



OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020

HIGHLIGHTS



About the OECD

The OECD is a unique forum where governments work together to address the economic, social and environmental challenges of globalisation. The OECD is also at the forefront of efforts to understand and to help governments respond to new developments and concerns, such as corporate governance, the information economy and the challenges of an ageing population. The Organisation provides a setting where governments can compare policy experiences, seek answers to common problems, identify good practice and work to co-ordinate domestic and international policies.

About the Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities

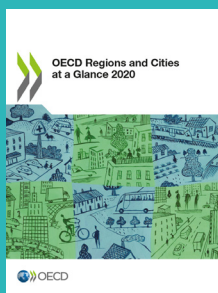
The Centre helps local, regional and national governments unleash the potential of entrepreneurs and small and medium-sized enterprises, promote inclusive and sustainable cities and regions, boost local job creation and implement sound tourism policies.

About this policy highlights

This booklet reproduces highlights from the OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020 report, which presents indicators on individual regions and cities to assess disparities within countries and their evolution since the turn of the new millennium. This report falls within the Programme of Work of the OECD's Regional Development Policy Committee.

The full book is accessible at

OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020



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Some places paid a higher death toll from the first wave of the global pandemic

Metropolitan regions experienced a larger number of deaths during the first half of 2020.

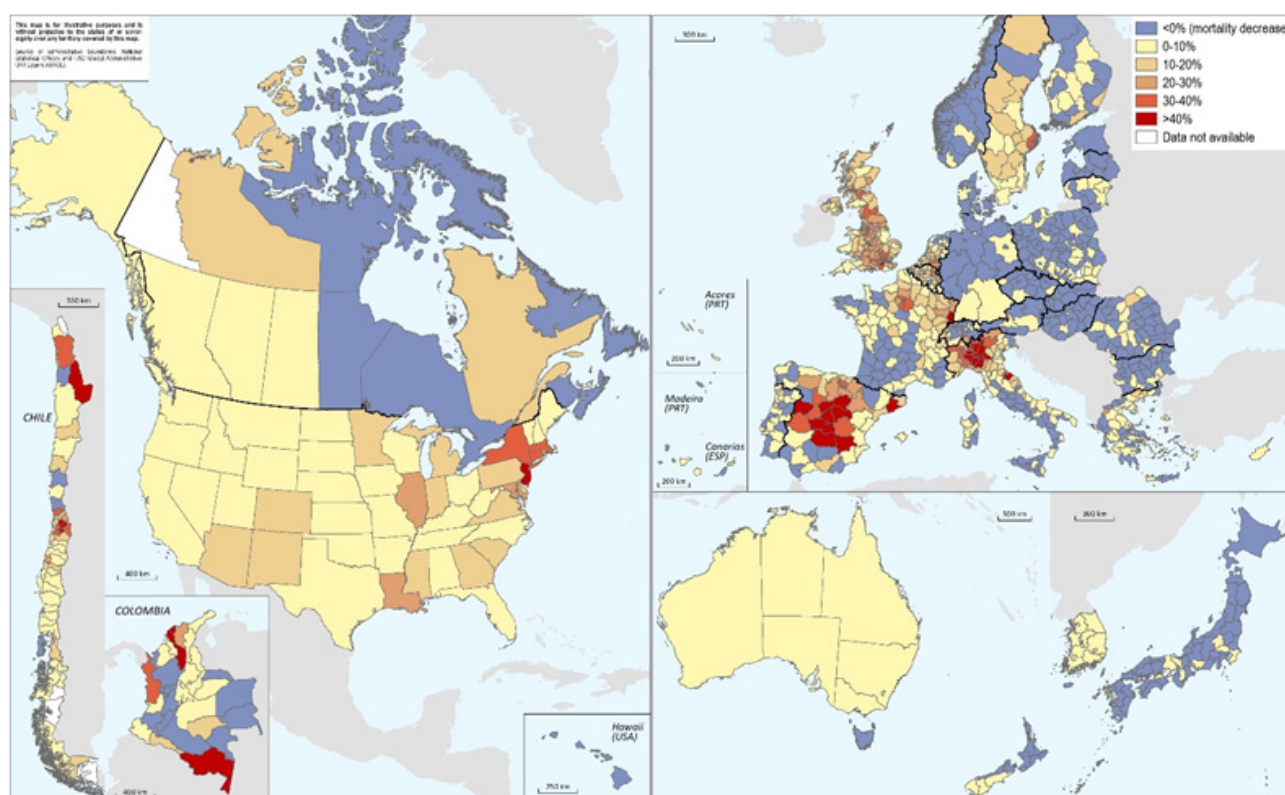
With widespread health effects across the OECD, the COVID-19 pandemic hit certain parts of countries harder than others during the first wave. From February to June 2020, large metropolitan regions experienced an average excess mortality of 13% compared to 3% in remote regions. Overall, compared to the previous two years, the number of deaths between February and June 2020 increased by 6% across regions in 31 OECD countries. Excess mortality during the first wave

of the pandemic was particularly high in some large metropolitan regions, such as Greater London (United Kingdom), New Jersey (United States), Lombardy (Italy) and Madrid (Spain). In these regions, the increase in deaths in the period from February to June 2020 compared to the previous years ranged from 46% to 80%, an increase equivalent to the average deaths due to cancer during an entire year.

