

## ELDERLY POPULATION BY REGION

In all OECD countries, populations aged 65 years and over have dramatically increased over the last 30 years, both in size and as a percentage of total population. As elderly people tend to be concentrated in few areas within each country, a small number of regions will have to face a number of specific social and economic challenges and opportunities raised by ageing population.

### Definition

The elderly population is the number of inhabitants of a given region aged 65 or older. The population can be either the average annual population or the population at a specific date during the year considered. The average population during a calendar year is generally calculated as the arithmetic mean of the population on 1 January of two consecutive years.

The index of geographic concentration offers a picture of the spatial distribution of the elderly population. It compares the share of population and land area over all regions in a given country and is constructed to account for both within- and between-country differences in the size of

all regions. It lies between 0 (no concentration) and 100 (maximum concentration) and is suitable for international comparisons.

The elderly dependency rate is defined as the ratio between the elderly population and the working age (15-64 years) population.

### Comparability

As for the other regional statistics, the comparability of elderly population data is affected by differences in the definition of the regions and the different geography of rural and urban communities (see Population by region), both within and among countries.

### Overview

The elderly population tends to be concentrated in few areas within each country. About 35% of elderly people within the OECD live in only 10% of regions. This share has not changed significantly in the past ten years with the exception of Ireland, due to the increase of this share in the region of Dublin.

According to the geographic concentration index, Canada, Australia and Iceland are the countries with the highest concentration of elderly population. A high geographic concentration of the elderly can facilitate the provision of services. The concentration of the elderly population in a given region may be a function of its total population – the higher its total population, the more its elderly people – or of regional disparities in the age structure – same population but more elderly people. A comparison of the concentration indexes of total and elderly population shows that, on average, the elderly population is less concentrated than the total population.

Besides the concentration of elderly people, the balance between the economically active and the retired population gives an indication of a region's challenges in generating wealth and sufficient resources to provide for the needs of elderly people. In 2008, the elderly dependency rate across OECD regions was higher in rural regions than in urban ones, with the exception of Belgium, Hungary, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic.

### Sources

- OECD (2009), *OECD Regions at a Glance 2009*, OECD, Paris.

### Further information

#### Analytical publications

- Oliveira Martins J., F. Gonand, P. Antolin, C. de la Maisonneuve and K.-Y. Yoo (2005), *The Impact of Ageing on Demand, Factor Markets and Growth*, OECD Economics Department Working Papers, No. 420, OECD, Paris.
- Spiezia, V. (2003), "Measuring Regional Economies", OECD Statistics Brief, No. 6, October, OECD, Paris, [www.oecd.org/std/statisticsbrief](http://www.oecd.org/std/statisticsbrief).

#### Online databases

- OECD Regional Database.

#### Web sites

- OECD eXplorer, [www.oecd.org/gov/regionaldevelopment](http://www.oecd.org/gov/regionaldevelopment).
- Territorial grids, [www.oecd.org/gov/regional/statisticsindicators](http://www.oecd.org/gov/regional/statisticsindicators).



ELDERLY POPULATION BY REGION

Elderly dependency rate in urban and rural regions, small regions

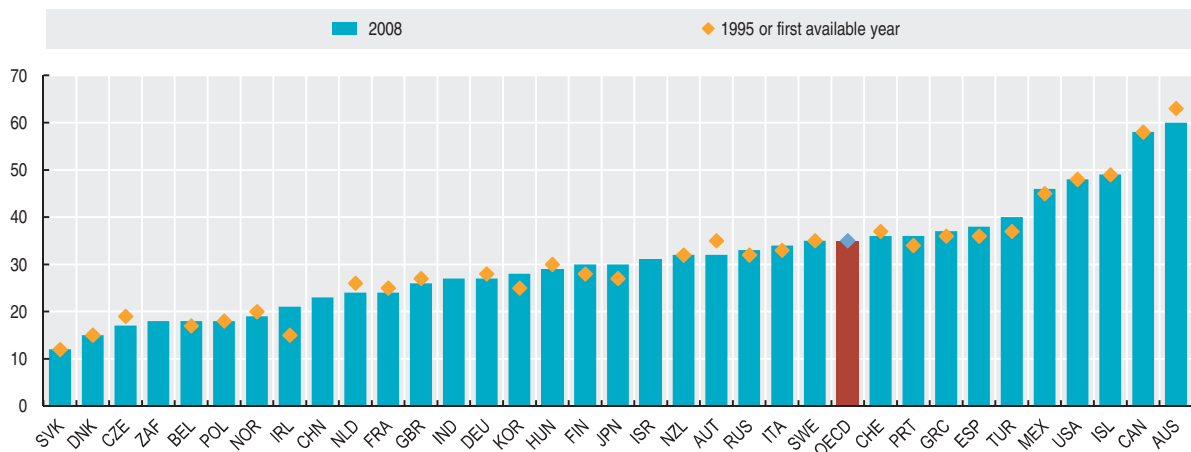
Percentage, 2008



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/817732071220>

Share of elderly population in the ten per cent of small regions with the largest elderly population

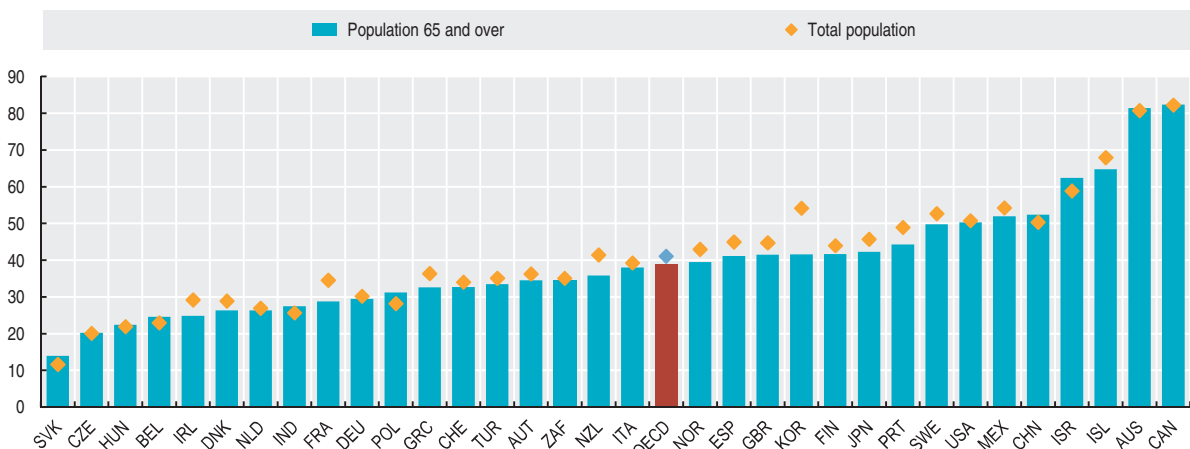
Percentage



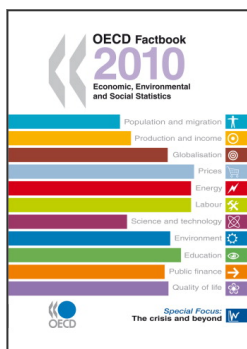
StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/817736435151>

Index of geographic concentration of the elderly and total population, small regions

Year 2008



StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/817741046441>



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