ILO unemployment and labour market-related indicators (results of the Labour Force Survey)

Sources used

The French Labour Force Survey is the only source allowing to measure the concepts of activity, unemployment, employment or inactivity as defined by the International Labour Office (ILO). In the survey, individuals describe their labour market situation in a given week, known as the "reference" week, through a number of factual questions.

The scope of the survey is made up of persons aged 15 or over residing in France[1] in private household (excluding communities: nursing homes, hospitals, prisons, etc.).

The survey sample is large: approximately 90,000 people answer the survey every quarter. In order to measure quarter-to-quarter changes more accurately, households are surveyed 6 quarters in a row. The sample is therefore renewed by one sixth each quarter. The first interview is carried out face-to-face; subsequent interviews are carried out by the internet or telephone.

Every ten years or so INSEE overhauls the Labour Force Survey to renovate the survey questionnaire or introduce methodological innovations. On that occasion, the long time series published with the *Informations Rapides* are backcast to make them consistent with the new survey. The latest overhaul happened at the beginning of 2021.

In Q3 2026, the collection rate was virtually stable over the year

In Q3 2026, the collection rate, which relates the number of successful surveys to the total number of dwellings in the sample, stood at 60.6%. It was stable over the year.

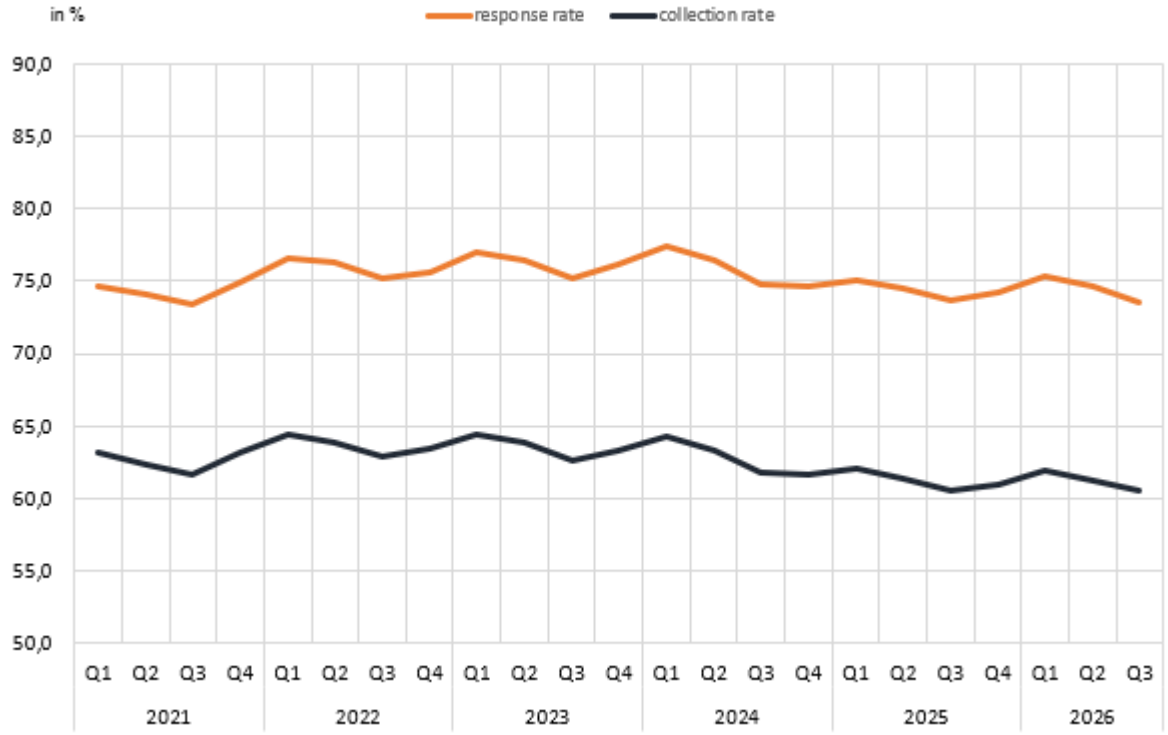
The response rate, which relates the number of successful surveys to the total number of dwellings in the survey area stood at 73.7%, it was virtually stable over the year (-0.1 points).

Since Q1 2021, except for the first interview, it is possible to carry on the interview by internet instead of telephone. In Q3 2026, the share of Internet among subsequent interviews stood at 47.8%.

The usual statistical adjustment methods make it possible to obtain data that remain representative of the entire population.

[1] Since 2014, four overseas departments (Guadeloupe, French Guiana, Martinique, Réunion) have been covered by the continuous Labour Force Survey. Since 2024, Mayotte has also been covered.

Collection rate* and response rate per quarter**



Scope : France from Q1 2024, France excluding Mayotte until Q4 2023.
*collection rate relates the number of successful surveys to the total number of dwellings in the sample.
**response rate relates the number of successful surveys to the total number of dwellings among the survey scope.

Publication and revision of series

The quarterly results of the Labour Force Survey for a given quarter are usually published **in the middle of the second month following the end of that quarter**. The seasonal adjustment coefficients are recalculated every quarter, which may result in a slight revision to the whole of each series. Seasonal adjustment models are recalculated once a year, when Q1 results are released. For the publications related to other quarters, the coefficients are recalculated under unchanged models.

All series are seasonally adjusted using the X13-ARIMA method implemented in the JDemetra+ software, and applied to the entire period from Q1 2003 to the current quarter.

Every year, for Q1 release, revisions of demographic data from the final resets of the census, known with a four-year lag, are taken into account. This results in slight changes being made annually to numbers and rates estimated using the Labour Force Surveys, up to four years before the reference year.

At Q1 2021, the Labour Force Survey has been renovated, with changes in the questionnaire, collection protocol and weighting methods. These changes resulted in a revision of the levels of the published series.

Labour Force Survey overhaul starting Q1 2021

In compliance with the new European regulation on social statistics (Integrated European Social Statistics), and to modernise its collection protocol, INSEE overhauled the French labour force survey from Q1 2021 onwards.

INSEE renovated the survey questionnaire to improve European harmonization, but also to better meet the needs of its users and the new challenges of the labour market. At the same time, INSEE modernized the survey protocol: after an initial face-to-face interview, INSEE now offers the possibility of answering on the Internet for reinterviewing, in addition to the telephone. INSEE also revised the weighting method.

These changes have modified the level of the indicators produced by the survey, from the first quarter of 2021 release onwards. In order to prepare for this overhaul, a comprehensive methodological “Pilot survey” operation was conducted throughout 2020 and in the first quarter of 2021. It made it possible to estimate the breaks in series introduced by the change in survey. From Q1 2021 the economic indicators fare directly derived from this new survey; those relating to previous quarters have been recalculated without breaks, in order to continue to shed light on the labour market situation in a long-term perspective.

All these changes and their impact on the main published indicators were released in an Insee Analyses also published on 29 June 2021.

Geographical scope: France

Since Q2 2026, all quarterly indicators from the Labour Force Survey have been released over “France” scope. Previously, since Q3 2019, all quarterly indicators were released over “France excluding Mayotte” scope.

Since 2024, the continuous Labour Force Survey has covered Mayotte. An initial backcast exercise has been carried out on annual series for the 1982-2023 period, to ensure the release of long-term time series without any breaks in published dedicated series (documentation). Then those series were converted into a quarterly frequency by extending the mean seasonality observed during 2024 and 2025. Those reconstructed series were aggregated with those of the previous scope (France excluding Mayotte) in order to now cover the entire territory on a long term period. Given the way it has been estimated before 2023, quarterly time series specific to Mayotte won’t be directly published: a longer-term perspective is be necessary to obtain a localised unemployment rate estimation as it currently is in the other overseas departments.

Regarding the unemployment rate, a “France excluding Mayotte” is still published in the complementary data given with quarterly publication.

Understanding the *Informations Rapides* results

ILO UNEMPLOYMENT AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE

An **unemployed person as defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO)** is a person aged 15 or over who meets the following three criteria:

1) is **not employed as defined by the ILO**, in the course of the reference week,

2) is available for work within two weeks,

3) has actively looked for a job in the last four weeks, or has found one starting within the next 3 months. Types of active job search considered are various: studying job advertisements, going to a job fair, mobilising one's social network or contacting “*France Travail*” (previously “*Pôle emploi*”, French unemployment agency), etc.

