

HM1.5. RESIDENTIAL STOCK BY DWELLING TYPE

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents available data on the distribution of different types of dwellings as a share of the total occupied residential dwelling stock across OECD countries. The data are collected primarily from Eurostat, as part of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), and from National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), mainly through population and housing censuses.

For the scope of this indicator, by dwelling stock or housing stock we refer to the total number of occupied dwellings in a country. A *dwelling* is “a room or suite of rooms and its accessories in a permanent building or structurally separated part thereof which by the way it has been built, rebuilt, converted, etc., is intended for private habitation. It should have a separate access to a street (direct or via a garden or grounds) or to a common space within the building (staircase, passage, gallery, etc.)” (UNECE, 2000).

A dwelling provides the usual place of residence to a household, which can include one or more persons. Occasionally, residential dwellings may also be used for business purposes while still housing a household; such dwellings are included. In contrast to the indicators in OECD (2019), which refer to all housing units (occupied and vacant), we only refer to occupied dwellings due to limitations in the data sources. Here, we distinguish among four types of dwellings: *detached house*, *semi-detached house*, *flat/apartment* and *others*:

- *Detached houses* refer to dwellings that have no common walls with another unit. Typically, this is a single-family housing unit with open space on all sides.
- *Semi-detached houses* refer to dwellings that share at least one wall, or a row of (more than two) joined-up dwellings. These may be dwellings in duplex-, terraced-, tenement-, row- or townhouses and in general, each dwelling unit has its own separate entrance.
- *Flats/apartments* refer to dwelling units in a building that shares some internal space or maintenance and other services with other units in the building. In these buildings, corridors, entry foyers, staircases and other common areas are typically jointly used. This category is better known as “condominium” in some countries.
- *Others* refers to all other types of dwelling not covered in the categories above. Most commonly, these are mobile homes, such as caravans, manufactured houses and houseboats, while they sometimes also include nurseries and shacks.

The data presented here is typically collected in quinquennial or decennial housing surveys, as well as from Eurostat, which provides yearly data on the distribution of dwelling types for EU members and the United Kingdom.

This document, as well as any data and any map included herein, are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

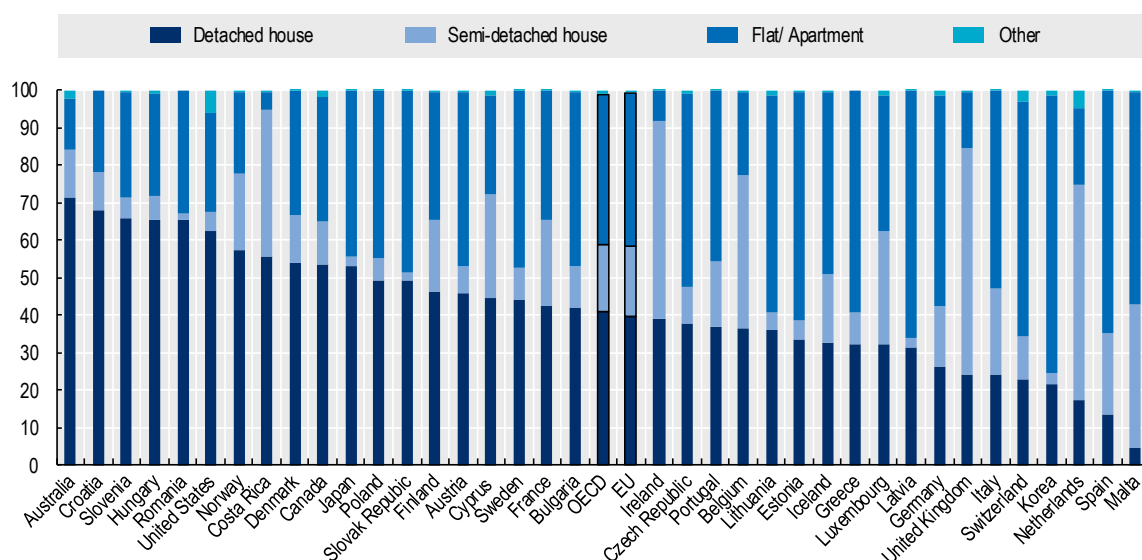
The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

Key findings

Across the OECD, there is significant variation in the characteristics of housing (Figure HM1.5.1). Detached houses are the dominant dwelling type in 17 countries. Australia records the largest share, with about 72% of the dwelling stock, while detached houses account for about two-thirds of the stock in Croatia, Hungary, Romania and Slovenia. Detached houses are much less common in Estonia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Korea, Latvia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, where they comprise between one-fifth to one-third of the stock. Meanwhile, detached dwellings are rare in the Netherlands (17% of the stock), Spain (14%) and Malta (5%).

