



International unemployment rates and employment indexes

2007-2009 (seasonally adjusted)

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HIGHLIGHTS

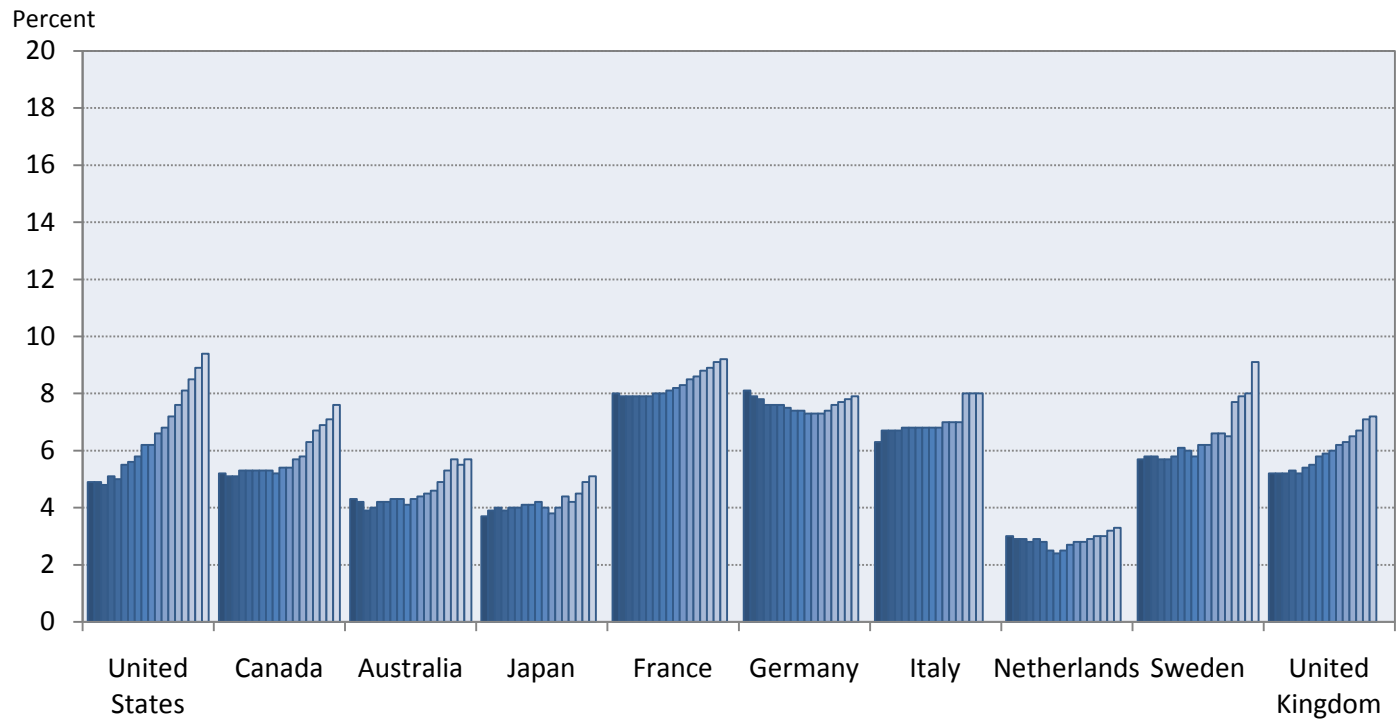
- Among the nine foreign countries covered in the BLS unemployment comparisons program, unemployment rates have been rising in recent months in all countries. See [Chart 1](#) and [Table 1](#).
- As of the latest month available, the highest unemployment rates were in the United States (9.4 percent), France (9.2 percent), and Sweden (9.1 percent).
- In other EU countries not covered in the BLS comparisons but tracked by BLS, unemployment rates have been rising particularly rapidly in Ireland and Spain. See [Chart 2](#) and [Table 2](#).
- Spain had, by far, the highest unemployment rate in the European Union in April.
- Employment declined or remained unchanged for the latest month available in all foreign countries covered by BLS. See [Table 3](#).

CONTACT US

Questions? Contact the BLS Division of International Labor Comparisons (ILC) at ILCHelp@bls.gov or (202) 691-5654.

