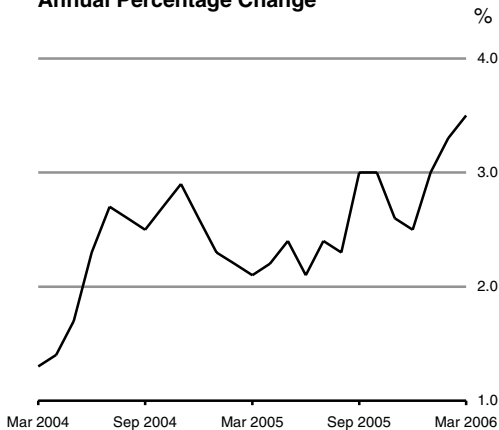




Consumer Price Index - all items
Annual Percentage Change



Consumer Price Index

March 2006

CPI and HICP

	CPI		HICP	
	% monthly change	% annual change	% monthly change	% annual change
Nov 2005	- 0.2	+ 2.6	- 0.2	+ 2.2
Dec 2005	- 0.1	+ 2.5	- 0.2	+ 1.9
Jan 2006	- 0.3	+ 3.0	- 0.5	+ 2.5
Feb 2006	+ 1.1	+ 3.3	+ 1.2	+ 2.7
Mar 2006	+ 0.4	+ 3.5	+ 0.3	+ 2.8

Annual Inflation rises to 3.5% in March

Consumer Prices in March, as measured by the CPI, increased by 0.4% in the month. This compares to an increase of 0.3% in March of last year and as a result, the annual rate of inflation increased to 3.5%, up from 3.3% in February.

The EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) increased by 0.3%, compared to an increase of 0.2% in March 2005. The annual rate of inflation, as measured by the HICP, increased from 2.7% in February to 2.8% in March.

The most notable changes in the year were increases in *Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels* (+12.4%), *Transport* (+5.4%), *Health* (+4.7%), *Education* (+4.6%) and *Restaurants & Hotels* (+3.6%). There were decreases in *Clothing & Footwear* (-1.8%), *Furnishings, Household Equipment & Routine Household Maintenance* (-1.1%) and *Communications* (-1.0%).

The annual rate of inflation for Goods was 2.1% in March while the corresponding rate for Services was 4.7%.

The most significant monthly price changes were increases in *Clothing & Footwear* (+1.9%), *Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels* (+0.8%), *Restaurants & Hotels* (+0.6%), *Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages* (+0.5%) and *Miscellaneous Goods & Services* (+0.4%).

The main factors contributing to the monthly change were as follows

- ◆ *Clothing & Footwear* increased due to the further recovery in prices following the traditional January sales.
- ◆ *Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas & Other Fuels* rose with higher average mortgage interest repayments and higher rental accommodation costs.
- ◆ *Restaurants & Hotels* rose with higher costs for accommodation and eating out.
- ◆ *Food & Non-Alcoholic Beverages* prices rose with increases across a range of items including poultry, other meat products, bread and fresh fruit.
- ◆ *Miscellaneous Goods & Services* increased due to higher health insurance and motor insurance premia.

The CPI excluding tobacco index for March was 113.3, up 0.4% since February and up 3.5% in the year. The CPI excluding energy products index was up 0.4% since February and increased by 2.7% in the year.

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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	
2005	Year	111.3			+ 2.5	
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
	March	110.1	130.1	+ 0.3	+ 0.3	+ 2.1
	April	110.6	130.7	+ 0.5	+ 1.6	+ 2.2
	May	111.0	131.2	+ 0.4	+ 1.1	+ 2.4
	June	111.3	131.6	+ 0.3	+ 1.1	+ 2.1
	July	111.3	131.6	-	+ 0.6	+ 2.4
	August	111.8	132.1	+ 0.4	+ 0.7	+ 2.3
	September	112.7	133.2	+ 0.8	+ 1.3	+ 3.0
	October	112.8	133.3	+ 0.1	+ 1.3	+ 3.0
	November	112.6	133.1	- 0.2	+ 0.7	+ 2.6
	December	112.5	133.0	- 0.1	- 0.2	+ 2.5
2006	January	112.2	132.6	- 0.3	- 0.5	+ 3.0
	February	113.4	134.0	+ 1.1	+ 0.7	+ 3.3
	March	113.9	134.6	+ 0.4	+ 1.2	+ 3.5

