

Ageing population

Populations are expected to continue ageing, especially in non-metropolitan areas.

The population has been stagnating or declining in many OECD countries while ageing at the same time, which presents many challenges and opportunities. Older individuals typically receive public pensions and use public services such as healthcare more intensively than younger people, which can entail greater financial burdens on the working-age population and future generations. Although ageing will be present in all types of regions in the next two decades, some places will be more concerned than others.

Non-metropolitan regions will experience population ageing the most. Across the OECD, elderly dependency rates remain significantly lower in metropolitan regions compared to other regions (Figure 3.7). As the population ages, the elderly share of the population (i.e. those above 65 years old) will increase in all 3 types of regions but the increase will be largest in regions far from a metropolitan region (Figure 3.7). While the share of the elderly is expected to increase by 8 percentage points, reaching 29% in these areas, it is expected to increase by 6 pp to 25% in metropolitan regions, and by 7 pp to 27% in regions near a metropolitan region.

These expected ageing trends are common to almost all OECD countries (Figure 3.8). In most countries, dependency rates will remain significantly lower in metropolitan regions compared to other regions (Figure 3.8). This is particularly the case in countries where all non-metropolitan regions have relatively high elderly dependency rates, such as Japan, Korea and Lithuania. In these countries, all non-metropolitan regions have elderly dependency rates above 35% (reaching 42% in Korea). Elderly dependency rates in metropolitan regions remain below 31% in all OECD countries, with the exception of Japan and Korea where the rates are 35% and 33% respectively.

Sources

OECD calculations are based on data from Eurostat and national statistical institutes.

Reference years and territorial level

2020-40, TL3 regions are classified according to metropolitan access classification (see below for further details).

Definitions

The elderly population is the population aged 65 years and over.

The elderly dependency ratio is defined as the ratio between the elderly population and the working-age population (15-64 years).

The elderly share is defined as the ratio between the elderly population and the total population.

Access to metropolitan areas typology: The proposed classification distinguishes TL3 regions based on the level of access to metropolitan areas (Fadic et al., 2019). At a first level, regions where at least half of the regional population live in a metropolitan area of at least 250 000 inhabitants are considered “metropolitan” regions, and as “non-metropolitan” otherwise. Metropolitan regions are further distinguished as “large metro” regions if they include or they are part of a metropolitan area of at least 1.5 million inhabitants. “Non-metropolitan” regions are sub-classified as regions “with access to a metro” if half of its population can reach a metropolitan area within a 60-minute drive. When half of the regional population can reach only a smaller-sized city (between 50 000 and 250 000 inhabitants), the region is classified as “with access to a small/medium city”. In all other cases, the region is classified as “remote”. The classification relies on the concept of FUAs (Dijkstra et al., 2019; OECD, 2012) to delineate metropolitan areas of at least 250 000 inhabitants or smaller-sized cities.

Further information

Dijkstra, L., H. Poelman and P. Veneri (2019), “The EU-OECD definition of a functional urban area”, *OECD Regional Development Working Papers*, No. 2019/11, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/d58cb34d-en>.

