

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, 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.

Definition

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

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.

Overview

The share of dependent population reflects the combined effect of fertility rates and longer life expectancy. In the year 2005, this share was higher in emerging countries (ranging between 38% in India and 34% in Brazil and Indonesia) than in most OECD countries (at 33% on average).

By 2050, the share of dependent population is projected to increase sharply in all OECD countries, to an average level of 41.6% for the OECD as a whole, while declining only in India and South Africa. The share of the dependent population is projected to be above 45% in Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain by 2050.

The youth population accounted for around 30% of the total population for the world as a whole, and for around 20% for the OECD area. Because of lower fertility rates, the share of the youth population is projected to decline to less than 20% at the world level by 2050, and to around 15% for the OECD area.

In 2005, the share of the elderly in the total population ranged between less than 4% in South Africa, India, Indonesia and Mexico, and above 18% in Greece, Germany, Japan and Italy. By 2050, this share is projected to be below 10% only in South Africa, and to exceed one third of the total in Italy, Japan, Korea and Spain.

Comparability

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 (2009), *Labour Force Statistics*, OECD, Paris.
- Eurostat, United Nations, national sources and OECD estimates.

Further information

Analytical publications

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- Oliveira Martins J., F. Gonand, P. Antolin, C. de la Maisonnette and K.-Y. Yoo (2005), *The Impact of Ageing on Demand, Factor Markets and Growth*, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 420, OECD, Paris.

Methodological publications

- OECD (1997), "Sources and Methods – Labour and Wage Statistics", *Main Economic Indicators: April Volume 1997 Issue 4*, OECD, Paris.

Online databases

- *Employment Statistics*.



