

HC2.2 HOUSEHOLDS LIVING IN DWELLINGS WITHOUT A FLUSHING TOILET

Definitions and methodology

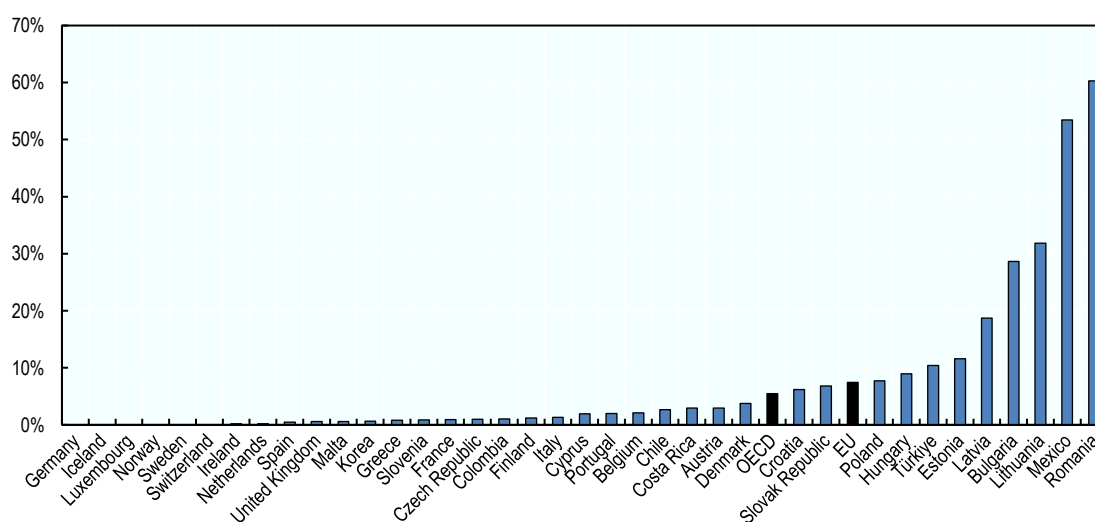
A lack of basic sanitary amenities, such as a flushing toilet, is a measure of poor quality housing and is also considered a health risk (Eurofound, 2016). Further discussion of housing quality indicators can be found in indicator HC1.5 Overview of housing affordability measures in the [OECD Affordable Housing Database](#). To illustrate the extent of the issue, this indicator provides information on the share of households that do not have a flushing toilet connected to a sewage system or septic tank. The information on access to basic sanitary amenities is derived from household survey microdata. Some differences in the definition of access to a flushing toilet are observed across surveys; these are discussed under *Data and comparability issues*, below.

Key findings

While the vast majority of households in OECD countries have a flushing toilet at their disposal, this is not always the case for poor households (e.g. below 50% of the median equivalised disposable household income) (Figure HC2.2.1, see online worksheet HC2.2.A1 for earlier years and results for non-poor households).

Figure HC2.2.1: Share of poor households without a flushing toilet

Share of poor households (below 50% of the median equivalised disposable household income) without a flushing toilet, in percent, 2020 or latest year available



Note by the Republic of Türkiye: The information in this document with reference to “Cyprus” relates to the southern part of the Island. There is no single authority representing both Turkish and Greek Cypriot people on the Island. Türkiye recognises the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC). Until a lasting and equitable solution is found within the context of the United Nations, Türkiye shall preserve its position concerning the “Cyprus issue”.

This document, as well as any data 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.

Notes:

1. No estimates available for Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand and the United States due to data limitations.
2. Data for Germany and Italy refer to 2019, for Iceland and the United Kingdom to 2018.
3. Results only shown if category composed of at least 100 observations.
4. Poor households are households with equivalised disposable income below 50% of the median country income.
5. In Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Korea, gross income is used due to data limitations.
6. In Türkiye, net income is not adjusted for income taxes due to data limitations.

Sources:

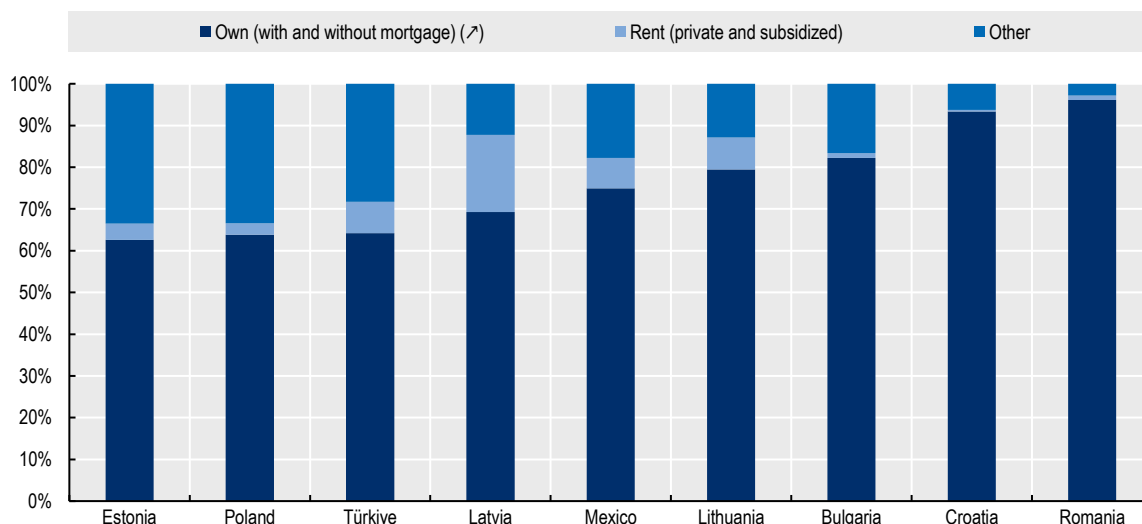
OECD calculations based on the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2020), except for Germany and Italy (2019), and Iceland (2018); the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2020); the Gran Encuesta Integrate de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAH) for Costa Rica (2020); the Korean Housing Survey (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH) for Mexico (2020); Türkiye-National SILC (2020).

In Nordic countries, as well as Germany, Luxembourg, and Switzerland, all poor households (below 50% of the median equivalised disposable household income) have a flushing toilet in their dwelling. The share of poor households without a flushing toilet is around 10 to 20% in Estonia, Latvia and Türkiye, above 20% in Bulgaria, and Lithuania and over 50% in Mexico and Romania.

In countries with a larger share of poor households that lack a flushing toilet, the issue tends to be more prevalent among homeowners, rather than tenants (Figure HC2.2.2 only shows results for countries with more than 5% of low-income households without a flushing toilet). Over three-quarters of poor homeowners lack a flushing toilet in Bulgaria, Croatia, Lithuania and Romania. This result is not surprising, considering that the tenure structure in these countries is dominated by homeowners across the income distribution.

Figure HC2.2.2: Tenure structure of poor households without a flushing toilet in selected countries

Tenure shares of low-income households without a flushing toilet, 2020 or latest year available, in percent



Notes:

1. Break-down by tenure type only shown for countries where more than 5% of poor households do not dispose of a flushing toilet and 100 or more of the sampled poor households reported lack of a flushing toilet.
2. Poor households are households with equivalised disposable income below 50% of the median country income.
3. In Chile, Colombia, Mexico and Korea, gross income is used due to data limitations.

Note by all the European Union Member States of the OECD and the European Union: The Republic of Cyprus is recognised by all members of the United Nations with the exception of Türkiye. The information in this document relates to the area under the effective control of the Government of the Republic of Cyprus.

Sources:

OECD calculations based on the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC 2020); the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN) for Chile (2020); the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH) for Colombia (2020); the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO) for Costa Rica (2020); the Korean Housing Survey (2020); Türkiye-National SILC (2020).

In the vast majority of countries, the share of poor households without a flushing toilet has remained stable at very low levels since 2010. In Bulgaria, Estonia and Romania, the situation has been improving, particularly for the poor (refer to online worksheet HC2.2.A1). For instance, in Romania, the share of poor households without a flushing toilet has decreased from 82% in 2010 to 60% in 2020 and in Bulgaria from 55% (2010) to 29% (2020).

Data and comparability issues

This indicator is calculated based on household surveys. For European countries, the European Survey on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC) is used; for Chile, the Encuesta de Caracterización Socioeconómica Nacional (CASEN); for Colombia, the Gran Encuesta Integrada de Hogares (GEIH); for Costa Rica, the Encuesta Nacional de Hogares (ENAHO); for Korea, the Korean Housing Survey; for Mexico, the Encuesta Nacional de Ingresos y Gastos de los Hogares (ENIGH); for Türkiye, the Türkiye-National SILC; and for the United States, the American Community Survey (ACS). No information on flushing toilets is available in the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, the Canada Income Survey (CIS) in Canada or the Japanese Household Panel Study (JHPS).

The definition of access to a toilet varies somewhat across surveys: EU-SILC and Türkiye-National SILC ask whether the household has an indoor flushing toilet; CASEN, GEIH, ENAHO ask whether the household has at its disposal a toilet that is connected to a sewage system or septic tank; INEGI asks whether the household has a toilet with direct water discharge.

Sources and further reading

Eurofound (2016), *Inadequate housing in Europe: Costs and consequences*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Solari, C. and R. Mare (2012), "Housing crowding effects on children's wellbeing", *Social Science Research*, Vol. 41(2), pp. 464-476.

OECD (2020), *Housing and Inclusive Growth*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://doi.org/10.1787/6ef36f4b-en>.

OECD (2021), "Building for a better tomorrow: Policies to make housing more affordable," *Employment, Labour and Social Affairs Briefs*, OECD, Paris, <http://oe.cd/affordable-housing-2021>