In most OECD countries, remote regions have paid a lower price in human losses than other regions.

Figure: Excess mortality across OECD regions

% increase in deaths during February-June 2020 compared to the same period in 2018-19 (average)





Not all regions are equally prepared to face health crises

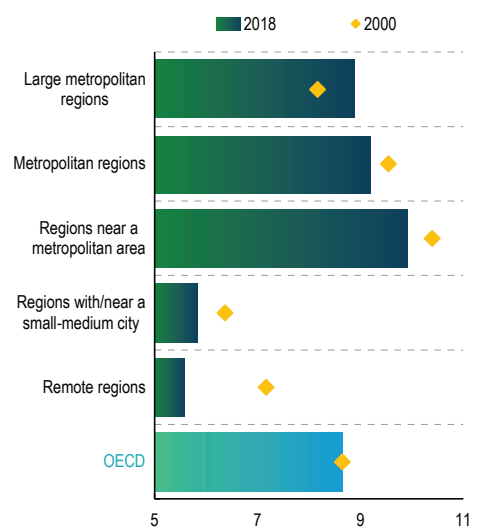
Higher capacity of health care facilities, lower exposure to air pollution and lower morbidity rates make some regions better prepared to face health crises

A number of factors related to healthcare, living standards and people's behaviour can make regions unevenly prepared to face health crisis. Medical resources such as hospital beds and doctors per inhabitant are crucial for managing health crises, but differ substantially across types of regions.

Metropolitan regions and regions close to metropolitan areas are better equipped with hospital beds per inhabitant than regions far from metropolitan areas. With 10 beds every 1000 inhabitants, regions close to metropolitan areas have almost twice as much beds than remote regions.

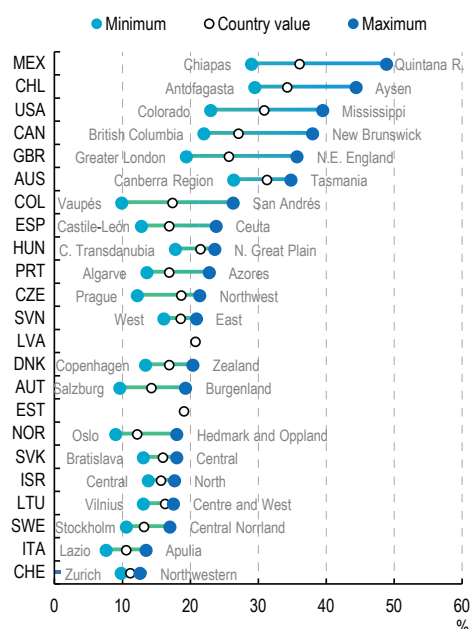
Since 2000, the number of beds per inhabitant have declined by 6% across OECD regions, with a particularly strong decrease (22%) in remote regions.

Hospital beds per 1000 inhabitants
(Small regions)



Morbidity rates are another factor rendering some places more vulnerable to health crises than others. In some regions in Mexico, Chile and the United States, close to 40% or more

Percent of obese adult population, 2018
(Large regions)



