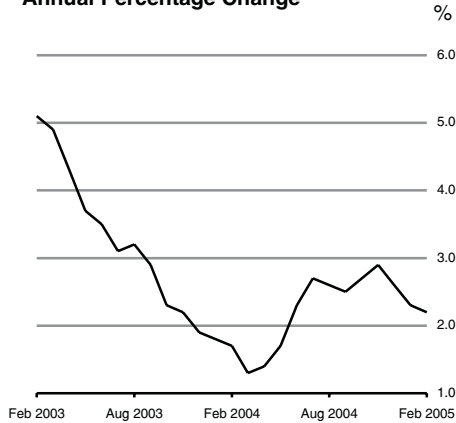




Consumer Price Index February 2005

Consumer Price Index - all items
Annual Percentage Change



CPI and HICP

	CPI		HICP	
	% monthly change	% annual change	% monthly change	% annual change
Oct 2004	+ 0.1	+ 2.7	+ 0.1	+ 2.5
Nov 2004	+ 0.2	+ 2.9	+ 0.2	+ 2.8
Dec 2004	+ 0.1	+ 2.6	+ 0.1	+ 2.4
Jan 2005	- 0.8	+ 2.3	- 1.0	+ 2.1
Feb 2005	+ 0.8	+ 2.2	+ 0.9	+ 2.0

Small decrease in inflation rate to 2.2% in February

Consumer Prices in February, as measured by the CPI, increased by 0.8% in the month. This is the same increase as recorded in February of last year. The annual rate of inflation fell slightly from 2.3% to 2.2% between January and February.

The EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) increased by 0.9% which was also the same as the increase recorded in February 2004. The annual rate of inflation as measured by the HICP fell from 2.1% in January to 2.0% in February.

The most notable changes in the year were increases in *Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels* (+9.4%), *Education* (+6.3%), *Health* (+5.9%), *Restaurants & Hotels* (+3.3%) and *Transport* (+2.8%). There were decreases in *Clothing & Footwear* (-4.1%) and *Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance* (-1.4%).

The annual rate of inflation for Goods was 0.2% in February while the corresponding rate for Services was 4.1%.

The most significant monthly price changes were increases in *Clothing & Footwear* (+11.2%), *Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance* (+2.3%), *Transport* (+0.6%), *Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels* (+0.6%) and *Health* (+0.6%).

The main factors contributing to the monthly change were as follows:

- ◆ *Clothing & Footwear* and *Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance* rose due to the recovery in prices following the traditional winter sales.
- ◆ *Transport* rose due to increases in taxi & air fares, standard maintenance costs and petrol prices, partially offset by falling diesel prices.
- ◆ *Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels* rose due to increases in average mortgage interest repayments, private rents and home heating oil prices.
- ◆ *Health* prices rose with increases in doctors' and dentists' fees.

The CPI excluding tobacco index for February was 109.2, up 0.8% since January and up 2.3% in the year.

For more information contact Kevin McCormack at 021-4535603 or Kieran Walsh at 021-4535091.

Published by the Central Statistics Office, Ireland.

Ardee Road
Dublin 6
Ireland

Skehard Road
Cork
Ireland

LoCall: 1890 313 414

Tel: +353-1 498 4000
Fax: +353-1 498 4229

Tel: +353-21 453 5000
Fax: +353-21 453 5555

Both offices may be contacted through any of these telephone numbers.

CSO on the Web: www.cso.ie
and go to
Economy: Prices

Director General: Donal Garvey

Enquiries:

CPI Statistics (021) 453 5445, 453 5427
cpi@cso.ie

Queries and Sales Information Section, ext 5032
information@cso.ie

© Central Statistics Office
The contents of this release may be quoted provided the source is given clearly and accurately. Reproduction for own or internal use is permitted.

Table 1 Consumer Price Index (All Items)

