

8.5 million underemployed part-time workers in the EU-27 in 2010

3 new Eurostat indicators to supplement the unemployment rate

In the EU-27 in 2010 there were 8.5 million underemployed part-time workers, 2.4 million jobless persons seeking a job but not immediately available for work, and 8.2 million persons available for work but not seeking it.

These three groups of persons do not fulfil all the criteria of the unemployment definition of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), i.e. being without work, actively seeking work and available for work. Hence they are not classified as unemployed. They do however share some characteristics with the unemployed. Eurostat is releasing three new indicators covering these groups in order to supplement the unemployment rate indicator.

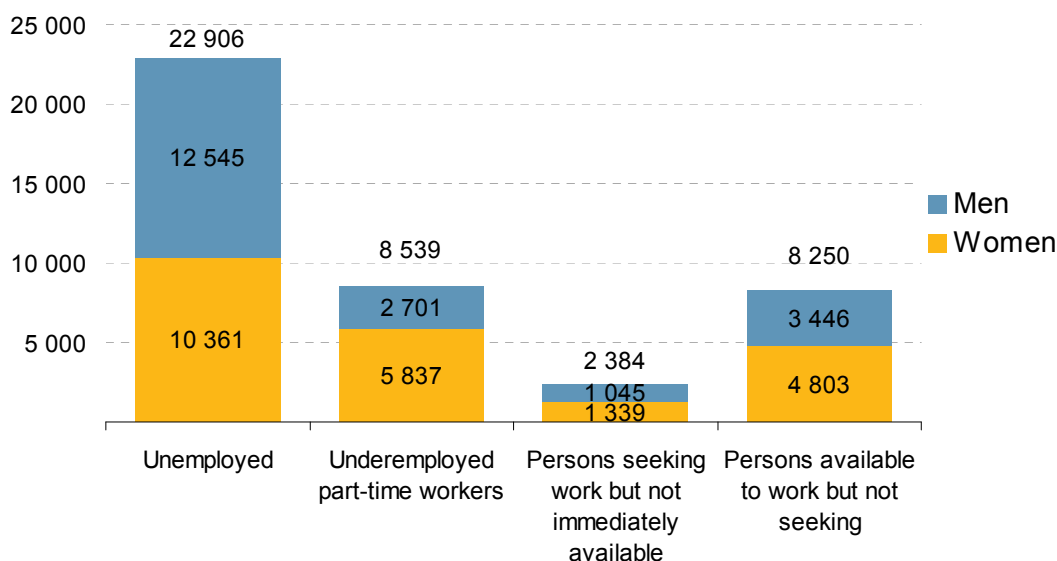
The first indicator, **underemployed part-time workers**, covers persons who, although employed, do not work full-time and have insufficient volume of work so that there is some similarity with

unemployed persons. This indicator captures in particular part-time workers who would like to have a full-time job.

The second and third indicators focus on persons outside the labour force but not completely detached from the labour market. They are not considered as unemployed under the ILO definition. The second indicator, **persons seeking work but not immediately available**, describes mostly people who do not qualify for recording as unemployed because of their limited availability to start a new job.

The third indicator, **persons available to work but not seeking**, covers people wanting to work and available to do so, but who are not recorded as unemployed because they are not actively looking for a job. It includes, among others, discouraged jobseekers and persons prevented from jobseeking due to personal or family circumstances.

Figure 1: Unemployment and new supplementary indicators, EU-27, age 15-74, 2010 (000 persons)



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [lfsi_sup_age_a](#) and [lfsa_pganws](#))

The sum of the two groups ‘persons seeking work but not immediately available’ and ‘persons available to work but not seeking’ is called the **potential additional labour force (PAF)**.

The 3 new indicators supplement the unemployment rate, thus providing an enhanced and richer picture than the traditional labour status framework, which classifies people as employed, unemployed or economically inactive, i.e. in only 3 categories (see methodological notes).

