

PH4.2 SOCIAL RENTAL HOUSING STOCK

Definitions and methodology

Social housing includes different forms of housing support across OECD countries, with considerable cross-national differences in terms of tenure, size, and type of providers. For the purpose of this indicator, “social rental housing” refers to *the stock of residential rental accommodation provided at sub-market prices and allocated according to specific rules rather than market mechanisms* (Salvi Del Pero et al., 2016). Data used in this indicator are mainly taken from information provided by governments of EU and OECD member countries in the OECD Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH), as well as from National Statistical Institutes (NSIs). Additional details on social housing in the OECD and EU are summarised in the OECD Policy Brief, “Social housing: A key part of past and future housing policy.”

Key findings

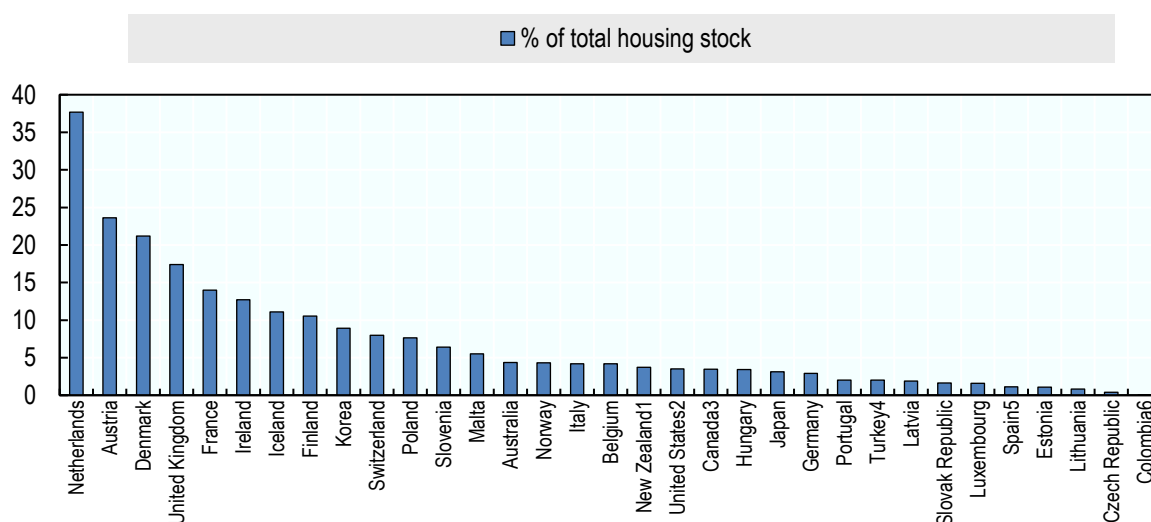
Social housing represents more than 29 million dwellings and accounts for around 6% of the total housing stock in the OECD and EU countries. Most, but not all, countries have a social housing sector, though the definition of social housing, as well as the size of the sector, varies considerably across countries (Figure PH4.2.1). The social housing stock is smallest in Colombia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic, Luxembourg and Spain, where it accounts for less than 2% of the total housing stock. At less than 10% of the overall housing stock, the sector is also relatively small in Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland, Turkey and the United States. Finland, France, Iceland, Ireland and the United Kingdom have a moderately-sized social rental housing sector (between 10 and 19% of the stock). Meanwhile, accounting for over 20% of the total housing stock, the sector is largest in Austria, Denmark and the Netherlands (data on the number of dwellings in absolute terms are available in the online Annex, PH4.2.A1).

Meanwhile, several OECD and EU countries do not have a social rental housing stock per the definition in this indicator. Chile has virtually no social rental sector, and in Mexico public rental housing is only offered to armed-forces personnel. In Sweden, municipal housing associations provide dwellings and estates to a large share of low-income households, but rents are not set at below-market levels and are thus not considered as social housing in this indicator. Further, it can be difficult to distinguish between social housing and other types of housing tenure in some countries. For instance, in Ireland, traditional social housing is supplemented by dwellings that are publicly leased from private owners and allocated to recipients of housing allowances. Please refer to indicators PH 4.1 and PH 4.3, and the OECD Policy Brief, “Social housing: A key part of past and future housing policy,” for further details.

There are different providers of social rental housing. Figure PH4.2.2 presents the relative size of the stock managed by the different types of providers as a share of the total social rental sector in each country. Sole provision of social rental housing by public authorities tends to be associated with a small social rental housing sector, as is the case in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Iceland, New Zealand and Norway. By contrast, in several countries with a large or moderate share of social rental housing, such as the Netherlands, Austria and Finland, there is a strong presence of non- or limit-profit housing associations. In the United

Kingdom (England), a large not-for-profit sector coexists with a significant stock owned and managed by local authorities, even though local authorities in the United Kingdom (England) have sharply reduced their investment in the construction of new dwellings. Social housing in the HLM sector (*habitations à loyer modéré*) in France is primarily provided by regional and/or municipal authorities, and non-profit providers. In some countries, central government agencies are involved in the direct provision of social housing, namely Canada, Denmark, Korea, Luxembourg, Malta, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia.

