



Spanish Labour Force Survey

Report on neutral link coefficients for backward series 2009-2020 due to 2021-LFS changes

1 Changes on the Spanish LFS

The changes in the European Union Labour Force Survey (LFS) in 2021 are determined by the entry into force of the framework regulation for social surveys (Reg. 2019/1700) and the implementing and delegate regulations that develop it (in particular the implementing regulation 2019/2240). Most of the specifications contained in the aforementioned regulations were previously met by the Spanish EPA (homogeneous distribution of the sample -both in time and space- and a priori selection of the reference week, precision criteria of the estimates, timetable for delivering microdata files with the variables of the survey, etc.).

The LFS-2021 changes in Spain has basically meant adapting to changes in the operational definition of employment, by introducing new cases and a different treatment of long-term absences, applying the new way of asking about job search methods, and in general to apply the flow of questions that the questionnaires must respect as stated in regulation 2019/2240.

Together with the modification of variables and question flows that had to be adapted, it was decided to adopt changes in the framework of the survey, which basically were advanced to the third quarter of 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in order to alleviate the lack of response derived from the impossibility of conducting personal interviews (the new framework contains more extensive information on the telephone numbers of the household and its members).

According to the information available in the Spanish LFS, the impact of these changes has been statistically negligible.

In ([link changes EPA 2021](#)) the different changes and their impact on results can be consulted.

2 Special case: Long-term absence due to Measures of Temporary Employment Regulation due to the COVID19 pandemic ('Expedientes de Regulación Temporal de Empleo', ERTE, according to Spanish denomination)

The group of people in complete absence in the reference week due to 'employment regulation' (RZNOTB = 11 in our national questionnaire) was a minimum group up to and including 2019. These persons were classified applying the criteria of receiving 50% of the salary or of a duration of more than three months. The employed people resulting of it offers the results that can be consulted in

[\(Link to table of absences by reason for employed people\)](#)

According to these data, from 2016 to 2019 it can be seen that these situations are anecdotal and affect just very particular cases. In previous years, at times of less economic dynamism, this group reached a higher amount. Even so, the maximum recorded for the period from 2008-2019 is 18.5 thousand in 2009. The table for the total 'employment regulation' absences and an illustrative graph are attached for convenience of consultation in the annex of results.

It must be borne in mind that these (employment) figures are the joint count of absences of less than three months or, if longer, receiving more than 50% of salary. The highest proportion of cases refers to absences of less than three months duration.

Therefore, looking at the data until 2019, it was not possible to anticipate a significant effect in the disappearance of the 50% salary reception criterion for ERTE durations of more than 3 months when implementing the new operational employment definition in 2021. But the problem emerged in all its harshness in Spain, as of March 2020, already influencing the data for the first quarter, with the COVID19 pandemic in which collective ERTes were approved that later on affected millions of people.

With the passing of the quarters and the persistence of the pandemic, the three-month duration limit of the absence from employment was exceeded in an appreciable number of cases and the strict application of the duration criterion (applicable from 2021 according to the new LFS regulations) or the consideration of receiving at least 50% of the salary (valid until 2020 inclusive) classified a considerable number of people as employed or not, according to the definition that was applied.

Faced with this dilemma and the need to adequately monitor the pandemic, it was decided, previous agreement of INE with Eurostat, to maintain the criterion of 50% of salary to consider employed people in a situation of ERTE lasting more than three months as long as the pandemic remained active. In fact, the practical application of the ILO criterion is that the formal link with employment is the requirement to consider people absent from work as employed, and the ERTE guarantees return to employment



This has made it possible to homogeneously compare the figures for 2020 and 2021 at a crucial moment in the labour market in Spain.

This treatment of ERTes, however, cannot be taken into consideration to recalculate retrospective series since the differences are exclusive to the period 2020-2021, which is when the measures adopted by the COVID19 pandemic associated with protection of employment offer different results depending on the application of one operational definition or another.

