

LFS explanation flags

The Labour Force Survey data are based on a sample of the population. Consequently, flags are applied due to two main facts: confidentiality and reliability, and comparability over time and across countries. These rules are applied to the **high-tech employment** and **knowledge intensive activities** (KIA) databases.

Confidentially and reliability

In order to avoid the publication of results statistically unreliable or which allow identifying individuals, some rules are implemented.

In the high-tech domain, the confidentiality rules are not applied because the data published only concern aggregated data and relate to more than 200-400 persons.

The reliability restrictions are based on two limits, namely 'a' and 'b'. They are based on the sample size and designed in the individual Member States. Figures flagged 'a' should not be published, the symbol ":u" is used in this case. Figures flagged 'b' are published with a warning concerning their reliability, using the symbol 'u' after the figures. In the high-tech domain, the limits applied correspond to the annual average results.

Comparability over time and across countries

The LFS data are supposed to be flagged with 'b' flags corresponding to breaks in series. According to the recommendation of the LFS, the breaks in series were applied as listed below:

- For the re-design or increase of the sample size; modification of the method, of the data collection or of the weighting procedure; the change affected the overall results of the survey and the break in series was applied to employment tables.
- The census breaks were applied as the census often brought the modification in population figures.
- If a substantial change was made in the variable which was not used for calculation but was interrelated with the requested derived variable, the break was applied in the concerned table or category; for example, the change in HAT97LEV had an impact on HATLEV1D (derived variable) while only the former was provided in the extraction.
- If a change was made in the variable which was not used for the calculation but as a filter variable and may affect the results, the break was applied. This was the case for all the variables on employment status and in particular WSTATOR (working status): WSTATOR is a filter variable for NACE, ISCO or STARTIME.

For more information, please consult the [LFS website](#).