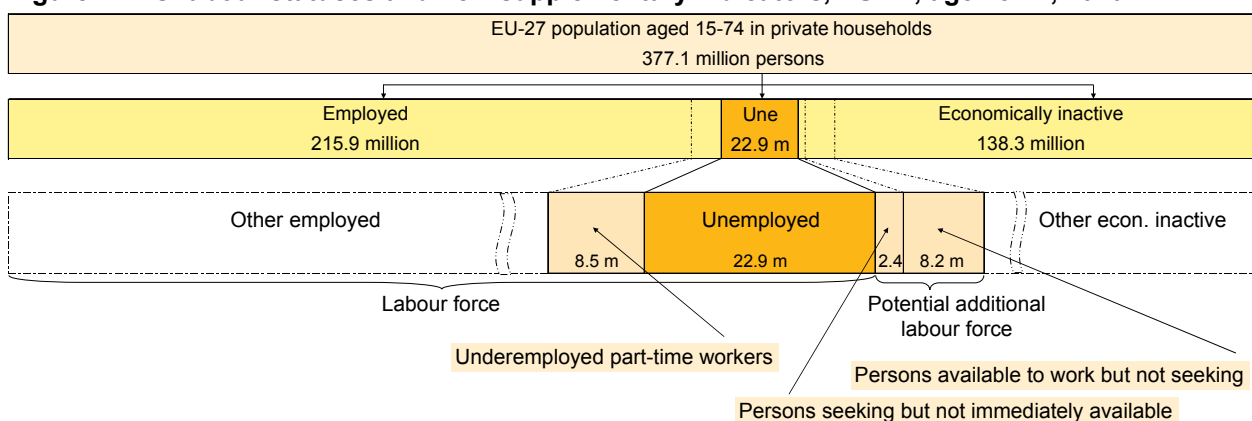
The new indicators create ‘halos’ around unemployment, as shown in figure 2 below. This concept is analysed in a companion Statistics in Focus publication titled ‘New measures of labour

market attachment’. That publication also explains the rationale of the indicators and provides further insight as to how they should be interpreted.

The new data neither alter nor put in question the unemployment statistics standards used by Eurostat. Eurostat publishes unemployment statistics according to the ILO definition, the same definition as used by statistical offices all around the world. Eurostat will continue publishing unemployment statistics using the ILO definition and they will remain the benchmark and headline indicators.

All figures in this report are based on the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).

Figure 2: ILO labour statuses and new supplementary indicators, EU-27, age 15-74, 2010



Source: Eurostat (online data codes [lfsi_sup_age_a](#) and [lfsa_pganws](#))

Mostly women in the groups covered by the new indicators

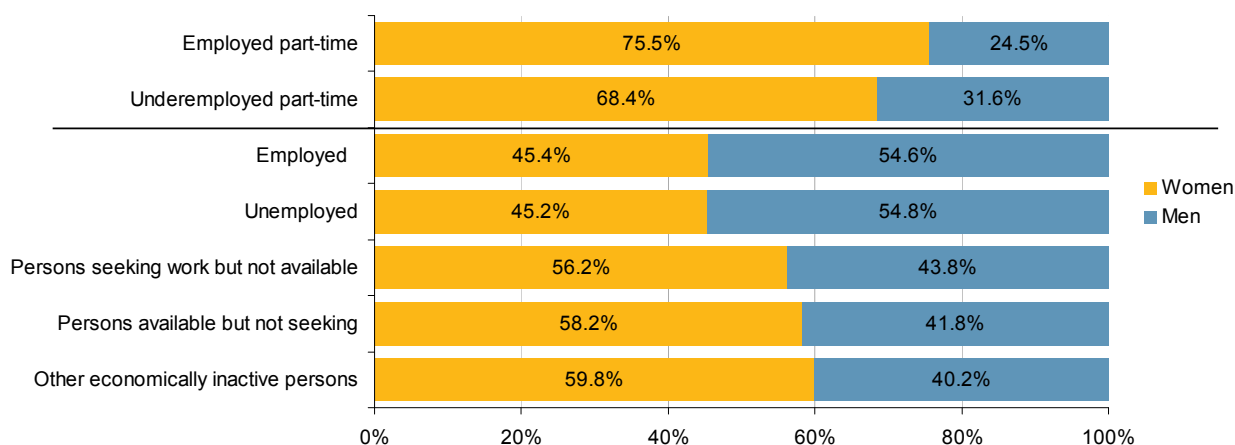
As seen in figure 1, the supplementary indicators cover predominantly women. This contrasts with a majority of men in unemployment (54.8 % in the EU-27 in 2010) and in employment (54.6 %).

