

## SELF-EMPLOYMENT

Self-employment may be seen either as a survival strategy for those who cannot find any other means of earning an income or as evidence of entrepreneurial spirit and a desire to be one's own boss. The self-employment rates shown in this section reflect these various motives.

### Definition

Employment is generally measured through household labour force surveys and, according to the ILO Guidelines, employed persons are defined as those aged 15 or over who report that they have worked in gainful employment for at least one hour in the previous week.

Self-employed persons include employers, own-account workers, members of producers' co-operatives, and unpaid family workers. The last of these are unpaid in the sense that they do not have a formal contract to receive a fixed amount of income at regular intervals, but they share in the income generated by the enterprise; unpaid family workers are particularly important in farming and retail trade. Note

that all persons who work in corporate enterprises, including company directors, are considered to be employees.

The rates shown here are the percentages of the self-employed in total civilian employment i.e., total employment less military employees.

### Comparability

All OECD countries use the ILO Guidelines for measuring employment, but the operational definitions used in national labour force surveys vary slightly in Iceland and Turkey. Employment levels are also likely to be affected by changes in the survey design and/or the survey conduct, but employment rates are likely to be fairly consistent over time.

Note that the composition of the self-employed with regard to the four categories listed above varies considerably among countries. In particular, countries with relatively large numbers of small farms, Brazil, Mexico and Turkey, for example, will have relatively large numbers of unpaid family workers.

### Long-term trends

In 2007, the total self-employment rates (men and women together) ranged from under 9% in Luxembourg, United States, Norway, and Denmark to well over 30% in Korea, Mexico, Brazil, Greece, Turkey and China. It is noticeable that close to 60% per cent of self-employed work in the farm sector in Turkey, while this share amounts to 30% in Greece, 25% in Mexico and 20 in Korea. In general, self-employment rates are highest in countries with low per capita income although Italy, with a self-employment rate of 26.4%, is a striking exception. Ireland and Spain are also countries with both high per capita incomes and high self-employment rates.

Over the period 1995-2007, self-employment rates have been falling in most countries although there have been small increases in Germany, and larger ones in Czech Republic and Slovak Republic, albeit from low levels. Conversely, there have been much sharper declines in self-employment rates in Turkey, Greece and Mexico from higher levels.

The levels and changes in total self-employment rates conceal significant differences between men and women. In more than half of the countries, over 18% of all men in employment were self-employed; the corresponding figure for women was under 10% (figures for 2007).

Growth rates have also differed. Self-employment rates for men rose somewhat significantly in Austria, Slovak Republic, Sweden and Ireland, while receding by more than one percentage point in Iceland, Poland and Turkey. For women, self-employment grew somewhat markedly only in Austria and Switzerland, albeit from low levels, while dropping by one or more percentage points in Korea and Turkey from historically high levels.

### Source

- OECD (2008), *Labour Force Statistics*, OECD, Paris.
- For Non-Member Countries: National Sources.

### Further information

#### Analytical publications

- OECD (2000), "The Partial Renaissance of the Self-Employed", *OECD Employment Outlook*, Chapter 5, OECD, Paris, pp. 155-199.
- OECD (2005), *OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Outlook – 2005 Edition*, OECD, Paris.
- OECD (2008), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD, Paris.

#### Statistical publications

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

#### Online databases

- *Employment Statistics*.

#### Websites

- OECD Directorate for Employment, Labour and Social Affairs, [www.oecd.org/els](http://www.oecd.org/els).
- OECD Entrepreneurship at Local Level, [www.oecd.org/tds/leed/entrepreneurship](http://www.oecd.org/tds/leed/entrepreneurship).

