

# Regional unemployment in the European Union and candidate countries in 2003

## Statistics in focus

### GENERAL STATISTICS

3/2004

### Regions

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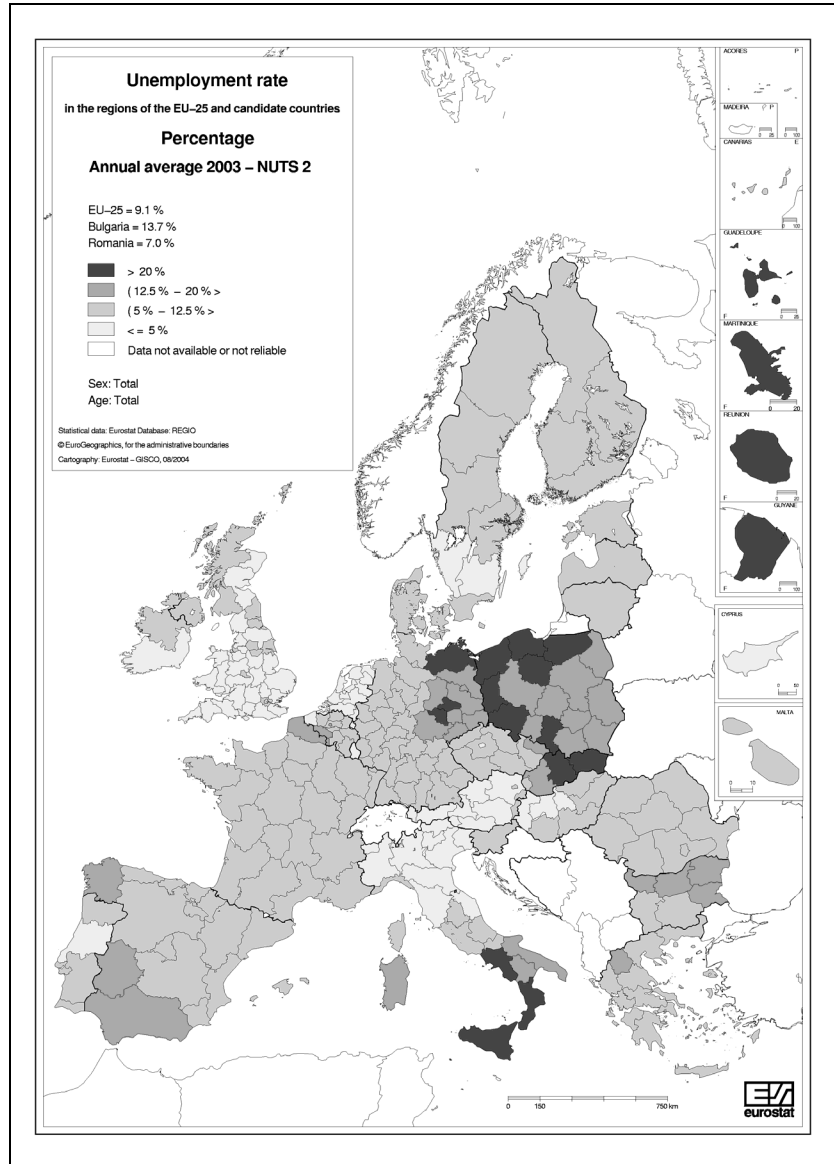
**Unemployment rate:** between 2.0 % (Bolzano/Bozen – IT) and 26.0 % (Dolnośląskie – PL) in EU-25 regions, and between 5.9 % (Vest – RO) and 19.4 % (Severoiztochen – BG) in the regions of candidate countries ..... 2

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Map 1: Unemployment rate in the regions of the EU-25 and candidate countries in 2003

In 2003, the unemployment rate in the EU-25 continental\* NUTS level 2 regions varied between 2.0 % in the north-eastern Italian region of Provincia Autonoma Bolzano/Bozen and 26.0 % in the south-western Polish region of Dolnośląskie.