Among the new indicators, the predominance of women is strongest in the group of underemployed part-time workers. More than two thirds of them are women (68.4 %) in the EU-27 in 2010, namely 5.8 million women as compared to 2.7 million men (see figure 3). This imbalance mirrors the gender gap in part-time employment (whether underemployed or not), as 75.5 % of all part-time workers in the EU-27 in 2010 were women. However it is worth noting that while there are

fewer men underemployed, in relative terms the share of part-time workers who are underemployed is higher among men (26.7 %, i.e. 2.7 million out of 10.1) than among women (18.7 %, i.e. 5.8 million out of 31.2).

There is a majority of women among persons seeking work but not immediately available (56.2% i.e. 1.3 million women compared to 1.0 million men), and a considerable majority among persons available for work but not seeking it (58.2 %, i.e. 4.8 million women vs. 3.4 million men). The share of females in the latter group is similar to their share in the group of other economically inactive persons (59.8 %).

Figure 3: Gender distribution in selected labour categories, age 15-74, EU-27, 2010



Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [lfsi_sup_age_a](#) and [lfsa_pganws](#))

Age distribution

Out of the 8.5 million underemployed part-time workers in the EU27 in 2010, 1.5 million were aged 15-24, 6.1 million were aged 25-54 and 0.9 million were aged 55-74. Persons seeking work but not immediately available had the following age distribution: 0.7 million were aged 15-24, 1.4 million were aged 25-54 and 0.2 million were aged 55-74. Finally, among the 8.2 million persons available for work but not seeking it, 1.9 million were aged 15-24, 4.8 million were aged 25-54 and 1.6 million aged 55-74. There are fewer people in the age group 55-74 in all indicators.

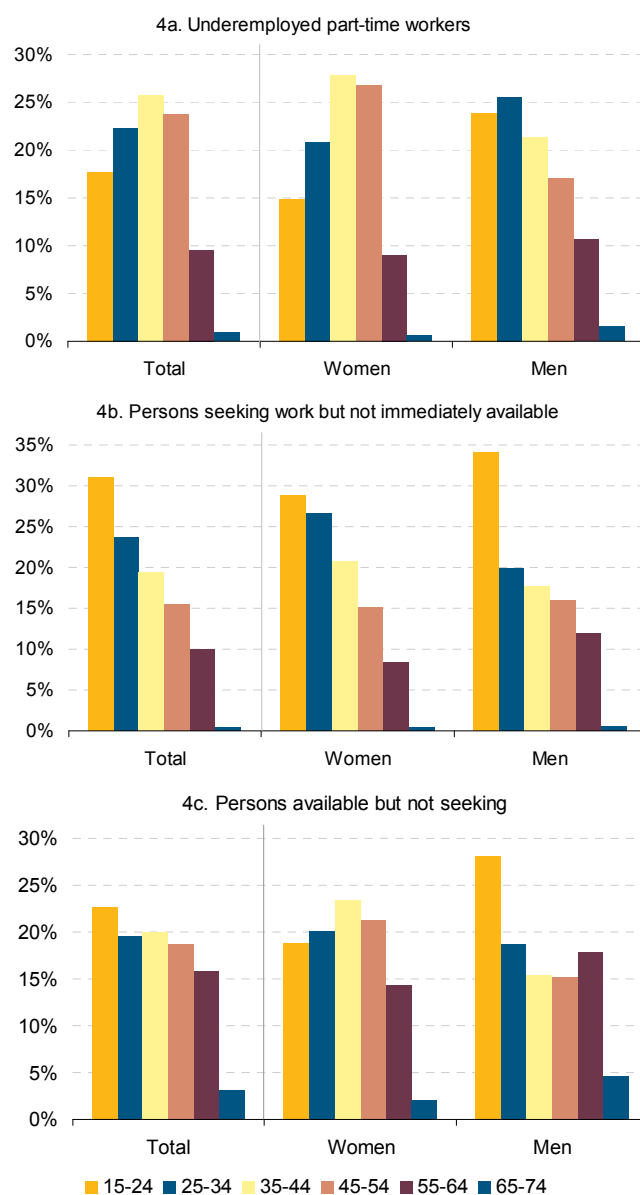
Figure 4 shows the shares broken down by ten-year age groups between 15 and 74 years of age. The same information is also given by sex. The sum of the age groups in each bar chart equals 100 %.