Period	Consumer Price Index		Percentage changes			
	Current base Dec. 2001=100	Former base Nov. 1996=100 ¹	One month	Three months	12 months	
			%	%	%	
1998	Year				+ 2.4	
1999	Year				+ 1.6	
2000	Year				+ 5.6	
2001	Year				+ 4.9	
2002	Year	102.7			+ 4.6	
2003	Year	106.3			+ 3.5	
2004	Year	108.6			+ 2.2	
2002	January	99.8	118.0	- 0.2	+ 0.3	+ 4.9
	February	100.5	118.8	+ 0.7	+ 1.0	+ 4.7
	March	101.4	119.9	+ 0.9	+ 1.4	+ 4.8
	April	102.3	120.9	+ 0.9	+ 2.5	+ 4.8
	May	102.8	121.5	+ 0.5	+ 2.3	+ 4.7
	June	103.0	121.7	+ 0.2	+ 1.6	+ 4.4
	July	102.6	121.3	- 0.4	+ 0.3	+ 4.2
	August	103.2	122.0	+ 0.6	+ 0.4	+ 4.5
	September	103.7	122.6	+ 0.5	+ 0.7	+ 4.5
	October	104.2	123.2	+ 0.5	+ 1.6	+ 4.6
	November	104.3	123.3	+ 0.1	+ 1.1	+ 4.8
	December	105.0	124.1	+ 0.7	+ 1.3	+ 5.0
2003	January	104.6	123.6	- 0.4	+ 0.4	+ 4.8
	February	105.6	124.8	+ 1.0	+ 1.2	+ 5.1
	March	106.4	125.8	+ 0.8	+ 1.3	+ 4.9
	April	106.7	126.1	+ 0.3	+ 2.0	+ 4.3
	May	106.6	126.0	- 0.1	+ 0.9	+ 3.7
	June	106.6	126.0	-	+ 0.2	+ 3.5
	July	105.8	125.1	- 0.8	- 0.8	+ 3.1
	August	106.5	125.9	+ 0.7	- 0.1	+ 3.2
	September	106.7	126.1	+ 0.2	+ 0.1	+ 2.9
	October	106.6	126.0	- 0.1	+ 0.8	+ 2.3
	November	106.6	126.0	-	+ 0.1	+ 2.2
	December	107.0	126.5	+ 0.4	+ 0.3	+ 1.9
2004	January	106.5	125.9	- 0.5	- 0.1	+ 1.8
	February	107.4	126.9	+ 0.8	+ 0.8	+ 1.7
	March	107.8	127.4	+ 0.4	+ 0.7	+ 1.3
	April	108.2	127.9	+ 0.4	+ 1.6	+ 1.4
	May	108.4	128.1	+ 0.2	+ 0.9	+ 1.7
	June	109.0	128.8	+ 0.6	+ 1.1	+ 2.3
	July	108.7	128.5	- 0.3	+ 0.5	+ 2.7
	August	109.3	129.2	+ 0.6	+ 0.8	+ 2.6
	September	109.4	129.3	+ 0.1	+ 0.4	+ 2.5
	October	109.5	129.4	+ 0.1	+ 0.7	+ 2.7
	November	109.7	129.7	+ 0.2	+ 0.4	+ 2.9
	December	109.8	129.8	+ 0.1	+ 0.4	+ 2.6
2005	January	108.9	128.7	- 0.8	- 0.5	+ 2.3
	February	109.8	129.8	+ 0.8	+ 0.1	+ 2.2

¹ Linked to current Consumer Price Index at mid-December 2001

Table 2 CPI Subindices, February 2005

COICOP Group	Dec. 2001 base expenditure weights	Consumer Price Index (CPI)		Percentage changes		
		Current base Dec. 2001	Former base Nov. 1996	One month	Three months	12 months
CPI excluding Tobacco	95.601	109.2	128.1	+ 0.8	+ 0.1	+ 2.3
CPI excluding Housing ¹	90.253	109.9	130.5	+ 0.8	- 0.2	+ 1.8
CPI excluding Mortgage Interest	95.370	109.8	130.7	+ 0.8	- 0.1	+ 1.8

¹ Housing includes rents, local authority charges, mortgage interest, materials for repairs & decoration and house insurance.

Table 3 Consumer Price Commodity Group Indices, February 2005

COICOP Group	Dec. 2001 base expenditure weights	Consumer Price Index (CPI)		Percentage changes		
		Current base Dec. 2001	Former base Nov. 1996	One month	Three months	12 months
01 Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	14.092	102.8	125.6	+ 0.1	+ 0.2	-
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	7.498	118.3	152.1	+ 0.1	+ 0.1	+ 0.9
03 Clothing and Footwear	5.052	84.1	65.1	+ 11.2	- 5.5	- 4.1
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	12.331	113.9	126.9	+ 0.6	+ 2.6	+ 9.4
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	4.331	96.4	114.0	+ 2.3	- 0.4	- 1.4
06 Health	2.518	126.5	173.2	+ 0.6	+ 4.2	+ 5.9
07 Transport	13.183	111.0	122.7	+ 0.6	- 1.3	+ 2.8
08 Communications	1.903	105.0	81.6	- 0.1	- 0.1	- 0.2
09 Recreation and Culture	10.810	108.7	129.0	+ 0.5	+ 0.5	+ 0.2
10 Education	1.547	125.8	191.5	+ 0.4	+ 0.5	+ 6.3
11 Restaurants and Hotels ¹	17.760	117.0	147.4	+ 0.3	+ 0.1	+ 3.3
12 Miscellaneous Goods & Services	8.975	107.9	151.2	+ 0.1	- 0.5	- 0.2
ALL ITEMS	100.000	109.8	129.8	+ 0.8	+ 0.1	+ 2.2
Of which:						
Goods ²	49.019	103.9	117.5	+ 1.2	- 1.3	+ 0.2
Services ³	50.981	115.5	144.1	+ 0.5	+ 1.3	+ 4.1
Energy Products ⁴	6.396	122.3	135.1	+ 0.2	- 2.3	+ 9.6
Utilities and Local Charges ⁵	3.387	127.3	113.0	-	+ 7.2	+10.4
Alcohol ⁶	11.898	115.7	141.0	- 0.1	- 0.1	+ 1.8
Tobacco	4.399	123.3	168.8	-	-	+ 1.1

¹ Includes alcoholic beverages consumed in licensed premises.

² Non service items usually purchased and transportable from a retail outlet.

³ Electricity, gas, telecommunications, alcoholic beverages consumed on licensed premises, meals out, housing, rent, mortgage interest repayments, insurance, public transport, entertainment and recreation, education, household services and miscellaneous services including childcare, social protection, package holidays and other services.

