16 June 2026

Quarterly Labour Cost Survey (QLCS)

First Quarter 2026

Main results

- The labour cost of companies increased to 4.9% in the first quarter compared to the same period of the previous year and stood at 3,278.01 euros per worker per month. The wage cost increased by 4.9%.
- With calendar-adjusted and deseasonalised results, the labour cost per worker increased by 4.5% annually and 1.4% quarterly.
- The number of vacancies was 159,785 this quarter.

More information

- Annex of tables (includes information from the Autonomous Communities)
- Detailed results

The labour cost increased by 4.9% in the first quarter compared to the same period of 2025, to 3,278.01 euros per worker per month. The wage cost increased by 4.9% to 2,403.80 euros, and other costs by 4.8%. Mandatory Social Security contributions, the main component of other costs, increased by 4.5%.

Total labour cost

Annual variation rate. Percentage

Current press release at:https://www.ine.es/dyngs/Prensa/en/ETCL1T26.htm

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Monthly labour cost per employee. First quarter 2026

	Euros	Rate [1]
Total labour cost	3,278.01	4.9
Wage cost	2,403.80	4.9
Other costs	874.21	4.8

[1] Compared to the same quarter of the previous year.

Hourly labour cost. First quarter 2026

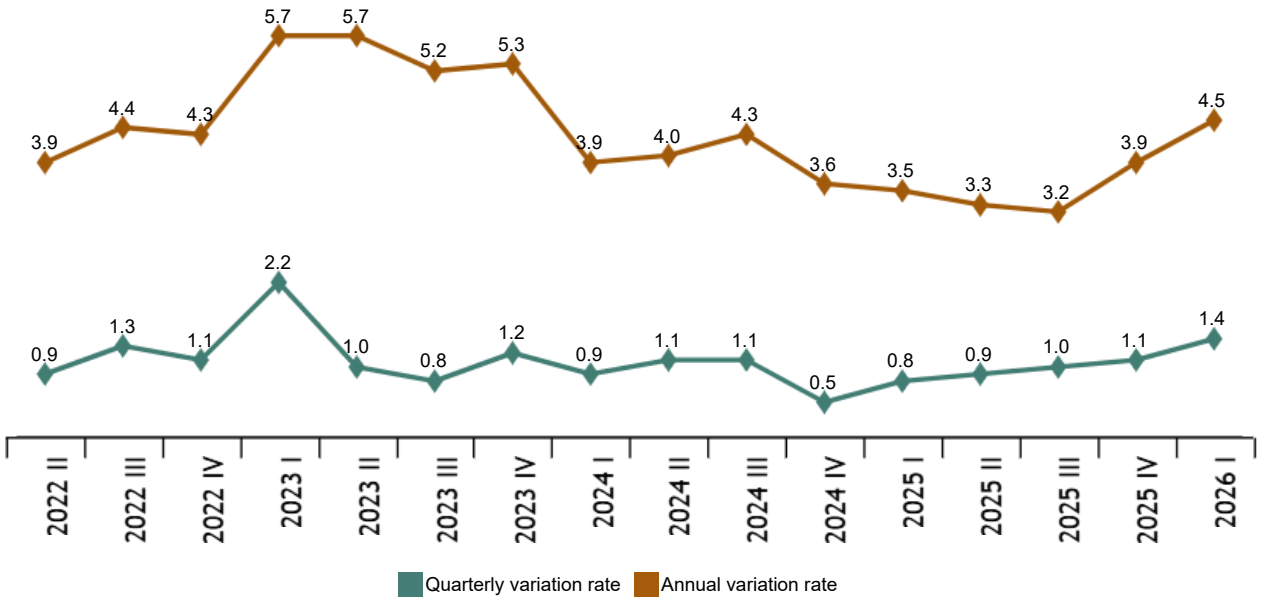
	Euros	Rate [1]
Cost per effective hour	24.88	5.4
Cost per paid hour	21.62	4.8

[1] Respecto al mismo trimestre del año anterior.

Series adjusted for seasonal and calendar effects

The labour cost per worker, excluding seasonal and calendar effects, increased by 4.5% this quarter compared to the same period of the previous year, and 1.4% compared to the previous quarter.

Labour cost per worker
Adjusted for seasonal and calendar effects. Percentage



Labour cost by activity sector

By sections of activity, the labour cost is highest in *Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply and Education.* In contrast, the cost decreases in *Water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities*.

Monthly labour cost per employee. First quarter 2026

	Euros	Annual variation rate
D. Electricity, gas, steam ...	9,043.76	15.1
P. Education	3,130.99	10.8
L. Real state activities	3,529.13	9.6
B. Mining and quarrying ...	5,014.75	8.9
S. Other services	2,394.90	8.7
O. Public Administration ...	3,763.22	7.4
Q. Health and social services ...	3,301.43	7.3
F. Construction	3,209.66	6.9
M. Professional, scientific ...	4,223.96	6.3
Total activities	**3,278.01**	**4.9**
N. Administrative and support ...	2,356.90	4.7
J. Information and communications	5,183.94	4.6
K. Financial and insurance ...	6,968.36	4.4
G. Wholesale and retail ...	2,897.25	2.9
C. Manufacturing industries	3,683.41	2.7
H. Transport and storage	3,471.00	2.4
R. Arts, entertainment and ...	2,127.83	2.3
I. Accommodation	1,883.01	1.4
E. Water supply, waste management ...	3,499.52	-0.9

Labour cost by Autonomous Community

Cantabria, País Vasco y Cataluña sowed the highest increases in labour cost this quarter.

