



## PRESS RELEASE

### LABOUR FORCE SURVEY: May 2020

The Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) announces the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May 2020. It should be noted that in May, due to the measures taken to protect public health and tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, the labour market was affected because of the suspension of the operation of businesses in many sectors of the economy, mainly in the service sector, and the limitations in the population movements. These measures affected, to a large extent, not only the normal functioning of the market, but also the data collection method of the survey.

It should be noted that due to the exceptional circumstances under which the collection of a part of the sample used for the compilation of the present survey took place and the resulting impact on the response rate as well as the extent to which the latter can be attributed to the above mentioned exceptional circumstances, ELSTAT is currently conducting methodological checks of compatibility of alternative data collection practices the results of which may be published as long as this is deemed necessary.

- The **seasonally adjusted unemployment rate** in May 2020 was **17.0%** compared to the downward revised 17.2% in May 2019 and to the upward revised 15.7% in April 2020. The number of employed in May 2020 amounted to 3,729,591 persons. The number of unemployed amounted to 764,912 while the number of inactive amounted to 3,401,996. The corresponding figures for May 2015 to 2020 are presented in Table 1.
- The **number of employed persons** decreased by 193,312 persons compared with May 2019 (a 4.9% rate of decrease) and by 128,924 persons compared with April 2020 (a 3.3% rate of decrease). It should be noted that according to Eurostat guidelines concerning the Labour Force Survey, in the light of the COVID-19 pandemic, persons in lay-off are still considered employed persons if the duration of their contract suspension is less than 3 months or if they receive more than 50% of their salary.
- The **number of unemployed persons** decreased by 52,396 persons compared with May 2019 (a 6.4% rate of decrease) and increased by 48,444 persons compared with April 2020 (a 6.8% rate of increase). In comparison with May 2019 the decrease in the number of unemployed was directed mainly towards the economically inactive, since on account of the COVID-19 pandemic, several jobseekers reported that they were not currently available for work and, therefore, in line with the definitions in the relevant European Regulation, they are classified as economically inactive. It should be noted that according to the definition of unemployed and inactive persons, if a person, who is not working, is not actively seeking work and is not currently available for work, is considered economically inactive and not unemployed.
- The **number of inactive persons**, i.e., persons that neither work nor look for a job, increased by 205,247 persons compared with May 2019 (a 6.4% rate of increase) and by 77,988 persons compared with April 2020 (a 2.3% rate of increase).

Seasonal adjustment is a statistical technique that removes the seasonal component of a time series, making more visible the underlying trend in the change of a characteristic. Users should take into account the fact that the seasonal adjustment procedure requires data for many months in order to remove the seasonal component from a time series. As a result, several "observations" (that is, a sufficient number of monthly results) are necessary so that the time series reflects a significant change in the trend of employment and unemployment.

The monthly estimates for the number of employed, unemployed and unemployment rate can be subject to revisions in the following months caused by updates to the seasonally adjusted series whenever new monthly data are added, inclusion of the most recent quarterly Labour Force Survey (LFS) data and update of seasonal adjustment model with complete annual data.

Users should also take into account that **the first estimates of the most recent monthly unemployment rates are likely to be revised as they are produced with the collected and processed at the time of the press release survey data, which do not coincide with the finally collected and processed sample of the survey.** For that reason, monthly estimates are revised when the final quarterly estimates are known.

