Beat: Business

Number of unemployed rise to 3,548,312 in March in Spain

Due to the coronavirus

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USPA NEWS - The effects of the coronavirus are already being felt in Spain. The figures for registered unemployment in March reflect such a large increase in the number of unemployed that March has become the worst month in history since records have been kept. More than 300,000 workers lost their jobs and National Insurance lost more than 240,000 contributors. With these figures, the number of unemployed in Spain amounts to 3,548,312. Unions warn that there are still 1.5 million workers affected by temporary employment regulation records, those who have been sent home by their companies due to the pandemic, although they will recover their jobs when the state of alarm ends.

The figures recorded in March reflect the extraordinary impact of the COVID-19 health crisis on jobs in Spain. This outbreak has changed the unemployed trend at the start of March, whereby there were 2,857 fewer unemployed in the first 12 days of the month. By the end of the month, the list of people registered with the State Public Employment Services (Spanish acronym: SEPE) has risen by 302,265 on February, a 9.31% increase. Following this rise, the total number of unemployed stands at 3,548,312. Due to the impact of COVID-19, recorded unemployment rose by 311,037 people in March on the previous month in seasonally-adjusted terms. The number of people unemployed registered with SEPE in March has risen by 293,228 on March last year; a rise of 9.01%.

Unemployment among men stands at 1,528,942, a rise of 178,967 (up 13.26%) on February, while unemployment among women stands at 2,019,370, a rise of 123,298 (up 6.5%). The rate of growth in unemployment among men is double that for women. When compared with March 2019, unemployment among women has risen by 103,183 (up 5.38%), while recorded unemployment among men has risen by 190,045 (up 14.19%).

Compared with February, recorded unemployment rose in Agriculture by 6,520 people (up 4.26%); in Industry by 25,194 (up 9.15%); in Construction by 59,551 (up 22.92%). In absolute terms, it rose the most in Services, by 206,016 (up 8.97%). Lastly, the number of unemployed among first-time job-seekers rose by 4,984 (up 1.91%).

As regards young people, unemployment among those under the age of 25 rose by 26,112 (up 9.99%) when compared with the previous month, while unemployment among those aged 25 and above rose in the month by 276,153 (up 9.25%).

National Insurance lost more than 240,000 contributors

The average number of national insurance contributors stood at 19,006,760 in March, a decline of 243,469 people in work compared with February (down 1.26%). The impact of the coronavirus pandemic started to take hold as from 12 March, and hence the average figure does not strictly represent the month as a whole. It is thus necessary to look at the figure for the last day of the month, since on this occasion it more reliably reflects the employment trend and the repercussions of the crisis caused by COVID-19. At 31 March, the number of national insurance contributors stood at 18,445,436, which means that at that date the system had lost 833,979 contributors.

As regards the average monthly figure (which is usually provided), the decline is only the second ever recorded drop in a month of March, which also fell in 2009 (down 54,489). In the same month of 2019, the rise was of 155,104 new contributors. When seasonally-adjusted, the average number of contributors fell in March by 415,800, a significant figure which breaks the positive trend recorded ever since November 2013 (down 17,072). On average, 8,884,144 women were in work in March, a decline of 94,621 women.

The year-on-year calculation of average contributor numbers posted a negative balance of 36,817 (down 0.19%) in March, to stand at a total number of people in work of 19,006,760. The largest fall was under the General Regime, which saw a drop of 0.21%, or 0.05% when discounting the Special Systems for Domestic Workers (down 14,985) and for Agricultural Workers (down 25,431). The number of contributors registered under the Special Regime for Self-Employed Workers fell by 1,562 people year-on-year in March (down 0.05%). The Special Regime for Seamen posted a decline of 1,772 (down 2.75%) and for Coal Workers a decline of 323 people (down 20.67%).

Impact of COVID-19

To truly see the employment trend in March, it is necessary to look at what happened in the first 11 days of the month, when contributor numbers were still rising, specifically by 64,843 workers (difference between 19,344,258 on 11 March and 19,279,415 on 29 February), and then between 12 and 31 March, when the numbers plummeted by 898,822 (difference between 19,344,258 on 11 March and 18,445,436 on 31 March).

The decline under the General Regime was of 855,081 contributors (down 5.63%), while the Regime for Self-Employed Workers saw a drop of 40,877 contributors (down 1.25%). Looking in greater detail by sector, the largest declines (as from 12 March) were recorded in Construction (down 17.08%), Hotel and Catering (down 14.27%), Administrative Activities and Auxiliary Services (down 8.91%), Education (down 5.24%) and Transport and Storage (down 4.76%). The figure grew by 7,085 under Health Activities. In terms of the type of employment contract, there was a big difference in the decline in temporary employment contracts, down 17.3% and the decline in permanent employment contracts, only down 1.92%.

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