⁴ Electricity, gas, other domestic and transport fuels.

⁵ Electricity, gas, landline telecommunications and local authority service charges.

⁶ Constitutes part of 02 (see page 12 - off-licence sales) and part of 11 (see page 12 - alcohol consumed in licensed premises) giving a combined index for alcohol.

See Background Notes page 12 for definition of COICOP groups.

Table 4 Contributions to changes in the All Items CPI, February 2005

COICOP Group	Contributions to overall CPI % change		
	One month	3 months	12 months
01 Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	+ 0.01	+ 0.02	–
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	+ 0.01	+ 0.01	+ 0.07
03 Clothing and Footwear	+ 0.40	- 0.23	- 0.17
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	+ 0.07	+0.32	+ 1.13
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	+ 0.09	- 0.01	- 0.06
06 Health	+ 0.02	+0.12	+0.17
07 Transport	+ 0.08	- 0.18	+0.36
08 Communications	–	–	–
09 Recreation and Culture	+ 0.06	+0.05	+0.03
10 Education	+ 0.01	+0.01	+0.11
11 Restaurants and Hotels	+ 0.06	+ 0.02	+0.62
12 Miscellaneous Goods & Services	+ 0.01	- 0.04	- 0.01
ALL ITEMS % change	+ 0.8	+ 0.1	+2.2