When the time comes, it will always be possible to carry out analytical studies that compare the levels of employed persons with one or another definition (remember that working hours, for example, are not affected, since these conflicting cases of employed persons with total absence of employment of more three months do not compute hours of work in the reference week). Once the pandemic is over, the numbers from both operational definitions of employment will naturally converge again. At this time, estimates of the impact of the pandemic and the different operational definitions in the occupancy figures may be offered, but always limited to the period 2020-2021 (provided that the effect of the pandemic ends in 2021 as we all hope). In any case, these effects should not be carried back retrospectively to previous periods when the differences between the two operational definitions are practically nil.

ANNEX of results:

- Table of employed persons absent of their main job in the reference week by reason of the absence. Quarterly data for 2008-2021
- Graph of employed persons absent due to 'employment regulation'

National results

Employed persons

Employed persons who have not worked in the reference week by economic sector, sex and reason for not working

Units: Thousands Persons

	Total									
	Total	Holidays or leave	Leave due to the birth of a child	Sickness, accident or temporary incapacity	Partial unemployment due to technical or economic reasons	Employment regulation	Strike or labour conflict	Other reasons	Does not know	Non-classifiable
Both sexes										
2021QII	3,810.4	2,818.4	120.6	702.7	30.0	65.2	..	59.5	..	13.9
2021QI	1,498.4	357.8	124.1	736.3	33.3	173.8	..	65.2	0.5	7.4
2021Q	1,964.7	502.8	102.8	838.3	88.6	329.3	0.7	97.3	0.6	4.4
2020QIV	1,889.1	452.1	106.5	742.0	145.3	352.6	1.1	80.1	..	9.4
2020QIII	3,592.8	2,228.1	96.5	654.1	162.3	352.4	..	82.0	1.1	16.2
2020QII	4,706.2	236.6	99.2	797.1	1,602.1	1,809.0	..	129.9	3.6	28.7
2020QI	1,966.9	572.7	87.1	617.2	398.5	179.8	1.4	96.3	1.5	12.3
2019QIV	1,457.1	711.3	94.2	565.5	13.9	1.5	1.4	63.2	1.5	4.4
2019QIII	3,136.8	2,446.7	85.4	519.5	12.0	0.2	..	61.5	0.7	10.8
2019QII	1,094.1	429.6	74.5	522.6	10.9	0.8	0.4	51.7	0.7	2.9
2019QI	1,135.4	444.1	87.1	532.4	13.0	3.5	2.0	49.4	0.2	3.8
2018QIV	1,337.7	665.4	75.0	512.7	13.8	0.9	..	63.1	0.4	6.5
2018QIII	3,005.9	2,358.7	72.9	476.0	10.5	2.0	..	74.9	..	10.8
2018QII	958.4	287.8	82.9	510.6	12.2	1.1	0.1	60.8	..	2.9
2018QI	1,127.2	467.2	74.6	490.7	13.8	1.9	0.4	75.1	0.5	2.9
2017QIV	1,286.5	644.0	83.5	474.2	12.9	1.7	..	64.4	0.4	5.4
2017QIII	2,969.4	2,349.1	83.0	438.9	14.5	..	0.4	67.0	0.3	16.3
2017QII	997.7	378.3	84.6	449.4	13.4	0.9	0.4	64.8	0.9	5.0
2017QI	969.2	330.7	86.4	461.8	22.5	1.1	0.1	63.8	..	2.8
2016QIV	1,213.7	642.3	71.4	413.4	19.6	0.7	..	62.5	0.3	3.7
2016QIII	2,776.8	2,198.9	81.2	412.7	21.0	2.3	..	51.7	0.5	8.7
