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Employment and unemployment in September 2003

- Number of employed persons unchanged from the year before
- Employment rate 66.8 per cent
- Number of unemployed 3,000 lower than the year before
- Rate of unemployment 8.0 per cent, 204,000 unemployed
- 23,000 new vacancies at labour exchange offices

According to the Labour Force Survey of Statistics Finland, the number of employed persons was 1,000 higher in September 2003 than a year earlier. The number of self-employed persons rose, while that of wage earners fell from the year before. The number of wage earners engaged in continuous full-time work remained almost unchanged. There were 13,000 fewer wage earners in so-called atypical, that is, part-time and/or fixed-term employment relationships in September than one year earlier. During September, 23,000 new vacancies were reported to the labour exchange offices, which is the same as in September 2002.

In September, the employment rate, that is, the proportion of the employed among persons aged 15 to 64, stood at 66.8 per cent, which is 0.2 percentage points lower than the year before. The employment rate for men remained at 68.5 per cent, while that for women fell by 0.4 percentage points to 65.0 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the employment rate was 67.3 per cent. Compared with last year's September, employment rose in trade, transport and technical and business services. Jobs declined in manufacturing and social services. Employment increased in the Province of Oulu and decreased in the Province of Lapland.

Changes in the labour force 9/2002 – 9/2003, thousand

	September 2003	September 2002	CHANGE, % 9/02 - 9/03
<i>Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey:</i>			
Employed, total	2 351	2 350	0.0
- wage-earners	2 036	2 053	-0.8
- self-employed and unpaid family workers	315	297	6.0
Employment rate, %	66.8	67.0	-0.2 ²
Unemployed¹	204	207	-1.3
Labour force, total	2 555	2 557	-0.1
Unemployment rate, %	8.0	8.1	-0.1 ²
Economically inactive, total	1 373	1 363	0.8
- discouraged job seekers	27	29	-5.9
- other disguised unemployment	71	82	-14.0
<i>Ministry of Labour's Labour Exchange Statistics:</i>			
Unemployed job seekers	272	275	-1.1
- unemployed over a year	71	76	-7.3
Employed with subsidised measures	39	39	-0.3
In labour market training	30	27	9.9
In trainee and job alternation places	22	17	24.8
New vacancies in labour exchange offices	23	23	-0.2

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 204,000 unemployed in September, i.e. 3,000 fewer than one year before. The change is within the margin of error ($\pm 15,000$). The rate of

unemployment was 8.0 per cent, having been 8.1 per cent twelve months previously. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate was 8.9 per cent.

The unemployment rate for both men and women was 8.0 per cent. Twelve months previously men's unemployment rate was 8.2 per cent and women's 8.0 per cent. The unemployment rate among young people aged 15 to 24 was 16.2 per cent, whereas in September 2002 it stood at 15.2 per cent. Adjusted for seasonal variation, the unemployment rate for young people was 21.9 per cent. The rate of unemployment was lowest in the Province of Southern Finland, i.e. 6.5 per cent, and highest in the Province of Lapland, at 17.1 per cent. Of all industries, the unemployment rate was highest in construction, 7.8 per cent.

According to the Labour Force Survey, over the January to September 2003 period, the average number of employed persons was 2,379,000, which is 3,000 fewer than in the corresponding period of the year before. The number of unemployed persons was 243,000, or 2,000 fewer than in the January to September period of 2002.

At the end of September 2003, there were altogether 272,000 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 3,000 fewer than in September 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 7,000 from the year before and was 3.6 per cent of the labour force. There were 33,000 unemployed job seekers aged under 25 registered at the labour exchange offices. Their number was the same as in September 2002.

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 September 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 ± 0.5 percentage points. The confidence interval for the number of unemployed is approximately $\pm 15,000$ persons.

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Latest seasonally adjusted unemployment figures published by the EU at:

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