

150/2020 - 8 October 2020

## EU labour market in the second quarter 2020

# Total labour market slack up to 14%

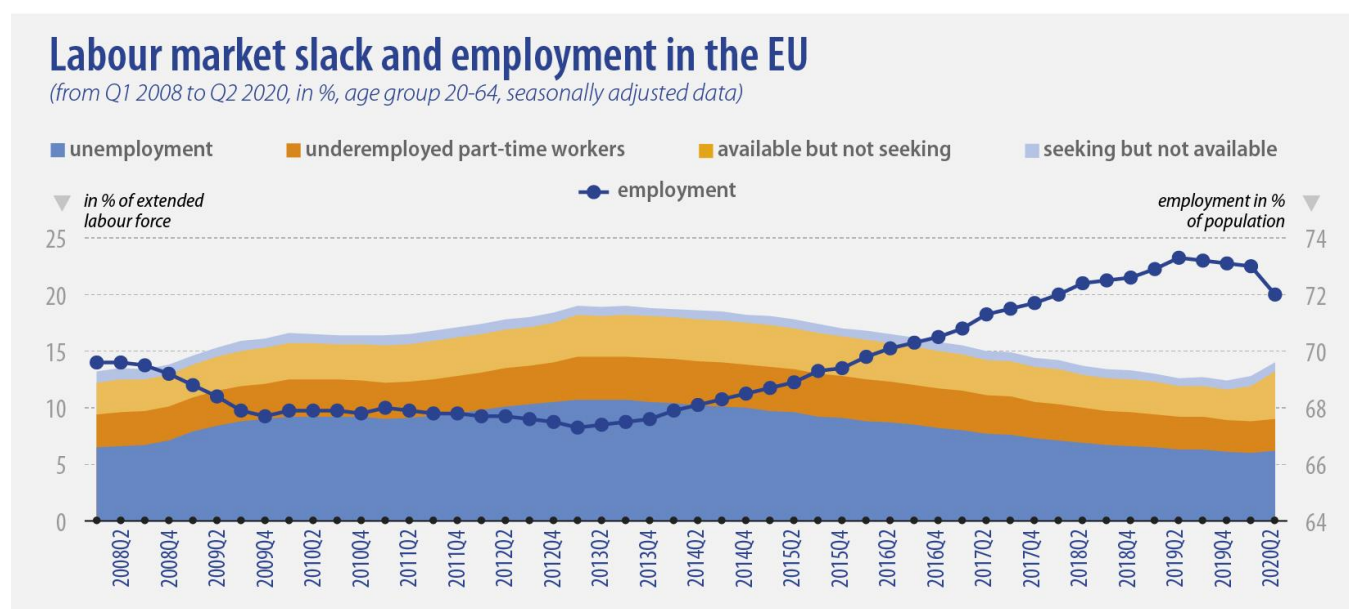
### Sharp drop in hours worked

Throughout the second quarter 2020, the labour market across the **European Union (EU)** was affected by COVID-19 measures taken by Member States. Employment and unemployment as defined by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) concept are, in this particular situation, not sufficient to describe all the developments taking place in the labour market. In this phase of the crisis, active measures to contain employment losses led to temporary absences from work rather than dismissals. In addition, individuals could not search for work or were not available due to the containment measures, thus not counting as unemployed according to the ILO concept.

In this release, **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**, is publishing a set of additional seasonally adjusted quarterly indicators which help to capture the most recent movements on the labour market in the EU Member States. These include **total labour market slack**, which comprises all persons who have an unmet need for employment, **absences from work** as well as an index of **total actual hours worked** in the main job. More **new indicators** on recent job leavers and starters, weekly total absences, as well as transitions are available in the Eurostat database.