2016QII	829.6	241.9	71.4	440.2	15.1	2.1	..	56.2	0.8	1.9
2016QI	965.4	400.7	65.6	412.5	25.8	1.5	0.3	56.0	..	3.1
2015QIV	1,013.1	460.8	76.7	380.9	17.8	2.7	0.6	68.0	0.6	5.0
2015QIII	2,640.4	2,099.3	68.8	379.6	17.8	2.5	..	64.3	..	8.1
2015QII	845.5	288.7	75.3	396.3	17.4	3.2	1.4	59.7	0.2	3.4
2015QI	1,004.4	435.5	72.8	382.7	31.4	7.3	0.6	69.5	0.2	4.5
2014QIV	965.5	434.9	72.8	358.3	26.8	8.3	0.2	62.2	0.5	1.6
2014QIII	2,735.0	2,209.4	76.2	351.8	22.4	6.2	..	58.2	0.1	10.9
2014QII	836.9	325.2	65.4	347.0	23.4	8.4	0.5	64.2	..	2.8
2014QI	915.4	346.3	82.8	356.2	26.5	14.5	1.8	84.9	..	2.5
2013QIV	1,038.7	515.2	69.4	337.3	33.1	13.9	1.4	65.2	..	3.3
2013QIII	2,749.9	2,217.4	74.0	323.8	34.6	18.1	0.1	72.6	0.1	9.2
2013QII	773.3	245.6	79.9	332.1	32.1	15.2	..	64.8	..	3.7
2013QI	1,011.2	423.0	79.0	367.5	38.5	16.7	1.0	81.4	0.3	3.9
2012QIV	1,105.4	555.7	86.2	340.2	41.4	15.7	1.3	62.2	0.3	2.6
2012QIII	2,759.3	2,228.6	76.1	317.0	45.6	14.0	2.1	64.1	..	11.9
2012QII	900.9	361.7	75.4	356.6	40.1	12.8	0.5	49.0	1.1	3.6
2012QI	994.3	373.8	108.7	374.1	43.6	15.1	0.7	74.9	0.4	3.2
2011QIV	1,203.2	584.6	91.2	409.0	29.8	10.4	0.6	73.9	0.6	3.1
2011QIII	2,888.2	2,324.5	78.2	372.8	24.1	8.3	1.4	67.8	0.9	10.2
2011QII	983.4	387.5	68.2	420.4	21.3	10.4	0.3	70.2	..	5.0
2011QI	951.9	343.6	70.0	424.8	25.0	13.1	0.1	70.8	0.3	4.2
2010QIV	1,336.1	672.4	91.3	436.2	44.9	11.1	0.6	75.2	..	4.3
2010QIII	3,097.8	2,491.9	83.1	406.1	33.6	7.4	..	64.5	..	11.2
2010QII	959.8	324.5	74.9	442.7	28.0	13.6	0.8	70.1	0.8	4.5
2010QI	1,170.5	463.1	78.6	450.1	39.8	18.5	0.4	114.8	1.0	4.2
2009QIV	1,257.5	583.4	77.1	456.0	34.7	19.1	..	81.8	1.8	3.7
2009QIII	3,210.6	2,580.5	73.9	418.6	27.2	21.4	0.4	76.1	0.6	12.0
2009QII	1,097.1	443.4	70.1	463.4	29.1	19.4	1.2	64.8	1.1	4.6
2009QI	1,296.3	563.1	73.6	496.1	40.8	13.9	0.2	98.8	0.6	9.1
2008QIV	1,387.4	671.6	78.0	515.5	26.0	3.5	0.6	86.0	0.7	5.6
2008QIII	3,463.7	2,798.4	94.2	463.2	12.5	0.7	0.7	79.3	0.8	13.9
2008QII	1,037.3	310.1	78.9	533.3	14.0	0.7	15.3	79.1	0.2	5.5
2008QI	1,497.6	764.4	83.9	558.2	12.8	0.4	1.5	70.9	..	5.5

Notes:

The category "Not classifiable" corresponds to employed persons who have not worked on their main job but who did not indicate any reason why they were unemployed because they had a second job

In the first quarter of 2020, as a consequence of the declaration of the high alert period (Royal Decrees 463/2020 and 487/2020) caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the sample size of the first EPA interviews in weeks 11 to 13 has been lower than in other quarters, meaning that the variation coefficients for the most disaggregated estimates may be higher than usual. We recommend that you consult the related INEbase tables coeficientes de variación.

Source:

National Statistics Institute

Economically Active Population Survey, Both sexes, Total, Employment regulation