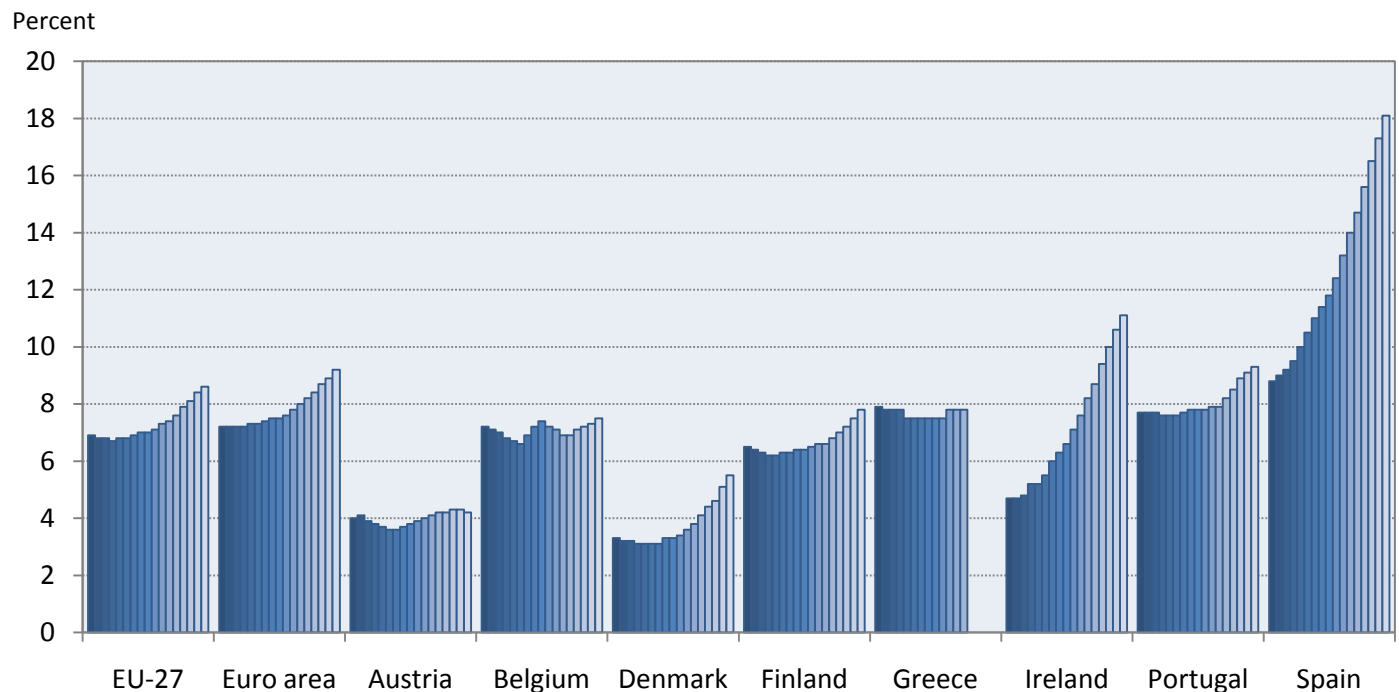
NOTE: Tables 1 and 2 previously were published separately. Henceforth, they will be published as one report. Historical time series of annual unemployment and employment statistics are available on the International Labor Comparisons website at www.bls.gov/ilc.

CHART 1. Monthly unemployment rates adjusted to U.S. concepts, 10 countries, seasonally adjusted, December 2007–May 2009



NOTE: Latest available monthly data are shown for each country. For Italy, data are for the respective quarter; a monthly indicator is not available. Refer to [Table 1](#) for actual reference months and data values.

CHART 2. Monthly unemployment rates unadjusted by BLS, 10 European Union countries or areas, seasonally adjusted, December 2007–April 2009



NOTE: Latest available monthly data are shown for each country. For Greece, data are for the respective quarter; a monthly indicator is not available. Refer to [Table 2](#) for actual reference months and data values.