#### Information on methodological issues

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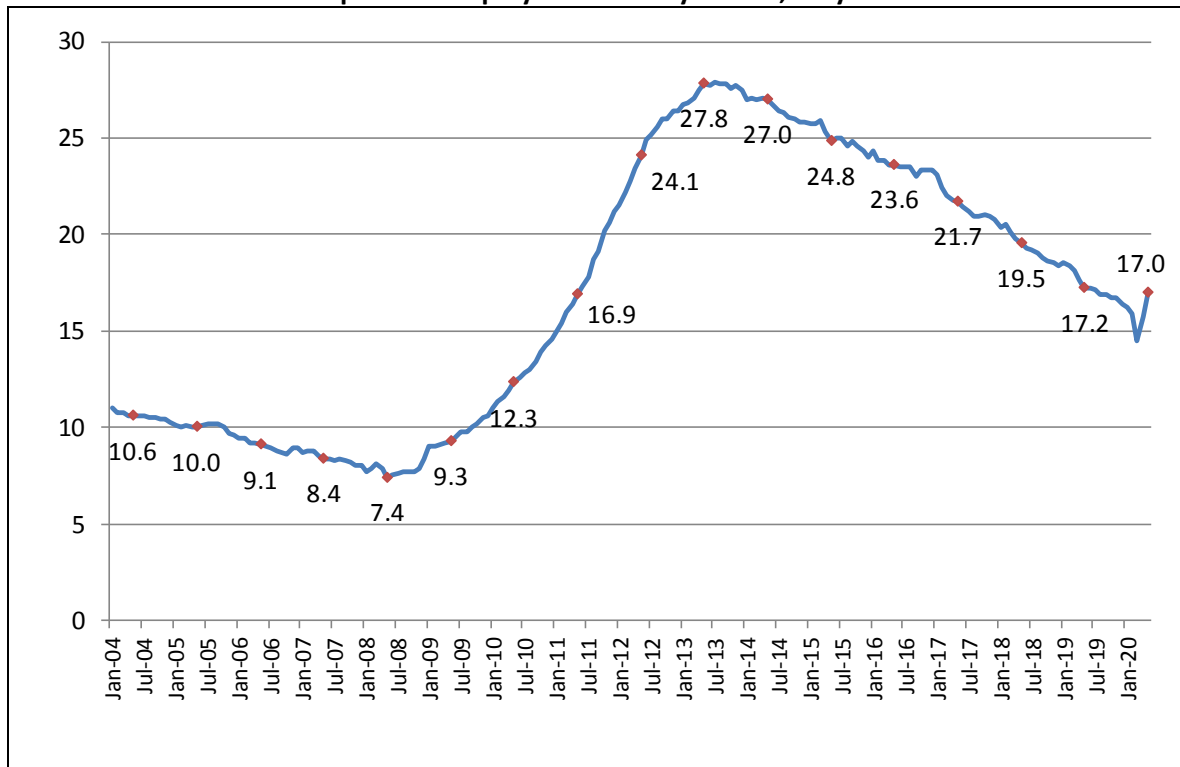
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**Table 1: Employed, unemployed, economically non-active persons and unemployment rate, May 2015 – 2020**

	May					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Employed	3,633,683	3,670,763	3,743,464	3,821,692	3,922,903	3,729,591
Unemployed	1,199,909	1,133,416	1,039,417	923,272	817,308	764,912
Inactive	3,258,730	3,247,429	3,233,484	3,234,982	3,196,749	3,401,996
<b>Unemployment Rate</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>17.0</b>

**Graph 1: Unemployment rate by month, May 2004 – 2020**



*The values of the curve refer to May of each year*

Tables 2 and 3 illustrate the unemployment rate by gender and age group from May 2015 to 2020. Table 4 presents the evolution of unemployment rate during the last 15 months, by Decentralized Administration. The complete time series for employed, unemployed and inactive persons as well as the unemployment rate are available on ELSTAT's website.

**Table 2: Unemployment rate by gender, May 2015-2020**

Gender	May					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Males	22.0	19.7	18.1	15.6	13.9	13.3
Females	28.2	28.4	26.3	24.3	21.4	21.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>17.0</b>

**Table 3: Unemployment rate by age group<sup>1</sup>, May 2015-2020**

Age Group	May					
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
15-24	49.5	48.4	44.1	38.5	32.2	37.5
25-34	30.7	30.8	27.8	24.1	23.4	22.9
35-44	22.8	20.1	19.1	17.9	14.9	15.2
45-54	20.0	19.4	17.0	16.3	14.5	13.1
55-64	17.1	17.9	20.0	16.6	13.3	11.8
65-74	11.3	12.9	12.0	11.9	10.7	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>24.8</b>	<b>23.6</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>19.5</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>17.0</b>

