

Comparison between the employment statistics of Statistics Finland and the KEHA Centre

Differences in the unemployment figures are based on the different data sources, definitions and purposes of use of the statistics.

Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey and the Employment Service Statistics of the KEHA Centre produce data on unemployment from different perspectives. For this reason, the level and development of the unemployment figures published by them differ from one another.

Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey describes the demand and supply of labour on the labour market. The sample for the survey is drawn from the population aged 15 to 89. Data on unemployment are published concerning persons aged 15 to 74. The concepts and definitions of the Labour Force Survey are based on international resolutions adopted by the United Nations Labour Organization (ILO) and on regulations of the European Union, the aim of which is international comparability of data.

The Employment Service Statistics of the KEHA Centre are register-based statistics based on the data of Job Market Finland, the URA system and Job Market Finland for Specialists. The statistics contain data on job seekers, public employment services and job vacancies. The data of the Employment Service Statistics are used in planning the employment policy, monitoring the activity of employment and economic services and developing services, for example.

Differences in the definition of unemployed person

The main reason for the difference in unemployment figures is the differing definition of unemployed in the two statistics.

In Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey, unemployed are persons that are without work during the survey week, that is, they have not done paid work or have not worked as self-employed, have sought work in the past four weeks and could start work within two weeks. Persons who are waiting for an agreed job to start within three months and could start work within two weeks are also classified as unemployed. Students and persons in labour market training are classified as unemployed if they meet the above-mentioned criteria. Similarly, persons temporarily laid off or laid off for a fixed term of over three months are classified as unemployed if the other criteria are met. Those having worked at least one hour during the survey week are always classified as employed in the Labour Force Survey.

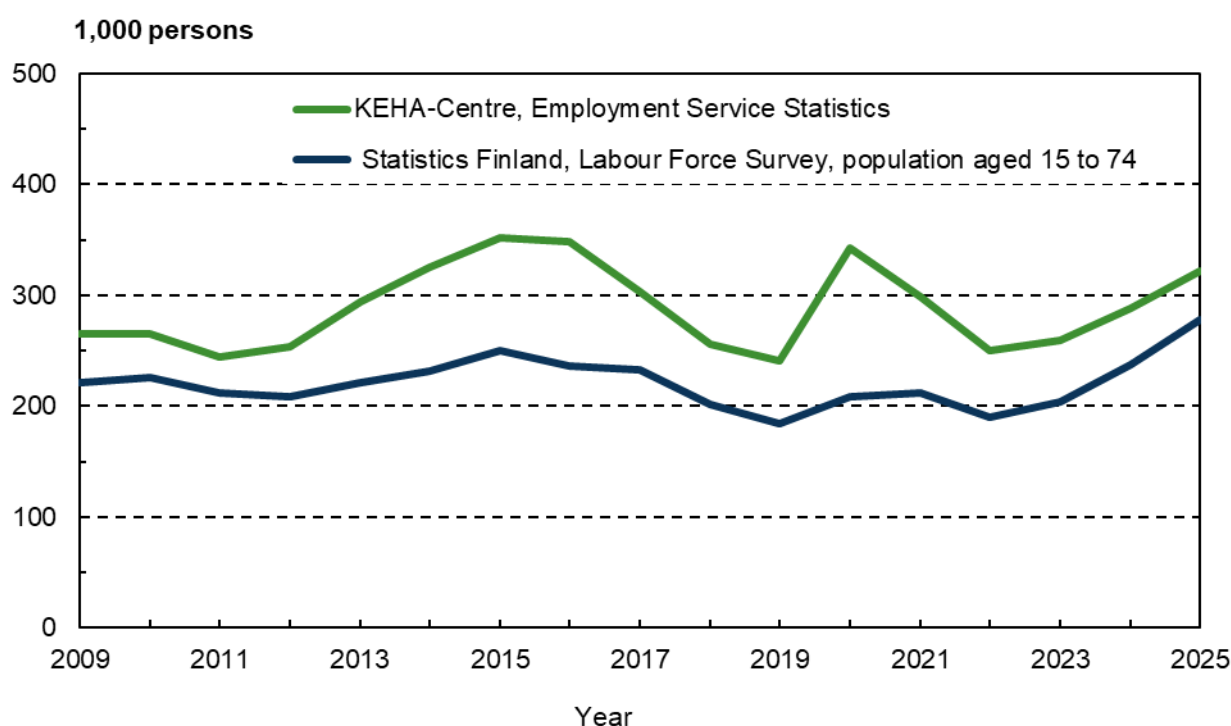
In the KEHA Centre's Employment Service Statistics, unemployed are persons registered as job seekers in employment services who do not have an employment relationship and do not work full-time as an entrepreneur or in their own work. Persons fully laid off or whose regular weekly working time is under four hours are also considered unemployed. The Employment Service Statistics do not classify as unemployed those in services promoting employment nor full-time pupils and students, not even during school holidays.

Due to these definitional differences, not all unemployed job seekers in the Employment Service Statistics meet the criteria for unemployed in the Labour Force Survey, and correspondingly, not all persons classified as unemployed in the Labour Force Survey are seen as unemployed job seekers in the Employment Service Statistics.

Development of unemployment figures and differences

The numbers of unemployed persons have differed from each other in the Labour Force Survey and the Employment Service Statistics throughout the reference period. In recent years, the annual average of unemployed persons in the Labour Force Survey has been around 50,000 to 135,000 persons lower than the number of unemployed job seekers in the Employment Service Statistics (figure).

Unemployed persons in the Labour Force Survey and unemployed job seekers in the Employment Service Statistics in 2009 to 2025, annual averages



The difference between the two statistics has been at its lowest when the number of unemployed persons has been low, as in 2019 and 2021. The legislative amendments made in 2013 to 2016 had a particular effect on the number of unemployed in the Employment Service Statistics. For instance, gradual abolishment of the unemployment pension increased the number of unemployed job seekers in the Employment Service Statistics. It is estimated that the legislative amendments made increased the number of unemployed in the Employment Service Statistics in 2014 by around 24,000 to 30,000 persons compared to the situation before the changes.

The sudden growth in the number of unemployed during the COVID-19 pandemic was more visible in the number of unemployed jobseekers in the Employment Service Statistics than in the number of unemployed in the Labour Force Survey, because registering as an unemployed job seeker is a precondition for receiving unemployment benefits.

The differences between the statistics are also influenced by the fact that in the Labour Force Survey students entering the labour market are classified as unemployed, but not in the Employment Service

Statistics. For this reason, the number of unemployed in the Labour Force Survey has in some spring months exceeded the number of unemployed in the Employment Service Statistics.

Register-based unemployment data at Statistics Finland

In addition to the unemployment data of the Labour Force Survey, Statistics Finland publishes data based on the KEHA Centre's Employment Service Statistics in the register-based employment statistics as part of the description of the main type of activity of the whole population. The data of the employment statistics are published once a year.

Further information and documentation:

[Statistics Finland's Labour Force Survey](#)

[KEHA Centre's Employment Service Statistics](#)