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Employment and unemployment in April 2003

- 7,000 more employed than a year ago
- Employment rate 66.6 per cent
- Number of unemployed almost the same as the year before
- Rate of unemployment 10.4 per cent, 272,000 unemployed
- 34,000 new vacancies at labour exchange offices

According to the Labour Force Survey of Statistics Finland, the number of employed persons was 7,000 higher than a year earlier. The number of wage-earners engaged in continuous full-time work continued to fall, in April by 7,000. In April, 22,000 more wage-earners than one year ago were in part-time employment relationships. During April, 34,000 new vacancies were reported to the labour exchange offices, which is the same as in April 2002.

In April, the employment rate, that is, the proportion of the employed among persons aged 15 to 64, stood at 66.6 per cent, which is 0.1 percentage points higher than the year before. The employment rate for men fell by 0.2 percentage points to 67.4 per cent. The employment rate for women rose by 0.3 percentage points and was 65.7 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the employment rate was 67.8 per cent. Compared to last year's April, employment grew in construction, health care services and trade. Jobs declined in manufacturing and social services. Employment increased most in the Province of Oulu.

Changes in the labour force 4/2002 - 4/2003, thousand persons

	April 2003	April 2002	CHANGE, % 4/02 - 4/03
<i>Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey:</i>			
Employed, total	2 339	2 332	0.3
- wage-earners	2 013	2 009	0.2
- self-employed and unpaid family workers	326	324	0.8
Employment rate, %	66.6	66.5	0.1 ²
Unemployed¹	272	270	0.7
Labour force, total	2 611	2 602	0.3
Unemployment rate, %	10.4	10.4	0.0 ²
Economically inactive, total	1 313	1 314	-0.1
- discouraged job seekers	29	33	-13.3
- other disguised unemployment	57	54	4.8
<i>Ministry of Labour's Labour Exchange Statistics:</i>			
Unemployed job seekers	281	289	-2.9
- unemployed over a year	72	78	-6.7
Employed with subsidised measures	37	37	-1.4
In labour market training	35	29	18.1
In trainee and job alternation places	21	16	30.3
New vacancies in labour exchange offices	34	34	0.4

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 272,000 unemployed in April, i.e. 2,000 more than the year before. The change is within the margin of error ($\pm 17,000$). The rate of unemployment, 10.4 per cent, was the same as one year previously. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate was 9.2 per cent, while in March it stood at 9.1 per cent.

In April the unemployment rate for women fell by 0.3 percentage points to 9.7 per cent. The unemployment rate for men rose by the same amount and was 11.1 per cent. The unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 was 27.9 per cent, while it stood at 29.9 per cent in April 2002. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate for young people was 20.7 per cent. The rate of unemployment was lowest in the Province of Southern Finland, i.e. 9.0 per cent, and highest in the Province of Lapland, at 19.1 per cent. Of all industries, the unemployment rate was highest in construction, 13.6 per cent.

The unemployment figures are higher in April than in March because young people are starting to enter the labour market, but many of them have not yet found a job. In April, 84,000 unemployed persons reported studying as their principal activity. Of employed persons, 96,000 said studying was their principal activity.

At the end of April 2003, there were 281,000 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 8,000 fewer than in April 2002. Unemployment declined elsewhere in the country, but rose in the areas of the employment and economic development centres of Uusimaa and Pirkanmaa. The number of those covered by employment policy measures increased by 10,000 from the year before and was 3.6 per cent of the labour force. There were 31,000 unemployed job seekers aged under 25 registered at the labour exchange offices. Their number was 2,000 lower than in last year's April.

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 April 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 $\pm 16,000$ persons.

Inquiries:

Statistics Finland: Mr Pekka Tossavainen +358 9 1734 3517, Ms Salme Kiiski +358 9 1734 3230, Mr Kalle Sinivuori +358 9 1734 3524, Mr Veli Rajaniemi +358 9 1734 3434;
e-mail tyovoima.tilastokeskus@stat.fi, Internet <http://www.stat.fi/tilk/ell/tyoll.html>

Ministry of Labour: Mr Oiva Lönnberg +358 9 1856 8048

Internet <http://www.mol.fi/katsaukset/>

Latest seasonally adjusted unemployment figures published by the EU at:

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