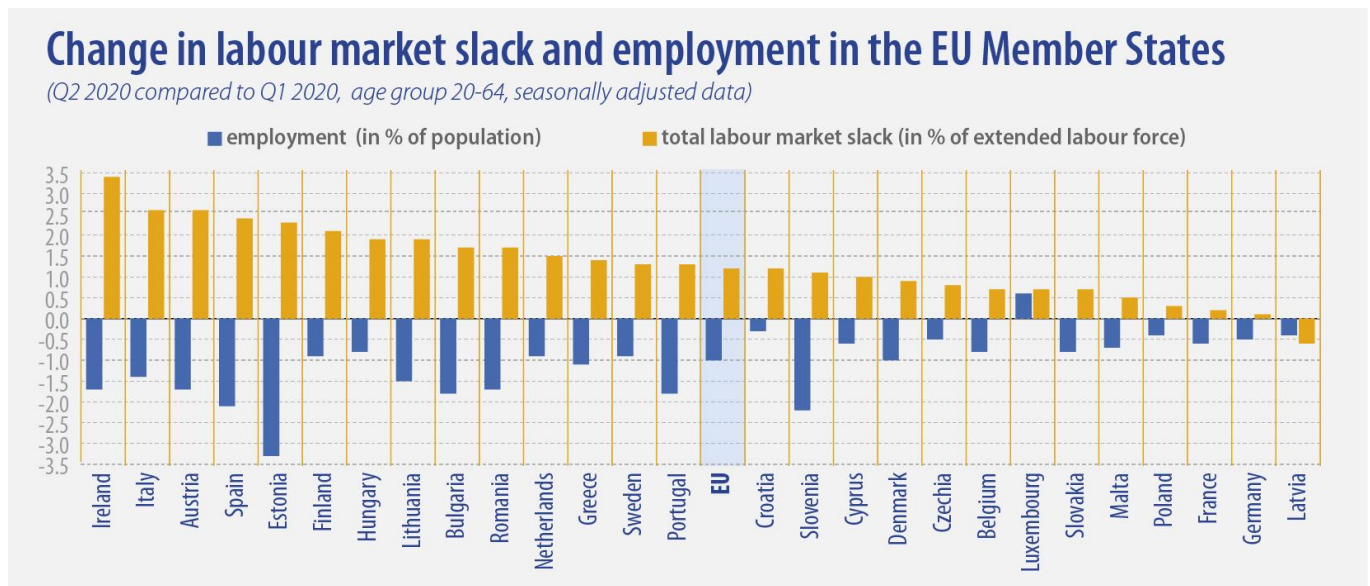
### Labour market slack up by 1.2 percentage points, employment down by 1.0 percentage points

In the second quarter of 2020, 187.3 million persons in the **EU** were employed. The **EU** seasonally adjusted employment rate for people aged 20-64 stood at 72.0%, down by 1.0 pp from 73.0% in the first quarter 2020. This has been the sharpest quarter-on-quarter decline since the beginning of the time series in 2000. 13.1 million persons were unemployed. The **EU** seasonally adjusted unemployment rate was 6.5%, up from 6.3% in the first quarter 2020. At the same time, seasonally adjusted total labour market slack in the **EU**, consisting in unmet demand for labour, amounted to 29.6 million persons, which represented 14.0% of the extended labour force in the second quarter 2020, up from 12.8% in the first quarter 2020. This has been the highest quarter-on-quarter increase since the beginning of the time series in 2008.



## Labour market slack increased most in Ireland, Italy and Austria

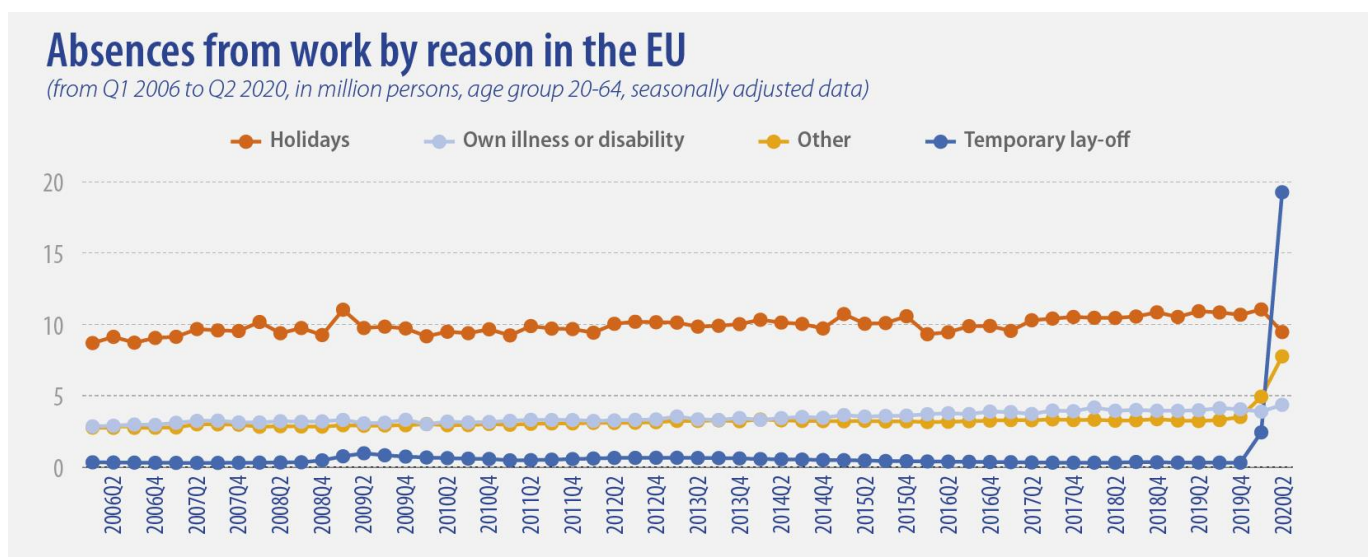
Overall labour market slack increased in all EU Member States in the second quarter 2020 compared to the first quarter 2020, except in **Latvia** (-0.6 pp). The highest increases were reported in **Ireland** (+3.4 pp), **Italy** and **Austria** (both +2.6 pp), and **Spain** (+2.4 pp). Employment fell in all countries with the exception of **Luxembourg** (+0.6 pp). The highest drops in employment were recorded in **Estonia** (-3.3 pp), **Slovenia** (-2.2 pp) and **Spain** (-2.1 pp), and the lowest in **Croatia** (-0.3 pp), **Latvia** and **Poland** (both -0.4 pp).