**Table 4: Unemployment rate for the period March 2019 - May 2020, by Decentralized Administration<sup>2</sup>**

Decentralized Administration	3d 2019	4th 2019	5th 2019	6th 2019	7th 2019	8th 2019	9th 2019	10th 2019	11th 2019	12th 2019	1st 2020	2nd 2020	3d 2020	4th 2020	5th 2020
Macedonia-Thrace	19.0	19.0	19.1	18.8	18.7	18.5	18.6	18.7	18.7	18.5	18.5	17.9	17.7	17.3	17.5
Epirus-Western Macedonia	20.9	20.4	19.9	20.0	20.2	19.8	19.2	19.4	19.7	19.9	19.9	19.8	13.9	13.7	14.5
Thessaly – Sterea Ellas	18.2	17.7	17.1	17.1	17.1	21.1	17.9	18.0	18.1	18.0	17.9	17.3	17.5	18.1	18.0
Peloponnese, Western Greece & Ionian Islands	19.0	18.8	17.9	17.5	17.2	16.9	17.0	16.8	16.3	16.1	15.4	14.6	14.3	15.2	16.0
Attica	18.0	17.5	17.2	16.8	16.8	16.2	15.9	15.7	15.6	15.5	14.8	14.3	14.0	13.8	13.6
Aegean Islands	17.1	13.0	12.4	13.9	14.5	14.2	14.7	14.1	16.3	12.3	12.8	13.9	6.6	18.9	22.1
Crete	12.2	12.4	10.9	11.3	11.0	11.8	12.0	11.9	11.8	12.2	12.7	12.7	11.4	23.3	23.1
<b>Greece, Total</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>17.6</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>17.2</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>16.7</b>	<b>16.4</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>15.7</b>	<b>17.0</b>

<sup>1</sup> Estimates of “rare” characteristics, that is estimates of characteristics that refer to 10,000 persons or less are accompanied by large sampling errors, as for example in the case of unemployment rate in the age group of 65 – 74 years old.

<sup>2</sup> Decentralized Administrations are the lowest geographical areas for which the Labour Force Survey (LFS) publishes estimates. LFS results are not published at lower level (i.e. NUTS 2 or NUTS 3) because, due to small population and sample size, estimates in these areas have large sampling errors. It should be noted that the same problem of small populations and sample sizes exist also in certain Decentralized Administrations and as a result, estimates in these areas have large sampling errors.

## The effect of seasonal adjustment on the estimates of Labour Force Survey

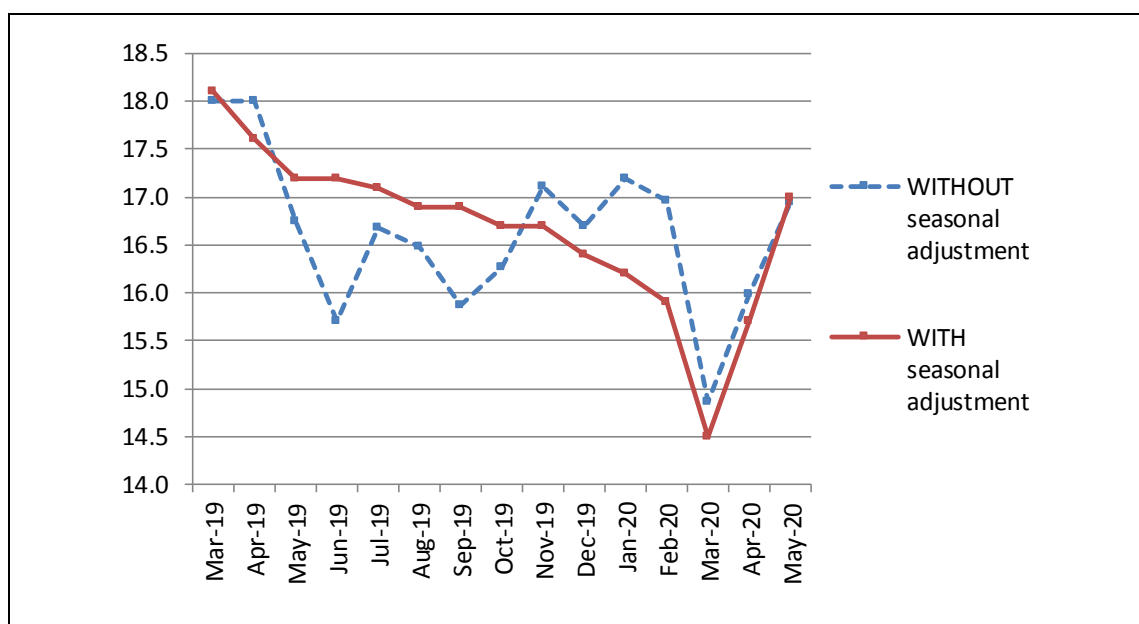
The characteristics surveyed by Labour Force Survey (number of employed, unemployed, etc.) have large seasonal variation. For example, in Greece, employment increases during summer months because of tourism (if there are no other countervailing factors).

