

## Safety, trust in institutions and political engagement in regions (SDG 16)

**Confidence in national governments is very unequal across OECD regions, particularly in the Americas.**

Safety in the place of residence is an essential determinant of individual well-being and confidence in institutions. Regional differences in personal safety, measured in terms of homicide rates, are persistent and stark within OECD countries. Although homicide rates declined by one-third in OECD countries since 2010, they remain very high in many regions of Latin and North American countries. Over the period 2000-19, annual homicide rates in OECD regions have declined from 3.8 to 2.7 homicides per 100 000 inhabitants on average. Despite this improvement, 40 regions in Colombia, Mexico and the United States still have homicide rates above 15 murders per 100 000 people (Figure 1.25).

Regional differences in confidence in national governments are highest in Latin American and Southern European countries. Such regional differences matter as trust in people and institutions, including the government, is associated with better economic and well-being outcomes (Algan and Cahuc, 2010; Macchia and Plagnol, 2019). During the period 2014-18, the levels of confidence in national governments between the regions with highest and lowest confidence levels differed by 15 percentage points on average in OECD and partner countries. However, in Brazil, Colombia, Mexico and Peru, those regional gaps exceeded 35 percentage points. In those countries, there is at least 1 region where less than 10% of the population expresses confidence in the national government. While trust in the government in Europe tends to differ to a lower extent within countries compared to Latin America, Southern European countries still show relatively high regional differences. In France, Italy, Portugal and Spain, the gap between top and bottom regions in terms of trust in the government ranges from 13 to 20 percentage points, while in Denmark, Finland, Iceland and Norway, it does not exceed 8 percentage points (Figure 1.26).

Low trust in institutions can trigger discontent and weak political participation in regions. Although over the last 20 years, voter turnout has slightly increased, on average, across OECD regions (by 2.7 percentage points), changes in voter turnout since 2000 differed by up to 20 percentage points across regions, leading to higher territorial disparities. Within OECD countries, the gap in voter turnout between the regions with the highest and lowest electoral participation averages 14 percentage points. Such regional differences are even more accentuated in countries such as Canada, Colombia, France, Greece and Mexico, where the difference between the top and bottom regions in terms of voter turnout is higher than 22 percentage points (Figure 1.27, panel A).

People in metropolitan regions participate more in elections than people living in regions far from metropolitan areas. Voter turnout is on average 3 percentage points higher in the former regions. This is even more pronounced in central European countries such as Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland where

the differences in voter turnout between metropolitan regions and regions far from a metropolitan area range from 4 to 12 percentage points. Overall, regional disparities in political participation have widened across types of regions. In 12 out of 17 OECD countries, electoral participation has increased the most (or declined the least) in metropolitan regions compared to regions far from metropolitan areas (Figure 1.27, panel B).

**Definition**

Homicide is the unlawful killing of a human being with malice aforethought, also known as intentional murder. The annual homicide rate is the number of reported homicides per 100 000 inhabitants over the year.

Confidence in the government refers to the share of the population aged 18 or more who declare that they have confidence in the national government.

Voter turnout corresponds to the people who voted at the last national election as a percentage of the people eligible to vote.

**Sources**

Algan, Y. and P. Cahuc (2010), "Inherited trust and growth", *American Economic Review*, Vol. 100(5), pp. 2060-92, <https://www.aeaweb.org/articles?id=10.1257/aer.100.5.2060>.

Macchia, L. and A.C. Plagnol (2019), "Life satisfaction and confidence in national institutions: Evidence from South America", *Applied Research in Quality of Life*, Vol. 14, pp. 721-736, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-018-9606-3>.

OECD (2020), *OECD Regional Statistics (database)*, OECD, Paris, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-en>.

See country metadata in Annex B.

**Figure notes**

Figure 1.25: 2017-19 average or: AUS, AUT, BEL, CAN, CZE, DNK, FIN, DEU, GRC, IRL, ISR, JPN, KOR, MEX, POL, PRT and ESP, 2016-18; LUX, CHE, GBR and USA, 2015-17; COL and EST, 2014-16; ISL, LVA and ROU, 2013-15; NZL, PER and SWE, 2012-14; TUR, 2011-13; and NLD, 2010.

Figure 1.27, panel A: COL, FIN, HUN, ITA, KOR, MEX and SWE, 2018; CHL, CZE, FRA, DEU, NLD, NZL and NOR, 2017; IRL, ISL, SVK and USA, 2016; EST, GRC, TUR and GBR, 2015; ROU and SVN, 2014; LUX, 2013; and PER, 2011.

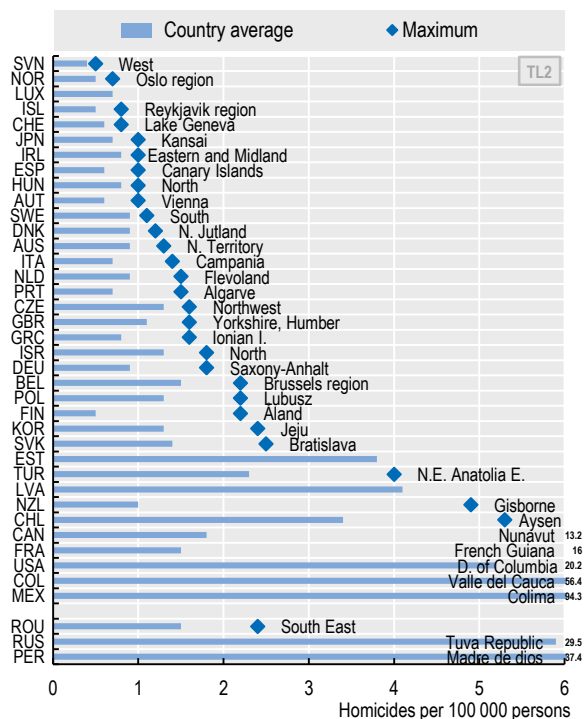
Figure 1.27, panel B: First year: NOR, 2001; AUT, CZE, FRA, DEU, HUN, IRL, LVA, LTU, PRT and SVK, 2002; EST and CHE, 2003; ISL, 2004; and DNK, 2007. Last year: HUN and KOR, 2018; AUT, CZE, FRA, DEU and NOR, 2017; IRL and SVK, 2016; LTU and ESP, 2015; LVA, 2014; and ISL, 2012.