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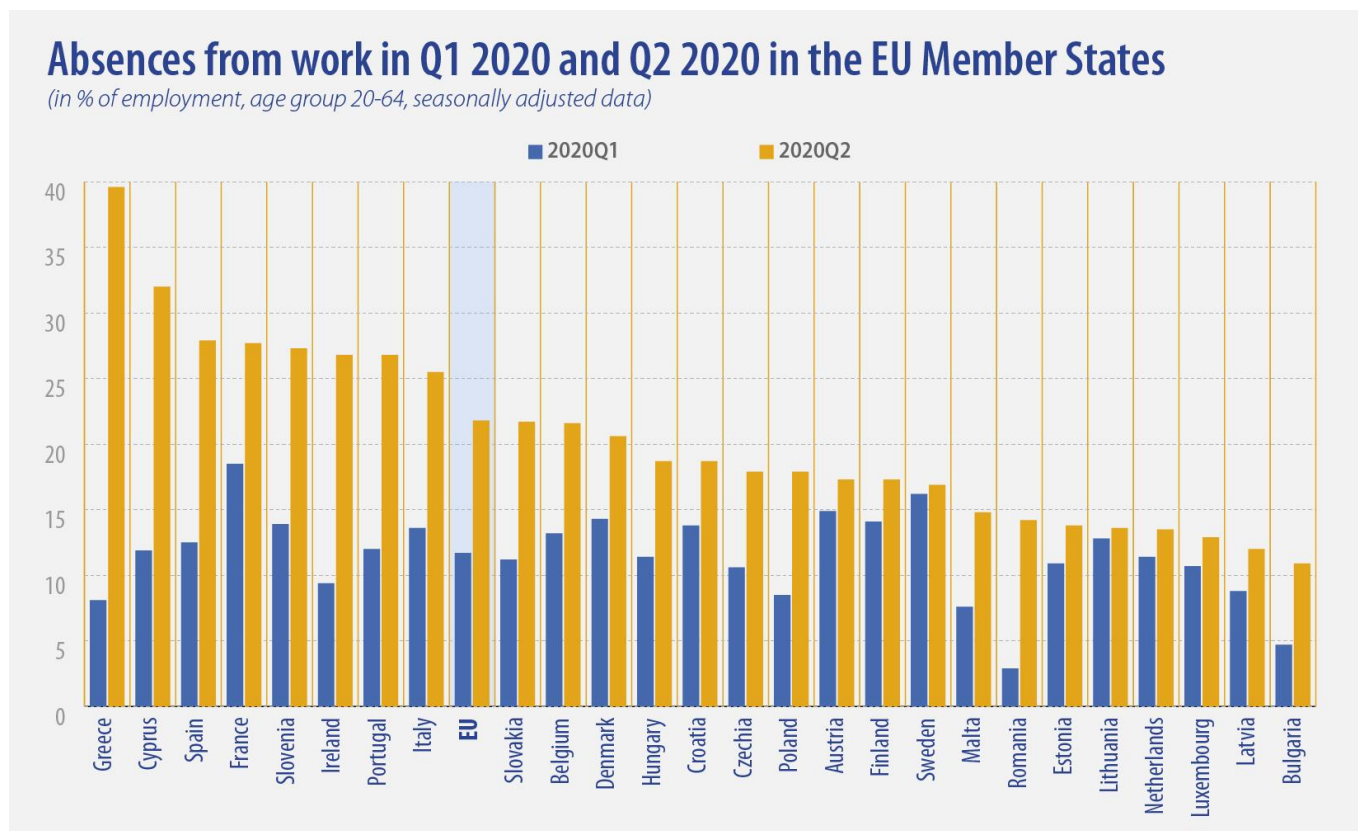
## Number of employed persons temporarily absent from work up by over 80%

