

Employment and unemployment back-recalculated time series since 1977

Istat has produced back-recalculated time series, both quarterly and annual from 1977 up today, for the main labour market indicators, thus overcoming the break due to the changeover of the Labour force survey in the IV quarter of 1992. The publication of long time series which are consistent with data currently disseminated extends the possibility for long-term analysis on the labor market. For further details, see the Methodological annex. All these series are available as from today on Istat datawarehouse I.Stat.

From 1977 to 2012 the number of employed people increased from 19 million 511 thousand to 22 million 899 thousand. The increase in overall employment is mainly due to the growth of the female participation in the labor market. The number of employed women increased from 6 million 150 thousand to 9 million 458 thousand, the female ratio over the total employment rose from 31.5% to 41.3%.

The trend in the employment rate highlights several phases: an increase between 1977 and 1980, followed by five years of decline, during which the employment rate fell from 54.6% to 53.3 %; a moderate increase between 1986 and 1991 and again down sharply - from 54.9% to 52.5% - in the next four years; rising from 1996 to 2008 (from 52.9% to 58.7%) and still down to 56.8% in 2012.

The number of unemployed grew from 1 million 340 thousand in 1977 to 2 million 744 thousand in 2012. The increase affected both men (+863 thousand) and women (+541 thousand).

Phases of growth and contraction characterized also the unemployment rate. Between 1977 and 1987 the rate increased by 3.9 percentage points (from 6.4% to 10.3%), while the next four years the rate declined to 8.6%. From 1991 to 1998, it increased again reaching 11.3%, then fell in the next ten years reaching the minimum value of 6.1% in 2007. Since 2008, the rate rose to 10.7% in 2012.

The number of inactive people aged 15-64 decreased by about 600,000 people in the last 35 years, from nearly 15 million to 14 million 386 thousand. This decline is the result of the growth of the male component, which grew from 3 million 820 thousand to 5 million 140 thousand, and the high decrease in the female component. The inactivity rate fell from 42.5% in 1977 to 36.3% in 2012.

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