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

Table 2 CPI Subindices, March 2006

COICOP Group	Dec. 2001 base expenditure weights	Consumer Price Index (CPI)		Percentage changes		
		Current base	Former base	One month	Three months	12 months
		Dec. 2001	Nov. 1996			
CPI excluding Tobacco	95.601	113.3	132.9	+ 0.4	+ 1.3	+ 3.5
CPI excluding Housing ¹	90.253	113.1	134.2	+ 0.3	+ 0.9	+ 2.7
CPI excluding Mortgage Interest	95.370	113.0	134.5	+ 0.4	+ 0.9	+ 2.7
CPI excluding Energy Products ²	93.604	112.0	133.3	+ 0.4	+ 1.0	+ 2.7

¹ Housing includes rents, waste collection & disposal charges, mortgage interest, materials for repairs & decoration and house insurance.

² Energy products includes electricity, gas, other domestic and transport fuels.

Table 3 Consumer Price Commodity Group Indices, March 2006

COICOP Group	Dec. 2001 base expenditure weights	Consumer Price Index (CPI)		Percentage changes		
		Current base	Former base	One month	Three months	12 months
		Dec. 2001	Nov. 1996			
01 Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	14.092	103.2	126.1	+ 0.5	+ 1.2	+ 1.2
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	7.498	119.6	153.8	+ 0.3	+ 0.9	+ 1.2
03 Clothing and Footwear	5.052	85.4	66.1	+ 1.9	- 2.2	- 1.8
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	12.331	128.9	143.6	+ 0.8	+ 3.8	+ 12.4
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	4.331	94.9	112.3	- 0.1	- 0.9	- 1.1
06 Health	2.518	132.5	181.4	+ 0.1	+ 2.8	+ 4.7
07 Transport	13.183	117.3	129.6	-	+ 1.3	+ 5.4
08 Communications	1.903	103.9	80.7	+ 0.3	- 0.7	- 1.0
09 Recreation and Culture	10.810	108.8	129.1	+ 0.1	+ 0.9	-
10 Education	1.547	131.6	200.3	-	+ 0.2	+ 4.6
11 Restaurants and Hotels ¹	17.760	121.8	153.5	+ 0.6	+ 1.1	+ 3.6
12 Miscellaneous Goods and Services	8.975	109.6	153.5	+ 0.4	+ 0.2	+ 1.7
ALL ITEMS	100.000	113.9	134.6	+ 0.4	+ 1.2	+ 3.5
Of which:						
Goods ²	49.019	106.3	120.2	+ 0.3	+ 0.8	+ 2.1
Services ³	50.981	121.2	151.3	+ 0.5	+ 1.6	+ 4.7
Energy Products	6.396	140.8	155.6	- 0.1	+ 2.8	+ 13.9
Utilities and Local Charges ⁴	3.387	136.1	120.9	-	+ 1.6	+ 6.9
Alcohol ⁵	11.898	117.3	143.0	-	+ 0.4	+ 1.5
Tobacco	4.399	125.8	172.2	+ 0.6	+ 0.6	+ 2.0

¹ Includes alcoholic beverages consumed on 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, landline telecommunications and waste collection & disposal charges.