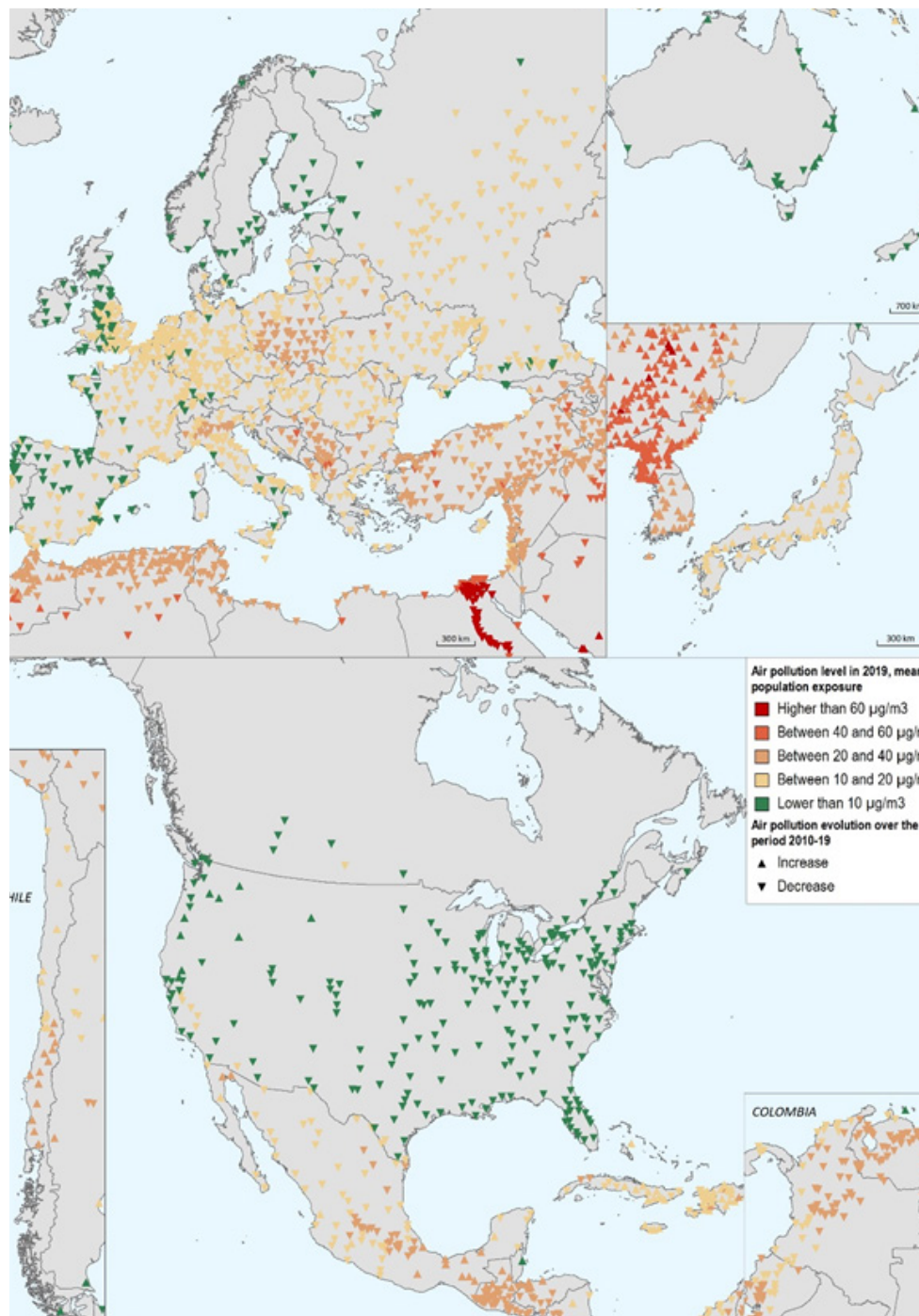
of the population is obese, posing a higher risk in terms of fatal diseases. For example, due to higher obesity levels, in Mississippi the average likelihood to suffer severe symptoms if infected with COVID-19 is roughly 23% higher than in Colorado.

Living standards, environmental quality and morbidity are other important factors that determine whether regions and cities are resilient or vulnerable to health crises. For example, the most polluted city in a given OECD country has on average an 8 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ higher concentration of particulate matter than the least polluted city, a large gap taking into account the 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ total concentration that the World Health Organisation recommends not to overcome.

Despite improvements during the last decade, air pollution in cities remains high



PM2.5 in $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in cities, levels (2019) and change (2010-19)



Most cities still have an exposure to PM2.5 above the limit recommended by the WHO (10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$).

Cities and capital regions have higher capacity to shift to remote working

Widespread social distancing measures to contain the spread of COVID-19 have pushed many firms and workers to remote working, although that shift was not equally possible across places. For example, 50% of employees can work from home in Luxembourg, but only 21% in Turkey.

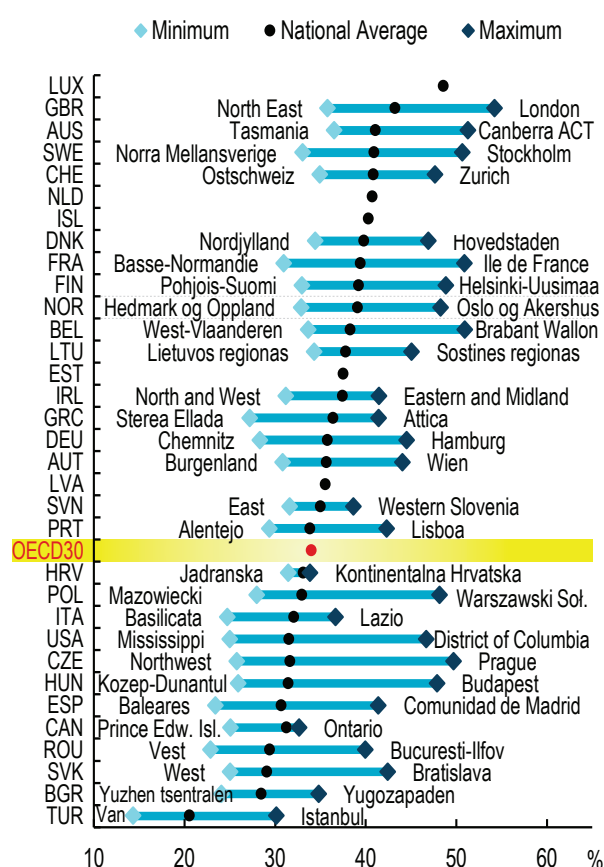
In several capital regions (i.e. Ile de France, London, Stockholm, Brussels, Prague), more than half of jobs are amenable to remote working.

