

### General government employment across levels of government

The proportion of staff employed at sub-central levels of government is an indicator of the level of decentralisation of public administrations. In general, larger shares of government employees at the sub-central level indicate that more responsibilities are delegated to regional and local governments for providing public services. Although decentralisation can increase the responsiveness of government to local needs and priorities, it can also result in variations in service delivery within countries.

In 2011, most countries had more employees at the sub-central level than at the central level of government. Federal states employ less than one-third of all government employees at the central level, indicating higher levels of decentralisation. The variance in the proportion of government employees at the central level of government is much larger in unitary states, ranging from less than 20% in Japan and Sweden to about 90% in Ireland, Turkey and New Zealand.

Between 2001 and 2011, the percentage of government staff employed at the central level has remained relatively stable, with a slight trend towards greater decentralisation in the majority of OECD member countries. A few countries have experienced significant decentralisation in this period, including Spain, the Czech Republic and Japan, where the share of government staff employed at the sub-central level has increased by 10 percentage points or more. In the case of Spain, this increase was due to the delegation of responsibilities to the sub-central level together with staff reductions implemented since 2010. Only one country – Norway – experienced a notable centralisation of government staff during this period, with a 13 percentage point increase in the share of staff employed at the central level, although nearly two-thirds of government employees continue to be employed at the sub-central level.

#### Methodology and definitions

Data were collected by the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the OECD and refer to 2001 and 2011, except where indicated. The data are based on the *System of National Accounts (SNA)* definitions and cover employment in central and sub-central levels of government. Sub-central government is comprised of state and local government including regions, provinces and municipalities. Together the central and sub-central levels comprise general government. In addition, countries provided information on employment in the social security funds component of general government, which include all central, state, and local institutional units whose principal activity is to provide social benefits. As social security funds refer to different levels of government, employment in this category has been recorded separately unless otherwise stated. However, in most countries, with the exceptions of France, Mexico, and Germany, social security funds employ a small number of staff and represent a small percentage of the total workforce. The following countries are federal states in the dataset: Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Germany, Mexico, the Russian Federation, Spain (considered a quasi-federal country), Switzerland and the United States.

Data represent the number of employees except for Italy, the Netherlands and New Zealand where data represent full-time equivalents (FTEs). As a result, employment numbers for these three countries are understated in comparison.

#### Further reading

Charbit, C. and M. Michalun (2009), “Mind the Gaps: Managing Mutual Dependence in Relations among Levels of Government”, *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 14, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/221253707200>.

OECD (2011), *Public Servants as Partners for Growth: Toward a Stronger, Leaner and More Equitable Workforce*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264166707-en>.

#### Figure notes

Data for Australia, Austria, Chile, Iceland, Korea, Poland, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom are not available. Social security funds are not separately identified (i.e. recorded under central and/or sub-central government) for Canada, Estonia, Ireland, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland and the United States. Data for Germany, Ireland, Norway and Sweden are for 2010 rather than 2011. Data for Japan, Mexico and the Russian Federation are for 2009 rather than 2011. Data for Greece, Hungary and Switzerland are for 2008 rather than 2011. Data for the Czech Republic are for 2007 rather than 2011. Data for France and South Africa are for 2006 rather than 2011.

5.3: Data for Brazil are for 2009. Data for Portugal are for 2008.

