

## EMPLOYMENT RATES BY AGE GROUP

Labour markets differ in how they allocate employment opportunities among people of different ages. Employment rates for people of different ages are significantly affected by government policies with regard to higher education, pensions and retirement age.

### Definition

The employment rate for a given age group is measured as the number of employed people of a given age as a ratio of the total number of people in that same age group.

Employment is generally measured through household labour force surveys. In accordance with the ILO Guidelines, employed persons are those aged 15 or over who report that they have worked in gainful employment for at least one hour in the previous week. Those not in employment consist of persons who are classified as either unemployed or inactive, in the sense that they are not included in the labour force for reasons of study, incapacity or the need to look after young children or elderly relatives.

Employment rates are shown for three age groups: persons aged 15 to 24 are those just entering the labour market following education; persons aged 25 to 54 are those in their prime working lives; persons aged 55 to 64 are those who are approaching retirement.

### Comparability

All OECD countries use the ILO Guidelines for measuring employment. Operational definitions used in national labour force surveys may, however, vary slightly from country to country. Employment levels are also likely to be affected by changes in the survey design and the survey conduct. Despite these changes, the employment rates shown here are fairly consistent over time.

### Overview

Employment rates for people aged 25 to 54 are relatively similar between OECD countries, with all countries except Turkey ranging between 70% and 90% in 2008. Cross-country differences are larger when looking at the youngest age group where, in 2008, employment rates ranged between less than 25% in Hungary, Korea, Greece and Italy and over 60% in Iceland, the Netherlands, Denmark, Australia, and Switzerland. Employment rates for the oldest age group also vary considerably, between 70% or more in Iceland, New Zealand and Sweden and less than 35% in Turkey, Hungary, Poland, Belgium, and Italy. In non-OECD countries, employment rates for youths are above OECD average only in Brazil, while those for people of prime working age exceed the OECD average by more than 5 points in Slovenia, Russia and Estonia, and those for older workers are above the OECD average in Estonia, Israel, Chile and Brazil.

Over the period from 1990 to 2008, employment rates for the youngest age group have declined by more than 5 points for the OECD as a whole, with large decreases in Sweden, Portugal, Luxembourg, Turkey and the United Kingdom. This partly reflects government policies to encourage young people to increase their educational qualifications and general employment conditions, but also the difficulties experienced by some youths to get a foothold in the labour market. For people in their prime working age employment rates have increased slightly for the OECD as a whole, with significant falls in Turkey, and Sweden, and large gains in Ireland, the Netherlands and Spain. The employment rates for older workers increased by 6 points on average, with the largest increases recorded in New Zealand, the Netherlands, the Slovak Republic, Germany, Ireland and Finland but declined in Turkey. Among the non-OECD countries included here, employment rates increased for all age groups.

### Sources

- OECD (2009), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.
- For Non-Member Countries: National Sources.

### Further information

#### Analytical publications

- Burniaux, J.-M., R. Duval and F. Jaumotte (2004), *Coping with Ageing*, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 371, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2000), *From Initial Education to Working Life: Making Transitions Work*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2006), *Ageing and Employment Policies*, OECD, Paris.

#### Statistical publications

- OECD (2004), *Quarterly Labour Force Statistics*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2009), *Labour Force Statistics*, OECD, Paris.

#### Online databases

- *Employment Statistics*.

#### Web sites

- NERO Meeting on Labour Market Issues, Paris, 25 June 2004, [www.oecd.org/eco/nero](http://www.oecd.org/eco/nero).
- OECD Ageing and Employment Policies, [www.oecd.org/els/employment/olderworkers](http://www.oecd.org/els/employment/olderworkers).
- OECD Employment Data, [www.oecd.org/els/employment/](http://www.oecd.org/els/employment/).
- OECD Jobs for Youth Project, [www.oecd.org/employment/youth](http://www.oecd.org/employment/youth).
- OECD Labour Statistics Database, [www.oecd.org/statistics/labour](http://www.oecd.org/statistics/labour).
- Youth Employment Summit, [www.yesweb.org](http://www.yesweb.org).



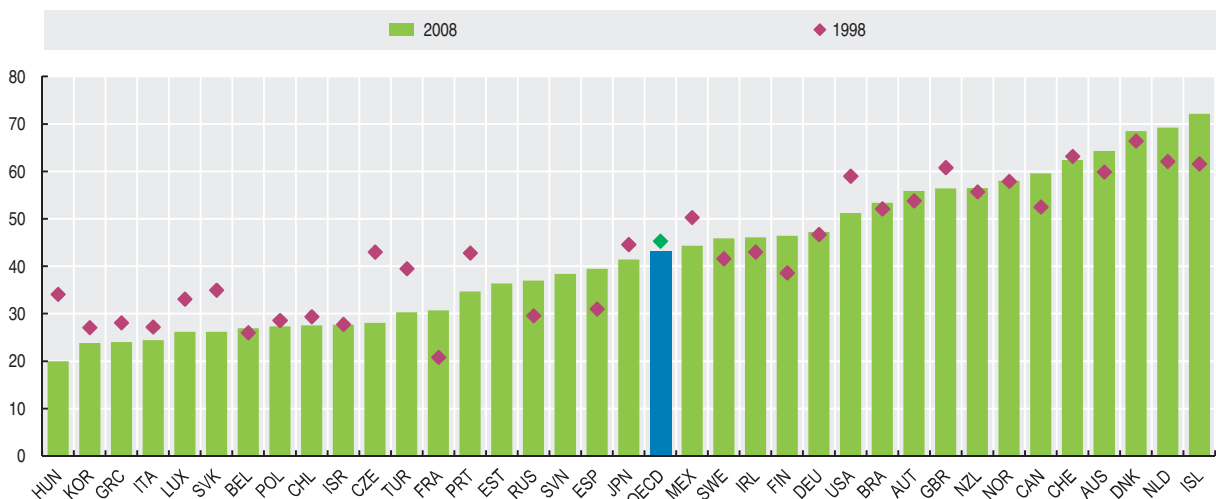
**Employment rates by age group**  
As a percentage of population in that age group