Within countries, the share of jobs amenable to remote working can differ by more than 20 percentage points.

The remote working capacity of urban places is higher than rural ones. On average, cities have 13-percentage point higher share of jobs amenable to remote working than rural areas.

Higher potential for remote working reflects also the skills of the labour force and education levels. These differences can start at the school age. For example, students in capital regions are much less likely to leave school at an early stage than in other regions – with school dropout rates being 10 percentage points below the national average.

Percentage of jobs amenable to remote working (large regions)



DRIVERS OF REMOTE WORKING CAPACITY OF PLACES:

- Higher proportion of occupations located there with tasks amenable to remote working
- Skills of its labour force: regions with larger shares of highly educated people tend to have higher capacity to remote working.
- Access to efficient digital infrastructure

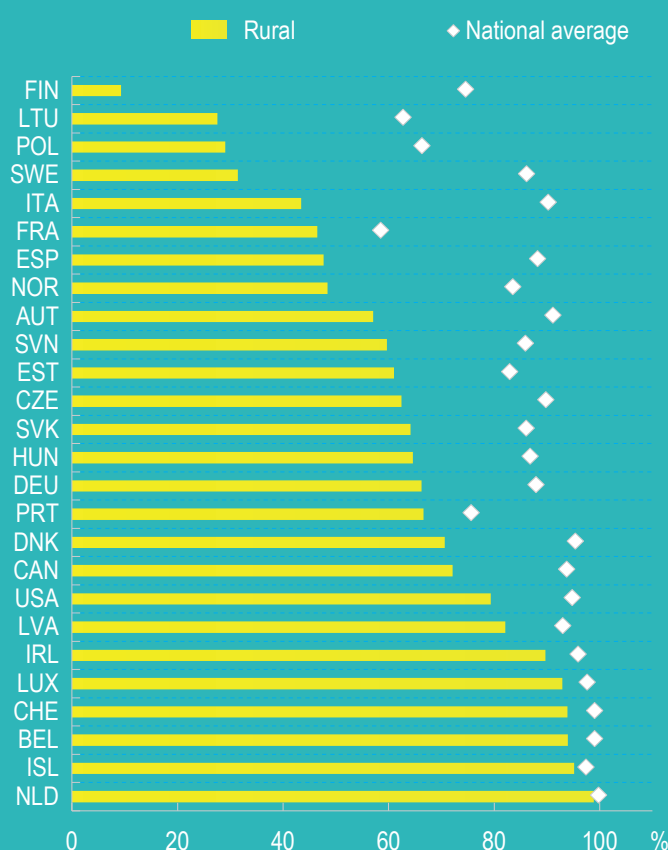
Rural areas need to bridge the digital divide

Seizing the opportunities of remote working requires well-functioning digital infrastructure. Bridging the regional divide in access to fast broadband connections and terminal devices will become increasingly important as households, governments and businesses switch their activities to the digital terrain.

One in three households in rural areas does not have access to high-speed broadband, on average. Overall, only 7 out of 26 countries have succeeded in ensuring access to high-speed connection to more than 80% of households in rural regions.

Regional gaps in access to high-speed (>30 Mbit/s) are stark, with a 23-percentage points difference between the most and least connected regions, on average.

Percentage households with access to internet >30Mbit/s, 2019



To reap the benefits of digitalisation, a combination of access to digital infrastructure, and adoption of digital technologies and minimum digital skills, is necessary. While in Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and in the Baltic countries almost all households use internet, in some regions in Italy, Japan, Greece, Portugal and Turkey one fourth or more of households do not use internet.

Lack of high-speed broadband connections and of digital take-up in some regions, especially in rural areas, limits the benefits from digitalisation.



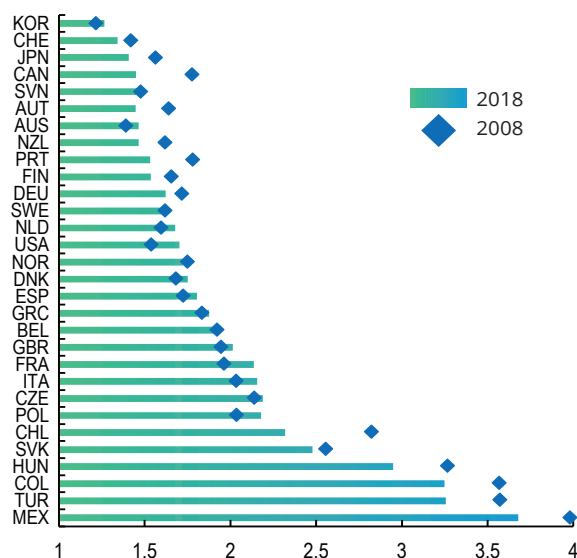
Regional economic disparities have increased in half of OECD countries since 2008

The gap in GDP per capita of regions far from metropolitan areas with respect to metropolitan regions has increased another 3 percentage points since 2008.

