

DEPENDENT POPULATION

Demographic trends in OECD countries have implied a sharp increase in the share of the dependent population (i.e. the sum of the elderly and youth population) in the total population, and this increase is expected to continue in the future. These trends have a number of implications for government and private spending on pensions, health-care and education and, more generally, for economic growth and welfare.

Overview

The share of dependent population reflects the combined effect of fertility rates, life expectancy and migration. In 2010, countries with a share of dependent population more than 1.3 percentage points above the OECD total (33% on average) were Israel, Japan, France, Sweden and Italy. Korea at 27% has the lowest recorded share of dependent population in the OECD and is closely followed by the Slovak Republic, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. There is a wide variation among the emerging countries, with this share ranging between 36% in India and 28% in the Russian Federation and China.

By 2050, the share of dependent population is projected to increase in all OECD countries, while declining only in the non-member economies of India and South Africa. The share of the dependent population is projected to be above 45% in Japan, Korea, Spain and Italy by 2050.

The youth population accounted for around 18% of the OECD total (on average) in 2010 with a steady decline since the 1970s. This fall is projected to continue as a result of lower fertility rates. By 2050 Japan and Korea are projected to have youth populations of 9% of the total, while only the United States (19%), Iceland (18%) and Estonia (18%) have projected youth populations close to the current OECD total.

In 2010, the share of the elderly in the total population ranged between less than 7% in South Africa, India, Indonesia and Mexico, to above 18% in Greece, Germany, Italy and Japan (the OECD average was 15%). By 2050, this share is projected to be below 11% in South Africa, and to exceed one third of the total population in Greece, Italy, Spain, Korea and Japan. A number of countries are projected to have large increases in their elderly population between 2010 and 2050. For example, the Slovak Republic, Spain, and Korea all see projected growth in the share of the elderly in the total population in excess of 17 percentage points. However, some countries see smaller projected increases between 2010 and 2050. For example, Sweden, South Africa, Estonia and the United States all see projected growth to be less than 8 percentage points for this period.

Definition

The total population is defined as the resident population, i.e. all persons, regardless of citizenship, who have a permanent place of residence in the country.

The elderly population refers to people aged 65 and over and the youth population to people aged less than 15. The share of dependent population is calculated as the sum of the elderly and youth population expressed as a ratio of the total population.

Comparability

Population projections by age and gender are taken from national sources where these are available; for other countries they are based on Eurostat and UN projections.

All population projections require assumptions about future trends in life expectancy, fertility rates and migration, and these assumptions may differ across countries. Often, a range of projections is produced. The estimates shown here correspond to the median or central variant of these projections.

Sources

- OECD (2011), *Labour Force Statistics*, OECD Publishing.
- Eurostat, United Nations, national sources and OECD estimates.

Further information

Analytical publications

- Burniaux, J., R. Duval and F. Jaumotte (2004), "Coping with Ageing", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 371.
- OECD (2012), *OECD Employment Outlook*, OECD Publishing.
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- Oliveira Martins J., et al. (2005), "The Impact of Ageing on Demand, Factor Markets and Growth", *OECD Economics Department Working Papers*, No. 420.

Methodological publications

- OECD (2005), *Main Economic Indicators – Sources and Methods: Labour and Wage Statistics*, OECD Publishing.

Online databases

- OECD *Employment and Labour Market Statistics*.



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Share of the dependent population

