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STATISTICS PORTUGAL

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PRESS RELEASE

6 May 2026
EMPLOYMENT STATISTICS
1st quarter of 2026

THE UNEMPLOYMENT RATE STOOD AT 6.1%

In the 1st quarter of 2026, the employed population (5,300.8 thousand people) decreased by 0.7% (38.7 thousand) from the previous quarter and increased by 2.3% (119.4 thousand) from one year before.

The share of the employed population who has teleworked, that is who has worked from home using information and communication technologies, was 21.1% (1,118.9 thousand people), 0.1 percentage points (pp) less than in the 4th quarter of 2025 and 0.2 pp more than in the 1st quarter of that year.

The unemployed population, estimated at 346.3 thousand people, increased by 6.1% (20.0 thousand) from the previous quarter and decreased by 5.3% (19.5 thousand) from a year earlier.

The unemployment rate stood at 6.1%, up 0.3 pp from the previous quarter, but down 0.5 pp in the year-on-year comparison.

The labour underutilisation covered 588.0 thousand people, increasing by 2.9% (16.8 thousand) from the previous quarter and decreasing by 6.4% (40.4 thousand) from a year before. The labour underutilisation rate (10.2%) increased by 0.3 p.p. from the previous quarter and decreased by 0.9 pp from the same quarter of 2025.

The inactive population aged 16 and over (3,738.8 thousand) has increased by 0.2% (8.7 thousand) from the previous quarter and decreased by 0.3% (12.0 thousand) from a year earlier.

1. THE LABOUR FORCE (ACTIVE POPULATION)

The results of the Labour Force Survey for the 1st quarter of 2026 show that the labour force (active population), estimated at 5,647.1 thousand people, has decreased by 0.3% (18.8 thousand people) from the previous quarter and increased by 1.8% (99.9 thousand) from the same quarter of 2025.

This translated into an activity rate of the working age population (those aged 16 to 89) of 61.1%, down 0.1 percentage points (pp) from the preceding quarter and up 0.5 pp from one year earlier.

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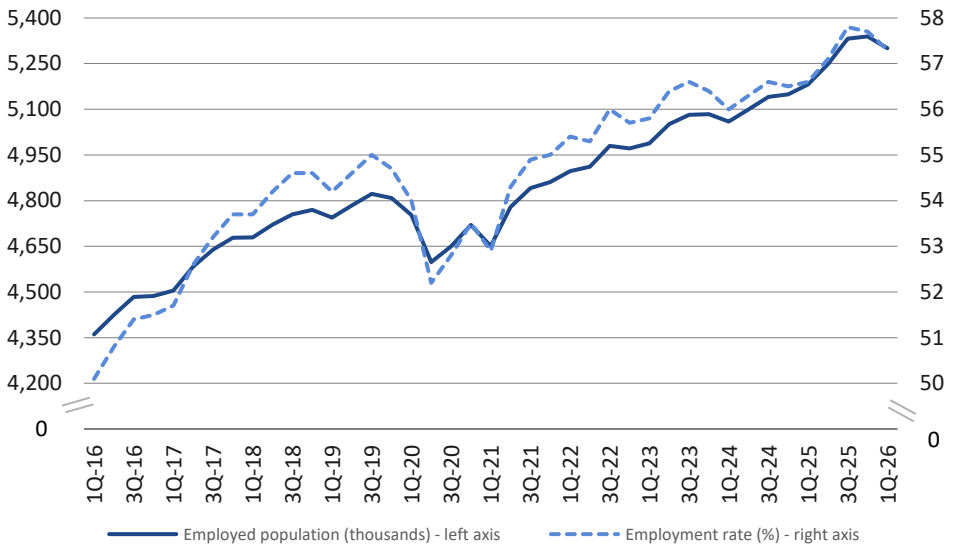
2. EMPLOYED POPULATION

In the 1st quarter of 2026, the employed population stood at 5,300.8 thousand people, having decreased by 0.7% (38.7 thousand) from the previous quarter and increased by 2.3% (119.4 thousand) from one year earlier. The corresponding employment rate stood at 57.3%, decreasing by 0.4 pp from the 4th quarter of 2025 and increasing by 0.7 pp from the 1st quarter of 2025.