In the whole OECD area, regional disparities in GDP per capita have increased in half of OECD countries since 2008. That increase has been particularly high in France, Poland, Italy and the United States.

Regional disparities in GDP per capita (large regions)

Ratio of the 20% richest regions over the 20% poorest regions

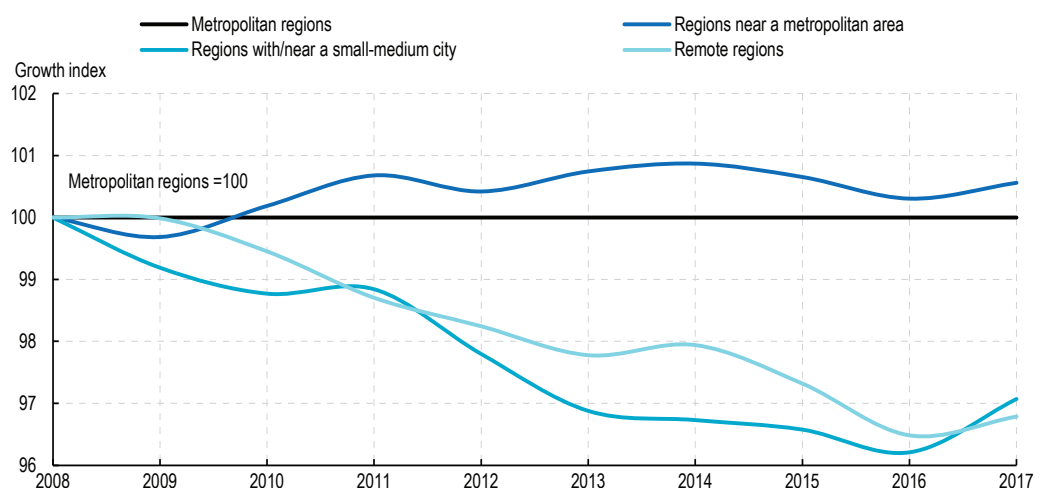


Most countries where regional economic disparities have increased since 2008 experienced faster economic growth in the richest regions.

Most countries are still facing the challenges of having some regions left behind. Two thirds of OECD countries have regions where productivity, a proxy for wages and economic prosperity, have stagnated or declined for a decade.

GDP per capita growth relative to metropolitan regions in OECD countries

(100=metropolitan regions)



Temperatures have increased in the large majority of cities during the last 50 years

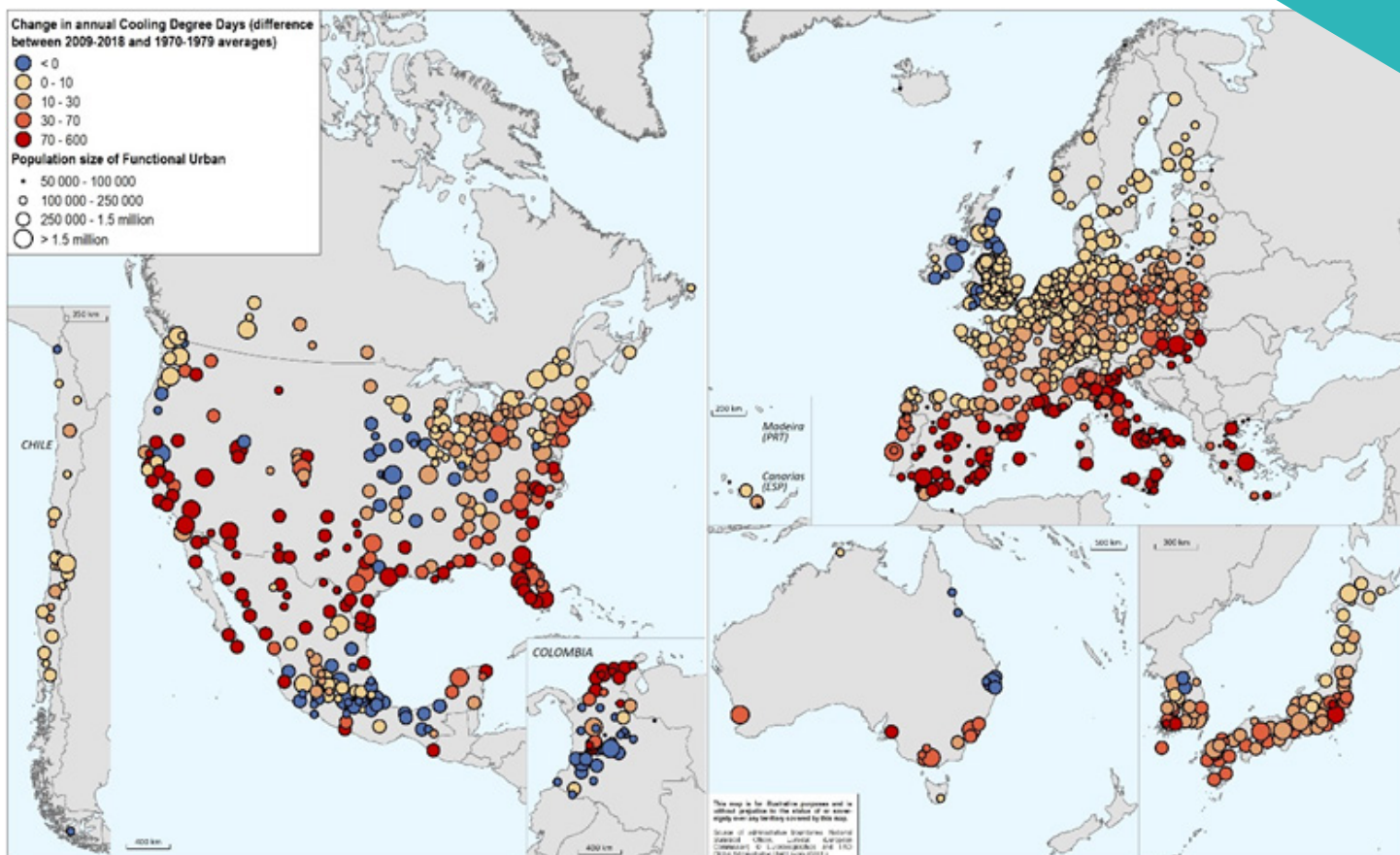
Climate has changed rapidly in the last decades, with most areas feeling significant raises in temperatures. During the last 50 years, the annual cooling degree days (CDD, a measure for how long and by how much outside air temperature was above 22°C), have on average increased by almost 25% in OECD cities. Over the last decade, the