**Self-employment rates: total**

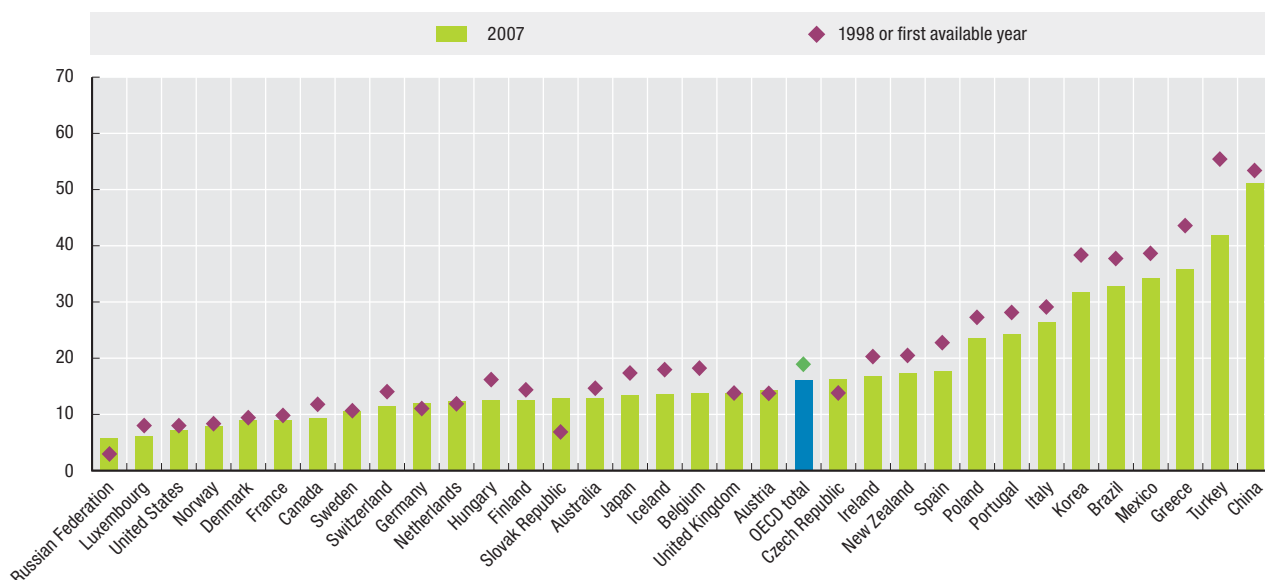
As a percentage of total civilian employment

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	15.9	15.4	14.8	15.1	14.6	14.5	14.1	13.8	13.9	13.4	13.2	12.9	12.9	12.9
Austria	13.8	14.4	14.0	13.6	13.7	13.4	13.1	13.2	13.1	12.8	12.8	13.3	13.6	14.4
Belgium	18.9	18.8	18.8	18.6	18.2	17.3	14.0	14.1	14.1	14.1	14.1	13.8	13.8	13.8
Canada	10.7	10.6	11.1	11.4	11.7	11.3	10.6	9.9	9.8	9.8	9.5	9.4	9.1	9.3
Czech Republic	10.6	12.0	12.2	12.4	13.8	14.5	15.2	15.2	16.1	17.3	16.9	16.1	16.2	16.2
Denmark	10.0	9.6	9.5	9.1	9.4	9.1	8.7	8.9	9.0	8.8	8.7	8.7	8.9	8.9
Finland	16.3	15.6	15.3	14.9	14.3	14.0	13.7	13.0	12.9	12.9	12.8	12.7	12.9	12.6
France	11.3	10.8	10.4	10.1	9.8	9.5	9.2	8.9	8.8	8.8	8.9	9.0	9.0	9.0
Germany	10.6	10.7	10.8	10.9	11.0	10.8	11.0	11.1	11.2	11.4	12.1	12.4	12.2	12.0
Greece	46.7	46.1	45.7	45.2	43.6	42.2	41.9	39.9	39.3	39.0	36.6	36.4	36.3	35.9
Hungary	17.8	18.0	18.1	17.4	16.1	15.7	15.2	14.5	13.9	13.5	14.3	13.8	12.8	12.5
Iceland	18.4	19.7	18.2	17.7	17.9	17.7	18.0	16.9	16.6	13.9	14.1	14.2	14.7	13.7
Ireland	22.8	22.2	20.8	20.8	20.2	19.2	18.9	18.1	18.1	17.7	18.0	17.4	16.3	16.8
Italy	29.0	29.3	29.3	29.1	29.1	28.6	28.5	28.2	27.7	27.5	28.4	27.0	26.7	26.4
Japan	18.6	18.3	17.7	17.5	17.3	17.2	16.6	15.9	15.4	15.1	14.9	14.7	13.8	13.4
Korea	37.1	36.8	36.7	36.8	38.3	37.6	36.8	36.7	36.0	34.9	34.0	33.6	32.8	31.8
Luxembourg	8.4	8.4	8.3	8.2	8.0	7.7	7.4	7.1	6.9	6.8	6.7	6.5	6.3	6.1