The **share of the unemployed** is the ratio of the number of unemployed to the number of people in a considered population; this is different from the **unemployment rate**, which is the ratio of the number of unemployed to the active population (in employment or unemployed).

A **long-term unemployed person** is a person who has been jobless and seeking a job for a year or more. The **long-term unemployment rate** is the ratio of the number of long-term unemployed to the active population.

ILO EMPLOYMENT

An **employed** person as defined by the ILO is a person aged 15 or over who worked at least one hour for pay or profit during the reference week or was temporarily absent from such work due to some listed reasons (leave, sick leave, short-time working, etc. sometimes with duration criteria). Employed people are either employees, self-employed, employers or family-helpers.

The **employment rate** is the ratio of the number of employed people to the total corresponding population.

The **permanent employment rate (respectively fixed-term or temporary)** is the ratio of the number of people employed on a permanent contract (respectively fixed-term contract or temporary contract) to the total population.

The **full-time equivalent employment rate** is the ratio of the number of people employed, converted into full-time equivalent for their principal employment, to the total population. Each position is then taken into account in proportion to its hourly workload compared to that of a full-time position. For example, an employee who has worked in a given position at 80% counts as 0.8 FTE.

The **underlying (or standardised) employment rate** is the arithmetic average of the detailed age-specific employment rates. It makes it possible to neutralise the unequal demographic weight of the age groups included in the employment rate. For example, from the 2000s onwards, the underlying employment rate of older people (50-64 years) makes it possible to measure an employment rate that does not take into account the fact that the baby-boom generations are gradually reaching retirement age and inflate the weight of the inactive age groups among the 50-64 year old.

ILO ACTIVITY

An active person as defined by the ILO is a person who is either employed or unemployed according to ILO's definition.

The **activity rate** is the ratio of the number of people in the labour force (in employment or unemployed) to the total population. It can be calculated on the total population, but is most often limited to the population aged 15 to 64, or to a subgroup of the population (women aged 25 to 49 for example).

The **active life expectancy** represents the average duration of activity, in years, of a generation that would be subject to the activity conditions observed over the current period.

It is calculated as the sum of the activity rates at each age from a given initial age (for example, for the "active life expectancy at 50": the sum of the activity rates at 50, 51, 52, etc. observed over the current period). It is independent of the demographic structure. This indicator is described as "apparent", as it takes no account of deaths that may occur during the activity period, nor of changes that could affect activity behaviour by age in the years to come.

HALO AROUND UNEMPLOYMENT

The **halo around unemployment** consists of people who are inactive as defined by the ILO, but who are close to the labour market: these are people who are seeking a job but do not match all ILO unemployment criteria: either they are looking for a job but are not available for work (component 1), or because they are available but have not been actively seeking work (component 2), or because they are neither available nor have been searching for a job (component 3).

The first two of these components correspond to the Eurostat definition of the halo. The third, which is more removed from the labour market, refers to the definition recommended in 2008 in the context of « Employment, unemployment, and precariousness. Better measurement for better discussion and better action[2] » a report by the National Council for Statistical Information (CNIS).

[2] De Foucauld J-B., Cézard M. and Reynaud M. (2008), « Emploi, chômage, précarité. Mieux mesurer pour mieux débattre et mieux agir » (*Employment, unemployment, and precariousness. Better measurement for better discussion and better action*), CNIS, *Report* no.108, September.

ILO UNDEREMPLOYMENT

Underemployment includes employed people who either are working part-time, would like to work more and are available to do so, or have worked less than usual during the reference week, due short-time working (technical unemployment, unemployment due to weather or partial activity scheme).

The definition of underemployment used by Eurostat does not include technical or partial unemployment and is therefore slightly more restrictive than the definition adopted by INSEE.

NEET

A NEET (neither in employment nor in education or training) is a person who is neither in employment, education nor training (formal or non-formal). The NEET share is usually calculated for people aged 15-29.

