

## **Estimated rates of activity: Countries and territories of North America, Europe and Oceania (1950-90)**

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In the course of preparing the fourth edition of *Estimates and projections of the economically active population*, the ILO Bureau of Statistics is now making estimates of activity rates by sex and age group and of distribution by sex for each sector of economic activity, for each country or territory in the world which had 200,000 inhabitants or more in 1990.

Three articles have already appeared in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics* for the first, second and third quarters of 1995 (1995-1, 1995-2 and 1995-3); they contained the estimates in question for 1950-90 for the countries and territories of Asia, Africa and Latin America, respectively. This fourth and last of the series is devoted to the countries and territories of North America, Europe and Oceania.

These estimates cancel and replace those published in previous editions of *Estimates and projections of the economically active population*, namely: *Labour force projections, 1965-85* (Geneva, ILO, first edition, 1971), *Labour force estimates and projections, 1950-2000* (Geneva, ILO, second edition, 1977) and *Economically active population 1950-2025* (Geneva, ILO, third edition, 1986). It should be noted, however, that for a very limited number of countries these data may have to be changed if the Bureau of Statistics receives more complete and detailed information before the publication of the fourth edition, which is foreseen for the end of 1995 for the figures and the middle of 1996 for the methodology.

This article also contains the estimates of activity rates by sex and age group and the distribution of the economically active population by sex for each sector of economic activity in the European countries of the former USSR, compiled by A. Vorobiev and published in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1994-2. The estimates, and specifically those of activity rates by sex and age group for 1950 and for almost all the countries concerned, have been adjusted.

In the case of the countries of former Czechoslovakia and former Yugoslavia, the estimates for 1980 and 1990, both of the activity rates by sex and age group and of distribution by sex for each sector of economic activity, are those compiled by B. Popovic and published in the *Bulletin of Labour Statistics*, 1994-2. It should, however, be noted that certain data have been corrected in the light of more recent information.

The definition retained for the economically active population is in conformity with that adopted by the 13th International Conference of Labour Statisticians in 1982 and similar to that retained in the three preceding editions.

Population censuses and sample surveys of the economically active population have provided the main basis for the estimates, which have been adjusted where necessary in order to make the data drawn from these sources compatible with the definition of the economically active population adopted, but we have also used the relevant statistics published by the OECD and by EUROSTAT as a source of reference.

The adjustments have concerned primarily military personnel, the unemployed, those seeking their first job and apprentices, but other categories, particularly women working in agriculture as unpaid family workers, have also been included. This latest adjustment concerns only the statistics for years prior to 1980.

Where national statistics permit, the adjustments have been made simply by shifting the category

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or categories concerned from the non-active or institutionalized (or separately counted) population to the category of economically active population. In a very small number of cases, especially for certain countries and territories of Oceania, recourse has been had to models taken from the same country for other years or from neighbouring countries with similar demographic, social, political and cultural characteristics.

Where, for one or more reasons, differences have arisen between the figures published in the third edition for 1950, 1960, 1970 and 1980 and the figure calculated for 1990 — differences in the definition of the economically active population or in certain population categories, in the date the census or survey was conducted (seasonal effect), in the coverage of certain categories of people — appropriate adjustments have been made, generally to the earlier series.

As to the differences that may have arisen between different sources, particularly sample surveys of the economically active population and population censuses, preference has usually been given to the former. In fact, national or international bodies in most of the countries concerned are tending more and more to use the findings of sample surveys of the economically active population or similar surveys to study not just the short- and medium-term but also the long-term trend of the economically active population, of its component parts and of its structure.

Although the adjustment methodology has remained the same as that used in the three previous editions, in terms of quality, quantity, reliability and comparability at the international and interregional level, the data collected on the economically active population in the countries and territories concerned show a notable improvement since the appearance of the third edition of *Estimates and projections of the economically active population*.

For the vast majority of the countries and territories concerned, the figures presented are based on statistics drawn from a number of censuses and/or sample surveys of the economically active population that were made between 1945 and 1994.

In this fourth edition, the former USSR, former Czechoslovakia and former Yugoslavia no longer appear. On the other hand, the following countries have been included: Belarus, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Republic of Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine (from the former USSR), the Czech Republic and Slovakia (from former Czechoslovakia), Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (from former Yugoslavia) and the Solomon Islands (over 200,000 inhabitants in 1990).