Mexico	43.7	41.2	40.1	40.9	38.6	38.0	36.0	36.4	36.8	36.6	36.5	35.5	34.5	34.3
Netherlands	12.3	12.4	12.5	12.6	11.8	11.3	11.2	11.6	11.7	11.4	12.1	12.4	12.4	12.4
New Zealand	21.1	20.9	20.9	20.0	20.4	21.2	20.7	19.9	19.4	19.4	19.2	18.5	17.7	17.3
Norway	9.7	9.3	8.7	8.2	8.3	7.8	7.4	7.2	7.1	7.3	7.4	7.4	8.5	8.0
Poland	30.9	29.7	29.5	28.3	27.2	26.9	27.4	28.0	28.1	27.3	26.7	25.8	24.4	23.5
Portugal	27.6	27.9	28.6	28.9	28.1	27.0	26.1	26.8	26.6	26.7	25.9	25.1	24.1	24.2
Slovak Republic	6.3	6.5	6.4	6.3	6.8	7.7	7.9	8.4	8.6	9.7	12.0	12.6	12.6	12.9
Spain	25.8	25.2	24.7	23.5	22.7	21.3	20.2	19.8	19.0	18.3	18.1	18.2	17.9	17.7
Sweden	11.1	11.2	11.0	10.8	10.6	10.6	10.3	10.0	9.8	9.6	9.9	9.8	10.0	10.6
Switzerland	12.7	12.8	13.4	13.9	14.0	14.0	13.2	13.0	12.5	12.0	11.4	11.2	11.1	11.5
Turkey	59.1	58.5	57.2	55.4	55.4	55.0	51.4	52.8	50.2	49.4	49.2	45.8	43.5	41.9
United Kingdom	15.7	15.6	14.9	14.5	13.7	13.2	12.8	12.8	12.7	13.2	13.6	13.4	13.5	13.8
United States	8.8	8.5	8.4	8.2	7.9	7.7	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.4	7.2
EU27 total	..	17.9	17.8	17.6	17.2	16.9	16.7	16.6	16.5	16.6	16.4	16.3	16.0	15.9
OECD total	19.8	19.4	19.2	19.0	18.6	18.3	17.6	17.5	17.3	17.2	17.3	16.9	16.5	16.1
Brazil	..	38.6	37.0	37.8	37.7	38.5	..	35.6	35.7	35.6	34.9	34.9	34.0	32.9
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	53.4	51.8	48.8	45.8	48.2	52.0	51.2
Russian Federation	..	1.9	2.1	2.9	2.9	8.0	7.6	6.0	5.9	5.7	5.8	6.1	6.0	5.7