In the second quarter 2020, a total of 40.9 million persons were absent from work in the **EU**, an increase of 18.6 million compared to the first quarter 2020. This increase is almost exclusively due to a sharp increase in temporary lay-offs, which rose from 2.4 million persons to 19.3 million persons. The number of persons absent from work due to reasons not including lay-off, holiday or illness, rose from 4.9 million to 7.8 million between the two quarters.



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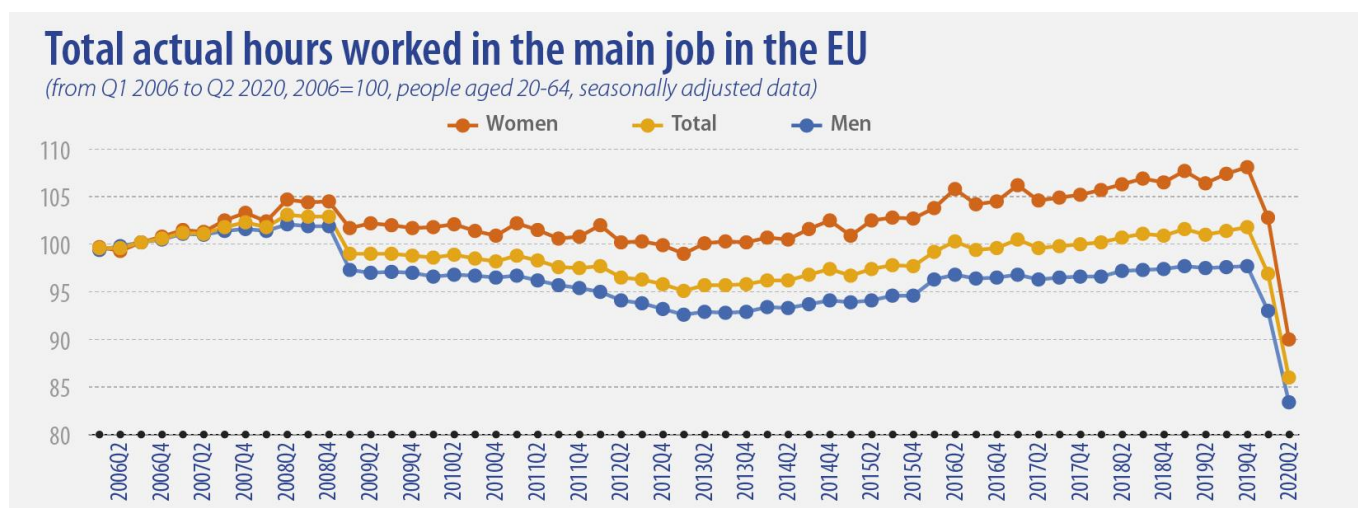
In comparison to the first quarter 2020, all Member States for which data are available experienced a rise in overall absences from work in the second quarter 2020. The highest rates of absences were observed in **Greece** (39.6%), **Cyprus** (32.0%), **Spain** (27.9%) and **France** (27.7%) and the lowest rates in **Bulgaria** (10.9%), **Latvia** (12.0%) and **Luxembourg** (12.9%).



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### Sharp fall of hours worked in the second quarter 2020

Total actual hours worked have dropped sharply in the **EU** between the first quarter 2020 and the second quarter 2020, and have fallen substantially below the values observed during the debt crisis. The levels of total actual hours worked are influenced by the total number of persons working, as well as the number of hours worked by each of these persons. In the second quarter 2020, total actual hours worked have hit record lows for women as well as for men. Women have been hit harder than men, with a drop from 103 to 90 index points between the first quarter 2020 and the second quarter 2020, compared to a drop of 93 to 83 for men.

