### Waiting for work

**Long-term unemployment increasingly plagues**



MORE than a third of unemployed people in rich countries have been out of work for over a year. Since the financial crisis began the number of long-term unemployed people has doubled to almost 17m, according to data from the OECD, a think-tank. In Spain a staggering 3m people have been out of work for more than 12 months, about the same number as in America, whose labour force is considerably larger. Yet a few European countries have seen a decline in long-term joblessness. In Germany, an economic recovery and labour-market reforms means that there are almost 1m fewer people out of work now than at the end of 2007. And Switzerland, where the jobless rate barely edged above 4%, found work for those lingering on the dole. (Description)

For most OECD countries, however, the high and growing proportion of long-term unemployed is a threat to their economic growth. The problem can be self-sustaining. Skills deteriorate when they are not used; the jobless become discouraged and employers are less inclined to hire them. (Narration)