Figure HM1.5. Residential dwelling stock by dwelling type

Occupied residential dwelling types, % of the total occupied residential dwelling stock, 2019 or latest available year¹



Note: 1. Data on residential dwelling stock refer to 2019, except for the United Kingdom (2018), and Australia, Canada and Iceland (2016).
 2. The classification and terminology on types of dwelling may differ slightly from country to country. In general, “detached houses” refer to dwellings having no common walls with another unit. “Semi-detached houses” refer to dwellings sharing at least one wall or a row of (more than two) joined-up dwellings. “Flats/apartments” refer to dwelling units in a building sharing some internal space or maintenance and other services with other units in the building. “Other” refers to other types of dwellings, including mobile homes, caravans or houseboats.
 3. It is not possible to distinguish between semi-detached houses and flats/apartments for New Zealand, or between detached and semi-detached houses for Mexico. Data for these countries are thus excluded.
 4. The present publication presents time series which end before the United Kingdom’s withdrawal from the European Union on 1 February 2020. The EU aggregate presented here therefore refers to the EU including the UK. In future publications, as soon as the time series presented extend to periods beyond the UK withdrawal (February 2020 for monthly, Q1 2020 for quarterly, 2020 for annual data), the “European Union” aggregate will change to reflect the new EU country composition.
 Source: Eurostat; Australian Bureau of Statistics; Statistics Canada; U.S. Census Bureau; Official Statistics of Japan Portal; Korean Statistical Information Service; Instituto Nacional De Estadística Y Censos Costa Rica.

Footnote 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 recognizes 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”;

Footnote by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Commission: The Republic of Cyprus is recognized 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.

On the other hand, semi-detached housing is widespread in the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and Ireland, representing more than half of all housing. Accounting for less than 10% of the housing stock, semi-detached housing is uncommon in Austria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Korea, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden and the United States.

Housing in apartments, flats or condominiums dominates among different dwelling types in 17 countries. It is most prevalent in Korea, where almost three-quarters of all households live in high-rise apartment buildings or lower-storey multiplex units. It is also the most common dwelling type for more than half of all households in the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Spain and Switzerland. Apartments/flats are much less common, representing less than 20% of the stock, in Australia, Costa Rica, Ireland and the United Kingdom.

In most countries, one dwelling type dominates in the housing market. However, some countries report a housing mix, with each main dwelling type – detached, semi-detached or apartment housing – making up at least 20% of the stock: this is the case, for instance, in Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, France, Luxembourg and Norway. Housing that does not fall into any of these categories (“Other”) is uncommon, with the exception of the United States (6%), the Netherlands (5%) and Switzerland (3%). In the United States, a large number of mobile homes in trailer parks, housing about 22 million individuals, mainly drives these numbers (MHI, 2018).

Data and comparability issues

Data on the distribution of dwellings types are mainly drawn from statistics at the national level, which limits comparability in different ways. First, data are not available for the same reference year(s) across countries and are not always up to date. While some countries rely on regular housing surveys, other countries provide data via the general Population and Housing Census, which is typically conducted every five or ten years. Most of the sources refer to the distribution of households across dwelling types, in particular Eurostat data, while others refer directly to the occupied building stock itself.

Furthermore, national definitions do not always allow for cross-country comparison. For example, in New Zealand, it is not possible to distinguish between semi-detached houses and flats/apartments, as the data cover the numbers of stories of a building, rather than the number of housing units per building.

The categorisation of dwelling types used in this indicator differs from that used in the OECD Residential Property Prices Indices (RPPIs; OECD, 2020), which are reported on a quarterly basis. Data on housing stocks is instead typically reported every five or ten years, with the exception of Eurostat data with yearly updates. Housing price data reported in the RPPIs are typically only available for detached houses and apartment units (in semi-detached or condominium buildings), and in some countries the data only cover selected (particularly urban) geographical areas where sufficient numbers of housing sales are available. The present indicator HM1.5 thus provides a further breakdown of detached dwelling types, to include semi-detached and flats/apartments, to give a more detailed picture of the types of housing people in which people live.

Sources and further reading

MHI (2018), "2017 Manufactured Housing Fact – Industry Overviews", *Manufactured Housing Institute (MHI)*, <https://www.manufacturedhousing.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2017-MHI-Quick-Facts.pdf>

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UNECE (2000), *Bulletin of Housing and Building Statistics for Europe and North America*, Annex II, Definitions and General Terms, page 82. United Nations, Geneva. http://www.unece.org/hlm/prgm/hsstat/Bulletin_00.html