TABLE 1. Unemployment rates adjusted to U.S. concepts, 10 countries, seasonally adjusted, 2007-2009

	United States	Canada	Australia	Japan	France (1)	Germany (1)	Italy (1)	Netherlands (1)	Sweden	United Kingdom
2007	4.6	5.3	4.4	3.9	8.6	8.7	6.2	3.2	6.1	5.4
2008	5.8	5.3	r 4.3	4.0	8.1	7.5	6.8	2.7	6.0	5.7
Qtr 1 2007	4.5	5.4	4.5	4.0	9.0	9.2	6.2	3.6	6.3	5.5
Qtr 2 2007	4.5	5.2	4.3	3.8	8.7	8.8	6.1	3.2	6.1	5.4
Qtr 3 2007	4.7	5.2	4.3	3.8	8.5	8.6	6.3	3.0	5.9	5.3
Qtr 4 2007	4.8	5.2	4.4	3.9	8.1	8.2	6.3	3.0	5.8	5.2
Qtr 1 2008	4.9	5.2	4.0	3.9	7.9	7.8	6.7	2.9	5.8	5.3
Qtr 2 2008	5.4	5.3	4.2	4.1	7.9	7.5	6.8	2.7	5.9	5.4
Qtr 3 2008	6.0	5.3	r 4.2	4.1	8.1	7.4	6.8	2.6	6.0	5.9
Qtr 4 2008	6.9	5.6	4.5	4.1	8.5	7.4	7.0	2.8	6.5	6.3
Qtr 1 2009	8.1	6.7	5.3	4.5	8.9	7.7	8.0	3.1	7.4	7.0
Dec 2007	4.9	5.2	4.3	3.7	8.0	8.1	(2)	3.0	5.7	5.2
Jan 2008	4.9	5.1	r 4.2	3.9	7.9	7.9	(2)	2.9	5.8	5.2
Feb 2008	4.8	5.1	3.9	4.0	7.9	7.8	(2)	2.9	5.8	5.2
Mar 2008	5.1	5.3	4.0	3.9	7.9	7.6	(2)	2.8	5.7	5.3
Apr 2008	5.0	5.3	4.2	4.0	7.9	7.6	(2)	2.9	5.7	5.2
May 2008	5.5	5.3	r 4.2	4.0	7.9	7.6	(2)	2.8	5.8	5.4
Jun 2008	5.6	5.3	4.3	4.1	8.0	7.5	(2)	2.5	6.1	5.5
Jul 2008	5.8	5.3	4.3	4.1	8.0	7.4	(2)	2.4	6.0	5.8
Aug 2008	6.2	5.2	4.1	4.2	8.1	7.4	(2)	2.5	5.8	5.9
Sep 2008	6.2	5.4	4.3	4.0	8.2	7.3	(2)	2.7	6.2	6.0
Oct 2008	6.6	5.4	4.4	3.8	8.3	7.3	(2)	2.8	6.2	6.2
Nov 2008	6.8	5.7	4.5	4.0	8.5	7.3	(2)	2.8	6.6	6.3
Dec 2008	7.2	5.8	r 4.6	4.4	8.6	7.4	(2)	2.9	6.6	6.5
Jan 2009	7.6	6.3	r 4.9	4.2	8.8	7.6	(2)	r 3.0	6.5	6.7
Feb 2009	8.1	6.7	r 5.3	4.5	8.9	7.7	(2)	3.0	7.7	7.1
Mar 2009	8.5	6.9	5.7	4.9	9.1	7.8	(2)	3.2	7.9	7.2
Apr 2009	8.9	7.1	r 5.5	5.1	9.2	7.9	(2)	3.3	8.0	
May 2009	9.4	7.6	5.7				(2)		9.1	

(1) Quarterly and monthly data are calculated by applying annual adjustment factors to current published data and therefore should be viewed as less precise indicators of unemployment under U.S. concepts than the annual figures.

(2) Data are not published on a monthly basis.

r=revised

NOTE: Data are on a civilian labor force basis. Foreign country data are adjusted to U.S. concepts. Although the U.S. lower age limit is 16 years, the age limit for other countries varies from 15 to 16 years. No adjustment is made for the treatment of layoffs. For some countries, no adjustment is made for the treatment of unpaid family workers, persons waiting to start a new job, and passive job seekers (for example, persons only reading newspaper ads as their method of job search). In the United States, job search must be "active,"

such as placing or answering advertisements, and simply reading ads is not enough to qualify as active search. These unadjusted differences have a negligible effect on the comparisons. For further information on comparability issues, see Constance Sorrentino, "International unemployment rates: how comparable are they?" *Monthly Labor Review*, June 2000, pp. 3-20, at www.bls.gov/opub/mlr/2000/06/art1full.pdf.

For further qualifications and historical data, see "International comparisons of annual labor force statistics, 10 countries, 1960-2007," October 21, 2008, at www.bls.gov/ilc/flscomparelf.htm.

Data used to calculate unemployment rates come mainly from national statistical sources but also from the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT).