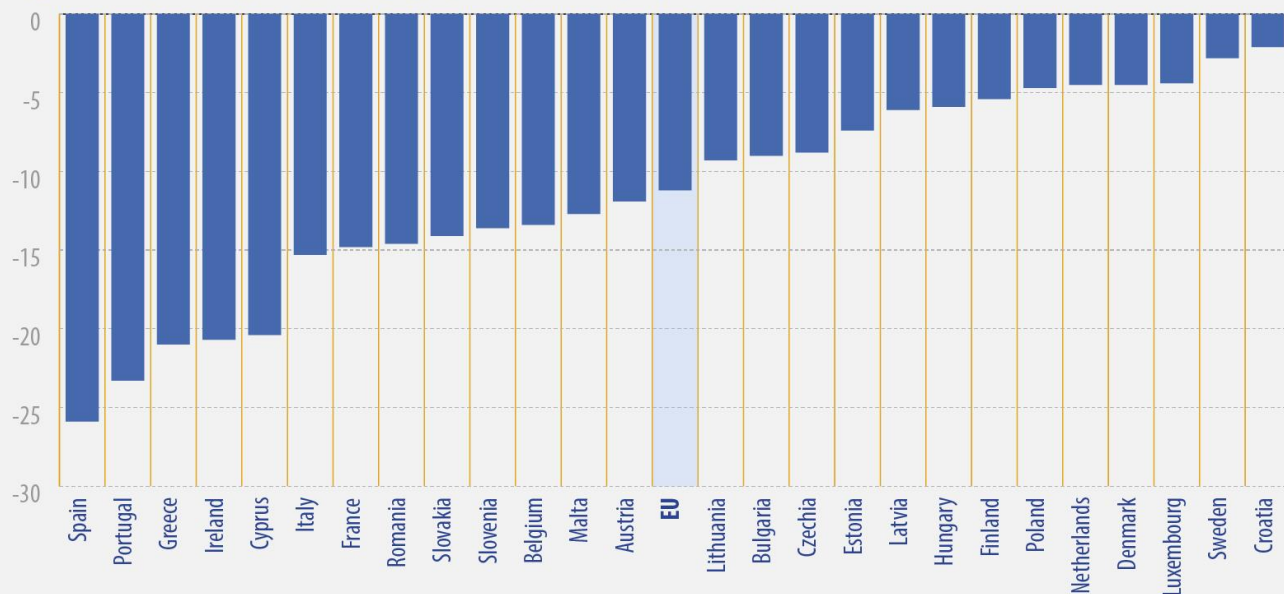


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All Member States for which data are available experienced a drop in total actual hours worked between the first quarter 2020 and the second quarter 2020. This was the second consecutive quarterly drop in total actual hours worked for all countries except Finland. The highest overall falls were observed in **Spain** (-25.9%), **Portugal** (-23.3%), **Greece** (-21.0%), **Ireland** (-20.7%) and **Cyprus** (-20.4%).

## Quarterly change in total actual hours worked in the main job in the EU Member States

(Q2 2020 compared to Q1 2020, in %, age group 20-64, seasonally adjusted data)



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## Geographical information

The **European Union (EU27)** includes Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, and Sweden.

## Methods and definitions

Eurostat produces harmonised labour market data for individual EU Member States, the euro area and the EU.

**Employed persons** are all persons who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week or unpaid for a business owned by a member of the family, or were temporarily absent from such work. The employment rate is the percentage of employed persons in relation to the total population.

**Unemployed persons** are all persons who:

- are without work;
- are available to start work within two weeks;
- and have actively sought employment at some time during the previous four weeks.

The **labour market slack** is the sum of unemployed persons, underemployed part-time workers, persons seeking work but not immediately available and persons available to work but not seeking, expressed as percentage of the extended labour force.

**Underemployed part-time workers** are persons working part-time who wish to work additional hours and are available to do so. Part-time work is recorded as self-reported by individuals.

**Persons seeking work but not immediately available** are the sum of persons neither employed nor unemployed who: (a) were actively seeking work during the last 4 weeks but are not available for work in the next 2 weeks; or (b) found a job to start in less than 3 months and are not available for work in the next 2 weeks; or (c) found a job to start in 3 months or more; or (d) were passively seeking work during the last 4 weeks and are available for work in the next 2 weeks.

**Persons available to work but not seeking** are persons neither employed nor unemployed who want to work, are available for work in the next 2 weeks but were not seeking work.

The **extended labour force** is the total number of people employed plus unemployed, plus those seeking work but not immediately available plus those available to work but not seeking. In this news release data cover persons aged 20 to 64.

**Absences from work:** persons absent from work are considered as employed if there is a formal attachment to the job. This can be for example the continued receipt of wage or salary, AND an assurance of a return to work (or an agreement as to the date of return) following the end of the contingency. Persons can be absent from work due to a number of reasons, among which **holidays, own illness, and temporary lay-offs**. **Lay-offs** are classified as employed if they have an assurance of return to work within a period of 3 months or receive  $\geq 50\%$  of their wage or salary from their employer.