The left-hand graph in Figure 4a shows the underemployed part-time workers by age group. The 3 ten-year age groups from 25 to 54 make up 72 % of all underemployed part-time workers. Younger persons aged 15-24 constitute 18 % of the total. Older persons comprise a much lower share: 10 % are aged 55-64 and less than 1 % are 65-74 year olds.

A simultaneous breakdown by age and sex reveals further differences in underemployed part-time workers. The shares among women are highest for age groups 35-44 (28 %) and 45-54 (27 %) (Figure 4a, centre). It may be that women at this age still have children so young that they limit the mother's scope for involvement in the labour market. The shares are lower for younger women aged 25-34 (21 %) and 15-24 (15 %). Instead the shares among men are concentrated in the young age groups 15-24 and 25-34 (24 % and 25 % respectively), and decrease for older age groups (Figure 4a, at right).

As regards the indicator 'persons seeking work but not immediately available', the distributions for

Figure 4: New indicators by gender and age group, %, EU-27, 2010



Source: Eurostat (online data code: [lfsi_sup_age_a](#))

both women and men are skewed to the left i.e. to the younger age groups, with the distribution for men being more strikingly so. More than half of the men and women in this group are less than 35 years old, as 31 % of them are aged 15-24 and another 24 % are aged 25-34 (Figure 4b, at left). The downward trend continues to 19 % for ages 35-44, 15 % for 45-54, 10 % for 55-64 and almost 0 % for 65-74.

Compared to the other indicators, the age distribution of persons available but not seeking is more balanced: 23 % of the total are young people

aged 15-24, who are only slightly more represented than the age groups 25-34, 35-44 and 45-54 (all around 20 %). 16 % are aged 55-64 and only 3 % are aged 65-74. A simultaneous breakdown by age and sex reveals some differences between women and men: among women the share is rather similar for each of the ten-year age groups 15 to 54 (all in the range between 19 % and 23 %), peaking in the ages 35-54 before decreasing to 14 % and 2 % in the last two age groups 55-64 and 65-74. By contrast, among men the share is highest for the age group 15-24 (28 %) and then stabilises between 15-19 % for ages 25-64.

Impact of educational level on attachment to the labour market

The educational level attained matters for labour force categories. Figure 5 shows data for the age group 25-74; the group aged 15-24 is excluded from this comparison because many of them have not yet attained their highest educational level.

