

# *French Jobless Rate at Highest Level Since 2013*

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Paris, November 30 (RHC)-- The number of unemployed in France increased in October by 42,000 from a month earlier, the biggest monthly rise in two years, the Labor Ministry has announced, denting the government's hope for good news ahead of regional elections.

That jump, raising the number of jobless people to a total of 3.59 million, has not been seen since April 2013. On a year-to-year basis, the number of unemployed registered at the unemployment office has risen by 3.7 percent.

"These figures are not satisfying," AFP has quoted Labor Minister Myriam El Khomri as saying in a statement. She added however that they "must be interpreted with care because the results of the past few months have had major variations."

In September, the number of registered unemployed had a net decrease of 23,800, and that was the biggest drop since the financial crisis in late 2007. "Since the beginning of the year, the increase in the number of people looking for work remains much less than that of 2014," the minister said.

The Labor ministry said it is looking for the jobless number to stabilize by the end of year and hopes it will begin to fall in 2016. Unemployment is a key issue for the Socialist government with regional elections only days away, and President Francois Hollande has vowed not to seek re-election in 2017 if his

administration fails to reduce the country's joblessness.

When Hollande took office, the jobless rate stood at 9.8%. The European Commission forecasts that the unemployment rate will end this year at 10.4% and remain flat next year, falling only to 10.2% by the end of 2017.

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