HM1.4 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS BY AGE GROUPS

Definitions and methodology

People's living arrangements change over the life cycle. When young people move out of their parents' home, they frequently share dwellings with other young people before setting up their own home when moving in with a partner and starting a family. At the same time, when children leave home, elderly parents often would like to downsize as household size has diminished.

This indicator shows how living arrangements vary across age groups and looks particularly at youth and seniors. The population of youth is defined as 15 up to 29 year olds, whereas those 65 years or older are considered as senior. The data presented here are based on household survey microdata and concern population level data. The data analysis considers living arrangements in the latest year available for different age groups.

Key findings

Less than half of the population, no matter the country or age group, live by themselves (see Figure HM1.4.1 and online worksheet HM1.4.A1 for earlier years). The share of one-person households ranges from 47% among the senior (65+ year-old) population in Denmark to about 1% or less among the young (15- to 29-year-old) population in Ireland and the Slovak Republic.

In most countries, the share of one-person households among private households (not including group accommodation such as nursing homes, hospitals and military quarters) rises with age. The population of seniors is most likely to live by themselves (between 13% in Mexico and 47% in Denmark), followed by those aged 50 to 64 years (between 6% in Mexico and 28% in Denmark). The share of one-person households among the 30- to 49-year-old population ranges from 3% in Mexico to 24% in Norway. In most countries, young people (15- to 29-year-olds) are least likely to live on their own (between 1% or less in the Slovak Republic and Ireland and 33% in Norway), except for in the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, and to a slight extent Estonia and Korea.
Living arrangements of youth vary widely across OECD (Figure HM1.4.2.). In countries such as Italy, Greece, and the Slovak Republic, 80% or more of 15- to 29-year-olds live with their parents. In others, such as the Nordic countries, a smaller proportion live with their parents and youth are much more likely to live independently. On average, around a quarter of young people (15- to 29-year-olds) live with a partner, ranging from 9.5% in Greece to 42.3% in Finland.
Compared to other age groups, seniors living in private households (refer to data and comparability section for more on the limitations of this approach) are usually the most likely to live on their own (Figure HM1.4.3, see online annex for earlier years). Nevertheless, the share of the senior population living in one-person households varies considerably across countries. One-person households are the most common arrangements for the senior population in several Eastern and Central European countries, such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, as well as Denmark. In most other countries, however, living with one or more other senior(s) is the most common household type among the senior population, ranging between 20% in Mexico and 59% in the Netherlands. In Chile, Greece, Korea, Mexico, Poland and the Slovak Republic, the most common living arrangement of seniors is a household that includes at least one person below the age of 65. In these countries, multi-generational households thus seem more common than in the rest of OECD countries.

1. Data refer to 2016 for Iceland, Ireland, Mexico, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, and 2015 for Turkey.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-SILC, HILDA (Australia), CASEN (Chile), ENIGH (Mexico) and CPS (United States).
**OECD Affordable Housing Database** – [http://oe.cd/ahd](http://oe.cd/ahd)

OECD - Social Policy Division - Directorate of Employment, Labour and Social Affairs

**Figure HM1.4.3: Share of senior population living in private households by household type, 2018 or latest year available**

Distribution of senior people (65+ year-olds), by household type

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**Data and comparability issues**

This indicator is calculated based on household surveys. For European countries, the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC); for Chile, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN); for Korea, the Korean Housing Survey; for Mexico, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH); and, for the United States, the American Community Survey (ACS).

The analysis considers only private households and excludes individuals living in institutional households such as nursing homes, hospitals and military quarters. The analysis of living arrangements of elderly people on the basis of household survey data has its limits. Population and census data that also consider institutional households provide evidence that with age the probability to live in an institutional household increases. In 2011, the proportion of persons aged 65-84 years living in an institutional household was 1.7% (Eurostat, 2016; also see OECD, 2016b). For those 85 years and older, by contrast, this share was 12.6%.

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*Note by Turkey: The information in this document with reference to “Cyprus” relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Turkey recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Turkey shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”.

**b) Note by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Turkey. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.**

**Source:** OECD calculations based on European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU SILC) survey 2018 except for Ireland, the Slovak Republic, and the United Kingdom (2017), and Iceland (2016); the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia (2017); Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2017); the Korean Housing Survey (2017); Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico (2016); American Community Survey (ACS) for the United States (2016).
Sources and further reading:

