

HM1.5. RESIDENTIAL STOCK BY DWELLING TYPE

Definitions and methodology

This indicator presents available data on the distribution of different types of dwellings as a share of the total occupied residential dwelling stock across OECD countries. The data are collected primarily from Eurostat, as part of the European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions (EU-SILC), and from National Statistical Institutes (NSIs), mainly through population and housing censuses.

For the scope of this indicator, by dwelling stock or housing stock we refer to the total number of occupied dwellings in a country. A *dwelling* is “a room or suite of rooms and its accessories in a permanent building or structurally separated part thereof which by the way it has been built, rebuilt, converted, etc., is intended for private habitation. It should have a separate access to a street (direct or via a garden or grounds) or to a common space within the building (staircase, passage, gallery, etc.)” (UNECE, 2000).

A dwelling provides the usual place of residence to a household, which can include one or more persons. Occasionally, residential dwellings may also be used for business purposes while still housing a household; such dwellings are included. In contrast to the data presented in indicator HM1.1 (OECD, 2022), which refer to all housing units (including both occupied and vacant), this indicator only refers to occupied dwellings due to limitations in the data sources. Here, four types of dwellings are distinguished: *detached house*, *semi-detached house*, *flat/apartment*, and *others*:

- *Detached houses* refer to dwellings that have no common walls with another unit. Typically, this is a single-family housing unit with open space on all sides.
- *Semi-detached houses* refer to dwellings that share at least one wall, or a row of (more than two) joined-up dwellings. These may be dwellings in duplex-, terraced-, tenement-, row- or townhouses and in general, each dwelling unit has its own separate entrance.
- *Flats/apartments* refer to dwelling units in a building that shares some internal space or maintenance and other services with other units in the building. In these buildings, corridors, entry foyers, staircases and other common areas are typically jointly used. This category is better known as “condominium” in some countries.
- *Others* refers to all other types of dwelling not covered in the categories above. Most commonly, these are mobile homes, such as caravans, manufactured houses and houseboats, while they sometimes also include nurseries and shacks.

The data presented here is typically collected in quinquennial or decennial housing surveys, as well as from Eurostat, which provides yearly data on the distribution of dwelling types for EU countries.

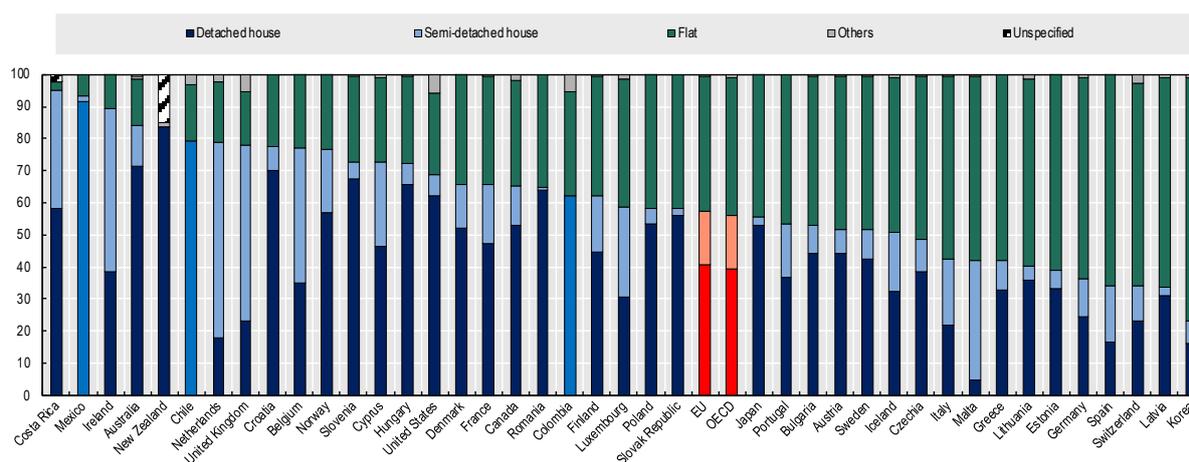
Key findings

Across the OECD and the EU, there is significant variation in dwelling types (Figure HM1.5.1). In 32 countries, houses, whether detached or semi-detached, are the most common dwelling type, while in 10 countries, flats represent the majority of dwellings. The share of houses is the largest in Costa Rica and Mexico, where they represent over 90% of all dwellings. Conversely, over 75% of dwellings are flats in Korea, with houses only representing 23% of the dwelling stock.

