

### Self-employment

#### Key facts

- Self-employment levels across countries have exhibited varying and diverging trends in the wake of the crisis, reflecting, in part, differences in the impact of the crisis on employment, the regulatory environment and the mechanisms used to mitigate the effects of the crisis.
- In Australia, Korea, Japan, and the United States, trend self-employment levels remain significantly below their pre-crisis level, reflecting in part a shift towards contractual employment, where employment levels were less adversely affected by the crisis. The most recent data however points to a decelerating trend, pointing to a possible turning point in the short-term.
- Self-employment levels in Spain and Greece remain significantly below pre-crisis levels but have begun to stabilise in recent periods and have outperformed overall employment levels in general, indicating that many of these jobs may be less about entrepreneurialism than coping strategies.
- Self-employment levels are significantly above pre-crisis levels in Mexico, France and the United Kingdom. In Mexico, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom, this has been against a back-drop of a growing labour market in general. While in France, where a change in legislation to simplify the creation of small businesses drove the increase in self-employment, employee jobs show little change on their pre-crisis levels.

#### Relevance

Self-employment can be an important driver of entrepreneurialism.

#### Definitions

The *self-employed* are defined as those who own and work in their own businesses, including unincorporated businesses and own-account workers, and declare themselves as “self-employed” in population or labour force surveys.

The *self-employed rate* refers to the number of self-employed as a percentage of total employment.

#### Comparability

Some care is needed in interpretation. Evidence in many countries points to rising shares of part-time employees, which may impair the 'economic' comparability of both self-employment and self-employment rates across time and countries.

For, Japan, New Zealand and Norway the data for self-employment do not include owners who work in their incorporated businesses, and instead are counted as employees.

Additional care is needed in interpreting the results with regards to entrepreneurship. Not insignificant shares of the self-employed in some countries may reflect arts and crafts type or subsistence type activities.

#### Source/online databases

OECD estimates based on:

Labour Force Survey (Australia), [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/6202.0).

Labour Force Survey (Canada), [www.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-bmdi/3701-eng.htm](http://www.statcan.gc.ca/imdb-bmdi/3701-eng.htm).

Eurostat Labour Force Surveys, <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/microdata/lfs>.

Labour Force Survey (Japan), [www.stat.go.jp/english/data/roudou/](http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/roudou/).

Economically Active Population Survey (Korea), <http://kostat.go.kr/portal/english/surveyOutlines/2/3/index.static>.

Encuesta Nacional de Empleo (Mexico), [www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/proyectos/encuestas/hogares/historicas/ene/default.aspx](http://www.inegi.org.mx/est/contenidos/proyectos/encuestas/hogares/historicas/ene/default.aspx).

Current Population Survey (United States), [www.census.gov/cps/](http://www.census.gov/cps/).

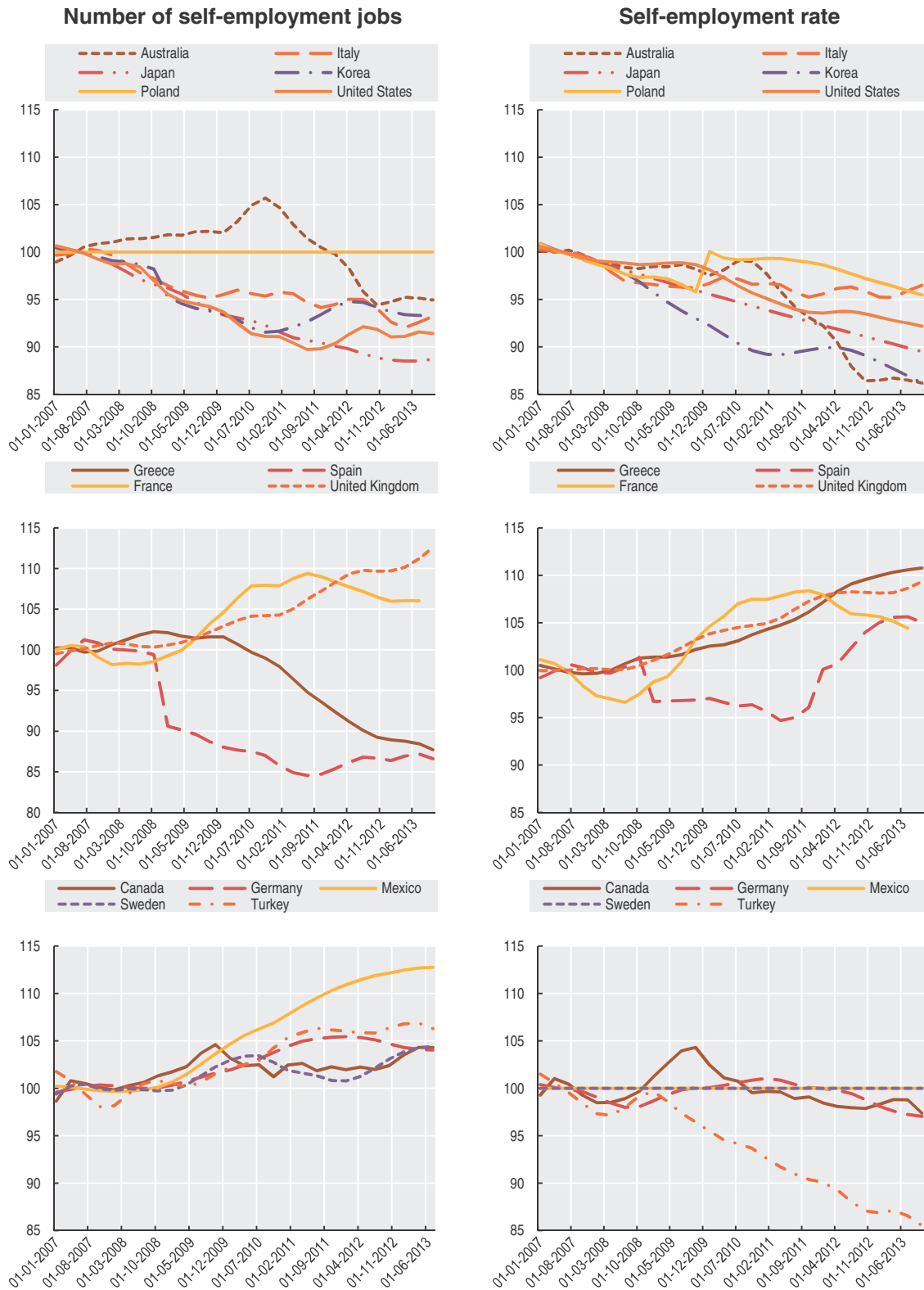
#### For further reading

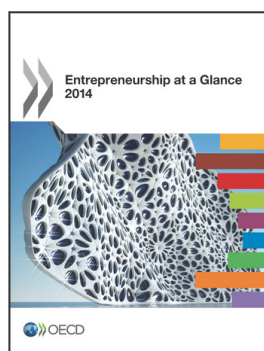
Hipple, S. (2010), “Self-employment in the United States”, Monthly Labor Review, September.

OECD (2000), OECD Employment Outlook, OECD Publishing, Paris, [www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/oecd-employment-outlook-2000\\_empl\\_outlook-2000-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/oecd-employment-outlook-2000_empl_outlook-2000-en).

Figure 1.3. Self-employment jobs

Trend-cycle average 2007 = 100

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