NUMBER OF WORKED HOURS

Worked hours includes all hours actually worked during the reference week. The average number of worked hours per week and per job relates this number of worked hours to the number of persons in employment. Since Q3 2023, the average number of hours worked per week and per job is adjusted for seasonal variations and calendar effects.

Beginning in Q3 2023, the series for average hours worked per week per job has been adjusted for calendar effects, in addition to the usual seasonal adjustment. To assess calendar effects, an econometric model is used to estimate the impact of various types of days (public holidays, extended weekends, school holidays, etc.) on the number of hours worked.

CONSTRAINT IN THE LABOUR SUPPLY

The concept of l**abour supply constraint** is intended to cover different situations faced by people in the labour market whose labour supply is unused (if they are unemployed or in the halo around unemployment) or underused (if they are underemployed).

The labour supply constraint rate is defined as the ratio of the number of people aged 15-64 who are underemployed, unemployed or in the halo around unemployment to the number of “broadly defined” labour force participants (either active or in the halo around unemployment, sometimes also referred to labour market participants).

ACTIVE SOLIDARITY INCOME (RSA)

In the Labour Force Survey (*Enquête Emploi*), **RSA recipients** refer to all people aged 15 or over belonging to a household including at least one RSA recipient. A household, in the sense of the household surveys conducted by Insee, is a set of (related or unrelated) people habitually sharing the same dwelling (whether it is their main residence or not) and who have a joint budget.

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https://www.cnis.fr/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/RAP_2008_108_emploi_chomage_precarite.pdf

Accuracy of the main indicators

The continuous Labour Force Survey is conducted on a sample of households, designed to be as accurate as possible at a given cost. Results from sample surveys are estimates, subject to some uncertainty which can affect results interpretations, especially for short-term comparisons.

Taking into account sampling variability, the quarterly unemployment rate can be estimated with a so-called “95% confidence interval” of plus or minus 0.3 percentage points. When the unemployment rate is estimated at 10.0%, one can be 95% confident that its real value, which would have been measured if the survey was conducted over the entire French population, is between 9.7% and 10.3%.

Quarterly changes’ accuracy of the unemployment rate is also impacted by the survey methodology. To prevent uncertainty from adding up, a rotating sampling scheme was adopted, which creates correlation between two consecutive quarterly samples. Thus, quarterly changes of the unemployment rate are also estimated with a 95% confidence interval of plus or minus 0.3 percentage points.

Main indicators accuracy in Q3 2026 (non seasonally adjusted)

	Non seasonally-adjusted level (thousands)			Non seasonally-adjusted rate (in %)		
		Accuracy	95 % confidence interval		Accuracy	95 % confidence interval
Unemployment	**2,521**	**87**	**[2,434 - 2,608]**	**8.0**	**0.3**	**[7.7 - 8.3]**
Men	1,359	64	[1,295 - 1,423]	8.4	0.4	[8 - 8.8]
Women	1,162	59	[1,103 - 1,221]	7.6	0.4	[7.2 - 8]
15-24 years	780	45	[735 - 825]	22.1	1.2	[20.9 - 23.3]
25-49 years	1,230	63	[1,167 - 1,293]	6.8	0.4	[6.4 - 7.2]
50 years or more	511	39	[472 - 550]	5.2	0.4	[4.8 - 5.6]
Employment	**28,281**	**175**	**[28,106 - 28,456]**	**70.0**	**0.4**	**[69.6 - 70.4]**
Men	14,478	108	[15,712 - 15,928]	72.0	0.5	[71.9 - 72.9]
Women	13,803	113	[14,841 - 15,067]	67.6	0.6	[67 - 68.2]
15-24 years	2,744	63	[2,681 - 2,807]	35.8	0.8	[35 - 36.6]
25-49 years	16,758	106	[16,652 - 16,864]	83.2	0.5	[82.7 - 83.7]
50-64 years	8,780	90	[8,690 - 8,870]	69.7	0.7	[69 - 70.4]
Activity	**30,774**	**151**	**[30,623 - 30,925]**	**76.2**	**0.4**	**[75.8 - 76.6]**
Men	15,820	68	[15,752 - 15,888]	79.2	0.5	[78.7 - 79.7]
Women	14,954	84	[14,870 - 15,038]	73.2	0.5	[72.7 - 73.7]
15-24 years	3,524	87	[3,437 - 3,611]	46.0	0.9	[45.1 - 46.9]
25-49 years	17,987	96	[17,891 - 18,083]	89.3	0.4	[88.9 - 89.7]
50-64 years	9,262	97	[9,165 - 9,359]	73.5	0.7	[72.8 - 74.2]
Halo around unemployment	**1,742**	**70**	**[1,672 - 1,812]**			
Men	737	45	[692 - 782]			
Women	1,005	48	[957 - 1,053]			
15-24 years	540	40	[500 - 580]			
25-49 years	817	52	[765 - 869]			
50 years or more	385	33	[352 - 418]			