Share of the dependent population

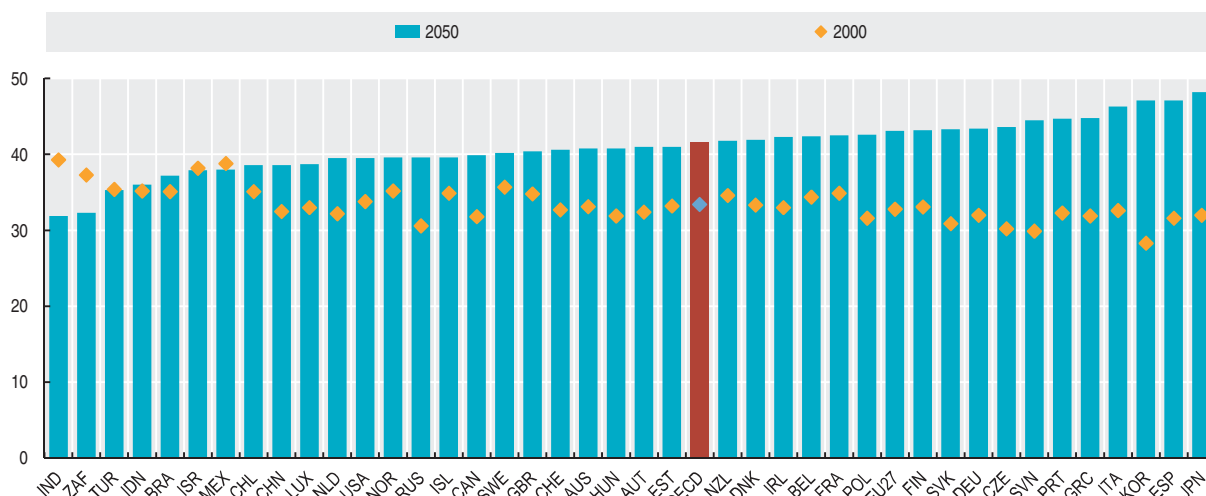
As a percentage of the total population

	Youth population (aged less than 15)							Elderly population (aged 65 and over)						
	2000	2005	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050	2000	2005	2010	2020	2030	2040	2050
Australia	20.7	19.7	18.4	17.0	16.2	15.5	15.1	12.4	12.9	14.3	18.3	22.2	24.5	25.7
Austria	17.0	16.0	14.9	14.4	14.3	13.8	13.6	15.4	16.3	17.4	19.3	23.4	26.4	27.4
Belgium	17.6	17.1	16.3	15.7	15.4	14.8	14.7	16.8	17.2	17.6	20.7	24.9	27.4	27.7
Canada	19.2	17.6	16.2	15.3	14.7	13.8	13.6	12.6	13.1	14.1	18.2	23.1	25.0	26.3
Czech Republic	16.4	14.8	13.6	13.7	12.7	12.2	12.4	13.8	14.1	15.4	20.1	22.7	26.5	31.2
Denmark	18.5	18.8	17.9	16.3	16.8	16.9	16.5	14.8	15.1	16.8	20.9	24.1	26.2	25.4
Finland	18.2	17.4	16.5	16.6	16.1	15.5	15.6	14.9	15.9	17.3	22.8	26.2	27.0	27.6
France	18.8	18.4	18.3	17.5	16.7	16.5	16.3	16.1	16.4	16.7	20.3	23.4	25.6	26.2
Germany	15.6	14.3	13.6	13.0	12.7	12.0	11.9	16.4	18.9	20.4	22.7	27.8	31.1	31.5
Greece	15.3	14.4	14.2	14.0	12.6	12.1	12.3	16.6	18.3	18.9	21.3	24.8	29.4	32.5
Hungary	16.8	15.5	14.8	15.1	14.4	13.7	13.9	15.1	15.7	16.7	20.1	21.5	23.9	26.9
Iceland	23.3	22.1	20.8	19.7	19.0	18.2	18.1	11.6	11.7	12.4	15.5	19.2	20.9	21.5
Ireland	21.8	20.6	21.0	19.7	16.8	16.1	16.0	11.2	11.1	11.9	14.9	18.5	22.4	26.3
Italy	14.3	14.1	14.0	13.1	12.1	12.4	12.7	18.3	19.6	20.5	23.3	27.3	32.2	33.6
Japan	14.6	13.8	13.0	10.8	9.7	9.3	8.6	17.4	20.2	23.1	29.2	31.8	36.5	39.6
Korea	21.1	19.2	16.2	12.4	11.4	10.3	8.9	7.2	9.1	11.0	15.6	24.3	32.5	38.2
Luxembourg	18.9	18.5	17.8	17.0	17.3	16.9	16.6	14.1	14.1	14.6	16.6	20.0	22.3	22.1
Mexico	34.1	31.3	28.1	23.2	20.8	18.5	16.8	4.7	5.2	5.9	8.1	11.8	16.7	21.2
Netherlands	18.6	18.4	17.5	15.9	16.1	16.2	16.0	13.6	14.2	15.5	19.8	23.4	25.0	23.5
New Zealand	22.8	21.5	20.3	18.1	16.9	16.3	15.6	11.8	12.0	13.3	17.1	21.9	25.2	26.2
Norway	20.0	19.6	18.7	17.5	17.5	16.9	16.4	15.2	14.7	15.1	18.0	20.6	22.9	23.2
Poland	19.4	16.5	14.7	14.5	14.1	12.8	13.0	12.2	13.2	13.5	18.5	22.7	25.0	29.6
Portugal	16.1	15.6	15.5	14.0	12.7	12.9	13.1	16.2	17.1	17.5	20.1	23.9	28.2	31.6
Slovak Republic	19.5	16.8	14.8	14.6	13.4	12.6	13.2	11.4	11.7	12.8	17.3	21.6	25.0	30.1
Spain	14.8	14.5	14.9	14.1	11.6	11.3	11.4	16.8	16.7	17.4	20.0	25.1	31.6	35.7
Sweden	18.4	17.4	16.4	17.2	17.1	16.4	16.6	17.3	17.3	18.5	21.2	22.8	24.0	23.6
Switzerland	17.4	16.1	15.0	14.0	13.6	13.0	12.7	15.3	15.9	17.2	20.2	24.2	27.0	27.9
Turkey	30.0	28.4	26.6	23.2	21.1	19.1	17.7	5.4	5.9	6.3	7.8	10.4	14.2	17.6
United Kingdom	19.0	17.9	17.4	17.8	16.9	16.3	16.3	15.8	16.0	16.5	19.0	21.9	23.7	24.1
United States	21.4	20.7	20.1	20.0	19.5	19.3	19.3	12.4	12.4	13.0	16.1	19.3	20.0	20.2
EU27 total	17.1	16.0	15.4	14.9	14.1	13.7	13.8	15.7	16.7	17.5	20.6	24.4	27.7	29.3
OECD total	20.4	19.3	18.4	17.2	16.4	15.9	15.8	13.0	13.8	14.8	18.0	21.5	24.2	25.8
Brazil	29.6	27.5	25.5	20.1	17.0	15.3	14.7	5.5	6.2	6.9	9.6	13.7	17.7	22.5
Chile	27.8	24.9	22.3	20.2	18.6	17.2	16.5	7.3	8.1	9.2	12.1	16.8	20.2	22.1
China	25.7	22.0	19.9	18.7	16.9	15.3	15.3	6.8	7.6	8.2	11.7	15.9	21.8	23.3
Estonia	18.1	15.2	15.4	18.3	16.9	15.3	16.8	15.1	16.7	17.1	18.6	20.7	22.0	24.2
India	35.0	33.1	30.8	26.7	22.8	19.7	18.2	4.3	4.6	4.9	6.3	8.4	10.7	13.7
Indonesia	30.3	28.4	26.7	22.9	20.0	18.8	17.4	4.9	5.5	6.1	7.5	10.7	14.7	18.6
Israel	28.3	27.9	27.6	24.9	22.1	20.6	18.7	9.9	10.1	10.2	12.8	14.7	16.8	19.2
Russian Federation	18.2	15.1	15.0	16.7	15.2	14.7	16.2	12.4	13.8	12.9	15.4	19.4	20.5	23.4
Slovenia	15.9	14.2	13.8	14.5	13.5	13.1	14.3	14.0	15.5	16.4	20.3	24.6	27.5	30.2
South Africa	33.6	31.7	30.3	28.6	26.2	24.3	22.5	3.7	4.1	4.6	6.3	7.9	8.5	9.8
World	30.3	28.4	26.9	25.0	22.7	20.7	19.6	6.8	7.3	7.6	9.3	11.7	14.2	16.2

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Share of the dependent population

As a percentage of the total population

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