Figure 1

EMPLOYED POPULATION AND EMPLOYMENT RATE

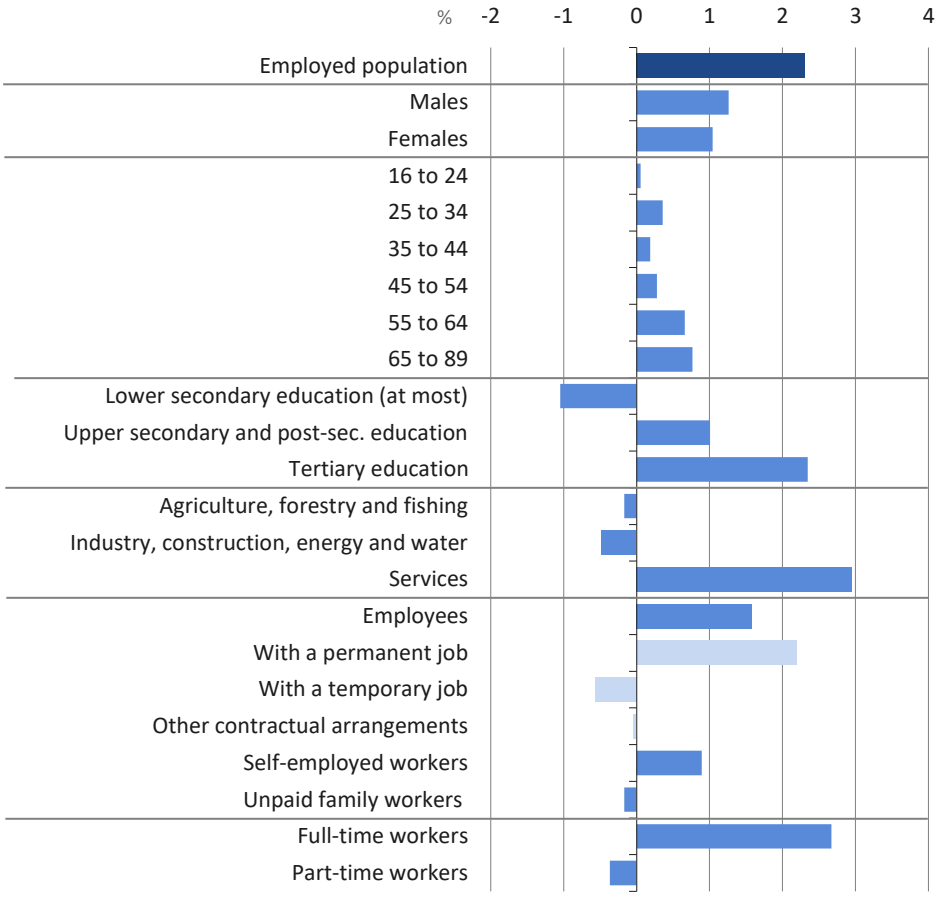


The year-on-year change of the employed population (Figure 2) was mainly due to the increases in the following population groups[1]: men (65.4 thousand; 2.5%); people aged 55 to 64 (34.3 thousand; 3.3%) and aged 65 to 89 (39.6 thousand; 17.7%); with tertiary education (121.4 thousand; 6.8%); employed in the services sector (153.1 thousand; 4.1%), namely in the Information and communication activities (section J), whose increase by 42.4 thousand people (20.3%) accounted for 27.7% of the sector change; employees (82.0 thousand; 1.9%), with a permanent job (113.5 thousand; 3.0%); and working full-time (138.4 thousand; 2.9%).

[1] In 2023, with the publication of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) 2023/137 of 10 October, the statistical classification of economic activities in the European Community (NACE) was revised, resulting in the creation of NACE Rev.2.1. This European legislation was transposed into national law through Decree-Law No 9/2025 of 12 February, which established Revision 4 of the Portuguese Classification of Economic Activities (CAE-Rev.4). To allow countries to adapt their systems to the new classification, Eurostat opted for its phased introduction across different statistical operations. In the case of the Labour Force Survey, the collection and transmission of data under NACE Rev.2.1 began in the 1st quarter of 2026, which means that quarterly and year-on-year analyses cannot be presented; consequently, we keep the reference to NACE-Rev.2.0 year-on-year change in this Press Release analysis. Nevertheless, the figures on employment by sector of activity and by NACE-Rev.2.1 sections are included in the Excel files accompanying this Press Release, as well as in the database on the Statistics Portugal website (www.ine.pt). In addition, the indicators by NACE-Rev.2 (CAE-Rev.3) will continue to be updated throughout 2026 and will be available for consultation on the aforementioned website.

