

22. General government employment across levels of government

The share of government staff employed at sub-central levels 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.

In 2008, the majority of OECD member countries had more employees at the sub-central level than at the central level of government. Federal states (with the exception of the Russian Federation) employ less than one-third of all government employees at the central level, confirming higher levels of decentralisation. For unitary states, the variance in the proportion of government employees at the central level of government is much larger, ranging from less than 18% in Japan and Sweden to almost 90% in New Zealand.

The percentage of government staff employed at the central level has remained relatively constant between 2000 and 2008. Some exceptions, however, include the Czech Republic, Japan and Spain which demonstrate significant decentralisations of staff during this period. For example, in the Czech Republic the data reflect the growing delegation of responsibilities to newly established administrative regions and regional offices. In comparison, Norway has experienced a significant centralisation of staff during this period, with a 12.5 percentage point increase in staff employed at the central level.

Methodology and definitions

Data refer to 2000 and 2008 and were collected by the International Labour Organization (ILO). 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. Some countries provided information on employment in the social security funds component of general government, which were included in each level of government. However, in a few cases, employment in social security funds was recorded separately and by consequence was not accounted at either the central or sub-central level. Social security represents a small number of employees and is of minor importance as a percentage of the total workforce. The following countries are federal states in the dataset: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Germany, Mexico, Switzerland, the Russian Federation and the United States.

Data represent the number of employees except for Austria, the Czech Republic, Italy, the Netherlands, New Zealand and Poland where data represent full-time equivalents (FTEs). In New Zealand, FTEs are included for education, health and community services and personal and other services. As a result, employment numbers for these six countries are understated in comparison.

Further reading

- OECD (2008), *The State of the Public Service*, OECD Publishing, Paris.
- Pilichowski, E. and E. Turkisch (2008), "Employment in Government in the Perspective of the Production Costs of Goods and Services in the Public Domain", *OECD Working Papers on Public Governance*, No. 8, OECD Publishing, Paris.

Figure notes

Data for Austria, Chile, Estonia, France, Iceland, Korea, Poland, Slovenia, the Slovak Republic and the United Kingdom are not available. General government employment data for Japan are not classified according to SNA definitions and are substituted by direct employment figures provided by central or sub-central governments. Data for Australia and the United States refer to the public sector (both general government and public corporations). Data for Hungary do not include other non-profit institutions at the central/sub-central level. Data for Finland, Israel, Mexico and Sweden are for 2007 rather than 2008. Data for Japan, New Zealand and Portugal are for 2006 rather than 2008. Data for the Russian Federation are for 2005 rather than 2008. Data for South Africa are for 2003 rather than 2008.

22.1: Data for Brazil are for 2003.

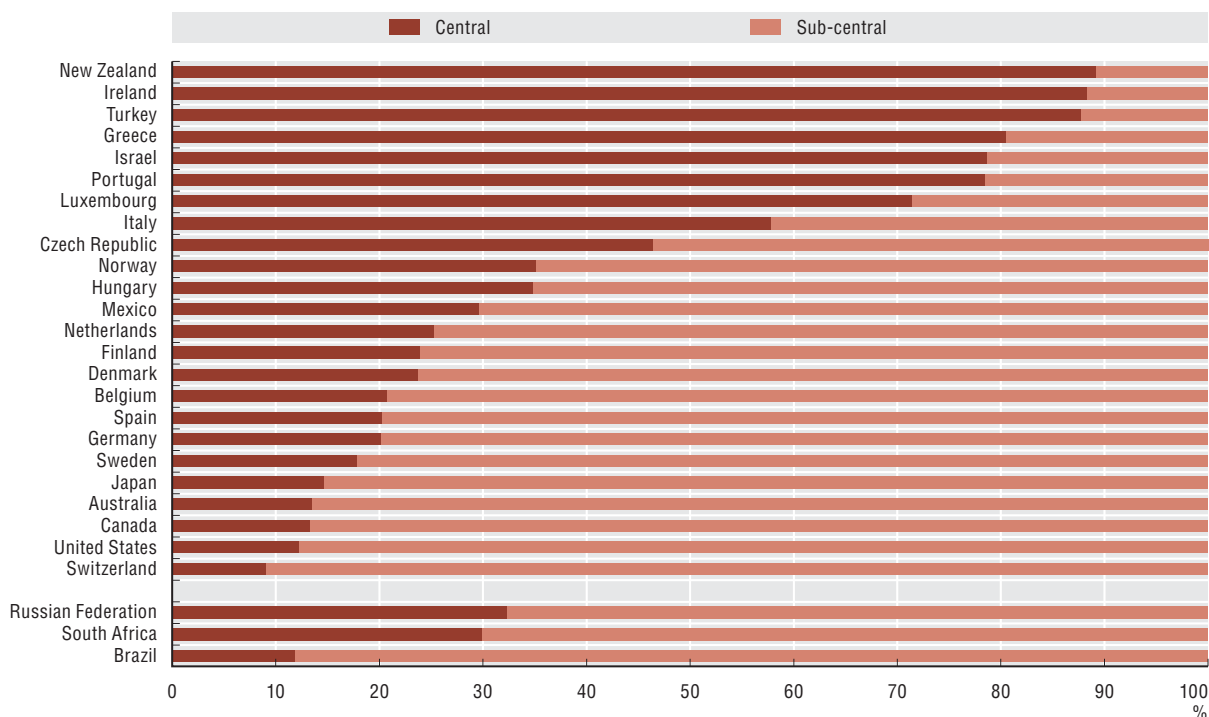
22.2: Data for Japan and Switzerland are for 2001 rather than 2000.