Data is available for two of the candidate countries: in Romania, the unemployment rate was below 10 % in all level 2 regions in 2003, while in Bulgaria it was between 10 % and 20 %. Statistical level 2 regions have not yet been defined for Croatia, and the data on Turkey is expected in spring 2005. Hereafter, regions mentioned in the text refer to NUTS level 2 regions in the EU-25 or the corresponding level 2 regions in the candidate countries.

\* This text does not include the four French overseas regions (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Guyane and Réunion).

**Unemployment rate: between 2.0 % (Bolzano/Bozen – IT) and 26.0 % (Dolnośląskie – PL) in EU-25 regions, and between 5.9 % (Vest – RO) and 19.4 % (Severozitochen – BG) in the regions of candidate countries**

The unemployment rate in the EU-25 increased slightly from 8.9 % in 2002 to 9.1 % in 2003, with an upward trend for the EU-15 (from 7.8 % to 8.1 %) and a downward trend in the case of the new Member States (from 14.9 % to 14.5 %).

At the regional level, an unemployment rate below half of the EU-25 level (i.e. below 4.6 %) was observed in 52 regions (out of 254 regions altogether), and a rate of over 18.2 %, i.e. at least twice as high as the overall EU-25 level, in 25 regions.

Region	Unemployment rate 2002 %	Unemployment rate 2003 %
Prov. Aut. Bolzano/Bozen (IT)	1.9	2.0
Salzburg (AT)	2.8	2.3
Zeeland (NL)	(2.3)	2.5
Tirol (AT)	2.0	2.5
North Yorkshire (UK)	3.7	2.7
Provincia Autonoma Trento (IT)	3.4	2.9
Emilia-Romagna (IT)	3.3	3.0
Dorset and Somerset (UK)	3.6	3.1
Glouces., Wilt. and N. Som. (UK)	3.6	3.2
Gelderland (NL)	2.4	3.3
⋮	⋮	⋮
Východné Slovensko (SK)	22.2	21.8
Kujawsko-Pomorskie (PL)	21.5	21.8
Calabria (IT)	24.6	23.4
Warmińsko-Mazurskie (PL)	25.9	23.9
Guyane (FR)	24.4	24.4
Lubuskie (PL)	26.3	24.5
Zachodniopomorskie (PL)	26.0	25.5
Dolnośląskie (PL)	26.1	26.0
Guadeloupe (FR)	26.0	26.3
Réunion (FR)	29.3	31.8

Table 1: EU-25 regions with lowest/highest unemployment rate in 2003 and the level in 2002

In the regions with the lowest unemployment (Table 1), among which the most positive trend was observed in the UK region of North Yorkshire, approximately a quarter of the employed population worked in industry (except for the region of Emilia-Romagna, where the figure was 36.0 %), while the proportion of people working in services ranged from 59.0 % (Emilia-Romagna in northern Italy) to 76.2 % (the south-western UK region of Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and North Somerset).

Of the regions with the highest unemployment rate, the Polish regions all have a high proportion of employment in agriculture, the highest levels being in Kujawsko-Pomorskie (17.9 %) in central Poland and Warmińsko-Mazurskie (17.3 %) in the north-east. In spite of high unemployment levels, the trend between 2002 and 2003 was noticeably positive in the region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie (two percentage points), with an increase of

employment in services of 19 500 persons (8.2 %), and in the western region of Lubuskie (1.8 percentage points), with a decrease of employment in industry (5.9 % or 6 500 persons) and an increase in services (2.9 % or 6 100 persons). Similarly noteworthy changes in employment in these sectors were to be found in the north-western region of Zachodniopomorskie: an increase in agriculture employment (11 400 persons), at the same time as a decrease in industry (9 100 persons) and services (11 600 persons) – the change in each of the sectors represents approximately 2 % of total employment. In the southern Italian region of Calabria, employment in agriculture (share of total employment: 12.8 %) increased by 3 300 persons (4.7 %). Similarly, the level of employment in services rose in the eastern Slovak region of Východné Slovensko (by 12 600 persons: 2.3 % of total employment).

