

Not to be released before 20 January 2004 (8.00 am Finnish time)

2004:10

## Employment and unemployment in December 2003

- Number of employed persons 5,000 lower than a year ago
- Employment rate 66.4 per cent
- Number of unemployed nearly the same as one year before
- Rate of unemployment 8.2 per cent, 209,000 unemployed
- 16,000 new vacancies at labour exchange offices

According to the Labour Force Survey of Statistics Finland, the number of **employed persons** was 5,000 lower in December 2003 than one year before. The number of self-employed persons rose, while that of wage earners fell from the previous year. The number of wage earners engaged in continuous full-time work grew by 10,000. In December there were 17,000 fewer wage earners in so-called atypical, that is, part-time and/or fixed-term employment relationships than one year earlier.

In December, the **employment rate**, that is, the proportion of the employed among persons aged 15 to 64, stood at 66.4 per cent, which is 0.3 percentage points lower than the year before. The employment rate for men fell by 0.6 percentage points to 67.7 per cent, while that of women was unchanged at 65.0 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the employment rate was 67.0 per cent. Compared with the previous year's December, employment rose in trade, hotels and restaurants and technical and business services. Jobs declined in manufacturing and social services. Employment decreased in the Provinces of Western Finland and Lapland.

### Changes in the labour force 12/2002 - 12/2003, thousand

	December 2003	October 2002	CHANGE, % 12/02 - 12/03
<i>Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey:</i>			
<b>Employed, total</b>	2 336	2 341	-0.2
- wage-earners	2 028	2 037	-0.4
- self-employed and unpaid family workers	308	304	1.4
<b>Employment rate, %</b>	66.4	66.7	-0.3 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Unemployed<sup>1</sup></b>	209	208	0.8
<b>Unemployment rate, %</b>	8.2	8.1	0.1 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Labour force, total</b>	2 545	2 548	-0.1
<b>Labour force participation rate</b>	64.7	65.0	-0.3 <sup>2</sup>
<b>Economically inactive, total</b>	1 386	1 372	1.0
- students	387	383	1.2
- persons performing domestic work	86	80	7.1
Economically inactive persons in disguised unemployment	92	107	-14.1
<i>Ministry of Labour's Labour Exchange Statistics:</i>			
<b>Unemployed job seekers</b>	305	304	0.4
- unemployed over a year	72	76	-4.7
Employed with subsidised measures	34	35	-4.3
In labour market training	30	31	-4.4
In trainee and job alternation places	19	16	18.6
<b>New vacancies at labour exchange offices</b>	16	16	1.7

Unrounded figures are used in the CHANGE column

<sup>2</sup> percentage points

<sup>1</sup> Based on the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO)

According to the Labour Force Survey, there were 209,000 **unemployed** in December, i.e. around 1,000 more than one year before. The change is within the margin of error ( $\pm 15,000$ ). The **rate of unemployment** was 8.2 per cent, while it was 8.1 per cent one year previously. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate was 9.0 per cent. The unemployment rate for men was 8.6 per cent and for women 7.8 per cent. The unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 was 16.7 per cent, whereas in the previous year's December it stood at 15.7 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate for young people was 22.4 per cent. The rate of unemployment was lowest in the Province of Southern Finland, i.e. 6.7 per cent, and highest in the Province of Lapland, at 16.2 per cent. Of all industries, the unemployment rate was highest in construction, 9.5 per cent.

According to the Labour Force Survey, the average number of employed persons **in 2003** was 2,365,000, which is 7,000 fewer than in 2002. The rate of employment in 2003 was 67.3 per cent, against 67.7 per cent in 2002. The number of unemployed persons was 235,000, or 2,000 fewer than one year previously. The rate of unemployment was 9.0 per cent, while in 2002 it was 9.1 per cent.

At the end of December 2003, there were altogether 305,000 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 about 1,000 more than in December 2002. Compared with year before, unemployment grew in the areas of four and continued to fall in the areas of other employment and economic development centres. The number of those covered by employment policy measures was on level with the previous year, being 3.3 per cent of the labour force. There were 36,000 unemployed job seekers aged under 25 registered at the labour exchange offices. Their number was the same as in December 2002. During December, 16,000 new vacancies were reported to the labour exchanges offices, which is unchanged from the previous year's December.

## 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 December unemployment figures of Statistics Finland and the Ministry of Labour was 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  $\pm 0.6$  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, Ms Salme Kiiski +358 9 1734 3230, Mr Veli Rajaniemi +358 9 1734 3434;**

**e-mail [tyovoima.tilastokeskus@stat.fi](mailto: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/comm/eurostat/>**