

HM1.4 LIVING ARRANGEMENTS BY AGE GROUPS

Definitions and methodology

People's living arrangements change over the life cycle. In many countries, when young people move out of their parents' home, they frequently share dwellings with other young people before setting up their own home to move in with a partner and/or to start 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, with a particular focus on youth (aged 15 to 29) and seniors (65 and older). The data presented here are based on household survey microdata and concern population-level data. They exclude living arrangements such as group accommodation, such as nursing homes, hospitals and military quarters. Data in this indicator refer to private households. The data analysis considers living arrangements in the latest year available for different age groups.

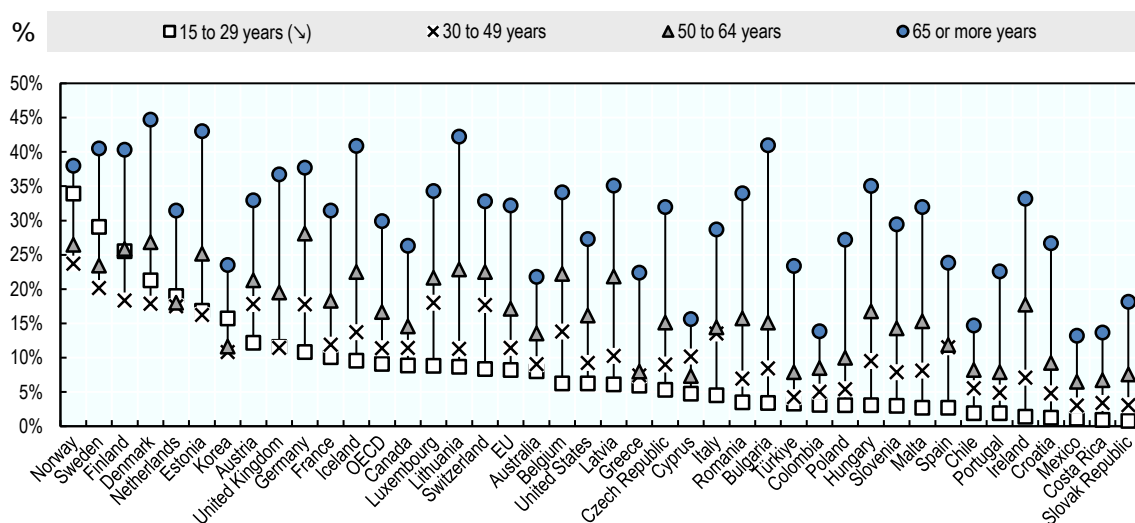
Key findings

Less than half of the population, no matter the country or age group, lives by themselves (see Figure HM1.4.1 and online worksheet HM1.4.A1 for earlier years). The share of one-person households ranges from 45% among seniors in Denmark to around 1% among youth (age 15-29) in Costa Rica, Mexico and the Slovak Republic.

In most countries, the share of one-person households rises with age. Seniors are more likely to live alone than any other age group -ranging from 13% of all seniors in Mexico to 46% in Denmark, followed by people aged 50 to 64 years (ranging from 6% in Mexico to 28% in Germany). Meanwhile, the share of single-person households among 30- to 49-year olds ranges from 3% in Mexico to 24% in Norway. In 31 countries, fewer than 10% of youth aged 15-29 years old live on their own – and the share is less than 5% in 18 countries. This is not the case, however, in the Nordic countries and the Netherlands, where between one-fifth and one-third of youth live alone.

Figure HM1.4.1. Share of population living alone

Percentage of population living in single-person households, by age groups, 2020 or latest year available



Notes:

1. Only private households are considered.
2. Data for Germany, Italy and Malta refer to 2019, for Iceland to 2018 and for Canada to 2011.

Sources: OECD calculations based on the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2020), except for Germany, Italy, Lithuania and Malta (2019), and Iceland (2018); the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia (2020); the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) for Canada (2011); the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2020); the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAH) for Costa Rica (2020); the Korean Housing Survey (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico (2020); Turkey-National SILC (2020); Understanding Society - The UK Household Longitudinal Study (2020); the American Community Survey (ACS) for the United States (2020).