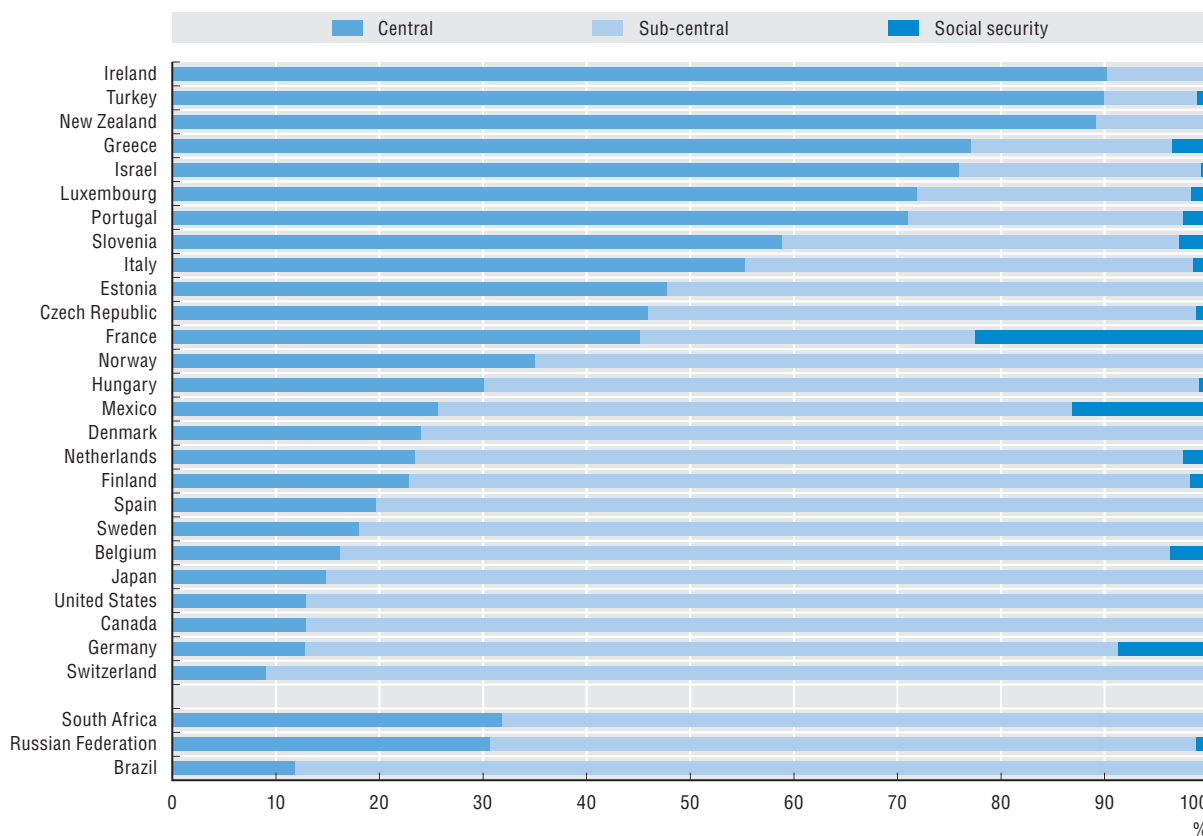
5.4: Data for Portugal are not available.

Information on data for Israel: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932315602>.

## 5. PUBLIC SECTOR EMPLOYMENT AND PAY

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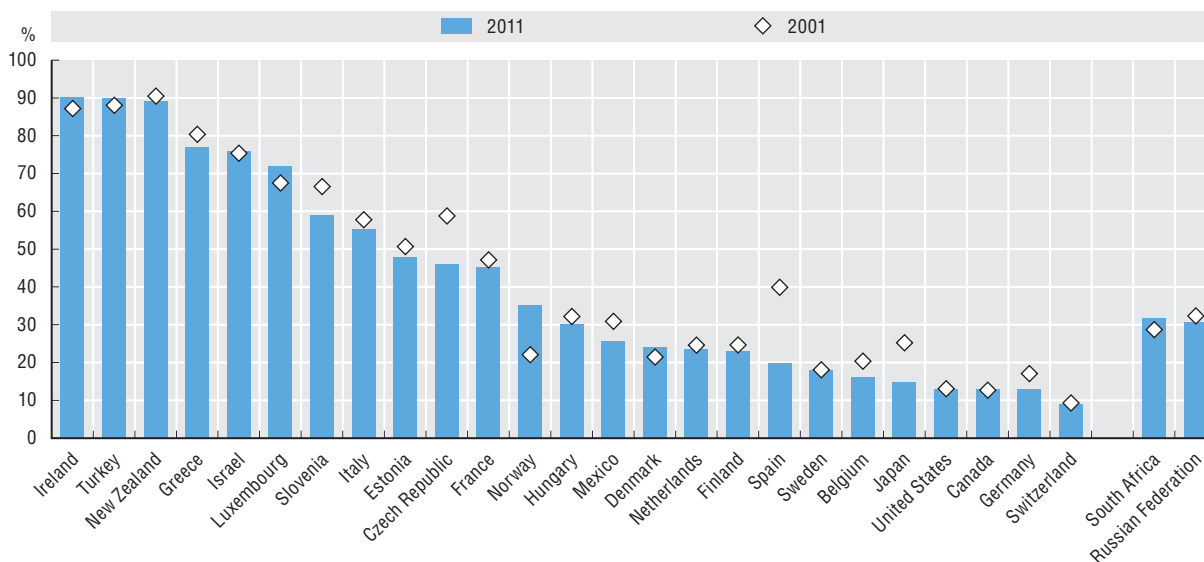
#### 5.3. Distribution of general government employment across levels of government (2011)



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA (database).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932942279>

#### 5.4. Change in the percentage of government staff employed at the central level (2001 and 2011)



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA (database).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932942298>



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