



14 February 2022  
LABOUR COST INDEX  
4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021

## THE LABOUR COST INDEX INCREASED BY 2.4% IN THE 4<sup>th</sup> QUARTER OF 2021 AND BY 2.5% IN 2021

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, the Labour Cost Index (LCI) recorded a year-on-year increase of 2.4%. In the previous quarter, it had increased 3.9%.

The wage costs (per hour actually worked) increased by 2.5%, and the other labour costs (also per hour actually worked) increased by 2.3%, compared with the same period of the previous year.

The quarterly development of the LCI resulted from the increase of 2.0% in the average cost per employee, since the number of hours actually worked per employee remained unchanged. The increase of the former component took place in all the economic activities, with the lower variation being recorded in the Public Administration (0.8%) and the higher being observed in construction (4.8%). The maintenance in the number of hours actually worked per employee resulted from the combination of the increases observed in industry (1.0%) and in services (5.7%), and the decreases in construction (2.1%) and in the Public Administration (6.5%).

In 2021, the LCI increased by 2.5%, corresponding to increases of 1.9% in the wage costs and of 4.7% in the other labour costs. The average cost per employee increased by 3.7% and the number of hours actually worked per employee increased by 1.5%. For the increase of the non-wage costs contributed the growth in the employers' contributions due to the progressive reduction of the enterprises that joined the simplified layoff regime in the private sector of the economy.

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### 1. Labour Cost Index and components

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, the LCI, that measures the labour costs per hour actually worked, increased by 2.4% compared with the same quarter of 2020 (it had increased by 3.9% in the preceding quarter)<sup>1</sup>.

The wage costs (per hour actually worked) increased by 2.5% (3.5% in the previous quarter) and the other labour costs (also per hour actually worked) increased by 2.3% (5.4% in the previous quarter) (Figure 1)<sup>2</sup>.

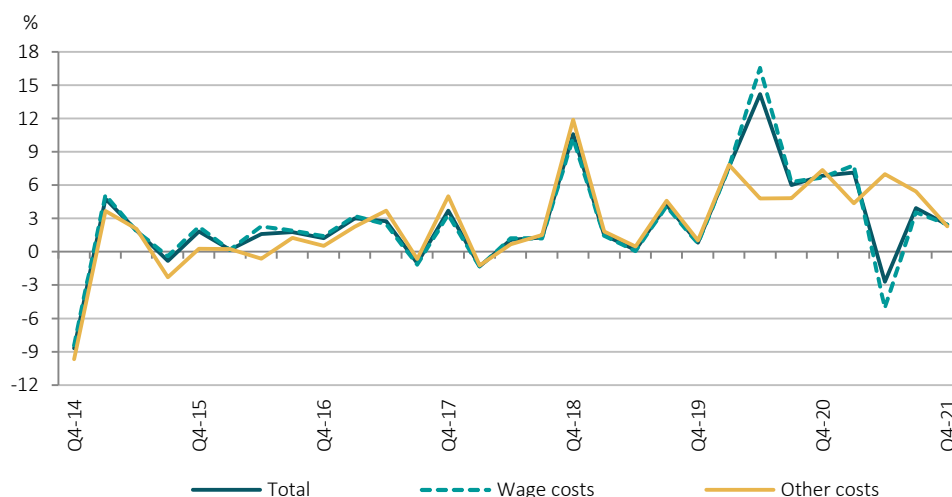
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<sup>1</sup> It should be noted that the wage costs considered in the LCI computation include those that were partially supported by Social Security in the scope of the employment protection measures, with the implementation, in particular, of the simplified layoff regime in the pandemic context. These amounts cannot be identified on the primary data used to calculate the LCI. Therefore, although from the economy perspective the LCI displays the behaviour of the hourly labour costs, in the companies' perspective these costs tend to be overestimated during this regime period.

<sup>2</sup> The data analysed in this Press Release are working days adjusted. The raw data are available in the annex tables and at the Official Statistics Portal.