Figure 2

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE YEAR-ON-YEAR RATE OF CHANGE OF THE EMPLOYED POPULATION IN THE 1ST QUARTER OF 2026



Considering the total employed population, 21.8% (1,156.8 thousand) reported having worked from home in the 1st quarter of 2026.[2] Among those who worked at home, 24.0% (277.8 thousand) did so always, 39.8% (460.1 thousand) did so regularly through a hybrid working model that combines face-to-face work and work at home, 14.8% (170.8 thousand) worked from home on occasion, and 21.5% (248.2 thousand) did so outside working hours. In absolute terms, it was in the hybrid working group that the largest quarter-on-quarter change occurred (14.1 thousand fewer people; 3.0%) as well as the highest year-on-year change (29.4 thousand more people; 6.8%).

Among those in hybrid work, the most common model was the one that combines a few days a week at home in every week (75.9%; 349.4 thousand), being also the one that had the largest quarterly (13.7 thousand fewer

[2] These indicators were computed from the data collected in the Labour Force Survey module on 'Working from home'. Other indicators related to this subject are available in the Excel tables published together with this Press Release.

people; 3.8%) and year-on-year change (22.6 thousand more people; 6.9%). Employed persons in a hybrid working model worked at home on average three days a week.

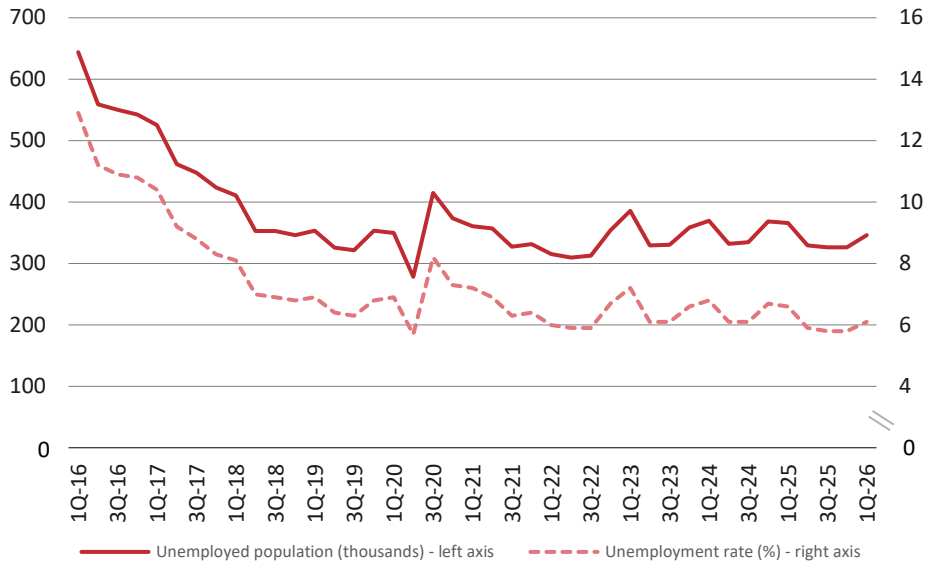
Also, among those working at home, 96.7% (1,118.9 thousand) have teleworked, that is, they have used information and communication technologies (ICT) to perform their jobs from home. This work practice covered 21.1% of the total employed population, 0.1 pp less than in the previous quarter and 0.2 pp more than in the same quarter of 2025.

3. UNEMPLOYED POPULATION

In the 1st quarter of 2026, the unemployed population (346.3 thousand people) increased 6.1% (20.0 thousand) from the previous quarter and decreased by 5.3% (19.5 thousand) from a year earlier.