**Total actual hours worked in the main job** are the total actual hours worked by all employees and self-employed in their main occupation during the quarter. Data are indexed to be equal to 100 in 2006 for reasons of comparability between countries.

The data presented in this news release are **seasonally adjusted**. The nature of current developments may therefore lead to revisions of the data in the future. Figures on employment and on hours worked in this news release come from the **Labour Force Survey**. Employment and hours worked data are also available from **National Accounts** domains. As the two data collections are compiled for different purposes, their underlying methodologies and definitions differ to some extent. In consequence, figures should not be compared directly, and not be used interchangeably.

## Country notes

Germany: due to technical issues with the introduction of the new German system of integrated household surveys, including the LFS, the figures for Germany for the first and second quarter 2020 are not direct estimates from LFS microdata, but based on a larger sample including additional data from other integrated household surveys. For more information, see [here](#).

## For more information

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

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

Eurostat "Statistics Explained" articles on quarterly data on [labour market slack](#), on [absences from work](#) and on [hours of work](#)

Eurostat [metadata](#) on LFS Main Indicators

European Statistics [Code of Practice](#)

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## Employment, unemployment and labour market slack in second quarter 2020

(age group 20 to 64, seasonally adjusted data)

	Employment (as % of population)			Unemployment (as % of labour force)			Labour market slack (as % of extended labour force)		
	Q2 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q2 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	Q2 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020
<b>EU</b>	73.3	73.0	<b>72.0</b>	6.5	6.3	<b>6.5</b>	12.6	12.8	<b>14.0</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	71.0	70.4	<b>69.6</b>	5.4	5.0	<b>5.0</b>	11.1	11.0	<b>11.7</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	75.5	74.1	<b>72.3</b>	4.1	4.3	<b>5.4</b>	7.5	8.0	<b>9.7</b>
<b>Czechia</b>	80.3	80.1	<b>79.6</b>	1.9	1.9	<b>2.5</b>	3.0	2.7	<b>3.5</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	78.2	78.5	<b>77.5</b>	4.6	4.5	<b>4.9</b>	9.3	9.9	<b>10.8</b>
<b>Germany</b>	81.0	80.8bpu	<b>80.3pu</b>	3.1	3.2bpu	<b>3.4pu</b>	7.3	8.2bpu	<b>8.3pu</b>
<b>Estonia</b>	79.4	80.7	<b>77.4</b>	4.8	4.7	<b>7.1</b>	8.8	8.6	<b>10.9</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	75.2	74.5	<b>72.8</b>	4.7	4.5	<b>4.5</b>	12.0	12.1	<b>15.5</b>
<b>Greece</b>	61.4	61.3	<b>60.2</b>	17.2	16.0	<b>17.0</b>	24.2	23.4	<b>24.8</b>
<b>Spain</b>	68.5	66.8	<b>64.7</b>	13.7	13.9	<b>15.0</b>	22.0	22.6	<b>25.0</b>
<b>France</b>	71.8	71.7	<b>71.1</b>	8.4	7.5	<b>6.9</b>	15.6	15.1	<b>15.3</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	66.1	67.1	<b>66.8</b>	6.4	5.9	<b>6.4</b>	13.4	12.5	<b>13.7</b>
<b>Italy</b>	63.7	63.3	<b>61.9</b>	9.9	8.7	<b>8.0</b>	21.3	21.0	<b>23.6</b>
<b>Cyprus</b>	76.2	75.7	<b>75.1</b>	7.1	6.7	<b>7.3</b>	13.4	13.3	<b>14.3</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	77.5	77.7	<b>77.3</b>	6.1	7.4	<b>8.5</b>	11.1	14.1	<b>13.5</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	78.5	78.2	<b>76.7</b>	6.3	6.8	<b>8.8</b>	8.3	9.3	<b>11.2</b>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	73.1	71.2	<b>71.8</b>	5.0	6.1	<b>6.2</b>	10.0	11.5	<b>12.2</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	75.3	75.1	<b>74.3</b>	3.2	3.6	<b>4.4</b>	5.8	6.7	<b>8.6</b>
<b>Malta</b>	77.5	78.2	<b>77.5</b>	3.2	3.4	<b>4.2</b>	4.7	5.9	<b>6.4</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	80.1	80.6	<b>79.7</b>	2.9	2.7	<b>3.1</b>	9.2	8.7	<b>10.2</b>
<b>Austria</b>	76.9	76.2	<b>74.5</b>	4.3	4.4	<b>5.5</b>	9.7	10.7	<b>13.3</b>
<b>Poland</b>	73.0	73.3	<b>72.9</b>	3.2	2.9	<b>3.1</b>	6.2	5.8	<b>6.1</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	76.0	75.5	<b>73.7</b>	6.6	6.3	<b>5.9</b>	12.4	12.4	<b>13.7</b>
<b>Romania</b>	70.9	71.6	<b>69.9</b>	3.6	3.9	<b>5.2</b>	6.6	6.5	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	76.6	76.7	<b>74.5</b>	4.2	4.2	<b>5.1</b>	6.4	6.7	<b>7.8</b>
<b>Slovakia</b>	73.4	73.0	<b>72.2</b>	5.5	5.9	<b>6.4</b>	8.3	8.3	<b>9.0</b>
<b>Finland</b>	77.3	77.1	<b>76.2</b>	6.1	6.2	<b>6.9</b>	13.0	13.2	<b>15.3</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	82.3	81.5	<b>80.6</b>	5.6	6.4	<b>7.4</b>	11.0	12.2	<b>13.5</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	79.2	79.8	<b>79.6</b>	3.4	3.3	<b>3.2</b>	9.4	9.2	<b>9.4</b>
<b>Iceland</b>	86.3	84.8	<b>81.3</b>	3.1	3.0	<b>4.6</b>	7.4	8.4	<b>11.7</b>
<b>Norway</b>	79.5	79.7	<b>78.6</b>	3.0	3.3	<b>3.8</b>	8.1	8.7	<b>9.8</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	83.1	83.0	<b>81.9</b>	4.3	4.3	<b>4.7</b>	14.0	13.8	<b>15.4</b>
<b>Montenegro</b>	60.8	:	:	14.7	:	:	24.6	:	:
<b>North Macedonia</b>	58.9	60.5	<b>58.9</b>	17.4	16.0	<b>16.8</b>	23.9	22.1	<b>24.4</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	65.0	65.7	<b>65.0</b>	11.2	9.0	<b>8.0</b>	20.3	19.3	<b>20.5</b>
<b>Turkey</b>	54.1	52.1	<b>49.5</b>	13.8	12.6	<b>13.9</b>	18.5	19.7	<b>25.3</b>