TABLE 2. Unemployment rates unadjusted by BLS, 10 European Union countries or areas, seasonally adjusted, 2007-2009

	EU-27 (1)	Euro area (2)	Austria	Belgium	Denmark	Finland	Greece	Ireland	Portugal	Spain
2007	7.1	7.4	4.4	7.5	3.8	6.9	8.3	4.6	8.1	8.3
2008	7.0	7.5	3.8	7.0	3.3	6.4	7.7	6.3	7.7	11.3
Qtr 1 2007	7.4	7.6	4.4	7.9	4.1	7.1	8.6	4.6	8.3	8.1
Qtr 2 2007	7.2	7.4	4.5	7.9	3.7	6.9	8.4	4.6	8.2	8.0
Qtr 3 2007	7.1	7.4	4.6	7.0	3.8	6.8	8.2	4.6	8.1	8.3
Qtr 4 2007	6.9	7.3	4.1	7.1	3.4	6.6	7.9	4.7	7.8	8.6
Qtr 1 2008	6.8	7.2	3.9	7.0	3.2	6.3	7.8	4.9	7.7	9.2
Qtr 2 2008	6.8	7.3	3.6	6.7	3.1	6.3	7.5	5.6	7.6	10.5
Qtr 3 2008	7.0	7.6	3.8	7.3	3.3	6.4	7.5	6.6	7.8	11.9
Qtr 4 2008	7.4	8.0	4.1	7.0	3.8	6.7	7.8	8.2	8.0	14.0
Qtr 1 2009	8.1	8.7	4.3	7.2	4.7	7.3		10.0	8.8	16.5
Nov 2007	6.9	7.3	4.1	7.1	3.4	6.6	(3)	4.7	7.8	8.6
Dec 2007	6.9	7.2	4.0	7.2	3.3	6.5	(3)	4.7	7.7	8.8
Jan 2008	6.8	7.2	4.1	7.1	3.2	6.4	(3)	4.7	7.7	9.0
Feb 2008	6.8	7.2	3.9	7.0	3.2	6.3	(3)	4.8	7.7	9.2
Mar 2008	6.7	7.2	3.8	6.8	3.1	6.2	(3)	5.2	7.6	9.5
Apr 2008	6.8	7.3	3.7	6.7	3.1	6.2	(3)	5.2	7.6	10.0
May 2008	6.8	7.3	3.6	6.6	3.1	6.3	(3)	5.5	7.6	10.5
Jun 2008	6.9	7.4	3.6	6.9	3.1	6.3	(3)	6.0	7.7	11.0
Jul 2008	7.0	7.5	3.7	7.2	3.3	6.4	(3)	6.3	7.8	11.4
Aug 2008	7.0	7.5	3.8	7.4	3.3	6.4	(3)	6.6	7.8	11.8
Sep 2008	7.1	7.6	3.9	7.2	3.4	6.5	(3)	7.1	7.8	12.4
Oct 2008	7.3	7.8	4.0	7.1	3.6	6.6	(3)	7.6	7.9	13.2
Nov 2008	7.4	8.0	4.1	6.9	3.8	6.6	(3)	8.2	7.9	14.0
Dec 2008	7.6	8.2	4.2	6.9	4.1	6.8	(3)	8.7	8.2	14.7
Jan 2009	7.9	8.4	4.2	7.1	4.4	7.0	(3)	9.4	8.5	15.6
Feb 2009	8.1	8.7	4.3	7.2	4.6	7.2	(3)	10.0	8.9	16.5
Mar 2009	8.4	8.9	4.3	7.3	5.1	7.5	(3)	10.6	9.1	17.3
Apr 2009	8.6	9.2	4.2	7.5	5.5	7.8	(3)	11.1	9.3	18.1

(1) European Union-27 (EU-27) refers to European Union member countries as of January 1, 2007. The EU-27 rate is the population-weighted average for the following 27 countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

(2) Euro area refers to European Union member countries that adopted the euro as a common currency. The composition of the euro area changes over time. As the euro area expands, data for new member countries are linked into this moving coverage series. Thus, the euro area rate changes its geographical coverage according to the composition of the euro area during the period to which the data refer. For January 2009 onward, the euro area rate is the population-weighted average for the following 16 countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland,

Italy, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Spain.