Figure 3

UNEMPLOYED POPULATION AND UNEMPLOYMENT RATE



The year-on-year change of the unemployed population (Figure 4) was mainly due to the decreases in the following population groups: men (19.2 thousand; 11.0%); people aged 16 to 24 (9.5 thousand; 11.9%); having completed, at most, the lower secondary education (10.1 thousand; 7.7%) or the upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (10.3 thousand; 7.2%); looking for a new job (17.7 thousand; 5.5%); and unemployed for less than 12 months (11.6 thousand; 8.6%).

Figure 4

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE YEAR-ON-YEAR RATE OF CHANGE OF THE UNEMPLOYED POPULATION IN THE 1ST QUARTER OF 2026

In the 1st quarter of 2026, 35.6% of the unemployed population was in this situation for 12 months or longer (long--term unemployment), down 0.5 pp from the preceding quarter and down 1.3 pp from a year earlier (Table 1). This situation was most common among men (38.0%) and those who have completed, at most, the lower secondary education (48.0%), being similar among those aged 45 to 54 (52.5%) and those aged 55 to 74 (53.4%).

The year-on-year change of the proportion of long-term unemployment was driven by decreases in the following population groups: women (3.5 pp), those aged 35 to 44 (6.1 pp), and with upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education (4.9 pp).

The share of very long-term unemployment (24 months or longer) in the long-term unemployment (52.2%) has decreased by 6.7 pp from the previous quarter and increased by 2.9 pp from the same quarter of 2025.

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Table 1

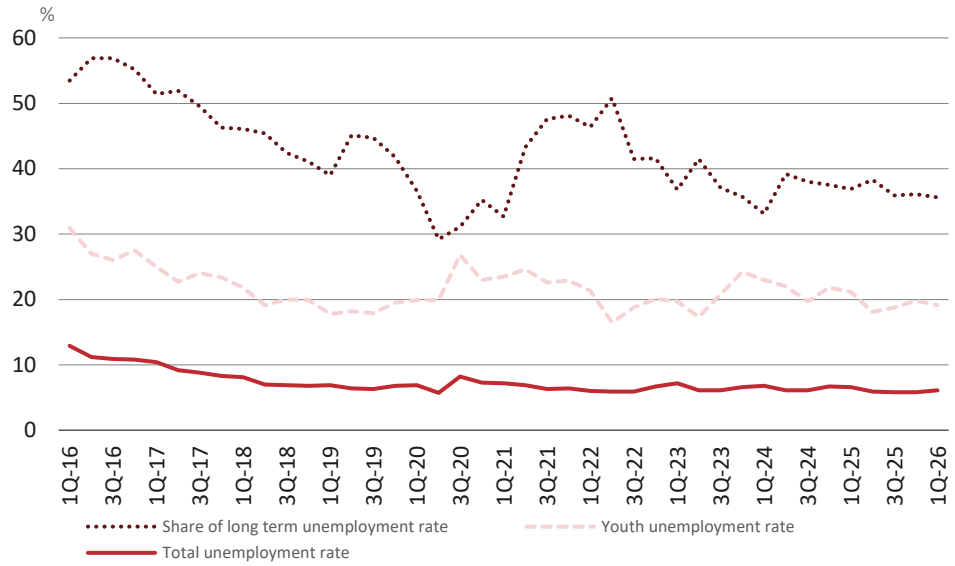
UNEMPLOYED POPULATION FOR 12 MONTHS OR LONGER (LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT)

Portugal	Quarterly level			Proportion [(a)]
	1Q-2025	4Q-2025	1Q-2026	1Q-2026
	Thousands			%
Total	**135.0**	**117.9**	**123.4**	**35.6**
Males	64.3	52.8	59.3	38.0
Females	70.7	65.2	64.0	33.6
16 to 24	16.5	12.0	11.0	15.6
25 to 34	25.3	25.0	24.2	28.2
35 to 44	23.8	18.8	19.4	32.4
45 to 54	30.1	25.4	33.2	52.5
55 to 74	39.3	36.8	35.5	53.4
Lower secondary education (at most)	60.6	51.7	58.1	48.0
Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary	49.3	40.4	39.4	29.7
Tertiary education	25.0	25.8	25.9	27.9
Unemployed for less than 24 months	68.4	48.5	59.0	47.8
Unemployed for 24 months or longer	66.5	69.4	64.4	52.2

Note: (a) The proportions shown, except for the last two, have been calculated considering the unemployed population. The proportions referring to the duration of long-term unemployment are based on the unemployed population for 12 months or longer.

