

Methodological Notes and Short Glossary

Ongoing reports on business cycle developments are among the key products provided by WIFO. In order to facilitate their understanding, in-depth explanations on definitions and technical terms are, whenever possible, combined in this glossary rather than supplied in the analytical part.

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Period comparisons

Time-series comparisons with the previous period, e.g., the previous quarter, are adjusted for seasonal effects. They also include effects that result from a different number of working days in the period (e.g., Easter). Unlike the "seasonally and calendar-adjusted" changes of quarterly GDP as communicated to Eurostat and released by Statistics Austria, WIFO in addition adjusts the series for irregular variations. The WIFO series labelled "trend-cycle data" exhibits a smoother path and offers a better interpretation of the cyclical profile.

The phrase "changed compared with a year before . . .", on the other hand, describes a change compared with the same period a year before and refers to unadjusted time series.

The analysis of the seasonally and working day adjusted development provides more precise information about the actual course of economic activity and shows turning points sooner. However, the data are subject to additional revisions as seasonal adjustment is based on statistical methods.

Carry-over (in economic growth)

The carry-over identifies the impact of the dynamics of a series (in seasonally adjusted figures) during one year (t_0) on the annual percentage change in the following year (t_1). It is defined as the annual percentage change in year t_1 , if GDP in t_1 remains constant at the level of the fourth quarter of year t_0 (in seasonally adjusted terms).

Average rates of change

The time given refers to the initial and the final value of the period of computation: hence the average rate 2005-2010 comprises as the first rate of change that from 2005 to 2006, and as the last that from 2009 to 2010.

Real and nominal values

In principle, the values shown must be understood as real values, i.e., adjusted for price effects. Whenever values are shown as nominal values (e.g., foreign trade statistics), this is specifically mentioned.

Production Sector

This term comprises the NACE 2008 sections B, C and D (Mining and Quarrying, Manufacturing, Energy Supply) and is here used in an international comparison.

Inflation, CPI and HICP

The inflation rate measures changes in consumer prices compared with a year before. The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is a inflation in the EU and for the evaluation of price stability in the euro area (see <https://www.statistik.at/>).

Core inflation as a monetary policy indicator is not clearly defined. WIFO follows the common practice of using the inflation rate excluding the product categories unprocessed food and energy for core inflation. Thus over 87 percent of the goods and services contained in the consumer price index (CPI 2015) are included in the calculation of core inflation.

WIFO-Konjunkturtest (business cycle survey) and WIFO Investment Survey

The WIFO-Konjunkturtest (business cycle survey) is a monthly survey in which around 1,500 Austrian firms are asked to assess their current and future economic situation. The WIFO Investment Survey is conducted twice a year, asking companies about their investment activity (<https://www.konjunkturtest.at/>). The indicators are balances between the positive and negative responses expressed as a percentage of the total number of firms sampled.

Unemployment rate

Austrian national definition: The number of persons registered as job seekers with the Public Employment Service expressed as a percentage of the dependent labour force. Labour force is the sum of the unemployed and the persons in dependent employment (measured in standard employment relationships). Database: registrations with the Public Employment Service (AMS) and Association of Austrian social insurance agencies.

Definition according to ILO and Eurostat: Any person who is not gainfully employed and is actively seeking work is considered unemployed. Gainfully employed persons comprise all persons who during the reference week worked for at least one hour in a self-employed capacity or in paid employment. Persons receiving child-care benefit and apprentices are classified as gainfully employed, whereas persons in military service or persons carrying out alternative service are not. The unemployment rate is the number of unemployed persons expressed as a percentage of the total labour force (unemployed persons plus gainfully employed persons). Database: data from household surveys ("Mikrozensus").

Terms used in connection with the national definition of the unemployment rate

Persons in training: Persons who at a set date are enrolled in AMS (Public Employment Service) training programmes. When calculating the unemployment rate, their number is not taken into account either in the denominator or in the numerator.

Persons in dependent active employment: "Persons in dependent employment" include persons receiving child-care benefit, as well as persons in military service with a valid employment contract. By deducting their number one arrives at the number of "persons in dependent active employment".