Figure 1. LCI year-on-year rate of change by components

(working days adjusted data)



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, the wage costs recorded the highest increases in construction (7.0%) and in the Public Administration (8.0%), while in services it was observed a decrease of 3.2%. In the preceding quarter, the wage costs recorded increases in all activities.

The non-wage costs, as the wage costs, recorded smaller increases than those observed in the previous quarter, except for construction (6.8%) and Public Administration (7.9%). In that quarter, the non-wage costs had increased 3.9% and 6.1%, respectively, in those activities. The non-wage costs for services, however, decreased 3.1% (they had increased 4.1% in the previous quarter).

The large increase of the wage costs and the non-wage costs in the Public Administration and in construction was due to the strong reduction in the number of hours actually worked per employee in these activities.

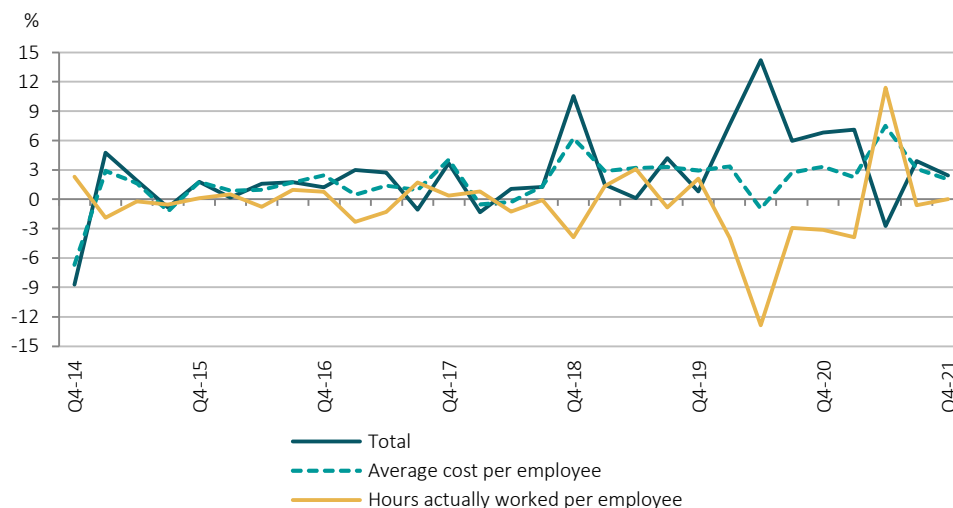
The increase of the LCI was essentially explained by the growth of 2.0% in the average cost per employee (it had increased by 3.1% in the preceding quarter), as the number of hours actually worked remained unchanged (it had dropped by 0.6% in the previous quarter) (Figure 2).

The average cost per employee recorded a less pronounced increase than that observed in the preceding quarter in all the economic activities, except for construction. The increases recorded in the Public Administration have been lower than those in the remaining activities since the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2021.

The relative stability of the number of hours actually worked per employee was a result of a reduction observed in the Public Administration (6.5%) and in construction (2.1%) and of an increase in industry (1.0%) and in services (5.7%). In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021, the majority of the activities had registered decreases, with the exception of services.

Figure 2. LCI year-on-year rate of change by source of variation

(working days adjusted data)



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

In 2021, the LCI recorded an increase of 2.5%, corresponding to increases of 1.9% in the wage costs and of 4.7% in the other costs. The average cost per employee increased by 3.7% and the number of hours actually worked per employee increased by 1.5%.

In 2020, the LCI had registered an increase of 8.6%, corresponding to increases of 9.2% in the wage costs and of 6.2% in the other costs. The average cost per employee had increased by 2.1% and the number of hours actually worked per employee had decreased by 5.7%.

## 2. Sectors of economic activity

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, for the subgroup of the economic activities belonging to sections B to N (which include, in general, the business economy of the private sector of the economy), the LCI decreased by 0.7%.

In the remaining economic activities (sections O to S), which include mostly (but not exclusively) the non-business economy of the public sector of the economy, the LCI recorded a year-on-year increase of 8.0%.

In 2021, the LCI recorded an increase of 2.8% in the activities from sections B to N (7.9% in 2020) and an increase of 1.8% (9.8% in 2020) in the activities from sections O to S.