Figure 5

TOTAL AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE AND SHARE OF LONG-TERM UNEMPLOYMENT



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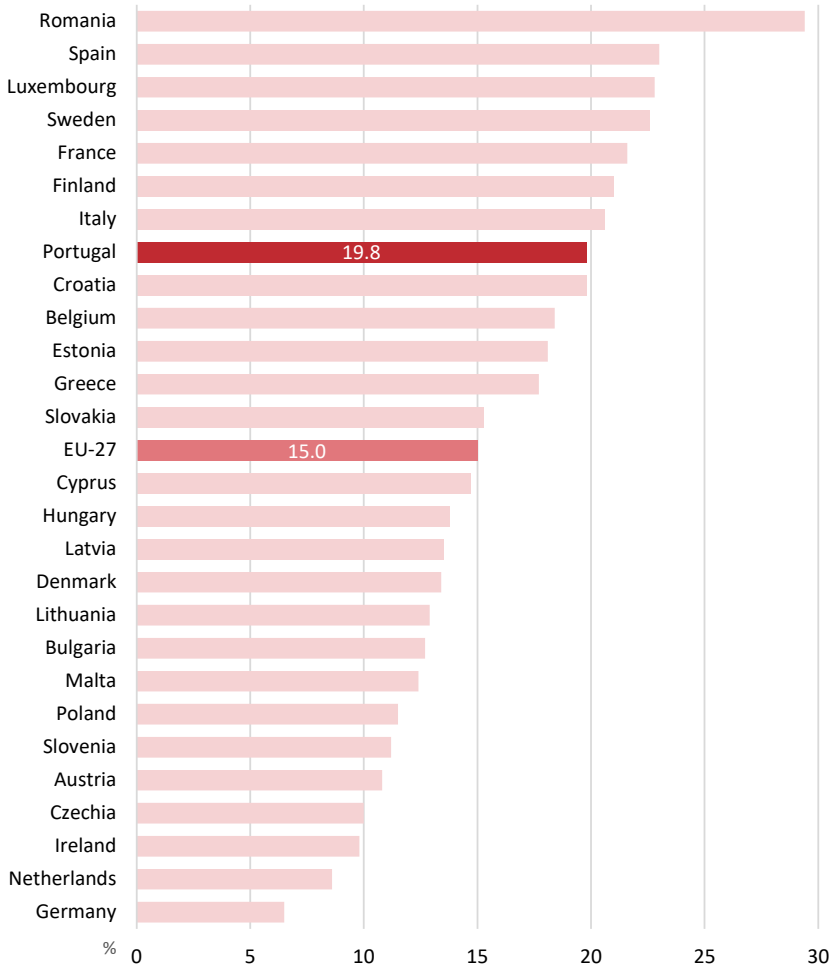
The unemployment rate for the 1st quarter of 2026 stood at 6.1%[3], up 0.3 pp from the previous quarter and down 0.5 pp in the year-on-year comparison (Figure 5). The youth unemployment rate (16 to 24 years old) was estimated at 19.1%, down from the previous quarter (0.7 pp) and from a year earlier (2.1 pp).

Figure 6

YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT RATE IN THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE 4TH QUARTER OF 2025



Source: Eurostat, Unemployment by sex and age – quarterly data [UNE_RT_Q].

[3] This unemployment rate was calculated for those aged 16 to 89 (in line with the concepts in force of the International Labour Organization). The unemployment rate for the moving quarter centered in February 2026 (which corresponds to the 1st quarter 2026), published in the Monthly Employment and Unemployment Estimates Press Release of March 2026 (disseminated on 29-4-2026), was calculated for the age subgroup of those aged 16 to 74 (as in the Eurostat News Release). This rate (not seasonally adjusted) was 6.2%.

In the 4th quarter of 2025, the youth unemployment rate in the European Union (Figure 6)[4], at 27 countries, was estimated at 15.0%, 4.8 pp less than in Portugal (19.8%), which in that quarter had the eighth highest rate in the EU-27.