⁵ Constitutes part of 02 (see page 12 - off-licence sales) and part of 11 (see page 12 - alcohol consumed on 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, March 2006

COICOP Group	Contributions to overall CPI % change		
	One month	3 months	12 months
01 Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	+ 0.06	+ 0.16	+ 0.15
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	+ 0.02	+ 0.07	+ 0.09
03 Clothing and Footwear	+ 0.07	- 0.08	- 0.07
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	+ 0.10	+ 0.51	+ 1.59
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	-	- 0.03	- 0.04
06 Health	-	+ 0.08	+ 0.13
07 Transport	+ 0.01	+ 0.18	+ 0.73
08 Communications	+ 0.01	- 0.01	- 0.02
09 Recreation and Culture	-	+ 0.10	-
10 Education	-	-	+ 0.08
11 Restaurants and Hotels	+ 0.10	+ 0.21	+ 0.67
12 Miscellaneous Goods and Services	+ 0.03	+ 0.02	+ 0.14
ALL ITEMS % change	+ 0.4	+ 1.2	+ 3.5

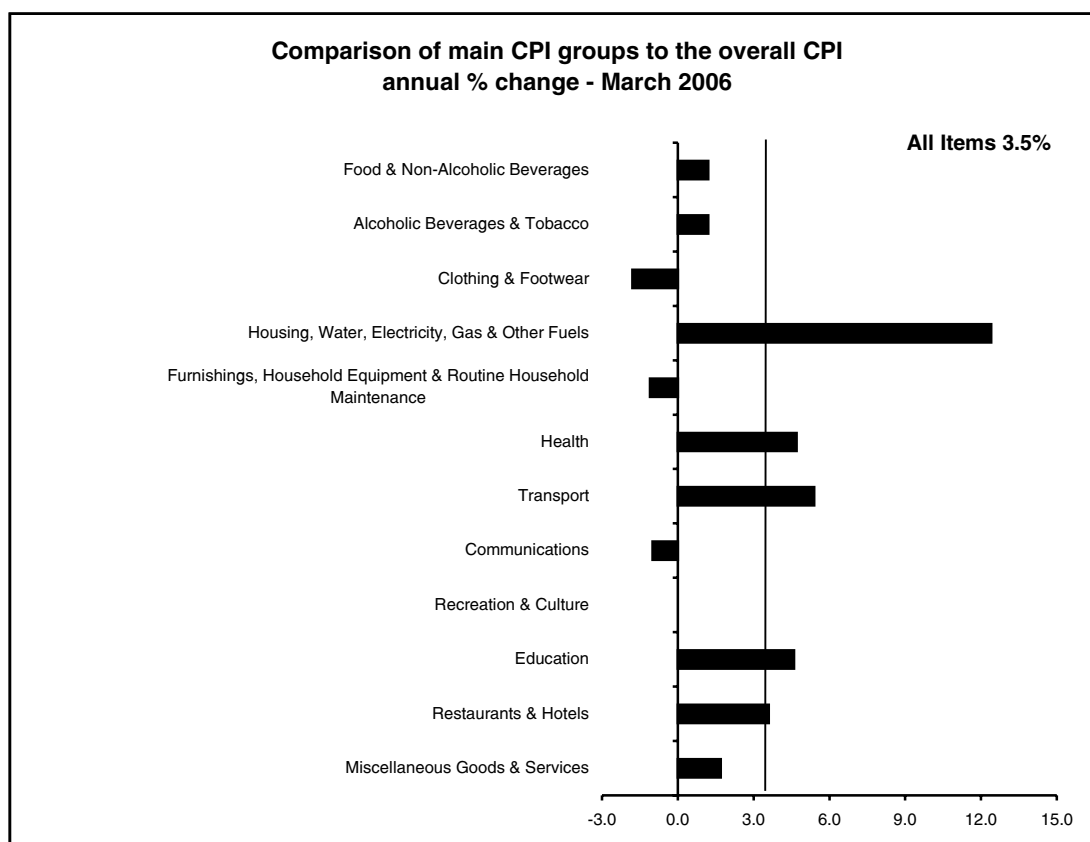


Table 5 EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices - Ireland

Period	HICP		Percentage changes	
	Year 2005=100	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
2005	Year	100.0		+ 2.2
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	97.9	- 1.0	+ 2.1
	February	98.8	+ 0.9	+ 2.0
	March	99.0	+ 0.2	+ 1.9
	April	99.6	+ 0.6	+ 2.2
	May	99.8	+ 0.2	+ 2.2
	June	100.1	+ 0.3	+ 1.9
	July	100.0	- 0.1	+ 2.2
	August	100.5	+ 0.5	+ 2.1
	September	101.2	+ 0.8	+ 2.8
	October	101.2	-	+ 2.7
	November	101.0	- 0.2	+ 2.2
	December	100.8	- 0.2	+ 1.9
2006	January	100.3	- 0.5	+ 2.5
	February	101.5	+ 1.2	+ 2.7
	March	101.8	+ 0.3	+ 2.8

Table 6 EU Harmonised Consumer Price COICOP Group Indices, March 2006
Ireland

Commodity Group COICOP	HICP		Percentage change		Percentage contribution	
	Current base	Former base	One	12	One	12
	Year 2005	Year 1996	month	months	month	months
			%	%	%	%
01 Food and Non-Alcoholic Beverages	101.0	125.6	+ 0.4	+ 1.1	+ 0.07	+ 0.17
02 Alcoholic Beverages and Tobacco	100.7	155.4	+ 0.3	+ 1.1	+ 0.02	+ 0.10
03 Clothing and Footwear	100.7	66.4	+ 1.8	- 1.9	+ 0.08	- 0.08
04 Housing, Water, Electricity, Gas and Other Fuels	105.4	153.0	+ 0.5	+ 9.1	+ 0.04	+ 0.78