## Sections B to N

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, in the activities from sections B to N, compared with the same quarter of 2020, it was observed that:

- the wage costs and the other labour costs decreased by 0.7% (Figure 3);
- the average labour cost per employee increased by 2.7% (Figure 4);
- the number of hours actually worked per employee increased by 3.7% (Figure 4).

Among the activities from sections B to N, the LCI increased by 2.5% in industry (sections B to E) and by 7.0% in construction (section F), and decreased by 3.1% in services (sections G to N).

In Industry (2.5%):

- the wage costs increased by 2.6% and the other labour costs increased by 2.2%;
- the average cost per employee increased by 3.4%;
- the number of hours actually worked per employee increased by 1.0%.

In Construction (7.0%):

- the wage costs increased by 7.0% and the other labour costs increased by 6.8%;
- the average cost per employee increased by 4.8%;
- the number of hours actually worked per employee decreased by 2.1%.

In Services (-3.1%):

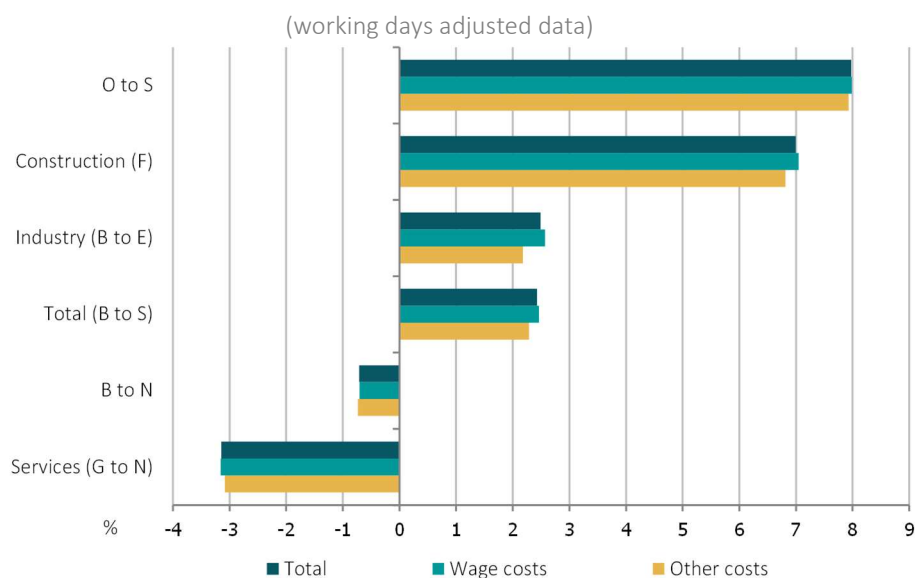
- the wage costs and the other labour costs decreased by 3.2% and 3.1%, respectively;
- the average cost per employee increased by 2.1%;
- the number of hours actually worked per employee increased by 5.7%.

## Sections O to S

In the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021, in the activities from sections O to S, the LCI recorded an increase of 8.0%. In these activities:

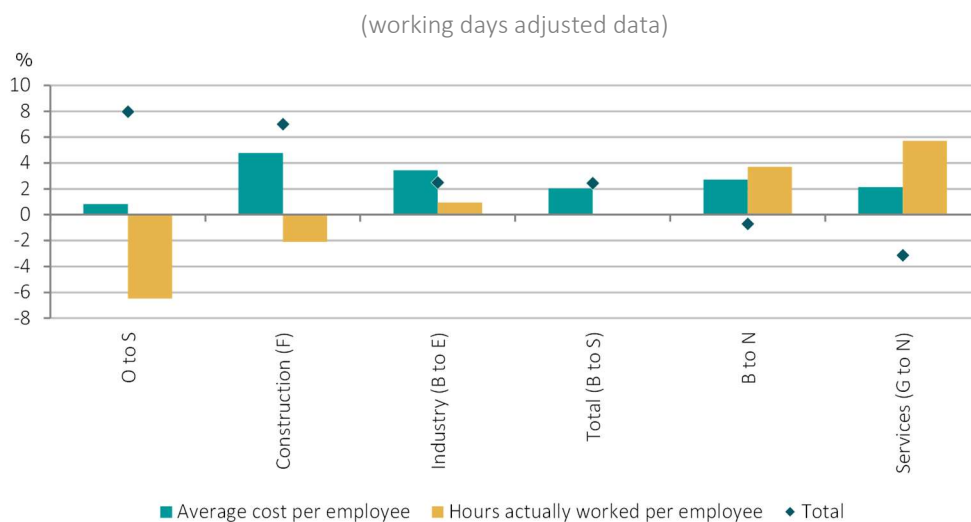
- the wage costs increased by 8.0% and the other labour costs increased by 7.9%;
- the average cost per employee increased by 0.8%;
- the number of hours actually worked per employee decreased by 6.5%.