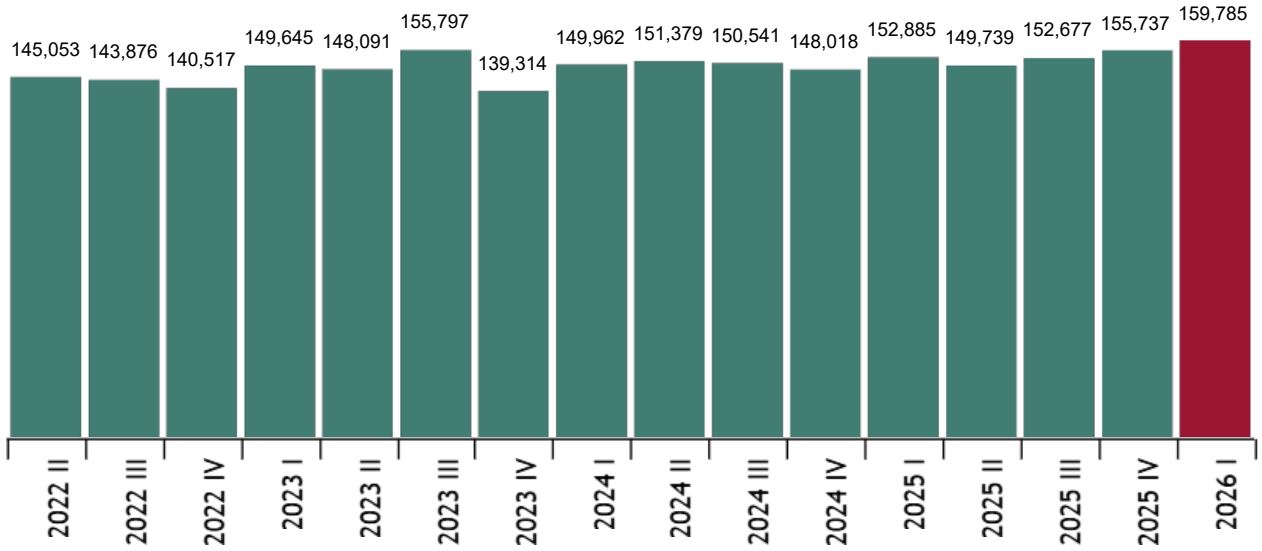
On the other hand, Principado de Asturias, Illes Balears y Andalucía had the smallest increases.

Current press release at:https://www.ine.es/dyngs/Prensa/en/ETCL1T26.htm

Job Vacancies

The number of vacancies were 159,785 in the first quarter, 6,900 more than in the same quarter of the previous year.

Total Vacancies



86.6% of vacancies were found in the Services sector this quarter.

Vacancies by sector. First quarter 2026

	Total vacancies	Percentage	Reasons why vacancies do not exist (percent distribution)			
			Total	No more workers needed	High hiring cost	Other
TOTAL	159,785	100.0	100.0	91.6	4.8	3.6
Industry	12,261	7.7	100.0	91.1	4.6	4.4
Construction	9,145	5.7	100.0	89.0	5.4	5.6
Services	138,379	86.6	100.0	92.0	4.7	3.3

The Autonomous Communities with the greatest number of vacancies were Cataluña, Comunidad de Madrid and Andalucía. In turn, those recording the lowest number were La Rioja, Extremadura and Cantabria.

Revision and updating of data

The data published today are final. All results are available on INEbase.

Current press release at:https://www.ine.es/dyngs/Prensa/en/ETCL1T26.htm

Methodological note

The Quarterly Labour Cost Survey (ETCL) primarily aims to understand the evolution of the average labour cost per worker per month, the average labour cost per effective working hour, and time worked and not worked.

Furthermore, it is the primary source of information for the development of the Harmonised Labour Cost Index, which is part of the euro-indicators of the Statistical Office of the European Union (EUROSTAT).

Type of operation: quarterly continuous survey.

Base year: 2020.

Population scope: Social Security contribution accounts. General Scheme: Sections B to S of CNAE-09 and Special Scheme for Seafarers: Sea Transport (Division 50 of CNAE-09).

Geographical scope: the entire national territory.

Reference period of the results: the calendar quarter.

Reference period of the information: the calendar month.

Sample size: 28,500 establishments, divided into three monthly sub-samples of 9,500 establishments each.

Sampling type: stratified random with optimal allocation. Comprehensive survey for workplaces with more than 500 employees.

Collection method: questionnaire filled in directly by the establishment.

More information on the methodology and the standardised methodological report.

INE statistics are produced in accordance with the Code of Good Practice for European Statistics. More information on Quality at INE and Code of Best Practices.

For further information see INEbase

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