Scope: people living in private households in metropolitan France, aged 15 years or over (unemployment, halo of unemployment) or 15-64 years (employment, activity).

Source: INSEE, Labour Force Survey.

Implementation of the French "full employment Act" (Loi pour le plein emploi): measuring the impact

Estimation of the number of RSA recipients in the Labour Force Survey

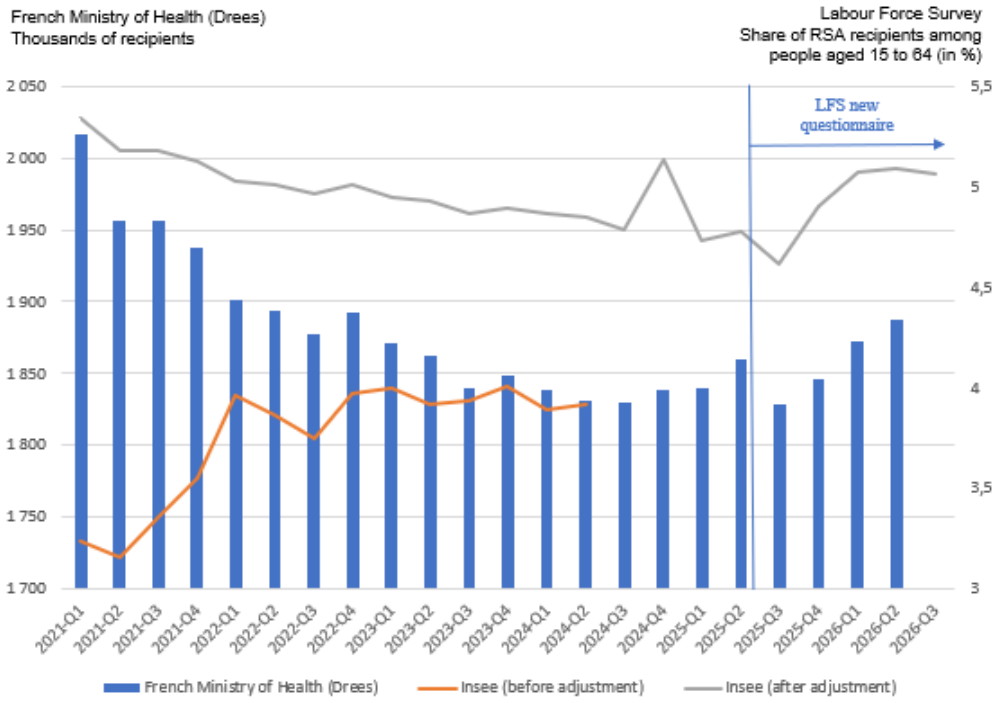
Until Q2 2024, the number of RSA recipients was clearly underestimated in the Labour Force Survey (LFS) (Insee, 2025). Starting from Q3 2024, thanks to an improvement in the questionnaire, the coverage rate of RSA recipients among ordinary households increases significantly and can be estimated at 90%.