05 Furnishings, Household Equipment and Routine Household Maintenance	99.3	111.3	- 0.1	- 1.1	-	- 0.05
06 Health	103.7	178.5	-	+ 4.6	-	+ 0.15
07 Transport	102.6	133.1	+ 0.1	+ 5.9	+ 0.01	+ 0.80
08 Communications	99.2	80.4	+ 0.4	- 1.1	+ 0.01	- 0.02
09 Recreation and Culture	100.6	130.5	+ 0.1	-	+ 0.01	- 0.01
10 Education	103.4	183.4	-	+ 4.7	-	+ 0.09
11 Restaurants and Hotels	101.9	155.1	+ 0.6	+ 3.6	+ 0.12	+ 0.74
12 Miscellaneous Goods and Services	101.9	149.9	+ 0.2	+ 2.8	+ 0.01	+ 0.17
HICP	101.8	134.4	+ 0.3	+ 2.8	+ 0.3	+ 2.8
Goods ¹	101.1		+ 0.3	+ 2.0	+ 0.14	+ 1.02
Services ²	102.5		+ 0.5	+ 3.7	+ 0.21	+ 1.82

¹ Non service items usually purchased and transportable from a retail outlet.

² Electricity, gas, telecommunication, alcoholic beverages consumed on licensed premises, meals out, housing, rent, insurance, public transport, entertainment and recreation, education, household services and miscellaneous services including childcare, social protection, package holidays and other services.

Table 7 EU Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices - annual % changes, February 2006

Country	February 2005 February 2006	January 2005 January 2006	December 2004 December 2005	November 2004 November 2005	October 2004 October 2005
Austria	1.5 ¹	1.5	1.6	1.7	2.0
Belgium	2.8	2.8	2.8	2.3	2.2
Finland	NA	NA	1.1	1.0	0.8
France	2.0	2.3	1.8	1.8	2.0
Germany	2.1	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.3
Greece	3.1	3.0	3.5	3.4	3.7
Ireland	2.7	2.5	1.9	2.2	2.7
Italy	2.2	2.2	2.1	2.4	2.6
Luxembourg	3.9	4.1	3.4	3.6	5.0
Netherlands	1.4 ¹	1.8	2.0	1.6	1.5
Portugal	2.9	2.6	2.5	2.5	2.6
Spain	4.1	4.2	3.7	3.4	3.5
EMU (MUICP)²	2.3 ¹	2.4 ¹	2.2 ¹	2.3 ¹	2.5 ¹
Czech Republic	2.4	2.4	1.9	2.2	2.4
Cyprus	2.3	2.0	1.4	2.0	2.2
Denmark	2.1	2.0	2.2	1.8	1.9
Estonia	4.5	4.7	3.6	4.0	4.5
Hungary	2.3	2.5	3.3	3.3	3.1
Latvia	7.0	7.6	7.1	7.6	7.7
Lithuania	3.4	3.5	3.0	2.9	3.0
Malta	2.3	2.4	3.4	4.3	3.0
Poland	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.1	1.6
Slovakia	4.3	4.1	3.9	3.6	3.5
Slovenia	2.3	2.6	2.4	2.1	3.2
Sweden	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.2	0.9
United Kingdom	2.0	1.9	1.9	2.1	2.3
EU15/EU25 (EICP)	2.2 ¹	2.2 ¹	2.1 ¹	2.3 ¹	2.4 ¹

