Government deficit continues to decrease and primary balances are improving faster

After extensive fiscal expansion in 2009 drove the government deficit to 12.7% of GDP, the overall government balance has improved significantly, reaching -4.2% of GDP in 2015, yet remaining higher than the OECD average of -2.8% of GDP. The primary balance, which excludes net interest payments on government debt, has improved faster though this period, reaching a deficit of 1.3% of GDP in 2015 after a trough of 9.7% of GDP in 2009.

The regulatory process in the United States is rigorously governed

Agencies have to evaluate costs and benefits of all significant regulatory proposals. All stakeholders have a right to comment on all legislative drafts as well as on the analysis that led to their preparation. The Office of Management and Budget oversees the process, the quality of cost and benefits estimates, making sure that all alternative solutions were duly considered. In addition, the process is safeguarded by judicial review. The United States scored 3.2, on a range between 0 and 4, on the composite indicator related to stakeholder engagement in developing subordinate regulation, above the OECD average of 2.1.

The financial crisis affected disproportionally the labour incomes of the bottom 10%

Even though the financial crisis of 2009 had a deleterious effect over the whole economy, the real labour incomes of the lowest 10% of earners took a particularly strong drop. Between 2008 and 2013, the year for which the latest comparable data is available, the real incomes of workers earning average income decreased by 4% in the USA, while labour incomes of the top 10% decreased by 2%. However, the decrease in real labour income for the lowest 10% fell by 14%.
**Public Finance and Economics**

**Fiscal balance**

- **United States:**
  - % of GDP: -4.2%
- **(2015)**

**Government expenditures**

- **United States:**
  - % of GDP: 37.7%
- **(2015)**

**Government investment**

- **United States:**
  - % of GDP: 3.1%
- **(2015)**

**Government gross debt**

- **United States:**
  - % of GDP: 3.2%
- **(2015, 2016)**

**How to read the figures:**
- **U.S.** Country value in blue (not represented if not available)
- **Average of OECD countries** in red
- **Range of OECD country values in grey**
- **n.a.** refers to data not available

**Public Employment**

**General government employment as % of total employment (2015)**

- **United States:**
  - 15.3%

**Women in the civil service ... and in senior positions (2015)**

- **United States:**
  - 42.6%
  - 34.4%

**Percentage of central government employees aged 55 years or older (2015)**

- **United States:**
  - 27.8%
  - 24.9%

**Public Sector Compensation**

**Annual compensation across central government positions (2015)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Secretarial Positions</th>
<th>Senior Professionals</th>
<th>Middle Managers (D3 positions)</th>
<th>Senior Managers (D1 positions)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2015 USD PPP</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>52,700</td>
<td>88,700</td>
<td>183,200</td>
<td>239,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td><strong>n.a.</strong></td>
<td><strong>n.a.</strong></td>
<td><strong>134,500</strong></td>
<td><strong>231,500</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** OECD (2016) Survey on the Composition of the workforce in Central/Federal Governments
Human Resource Management

Composite indicators on HRM practices in central government (2016)

- Extent of delegation of HRM practices in line ministries: 0.63
- Extent of the use of performance assessments in HR decisions: 0.64
- Extent of the use of performance related pay: 0.80
- Use of separate HRM practices for senior civil servants: 0.90
- Collection of administrative data: 0.68

Source: OECD (2016) Strategic Human Resources Management Survey

Budgeting

Performance budgeting practices at the central level of government (2016)

- United States: 0.28

Source: OECD (2016) Survey of Performance Budgeting

Regulatory governance

Composite indices on regulatory governance for primary laws* (2014)

- Stakeholder engagement in developing regulations: 2.09
- Regulatory Impact Assessment for developing regulations: 2.05
- Ex post evaluation of regulations: 0.66

Source: OECD Indicators of Regulatory Policy and Governance (iREG)

Public Procurement

General government procurement expenditures (2015)

- United States: 24.8%

Source: OECD National Accounts

Strategic public procurement - Objectives (2016)

- Support for green public procurement: n.a.
- Support for SMEs: n.a.
- Support for innovative goods and services: n.a.

Source: OECD (2016) Survey on Public Procurement
**Fiscal balance**

As reported in the System of National Accounts (SNA) framework, also referred to as net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) of government, is calculated as total government revenues minus total government expenditures.

**Regulatory governance indicators:**

The results for stakeholder engagement and Regulatory Impact Assessment apply exclusively to processes for developing primary laws initiated by the executive. Data is not applicable to the United States, where all primary laws are initiated by Congress. In the majority of countries, most primary laws are initiated by the executive, except for Mexico and Korea, where a higher share of primary laws are initiated by parliament/congress (respectively 90.6% and 84%).

**Government gross debt** is reported according to the SNA definition, which differs from the definition applied under the Maastricht Treaty. It is defined as all liabilities that require payment or payments of interest or principal by the debtor to the creditor at a date or dates in the future. All debt instruments are liabilities, but some liabilities such as shares, equity and financial derivatives are not debt.

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**Open Data**

**OURdata Index:**

Open, Useful, Reusable Government Data (2017)

Composite index: from 0 lowest to 1 highest

United States: 0.63

Digital Government

Individuals using the Internet for sending filled forms via public authorities websites in the past 12 months (2016)

United States: 35.6%

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**Core Government Results**

**Satisfaction and confidence across public services (2016)**

- % of citizens expressing confidence/satisfaction

U.S.

National government:

- 30% before taxes and transfers
- 42% after taxes and transfers

Police:

- 82% before taxes and transfers
- 77% after taxes and transfers

Health care:

- 78% before taxes and transfers
- 70% after taxes and transfers

Education system:

- 64% before taxes and transfers
- 67% after taxes and transfers

Judicial system:

- 43% before taxes and transfers
- 55% after taxes and transfers

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**Differences in income inequality pre and post-tax and government transfers (2013)**

- Higher inequality
- Lower inequality

U.S.

- 0.51 before taxes and transfers
- 0.39 after taxes and transfers

- 0.47 before taxes and transfers
- 0.32 after taxes and transfers

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**Limited government powers (2016)**

Limited government powers:

United States: 0.81

Source: The World Justice Project

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**Notes**

- Fiscal balance as reported in the System of National Accounts (SNA) framework, also referred to as net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) of government, is calculated as total government revenues minus total government expenditures.
- Regulatory governance indicators: The results for stakeholder engagement and Regulatory Impact Assessment apply exclusively to processes for developing primary laws initiated by the executive. Data is not applicable to the United States, where all primary laws are initiated by Congress. In the majority of countries, most primary laws are initiated by the executive, except for Mexico and Korea, where a higher share of primary laws are initiated by parliament/congress (respectively 90.6% and 84%).
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**Government at a Glance 2017**

Government at a Glance provides readers with a dashboard of key indicators assembled with the goal of contributing to the analysis and international comparison of public sector productivity and performance. Indicators on government revenues, expenditures, and employment are presented, alongside key output and outcome data for education, health and justice. Information on key enablers to increase productivity including on digital government, budget procedures, strategic human resource management, open government data and innovative practices are also included. In a context of tight budget constraints in many member countries, good indicators are needed more than ever, in order to help governments make informed decisions regarding resource allocation and to help restore confidence in government institutions.

The Excel spreadsheets used to create the tables and figures in Government at a Glance 2017 are available via the StatLinks provided throughout the publication:

http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2017-en

For more information on the data (including full methodology and figure notes) and to consult all other Country Fact Sheets: www.oecd.org/gov/govataglance.htm