	Persons 15-24 in employment				Persons 25-54 in employment				Persons 55-64 in employment			
	1990	2000	2005	2008	1990	2000	2005	2008	1990	2000	2005	2008
Australia	62.7	62.1	63.3	64.3	76.0	76.3	78.8	80.3	41.5	46.2	53.5	57.4
Austria	..	52.8	53.1	55.9	..	82.5	82.6	84.4	..	28.3	31.8	41.0
Belgium	30.4	30.3	26.6	26.9	71.7	77.9	78.3	80.5	21.4	25.0	32.1	32.8
Canada	61.3	56.3	57.8	59.6	78.1	79.9	81.3	82.3	46.2	48.1	54.8	57.5
Czech Republic	..	38.3	27.3	28.1	..	81.6	82.0	83.8	..	36.3	44.6	47.6
Denmark	65.0	67.1	62.0	68.5	84.0	84.3	83.9	87.9	53.6	54.6	59.8	57.7
Finland	55.2	42.9	42.1	46.4	87.9	80.9	81.7	84.3	42.8	42.3	52.6	56.4
France	29.5	23.2	29.3	30.7	77.4	78.3	80.7	83.2	35.6	34.3	38.7	38.2
Germany	56.4	47.2	42.6	47.2	73.6	79.3	77.4	81.0	36.8	37.6	45.5	53.8
Greece	30.3	26.9	25.3	24.0	68.5	70.2	74.3	76.6	40.8	39.0	41.6	42.9
Hungary	..	32.5	21.8	20.0	..	73.0	73.7	74.4	..	21.9	33.0	31.4
Iceland	..	68.2	71.6	72.1	..	90.6	88.2	88.1	..	84.2	84.8	83.3
Ireland	41.4	48.2	46.4	46.1	60.0	75.3	77.8	78.0	38.6	45.2	51.7	53.9
Italy	29.8	27.8	25.5	24.4	68.2	68.0	72.2	73.5	32.6	27.7	31.4	34.4
Japan	42.2	42.7	40.9	41.4	79.6	78.6	79.0	80.2	62.9	62.8	63.9	66.3
Korea	32.5	29.4	29.9	23.8	73.2	72.2	73.4	74.2	61.9	57.8	58.7	60.6
Luxembourg	43.3	31.8	24.9	26.2	71.8	78.2	80.7	80.2	28.2	27.2	31.7	38.3
Mexico	..	48.9	43.7	44.3	..	67.4	68.8	70.6	..	51.7	52.6	54.7
Netherlands	54.5	66.5	64.2	69.2	71.2	81.0	81.8	85.7	29.7	37.6	44.0	50.7
New Zealand	59.1	54.6	56.9	56.5	76.3	78.6	82.0	82.2	41.8	57.2	69.7	71.9
Norway	53.4	58.1	52.9	58.0	82.2	85.3	83.2	86.8	61.5	67.1	67.6	69.3
Poland	..	24.5	20.9	27.3	..	70.9	69.5	77.5	..	28.4	29.1	31.6
Portugal	54.8	42.0	36.1	34.7	78.4	81.8	80.8	81.6	47.0	50.8	50.5	50.8
Slovak Republic	..	29.0	25.6	26.2	..	74.7	75.3	80.1	..	21.3	30.4	39.3
Spain	38.3	36.3	41.9	39.5	61.4	68.4	74.4	75.3	36.9	37.0	43.1	45.6
Sweden	66.1	46.1	42.5	45.9	91.6	83.8	83.9	86.5	69.5	65.1	69.6	70.3
Switzerland	..	65.1	59.9	62.4	..	85.4	85.1	87.2	..	63.3	65.1	68.4
Turkey	45.9	37.0	31.2	30.3	61.6	56.7	54.1	53.5	42.7	36.4	30.8	27.4
United Kingdom	70.1	61.5	58.6	56.4	79.1	80.2	81.1	81.6	49.2	50.4	56.7	58.2
United States	59.8	59.7	53.9	51.2	79.7	81.5	79.3	79.1	54.0	57.8	60.8	62.1
OECD total	48.8	45.6	43.1	43.2	75.8	76.0	75.9	77.2	48.0	47.9	51.9	54.0
Brazil	..	51.7	52.7	53.4	..	73.2	75.9	77.0	..	52.2	54.1	55.1
Chile	..	26.3	25.7	27.5	..	65.9	68.2	71.1	..	47.8	51.7	56.6
Estonia	..	..	29.1	36.4	..	..	79.6	83.9	..	..	56.1	62.4
Israel	23.6	28.2	26.6	27.6	66.5	70.4	70.6	73.9	48.5	46.6	52.4	58.4
Russian Federation	..	34.6	32.9	37.0	..	80.2	82.9	84.2	..	34.8	44.6	50.7
Slovenia	..	..	34.1	38.4	..	..	83.8	86.8	..	..	30.7	32.8

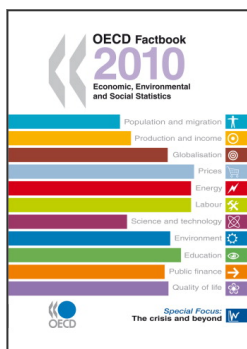
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/825481425236>

**Employment rates for age group 15-24**

Persons in employment as a percentage of population in that age group



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/820428223537>



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