# 1. SOCIAL RESILIENCE FOR BETTER HEALTH AND SUSTAINED WELL-BEING

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### 1.25. Homicide rate, annual average 2017-19 or most recent

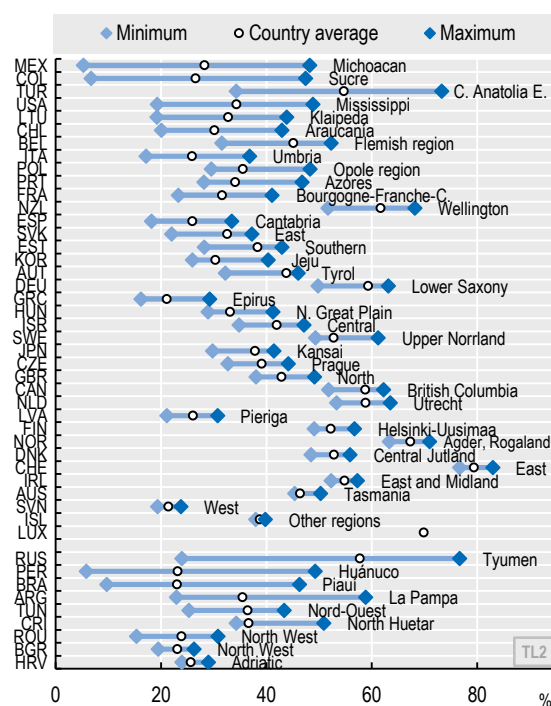
Homicides per 100 000 persons, large regions (TL2)



StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934189526>

### 1.26. Confidence in the government, average 2014-18

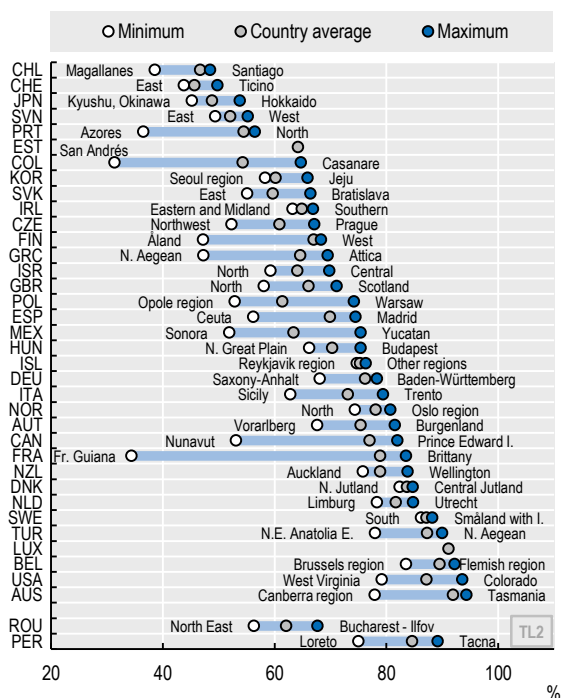
Percentage of the population aged 18 or more, large regions (TL2)



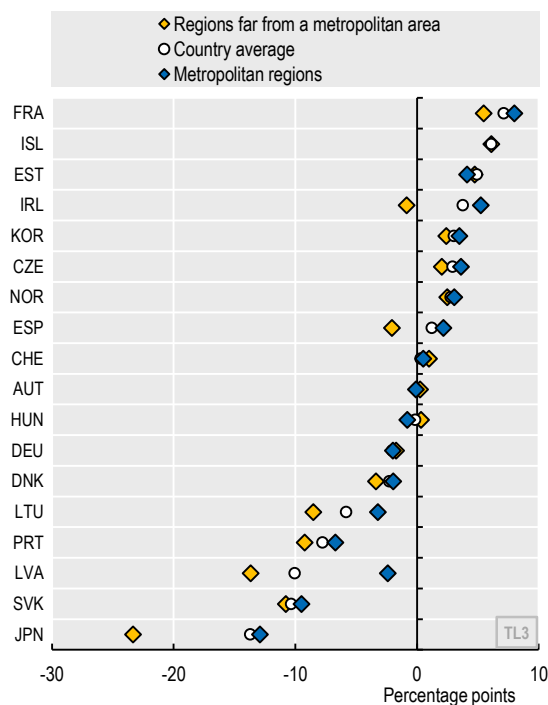
StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934189545>

### 1.27. Regional disparities in voter turnout

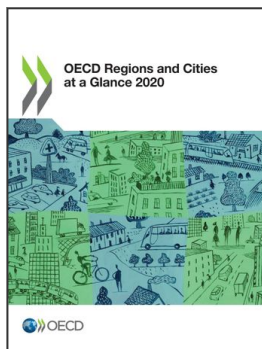
Panel A: Voter turnout %  
large regions (TL2), 2019



Panel B: Change in voter turnout  
by type of small regions (TL3), 2000-19



StatLink <https://doi.org/10.1787/888934189564>



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