

Unit 1 EMPLOYMENT AGENCY

Topics: The labour market and the employment agency,

Finding employment abroad, foreigners seeking jobs

Skills: analysing charts, making appointments, inquiry, providing information, giving advice, writing a letter of inquiry, writing short summaries

Exercise 1, Lead-in: Statistics basics



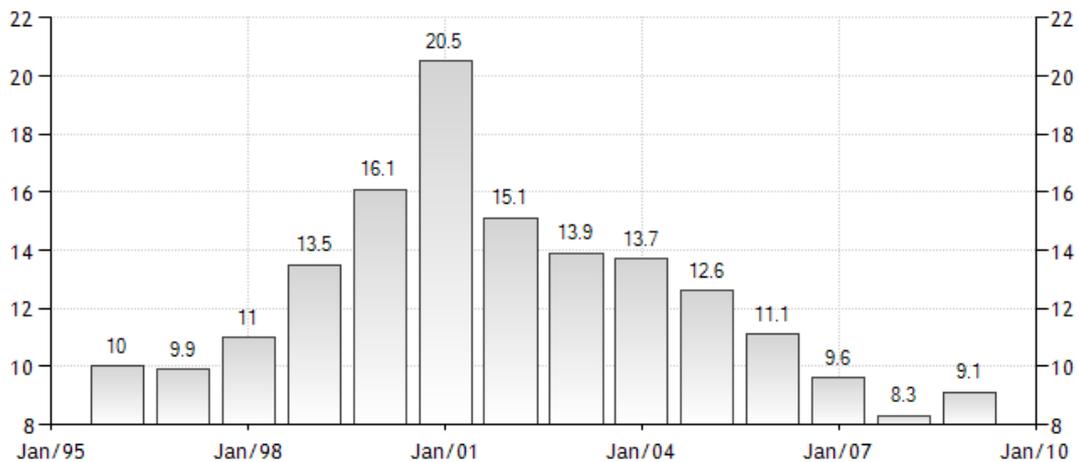
The unemployment rate in Hungary was reported/was recorded at 10.6 percent in September of 2011 to November of 2011 period. From 1999 until 2010, Hungary's Unemployment Rate averaged 7.13 percent reaching an historical high of 11.80 percent in March of 2010 and a record low of 5.50 percent in October of 2001.



Write a similar text based on the above bar chart about the major changes of the unemployment rate in the EURO area. You might begin like this:

Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union in Luxembourg estimates that 23.674 million men and women in the EU27, of whom 16.372 million were in the euro area, were unemployed in November 2011. Compared with October 2011, the number of persons unemployed increased by 45 000 in the euro area a

CROATIA: UNEMPLOYMENT RATE; TOTAL (% OF TOTAL LABOR FORCE)



Source: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/croatia/unemployment-total-percent-of-total-labor-force-wb-data.html>

The following expressions might be of some help:

Lead-in:

The diagram shows the annual average unemployment rate in the EU between 2010 and 2011. The overall trend is rather variable/changeable in the given period, yet on the whole it shows a considerable increase. As one/you can see on the chart, in January 2011 the number of the unemployed was/stood at..... the month.....was a turning point this period is characterised by a steady growth.

Main Body:

positive trends:

to increase, to go up, to rise, to grow, to hike
to soar, rocket
to reach a peak, to peak,
to recover/improve.

negative trends:

to go down, to drop, to sink, to fall back, to decrease, to decline, to dip
to plummet, to plunge, to dive
to worsen,
to hit a low/the bottom, to bottom out

to fluctuate and then level off, to stay at..., to remain stable/steady/constant/the same at...



intensity of trends:

to increase/sink steadily/constantly, continuously, considerably/ significantly/substantially/markedly,
gradually/step-by-step,
a little/a bit/a little bit/slightly/marginally/moderately/minimally/gently,
fast/quickly/swiftly/rapidly, suddenly/sharply/steeply/dramatically

to increase **by**.....% from.....**to**.....withinyears/throughout May and June.

There was an increase/a growth/a rise/an upward trend in the rate of unemployment of 45.000 people,
approaching the 10.4% mark.

There was a X% decline/a fall/a downward trend in the unemployment rate throughout 2010 .

the month(s)... saw a gradual fall

Figures are up/down X%.