Of all the countries studied, Bulgaria, with the second highest unemployment rate in 2002 (18.2 %), recorded the greatest improvement in 2003 (albeit with an increase in economic inactivity), a decrease of 4.5 percentage points to 13.7 %, representing a fall in unemployment of 160 000 persons and an increase in employment of 93 800 persons. The unemployment rate in Romania reached 7.0 % in 2003.

Region	Unemployment rate 2002* %	Unemployment rate 2003 %
Severozapaden (BG)	26.9	16.5
Severen tsentralen (BG)	18.1	13.6
Severozitochen (BG)	22.3	19.4
Yugozapaden (BG)	13.3	11.3
Yuzhen tsentralen (BG)	17.2	11.1
Yugoiztochen (BG)	22.2	16.2
Nord-Est (RO)	7.8	6.3
Sud-Est (RO)	10.6	8.3
Sud (RO)	9.8	7.8
Sud-Vest (RO)	6.7	6.0
Vest (RO)	7.2	5.9
Nord-Vest (RO)	7.6	6.0
Centru (RO)	8.4	7.2
Bucureşti (RO)	8.8	8.6

Table 2: Regional unemployment rate in candidate countries in 2002 and 2003

The situation in the two candidate countries also varied significantly at regional level (Table 2). Whereas the unemployment rate in all Romanian regions was below 10 % (varying from 5.9 % in the region of Vest to 8.6 % in the capital region of Bucureşti), in Bulgaria it varied

between 11.1 % in the central southern region of Yuzhen tsentralen and 19.4 % in the north-eastern region of Severoiztochen.

In spite of higher unemployment, all Bulgarian regions recorded a very positive trend (not taking into account the increase in economic inactivity), in particular in the north-western region of Severozapaden, the southern region of Yuzhen tsentralen and the south-eastern region of Yugoiztochen. Concerning the growth of employment, the strongest growth was observed in the regions of Yugoiztochen (6.0 % or 15 500 persons) and Yuzhen tsentralen (5.2 % or 34 600 persons, including 6 400 self-employed persons and 23 700 employees). In the

north-western region of Severozapaden, the number of employees rose by 14 200 persons (11.2 %). A significant upward trend in self-employment was observed in the south-western region of Yugoiztochen, which includes the capital Sofia, increasing by 24 400 persons, or 30.6 %.

All regions in Romania, except for the capital region of București, are distinctive, with very high employment in agriculture – from 25.4 % in the region of Centru to 51.5 % in the region of Nord-Est.

\* The data on Romania for 2002 and 2003 is not comparable as the new weightings from the last census were applied for the 2003 data and the 2002 data has not yet been recalculated.

### Female unemployment rate: lowest in Salzburg (AT) (2.3 %) and Vest (RO) (4.9 %), highest, but improving, in Calabria (IT) (33.3 %) and Severoiztochen (BG) (20.6 %)

In 2003, the female unemployment rate remained almost unchanged at the EU level: 10.0 % in the EU-25 (9.9 % in 2002), 8.9 % in the EU-15 (8.8 % in 2002) and 15.3 % in the new Member States (15.6 % in 2002).