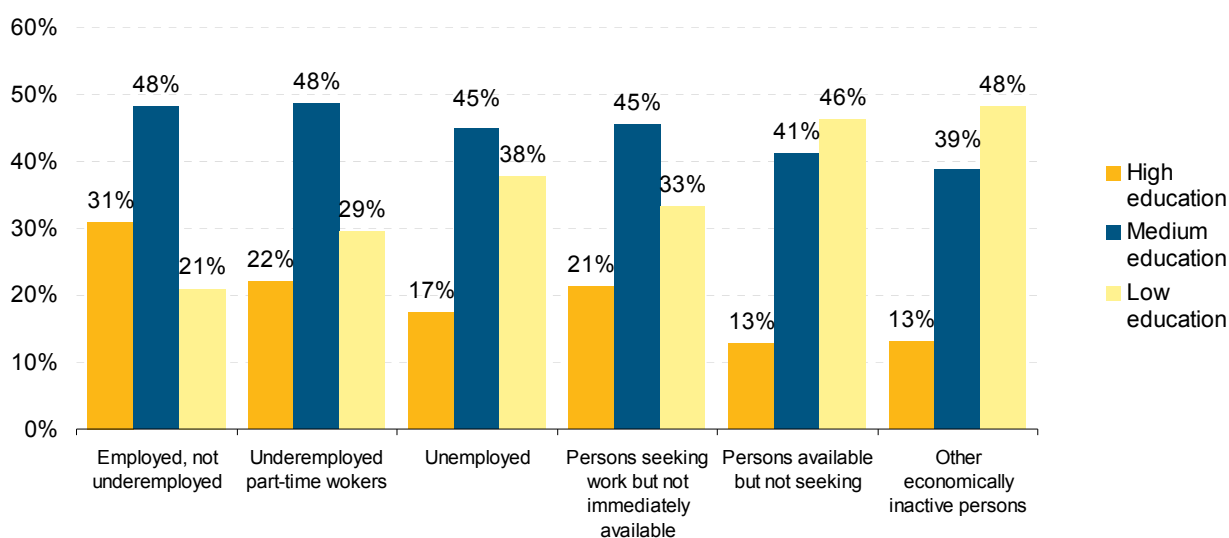
As can be seen in Figure 5, 31 % of employed persons, not underemployed are highly educated. This share is 22 % among underemployed part-time persons. This is not as high as among other employed persons (i.e. not underemployed part-time), but it is higher than among the unemployed (17 %). A similar comparison of the share of low educated people for these three groups confirms that underemployed part-time workers rank

between other employed persons and unemployed persons.

The share of highly educated people in the group 'persons seeking work but not immediately available' (21 %) is higher than among unemployed persons (17 %) and almost as high as the share among underemployed part-time workers (22 %).

Finally, the group 'persons available but not seeking' has only a 13% share of highly educated persons, the same share as other economically inactive persons. The respective shares of low educated persons are also similar. Both groups are hence similar from the viewpoint of their composition by educational level.

Figure 5: Persons in labour categories by educational level, shares of total persons in each category, age 25-74, EU-27, 2010



Source: Eurostat (online data code: [lfsi_sup_edu_a](#))

Share of foreigners in underemployment twice their share in the total population

Foreigners are relatively more represented than nationals in the groups of underemployed part-time workers and persons seeking work but not immediately available. Foreigners are defined here as non-nationals of the country where they live, i.e. either nationals from another EU Member State or non-EU nationals.

Out of the 8.5 million underemployed part-time workers in the EU-27 in 2010, 1.2 million are not nationals of the country where they live (see Table 1, at left). They are overrepresented relative to their share in the population aged 15-74: they form 14 % of

the underemployed whereas they constitute only 7 % of the total population aged 15-74 in the EU-27 (see Table 1 at right). This indicates that proportionally more foreigners work in part-time jobs with fewer hours than they would like to work, possibly pointing to their either having to accept those jobs or to their being more eager to work additional hours to earn more.

Similarly, the share of foreigners among people seeking work but not immediately available is 12 %, significantly higher than their 7 % share of the total population.

Table 1: Labour status by nationality, persons and shares, age 15-74, EU-27, 2010, million persons

	Persons (millions)			Persons (% population)		
	Nationals	Foreigners	Total	Nationals	Foreigners	Total
Total population aged 15-74	350.4	25.7	376.2	93	7	100
Employed, not underemployed	193.1	13.4	206.6	93	7	100
Underemployed part-time workers	7.4	1.2	8.5	86	14	100
Unemployed	20.0	2.9	22.9	87	13	100
Persons seeking work but not immediately available	2.1	0.3	2.4	88	12	100
Persons available but not seeking	7.6	0.7	8.2	92	8	100
Other economically inactive persons	120.3	7.2	127.5	94	6	100

Note: Persons not reporting their nationality are not included in Table 1; therefore the total population 15-74 does not match Figure 2.

Source: Eurostat (online data code: [lfsi_sup_nat_a](#))

Varying situation by Member State

EU Member States report markedly different values for the 3 new indicators. Meaningful comparisons between countries of different sizes require expressing them in relative terms (i.e. percentages). Table 2 reports the standard unemployment levels and unemployment rates (ILO definition) alongside the 3 supplementary indicators both in absolute terms and relative terms.