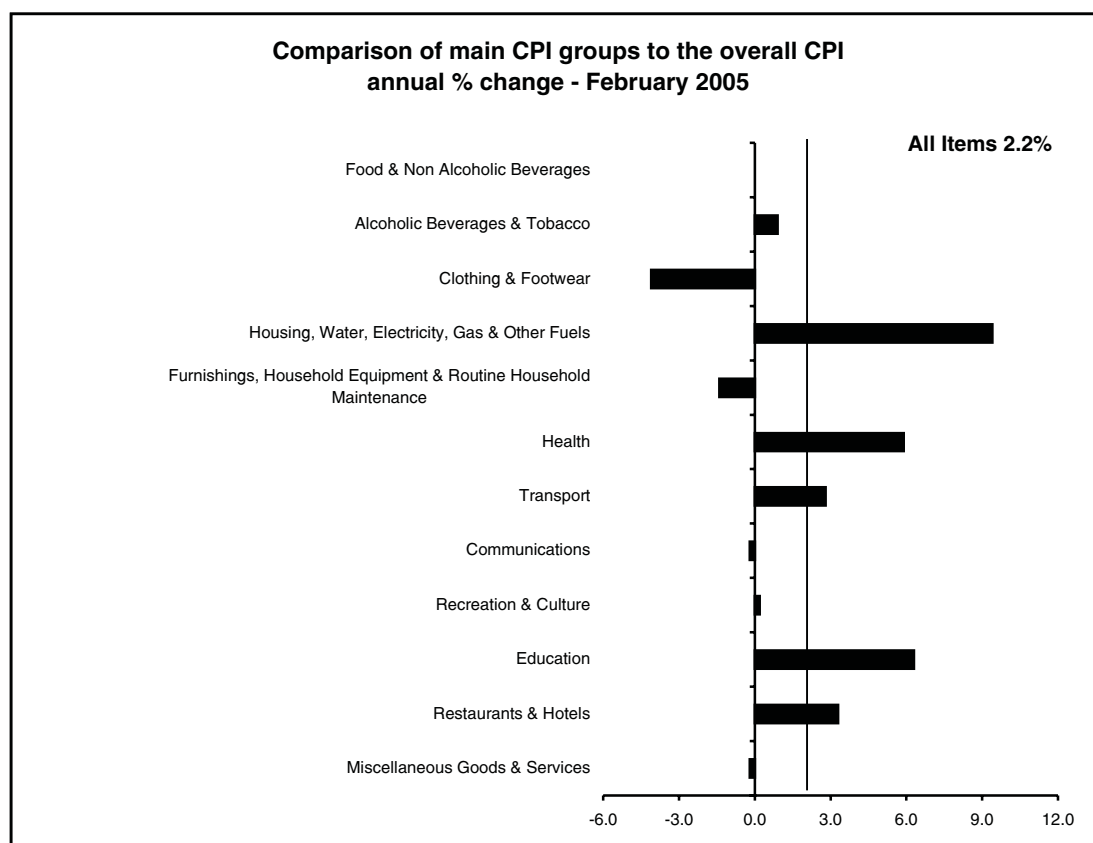


Table 5 EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices – Ireland

Period		HICP	Percentage changes	
		Year 1996=100	One month	12 months
			%	%
1997	Year	101.2		+ 1.2
1998	Year	103.4		+ 2.2
1999	Year	106.0		+ 2.5
2000	Year	111.5		+ 5.2
2001	Year	116.0		+ 4.0
2002	Year	121.5		+ 4.7
2003	Year	126.3		+ 4.0
2004	Year	129.2		+ 2.3
2002	January	118.3	- 0.2	+ 5.2
	February	119.0	+ 0.6	+ 4.9
	March	120.1	+ 0.9	+ 5.1
	April	121.0	+ 0.7	+ 5.0
	May	121.7	+ 0.6	+ 5.0
	June	121.9	+ 0.2	+ 4.5
	July	121.3	- 0.5	+ 4.2
	August	122.0	+ 0.6	+ 4.5
	September	122.4	+ 0.3	+ 4.5
	October	122.9	+ 0.4	+ 4.4
	November	123.0	+ 0.1	+ 4.7
	December	123.9	+ 0.7	+ 4.6
2003	January	123.9	-	+ 4.7
	February	125.1	+ 1.0	+ 5.1
	March	126.0	+ 0.7	+ 4.9
	April	126.6	+ 0.5	+ 4.6
	May	126.4	- 0.2	+ 3.9
	June	126.5	+ 0.1	+ 3.8
	July	126.0	- 0.4	+ 3.9
	August	126.8	+ 0.6	+ 3.9
	September	127.0	+ 0.2	+ 3.8
	October	127.0	-	+ 3.3
	November	127.0	-	+ 3.3
	December	127.5	+ 0.4	+ 2.9
2004	January	126.7	- 0.6	+ 2.3
	February	127.8	+ 0.9	+ 2.2
	March	128.3	+ 0.4	+ 1.8
	April	128.7	+ 0.3	+ 1.7
	May	129.0	+ 0.2	+ 2.1
	June	129.7	+ 0.5	+ 2.5
	July	129.2	- 0.4	+ 2.5
	August	130.0	+ 0.6	+ 2.5
	September	130.1	+ 0.1	+ 2.4
	October	130.2	+ 0.1	+ 2.5
	November	130.5	+ 0.2	+ 2.8
	December	130.6	+ 0.1	+ 2.4
2005	January	129.3	- 1.0	+ 2.1
	February	130.4	+ 0.9	+ 2.0

Table 6 EU Harmonised Consumer Price COICOP Group Indices, February 2005
Ireland

Commodity Group COICOP	HICP		Percentage Change		Percentage Contribution	
	Current base Year 1996	One month		12 months		
			%	%	%	%
01 Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	125.1	+ 0.2	-	+ 0.02	-	
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	153.7	+ 0.1	+ 0.8	+ 0.01	+ 0.08	
03 Clothing and Footwear	65.5	+ 11.4	- 4.0	+ 0.44	- 0.18	
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	139.5	+ 0.4	+ 8.2	+ 0.03	+ 0.66	
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	113.1	+ 2.4	- 1.5	+ 0.10	- 0.06	
06 Health	170.6	+ 0.6	+ 6.0	+ 0.02	+ 0.18	
07 Transport	125.5	+ 0.6	+ 2.9	+ 0.09	+ 0.40	
08 Communications	81.3	-	-	-	-	
09 Recreation and Culture	130.4	+ 0.5	+ 0.2	+ 0.06	+ 0.03	
10 Education	175.3	+ 0.3	+ 6.2	+ 0.01	+ 0.12	
11 Restaurants and Hotels	149.1	+ 0.3	+ 3.3	+ 0.06	+ 0.68	
12 Miscellaneous Goods & Services	145.6	+ 0.2	+ 2.0	+ 0.01	+ 0.12	
HICP	130.4	+ 0.9	+ 2.0	+ 0.9	+ 2.0	

Table 7 EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices – annual % changes, January 2005

Country	January 2004 January 2005	December 2003 December 2004	November 2003 November 2004	October 2003 October 2004	September 2003 September 2004	August 2003 August 2004
Austria	2.4 ¹	2.5	2.4	2.4	1.8	2.2
Belgium	2.0	1.9	2.3	2.7	1.8	2.0
Finland	-0.2	0.1	0.2	0.6	0.2	0.3
France	1.6	2.3	2.2	2.3	2.2	2.5
Germany	1.6	2.2	2.0	2.2	1.9	2.1
Greece	4.2	3.1	3.2	3.3	2.9	2.8
Ireland	2.1	2.4	2.8	2.5	2.4	2.5
Italy	2.0	2.4	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.4
Luxembourg	2.8	3.5	4.0	4.1	3.1	3.6
Netherlands	1.3 ¹	1.2	1.5	1.5	1.1	1.2
Portugal	2.0	2.6	2.6	2.4	2.1	2.4
Spain	3.1	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.2	3.3
EMU (MUICP)²	1.9¹	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.1	2.3
Czech Republic	1.5	2.5	2.6	3.1	2.8	3.2
Cyprus	2.8	3.9	2.6	2.0	1.8	2.8
Denmark	0.8	1.0	1.0	1.6	0.9	0.9
Estonia	4.2	4.8	4.4	4.0	3.8	3.9
Hungary	3.9	5.5	5.7	6.4	6.7	7.2
Latvia	6.7	7.4	7.2	7.2	7.7	7.8
Lithuania	2.8	2.8	2.9	3.1	3.0	2.2
Malta	1.9	1.9	1.9	2.7	3.2	2.5
Poland	3.8	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.9
Slovakia	3.1	5.8	6.0	6.3	6.4	7.0
Slovenia	2.3	3.3	3.8	3.4	3.4	3.7
Sweden	0.5	0.9	1.1	1.4	1.2	1.2
United Kingdom	1.6	1.6	1.5	1.2	1.1	1.3
EU15/EU25 (EICP)	2.0¹	2.2	2.1	2.2	2.0	2.1