(3) Data are not published on a monthly basis.

r=revised

NOTE: Data exclude conscripts but include career military living in private households. BLS does not adjust these data to reflect U.S. concepts. These data are prepared by the Statistical Office of the European Communities (EUROSTAT) according to the International Labor Office (ILO) definitions and are called harmonized unemployment rates. For details on methods and concepts, see "European Union labor force survey, methods and concepts, 2001," at http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-BF-03-002/EN/KS-BF-03-002-EN.PDF. Data are reproduced with permission from EUROSTAT.

TABLE 3. Employment indexes adjusted to U.S. concepts, 10 countries, seasonally adjusted, 2007-2009

	United States	Canada	Australia	Japan	France	Germany	Italy	Netherlands	Sweden	United Kingdom
	2 nd Quarter 2008 = 100									
Qtr 1 2007	100.1	97.8	96.9	100.1	97.8	98.1	98.5	97.1	97.9	98.5
Qtr 2 2007	99.9	98.1	97.6	100.4	98.2	98.5	98.7	97.9	98.3	98.8
Qtr 3 2007	100.0	98.7	98.1	100.1	98.1	98.8	99.5	98.5	99.1	99.2
Qtr 4 2007	100.2	99.3	98.8	100.3	100.0	99.1	99.5	98.6	99.5	99.6
Qtr 1 2008	100.1	99.8	99.6	100.2	99.7	99.8	100.0	99.5	99.9	100.0
Qtr 2 2008	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Qtr 3 2008	99.5	100.0	100.2	99.4	100.0	100.2	99.9	100.2	99.8	99.6
Qtr 4 2008	98.7	100.1	100.3	99.6	100.2	100.2	99.7	100.4	99.5	99.5
Qtr 1 2009	97.0	98.9	100.2	99.4	100.1	99.9	98.0	100.5	98.6	98.9
	May 2008 = 100									
Dec 2007	100.2	99.5	99.2	100.6	(1)	99.3	(1)	98.9	99.4	99.8
Jan 2008	100.2	99.7	99.5	100.4	(1)	99.7	(1)	99.2	99.6	100.0
Feb 2008	100.1	99.9	99.8	100.1	(1)	99.8	(1)	99.6	100.1	100.0
Mar 2008	100.0	99.8	99.9	100.1	(1)	99.9	(1)	99.9	100.0	100.0
Apr 2008	100.2	100.0	100.2	100.2	(1)	100.0	(1)	100.0	100.2	100.1
May 2008	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	(1)	100.0	(1)	100.0	100.0	100.0
Jun 2008	99.8	100.0	100.2	99.9	(1)	100.0	(1)	100.2	99.7	100.0
Jul 2008	99.7	99.7	100.3	99.5	(1)	100.2	(1)	100.2	99.8	99.7
Aug 2008	99.5	99.9	100.4	99.5	(1)	100.2	(1)	100.3	99.7	99.7
Sep 2008	99.4	100.4	100.3	99.4	(1)	100.2	(1)	100.4	99.7	99.6
Oct 2008	99.1	100.4	100.6	99.5	(1)	100.3	(1)	100.6	99.8	99.6
Nov 2008	98.7	100.1	100.4	99.8	(1)	100.2	(1)	100.5	99.3	99.5
Dec 2008	98.2	99.9	100.4	99.5	(1)	100.2	(1)	100.5	99.3	99.6
Jan 2009	97.3	99.3	100.4	100.0	(1)	100.0	(1)	100.8	99.3	99.2
Feb 2009	97.1	98.7	100.5	99.7	(1)	99.9	(1)	100.5	98.3	99.0
Mar 2009	96.5	98.4	100.1	98.7	(1)	99.8	(1)	100.3	98.2	98.6
Apr 2009	96.6	98.5	100.3	98.6	(1)	99.7	(1)	100.2	97.8	
May 2009	96.3	98.4	100.3		(1)		(1)		97.6	

(1) Data are not published on a monthly basis.

NOTE: Indexes are calculated using employment levels underlying the unemployment rates adjusted to U.S. concepts in Table 1 (see [Table 1 notes](#)). Data are on a civilian labor force basis and mainly from household surveys. Household surveys provide greater comparability of labor market trends across countries than establishment surveys, although both types of surveys are used to

measure employment. In the United States, the establishment survey provides a highly reliable gauge of monthly change in nonfarm payroll employment while the household survey provides a broader picture of employment including agriculture and the self-employed. For details on the differences between the two U.S. surveys, see www.bls.gov/web/ces_cps_trends.pdf. Note that trends shown in this table are for the number of persons in employment and not the number of jobs.