

## Foreword

**T**his is the seventh edition of *Society at a Glance*, the OECD's biennial overview of social indicators. As with its predecessors, this report addresses the growing demand for quantitative evidence on social well-being and its trends across OECD countries. It updates some indicators included in the previous six editions and introduces several new ones. Data for the other economies that are members of the G20 are included separately where available.

Before the onset of the financial and economic crisis in 2007-08, social spending across the OECD area accounted for about half of all government outlays. But while there are big demands on social protection systems during all phases of the economic cycle, the need for social support measures is especially acute during deep and extended economic downturns. Against this background, this edition of *Society at a Glance* takes stock of available information about the social challenges emerging since the beginning of the economic crisis, and countries' policy responses to meet those challenges.

Chapter 1 presents and discusses the most recent data on the social situation in OECD countries and in selected emerging economies, and it discusses how countries can make social policies more "crisis-proof". Chapter 2 provides a guide to help readers in understanding the structure of OECD social indicators. Indicators are then considered more in detail in the Chapters 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7. More detailed information on indicators, including some not included in this print edition, can be found on the OECD web page ([www.oecd.org/social/societyataglance.htm](http://www.oecd.org/social/societyataglance.htm)).

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**From:**  
**Society at a Glance 2014**  
OECD Social Indicators

**Access the complete publication at:**  
[https://doi.org/10.1787/soc\\_glance-2014-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2014-en)

**Please cite this chapter as:**

OECD (2014), "Foreword", in *Society at a Glance 2014: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1787/soc\\_glance-2014-1-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/soc_glance-2014-1-en)

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