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

V. EMPLOYMENT IN GENERAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC CORPORATIONS

22. General government employment across levels of government

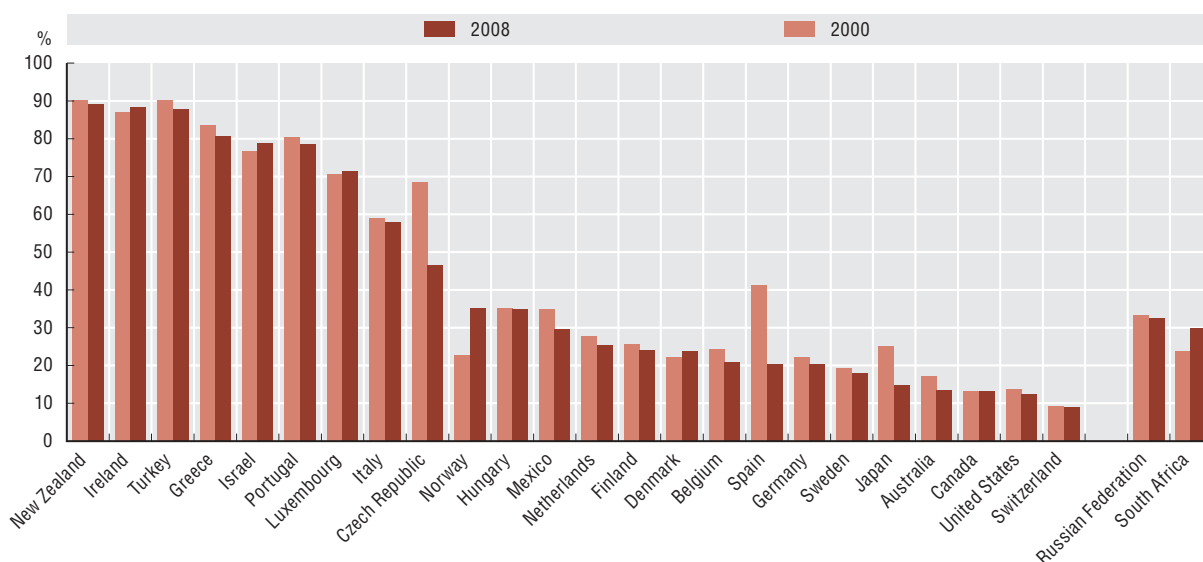
22.1 Distribution of general government employment between the central and sub-central levels of government (2008)



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA Database. Data for Turkey are from the Ministry of Finance and the Turkish Statistical Institute. Data for Japan are from the Establishment and Enterprise Census.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932390576>

22.2 Change in the percentage of government staff employed at the central level (2000 and 2008)



Source: International Labour Organization (ILO), LABORSTA Database. Data for Turkey are from the Ministry of Finance and the Turkish Statistical Institute. Data for Japan are from the Establishment and Enterprise Census.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888932390596>



From:
Government at a Glance 2011

Access the complete publication at:
https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-en

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2011), "General government employment across levels of government", in *Government at a Glance 2011*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.1787/gov_glance-2011-28-en

This work is published under the responsibility of the Secretary-General of the OECD. The opinions expressed and arguments employed herein do not necessarily reflect the official views of OECD member countries.

This document and any map included herein are without prejudice to the status of or sovereignty over any territory, to the delimitation of international frontiers and boundaries and to the name of any territory, city or area.

You can copy, download or print OECD content for your own use, and you can include excerpts from OECD publications, databases and multimedia products in your own documents, presentations, blogs, websites and teaching materials, provided that suitable acknowledgment of OECD as source and copyright owner is given. All requests for public or commercial use and translation rights should be submitted to rights@oecd.org. Requests for permission to photocopy portions of this material for public or commercial use shall be addressed directly to the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) at info@copyright.com or the Centre français d'exploitation du droit de copie (CFC) at contact@cfcopies.com.