¹ Provisional

² MUICP (see Background Notes)

^{NA} Not available

Source: Eurostat

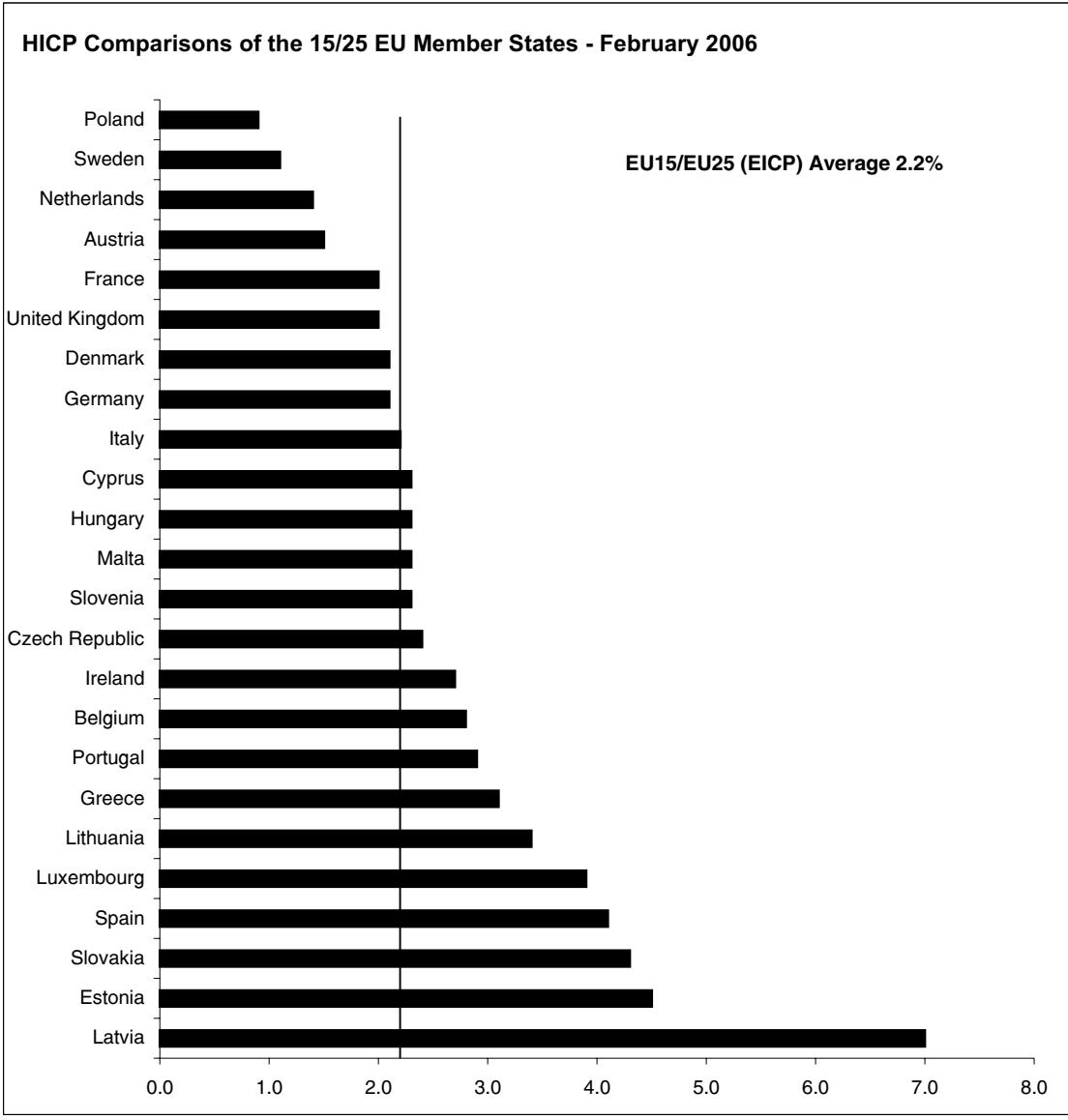