Region	Female unemployment rate	Female unemployment rate
	2002 %	2003 %
Salzburg (AT)	2.8	2.3
Dorset and Somerset (UK)	3.4	2.4
Zeeland (NL)	(2.8)	(2.4)
Tirol (AT)	1.8	2.6
Prov. Aut. Bolzano/Bozen (IT)	(2.4)	(2.7)
Cheshire (UK)	3.2	2.8
Surrey, East and W. Sus. (UK)	3.6	3.1
Devon (UK)	3.2	3.2
Utrecht (NL)	2.4	3.3
East Anglia (UK)	3.3	3.4
⋮	⋮	⋮
Warmińsko-Mazurskie (PL)	27.7	26.0
Dytiki Makedonia (GR)	23.3	26.1
Andalucía (ES)	28.5	26.5
Zachodniopomorskie (PL)	26.3	27.0
Guadeloupe (FR)	28.6	27.6
Campania (IT)	30.6	28.0
Guyane (FR)	(29.0)	(28.5)
Sicilia (IT)	28.4	28.9
Réunion (FR)	32.1	32.9
Calabria (IT)	35.6	33.3

Table 3: EU-25 regions with lowest/highest female unemployment rate in 2003 and the level in 2002

The regions with the lowest female unemployment rate (Table 3) recorded a stable trend in 2003 except for three regions (the Dorset and Somerset region in the southern UK, which showed a downward trend, and Utrecht in the southern Netherlands and Tirol in western Austria, which had an upward trend). Besides the two neighbouring regions in Italy and Austria (Provincia Au-

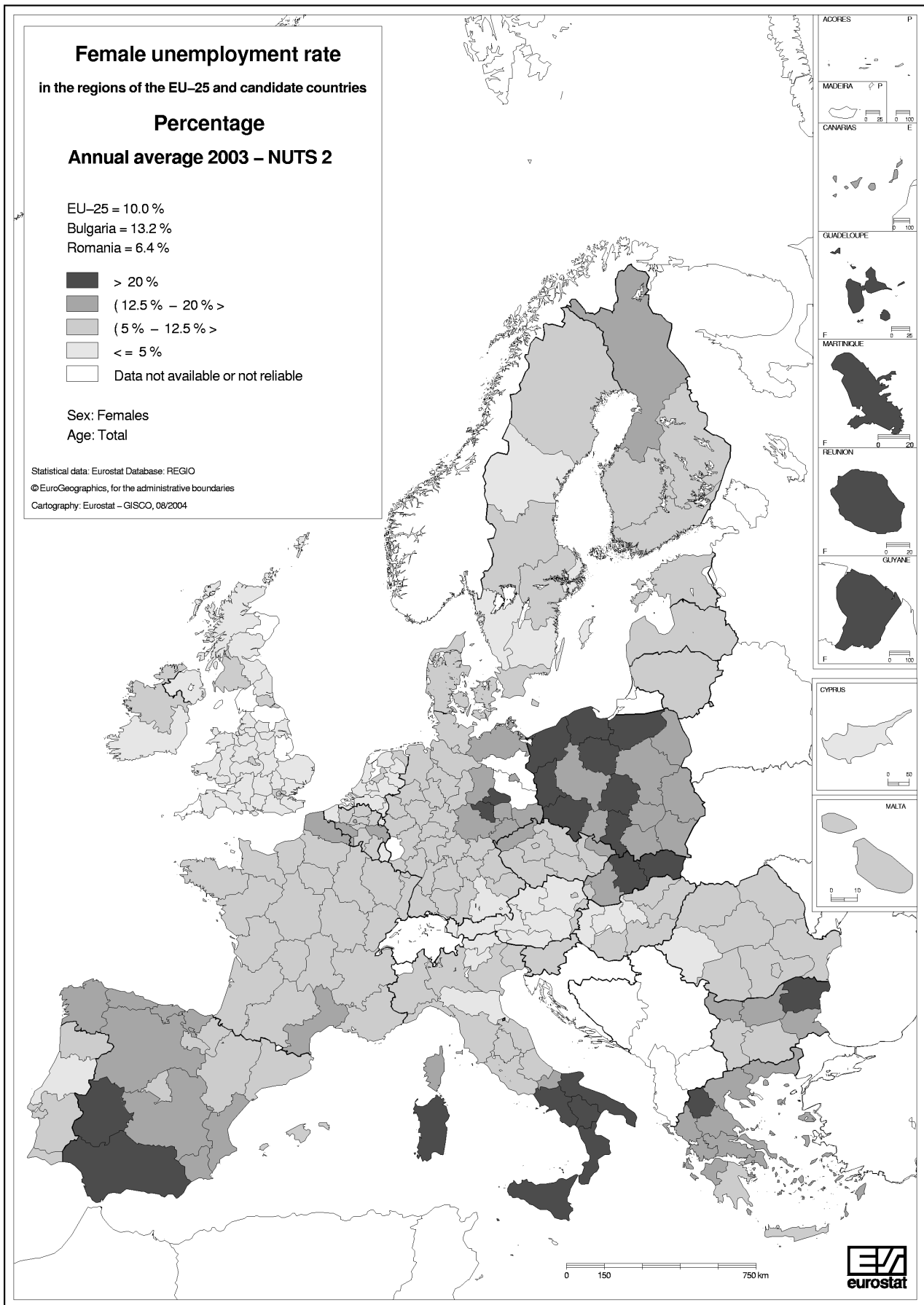
tonoma Bolzano/Bozen and Tirol), all these regions had a share of employment in agriculture below 5 %.