b break in series

p provisional

u unreliable

: data not available

Source datasets: [lfsi\\_emp\\_q](#) (employment rate), [une\\_rt\\_q](#) (unemployment rate) and [lfsi\\_sla\\_q](#) (labour market slack)

## Absences from work and total actual hours worked in second quarter 2020

(age group 20 to 64, seasonally adjusted data)

	Absences from work (% of persons employed)			Total actual hours worked in the main job (2020 Q2 % change compared to the previous quarter and to the same quarter of the previous year)					
	Q2 2019	Q1 2020	Q2 2020	% change/Q2 2019			% change/Q1 2020		
				Women	Men	Total	Women	Men	Total
<b>EU</b>	9.6	11.7	<b>21.8</b>	-15.4	-14.5	<b>-14.9</b>	-12.5	-10.3	<b>-11.2</b>
<b>Belgium</b>	10.8	13.2	<b>21.6</b>	-15.4	-20.0	<b>-18.1</b>	-9.3	-16.1	<b>-13.4</b>
<b>Bulgaria</b>	2.5	4.7	<b>10.9</b>	-12.7	-9.7	<b>-11.1</b>	-10.4	-7.9	<b>-9.0</b>
<b>Czechia</b>	8.5	10.6	<b>17.9</b>	-12.3	-9.9	<b>-10.9</b>	-9.3	-8.7	<b>-8.8</b>
<b>Denmark</b>	12.6	14.3	<b>20.6</b>	-3.2	-3.7	<b>-3.5</b>	-4.3	-4.5	<b>-4.5</b>
<b>Germany</b>	11.8	:	:	:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>Estonia</b>	8.3	10.9	<b>13.8</b>	-12.2	-9.8	<b>-11.0</b>	-9.9	-5.2	<b>-7.4</b>
<b>Ireland</b>	7.5	9.4	<b>26.8</b>	-19.9	-21.8	<b>-21.0</b>	-19.9	-21.3	<b>-20.7</b>
<b>Greece</b>	3.8	8.1	<b>39.6</b>	-29.6	-24.8	<b>-26.6</b>	-24.6	-18.9	<b>-21.0</b>
<b>Spain</b>	8.5	12.5	<b>27.9</b>	-28.2	-27.1	<b>-27.6</b>	-26.7	-25.1	<b>-25.9</b>
<b>France</b>	13.8	18.5	<b>27.7</b>	-18.8	-19.7	<b>-19.3</b>	-15.5	-14.1	<b>-14.8</b>
<b>Croatia</b>	9.7	13.8	<b>18.7</b>	-7.5	-7.9	<b>-7.8</b>	-2.6	-1.8	<b>-2.1</b>
<b>Italy</b>	7.4	13.6	<b>25.5</b>	-24.4	-23.5	<b>-23.7</b>	-15.7	-15.1	<b>-15.3</b>
<b>Cyprus</b>	7.3	11.9	<b>32.0</b>	-23.2	-21.5	<b>-22.3</b>	-19.8	-20.8	<b>-20.4</b>
<b>Latvia</b>	7.3	8.8	<b>12.0</b>	-6.5	-8.5	<b>-7.5</b>	-3.2	-8.9	<b>-6.1</b>