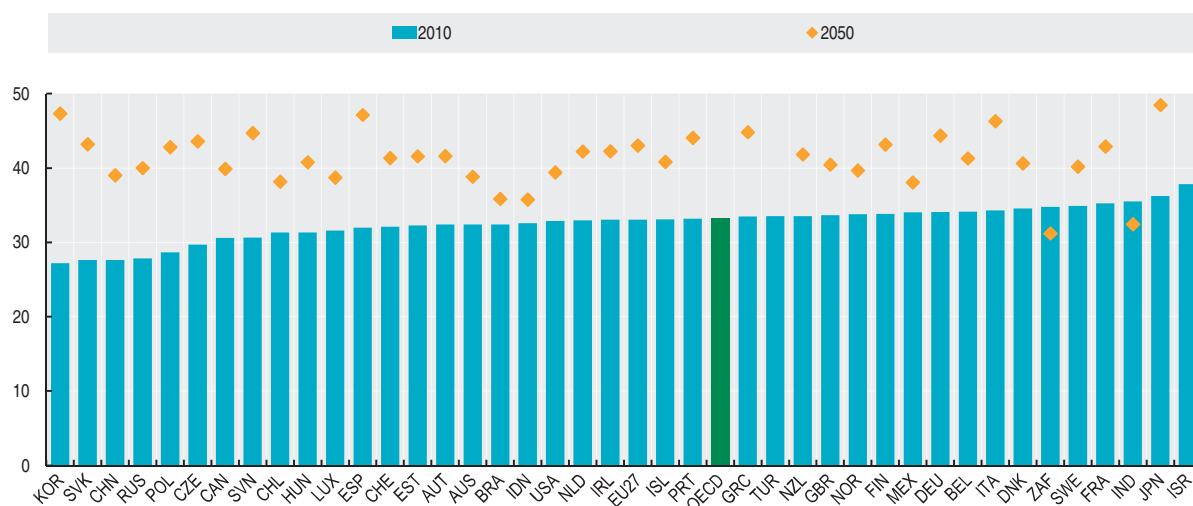
As a percentage of total population

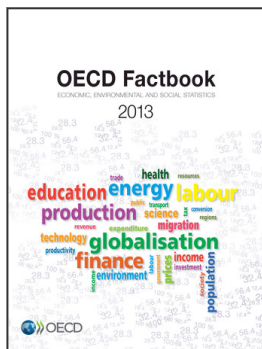
	Youth population (under the age of 15)						Elderly population (age 65 and over)					
	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2000	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Australia	20.7	18.9	18.4	17.6	16.9	16.7	12.4	13.5	16.8	19.7	21.3	22.2
Austria	17.0	14.8	14.3	14.2	13.5	13.3	15.4	17.6	19.6	24.0	27.2	28.3
Belgium	17.6	16.9	17.6	17.2	16.6	16.8	16.8	17.2	19.2	22.3	24.1	24.5
Canada	19.2	16.5	15.3	14.7	13.8	13.6	12.6	14.1	18.2	23.1	25.0	26.3
Chile	27.8	22.3	20.2	18.7	17.3	16.6	7.2	9.0	11.9	16.5	19.8	21.6
Czech Republic	16.4	14.3	13.7	12.7	12.2	12.4	13.8	15.4	20.1	22.7	26.5	31.2
Denmark	18.5	18.0	16.9	17.2	17.3	16.8	14.8	16.6	20.0	22.6	24.5	23.8
Estonia	18.0	15.2	18.1	17.2	16.0	17.8	15.1	17.0	18.3	20.4	21.8	23.8
Finland	18.2	16.6	16.6	16.1	15.5	15.6	14.9	17.3	22.9	26.1	26.9	27.6
France	18.9	18.4	17.9	17.1	16.7	16.7	16.1	16.9	20.6	23.6	25.8	26.2
Germany	15.6	13.4	12.5	12.4	11.5	11.3	16.4	20.6	23.3	28.8	32.1	33.1
Greece	15.3	14.4	14.0	12.6	12.1	12.3	16.6	19.1	21.3	24.8	29.4	32.5
Hungary	16.8	14.7	15.1	14.4	13.7	13.9	15.1	16.7	20.1	21.5	23.9	26.9
Iceland	23.3	20.9	20.4	19.0	17.8	17.5	11.6	12.1	15.2	19.2	21.5	23.4
Ireland	21.8	21.6	19.7	16.8	16.1	16.0	11.2	11.5	14.9	18.5	22.4	26.3
Israel	28.6	28.0	27.4	27.0	..	..	9.8	9.9	12.0	13.1	..	..
Italy	14.3	14.0	13.1	12.1	12.4	12.7	18.3	20.3	23.3	27.3	32.2	33.6
Japan	14.6	13.2	11.7	10.3	10.0	9.7	17.4	23.0	29.1	31.6	36.1	38.8
Korea	21.1	16.1	13.2	12.6	11.2	9.9	7.2	11.0	15.7	24.3	32.3	37.4
Luxembourg	18.9	17.7	17.0	17.3	16.9	16.6	14.1	13.9	16.6	20.0	22.3	22.1
Mexico	34.1	28.1	23.2	20.8	18.5	16.8	4.7	5.9	8.1	11.8	16.7	21.2
Netherlands	18.6	17.5	16.2	16.1	15.8	15.4	13.6	15.4	19.9	24.3	27.0	26.9
New Zealand	22.8	20.5	18.1	16.9	16.3	15.6	11.8	13.0	17.1	21.9	25.2	26.2
Norway	20.0	18.8	17.5	17.5	16.9	16.4	15.2	15.0	18.0	20.6	22.9	23.2
Poland	19.5	15.1	15.6	13.7	12.1	12.5	12.2	13.5	18.4	22.3	25.1	30.3
Portugal	16.1	15.2	13.7	12.4	12.2	12.1	16.2	18.0	20.8	24.4	28.6	32.0
Slovak Republic	19.5	15.3	14.6	13.4	12.6	13.2	11.4	12.3	17.3	21.6	25.0	30.1
Slovenia	15.9	14.1	14.7	13.9	13.5	14.7	14.0	16.5	20.5	24.7	27.6	30.0
Spain	14.8	15.0	14.1	11.6	11.3	11.4	16.8	17.0	20.0	25.1	31.6	35.7
Sweden	18.4	16.6	17.6	16.9	16.0	16.3	17.3	18.3	20.8	22.7	23.9	23.8
Switzerland	17.4	14.6	14.4	14.0	13.2	13.1	15.3	17.5	20.5	24.7	27.4	28.3
Turkey	29.4	25.8	22.9	..	..	..	6.8	7.7	9.5	..	..	..
United Kingdom	19.0	17.7	17.8	16.9	16.3	16.3	15.8	16.0	19.0	21.9	23.7	24.1
United States	21.4	19.8	20.0	19.5	19.3	19.3	12.4	13.1	16.1	19.3	20.0	20.2
EU 27	17.1	15.6	15.5	14.6	14.2	14.3	15.7	17.4	20.3	23.8	27.0	28.7
OECD	20.5	18.4	17.5	..	..	..	13.1	14.7	17.9	..	..	..
Brazil	29.8	25.6	20.1	17.0	14.9	13.1	5.4	6.8	9.2	13.3	17.5	22.7
China	25.5	19.5	16.7	14.6	13.6	13.5	7.0	8.2	12.0	16.5	23.3	25.6
India	34.7	30.6	27.1	23.8	21.1	19.0	4.2	4.9	6.3	8.3	10.5	13.5
Indonesia	30.7	27.0	23.5	20.1	17.9	16.5	4.6	5.6	7.0	10.5	14.9	19.2
Russian Federation	18.2	15.0	17.3	15.8	15.4	16.9	12.4	12.8	15.2	19.1	20.1	23.1
South Africa	33.7	30.1	27.6	25.2	23.1	21.1	3.7	4.6	6.2	7.8	8.5	10.1

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Share of the dependent population

As a percentage of total population

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