Table 5 presents the change in monthly estimates of employed and unemployed persons because of seasonal adjustment for the period March 2019 – May 2020 while Graphs 2, 3 and 4 present adjusted and unadjusted time series for employed persons, unemployed persons and the rate of unemployment for the same period.

**Table 5: Change in monthly estimates of employed and unemployed persons due to seasonal adjustment**

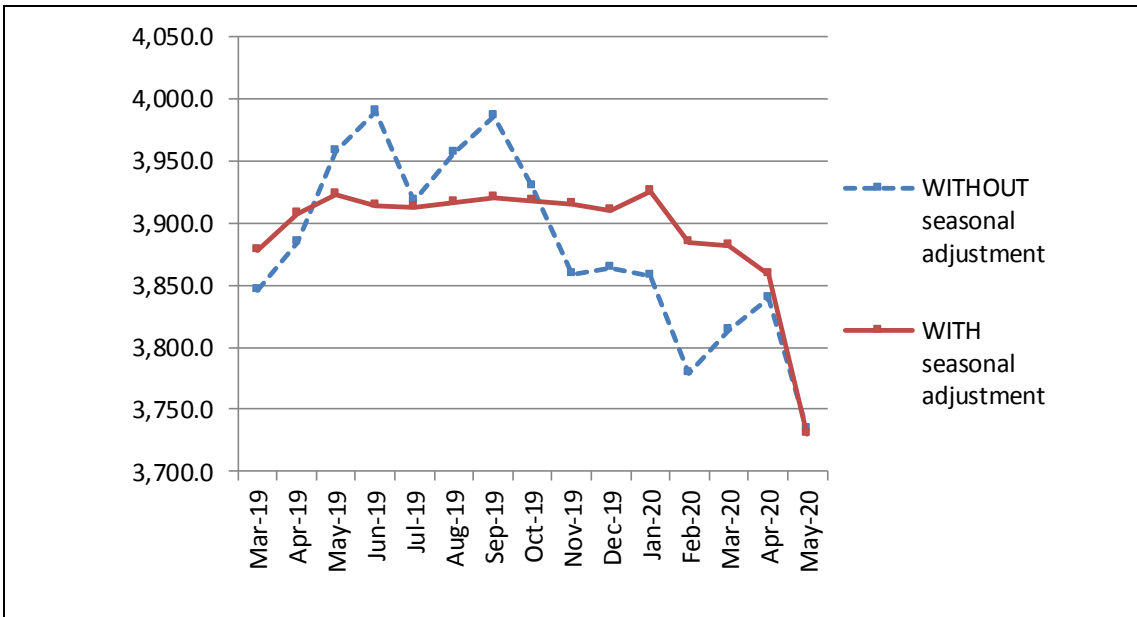
	Estimated number of employed <u>without seasonal adjustment</u> (in thousands)	Change due to seasonal adjustment (in thousands)	Change (%)	Estimated number of unemployed <u>without seasonal adjustment</u> (in thousands)	Change due to seasonal adjustment (in thousands)	Change (%)
March 2019	3,846.3	32.0	0.8	844.0	13.9	1.6
April 2019	3,884.3	23.2	0.6	852.6	-20.1	-2.4
May 2019	3,957.8	-34.9	-0.9	795.7	21.6	2.7
June 2019	3,989.3	-75.6	-1.9	743.0	67.1	9.0
July 2019	3,918.1	-5.9	-0.2	784.7	21.3	2.7
August 2019	3,956.6	-39.5	-1.0	780.9	18.3	2.3
September 2019	3,986.2	-66.4	-1.7	751.9	44.4	5.9
October 2019	3,928.9	-11.4	-0.3	763.6	21.0	2.8
November 2019	3,859.2	56.3	1.5	796.9	-14.6	-1.8
December 2019	3,864.2	46.4	1.2	774.8	-6.3	-0.8
January 2020	3,857.1	68.3	1.8	800.5	-44.1	-5.5
February 2020	3,779.2	105.4	2.8	771.6	-37.9	-4.9
March 2020	3,813.0	68.7	1.8	665.4	-6.3	-0.9
April 2020	3,839.3	19.2	0.5	730.3	-13.8	-1.9
May 2020	3,733.9	-4.3	-0.1	761.5	3.4	0.5