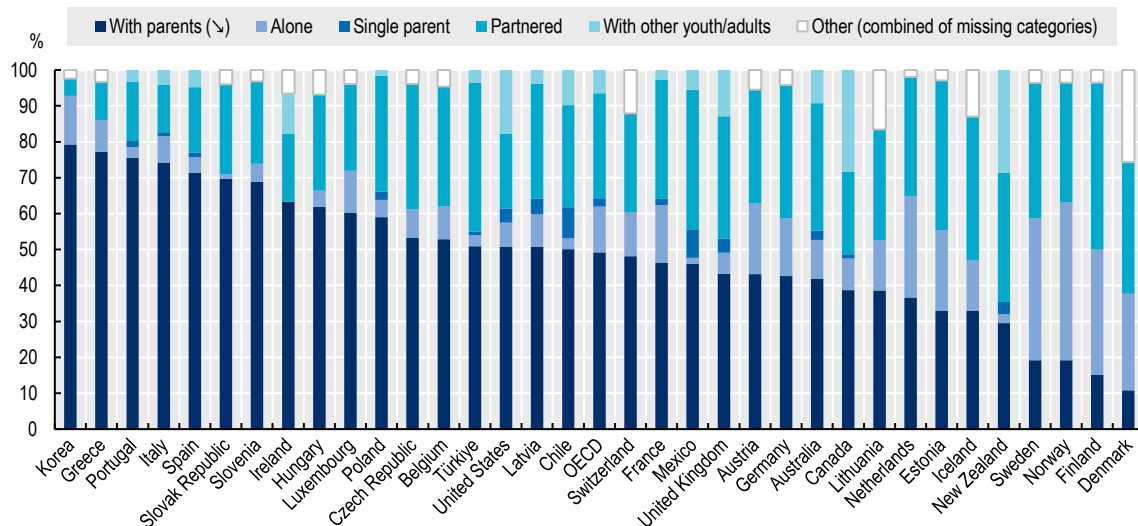
Living arrangements of youth (aged 20-29 years old) vary widely across OECD (Figure HM1.4.2). On average across the OECD, around half of young people live with their parents. The share is much higher in Greece, Italy, Korea, Portugal and Spain, where about 70% or more of youth live with their parents. Meanwhile, the share is much smaller in Nordic countries, where youth are much more likely to live on their own. On average in the OECD, around three in ten young people live with a partner, though there are large variations across countries, ranging from 5% in Korea to 46% in Finland.

Note by the Republic of Türkiye: 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. Türkiye recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Türkiye shall preserve its position concerning the "Cyprus issue".

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 Türkiye. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Figure HM1.4.2: Living arrangements of youth

Distribution of young people (20- to 29-year-olds), by household type¹, 2020 or latest year available



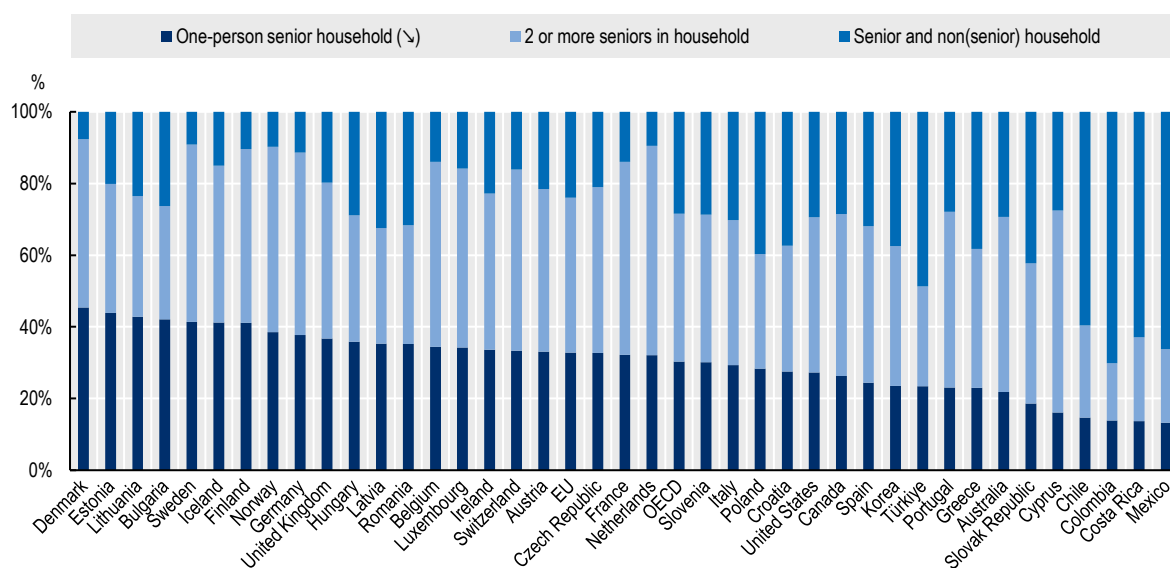
Note: 1. The 'single parent' category includes any individual who is living with their child and without a partner, whether they live by themselves, with their parents or with roommates. Similarly, the 'with a partner' category includes anyone who lives with a partner, whether or not they are living by themselves, with parents or with roommates. The 'other' category aggregates the missing categories for a given country when there were fewer than 40 observations in a given category. The OECD average is unweighted. The latest data refers to 2015 for Turkey, 2016 for Korea, 2017 for Canada and Chile, 2018 for Iceland and the United States and 2019 for Germany, Ireland, Italy and Poland, 2021 for New Zealand.

