

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 may share a dwelling 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 sometimes downsize as household size has diminished. Living arrangements may also be impacted by changing family trends and structures, such as increased life expectancy, marriages at later ages and higher divorce rates (see [OECD Family Database](#)).

This indicator shows how living arrangements vary across age groups, with a particular focus on youth (aged 15 to 29; for some indicators, aged 20 to 29) and seniors (65 and older). The data are based on household survey microdata and concern population-level data. They exclude group accommodations, such as nursing homes, hospitals, and military quarters. Data in this indicator refer to private households.

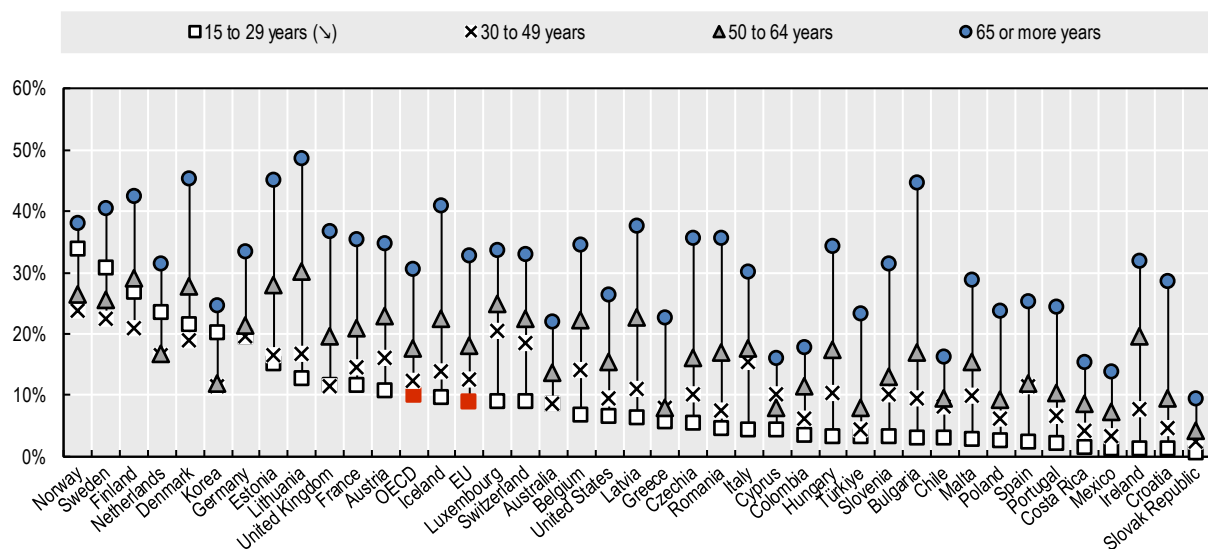
Key findings

Less than half of the population, no matter the country or age group, live on their own (see Figure HM1.4.1 and online worksheet HM1.4.A1 for earlier years). The share of one-person households ranges from 49% among seniors in Lithuania to around 1% among youth (age 15-29) in Croatia, Ireland and the Slovak Republic.

In most countries, the share of one-person households increases with age. Seniors are more likely to live alone than any other age group (ranging from 9% of all seniors in the Slovak Republic to 49% in Lithuania), followed by people aged 50 to 64 years (ranging from 4% in the Slovak Republic to 30% in Lithuania). Meanwhile, the share of single-person households among 30- to 49-year-olds ranges from 3% in the Slovak Republic to 24% in Norway. In 28 countries, fewer than 10% of youth aged 15-29 years old live on their own – and the share is less than 5% in 18 of these 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, 2022 or latest year available



Notes:

1. Only private households are considered.
2. No data available for Canada, Japan, Israel and New Zealand due to data limitations.
3. Data for Australia, Korea, Switzerland, United Kingdom and the United States refer to 2021, for Norway and Türkiye to 2020, for Iceland to 2018.

Source: OECD calculations based on the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2022), except for Switzerland (2021), Norway (2020) and Iceland (2018); the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia (2021); the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2022); the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia (2022); the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAH) for Costa Rica (2022); the Korean Housing Survey (2021); the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico (2022); Türkiye-National SILC (2020); Understanding Society - The UK Household Longitudinal Study (2021); the American Community Survey (ACS) for the United States (2021).