At the other end of the scale, in regions with the highest female unemployment, a remarkable improvement was observed: The north-eastern Polish region of Warmińsko-Mazurskie saw a 4.6 % growth in female employment accompanied by an increase in total employment in services of 8.2 %; the southern Spanish region of Andalucía had 6.4 % growth in female employment and an increase in total employment in industry (5.3 %) and services (3.6 %); and two southern Italian regions – Campania, which saw a 2.1 % growth in female employment and an increase in total employment in industry of 2.0 %, and Calabria, which showed a 2.3 % increase in female employment and a 4.7 % growth in total employment in agriculture.

The upward trend of female unemployment in the northern Greek region of Dytiki Makedonia was connected with a decrease in total employment in services (5.8 %).

In Bulgaria, the female unemployment rate stood at 13.2 % (17.3 % in 2002), and in Romania at 6.4 % (7.7 % in 2002).

The regional female unemployment rate in Bulgaria ranged from 10.0 % in the central southern region of Yuzhen tsentralen to 20.6 % in the north-eastern region of Severoiztochen in 2003. While in Romania, the range was considerably lower – from 4.9 % in the region of Vest to 7.8 % in the capital region of București (Table 4).



Map 2: Female unemployment rate in the regions of the EU-25 and candidate countries in 2003

Region	Female unemployment rate 2002* %	Female unemployment rate 2003 %
Severozapaden (BG)	25.4	14.8
Severen tsentralen (BG)	16.9	12.8
Severoiztochen (BG)	22.5	20.6
Yugozapaden (BG)	12.4	10.6
Yuzhen tsentralen (BG)	15.7	10.0
Yugoiztochen (BG)	23.0	17.4
Nord-Est (RO)	7.1	5.6
Sud-Est (RO)	11.2	7.4
Sud (RO)	9.1	7.0
Sud-Vest (RO)	6.2	5.3
Vest (RO)	6.8	4.9
Nord-Vest (RO)	6.6	5.6
Centru (RO)	7.0	7.4
Bucureşti (RO)	7.3	7.8

Table 4: Regional female unemployment rate in candidate countries in 2002 and 2003

The positive labour market trend in Bulgaria also was reflected in female unemployment. This was particularly evident in the regions of Severozapaden (where there was a related rise in total employment in services of 13.9 %), Yuzhen tsentralen (with a growth in total employment in agriculture (9.2 %) and industry (10.4 %)) and Yugoiztochen (which had an increase in total employment in agriculture of 16.6 %). In the region of Severoiztochen, with a rate above 20 %, employment in agriculture decreased by 14.0 %.