10% of cities with the highest average cooling needs were in Mexico, Colombia and the United States. For example, in Mexico, Mexicali has seen its average annual cooling needs doubling since 1970.

In Europe, Southern regions experienced higher increases in cooling degree days.

Change in cooling needs in cities and their commuting zones

Cooling degree days needed over the year to maintain 22 °C indoor temperature, functional urban areas, 1970-2018





Remote regions lead the production of electricity through renewable sources

Metropolitan regions have the highest share of electricity generated through coal, on average.

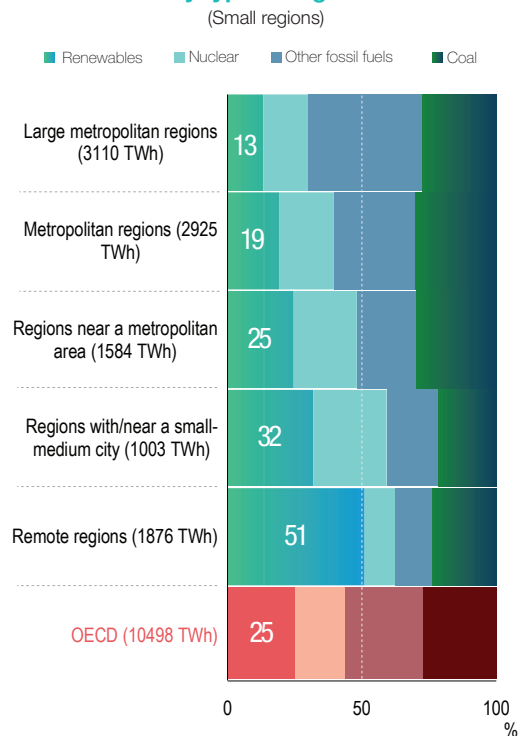
Regions far from metropolitan areas generate 34% less tons of CO2 per unit of electricity (GWh) than metropolitan regions.

The use of renewable sources increases with distance to metropolitan areas. Metropolitan regions, which are home to around 70% of the OECD population, generate almost 60% of the total electricity in OECD countries, but only 16% of their total electricity production comes from renewable sources.

Regions located further away from metropolitan areas account for 27% of total electricity produced (although they represent only 17% of population)