Compared with/In comparison with a year ago, the number of the people on the dole sank by X%.

Conclusion:

Overall, we can state/say that the number of the unemployed in the Euro zone/area had highs and
lows/ups and downs in the examined period.

To sum up, we could notice/observe a fluctuation in the given time period/in the span of two years with
three downward and four upward trends.

To summarize, In sum, In summary,

On the whole,

To conclude, In conclusion,

Taking everything into consideration/account,

Finally,/eventually we can draw the conclusion that the figures paint a gloomy picture about

2, Mention some characteristics of the labour market of your country. Highlight the main problems by using the prompts and facts below.

Example:

'In Hungary the number of people who are active in the labour market is very low. The Hungarian employment rate is the second lowest in the EU, at 56-57% we are only ahead of Malta at 55% and we are well behind the 65% employment of the Czech Republic and Slovenia. Relative to the EU average of 66%, we are lagging by 10 percentage points.'

The biggest gap between the employment rate of the EU and ours lies in the number of fulltime and part-time jobs available for women. In Hungary the employment rate is very low and one of the greatest shortfalls is in case of women of childbearing age. Furthermore, it gives reasons for concern that within the working age population, in Hungary, the number of those who receive disability pensions is extremely high. In 2007 it was more than 12% whereas it was only 6.3% in Slovakia and the EU average was even less at 5.8%. In the most developed countries of the EU, the employment rate of handicapped people is 40% while here it is 12-15%.

(Source: Hungary's Structural Reform Program 2011-2014

<http://www.kormany.hu/download/b/23/20000/Hungary's%20Structural%20Reform.pdf>)

prompts:

high rate of unemployment, regional differences between eastern and western regions, recession, downsizing, restructuring and lay-offs, high rate of long-term unemployment, 'land of a million invalids', disabled pensioners, draw disability pension, take early retirement, ageing western societies, low birth rate, high life expectancy, increased pension eligibility age, lack of mobility, inequality between male and female workers, gender wage gap, gender imbalance in occupations, oversupply in some academic professions, acute shortage of skilled workers, glass-ceiling, gender and race discrimination, youth unemployment, ageism, brain-drain, hidden unemployment, forced/accidental/hidden entrepreneurs, black economy, moonlighting, overstaffed government office, job freeze, wage freeze, welfare-to-work policy.

3, Reading:

Pre-reading: match the words from the box with their definitions:

unemployed person, notification obligation, get unemployment benefit, jobseeker, unemployment benefit, mediation, employee, lay-off, dismiss, vacancy, JSA, inquire

The person who is out of work is called an,
 A is a vacant position, that is, a position which has not been taken yet.
 A..... is looking for a job.
 Acting between two sides and helping them to match their needs and interests is called
 The person employed in the public or private sector is referred to as.....
 Cost-cutting measures at a company often include restructuring, hiring freeze and.....s.
 is a classical term meaning the regular financial support that the unemployed receive until they find work.
 Its modern equivalent is called....., which is the official term for the regular financial support for people on the dole.
 You lose your job if you are fired, you get the axe i.e. you areed by your employer.
 If you want to know more about something, you ask for the necessary information in writing, personally or by phone, in other words, youabout it.
stands for Job Seeker's Allowance, a term used currently in many countries instead of unemployment benefit.
 Prospective employers have to inform the local employment agency that they want to employ a foreign citizen.

The labour market and the employment agency

The European Union's **principle of free movement** of workers means that you can get a job in any country of the European Union, as well as in Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein (also known as the EEA - European Economic Area - countries) and Switzerland. Regarding better payment, more job opportunities and job prestige working abroad may sound for people on the look for a proper job in many cases very promising. However, only around 2% of European citizens live and work in another member state rather than their country of origin. Employment agencies all over Europe offer professional service both for jobseekers who would like to search employment abroad and foreigners who would like to settle down and find work in the domestic labour market.

In the EU employment service is provided both by **private employment (recruiting) agencies** (headhunters) and by **state-run employment agencies**. The structure and hierarchy of public employment agencies varies from country to country within the EU. For instance, in Hungary the National Employment Service (Nemzeti Munkaügyi Hivatal) at country level coordinates the work

of the National Employment Office (NEO) (Nemzeti Munkaügyi Hivatal) and 20 county labour centres of government offices managing, monitoring and supporting the activities of the subordinated 170 branch offices. In Austria, the Public Employment Service AMS (Arbeitsmarktservice) is structured into 1 federal, 9 regional and 99 local organisations, providing labour-market related services all over the country. From April 2011 Job Centre Plus offices are the main public employment providers, restructured into 7 groups and 37 districts.