Figure PH4.2.1 Relative size of the social rental housing stock
Share of social rental dwellings as a % of total dwellings, 2018 or latest year available

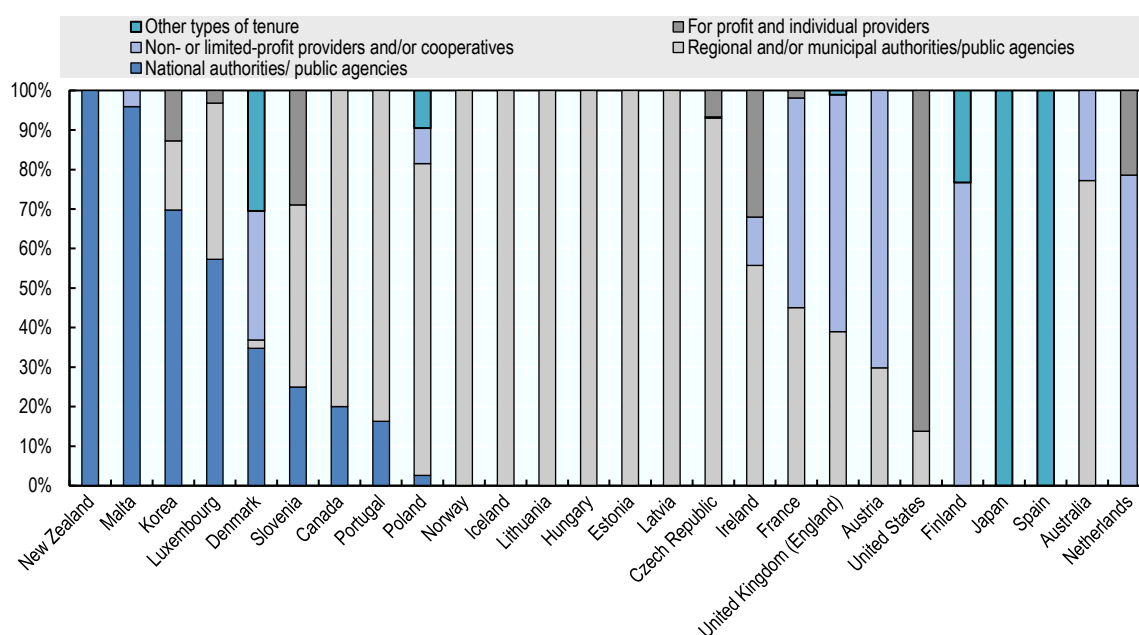


Notes:

1. For New Zealand, data refer to the number of social housing places (public housing) that are funded through central government, and do not include social housing provided by local authorities.
2. For the United States, the social housing stock includes public housing, subsidised units developed through specific programmes targeting the elderly (section 202) and disabled people (section 811), as well as income-restricted units created through the *Low-Income Housing Tax Credit* (LIHTC) programme; the number of public housing units as well as section 202 and 811 dwellings financed through the LIHTC programme have been adjusted to avoid double-counting, following OECD correspondence with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
3. For Canada, data exclude units managed by the *Société d'habitation du Québec* (SHQ) for the Province of Quebec.
4. Turkish data only includes social housing produced between 2002-2020 by the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) and exclude those provided by local governments.
5. For Spain, the share of social dwellings may also contain other types of reduced rent housing, e.g. employer-provided dwellings.
6. For Colombia, data only refer to social rental housing produced since 2019 in the *semillero de propietarios* programme.

Source: OECD, QuASH (2016, 2019), Statistik Austria (Mikrozensus 2019), Center d'Etudes en Habitat Durable de Wallonie (2016); Institut Bruxellois de Statistique et d'Analyse (2019); Korean Statistical Information Service (2020); Scottish Government (2019); Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2018); Statistics for Wales (2019); Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2019); OECD exchanges with the Turkish Ministry of Environment And Urbanization and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in August 2020; Poggio and Boreiko (2017).

Figure PH4.2.2 Providers of social rental housing in selected OECD countries
Percentage of social rental dwellings by type of provider, 2018 or latest year available^{1,2,3}



Notes:

1. Data refer to responses from the 2019 QuASH, except for Canada, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Korea, Latvia, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal and Slovenia where they refer to 2016 QuASH.