Figure 3. LCI year-on-year rate of change by index component and economic activity in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

Figure 4. LCI year-on-year rate of change by index source of variation and economic activity in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.



### 3. Comparison with the European Union

The latest available information by country on the LCI year-on-year rate of change reports to the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021 and was published by Eurostat in the 16<sup>th</sup> December of 2021 (Figure 5).

The LCI year-on-year rate of change for the European Union (27 countries) was 2.9%, in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021.

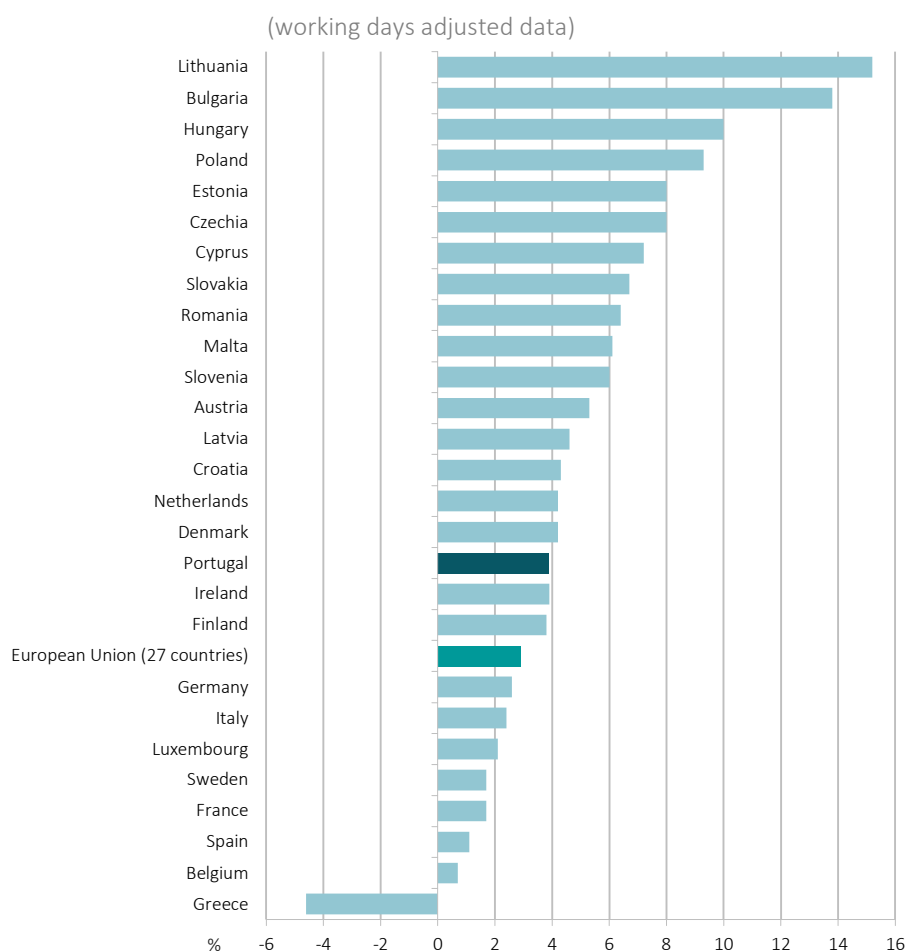
Nineteen countries recorded LCI rates of change larger than the European Union average, with Lithuania recording the largest LCI increase (15.2%).