¹ Provisional

² MUICP (see Background Notes)

Source: Eurostat

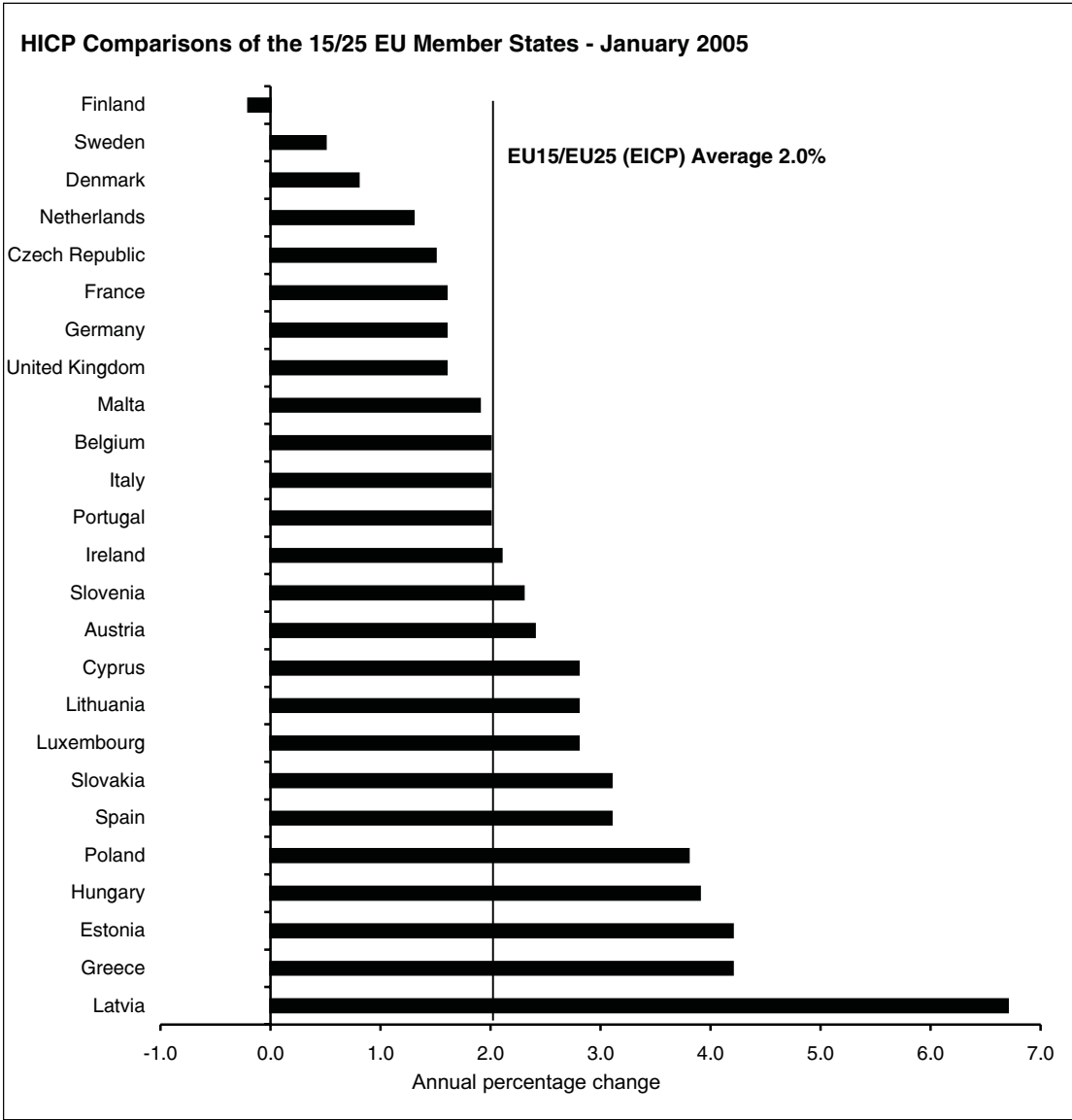
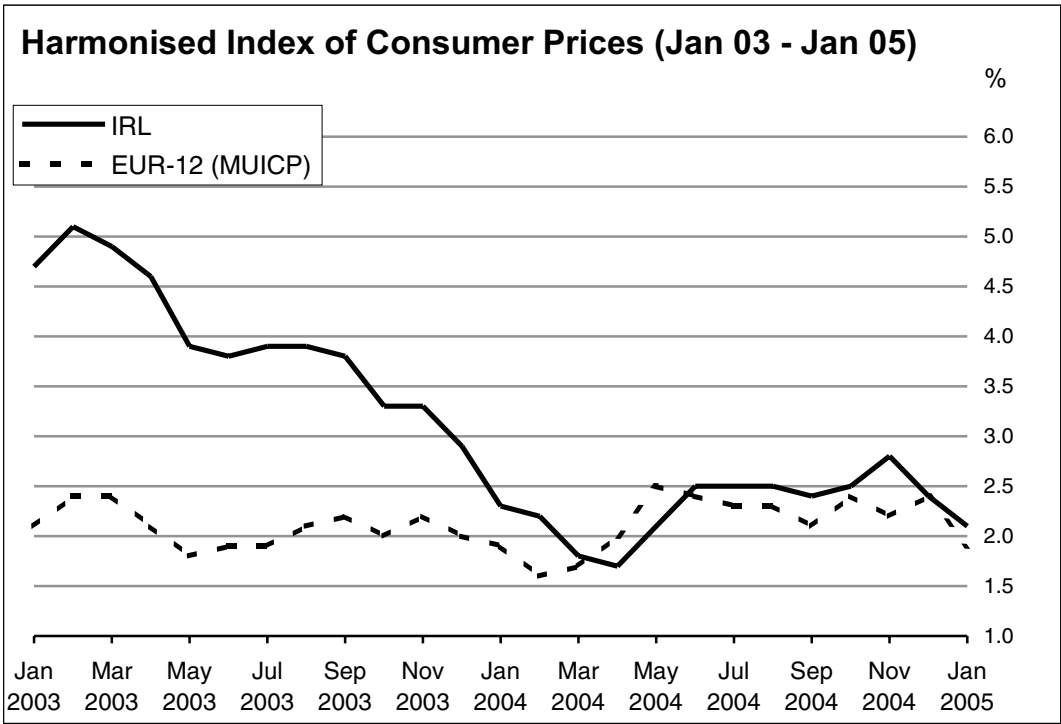