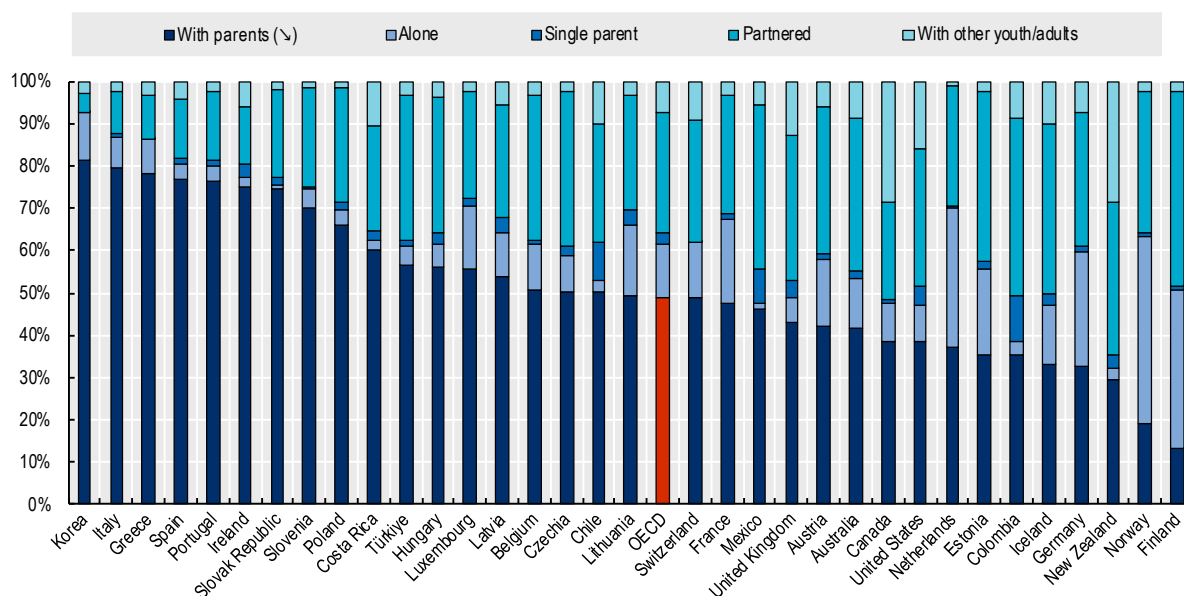
Living arrangements of youth (aged 20-29 years old) vary widely across OECD (Figure HM1.4.2). On average across the OECD, around half of young people live with their parents. The share is much higher in Greece, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Portugal, and Spain, where more than 75% of youth live with their parents. Meanwhile, the share of young people living with their parents 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 4% 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 type, 2022 or latest year available^{1,2,3}



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.

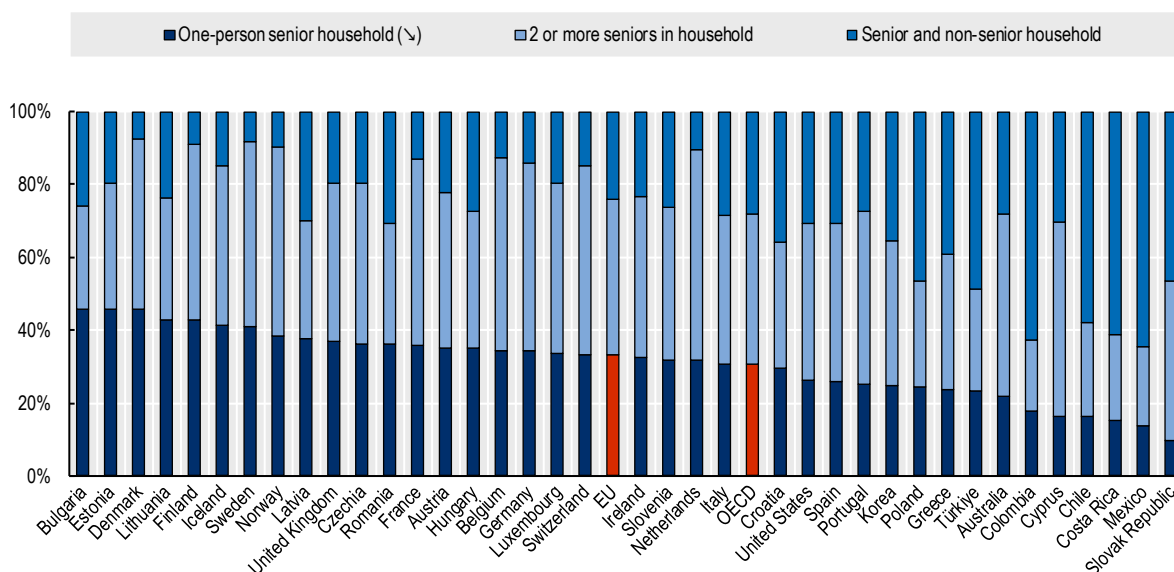
2. The OECD average is unweighted.