**Graph 2: Unemployment Rate - Adjusted and Non-adjusted Estimates**



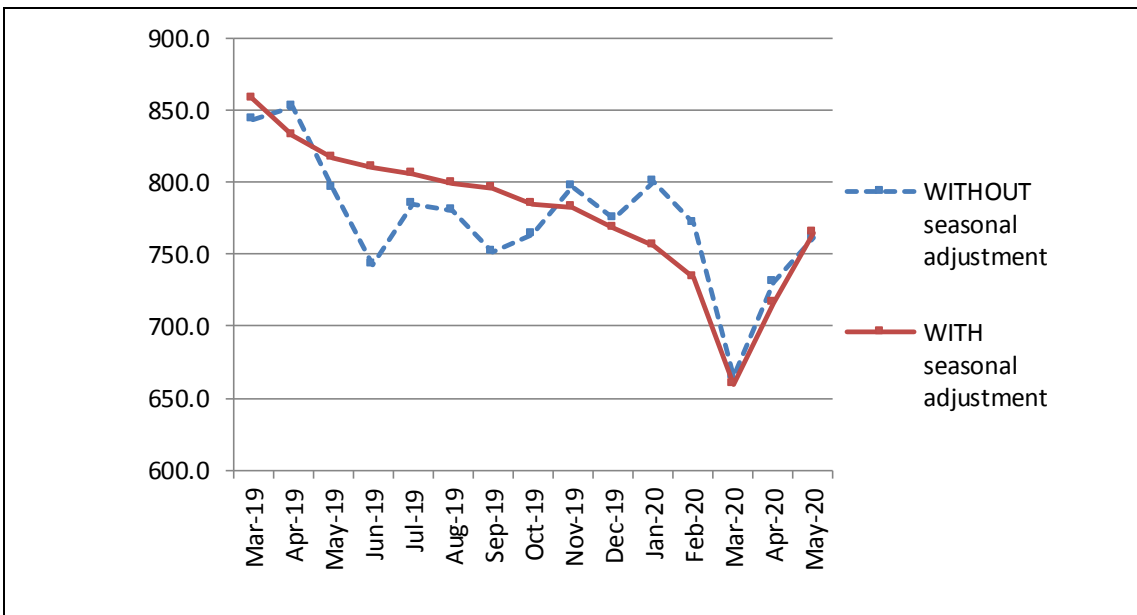
(in thousands)

**Graph 3: Number of Employed Persons - Adjusted and Non-adjusted Estimates**



(in thousands)

**Graph 4: Number of Unemployed Persons - Adjusted and Non-adjusted Estimates**



(in thousands)

### Revisions of monthly estimates

The monthly estimates, for the number of employed and unemployed persons and unemployment rate, can be subject to revisions in the following months caused by updates to the seasonally adjusted series whenever new monthly data are added, inclusion of the most recent quarterly Labour Force Survey data and update of the seasonal adjustment model with complete annual data. In the current press release the estimation of unemployment rate for the period March 2019 – April 2020 has been revised (compared to the estimation published in the previous press-release) as follows:

**Table 6: Comparison of seasonally adjusted estimates**

	Estimations published in July 2020	Estimations published in the current press release
March 2019	18.1	18.1
April 2019	17.5	17.6
May 2019	17.3	17.2
June 2019	17.1	17.2
July 2019	17.1	17.1
August 2019	16.9	16.9
September 2019	16.9	16.9
October 2019	16.7	16.7
November 2019	16.6	16.7
December 2019	16.4	16.4
January 2020	16.2	16.2
February 2020	15.9	15.9
March 2020	14.5	14.5
April 2020	15.5	15.7
May 2020	-	17.0

## EXPLANATORY NOTES

<b>Labour Force Survey</b>	Labour Force Survey has been conducted since 1981. Until 1997 the results were produced on an annual basis with reference to the second quarter of each year. From 1998 onwards it is a continuous quarterly survey. The main statistical objectives of the Labour Force Survey is to divide the population of working age (15 years and over) into three mutually exclusive and exhaustive groups - persons in employment, unemployed persons and inactive persons. In addition, the Labour Force Survey collects information on demographic characteristics, on main job characteristics, on the existence and characteristics of a second job, on educational attainment, on participation in education, on previous working experience and on search of job.
<b>Legislation</b>	The current survey is fully harmonized with European legislation. The principal legal act is the <u>Council Regulation (EC) No. 577/98</u> that stipulates the provisions on design, survey characteristics and decision-making processes.
<b>Reference Period</b>	The sample of Labour Force Survey is equally allocated to the 4 (or 5) weeks of the month. Every selected household is assigned to a specific week, the reference week, running from Monday to Sunday.
<b>Coverage</b>	For the monthly estimates, a sub-sample of the quarterly Labour Force survey's sample is used.
<b>Definitions</b>	<p><b>Employed</b> are persons aged 15 years or older, who during the reference week worked, even for just one hour, for pay or profit or they were working in the family business, or they were not at work but had a job or business from which they were temporarily absent.</p> <p><b>Unemployed</b> are persons aged 15-74 who were without work during the reference week (they were not classified as employed), were currently available for work and were either actively seeking work in the past four weeks or had already found a job to start within the next three months.</p> <p><b>Inactive</b> are those persons who are neither classified as employed nor as unemployed.</p> <p><b>Economically active population (labour force)</b> are persons either employed or unemployed.</p> <p><b>Unemployment Rate</b> is the ratio of unemployed divided by total labour force.</p>
<b>Seasonal adjustment</b>	Seasonal adjustment is a statistical technique that removes the seasonal component of a time series, making more visible the underlying trend in the change of a characteristic. Hellenic Statistical Authority is using Demetra 2.0 for seasonal adjustment. Seasonally adjusted series are produced by TRAMO&SEATS algorithm. It should be noted that due to seasonal adjustment the whole series with monthly estimates is recalculated every time a new month is added in time series. As a result, estimations for the previous months are often revised.
<b>Sampling errors</b>	The monthly results of Labour Force Survey are estimations that are based in a relatively small sample size and have large sampling errors. An indication of the magnitude of survey's sampling errors is that estimations of characteristics that refer to 25,000 persons at the total country are accompanied by a coefficient of variation of at least 15%. More accurate estimates and detailed analysis of the changes in employment can be based on the quarterly results of the survey.
<b>Methodology</b>	Labour Force Survey's estimates are produced by a suitable unbiased estimator which takes in to account a) the probability of selection of every sampled household, b) the response rate in every primary sampling unit, c) the estimated population, for the corresponding month, allocated by NUTS II areas, gender and age group.
<b>Data collection during the pandemic period of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19)</b>	Labour Force Survey collects data on households (personal or telephone interviews). From 16 March to 24 June 2020, for reasons of public health protection, personal interviews were suspended, and data were collected exclusively by way of telephone interviews. For this reason, the response rate was lower during that period in comparison with previous months.
<b>References</b>	Analytical description of the Labour Force Survey's methodology and definitions can be found at <a href="http://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SJO02/">http://www.statistics.gr/en/statistics/-/publication/SJO02/</a>