The **Croatian Employment Service (CES)** functions on three levels: **Central Office, Regional Offices** and **Local Offices**. The first level in the basic structure of the CES is the Central Office, it implements and designs national employment policy. The Central Office provides guidelines for the work in the Regional and Local Offices. The second level within the CES structure are 22 Regional Offices in 20 counties, and there are two offices in two counties. They perform professional and work activities, as well as provide support for them via monitoring and analysis of employment trends, in other words of unemployment in their counties. In close cooperation with SMEs or local government or self-government. The third level in this structure are 93 Local Offices.

In general, labour centres provide basic labour market services such as **mediation, matching job-openings with job seekers (job-matching), online and personal information supply, frontline services, registration, counselling, (re)training and mentoring**. **Job mediation** is the core service of the labour centres matching the demand and supply sides of the labour market. In other words, labour centres assists jobseekers and prospective employers find each other, in order to help them to establish an employment relationship. In practice it means that jobseekers can turn to local branch offices for support, advice and services.

The classic form is the **individual mediation** – after a personal interview the jobseeker is informed about the vacant positions available in the database, while **group mediation** enables a group of applicants to meet the employers at job fairs and are provided with the opportunity of a job interview on the spot. Information about job vacancies is available from various resources. Job seekers can have free online access to job vacancy databases on the website of the agency, they can be personally informed about current job opportunities in the offices or by phone or mail as well as at job fairs. They can even place their own job advertisements on the website and be contacted directly by the prospective employers.

EURES

Set up in 1993, **EURES** is a co-operation network between the European Commission and the Public Employment Services of the EEA Member States (The EU countries plus Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein) and other partner organisations. Switzerland also takes part in EURES co-operation.

EURES is not only a JOB Mobile Portal but also a human network of more than 850 EURES advisers that are in daily contact with jobseekers and employers across Europe. EURES advisers are trained specialists who work within the Public Employment Service of each member country, or within other partner organisations in the EURES network. They give professional advice, provide information and support for jobseekers and employers collaborating with other colleagues at European level to facilitate job mobility across national borders on the European labour market.

General Rules of Employment in the EU

Different rules apply to the employment of EEA nationals and their family members and to third country (i.e. non-EEA countries) nationals and their relatives in the EU. EEA citizens and their family members **do not need a work permit** in the EU. The employer has to notify the competent labour centre about the employment. Following that, the labour centre confirms that the notification obligation has been fulfilled and keeps record of the received data.

In contrast, **third country nationals** (i.e. non-EEA) can only be employed in the EU – in possession of a valid **work and residence permit**. The work permit is issued by the labour centres. The **work contract** between third-country employees and their EU employers can be signed only after the issuance of the work permit and for **the period specified by the work permit**. In other words, the would-be employer is required to submit **application for the work permit** on a printed form to the competent labour centre. Before submitting the application the employer shall prove that the third country national's workforce is needed and that the labour centre could not mediate any registered jobseekers from the domestic labour market. In the end, the labour centre decides on authorising or rejecting the employment and sends the relevant decision to the employer.

The **EU Blue Card** is a special permit that allows highly qualified third-country nationals to live and work in the European Union without having to obtain a work permit. In other words, the EU Blue Card is practically a kind of immigration visa which legally entitles the holder to work and live in the EU for a period of between one and four years. It may also be possible to renew the EU Blue Card.

After reading:

- *Questions:*

What type of employment agencies can provide help for jobseekers?

What kind of services can jobseekers benefit from?

How would you define EURES?

What are the main differences in the treatment of EEA-citizens and third-country nationals?

In what way is the EU Blue Card a special document?