Source: OECD calculations based on EU-SILC, HILDA (Australia), CIS (Canada), CASEN (Chile), KLIPS (Korea), ENIGH (Mexico), estimates provided by Statistics New Zealand (2021), and CPS (United States).

Compared to other age groups, seniors living in private households (see the data and comparability section for more information on the limitations of this approach) are the most likely age group to live on their own (Figure HM1.4.3, see online annex for earlier years). Nevertheless, the share of seniors living in one-person households varies considerably across countries. One-person households are the most common arrangements for seniors in several Eastern and Central European countries, such as Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania and as well as Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Sweden. In most other countries, however, living with one or more other senior(s) is the most common household type among the senior population, ranging from 16% of all seniors in Colombia to 58% in the Netherlands. In Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Türkiye, 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.

Figure HM1.4.3: Share of senior population living in private households by household type

Distribution of senior people (65+ year-olds), by household, 2020 or latest year available



Notes:

1. No data available for Japan and New Zealand due to data limitations.

2. Data for Germany, Italy and Lithuania refer to 2019, for Iceland to 2018 and for Canada to 2011.

Source: OECD calculations based on the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2020), except for Germany, Italy, Lithuania and Malta (2019), and Iceland (2018); the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia (2020); the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID) for Canada (2011); the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2020); the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAH) for Costa Rica (2020); the Korean Housing Survey (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico (2020); Turkey-National SILC (2020); Understanding Society - The UK Household Longitudinal Study (2020); the American Community Survey (ACS) for the United States (2020).

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 Colombia, the *Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares* (GEIH); for Costa Rica, the *Encuesta Nacional de Hogares* (ENAH); for Korea, the Korean Housing Survey; for Mexico, the *Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares* (ENIGH); for Turkey, Turkey-National SILC; for the United Kingdom, Understanding Society - The UK Household Longitudinal Study; and, for the United States, the American Community Survey (ACS).

The analysis considers only private households and excludes individuals living in institutions, 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 people living in institutions suggest that the probability to live in an institution increases with age. Despite the avowed political shift away from institutional settings, the increasing number of elderly people have led to an increase in the institutionalised population in some countries. Seniors aged 65 and over make up around 86% of the total institutionalised population, representing around 4% of all seniors aged 65 and over. Moreover, the majority (57%) of seniors living in institutions are over age 80, representing around 11% of all seniors aged 80 and over. Meanwhile, working-age adults (aged 18 to 64) make up around 12% of the total institutionalised population, on average. In 18 countries for which data are

available, around 21 000 children under age 18 live in institutions, representing less than 0.5% of the total institutionalised population.

There are important limitations to data on long-term care services, however. They are difficult to collect in many countries, and the definition of “institution” varies from one country to another. In addition, data for some countries refers only to people receiving publicly funded care, while other countries include people who are paying for their own care (OECD, 2019a).

Sources and further reading

Eurostat (2020), *Ageing Europe - looking at the lives of older people in the EU*, https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Ageing_Europe_-_looking_at_the_lives_of_older_people_in_the_EU.

OECD (2021), “A crisis on the horizon: Ensuring affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities”, Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Policy Briefs, OECD, Paris. [oe.cd/il/housing-disability-2021](https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/sites/employment-labour-and-social-affairs-policy-briefs-2021-01-01_en/index.html?itemId=/content/publication/employment-labour-and-social-affairs-policy-briefs-2021-01-01_en)

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