From the 3rd quarter of 2025, the youth unemployment rate decreased by 0.8 pp in the EU-27 and increased by 1.0 pp in Portugal. However, a different pattern was observed from the 4th quarter of 2024: up 0.6 pp for the EU-27 and down 2.0 pp for Portugal.

In the 1st quarter of 2026, the unemployment rate was higher than the national average (6.1%) in three NUTS 2 (NUTS-2024) regions (*Grande Lisboa*: 7.4%; *Península de Setúbal*: 6.8%; *Algarve*: 6.7%) and was lower in the remaining six (*Norte*: 6.0%; *Oeste e Vale do Tejo*: 5.6%; *Alentejo*: 5.5%; *Região Autónoma dos Açores*: 5.4%; *Centro*: 5.0%; and *Região Autónoma da Madeira*: 4.5%).

Compared to the previous quarter, the unemployment rate increased in five regions, standing out the 1.6 pp increase in *Grande Lisboa,* and decreased in three NUTS II regions, with emphasis on the *Península de Setúbal* (1.2 pp). The unemployment rate on the *Norte* region remained unchanged.

In the year-on-year comparison, the unemployment rate increased in the *Grande Lisboa* region (0.6 pp), and decreased in the remaining regions, with the largest decrease being observed in the *Região Autónoma da Madeira* (2.2 pp).

Table 2

UNEMPLOYMENT RATES BY NUTS 2 REGION (NUTS-2024)

Portugal	Quarterly level			Rate of change	
	1Q-2025	4Q-2025	1Q-2026	On year	On quarter
	%			pp	
Portugal	**6.6**	**5.8**	**6.1**	**- 0.5**	**0.3**
Norte	6.8	6.0	6.0	- 0.8	-
Centro	5.1	4.5 §	5.0 §	- 0.1	0.5
Oeste de Vale do Tejo	5.9 §	5.2 §	5.6 §	- 0.3	0.4
Grande Lisboa	6.8	5.8	7.4	0.6	1.6
Península de Setúbal	8.5 §	8.0 §	6.8 §	- 1.7	- 1.2
Alentejo	5.8 §	5.9 §	5.5 §	- 0.3	- 0.4
Algarve	8.1	5.3	6.7	- 1.4	1.4
Região Autónoma dos Açores	5.7 §	5.1 §	5.4 §	- 0.3	0.3
Região Autónoma da Madeira	6.7	4.9	4.5 §	- 2.2	- 0.4

Conventional sign: - Null or not applicable. § Value with low reliability.

[4] The estimates for the 1st quarter of 2026 at European Union level will be released on June 12, 2026. Their reference age group is that of 15 to 24 years old, except for Portugal, Spain and Italy, whose lower age limit is 16.

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4. INACTIVE POPULATION

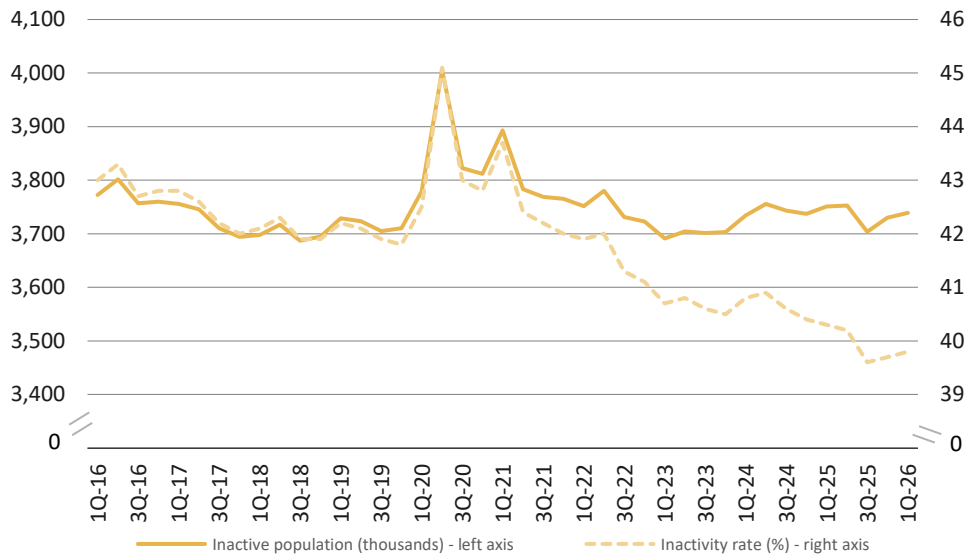
The inactive population, estimated at 5,199.8 thousand people in the 1st quarter of 2026, increased by 0.3% (13.2 thousand) from the previous quarter and decreased by 0.2% (10.1 thousand) from the same quarter of 2025.