### Youth unemployment rate: lowest in Tirol (AT) (4.5 %) and Vest (RO) (14.8 %), highest, but improving, in Campania (IT) (58.4 %) and Severozapaden (BG) (40.4 %)

The EU-25 youth unemployment rate was 18.4 % in 2003 (17.9 % in 2002), twice as high as the total unemployment rate. This remarkable difference was similar in the EU-15, with a youth unemployment rate of 15.8 % and a total unemployment rate of 8.1 % in 2003, and even higher in the new Member States, with a youth unemployment rate of 32.3 % and a total unemployment rate of 14.5 %.

The regional youth unemployment rate was at least twice as high as the total unemployment rate in 72 % of the EU-25 regions for which reliable data for this indicator is available.

In spite of the low level of youth unemployment (Table 5), a notable decrease in youth employment was recorded in two Dutch regions (Noord-Brabant in the south (3.1 %) and Noord-Holland in the west (3.7 %)) and in the region of Oberbayern in southern Germany (6.7 %). From continental regions with the highest youth unemployment, the southern Polish region of Świętokrzyskie (with a decrease in total employment in agriculture of 5.9 %) and Sicilia (with a decrease in total employment in agriculture of 10.6 %) recorded the biggest falls in youth employment.

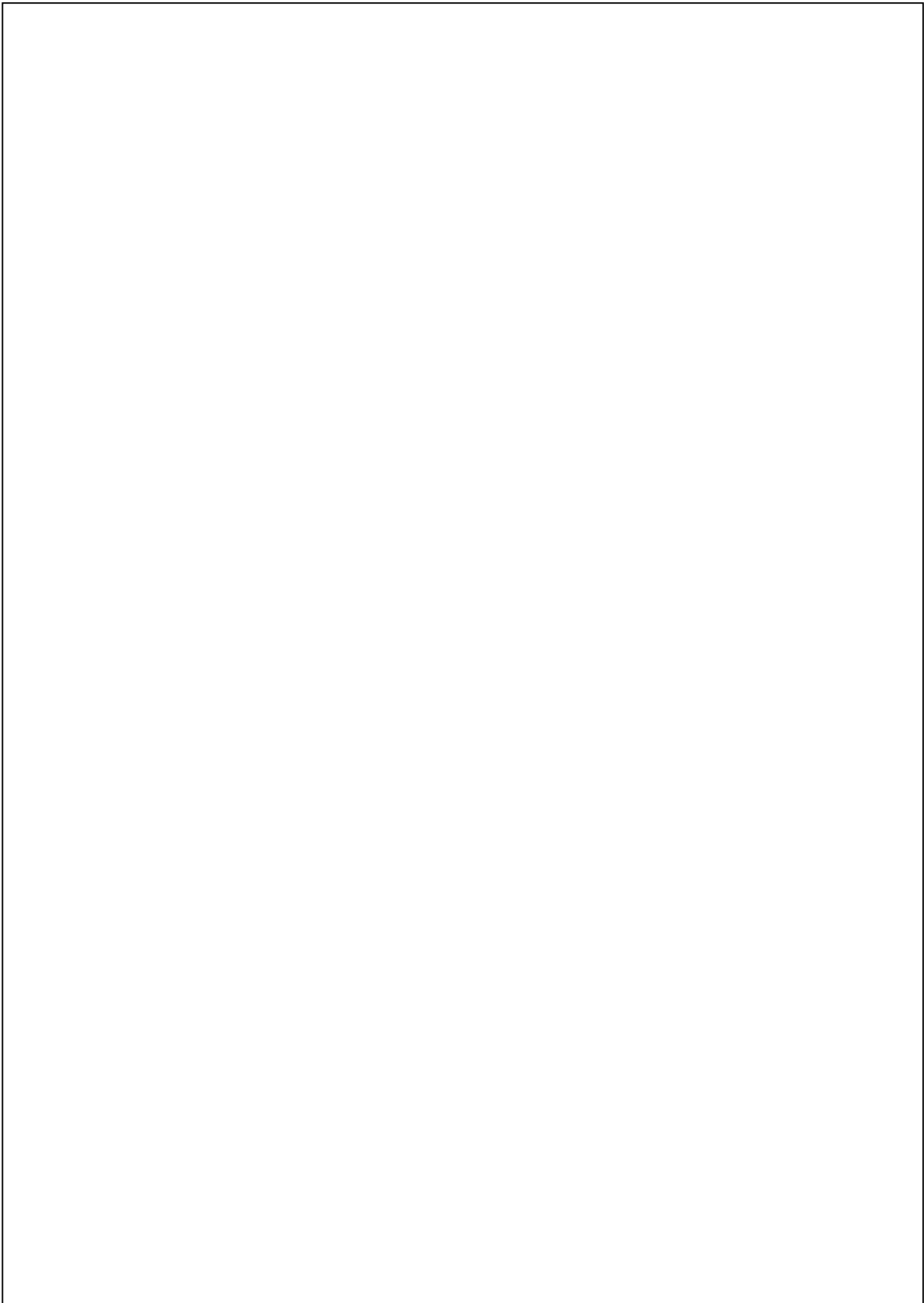
In Bulgaria, the youth unemployment rate reached 28.2 % (the third highest after Poland and Slovakia), and in Romania 19.6 %.