<b>Lithuania</b>	7.7	12.8	<b>13.6</b>	-14.2	-9.8	<b>-11.8</b>	-9.7	-9.1	<b>-9.3</b>
<b>Luxembourg</b>	8.8	10.7	<b>12.9</b>	-8.3	-10.2	<b>-9.3</b>	-3.7	-5.0	<b>-4.4</b>
<b>Hungary</b>	4.4	11.4	<b>18.7</b>	-9.7	-3.8	<b>-6.4</b>	-11.0	-2.0	<b>-5.9</b>
<b>Malta</b>	1.2	7.6	<b>14.8</b>	-12.1	-11.7	<b>-11.9</b>	-13.7	-12.0	<b>-12.7</b>
<b>Netherlands</b>	10.5	11.4	<b>13.5</b>	-7.3	-5.9	<b>-6.4</b>	-6.3	-3.3	<b>-4.5</b>
<b>Austria</b>	11.8	14.9	<b>17.3</b>	-15.6	-15.9	<b>-15.7</b>	-12.6	-11.4	<b>-11.9</b>
<b>Poland</b>	6.4	8.5	<b>17.9</b>	-11.0	-5.4	<b>-7.8</b>	-8.3	-2.1	<b>-4.7</b>
<b>Portugal</b>	8.9	12.0	<b>26.8</b>	-30.6	-22.3	<b>-26.2</b>	-27.8	-19.4	<b>-23.3</b>
<b>Romania</b>	1.6	2.9	<b>14.2</b>	-16.5	-13.5	<b>-14.7</b>	-15.9	-13.7	<b>-14.6</b>
<b>Slovenia</b>	10.7	13.9	<b>27.3</b>	-15.2	-13.6	<b>-14.2</b>	-14.5	-13.0	<b>-13.6</b>
<b>Slovakia</b>	7.2	11.2	<b>21.7</b>	-21.5	-16.4	<b>-18.6</b>	-14.2	-14.1	<b>-14.1</b>
<b>Finland</b>	13.1	14.1	<b>17.3</b>	-6.6	-5.1	<b>-5.8</b>	-7.4	-3.9	<b>-5.4</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	15.4	16.2	<b>16.9</b>	-3.4	-5.1	<b>-4.4</b>	-1.7	-3.6	<b>-2.8</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>	9.7	11.4	<b>27.1</b>	-17.2	-19.6	<b>-18.6</b>	-17.2	-17.4	<b>-17.4</b>
<b>Iceland</b>	13.4	11.5	<b>9.6</b>	-10.7	-9.4	<b>-9.9</b>	-6.2	-8.7	<b>-7.7</b>
<b>Norway</b>	15.8	20.4	<b>19.2</b>	-1.5	-5.5	<b>-3.9</b>	-0.8	-4.2	<b>-2.8</b>
<b>Switzerland</b>	12.4	12.9	<b>15.5</b>	-12.7	-10.2	<b>-11.2</b>	-13.4	-10.2	<b>-11.4</b>
<b>North Macedonia</b>	3.3	7.6	<b>51.3</b>	-22.1	-25.0	<b>-23.8</b>	-13.8	-19.4	<b>-17.2</b>
<b>Serbia</b>	6.3	7.9	<b>13.8</b>	:	:	:	:	:	:
<b>Turkey</b>	4.2	7.2	<b>30.7</b>	-33.6	-29.4	<b>-30.7</b>	-31.1	-28.9	<b>-29.5</b>

: data not available

Source datasets: [lfsi\\_abs\\_q](#) (absences from work) and [lfsi\\_ahw\\_q](#) (total actual hours worked)