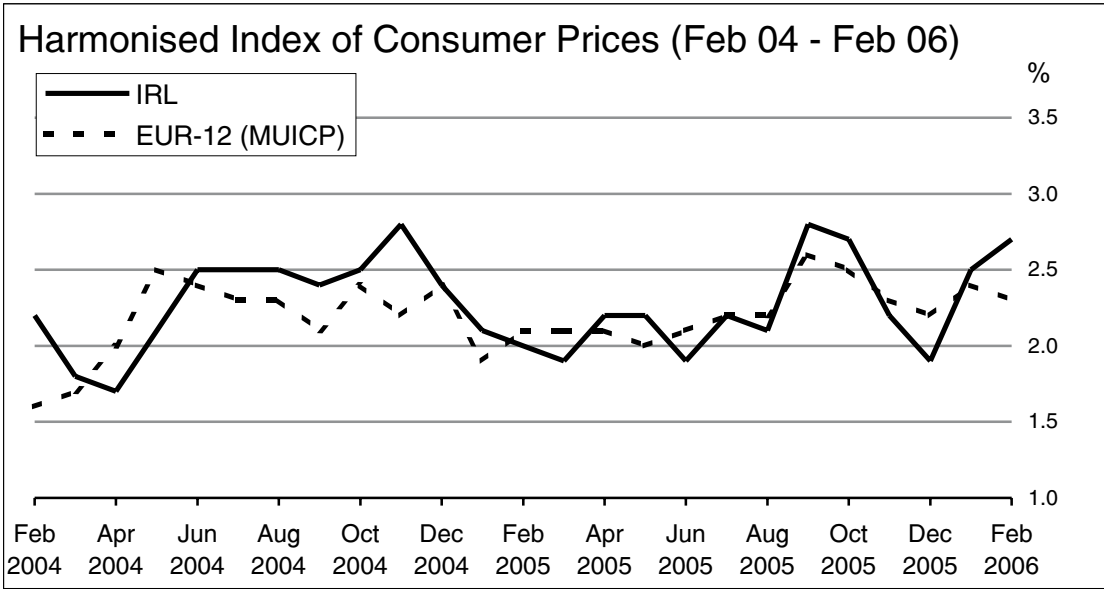


Table 8 Main Categories of Harmonised Indices of Consumer Prices - annual % changes, February 2006

