Unemployment statistics at regional level

Data extracted in April 2020.
Next article update: April 2021.

Unemployment rate, 2019
(share of labour force aged 15-74 years, by NUTS 2 regions)

This article provides an overview of regional unemployment rates across the 240 NUTS -2 regions of the European Union’s (EU) Member States in 2019, compiled by Eurostat on the basis of data from the EU Labour force survey.

Regional unemployment rates and the EU average
In 2019, the year before COVID-19 containment measures were widely introduced by EU Member States, unemployment rates continued to vary widely across the NUTS 2 regions of the EU’s 27 Member States. The
lowest rates were recorded in four Czech regions: Prague and Central Bohemia (both 1.3 %), South-West (1.5 %) as well as North-East (1.7 %), followed by West Transdanubia (1.8 %) in Hungary, two German regions, Upper Bavaria and Tübingen, and one further Czech region, South-East (all 1.9 %). At the opposite end of the scale, the highest unemployment rates were registered in Mayotte (30.1 %) an overseas region of France, the Spanish autonomous cities of Melilla (27.0 %) and Ceuta (25.8 %) and two Greek regions, West Macedonia (24.6 %) and Western Greece (24.1 %).

Compared with 2018, almost three quarters (74 %) of EU’s regions saw their unemployment rate for persons aged 15-74 fall. Almost half (48 %) recorded a decrease of at least 0.5 percentage points.

Over a quarter of EU regions with an unemployment rate half or less of the EU average

Among the 239 EU regions for which data are available, 66 had an unemployment rate of less than 3.4 % in 2019, half the average of the EU (6.7 %). They included twenty-two regions in Germany, eleven in Poland, eight in the Netherlands, seven in Czechia, five in Austria, four in Hungary, three in Romania, two each in Belgium and Bulgaria, as well as one each in Italy and Slovakia.

In contrast, 29 regions had an unemployment rate of at least 13.4 %, double that of the EU: ten regions in Greece, nine in Spain and five each in France and Italy.

Regional variations in youth unemployment

Youth unemployment rates varied from 2.8 % in North-East in Czechia to 64.0 % in Melilla in Spain

In 2019, the average unemployment rate for young people aged between 15 and 24 in the EU was 15.1 %. However, there are marked regional differences in the unemployment rates for young people. The lowest rate was recorded in North-East (2.8 %) in Czechia, followed by Czech capital city region Prague and German region Upper Bavaria (both 3.3 %) as well as another Czech region, Central Bohemia (3.6 %), three German regions, Freiburg (4.0 %), Swabia (4.4 %) and Münster (4.6 %) as well as South-West (4.7 %) in Czechia.

By contrast, the highest rate was recorded in the Spanish region Melilla (64.0 %), followed by the French region Mayotte (54.1 %), West Macedonia (53.5 %) in Greece, Ceuta in Spain and Guadeloupe, an overseas region of France, (both 52.7 %) as well as Sicily (51.1 %) in Italy.

In over 83 % of the EU regions for which data are available, the unemployment rate for young people was at least twice that of total unemployment in the same region.
Table 1: Regions with lowest and highest youth unemployment rates in 2019, % Source: Eurostat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions with lowest and highest youth unemployment rates in 2019, %</th>
<th>Total (15 – 24 years old)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prague (CZ)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre (Baltic C)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West (CZ)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East (CZ)</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Transylvania (HU)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East (CZ)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Târgovişte (RO)</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Bavaria (DE)</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Saxony (DE)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower Saxony (DE)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Troll (DE)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre Transylvania (HU)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altogether (PL)</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2: Regions with lowest and highest long-term unemployment shares in 2019, % Source: Eurostat

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions with lowest and highest long-term unemployment shares in 2019, %</th>
<th>Total (15 – 24 years old)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>Highest</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>north-East (CZ)</td>
<td>(2.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prague (CZ)</td>
<td>(3.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Bavaria (DE)</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre (Baltic C)</td>
<td>(3.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fribourg (CH)</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savoie (FR)</td>
<td>4.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Munich (DE)</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West (CZ)</td>
<td>(4.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>altogether (DE)</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Long term unemployment in the EU regions

In almost a fifth of regions, the majority of the unemployed out of work for at least a year

The long-term unemployment share, which is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons who have been unemployed for 12 months or more, stood at 41.8 % on average in the EU in 2019. Across EU regions for which data are available, the lowest shares of long-term unemployed were recorded in four Swedish regions, Stockholm (11.3 %), Småland and islands (12.0 %), South Sweden (13.1 %) and West Sweden (13.6 %), as well as North and East Finland (14.2 %).

On the other hand, more than three-quarters of the unemployed had been out of work for at least a year in the French overseas region Mayotte (84.4 %), North-West (83.1 %) in Bulgaria, Western Greece (75.4 %), Peloponnese (75.3 %) and Attica (75.2 %) in Greece.