In seven countries, the LCI recorded a lower increase than the European Union average, between 0.7% in Belgium, and 2.6% in Germany.

Greece observed a year-on-year decrease of the LCI, of 4.6%.

Portugal recorded a year-on-year increase, of 3.9%.

Figure 5. LCI year-on-year rate of change by European Union Country (27) in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021



Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021, Eurostat – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021.





Table 1. LCI year-on-year rate of change by index component and economic activity (NACE-Rev. 2)  
(working days adjusted data)

Economic activity (sections from Nace-Rev. 2)	Q1-2021			Q2-2021			Q3-2021			Q4-2021			2020			2021		
	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs
	%																	
<b>Total (B to S)</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>-5.1</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>9.2</b>	<b>6.2</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>4.7</b>
B to N	9.1	10.0	5.5	0.9	-2.4	14.5	2.9	2.3	5.0	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	7.9	8.8	4.5	2.8	1.9	5.7
Industry (B to E)	9.1	9.2	8.7	-2.8	-6.0	9.8	5.2	4.7	7.2	2.5	2.6	2.2	7.9	8.8	4.4	3.3	2.3	6.8
Construction (F)	6.8	6.8	6.8	10.2	9.1	14.3	3.7	3.6	3.9	7.0	7.0	6.8	3.5	3.7	2.8	6.9	6.6	7.8
Services (G to N)	9.3	10.7	3.8	1.8	-2.0	16.8	1.6	1.0	4.1	-3.1	-3.2	-3.1	8.5	9.4	4.8	2.0	1.2	4.9
O to S	3.6	4.0	2.1	-9.2	-9.6	-7.1	5.7	5.7	6.1	8.0	8.0	7.9	9.8	9.9	9.2	1.8	1.7	2.1

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

Table 2. LCI year-on-year rate of change by index component and economic activity (NACE-Rev. 2)  
(non working days adjusted data)

Economic activity (sections from Nace-Rev. 2)	Q1-2021			Q2-2021			Q3-2021			Q4-2021			2020			2021		
	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs	Total	Wage costs	Other costs
	%																	
<b>Total (B to S)</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>7.8</b>	<b>4.4</b>	<b>-4.7</b>	<b>-6.6</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.5</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>8.9</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>1.5</b>	<b>4.3</b>
B to N	9.0	10.0	5.5	-1.3	-4.0	12.7	2.9	2.3	5.0	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7	7.7	8.5	4.3	2.2	1.5	5.2
Industry (B to E)	9.1	9.2	8.7	-4.7	-7.5	8.1	5.2	4.7	7.2	2.5	2.6	2.2	7.6	8.5	4.1	2.7	1.9	6.3
Construction (F)	6.8	6.8	6.8	8.4	7.4	12.4	3.7	3.6	3.9	7.0	7.0	6.8	3.2	3.4	2.5	6.5	6.2	7.4
Services (G to N)	9.2	10.7	3.8	-0.7	-3.6	15.0	1.7	1.0	4.1	-3.1	-3.2	-3.1	8.2	9.1	4.6	1.3	0.8	4.4
O to S	3.6	4.0	2.1	-10.7	-11.1	-8.6	5.7	5.7	6.1	8.0	8.0	7.9	9.5	9.6	8.9	1.4	1.3	1.7

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

#### Sections from Nace-Rev. 2

B - Mining and quarrying  
C - Manufacturing  
D - Electricity, gas, steam and air conditions supply  
E - Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities  
F - Construction  
G - Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motor cycles

H - Transport and storage  
I - Accommodation and food service activities  
J - Information and communication  
K - Financial and insurance activities  
L - Real estate activities  
M - Professional, scientific and technical activities

N - Administrative and support service activities  
O - Public administration, defence, and compulsory social security  
P - Education  
Q - Human health and social work activities  
R - Arts, entertainment and recreation  
S - Other service activities