At the regional level (Table 6), this indicator varied in Bulgaria between 23.2 % in the south-western region of Yugozapaden and 40.4 % in the north-western region of Severozapaden. While in Romania, it ranged from 14.8 % in the region of Vest to 26.9 % in the capital

region of Bucureşti. In all Bulgarian and Romanian regions, except the region of Severoiztochen, the rate was at least twice as high as the total unemployment rate.

Region	Youth unemployment rate 2002 %	Youth unemployment rate 2003 %
Tirol (AT)	.	4.5
Oberösterreich (AT)	5.1	5.5
Steiermark (AT)	5.8	5.7
Gelderland (NL)	(4.0)	5.9
Noord-Brabant (NL)	4.3	6.0
Utrecht (NL)	(4.3)	6.0
Niederösterreich (AT)	5.7	6.1
Drenthe (NL)	(6.6)	(6.2)
Noord-Holland (NL)	3.9	6.2
Oberbayern (DE)	4.1	6.3
⋮	⋮	⋮
Świętokrzyskie (PL)	48.7	46.7
Dolnośląskie (PL)	50.2	46.8
Lubuskie (PL)	50.1	48.1
Martinique (FR)	(55.2)	(48.7)
Zachodniopomorskie (PL)	54.6	51.5
Réunion (FR)	48.6	53.0
Sicilia (IT)	51.2	53.5
Guadeloupe (FR)	57.8	(56.0)
Calabria (IT)	58.2	56.7
Campania (IT)	59.5	58.4

Table 5: EU-25 regions with lowest/highest youth unemployment rate in 2003 and the level in 2002



*Map 3: Youth unemployment rate in the regions of the EU-25 and candidate countries in 2003*

Region	Youth unemployment rate 2002* %	Youth unemployment rate 2003 %
Severozapaden (BG)	53.6	(40.4)
Severen tsentralen (BG)	36.5	29.0
Severoiztochen (BG)	40.0	31.9
Yugozapaden (BG)	28.3	23.2
Yuzhen tsentralen (BG)	38.5	25.3
Yugoiztochen (BG)	44.8	34.6
Nord-Est (RO)	19.6	14.9
Sud-Est (RO)	26.7	18.3
Sud (RO)	29.8	25.2
Sud-Vest (RO)	22.4	19.4
Vest (RO)	18.6	14.8
Nord-Vest (RO)	19.4	17.2
Centru (RO)	22.8	22.4
Bucureşti (RO)	26.1	26.9

Table 6: Regional youth unemployment rate in candidate countries in 2002 and 2003

All six Bulgarian regions recorded a strong decrease in youth unemployment in 2003, in particular Severozapaden in the north-west, Yuzhen tsentralen in the central-south and Yugoiztochen in the south-east (more than 10 percentage points).