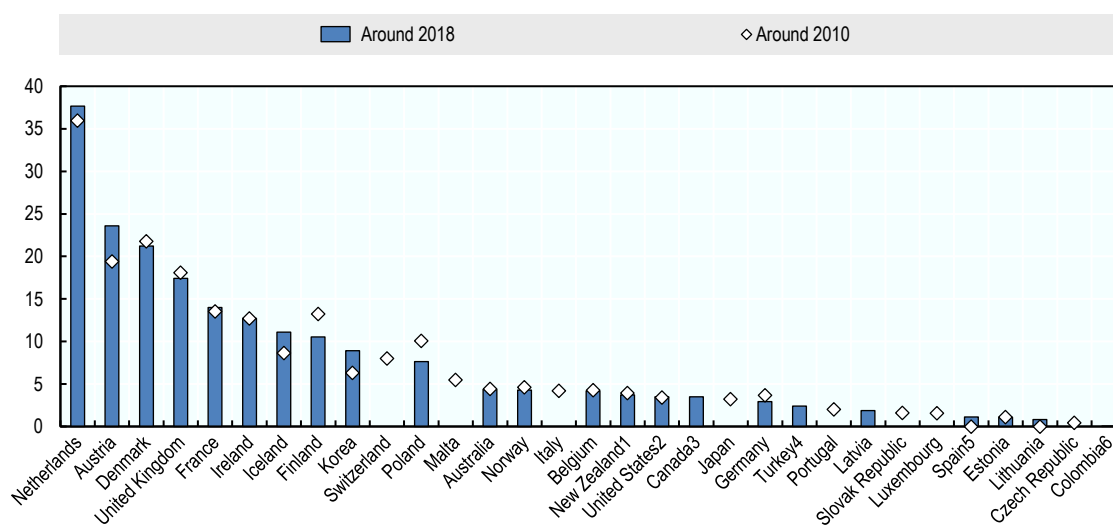
3. Data for Germany are not available, but in most federal states (*Länder*), the majority social dwellings are provided by municipalities or other public institutions as well as housing cooperatives; in some federal states, private providers are responsible for a significant share of the social housing stock.

3. Data for the United States are not available, but generally public housing is provided by local public housing authorities; for-profit, and in some cases non-profit, providers, more commonly provide housing developed through the Low-income Housing Tax Credit programme (LIHTC).

Source: OECD QuASH (2016, 2019).

The relative size of the social housing stock, measured as the share of social housing dwellings as a percentage of total dwellings, has increased to some extent in Austria, France, Iceland, Korea and the Netherlands since 2010 as well as marginally the United States (Figure PH4.2.3). By contrast, Finland and Poland experienced the most significant reduction in the relative size of the social housing sector; the sector also shrank in Portugal and Germany, Denmark and in the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent in Belgium, Estonia, New Zealand and Norway. The decline is partly related to a slowdown in new social housing construction, as well as the privatisation of the stock, whereby social dwellings are converted into market-rate rental housing (Germany), or are purchased by tenants and thus transition to the owner-occupied stock (United Kingdom (England and Northern Ireland)).

Figure PH4.2.3 Social rental housing stock: trends over time
Social rental dwellings, % of the total housing stock in selected years (2010, 2018)



Notes:

1. Data refer to country responses to the 2019 OECD QuASH, except for "Around 2010" data for the Netherlands and Korea, where they refer to the 2016 QuASH.
2. For the Czech Republic, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Switzerland, no data are available for "Around 2018". For Canada, Colombia, Latvia, Spain and Turkey, no data are available for "Around 2010". For Bulgaria, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Romania, Slovenia no data are available for either year. Chile and Sweden do not have a social housing sector following the definitions used in the Affordable Housing Database.
3. For New Zealand, data refer to the number of social housing places (public housing) that are funded through central government, and do not include social housing provided by local authorities.
4. For the United States, the social housing stock includes public housing, subsidised units developed through specific programmes targeting the elderly (section 202) and disabled people (section 811), as well as income-restricted units created through the *Low-Income Housing Tax Credit* (LIHTC) programme; the number of public housing units as well as section 202 and 811 dwellings financed through the LIHTC programme have been adjusted to avoid double-counting, following OECD correspondence with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.
5. For Canada, data exclude units managed by the Société d'habitation du Québec (SHQ) for the Province of Quebec.
6. Turkish data only includes social housing produced between 2002-2020 by the Housing Development Administration (TOKİ) and exclude those provided by local governments.
7. For Spain, the figures may also contain other types of reduced rent housing, e.g. employer-provided dwellings.
8. For Colombia, data only refers to social rental housing produced since 2019 in the *semillero de propietarios* programme.

Source: OECD, QuASH 2016, 2019; Statistik Austria (Mikrozensus 2019), Center d'Etudes en Habitat Durable de Wallonie (2016); Institut Bruxellois de Statistique et d'Analyse (2019); Korean Statistical Information Service (2020); Scottish Government (2019); Northern Ireland Housing Executive (2018); Statistics for Wales (2019); Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (2019); OECD exchanges with the Turkish Ministry of Environment and Urbanization and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in August 2020; Poggio and Boreiko (2017).

Data and comparability issues

The relative size of the social rental sector was calculated on the basis of the overall number of dwellings in each tenure (owner-occupied dwellings, market-rented dwellings, co-operative dwellings, social rental dwellings, others), as collected from governments in the OECD 2019 Questionnaire on Affordable and Social Housing (QuASH 2019). There are significant gaps in the information gathered, which does not allow for inclusion of all countries, as indicated in the notes to the figures above. Differences in the years of reference for information across countries constitute an additional limitation.

Sources and further reading:

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