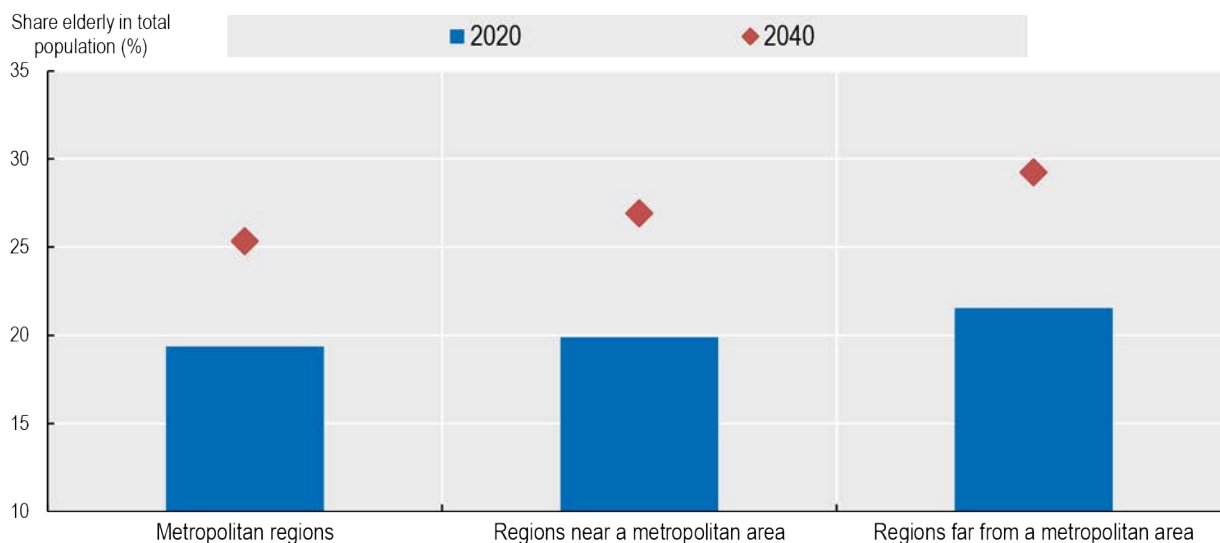
Fadic, M. et al. (2019), “Classifying small (TL3) regions based on metropolitan population, low density and remoteness”, *OECD Regional Development Working Papers*, No. 2019/06, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/b902cc00-en>.

OECD (2012), *Redefining “Urban”: A New Way to Measure Metropolitan Areas*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264174108-en>.

Figure notes

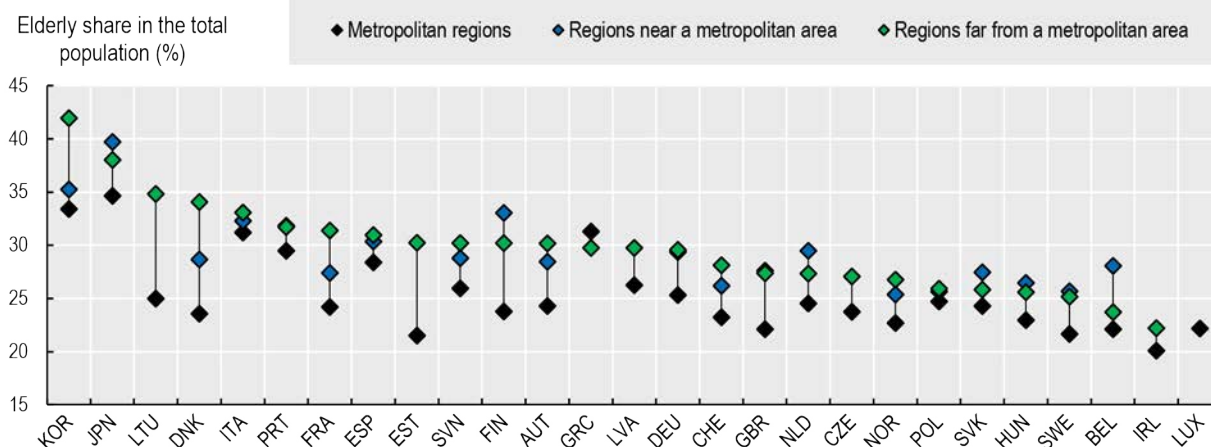
3.7-3.8: Data corresponds to 27 OECD countries for which data is available. It includes 25 European countries, Japan and Korea.

3.7. The share of elderly in the population by area typology, 2020 and 2040

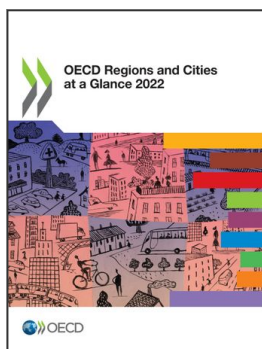


StatLink <https://stat.link/7v1imr>

3.8. The share of elderly population by country and region typology, 2040 projection



StatLink <https://stat.link/ozhbn4>



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