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**Self-employment rates: total**

As a percentage of total civilian employment




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## SELF-EMPLOYMENT

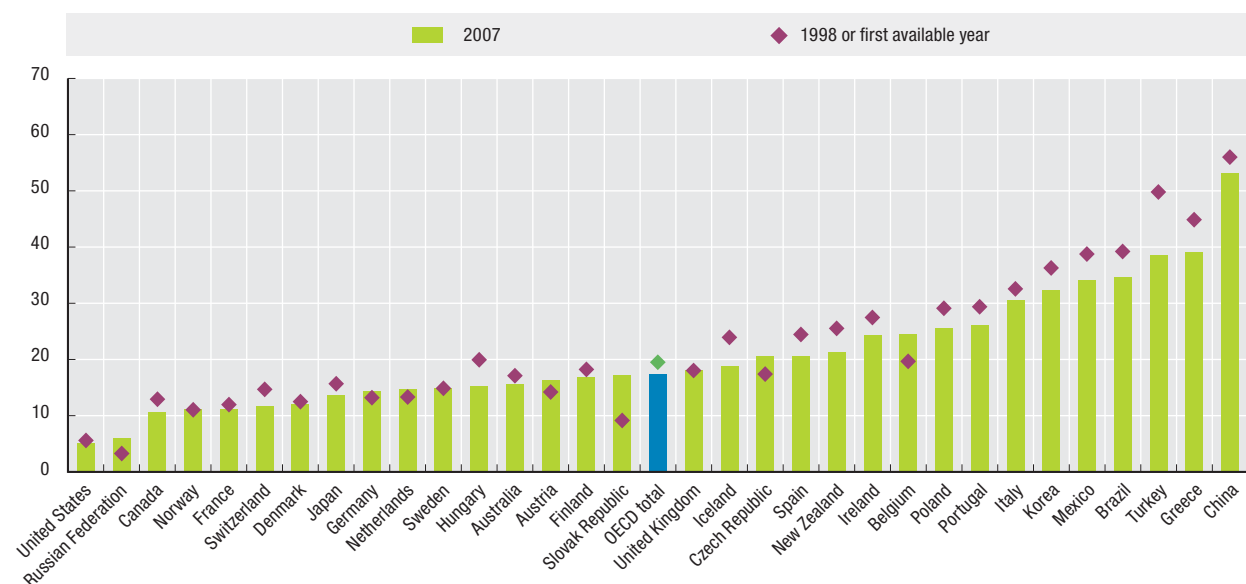

**Self-employment rates: men**

As a percentage of total male civilian employment

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	18.3	17.9	17.2	17.4	17.1	17.1	16.7	16.6	16.6	16.2	15.9	15.5	15.5	15.5
Austria	..	-	14.1	14.0	14.2	14.0	13.9	14.1	14.2	14.0	14.8	15.3	15.4	16.2
Belgium	19.6	19.7	19.9	19.9	19.6	18.2	24.2	24.4	24.6	24.8	24.9	24.5	24.5	24.5
Canada	12.0	11.8	12.2	12.5	12.9	12.5	11.7	11.2	10.8	11.0	10.8	10.5	10.2	10.5
Czech Republic	13.7	15.1	15.7	15.9	17.3	18.4	19.1	19.1	20.3	21.7	21.5	20.4	20.3	20.5
Denmark	..	12.4	12.4	..	12.4	12.2	11.7	12.4	12.5	11.9	11.9	11.6	11.7	12.0
Finland	21.1	20.2	19.7	19.0	18.2	18.1	17.8	16.8	16.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	17.1	16.8
France	13.3	12.9	12.6	12.3	11.9	11.6	11.3	11.0	10.9	10.9	11.0	11.2	11.2	11.2
Germany	12.3	12.5	12.7	13.0	13.1	13.2	13.4	13.4	13.6	14.0	14.9	14.9	14.7	14.4
Greece	47.6	47.4	46.9	46.8	44.9	43.8	43.7	42.1	41.4	41.0	39.4	39.1	39.1	39.0
Hungary	21.9	22.1	22.6	21.5	19.9	19.5	19.2	18.1	17.3	17.1	17.9	17.3	16.0	15.3
Iceland	25.6	27.6	23.9	23.2	23.9	23.7	24.0	23.1	23.6	19.2	19.3	20.1	20.8	18.8
Ireland	30.3	29.9	28.2	28.1	27.4	26.1	25.8	25.2	25.6	25.0	25.3	24.7	23.3	24.2
Italy	31.6	32.3	32.5	32.4	32.5	32.1	32.3	32.2	31.7	31.5	32.4	31.2	30.8	30.6
Japan	16.4	16.1	15.8	15.9	15.6	15.8	15.5	15.0	14.8	14.7	14.7	14.5	13.9	13.6
Korea	34.7	34.3	34.4	34.7	36.3	36.1	35.7	36.0	35.7	35.3	34.4	34.0	33.2	32.3
Mexico	44.2	41.6	40.6	40.8	38.7	38.1	36.4	36.9	36.9	36.5	36.2	35.7	34.4	34.1
Netherlands	-	13.7	13.8	14.0	13.3	12.7	12.6	12.9	13.4	13.6	14.1	14.6	14.6	14.6
New Zealand	25.7	25.4	25.8	24.9	25.5	26.4	25.9	24.9	24.5	24.6	24.0	23.0	22.0	21.2
Norway	12.8	12.1	11.4	10.9	11.0	10.3	9.8	9.4	9.7	10.1	10.3	10.2	11.7	11.1
Poland	32.4	31.4	31.1	30.0	29.1	29.2	29.5	29.9	30.4	29.8	28.9	27.9	26.6	25.5
Portugal	28.9	29.9	30.3	30.0	29.3	28.2	27.5	28.4	28.1	28.3	27.8	26.7	25.5	26.0
Slovak Republic	8.6	8.7	8.7	8.4	9.1	10.4	10.8	11.3	11.8	13.0	16.0	17.2	16.7	17.2
Spain	26.9	26.2	26.1	25.3	24.4	23.2	22.2	21.9	21.3	20.7	20.5	20.8	20.7	20.6
Sweden	15.7	15.7	15.6	15.3	14.8	14.8	14.5	14.1	14.0	13.9	14.3	14.0	14.2	14.9
Switzerland	12.5	13.3	14.0	14.1	14.6	14.6	13.9	13.7	13.0	12.4	11.9	11.7	11.5	11.7
Turkey	52.7	52.1	50.5	49.8	49.8	48.9	46.5	47.5	45.1	44.5	45.0	42.2	40.1	38.5
United Kingdom	20.6	20.6	19.6	19.1	18.0	17.7	16.7	17.0	17.0	17.6	18.3	17.6	17.7	18.0
United States	6.0	5.9	5.9	5.8	5.5	5.4	5.3	5.3	5.2	5.4	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.1
EU27 total	..	20.8	20.0	19.8	19.6	19.2	19.1	19.1	19.2	19.6	19.4	19.3	19.0	18.9
OECD total	20.3	19.9	19.9	19.9	19.5	19.2	18.7	18.7	18.5	18.5	18.6	18.1	17.7	17.4
Brazil	..	38.8	38.2	39.0	39.2	40.0	..	37.4	37.2	37.4	36.7	36.2	35.5	34.6
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	56.0	54.5	51.2	48.8	51.1	54.1	53.1
Russian Federation	..	2.3	2.5	3.2	3.2	7.5	7.3	5.8	5.8	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.2	6.0