	00	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12
Annual percentage rate of change													
Euro-zone	2.3 ¹	1.6 ¹	2.5 ¹	-0.7 ¹	5.6 ¹	0.8 ¹	1.0 ¹	4.9 ¹	-3.3 ¹	0.1 ¹	2.5 ¹	2.5 ¹	1.9 ¹
EU15/EU25 (EICP)	2.2 ¹	1.4 ¹	2.3 ¹	-1.4 ¹	5.6 ¹	0.3 ¹	1.4 ¹	4.8 ¹	-2.6 ¹	-0.3 ¹	3.0 ¹	2.7 ¹	2.3 ¹
BE	2.8	1.8	1.7	0.0	6.1	1.1	3.8	5.7	-1.1	1.0	1.6	2.8	2.4
CZ	2.4	-0.5	1.0	-6.4	9.3	-1.7	4.3	5.5	5.6	1.8	4.1	1.8	1.5
DK	2.1	1.7	0.1	0.1	4.1	1.1	2.8	3.5	-0.8	0.2	1.5	1.9	2.7
DE	2.1	1.0	3.7	-1.5	5.2	-0.3	0.6	4.8	-3.1	0.3	1.9	1.3	0.8
EE	4.5	3.2	2.6	4.3	9.2	1.7	1.7	10.6	-5.9	5.0	2.2	2.4	3.5
EL	3.1	2.6	3.3	0.7	9.6	0.3	3.9	2.9	0.4	1.5	3.7	3.1	3.4
ES	4.1	4.4	-0.5	1.1	7.8	2.4	1.0	7.3	-1.7	0.2	3.9	4.5	3.3
FR	2.0	1.1	0.3	-0.9	5.0	0.8	1.3	4.5	-5.9	-0.8	3.2	2.3	2.6
IE	2.7	0.0	0.8	-0.4	9.2	-1.5	4.6	6.0	-1.5	0.0	4.7	3.6	2.8
IT	2.2	0.9	4.9	0.1	6.0	1.5	-0.2	4.3	-2.3	1.3	3.0	2.0	2.2
CY	2.3	3.7	0.2	-1.7	12.6	1.7	-2.9	5.5	-0.3	-0.9	4.5	-0.4	2.7
LV	7.0	8.5	9.3	-0.9	12.1	2.8	10.4	9.2	-7.0	3.5	9.1	10.7	5.9
LT	3.4	4.2	-1.4	0.5	5.4	-0.4	6.2	11.0	-4.0	2.5	-1.3	2.8	3.3
LU	3.9	1.8	4.6	0.4	7.3	1.7	5.7	6.2	-2.9	2.8	5.0	3.4	2.7
HU	2.3	4.3	2.2	-1.7	2.3	-2.1	5.2	4.2	-3.4	0.5	7.5	3.9	1.6
MT	2.3	-1.6	0.6	-2.3	10.0	2.4	3.8	5.8	0.0	0.1	2.0	2.9	3.1
NL	1.4 ¹	0.9 ¹	0.5 ¹	-1.8 ¹	4.5 ¹	-0.1 ¹	3.2 ¹	4.1 ¹	-1.9 ¹	-0.2 ¹	-15.7 ¹	1.6 ¹	0.6 ¹
AT	1.5 ¹	0.4 ¹	0.3 ¹	-2.5 ¹	4.6 ¹	0.7 ¹	1.2 ¹	5.2 ¹	-7.3 ¹	-2.6 ¹	6.9 ¹	1.9 ¹	2.3 ¹
PL	0.9	-0.3	2.6	-6.7	3.5	0.1	1.7	1.3	-0.3	-1.5	1.7	1.6	1.8
PT	2.9	1.7	8.8	-7.6	4.4	1.0	0.2	8.5	-1.1	1.5	5.3	2.1	2.5
SI	2.3	0.3	3.8	-2.5	8.8	3.6	-3.1	2.1	-0.3	1.2	4.0	3.6	3.5
SK	4.3	0.3	1.7	-0.4	13.4	-1.4	8.3	2.8	-0.3	1.4	8.5	2.3	3.8
FI	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
SE	1.1	-1.4	1.5	2.3	3.6	-2.6	1.0	3.2	-5.5	-1.7	2.8	2.6	3.0
UK	2.0	1.1	1.6	-4.7	6.4	-0.5	2.3	4.2	0.4	-0.8	4.7	3.5	3.6

¹ Provisional

Source: Eurostat

NA Not available

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 March index relates is Tuesday, 14th March 2006.
- 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 waste collection & disposal 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.

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| 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, waste collection and disposal 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. |