- *Write a short text about the structure of job agencies in your own country, highlighting their competence and scope of activities.*

Topic-related dialogues

Dialogue 1: calling the employment centre

Role A: You are Marina/András Nagy, looking for a job with a college degree and extensive hands-on experience. You have just been made redundant together with some of your colleagues during the restructuring of the company you have been working for till now. You would like to make an appointment with the office clerk for a personal interview. Contact the clerk at the employment centre and discuss the following points:

- introduce yourself and state the purpose of your call
- agree on the date of your visit (it suits you next Monday at about 8 a.m.)
- report the clerk about your situation
- you would like to get unemployment benefit until you find a proper job
- ask about what documents are needed for registration

You will start the phone conversation.

Role B: You are an office clerk at a local branch office of the national employment service. You will receive a phonecall from a jobseeker. Answer his/her questions using the following information:

- offer your help as a person in charge
- make an appointment with her/him for next week
- to get unemployment benefit the jobseeker should be registered into your database
- for registration the jobseeker should submit the following documents on the first visit:
 - ID (identity)card, address card, health insurance card, tax certificate, certificates of qualification
- say that you have written the appointment into your diary and you are looking forward to meeting him/her personally

Your partner will start the phone conversation.

Useful expressions:

How may I help you?/What can I do for you?/What can I help you with?
I am calling you **about** job vacancies./I would like to **inquire about** your services.

asking for information:

I need some information about/on

Can/could you (informal) **Will/Would** you (formal) give me some (more) information on

I wonder/I was wondering if you could give me some information about...

I would be grateful/I would appreciate if you could answer a few questions.

Another thing I would like some information about is.../I would also like some details about.....

I would like to know how/on what conditions I will **be entitled to** unemployment benefit.

making an appointment:

I suggest, we should make an appointment for next Monday./I suggest fixing a date for next week.

I would like to make/fix an appointment with you if possible.

Can I have an appointment next Monday morning?

When does it suit you? What time is it convenient for you?

When can you manage/make it?

When would you like to come to our office?

Let me see. /Let me check in my diary. There is a slot/an opening at 8.30. How does that suit you?

I will be available next Monday morning.

Is next Monday all right/OK with you?

Is next Monday fine/good/convenient for you? **How about/What about** meeting at 10 a.m. next Monday?

Do you have time to meet next Monday?

Would it be possible to meet next Monday?

Can you make it this time next Monday?

Can we **agree on** next Monday morning?

How does the third of February sound for you? I will be in all day long.

What time is best for you?/When would it be the right time for you?

Could you pencil me in/fit me in/on Monday morning?

Monday at ten will be fine/all right/perfect/great/sounds good.

We could agree on 10 am next Monday.

Dialogue2: Frontline service at the employment centre

Role A: You are Marina/András Nagy, looking for a job. You have just been made redundant and you would like to find a suitable job as soon as possible. You have made an appointment with the employment office clerk for a personal interview and now you are entering the employment centre. Act out the dialogue while focusing on the points below:

- say that you have got an appointment
- ask about the formal procedure for jobseekers
- you would like to get unemployment benefit, ask about the details (amount, length)
- inquire about how you can have access to information about job vacancies
- you can also imagine working abroad, ask about the most important things a candidate should be aware of.

Your partner will start the conversation.

Role B: You are an office clerk at a local branch office of the national employment service. You have already made an appointment with a jobseeker who is visiting you at the agreed time. Answer his/her questions according to the points below:

- ask how you can help
- tell the client that jobseekers have to be registered first by filling in the *Jobseeker's Agreement* form and, after it, they can apply for job seeker's allowance. Inform the client about the documents needed for application.
- Tell the client the main types of unemployment benefit and on what conditions (s)he will be entitled for it (e.g. JSA amounts to 60% of the contribution base in Hungary)
- Advise the client on the various information resources about vacant jobs
- offer the client your job opportunities abroad and the help of your EURES adviser colleague.

You will start the conversation.

Supplementary Information

three types of job search assistance:

- **Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA)** (i.e. the classical contribution-based unemployment benefit) for jobseekers who were in employment at least 360 days within the three years before losing their job.

- **job search aid:**

- for jobseekers who received JSA but couldn't find a job until the end of the JSA period
- for job seekers who were employed less than 360 days but more than 200 days
- for jobseekers who will reach the official retirement age within five years

- reimbursement of travel expenses.

-housing benefit

-council tax benefit

-job grant –one-off payment as support when starting to work

Conditions of eligibility to JSA:

Jobseekers have prove that they are actively seeking work. They have to co-operate with the agency and visit the local office regularly and sign on. They have to accept the vacancy or participation in a retraining course offered by the agency. They can receive JSA only for a certain period of time, in Hungary up to 90 days.

