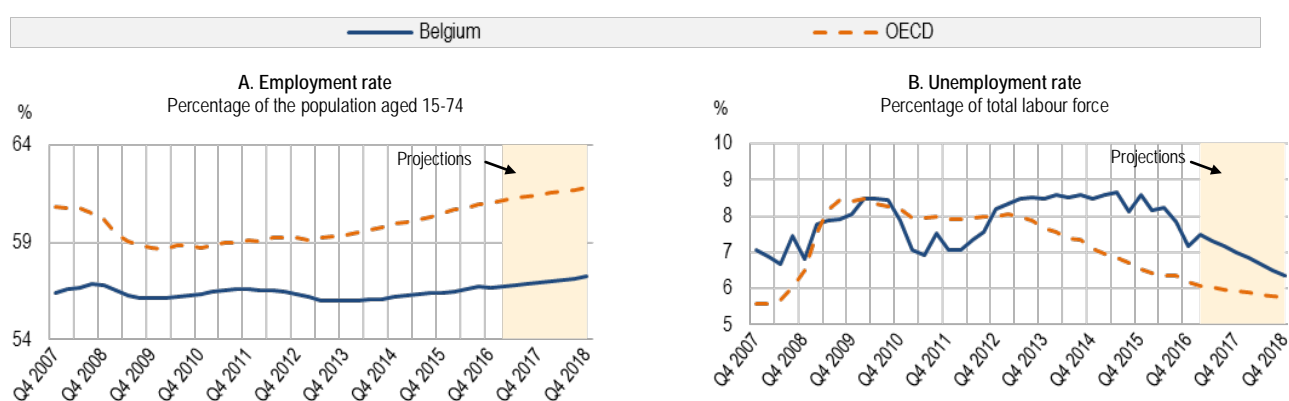


The 2017 edition of the OECD Employment Outlook provides an international assessment of recent labour market trends and short-term prospects. It also contains chapters on: benchmarking labour market performance based on the new OECD Jobs Strategy scoreboard; labour market resilience in the wake of the global crisis; the role of technological change and globalisation in transforming labour markets; and key country differences in collective bargaining arrangements.

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Labour market developments in Belgium



Note: OECD weighted average.

Source: OECD Economic Outlook No. 101, June 2017.

RECENT LABOUR MARKET TRENDS AND PROSPECTS

Labour market conditions continue to improve and the OECD average employment rate finally returned to its pre-crisis rate in the first quarter of 2017, nearly ten years after the global financial crisis erupted. The OECD-average unemployment rate continues its slow descent, but remains slightly above its pre-crisis level because employment has not increased enough to fully offset a rising trend in participation rates. The unemployment rate is projected to fall back to its pre-crisis level in late 2018 or early 2019. The recovery remains very uneven across countries and different groups within the workforce.

- Unemployment in Belgium fell back to its pre-crisis level sooner than in most other OECD countries, but then rose significantly again in 2012 and has only recently begun to decline again. At 6.8% in April, it was still above its pre-crisis level and 0.9 percentage points above the OECD average. However, it is projected to fall further, reaching pre-crisis levels by the end of 2017 and halving

the gap with the OECD average by the end of 2018.

- Historically, the employment rate in Belgium has remained below the OECD average. However, this gap has widened since 2012 as the employment rate in Belgium has remained almost invariant to the cycle, unlike in the majority of OECD countries where it has risen following the post-crisis economic recovery.
- As in most other OECD countries, the labour force participation rate in Belgium is above its pre-crisis level, although still low by OECD standards. As elsewhere, there has been a rise in the participation rates of women and older people (55-64) which has offset the decreases for youth and prime age men.

Scoreboard of labour market performance for Belgium



Note: An upward ↗ (downward ↘) pointing arrow for an indicator means that higher (lower) values reflect better performance.

Earnings quality: Gross hourly earnings in USD adjusted for inequality. *Labour market insecurity*: Expected monetary loss associated with the risk of becoming unemployed as a share of previous earnings. *Job strain*: Percentage of workers in jobs characterised by a combination of high job demands and few job resources to meet those demands. *Low income rate*: Share of working-age persons living with less than 50% of median equivalised household disposable income. *Gender labour income gap*: Difference between average per capita annual earnings of men and women divided by average per capita earnings of men. *Employment gap for disadvantaged groups*: Average difference in the employment rate for prime-age men and the rates for five disadvantaged groups (mothers with children, youth who are not in full-time education or training, workers aged 55-64, non-natives, and persons with disabilities) as a percentage of the employment rate for prime-age men.

Source and definitions: OECD calculations using data for 2015 or latest year available from multiple sources. See [OECD Employment Outlook 2017](#), Table 1.2. for further details

NEW OECD SCOREBOARD SHOWS RELATIVE STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES OF THE BELGIUM LABOUR MARKET

The 2017 issue of the *OECD Employment Outlook* presents a comparative scoreboard of labour market performance that provides a rich overview of the strengths and weaknesses of different national labour markets, going well beyond the standard measures of employment and unemployment rates. These include measures of job quality (pay, employment security, working environment) and labour market inclusiveness (income equality, gender equality, employment access for potentially disadvantaged groups). Some countries score well on most or all indicators, implying that there are no hard trade-offs that prevent countries from performing well in all areas.

- The Belgium labour market shows large variation in its ranking. For some indicators such as the share of workers experiencing high levels of job strain and the share of working-age persons living in poor households, it performs close to the OECD average. However, in most other areas, Belgium shows either relative strengths or weaknesses.

- Belgium's main strengths are in the areas of job quality and the inclusiveness of its labour market. Belgium is one of the top performers in earnings quality due to its relatively high average wage and low inequality; and it outperforms most other countries in terms of having a lower level of labour market insecurity and a smaller gender gap in labour income.
- Belgium performs less well on the "quantity" side of the labour market, performing worse than the OECD average in all indicators. Its lower-than-average employment rate is reflected in a higher-than-average unemployment rate.

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