3. The latest data refer to 2021 for Australia, Colombia, Costa Rica, Hungary, New Zealand, Switzerland and the United States, 2020 for Korea, Mexico, Norway, Switzerland, Türkiye and the United Kingdom, 2018 for Iceland, and 2017 for Canada and Chile. 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 in single person households (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, Latvia, and Lithuania. 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 19% of all seniors in Colombia to 58% in the Netherlands. In Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Croatia, Greece, 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, where multi-generational households appear to be more common.

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

Distribution of senior people (65+ year-olds), by household, 2022 or latest year available ^{1, 2, 3}.



Notes: 1. Only private households are considered.

2. No data available for Canada, Israel, Japan, Malta, and New Zealand due to data limitations.

3. Data for Australia, Korea, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States refer to 2021, for Norway and Türkiye to 2020, for Iceland to 2018.

Sources: OECD calculations based on the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2022), except for Switzerland (2021), Norway (2020) and Iceland (2018); the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics Survey (HILDA) for Australia (2021); the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2022); the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia (2022); the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) for Costa Rica (2022); the Korean Housing Survey (2021); the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico (2022); Türkiye-National SILC (2020); Understanding Society - The UK Household Longitudinal Study (2021); the American Community Survey (ACS) for the United States (2021).

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* (ENAHO); 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).

Data collection for household surveys faced additional limitations during the COVID-19 pandemic, which may affect the quality of data in 2020 and 2021. This included challenges to conducting face-to-face interviews, as well as difficulties to interpret certain questions in the context of the pandemic (e.g. questions relating to the primary place of residence among young people who had returned to live with their parents during the pandemic). With regards to EU-SILC, there were also cross-country differences in how the reference period was defined, as some countries interpreted the reference period as “before the crisis – as usual” while others considered the impacts of the pandemic (Eurostat, 2020).

Data from EU-SILC are also subject to variation across years due to limited sample sizes. Although weights are used to help ensure data are representative of the population, and all indicators in the

OECD Affordable Housing Database rely on variables with at least 100 observations, caution should still be exercised when comparing data across years.

The analysis considers only private households and excludes individuals living in institutions, such as nursing homes, hospitals, and military quarters. As such, the analysis of living arrangements of elderly people on the basis of household survey data has its limits. In 2021, across 28 OECD countries, the share of adults aged 65 and over receiving long-term care was 11.5% (OECD, 2023). Despite the avowed political shift away from institutional settings, population ageing has led to an increase in the institutionalised population in some OECD countries. For example, in Germany, Lithuania, and Spain, the share of adults aged 65 and over receiving long-term care has increased by over five percentage points between 2011 and 2021 (OECD, 2023).

There are important limitations to data on long-term care services, however. Such data 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 who receive publicly funded care, while other countries include people who pay for their own care (OECD, 2019).

Sources and further reading

Cournède, B. and M. Plouin (2022), “No Home for the Young?”, <https://www.oecd.org/housing/no-home-for-the-young.pdf>.

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.

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