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**Self-employment rates: men**

As a percentage of total male civilian employment

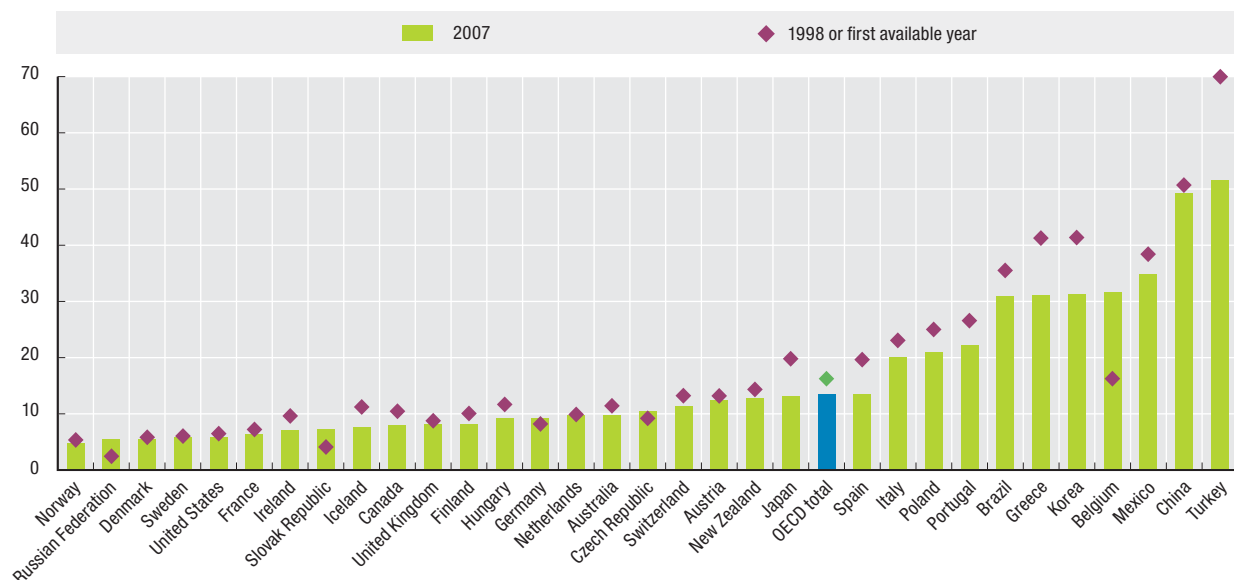

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**Self-employment rates: women**  
As a percentage of total female civilian employment