The inactive population aged 16 and over, which stood at 3,738.8 thousand people, accounted for 71.9% of the total inactive population and has increased from the previous quarter (8.7 thousand; 0.2%) and decreased from a year earlier (12.0 thousand; 0.3%).

The inactivity rate (aged 16 and over) stood at 39.8%, up 0.1 pp from the 4th quarter of 2025 and down 0.5 pp from the 1st quarter of that same year.

Figure 7

INACTIVE POPULATION (AGED 16 AND OVER)



5. SUPPLEMENTARY INDICATORS TO UNEMPLOYMENT AND THE LABOUR UNDERUTILISATION

The labour underutilisation is an indicator that aggregates the unemployed population, the underemployment of part-time workers, the inactive seeking work but not immediately available, and the inactive available but not seeking work. [5] This indicator is supplemented by its corresponding rate – the labour underutilisation rate. This indicator is a broader measure of the labour underutilisation than the unemployment rate.

[5] For a more detailed definition and analysis of these indicators, see the Press Release "Labour Day - 2026" available at the Statistics Portugal website.

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In the 1st quarter of 2026, the labour underutilisation was estimated at 588.0 thousand people, and the corresponding rate was 10.2%.

The labour underutilisation has increased from the 4th quarter of 2025 (16.8 thousand; 2.9%) and decreased from the 1st quarter of that year (40.4 thousand; 6.4%). The labour underutilisation rate was 0.3 pp higher than in the previous quarter and 0.9 pp lower than a year earlier.

By component, the following is observed:

- The unemployed population was estimated at 346.3 thousand people and, as previously mentioned, increased by 6.1% (20.0 thousand) from the previous quarter, while decreasing by 5.3% (19.5 thousand) from the 1st quarter of 2025. The unemployment rate was 6.1%, up 0.3 pp from the previous quarter and down 0.5 pp from same quarter of a year earlier.
- The number of underemployed part-time workers was 120.2 thousand people, which corresponded to a quarterly decrease of 11.1% (15.0 thousand) and to a year-on-year decrease of 11.7% (15.9 thousand).
- The number of inactive persons seeking work but not immediately available stood at 28.4 thousand, up from the previous quarter (7.5 thousand; 35.9%) and down from the same quarter of 2025 (2.5 thousand; 8.2%).
- The number of inactive persons available to work but not seeking a job covered 93.0 thousand, which corresponded to a quarterly increased (4.3 thousand; 4.9%) and a year-on-year decrease (2.6 thousand; 2.6%).

Table 3

LABOUR UNDERUTILISATION BY COMPONENT

Portugal	Quarterly level			Rate of change	
	1Q-2025	4Q-2025	1Q-2026	On year	On quarter
Number	Thousands			%	
Total	**628.4**	**571.2**	**588.0**	**- 6.4**	**2.9**
Unemployed population	365.8	326.3	346.3	- 5.3	6.1
Underemployed part-time workers	136.1	135.2	120.2	- 11.7	- 11.1
Persons seeking work but not immediately available	30.9	20.9	28.4	- 8.2	35.9
Persons available to work but not seeking	95.6	88.7	93.0	- 2.6	4.9
Rate	%			pp	
Unemployment rate	6.6	5.8	6.1	- 0.5	0.3
Labour underutilisation rate	11.1	9.9	10.2	- 0.9	0.3

TECHNICAL NOTE

The main purpose of the Labour Force Survey is to classify the population in terms of their participation in the labour market. It is a quarterly sample survey, addressed to all persons living in the national territory.

Most of the characteristics observed in this survey report to the situation in one pre-defined week (from Monday to Sunday), known as reference week. The reference weeks are uniformly distributed throughout the quarters and years. The interviews usually take place in the week following the reference week.