Detached houses are the dominant dwelling type in 17 countries. New Zealand records the largest share, with about 84% of the dwelling stock, while detached houses account for above two-thirds of the stock in Australia, Croatia, and Slovenia and around (below) two-thirds in Hungary and Romania. Detached houses are much less common in Estonia, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom, where they comprise between one-fifth to one-third of the stock. Meanwhile, detached dwellings are rare in the Netherlands (18% of the stock), Spain (17%), Korea (16%), and Malta (5%).

Figure HM1.5. Residential dwelling stock by dwelling type

Occupied residential dwelling types, % of the total occupied residential dwelling stock, 2022 or latest available year^{1,2,3,4, 5}



Notes: 1. Data on residential dwelling stock refer to 2022, except for Australia (2021), Canada (2020), Chile (2017), Colombia (2018), Cyprus (2021), Iceland (2018), Japan (2018), Latvia (2021), Luxembourg (2021), Malta (2021), Mexico (2020), New Zealand (2018), Norway (2020), Portugal (2021), Switzerland (2021), the United Kingdom (2021) and the United States (2021). 2. The classification and terminology on types of dwelling may differ slightly from country to country. In general, detached houses refer to dwellings having no common walls with another unit. Semi-detached houses refer to dwellings sharing at least one wall or a row of (more than two) joined-up dwellings. Flats/apartments refer to dwelling units in a building sharing some internal space or maintenance and other services with other units in the building. Other refers to accommodations that are situated in buildings that are for use other than housing (schools, etc.) and mobile homes (caravans, houseboats, etc.) 3. It is not possible to distinguish between semi-detached houses and flats/apartments for New Zealand. These dwelling types are therefore classified as unspecified. 4. It is not possible to distinguish between detached house and semi-detached house in Colombia, Chile, and Mexico. 5. The OECD and EU averages for each dwelling type exclude countries where the number of dwellings is unspecified.

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".

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.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics; Official Statistics Canada; Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas de Chile; Departamento Administrativo Nacional de Estadística de Colombia; Instituto Nacional De Estadística Y Censos Costa Rica; Eurostat; Statistics of Japan; Korean Statistical Information Service; Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía de Mexico; Stats New Zealand; United States Census Bureau.

On the other hand, semi-detached housing is widespread in Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom, representing at least half of all housing. On the other hand, accounting for less than 10% of the housing stock, semi-detached housing is much less common in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Japan, Korea, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States.

Housing in apartments, flats or condominiums dominates among different dwelling types in 16 countries. It is most prevalent in Korea, where three-quarters of all households live in high-rise apartment buildings or lower-storey multiplex units. It is also the most common dwelling type for more than half of all households in the Czechia, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Spain, and Switzerland. Apartments/flats are much less common, representing less than 20% of the stock, in Australia, Chile, Costa Rica, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

In most countries, one dwelling type dominates in the housing market. However, some countries report a housing mix, with each main dwelling type – detached, semi-detached or apartment housing – making up at least 20% of the stock: this is the case, for instance, in Belgium, Cyprus, Italy, Luxembourg and Norway.

Data and comparability issues

Data on the distribution of dwelling types are mainly drawn from statistics at the national level, which limits comparability in different ways. First, data are not available for the same reference year(s) across countries and are not always up to date. While some countries rely on regular housing surveys, other countries provide data via the general Population and Housing Census, which is typically conducted every five or ten years. Most of the sources refer to the distribution of households across dwelling types, in particular Eurostat data, while others refer directly to the occupied building stock itself.

Furthermore, national definitions do not always allow for cross-country comparison. For example, for New Zealand, the data do not facilitate a distinction between semi-detached houses and flats/apartments, as the data cover the numbers of stories of a building, rather than the number of housing units per building. For Chile, Colombia, and Mexico, the data do not facilitate the distinction between detached and semi-detached houses.

The categorisation of dwelling types used in this indicator differs from that used in the OECD Residential Property Prices Indices (RPPIs; OECD, 2021), which are reported on a quarterly basis. Data on housing stocks are instead typically reported every five or ten years, with the exception of Eurostat data with yearly updates. Housing price data reported in the RPPI are typically only available for detached houses and apartment units (in semi-detached or condominium buildings), and in some countries the data only cover selected (particularly urban) geographical areas where sufficient numbers of housing sales are available. The present indicator HM1.5 thus provides a further breakdown of detached dwelling types, to include semi-detached and flats/apartments, to give a more detailed picture of the types of housing people in which people live.

Sources and further reading

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