

Foreword

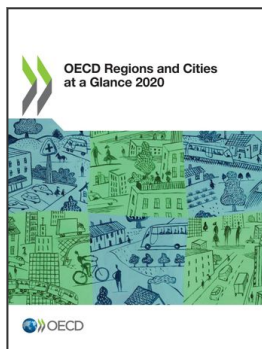
The COVID-19 pandemic that hit the entire world at the beginning of 2020 has been affecting people and places in both economic and social terms. The indicators presented in this edition of *OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance* allow a comprehensive assessment of the factors that contribute to making regions and cities prepared and resilient not only to the current crises but also to other megatrends that have an impact on the economy, society and the environment. Overall, this edition presents more than 100 statistical indicators for individual regions and cities, shedding light on disparities and their evolution since the start of the new millennium. For most of the topics analysed, this report covers all OECD member countries and, for a subset of indicators, especially on urbanisation, the scope of the report extends for the first time to the entire world.

There are many new areas of subnational data in the 2020 edition of *OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance*. New subnational health-related indicators enrich the first chapter of the report, covering aspects that range from excess mortality to the availability of health infrastructure and morbidity rates. The assessment of the economic resilience of regions (Chapter 2) presents new estimates of remote working potential, access to digital infrastructure as well as new evidence on the regional openness to trade. In addition, new data on expenditure and investment by regional and municipal governments (Chapter 5) provide novel insights into the financial resilience of regions and cities. Taken together, all these factors will contribute to shaping how regional economic disparities – observed from different perspectives and at different scales – might change in the future.

The report also provides new region- and city-level indicators to monitor the transition to a climate-neutral economy and sustainable development (Chapter 3). In this respect, the new indicators presented in the report are consistent, to the extent possible, with those in the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) framework. Those indicators cover a wide range of topics, including trends in land consumption and tree cover loss, biodiversity and ecosystem protection, household energy consumption, as well as the production of electricity by energy source and related carbon emissions.

Another new aspect of this edition is the analysis of population growth, sub-urbanisation and densification of all cities and metropolitan areas in the world over the last four decades (Chapter 4). The analysis relies on concepts and definitions developed by six international organisations (European Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization, International Labour Organization, OECD, UN-Habitat and the World Bank) and endorsed earlier this year by the UN Statistical Commission.

The analyses presented in *OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020* draw on a range of maps, charts and figures designed to present differences between regions and cities within and across countries. Country profiles providing key facts related to regional development complement the report and are available on the publication website.



From:

OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020

Access the complete publication at:

<https://doi.org/10.1787/959d5ba0-en>

Please cite this chapter as:

OECD (2020), "Foreword", in *OECD Regions and Cities at a Glance 2020*, OECD Publishing, Paris.

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1787/9555f82f-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, as well as any data and 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. Extracts from publications may be subject to additional disclaimers, which are set out in the complete version of the publication, available at the link provided.

The use of this work, whether digital or print, is governed by the Terms and Conditions to be found at <http://www.oecd.org/termsandconditions>.