## ➤ ESSENTIAL INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

### Data characteristics

The primary source for regional labour market information is the EU Labour Force Survey (LFS). This survey is a quarterly household sample survey conducted in the Member States of the European Union as well as in Bulgaria and Romania.

The LFS' target population is made up of all persons in private households aged 15 and over. The definitions of the survey's characteristics follow the definitions and recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO). In addition, harmonisation is achieved through adherence of the Member States to common principles of questionnaire construction.

### Definition of indicators

**Population** covers persons aged 15 and over, living in private households (population living in collective households, i.e. residential homes, boarding houses, hospitals, religious institutions, workers' hostels, etc. are not included). This comprises all persons living in the households surveyed during the reference week. This definition also includes persons absent from the households for the short periods (but having retained a link with the private household) owing to studies, holidays, illness, business trips, etc. Persons on obligatory military service are not included.

**Employed** persons are all persons aged 15 and over who during the reference week worked at least one hour for pay or profit, or were temporarily absent from such work. Family workers are included.

**Unemployed** persons comprise persons aged 15-74 who were (all three conditions must be fulfilled simultaneously): 1. without work during the reference

week; 2. available for work at the time (i.e. were available for paid employment or self-employment before the end of the two weeks following the reference week); 3. actively seeking work (i.e. had taken specific steps in the four-week period ending with the reference week to seek paid employment or self-employment) or who found a job to start within a period of at most three months.

**Economically active population** (labelled also as **labour force** or **active population**) comprises employed and unemployed persons.

**Unemployment rate** represents unemployed persons as a percentage of the economically active population.

The unemployment rate can be broken down further by age and sex. The **youth unemployment rate** relates to persons aged 15-24.

### NUTS levels 2 and 3 data

Even though, the new Member States did not join the EU until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004, their regions are referred to as EU-25 regions in this SIF publication describing the regional EU labour market in 2003. Consequently, Bulgaria and Romania are referred to here as candidate countries in 2003.

All regional results presented in the SIF publication concern NUTS level 2 regions (or the corresponding level 2 regions in the candidate countries). Elsewhere in this note, "NUTS level" includes corresponding regions in the candidate countries.

Down to NUTS level 2, the regional labour market data provided by Eurostat are derived from the LFS.

LFS NUTS level 2 absolute figures (i.e. unemployed persons and economically active population) are

divided between NUTS level 3 regions according to the distribution of NUTS level 3 absolute figures (i.e. unemployed persons and economically active population) by sex and age (15-24, 25 and over) provided by countries.

The best source of the NUTS level 3 data provided by countries and used when attributing LFS NUTS level 2 absolute figures to NUTS level 3 depends very much on the country. The choice of the source between LFS annual average figures, LFS three-year average figures, reliable register results or other reliable sources is made in close co-operation between Eurostat and the relevant NSI. The absolute indicators are used for computing rates.

For more details about the LFS see <http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/> (Themes / General Statistics by geographical areas / Data / Regions / Regional Labour market).

For a list of the European statistical regions see [http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon/nuts/codelist\\_en.cfm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/ramon/nuts/codelist_en.cfm).

### Availability of the data

As a result of small sample sizes or an insufficient number of persons within samples for the indicators concerned, some figures have reduced reliability: these appear between brackets (e.g. the unemployment rate in Zeeland in 2002); and some are extremely unreliable: these have been replaced with a full stop (e.g. the youth unemployment rate in Tirol in 2002).

### Employment by sectors

Agriculture covers sections A and B, Industry sections C to F, Services sections G to P.

## ***Further information:***

### ➤ **Databases**

[EUROSTAT website/General statistics/Regions/Regional labour market](http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/General_statistics/Regions/Regional_labour_market)

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