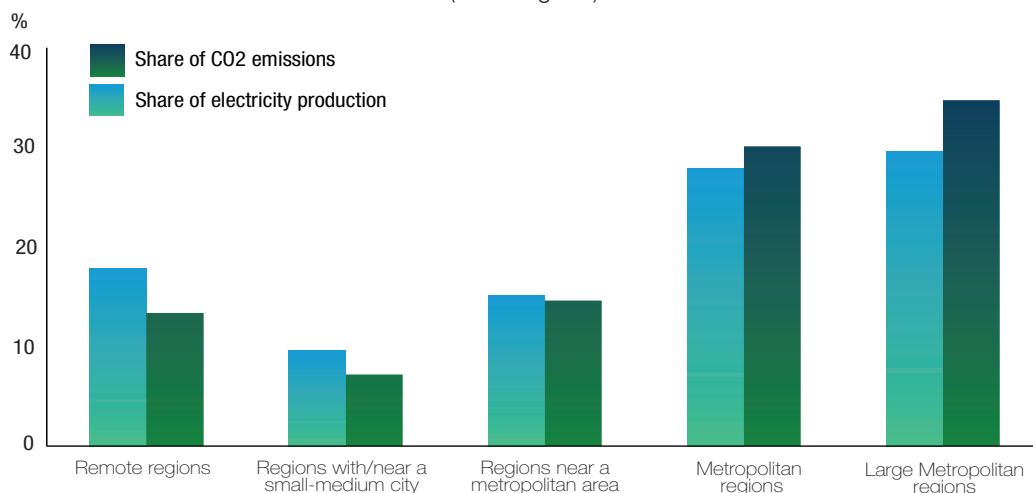
Those regions generate 44% of their electricity using renewable sources (almost half of the clean electricity in the OECD). Hydropower is the most used renewable source for remote regions.

Sources of electricity production by type of region



Contribution to total CO2 emissions from electricity production, 2017

(Small regions)

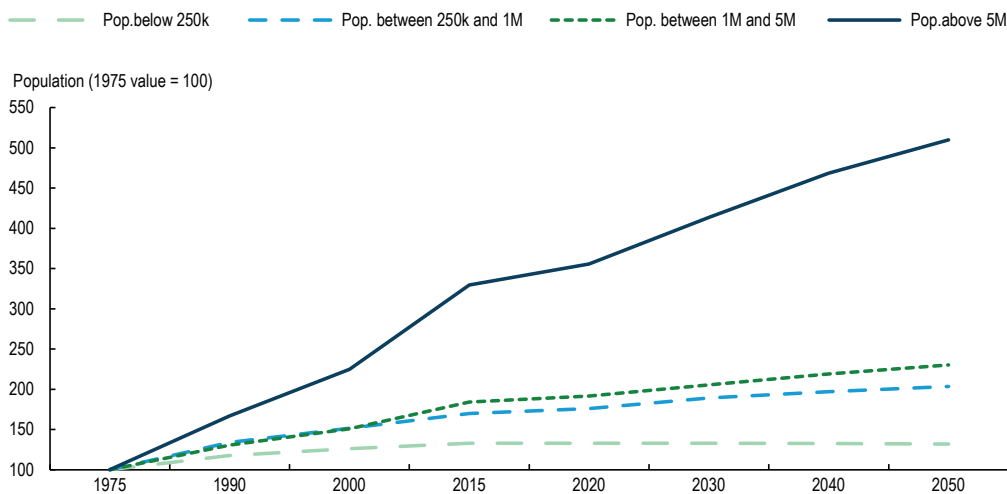


Large metropolitan areas have grown fastest and will likely continue to do so

Since 1975, population has grown faster in the largest metropolitan areas compared to smaller ones. This situation is set to continue during the next thirty years, with population in metropolitan areas over 5 million inhabitants growing more than three times as fast as in smaller ones.

Growth in total population in metropolitan areas by their size

1975-2050 (1975=100)



Between 2000 and 2015, the total world population living in cities and their commuting zones (functional urban areas) has increased by over 20%. During the same period, functional urban areas have grown by 13.2% in OECD countries. While the highest growth was in Sub-Saharan Africa (52%), the slowest growth was in Europe and Central Asia (8%).

While cities have been growing faster than other places in OECD countries, around one in five has been shrinking since 2000. City-population decline was particularly strong