The indicators in relative terms use the same denominators, namely the size of the labour force, i.e. sum of employed and unemployed persons. However, in relative terms the 3 indicators have different interpretations and it is explicitly not advised to add them to obtain a total. In particular, the relative figures for the two indicators on the right ('persons seeking work but not immediately available' and 'persons available but not seeking') are not shares because the numerator is not a subgroup of the denominator (persons in the numerators are not in the labour force, see Figure 2). Instead, the percentages for these two indicators show how much the current labour force could grow if joined by these people with a certain

degree of labour market attachment. For its part, the indicator 'underemployed part-time workers' as percentage of the labour force is a classical share because the numerator is a subgroup of the denominator.

In relative terms, underemployed part-time work is highest in Germany and the United Kingdom (5.4% of the labour force), followed by Latvia and Ireland (5.1 % each). It is lowest in the Czech Republic (0.6 %), Belgium and Bulgaria (0.8 % each). The indicator 'persons seeking work but not immediately available' is highest in Finland (2.3 % of the labour force), Sweden and Belgium (1.9 % each) and lowest in Portugal (0.2 %) and Hungary and Greece (0.3 %). The indicator 'persons available but not seeking' is highest in Italy (11.1% of the labour force) and Bulgaria (8.3 %) and lowest in Belgium (0.7 %).

Other denominators can also be used for reporting the supplementary indicators in relative terms. Data based on other denominators are available in the Eurostat online database, data code [lfsi_sup_age_a](#).

Table 2: Unemployment and new indicators by Member State, 2010

2010	Unemployed		Underemployed part-time workers		Persons seeking work but not immediately available		Persons available to work but not seeking	
	Persons thousands	Rate (% over labour force)	Persons thousands	% over labour force	Persons thousands	% over labour force	Persons thousands	% over labour force
EU27	22 906	9.6	8 539	3.6	2 384	1.0	8 250	3.5
EA17	15 692	10.0	5 782	3.7	1 737	1.1	5 465	3.5
BE	406	8.3	37	0.8	93	1.9	36	0.7
BG	348	10.2	28	0.8	25	0.7	283	8.3
CZ	384	7.3	29	0.6	20	0.4	55	1.1
DK	218	7.4	86	2.9	20	0.7	59	2.0
DE	2 946	7.1	2 232	5.4	624	1.5	530	1.3
EE	116	16.9	12	1.8	(2)	(0.3)	41	5.9
IE	291	13.7	109	5.1	12	0.6	39	1.8
EL	629	12.6	135	2.7	17	0.3	55	1.1
ES	4 632	20.1	1 120	4.9	233	1.0	973	4.2
FR	2 653	9.4	1 216	4.3	424	1.5	309	1.1
IT	2 102	8.4	434	1.7	126	0.5	2 764	11.1
CY	25	6.2	11	2.7	3	0.8	9	2.3
LV	216	18.7	59	5.1	5	0.4	93	8.0
LT	291	17.8	38	2.3	16	1.0	29	1.8
LU	10	4.4	4	1.7	2	0.7	11	4.7
HU	475	11.2	58	1.4	11	0.3	199	4.7
MT	12	6.9	4	2.5	:	:	(1.9)	(1.1)
NL	390	4.5	112	1.3	71	0.8	309	3.5
AT	188	4.4	123	2.9	37	0.9	150	3.5
PL	1 699	9.6	309	1.8	116	0.7	643	3.6
PT	603	11.0	99	1.8	11	0.2	74	1.3
RO	725	7.3	244	2.4	:	:	455	4.6
SI	75	7.3	19	1.9	6	0.6	18	1.7
SK	389	14.4	34	1.3	14	0.5	45	1.7
FI	224	8.4	80	3.0	62	2.3	99	3.7
SE	417	8.4	222	4.5	97	1.9	132	2.7
UK	2 440	7.8	1 684	5.4	334	1.1	837	2.7
IS	14	7.6	:	:	2	1.1	4	2.2
NO	91	3.5	77	3.0	19	0.7	63	2.4
CH	204	4.6	241	5.4	53	1.2	159	3.6
HR	206	11.8	41	2.4	(13)	(0.8)	110	6.3
MK	300	32.0	13	1.4	(5)	(0.5)	:	:
TR	2 696	10.7	451	1.8	132	0.5	1 713	6.8

Note: Figures in brackets have low reliability. ':' colons are used for missing or extremely unreliable data. See [EU-LFS publishing guidelines](#) for details.