Table 8 Main Categories of Harmonised indices of Consumer Prices - annual % changes, January 2005

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
Annual percentage rate of change													
Euro-zone	1.9 ¹	-0.1 ¹	7.5 ¹	0.8 ¹	3.7 ¹	1.0 ¹	3.0 ¹	3.2 ¹	-2.4 ¹	0.0 ¹	3.4 ¹	2.6 ¹	1.9 ¹
EU15/EU25 (EICP)	2.0 ¹	0.2 ¹	6.1 ¹	-0.1 ¹	4.0 ¹	0.8 ¹	3.0 ¹	3.2 ¹	-2.3 ¹	0.0 ¹	4.0 ¹	2.8 ¹	2.3 ¹
BE	2.0	0.6	4.9	-0.8	4.2	0.8	1.6	3.6	0.0	0.4	2.3	3.1	1.7
CZ	1.5	0.0	3.9	-4.6	3.2	-2.4	7.5	-1.4	-3.7	1.9	3.4	6.4	3.7
DK	0.8	-1.3	2.3	-3.6	3.0	0.3	0.8	3.1	-3.3	-3.8	3.4	2.9	3.0
DE	1.6	-1.0	14.5	-1.8	2.7	-0.3	3.8	2.1	-1.3	-0.2	2.4	1.3	1.3
EE	4.2	6.7	4.6	-0.3	5.3	0.3	3.0	9.3	-7.1	0.4	4.3	3.4	3.3
EL	4.2	1.0	0.6	13.0	6.9	5.1	4.9	3.2	-1.5	1.8	4.3	3.4	3.5
ES	3.1	3.3	5.5	1.7	3.9	1.9	0.3	5.2	-0.3	0.2	4.3	4.0	2.4
FR	1.6	-0.6	0.9	3.0	4.1	1.6	2.4	3.2	-1.3	-0.7	2.3	2.4	1.5
IE	2.1	-0.2	0.7	-3.4	7.8	-2.0	6.2	2.9	2.0	0.3	5.5	3.4	2.3
IT	2.0	-0.7	10.6	0.7	3.4	1.9	3.6	4.3	-5.8	1.1	3.4	2.6	2.4
CY	2.8	3.0	3.0	0.0	4.6	0.5	2.8	3.7	-13.3	2.7	5.6	5.0	3.4
LV	6.7	9.1	2.5	0.4	3.9	2.5	14.0	12.2	-1.1	3.2	8.5	10.8	10.3
LT	2.8	5.0	1.4	-2.1	3.7	-2.8	10.9	5.6	-1.0	-2.3	0.2	2.1	4.5
LU	2.8	0.7	7.0	0.0	5.4	1.2	0.6	3.9	-4.0	0.0	0.1	3.5	1.9
HU	3.9	0.9	8.1	0.9	10.5	0.0	-4.1	4.5	1.6	3.2	8.8	7.7	3.0
MT	1.9	-1.1	2.1	-3.2	7.8	2.2	6.2	3.5	18.3	1.5	0.5	-0.4	2.9
NL	1.3 ¹	-3.3 ¹	9.5 ¹	-3.3 ¹	6.1 ¹	-0.9 ¹	2.0 ¹	2.6 ¹	-2.7 ¹	-0.9 ¹	2.3 ¹	2.0 ¹	2.2 ¹
AT	2.4 ¹	0.9 ¹	6.7 ¹	-0.8 ¹	7.7 ¹	-0.7 ¹	3.5 ¹	3.3 ¹	-5.0 ¹	0.4 ¹	2.5 ¹	2.5 ¹	2.9 ¹
PL	3.8	6.7	2.2	-4.3	5.1	2.6	2.8	6.1	-0.1	0.1	3.6	4.6	1.7
PT	2.0	-0.7	2.4	-2.0	4.3	1.4	1.5	4.5	0.0	2.6	7.0	2.7	2.6
SI	2.3	-2.4	2.5	-2.9	9.2	2.4	1.4	2.9	0.8	4.0	3.6	5.5	2.2
SK	3.1	-0.6	0.1	-0.7	8.2	-3.9	7.2	1.6	-0.6	3.7	30.5	8.5	2.2
FI	-0.2	0.1	-13.0	-1.3	2.8	0.7	2.7	1.4	-7.7	0.3	4.7	0.5	1.9
SE	0.5	-1.0	0.2	-1.6	1.2	-1.3	2.7	3.0	-3.2	-1.2	3.4	2.3	2.2
UK	1.6	0.4	2.5	-5.9	5.8	0.4	2.4	2.8	-2.4	-0.4	5.0	2.9	3.6

