

Employment and unemployment in February 2004

- **12,000 fewer employed than a year ago**
- **Employment rate 65.6 per cent**
- **Number of unemployed same as one year earlier**
- **Rate of unemployment 9.0 per cent, 229,000 unemployed**
- **35,000 new vacancies at labour exchange offices**

According to the Labour Force Survey of Statistics Finland, the number of **employed persons** was 12,000 lower this February than in February 2003. The number **unemployed persons** remained unchanged, so the size of the **labour force** decreased by 12,000 persons in twelve months. The size of the population of working age grew by 10,000 in the year. There were 23,000 more persons of working age outside the labour force than in February 2003. Among the groups outside the labour force the proportion of women performing domestic work grew by most.

The numbers of both self-employed persons and wage earners fell. The number of wage earners engaged in continuous full-time work went up by 6,000. There were 11,000 fewer wage earners in atypical, that is, part-time and /or fixed-term employment relationships in February than twelve months previously. Compared to February 2003, employment increased in trade, public services and real estate activities, but decreased in construction, hotel and restaurant activities, business services and manufacturing. Examined by area, jobs decreased most in the Province of Southern Finland.

In February, the **employment rate**, that is, the proportion of the employed among persons aged 15 to 64, stood at 65.6 per cent, which is 0.5 percentage points lower than one year earlier. The employment rate for women fell by 0.1 percentage points to 64.6 per cent. The employment rate for men went down by 0.7 percentage points and was 66.7 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the employment rate was 67.2 per cent.

Changes in the labour force 2/2003 - 2/2004, thousand

	February 2004	February 2003	CHANGE, % 2/03 - 2/04
<i>Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey</i>			
Employed, total	2 308	2 320	-0.5
- wage-earners	2 023	2 027	-0.2
- self-employed and unpaid family workers	285	293	-2.7
Employment rate, %	65.6	66.1	-0.5 ²
Unemployed¹	229	229	-0.2
Unemployment rate, %	9.0	9.0	0.0 ²
Labour force, total	2 537	2 549	-0.5
Labour force participation rate, %	64.5	65.0	-0.5 ²
Economically inactive, total	1 395	1 372	1.6
- students	391	390	0.3
- persons performing domestic work	101	84	20.3
Economically inactive persons in disguised unemployment	89	84	5.5
<i>Ministry of Labour's Labour Exchange Statistics</i>			
Unemployed job seekers	300	300	0.0
- unemployed over a year	72	75	-3.4
Employed with subsidised measures	35	36	-1.4
In labour market training	33	33	1.1
In trainee and job alternation places	21	19	6.2
New vacancies at labour exchange offices	35	35	-1.4

Unrounded figures are used in the CHANGE column

² percentage points

¹ Based on the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

According to the Labour Force Survey, there were 229,000 **unemployed** in February, i.e. the same number as one year before. The **rate of unemployment** was also unchanged from February 2003 at 9.0 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate was 8.9 per cent.

Men's unemployment rate rose by 0.3 percentage points to 9.3 per cent. Women's unemployment rate fell by 0.2 percentage points and was 8.7 per cent. The unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 was 21.6 per cent, whereas in February 2003 it stood at 22.9 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate for young people was 21.7 per cent. The rate of unemployment was lowest in the Province of Southern Finland at 7.3 per cent and highest in the Province of Lapland at 16.0 per cent. Of all industries, the unemployment rate was highest in construction, 14.6 per cent.

At the end of February 2004, there were altogether 300,000 persons registered, in accordance with the Unemployment Security Act and the Labour Exchange Office Regulations, as job seekers at the **labour exchange offices**. This is the same as in February 2003. Unemployment increased from the previous year in the areas of five and continued to decrease in those of ten employment and economic development centres. The number of those covered by employment policy measures increased by 1,000 from February 2003 and was 3.6 per cent of the labour force. There were 34,000 unemployed job seekers aged under 25 registered at the labour exchange offices. Their number was the same as in last year's February. During this February, 35,000 new vacancies were reported to the labour exchange offices, which is the same number as in February 2003.

Differences between the Labour Force Survey and the Labour Exchange Statistics

The employment situation is monitored monthly both with the sample-based Labour Force Survey of Statistics Finland and with the register-based Labour Exchange Statistics of the Ministry of Labour. The Labour Exchange Statistics describe the situation on the last weekday of the month. The data for the Labour Force Survey are collected for every week of the month.

The Labour Force Survey follows the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) and the practices required by Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Communities. According to them, a person is classified as unemployed if he or she is aged 15 or over, does not have a job, has actively sought employment in the past four weeks and would be available for work within two weeks. The Labour Exchange Statistics are based on legislation and administrative regulations.

The Labour Force Survey and the Labour Exchange Statistics apply two basically different statistical criteria to how actively a person seeks work and makes him/herself available on the labour market. Those unemployed persons who have neither contacted a labour exchange office for over four weeks, nor actively sought work in any other way either, are generally classified in the Labour Force Survey as belonging to disguised unemployment. Full-time students can be recorded as unemployed in the Labour Force Survey if they meet the ILO recommendations, whereas in the Labour Exchange Statistics they are not accepted as being unemployed during term time. Due to statistical differences, the number of unemployed job seekers does not agree with the number of unemployed calculated in accordance with the ILO recommendations. The difference between the February unemployment figures of Statistics Finland and the Ministry of Labour was approximately the same as one year previously.

Since the Labour Force Survey is a sample survey, its data allow for random variation. In respect of the unemployment rate, for example, the 95 per cent confidence interval or the margin of error is about ± 0.6 percentage points. The confidence interval for the number of unemployed is approximately $\pm 15,000$ persons.

Inquiries:

Statistics Finland: Mr Pekka Tossavainen +358 9 1734 3517, Mr Kalle Sinivuori +358 9 1734 3524, Mr Veli Rajaniemi +358 9 1734 3434;

E-mail: tyovoima.tilastokeskus@stat.fi;

Ministry of Labour: Mr Oiva Lönnberg +358 9 1604 8048;

Latest seasonally adjusted unemployment figures published by the EU at:

<http://europa.eu.int/en/comml/eurostat/>