Data sources

These data on regional unemployment, compiled on the basis of the EU Labour force survey, are published by Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union.

The data are based on the Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics (NUTS 2016) as set out in the amending Commission Regulation (EU) No 2016/2066 of 21 November 2016. NUTS 2016 (valid from 1 January 2018) provides a uniform, consistent breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics for the EU and the United Kingdom.
Level 2 of the nomenclature has 281 regions: Belgium (11), Bulgaria (6), Czechia (8), Denmark (5), Germany (38), Ireland (3), Greece (13), Spain (19), France (27), Croatia (2), Italy (21), Lithuania (2), Hungary (8), the Netherlands (12), Austria (9), Poland (17), Portugal (7), Romania (8), Slovenia (2), Slovakia (4), Finland (5), Sweden (8), as well as the United Kingdom (41). Estonia, Cyprus, Latvia, Luxembourg and Malta are all considered as single regions at NUTS 2 level.

The statistical regions in the candidate and EFTA countries follow the principles of the NUTS classification; however there is no legal base: Norway (7), Switzerland (7), Serbia (8) and Turkey (26), while Iceland, Montenegro and North Macedonia are considered as single regions at NUTS level 2.

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.

The United Kingdom left the European Union on 31 January 2020. Information on dissemination of European statistics from 1 February 2020 is published on the Eurostat website.

In the text of this article, the names of the regions are in English, while the tables in the annex list regions in the national language as set out in the NUTS.

The detailed tables are available here.

Context

The unemployment rate is an important indicator with both social and economic dimensions. Rising unemployment results in a loss of income for individuals, increased pressure with respect to government spending on social benefits and a reduction in tax revenue. From an economic perspective, unemployment may be viewed as unused labour capacity.

Male, youth and long-term unemployment appear to be more susceptible to cyclical economic changes than overall unemployment. Indeed, social policymakers often face the challenge of remedying these situations by designing ways to increase employment opportunities for various groups of society, those working in particular economic activities, or those living in specific regions.

Methods and definitions

The unemployment rate is defined as the percentage of unemployed persons aged 15-74 in the labour force population (which comprises the employed and unemployed persons, but excludes the persons outside the labour force).

According to the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation, a person is deemed to be unemployed if all three of the following conditions are met:

- he or she is without work during the survey reference week;
- he or she is available for work, being able to take up employment within two weeks;
- he or she has actively sought work over the past four weeks.

The youth unemployment rate is the number of people aged 15 to 24 unemployed as a percentage of the labour force of the same age. Therefore, the youth unemployment rate should not be interpreted as the share of jobless people in the overall youth population.
Country notes

France: The actual net sample for Corsica (FRM0) is too small to have reliable regional results and Mayotte (FRY5) is covered by a specific annual survey. As a result, data for these two regions should be treated with caution.

Other articles

• Labour markets at regional level
• Unemployment statistics and beyond
• Unemployment statistics

Publications

• Unemployment rates in the EU regions ranged from 1.3 % to 305.1 % in 2019 (News release xx/2020)
• European statistics Code of Practice (revised edition 2017)

Main tables

• Regions, see:
  Regional labour market statistics (t_reg_lmk)

  • Employment and unemployment (Labour force survey) (t_employ), see:
    LFS main indicators (t_lfsi)
    Unemployment - LFS adjusted series (t_une)
    LFS series - detailed annual survey results (t_lfsa)
    Unemployment rates of the population aged 25-64 by level of education (tps00066)

Database

• Regions, see:
  Regional labour market statistics (reg_lmk)

  • Employment and unemployment (Labour force survey) (employ), see:
    LFS main indicators (lfsi)
    Unemployment - LFS adjusted series (une)
    LFS series - detailed quarterly survey results (from 1998)
    Total unemployment - LFS series (lfsq_unemp)
    LFS series - Detailed annual survey results (lfsa)
    Total unemployment - LFS series (lfsa_unemp)
Dedicated section

- Labour market (including the Labour Force Survey)
- Regions and Cities
- Regions
- NUTS - Nomenclature of territorial units for statistics

Data visualisations

- My region - select a region on the map to see its key statistics on regional indicators.
- Regions and Cities Illustrated - select statistical domain 'Labour market' (top right)
- The "My region" app gives mobile access to a selection of annual regional indicators. Available for iPhone and Android.

Methodology

- Labour force survey (LFS) – Main concepts
- Labour force survey in the EU, candidate and EFTA countries - Main characteristics of national surveys, 2009
- Regional labour market statistics (ESMS metadata file - reg_lmk_esms)
- Unemployment - LFS-adjusted series (ESMS metadata file - une_esms)

Legislation

- Council Decision 2010/707/EU of 21 October 2010 on guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States
- Summaries of EU Legislation: Guidelines for employment policies

External links

- LABORSTA (online database)
- International Labour Organization (ILO) - Statistics and databases
- OECD - Labour Statistics