¹ Provisional

COICOP/HICP Code

- | | |
|--|--|
| 00 HICP (all-items index) | 06 Health |
| 01 Food and non-alcoholic beverages | 07 Transport |
| 02 Alcoholic beverages and tobacco | 08 Communications |
| 03 Clothing and footwear | 09 Recreation and culture |
| 04 Housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels | 10 Education |
| 05 Furnishings, household equipment and routine household maintenance | 11 Restaurants and hotels |
| | 12 Miscellaneous goods and services |

Background Notes – Consumer Price Index

- Definition** The Consumer Price Index is designed to measure the change in the average level of prices (inclusive of all indirect taxes) paid for consumer goods and services by all private households in the country and by foreign tourists holidaying in Ireland.
- Consumer Price Index (CPI)** Over 55,000 prices are collected for a representative basket consisting of 613 headings which cover over 1,000 different items in a fixed panel of retail and service outlets throughout the country on the second Tuesday of each month. The date to which the February index relates is Tuesday, 8th February 2005.
- Scope of the Index**
- (i) **Population Coverage:** All private households covering approximately 97% of the total population and the expenditure of foreign tourists within Ireland. It does not include the expenditure of persons in institutions and other non private households. Expenditure which occurs abroad by Irish residents is also excluded. In statistical terms coverage is referred to as the domestic concept.
 - (ii) **Geographic Coverage:** Covers the whole of the Republic of Ireland. Pricing takes place in 86 locations (cities and towns) throughout the country. These sampling points are located in Dublin city and county, the four regional cities of Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford, 90% of towns with a population of 10,000 and over, 88% of towns between 5,000 and 9,999 and a smaller proportion below this threshold. The results are weighted to represent the distribution of the population and its related consumer expenditure.
 - (iii) **Item Coverage:** All goods and services bought by the reference population for the purposes of consumption are included in the index. Expenditure on capital assets and investments, gambling and certain other activities are however excluded. Over 1,000 different varieties are priced and then aggregated into 613 item headings and 12 group headings based on the COICOP classification. With each rebase the coverage of goods and services is reviewed to ensure that it continues to be representative of consumer tastes and purchasing practices.
- Price Collection** Personal visits are made to retail outlets by some 200 part-time pricers on a monthly basis. Approximately 51,000 price quotations are gathered in this way. In addition 112 special inquiries covering items such as utility charges and services are conducted by post and telephone. Most prices are collected monthly, some quarterly and others annually. The CSO supplies general specifications to price collectors and collectors are free initially to select a brand and in certain cases, size. This allows for a wide variety of different brands of the same item to be priced throughout the country. Once selected, the same item/brand is priced on a monthly basis in order to ensure matched price quotations. If an item disappears, substitution can occur but that price is excluded until matched prices are available for the same comparable item for two consecutive months. The CSO wishes to put on record its appreciation of the co-operation and assistance it receives from retail outlets and other business concerns.
- CPI Weights** The CPI measures in index form the monthly changes in the cost of purchasing a fixed representative ‘basket’ of consumer goods and services (i.e. Laspeyres formula). The representative share of each item in this basket is proportional to the average amount purchased by all households in the country as determined by the Household Budget Survey and by foreign tourists in this country using estimates of expenditure by tourists across a range of consumer goods and services. Individual items typically purchased by foreign tourists while holidaying in Ireland such as hotel accommodation and meals out have been adjusted to take account of the additional tourist expenditure. Identical items are priced in the same outlet on each occasion so that changes in the cost of this constant basket reflect only pure price changes.

Background Notes – Consumer Price Index (continued)

Rebase The index has been rebased with effect from December 2001, the ninth series since the foundation of the State. The index was last rebased in January 1997 (Base Nov 96 = 100) when the monthly CPI series was first introduced.

The rebase of the current CPI resulted in a number of methodological changes:

- The introduction of the Geometric Mean;
- Updating the expenditure weights;
- A revision of the sample of goods and services;
- An update of the sample of areas priced; and
- A move to the COICOP classification.

Classification The classification used in the CPI is based on a version of COICOP – COICOP HICP, the Classification of Individual Consumption Expenditure by Purpose. This replaces the former national classification which was used up to December 2001. The COICOP classification breaks consumer expenditure into twelve different categories covering a comprehensive range of consumer goods and services.

Methodological Details A full methodological description of the new series is available in the CPI 2001 Introduction to Series booklet.

Goods and Services The consumer basket can be split into two constituent parts - goods and services according to the following definitions.