To enable consistent estimation over time prior to Q3 2024 — both to adjust past data for series with no statistical break and to compute seasonally adjusted indicators — a two-step method has been implemented:

- From Q1 2021 to Q2 2024, an individual-level matching was carried out between data from the Labour Force Survey and the Pasrau system (an administrative reporting system that contains exhaustive information on RSA recipients). This matching enriched the LFS data by identifying RSA recipients who did not report themselves as such in the survey. However, to avoid a break in the time series between Q2 and Q3 2024, only 90% of individuals identified as RSA recipients according to the PASRAU were used in this enrichment (rather than all of them). Indeed, while the coverage rate improved significantly starting in the third quarter of 2024, the LFS still does not fully cover the population of RSA recipients as defined in the PASRAU ;
- The resulting series of RSA recipients up to Q2 2024 was then smoothed using an external calibration, based on the indicator of the number of recipients published by DREES. More specifically, an adjustment coefficient was calculated between the two sources for the second quarter of 2024, and the data were then backcast accordingly.

Starting from Q3 2024, the data on RSA recipients from the LFS are no longer adjusted. The resulting series, on which the labour market indicators presented in this note are based, is shown in grey in the following figure. The data were then seasonally adjusted to ensure comparability with the other indicators usually published in the *Informations Rapides*.

Share of RSA recipients since 2021



Non seasonally adjusted data

Source: French Ministry of Health (Drees), Monthly Data on Solidarity Benefits; INSEE, Labour Force Survey.

Estimating Contributions to the Overall Evolution of Labour Market Indicators

RSA recipients

To estimate these contributions, a decomposition method based on Berthier (2002) was used. This approach allows to compute the contribution of a specific population to the overall evolution by distinguishing a contribution due to the evolution of the indicators of those population and a contribution of the evolution of the share of those specific population into the total population.

Thus, the contribution of RSA recipients to the change in the unemployment rate between a first quarter Q1 and a second one Q2 can be broken down as follows:

$(1/2) * (pRSA_{Q1} + pRSA_{Q2}) * (txchoRSA_{Q2} - txchoRSA_{Q1})$ [Within-group effect]

$+ (1/2) * (pRSA_{Q2} - pRSA_{Q1}) * ((txchoRSA_{Q2} - txcho_{Q1}) + (txchoRSA_{Q2} - txcho_{Q1}))$ [Composition effect]

With :

pRSA = Share of RSA recipients in the labour force

txchoRSA = Unemployment rate of RSA recipients

txcho = Unemployment rate of the total population

The first term is the within-group effect of the change in the unemployment rate of RSA recipients, which will be stronger when their unemployment rate changes sharply. The second term is a composition effect, which increases with both the share of RSA recipients in the labour force and the extent to which their unemployment rate differs from the average unemployment rate of the total labour force.

Young people followed by a local youth mission

Measuring the effects of the law on the registration with the national public employment service, France Travail, of young people followed by a local youth mission is more difficult. Indeed, it is not possible to identify in the LFS whether someone is being supported by such a mission. A much broader definition was therefore chosen: individuals aged 15 to 29 who are registered with France Travail. However, with the systematic registration of young people searching for a job and supported by local youth missions at France Travail, the population defined in this way is expected to increase and, mechanically, to contribute to the rise in overall indicators. Therefore, in order to estimate the contribution stemming solely from the change in labour market behaviour related to the registration of these young people at France Travail, only the first component — the within-group effect — is considered:

$(1/2) * (pJFT_{T1} + pJFT_{T2}) * (txchoJFT_{T2} - txchoJFT_{T1})$ [Effet propre]

With :

pRSA = Share of RSA recipients in the labour force

txchoRSA = Unemployment rate of RSA recipients

txcho = Unemployment rate of the total population

For the other indicators (employment rate, activity rate), the contributions are calculated according to the same principles.

Detailed documentation

- Continuous employment survey since 2003: description and methodology
https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/source/s1223

- Educational content on ILO unemployment (in French only)
https://www.insee.fr/fr/statistiques/4805248

- Documentation on French Labour Force Survey 2025
https://www.insee.fr/en/metadonnees/source/operation/s2227/presentation

- "The French Labour Force Survey is being overhauled in 2021: rationale behind the renovation and impact on the measurement of employment and unemployment", in *Insee Analyses,* n° 65, June 2021
https://www.insee.fr/en/statistiques/5412790