LABOUR COST INDEX – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021



Table 3. LCI year-on-year rate of change by index source of variation and economic activity (NACE-Rev. 2)  
(working days adjusted data)

Economic activity (sections from Nace-Rev. 2)	Q1-2021			Q2-2021			Q3-2021			Q4-2021			2020			2021		
	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee
	%																	
<b>Total (B to S)</b>	<b>7.1</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>-3.9</b>	<b>-2.7</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>-5.7</b>	<b>2.5</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>1.5</b>
B to N	9.1	2.4	-5.4	0.9	10.2	10.4	2.9	4.2	1.4	-0.7	2.7	3.7	7.9	1.7	-5.6	2.8	4.8	2.3
Industry (B to E)	9.1	3.6	-5.0	-2.8	11.2	14.9	5.2	4.7	-0.4	2.5	3.4	1.0	7.9	1.4	-6.0	3.3	5.6	2.2
Construction (F)	6.8	2.4	-4.1	10.2	6.8	-3.1	3.7	3.5	-0.2	7.0	4.8	-2.1	3.5	2.1	-1.6	6.9	4.4	-2.4
Services (G to N)	9.3	1.9	-5.8	1.8	10.1	9.6	1.6	4.1	2.4	-3.1	2.1	5.7	8.5	1.8	-5.8	2.0	4.4	2.7
O to S	3.6	1.9	-1.1	-9.2	2.7	13.3	5.7	1.2	-4.1	8.0	0.8	-6.5	9.8	2.9	-6.0	1.8	1.6	0.1

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

Table 4. LCI year-on-year rate of change by index source of variation and economic activity (NACE-Rev. 2)  
(non working days adjusted data)

Economic activity (sections from Nace-Rev. 2)	Q1-2021			Q2-2021			Q3-2021			Q4-2021			2020			2021		
	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee	Total	Average cost per employee	Hours actually worked per employee
	%																	
<b>Total (B to S)</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>2.3</b>	<b>-3.9</b>	<b>-4.7</b>	<b>7.5</b>	<b>13.3</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>-0.6</b>	<b>2.4</b>	<b>2.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>-5.4</b>	<b>1.9</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>1.9</b>
B to N	9.0	2.4	-5.4	-1.3	10.2	12.2	2.9	4.2	1.4	-0.7	2.7	3.7	7.7	1.7	-5.2	2.2	4.8	2.6
Industry (B to E)	9.1	3.6	-5.0	-4.7	11.2	16.8	5.2	4.7	-0.4	2.5	3.4	1.0	7.6	1.4	-5.6	2.7	5.6	2.6
Construction (F)	6.8	2.4	-4.1	8.4	6.8	-1.5	3.7	3.5	-0.2	7.0	4.8	-2.1	3.2	2.1	-1.1	6.5	4.4	-2.0
Services (G to N)	9.2	1.9	-5.8	-0.7	10.1	11.4	1.7	4.1	2.4	-3.1	2.1	5.7	8.2	1.8	-5.4	1.3	4.4	3.1
O to S	3.6	1.9	-1.1	-10.7	2.7	15.1	5.7	1.2	-4.1	8.0	0.8	-6.5	9.5	2.9	-5.7	1.4	1.6	0.6

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

Note: The name of the activities can be found in the previous page.





## TECHNICAL NOTE

With the publication of the results for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2019, Statistics Portugal started the dissemination of a new series of the Labour Cost Index (LCI), with the base year in 2016, in line with Eurostat's procedure for the Labour Cost Index, whenever new data of the (quadrennial) Labour Cost Survey become available.

With the publication of the results for the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2020, Statistics Portugal started to include, in the LCI calculation, regarding the information related to the labour costs obtained from administrative sources, data corresponding to the universe of about 386 thousand entities (instead of the actual sample of around 4 100 entities), which declared earnings for a total of 4.2 million workers. The information on hours actually worked continues to be obtained by direct inquiry from the entities that belong to the LCI sample, and no changes were introduced at this level. For the O, P and Q sections of NACE-Rev. 2 estimates of the number of hours actually worked per employee from the Labour Force Survey are used.