Goods Goods are defined as non service items usually purchased and transportable from a retail outlet - the basket excluding services.

Services Services include electricity, gas, telecommunications and other public utilities, alcoholic beverages consumed on licensed premises, meals out, accommodation services, public transport, medical fees, insurances, education fees, hairdressing & other personal services, childcare & social protection, entertainment & recreation services, mortgage interest & rents, package holidays and other miscellaneous services.

Utilities and Local Charges Includes electricity, gas, landline telecommunications and local authority service charges.

Background Notes – Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices

- Introduction** The EU-Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices is calculated in each Member State of the European Union. The purpose of this index is to allow the comparison of consumer price trends in the different Member States.
- Comparison with CPI** The methodology now adopted for the construction of the national CPI is identical to that recommended for the HICP. Thus the two indexes only differ in respect of the coverage of certain goods and services and the definition of insurance. The current EU reference base period (Year 1996 = 100) is however retained for ease of comparison with other EU countries.
- Excluded Items** The following items, constituting approximately 9% of the Irish CPI expenditure weighting, are excluded from the HICP:
- ◆ mortgage interest
 - ◆ building materials
 - ◆ union subscriptions
 - ◆ motor car tax
 - ◆ motor car insurance (non-service)
 - ◆ dwelling insurance (non-service)
 - ◆ motor cycle tax
- Weights** The expenditure weighting system used in the HICP is the same as that used for the CPI excluding the items listed above. In addition the weights of House Insurance (Buildings) and Health Insurance differ because of definition. Taking all these factors into account the HICP expenditure covers just under 91% of total CPI expenditure.
- Monetary Union Index of Consumer Prices (MUICP)** The MUICP is calculated as a weighted average of HICPs of the 12 countries participating in Stage III of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU). Country weights are computed every year reflecting the country's share of private final domestic consumption expenditure in the EMU total.
- Classification System** The coverage of the indices is based on the international classification system, COICOP (classification of individual consumption by purpose).
- Calculating percentage changes in the index** The movement of the CPI, HICP and their subindices are expressed as percentage changes, rather than changes in index points, because index point changes are affected by the level of the index in relation to its base period, whereas percentage changes are not. The example below illustrates the computation of index point and percentage changes.

Index point change	
CPI	106.7
Less previous index	103.7
Equals index point change	3.0
Percentage change	
Index point difference	3.0
Divided by the previous index	103.7
Equals	0.0289
Results multiplied by 100	0.0289 x 100
Equals percentage change	2.9

Background Notes – COICOP Classification

Prior to the introduction of the current series in January 2002 the CPI used a national classification while the HICP used COICOP/HICP. To ensure greater comparability CPI and the HICP now both use the COICOP/HICP classification (Classification of Individual Consumption by Purpose - adapted for the purposes of the EU HICP).

The COICOP classification is based on 12 main subgroups.

01 Food and Non Alcoholic Beverages	Food and non alcoholic beverages purchased in supermarkets, small shops, speciality shops and petrol station forecourt outlets. It excludes meals out which are covered under 11 Restaurants and Hotels .
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	Includes alcoholic beverages purchased in off licences and supermarkets but excludes alcohol consumed on or within a licensed premises which is classified under 11 Restaurants and Hotels .
03 Clothing and Footwear	Mens, ladies and childrens clothing and footwear, sports and leisurewear and services such as laundry and dry cleaning, shoe repair, dress hire and alteration.
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	This group covers rents, mortgage interest repayments, local authority service charges, goods and services for maintaining, decorating and repairing dwellings and domestic energy products such as electricity, gas and solid fuels.
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	This category covers household items such as furniture, carpets and other floor coverings, house textiles and soft furnishings, household electrical appliances, and other household items such as utensils, tools, garden equipment and non-durable items for cleaning, washing and other day to day household activity. Also included in this category are domestic services such as cleaning and other services.
06 Health	Health includes medical products, appliances and equipment, hospital charges and out patient services supplied by doctors, dentists, opticians, practitioners of alternative and complimentary medicine and paramedical services.
07 Transport	Includes the purchase of new and second hand vehicles, spare parts, car maintenance, fuels and lubricants, public transport and services such as parking, motor association subscriptions, car wash, toll charges, driving tests, licences and car hire.
08 Communications	Post and telecommunications.
09 Recreation and Culture	All goods and services connected with recreation and culture and includes items such as audio visual and photographic equipment, computers, music and videos, sports and recreation goods, games and toys, items connected with gardening and pets, recreational, sporting and cultural activities and events, newspapers and other reading material, package holidays and other items connected with recreation and culture.
10 Education	Covers all aspects of education including primary, secondary, third level and other education and training such as night courses, play schools and examination fees.
11 Restaurants and Hotels	This category covers the following areas: meals in restaurants and hotels; fast food and take-aways; cafes; canteens; alcohol consumed on or within a licensed premises and accommodation services supplied by hotels, guesthouses and hostels.
12 Miscellaneous Goods and Services	This remaining category covers a wide range of items including hairdressing and other grooming; goods for hygiene, hair and body care; personal goods such as jewellery, handbags and wallets; childcare and other social protection services; insurance, financial services and other services including funerals, weddings, legal and professional services.