Documents required at JSA application:

- ID card, address card
- health insurance card
- income tax certificate
- job seeker's certificate for JSA application
- bank account number

Dialogue3: A visit to the EURES adviser

Role A: You are Marina/András Nagy, looking for a job. You have just been made redundant and as a registered active jobseeker you are looking for employment. You are also interested in working abroad. You have been invited to a personal meeting with the EURES adviser of your local employment centre. Act out your role considering the following points:

- introduce yourself briefly and ask about job opportunities in the EU
- inform the adviser about your qualification and work history
- tell the adviser what types of jobs would suit you most.
- ask about the details about registration in the EURES database
- inquire about the working and living conditions in the country of your choice
- you would like to visit the information meeting that the adviser is recommending you

You will start the conversation.

Role B: You are the EURES adviser of your local employment centre. A jobseeker is inquiring about job opportunities abroad. Play your role according to the following:

- ask about your client's qualification, language knowledge and work history
- ask the client about his/her country and job preference
- explain how the EURES, the European Job Mobility Portal works:





- in the "**Search for a job**" section jobseekers can have access to job vacancies in 31 European countries updated in real time;
- registration with '**My EURES**' link is free, jobseekers can write their own CV, by opening a My EURES account they can create and manage their job search profiles, which can be read by prospective employers and EURES advisers
- in the 'Living and Working' section candidates can learn about a wide range of issues related to target country, the Labour Market Information section contains information on current trends on the European labour market
 - tell the client about the date of the next job information meeting where people seeking jobs abroad can get up-to-date information from the EURES advisers. offer your client to sign up on the list of participants.

Your partner will start the conversation.

Writing:

A letter of inquiry

In many cases clients turn to officials in writing inquiring about various issues. For example, it can happen that a foreigner who would like to settle down and work in your country writes a letter of inquiry asking about certain aspects of his/her future employment.

Layout of the letter of inquiry:

Lead-in: You state the purpose of your letter and what you are interested in.

Main body: Request for information: list your questions concerning certain related aspects

Ending: thank for the reply and use a closing remark

Please note:

If the writer doesn't know the recipient by name, it is advisable to start with:

'Dear Sir or Madam' and use the ending 'Yours faithfully'.

If the recipient's name is known, the letter should be closed with 'Yours sincerely'.

Never use contracted forms in official letters, e.g. instead of 'We're' you should write 'We are'.

Useful phrases:

Lead-in:

I am writing to **inquire about/concerning/in connection with** job opportunities in your country.

With regard/ Regarding/Referring to your advertisement of/dated 3rd January 2012 I would like to inquire about

I was impressed **by** the newspaper article reporting about your institution in the February issue of..... magazine and I decided to write you. I am interested in finding employment in your country.

Your Internet website offering job vacancies in your country has raised my interest and I would like to turn to you for further information.



Main Body:

First of all,/firstly, I need information about employment chances in the labour market of your country.

Besides, I also would like to know about

Furthermore,/Moreover, I would appreciate some information/some further details about.....

Another matter I need information on is

Please kindly inform me about the possibilities for

Finally,/Eventually, I would be very grateful/I would be glad if you could send me/supply me with some information materials (brochure, leaflet) about

Closing Remark:

I thank you in advance for an early reply/your kind help/your assistance/consideration.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Writing task: based on the above mentioned guidelines, write the letter as a third-country citizen looking for a job abroad. You should ask the job adviser of the public employment agency.

Follow-up:

Writing task 1:

Write a summary about the unemployment rate in your country. You can download the necessary information from the website of TRADING ECONOMICS: <http://www.tradingeconomics.com>.

Writing task 2: for students from countries where the official language is not English.

Download one or two official forms required when you apply for unemployment benefit in the official language of your country. Try to translate it into English. After that study the the form used in the UK below and compare the two documents finding differences and similarities.

Writing task 3:

Visit the '*Living and Working Conditions*' section in English of the EURES website, choose a country of your interest and write a short summary entitled 'Living and Working in e.g. the UK' covering the following aspects: finding accomodation, registration procedures, residence permits, recognition of qualifications, types of employment, representation of workers, social security, unemployment insurance.