The back series for all indices, from the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2008, are available at the Official Statistics website.

The LCI is a short-term indicator that measures quarterly developments in labour costs per hour actually worked (hourly average cost) incurred by the employer. The index is calculated by dividing the average cost per employee by the number of hours actually worked per employee. For this reason, the evolution of these two variables (labour costs and hours worked) contribute to explaining the development of the LCI.

Labour costs incurred by the employer correspond to that reported by the entities to the Social Security (*Declaração Mensal de Remunerações*) and to the *Caixa Geral de Aposentações (Relação Contributiva)* include the following:

### Wage costs:

- Base wage
- Regular bonuses and allowances
- Irregular bonuses and allowances (holiday bonus, Christmas bonus, end-of-year bonuses/distribution of profits, other irregular bonuses and allowances)
- Payment of overtime

### Other costs:

- Severance payment
- Employers' legal costs (social security contributions, insurance against accidents and occupational disease)
- Collectively agreed, contractual and voluntary costs (supplementary pension/invalidity benefit, health insurance, life/personal accident insurance, and social benefits paid directly to employees in case of absence on account of sickness)

Quarterly data collection on the hours worked in the enterprises is carried out through an electronic questionnaire (Computer Assisted Web Interviewing - CAWI).



By economic activity, the LCI covers Sections B to S of NACE-Rev. 2.

The LCI is a Laspeyres index.

In order to obtain more information about the LCI calculation, we recommend the consultation of the [methodological note](#) (only in Portuguese) for this statistical operation.

### INFORMATION SELECTED FOR PUBLICATION

This Press Release analyses changes in the total LCI and respective items: 1) wage costs versus other costs; and 2) average costs per employee versus number of hours actually worked per employee.

Given that the LCI is seasonal, data are presented as year-on-year rates of change, which compare index levels in the current quarter with those for the same quarter a year earlier. The series of index figures are available on the Official Statistics website.

With the purpose of eliminating the effects of a different number of working days in similar quarters of different years (Easter and other movable feasts), the series analysed are adjusted for working days. Raw series, not adjusted for working day effects, are available in the annex tables and at the Official Statistics website.

### REVISIONS

The data published in this release concerning the last quarters are subject to revisions. These revisions result from the inclusion of information for the last quarter sent lately by some enterprises of the sample survey on hours worked and from the update of information obtained through administrative sources, namely by data from the *Declaração Mensal de Remunerações* reported by the enterprises to the Social Security.

The impact of those revisions, measured by the difference between the year-on-year rates of change published today and those published for the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021 in the Press Release “Labour Cost Index – 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021”, is available in the following table:



## Revision of the LCI year-on-year rates of change published in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2021

Economic activity (sections from Nace- Rev. 2)	Working days adjusted data					Non working days adjusted data				
	Total	Component of the index		Source of variation of the index		Total	Component of the index		Source of variation of the index	
		Wage costs	Other costs	Average cost	Hours actually worked		Wage costs	Other costs	Average cost	Hours actually worked
	Per hour actually worked			Per employee		Per hour actually worked			Per employee	
	%									
Total (B to S)	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1
B to N	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,1	0,2	0,1
Industry (B to E)	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,1	-0,1	0,3	0,3	0,3	0,1	-0,1
Construction (F)	-0,2	-0,3	-0,3	0,1	0,3	-0,2	-0,3	-0,3	0,1	0,3
Services (G to N)	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,3	0,1	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,3	0,1
O to S	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,0	0,1	0,0	0,1	0,0

Source: Statistics Portugal, Labour Cost Index – 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2021.

Due to rounding, the sum of the components may not equal to the corresponding totals.

This Press Release was prepared with the data received up to the 31<sup>st</sup> of January of 2022. The response rate of the LCI survey on hours worked was 91.7%.

### ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Eurostat – Statistical Office of the European Union

LCI – Labour Cost Index

NACE-Rev. 2 – Statistical Classification of Economic Activities in the European Communities, Revision 2

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Next quarterly press release -13<sup>th</sup> May of 2022

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