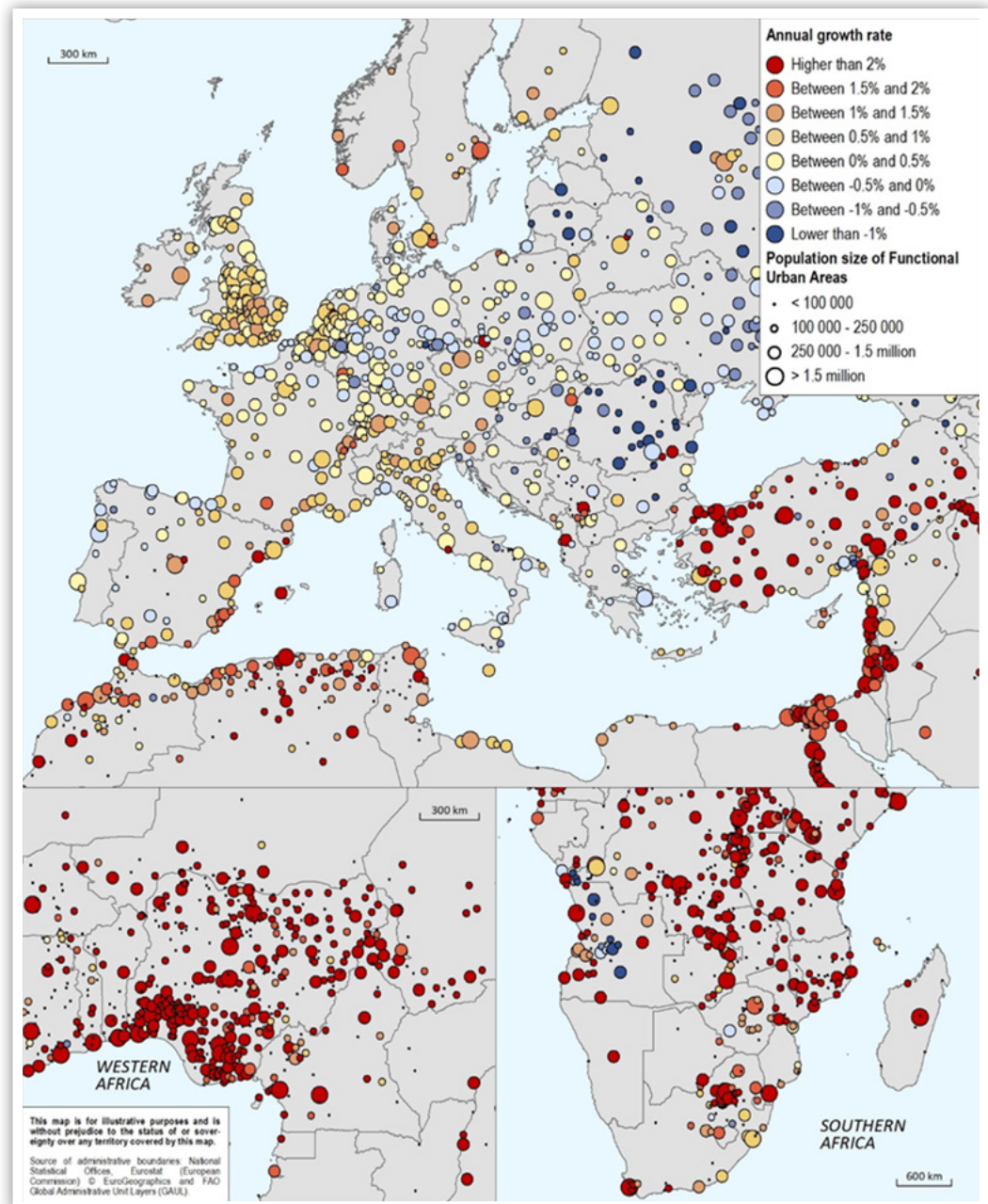
in Latvia and Lithuania, where all functional urban areas lost population. The 'shrinking cities' phenomenon brings unprecedented challenges to policy makers and it is projected to become even more pressing in the coming decades, with population in 35% of all functional urban areas (20% in the OECD) expected to decline between 2020 and 2050.

By 2050, in the whole world, the population of cities and their commuting zones is expected to increase by what amounts to 13 times the population of France.





Population growth and size in functional urban areas, 2000-15

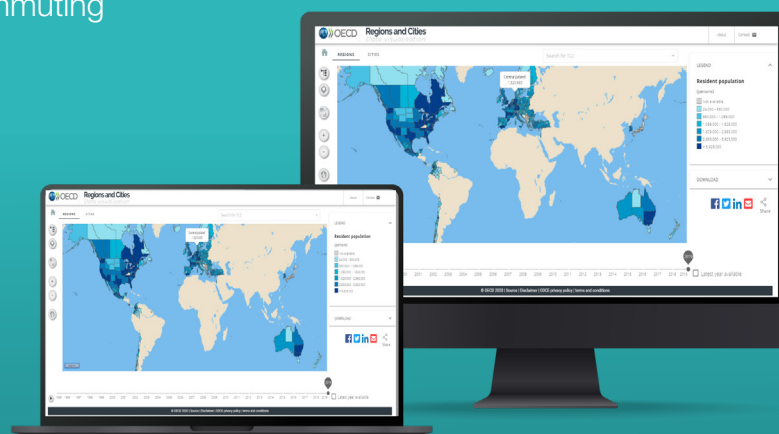


OECD Regions and Cities Data Visualisation

The OECD Regions and Cities Data Visualisation is a web-platform developed that helps users to select and visualise on a map or a chart, any statistical indicator at the subnational scale made available by CFE through the OECD statistical portal and selected additional indicators, all of which are downloadable in CSV format. The available indicators include demographic, social, economic and environmental aspects and cover primarily OECD member countries. However, a sub-set of indicators on population, built-up area and air quality have global coverage for cities of at least 50,000 inhabitants and their respective commuting zones.

FEATURES

- OECD and global coverage
- About 100 indicators for regions and metropolitan areas
- 2500 small regions and 460 large regions covered
- 670 Cities and their commuting areas in OECD countries
- Over 9000 cities in the world
- Download the data
- Draw your map and download it



Visit our Regions and Cities webtool at:

<https://regions-cities-atlas.oecd.org>

Read the full report at:
<https://doi.org/10.1787/959d5ba0-en>



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