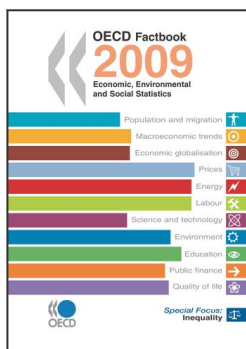
	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Australia	12.6	12.1	11.6	12.2	11.4	11.1	10.7	10.3	10.4	10.0	9.9	9.8	9.8	9.8
Austria	..	-	13.8	13.2	13.1	12.6	12.2	12.1	11.8	11.3	10.3	10.9	11.3	12.3
Belgium	17.7	17.6	17.4	16.9	16.2	16.0	33.1	33.6	33.3	32.9	32.4	31.6	31.6	31.6
Canada	9.2	9.1	9.7	10.2	10.4	9.8	9.2	8.4	8.5	8.4	8.0	8.1	7.9	8.0
Czech Republic	6.7	8.0	7.9	8.0	9.2	9.6	10.2	10.2	10.7	11.5	10.9	10.4	10.9	10.5
Denmark	..	6.3	6.1	..	5.8	5.6	5.5	4.9	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.3	5.8	5.5
Finland	11.1	10.5	10.5	10.2	10.0	9.5	9.2	8.9	8.7	8.8	8.5	8.5	8.4	8.2
France	8.7	8.2	7.8	7.5	7.2	6.9	6.7	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3	6.3
Germany	8.3	8.3	8.1	8.1	8.2	7.8	7.9	8.3	8.2	8.4	8.8	9.4	9.3	9.2
Greece	45.2	43.8	43.7	42.4	41.3	39.3	38.9	36.1	35.7	35.6	32.1	32.0	32.1	31.1
Hungary	13.0	13.0	12.7	12.4	11.6	11.1	10.5	10.2	10.0	9.2	10.1	9.9	9.1	9.2
Iceland	10.4	10.6	11.5	11.4	11.2	10.8	11.0	9.7	8.7	8.0	8.3	7.4	7.6	7.6
Ireland	10.1	9.7	9.6	9.5	9.6	9.2	9.0	8.0	7.8	7.9	7.9	7.5	6.7	7.1
Italy	24.2	23.8	23.6	23.2	23.0	22.6	22.0	21.6	21.2	21.1	22.2	20.6	20.5	20.0
Japan	22.0	21.5	20.4	19.9	19.8	19.3	18.3	17.2	16.3	15.8	15.3	14.9	13.7	13.1
Korea	40.7	40.4	40.1	39.8	41.4	39.7	38.4	37.6	36.5	34.5	33.4	32.9	32.3	31.2
Mexico	42.6	40.5	38.9	41.3	38.4	37.8	35.3	35.6	36.7	36.7	37.1	35.3	34.6	34.8
Netherlands	-	10.7	10.6	10.7	9.8	9.4	9.4	9.8	9.5	8.6	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.7
New Zealand	15.3	15.3	14.9	14.1	14.3	15.0	14.7	14.0	13.3	13.2	13.6	13.4	12.5	12.7
Norway	5.8	6.1	5.7	5.1	5.3	5.0	4.8	4.7	4.2	4.3	4.3	4.5	4.9	4.7
Poland	29.2	27.7	27.5	26.3	25.0	24.1	24.8	25.7	25.4	24.3	24.1	23.1	21.8	20.9
Portugal	26.0	25.5	26.5	27.5	26.6	25.6	24.4	24.9	24.7	24.8	23.5	23.3	22.4	22.1
Slovak Republic	3.4	3.8	3.5	3.8	4.0	4.4	4.7	4.9	4.7	5.9	7.1	7.0	7.3	7.3
Spain	23.6	23.2	21.9	20.2	19.6	17.8	16.6	16.2	15.1	14.5	14.3	14.5	13.8	13.5
Sweden	6.3	6.4	6.0	5.9	6.0	6.1	5.7	5.6	5.3	5.1	5.1	5.3	5.4	5.8
Switzerland	13.0	12.0	12.6	13.5	13.2	13.2	12.4	12.0	11.7	11.4	10.7	10.6	10.7	11.4
Turkey	74.6	74.0	73.6	70.0	69.9	70.0	64.7	66.8	63.0	61.9	60.7	56.2	53.3	51.5
United Kingdom	9.8	9.6	9.3	9.1	8.7	8.0	8.3	7.8	7.8	8.2	8.3	7.8	8.0	8.2
United States	7.1	6.9	6.9	6.7	6.4	6.2	6.1	6.1	5.9	6.1	6.1	5.9	6.0	5.8
EU27 total	..	13.8	14.8	14.5	14.1	13.7	13.5	13.3	12.9	12.9	12.6	12.5	12.2	12.1
OECD total	17.4	17.0	16.8	16.7	16.2	15.8	15.0	14.9	14.7	14.4	14.4	14.0	13.6	13.4
Brazil	..	38.4	35.3	36.1	35.5	36.3	..	33.0	33.5	33.1	32.5	33.1	31.8	30.8
China	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	50.7	49.1	46.3	42.7	45.4	49.9	49.3
Russian Federation	..	1.4	1.6	2.5	2.4	8.5	8.0	6.1	5.9	5.5	5.6	6.0	5.7	5.4

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**Self-employment rates: women**  
As a percentage of total female civilian employment



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