Note 2: The 3 new indicators in relative terms have different interpretations and it is explicitly not advised to add them to obtain a total.

Note 3: Unemployment figures in this table differ from those published in online data codes: [une_nb_a](#) and [une_rt_a](#) because they do not cover French overseas departments and they are not adjusted to ensure consistent time-series.

Source: Eurostat (online data codes: [lfsa_pganws](#) and [lfsi_sup_age_a](#))

ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Sources: All statistics in this publication are derived from the European Union Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS). The EU-LFS is a quarterly, large sample survey providing results for the population in private households in the EU, EFTA, and the Candidate Countries (except Liechtenstein).

Country codes: European Union (27 countries) is written as EU-27 and consists of Belgium (BE), Bulgaria (BG), the Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Germany (DE), Estonia (EE), Ireland (IE), Greece (EL), Spain (ES), France (FR), Italy (IT), Cyprus (CY), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Luxembourg (LU), Hungary (HU), Malta (MT), the Netherlands (NL), Austria (AT), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Slovenia (SI), Slovakia (SK), Finland (FI), Sweden (SE) and the United Kingdom (UK). EFTA countries are Iceland (IS), Norway (NO) and Switzerland (CH). Candidate countries are Croatia (HR), the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (MK), and Turkey (TR). The abbreviation MK used for the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is a provisional code which does not prejudice in any way the definitive nomenclature for this country, which will be agreed following the conclusions of negotiations currently taking place on this subject at the United Nations.

The figures for France do not include overseas departments.

Reference periods: All the data are annual averages of quarterly data for 2010Q1-2010Q4.

Labour status definitions: The concepts and definitions used in the EU-LFS follow the guidelines of the International Labour Organisation (ILO).

- **Employment** covers persons who during the reference week performed work, even for just one hour, for pay, profit or family gain or were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent for example because of illness, holidays, temporary lay-off, flexible working time arrangements, industrial dispute or education and training.

While employment statistics are typically published for the age group 15-64, this report publishes employment for the age group 15-74 (16-74 in Italy, Spain, UK and Iceland). This is to allow comparability with unemployment, which is normally published for ages 15-74, also in this report.

- **Unemployment** covers persons aged 15-74 (16-74 in Italy, Spain, UK and Iceland) who:
 - were without work during the reference week;
 - were available to start work within the next two weeks;
 - and had either been actively seeking work in the past four weeks or had already found a job to start within the next three months.
- **Economically inactive population** are persons who are neither employed nor unemployed.

Definitions of indicators to supplement unemployment:

1. **Underemployed part-time workers** are persons aged 15-74 working part-time which wish to work additional hours and are available to do so. Part-time work is recorded as self-reported by individuals.
2. **Persons seeking work but not immediately available** are the sum of persons aged 15-74 neither employed nor unemployed who:
 - Are actively seeking work during the last 4 weeks but not available for work in the next 2 weeks;
 - Found a job to start in less than 3 months and are not available for work in the next 2 weeks;
 - Found a job to start in 3 months or more;
 - Are passively seeking work during the last 4 weeks and are available for work in the next 2 weeks. Passive job search is e.g. waiting the results of a job interview.The first of those 4 groups is the biggest by far. The 3 latter groups are included in this indicator for completeness as they are not ILO unemployed but have many common characteristics with people in the first group.
3. **Persons available to work but not seeking** are persons aged 15-74 neither employed nor unemployed who want to work, are available for work in the next 2 weeks but do not seek work.

These definitions come from recent methodological work at EU level.

Level of education is defined according to the International Classification of Education 1997 (ISCED 1997). Three levels are distinguished in this publication: low (ISCED 0 to 2), medium (ISCED 3 to 4) and high (ISCED 5b to 6).

Further information

Eurostat Website: <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Data on 'EU-LFS Statistics'

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/data/database

Further information about 'EU-LFS Statistics'

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/employment_unemployment_lfs/introduction

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