The information is obtained directly, through computer-assisted interview by using a mixed data collection mode: the initial interview is done face-to-face by an interviewer visiting the household and the other five interviews are done by telephone if certain requirements are met. However, it should be noted that, following the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures adopted by the competent authorities, Statistics Portugal has decided, between the first fortnight of March 2020 and the end of the collection of the 2nd quarter of 2022, to suspend the face-to-face collection mode, replacing it exclusively with telephone interviews. After analysing the impact of this suspension, Statistics Portugal decided to incorporate the variable "completed level of education" into the process of calibrating the individual weights of the samples for the 2nd quarter of 2020 to the 3rd quarter of 2023, in addition to the information usually used (monthly estimates of the resident population by sex, age group and region).[6]

The Labour Force Survey weights were calibrated by using the resident monthly population estimates calculated from the final results of Census 2021.

Together with this Press Release, two Excel files are published containing the analysed indicators and additional information.

Due to rounding, the totals in tables and diagrams do not always match the sum of parts.

For more detailed information consult the Labour Force Survey methodological document (only in Portuguese) available at https://smi.ine.pt/ (tab *Documentação metodológica*; *tema* "Labour market").

SOME CONCEPTS

Unemployed: person aged 16 to 74 who during the reference period met simultaneously the following situations:

- neither had a job nor was at work;
- had actively sought work, i.e. had actively searched for a paid or unpaid job during the specified period (reference period or the three previous weeks); and
- was available for a paid or unpaid job.

[6] For more information, see the "Methodological note on the revision of the Labour Force Survey data: the context of the COVID-19 pandemic", published on 8 November 2023 together with the Press Release "Employment Statistics – 3rd quarter of 2023".

Employed: person aged 16 to 89 who, during the reference period, was in one of the following situations:

- worked for at least one hour for a wage or salary, in cash or in kind (including unpaid family work);
- had a formal attachment to his/her job but was not at work temporarily.
- was in early retirement but working in the reference week.

Working age resident population: Resident population aged 16 to 89.

Active: person aged 16 to 89 who, during the reference period, furnish the supply of labour force for the production of economic goods and services (was employed or unemployed).

Labour force: population formed by all active persons.

Extended labour force: corresponds to the labour force enlarged by the inactive seeking work but not immediately available and the inactive available but not seeking work.

Labour underutilisation: indicator that aggregates the unemployed population, the underemployment of part-time workers, the inactive seeking work but not immediately available, and the inactive available but not seeking work. All these population groups consider the age group 16 to 74.

Young people not in employment, education or training: population of young people of a given age group who, in the reference period, was not employed (i.e., was unemployed or inactive) and was not involved in education or training over a specific period of time (the reference week or in the previous three weeks).

Activity rate of the working age population: rate that defines the relation between the labour force and the working age population.

P.R. (%) = (Labour force / Working age population) x 100

Employment rate: rate that defines the relation between the employed population and the working age population.

E.R. (%) = (Employed population / Working age population) x 100

Unemployment rate: rate that defines the relation between the unemployed population and the labour force.

U.R. (%) = (Unemployed population / Labour force) x 100

Long term unemployment rate: rate that defines the relation between the unemployed population seeking employment for 12 months or over and the labour force.

L.T.U.R. (%) = (Unemployed population seeking employment for 12 months or over / Labour force) x 100

Inactivity rate of the working age population: rate that defines the relation between the working age inactive population and the working age total population.

I.R. (%) = (Working age inactive population / Working age population) x 100

Labour underutilisation rate: rate that defines the relation between the labour underutilisation and the extended labour force.

L.U.R. (%) = (Labour underutilisation / Extended labour force) x 100

Rate of young people not in employment, education or training: rate that defines the relation between the population of young people of a given age group not in employment, education or training and the total population of young people of the same age group.

The year-on-year change compares the level of the variable in the current quarter with that of the corresponding quarter of the previous year. This change considering a seasonal stable pattern is not affected by this type of fluctuation but may, however, be influenced by specific effects in a given quarter.

The quarter-on-quarter change compares the level of the variable over two consecutive periods. Although this indicator allows to monitor the recent pace of the variable, its computation is particularly influenced by seasonal effects and other more specific effects in one (or both) of the quarters under comparison.

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