3	8.3	:	:
IS	7.8	7.1	7.1	7.0	7.0	6.9	6.9	6.9
NO	3.2	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.4	3.3	3.2	:
US	9.0	9.1	9.0	8.9	8.7	8.5	8.3	8.3
JP	4.7	4.3	4.2	4.4	4.4	4.5	4.7	:

: Data not available Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED UNEMPLOYMENT RATES (%)

	Youth (under 25's)				Males				Females			
	Feb-11	Dec-11	Jan-12	Feb-12	Feb-11	Dec-11	Jan-12	Feb-12	Feb-11	Dec-11	Jan-12	Feb-12
EA17	20.5	21.4	21.5	21.6	9.7	10.4	10.6	10.7	10.3	10.8	10.9	11.0
EU27	21.0	22.1	22.3	22.4	9.4	9.9	10.1	10.1	9.6	10.1	10.1	10.2
BE	19.2	17.0	16.7	16.6	7.4	7.0	7.2	7.2	6.7	7.2	7.3	7.3
BG	26.5	29.3	31.0	32.2	11.9	13.3	13.7	14.0	10.1	10.2	10.5	10.7
CZ	17.1	18.4	18.8	19.1	6.0	5.8	5.9	6.0	8.1	7.8	7.8	7.8
DK	13.5	14.2	14.5	14.7	7.6	7.9	7.9	8.1	7.2	7.8	7.8	7.7
DE ⁷	8.9	8.3	8.2	8.2	6.6	5.9	5.9	6.0	6.0	5.4	5.4	5.4
EE ⁶	20.2	25.1	:	:	14.2	12.6	:	:	12.9	10.8	:	:
IE	29.0	31.1	31.5	31.6	17.3	17.7	17.9	17.9	10.3	11.0	10.9	10.8
EL	39.5	50.4	:	:	12.2	18.0	:	:	18.6	25.0	:	:
ES	44.4	49.3	49.9	50.5	20.1	22.6	22.9	23.3	21.4	23.4	23.7	23.9
FR	23.5	22.6	22.1	21.7	9.0	9.7	9.7	9.8	10.4	10.1	10.2	10.2
IT ⁵	27.8	30.7	31.0	31.9	7.4	8.4	8.6	8.6	9.1	9.7	9.9	10.3
CY ⁶	18.8	26.8	:	:	6.5	10.3	10.4	10.6	6.9	8.4	8.5	8.6
LV ⁶	30.9	27.4	:	:	18.0	16.8	:	:	14.5	12.3	:	:
LT ⁶	32.0	34.3	:	:	19.1	16.2	:	:	13.5	12.4	:	:
LU	14.4	16.7	16.6	16.9	3.4	4.0	4.0	4.1	6.2	6.4	6.4	6.5
HU	25.7	27.0	28.3	27.8	11.0	10.8	11.1	10.8	10.6	11.1	11.4	11.3
MT	14.0	14.4	14.8	14.5	5.8	6.3	6.1	6.1	7.5	7.5	8.0	8.0
NL	7.4	8.6	9.0	9.4	4.3	4.9	5.0	4.9	4.2	4.9	5.0	4.9
AT ⁷	8.9	8.4	8.9	8.3	4.3	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.5	4.6	4.5	4.4
PL	25.5	26.9	27.4	27.5	9.1	9.3	9.4	9.5	9.7	11.0	11.0	11.0
PT	26.9	35.0	35.1	35.4	11.9	14.7	14.9	15.1	12.8	14.5	14.7	14.8
RO ⁶	22.9	24.8	:	:	7.6	7.8	7.8	7.5	6.4	7.0	6.6	6.7
SI ⁶	16.3	16.4	:	:	8.1	8.4	8.3	8.4	8.0	9.2	9.1	9.0
SK	33.1	33.7	34.1	34.2	13.4	13.9	13.9	13.9	13.5	14.2	14.2	14.1
FI ⁷	20.4	19.9	19.9	19.8	8.5	8.2	8.2	8.2	7.5	6.7	6.7	6.6
SE	22.7	23.0	22.3	23.5	7.6	7.6	7.8	7.8	7.5	7.3	7.3	7.2
UK	20.1	22.2	:	:	8.3	8.9	:	:	7.0	7.6	:	:
IS	15.6	15.5	15.5	15.5	8.8	6.9	6.9	6.9	6.6	6.9	6.9	6.9
NO	9.1	8.0	7.6	:	3.5	3.7	3.7	:	2.8	2.8	2.7	:
US	17.6	16.7	16.0	16.5	9.4	8.7	8.3	8.3	8.5	8.3	8.3	:
JP	:	:	:	:	5.0	4.9	4.9	:	4.4	4.0	4.4	:

: Data not available Source: Eurostat

SEASONALLY ADJUSTED NUMBER OF UNEMPLOYED (in millions)

	Feb 2011	Aug 2011	Sep 2011	Oct 2011	Nov 2011	Dec 2011	Jan 2012	Feb 2012
EA17	15.658	16.043	16.277	16.456	16.681	16.793	16.972	17.134
EU27	22.676	23.302	23.566	23.778	24.042	24.189	24.383	24.550
EA17 - youth	3.166	3.170	3.213	3.237	3.293	3.265	3.262	3.272
EU27 - youth	5.200	5.290	5.347	5.398	5.479	5.454	5.451	5.462

