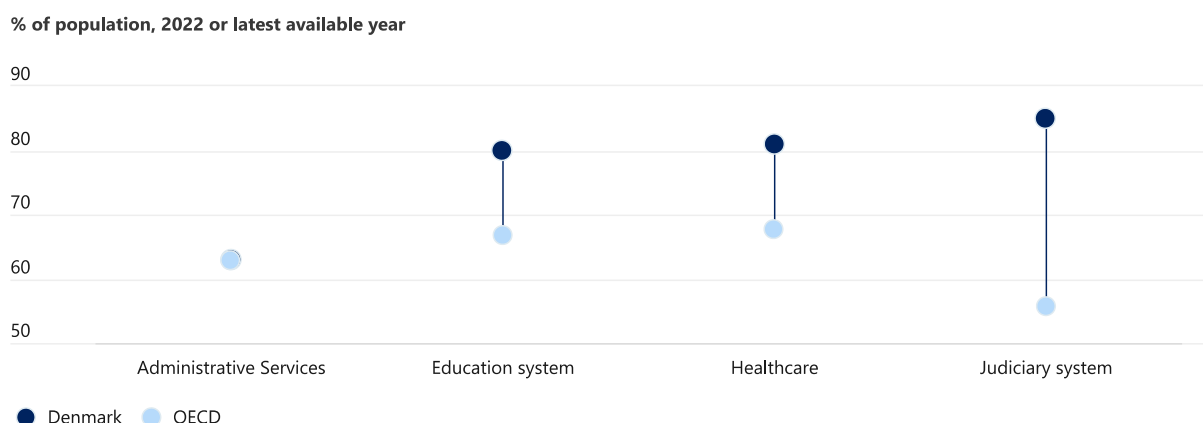# Government at a Glance 2023
Country Notes

Denmark

Trust and satisfaction with public services

Trust in public institutions and satisfaction with public services are important yardsticks of the quality of public governance. They reflect people's perceptions of government competence in designing and delivering policies and services, and expectations on the behaviour of public institutions and their representatives. Although high trust in public institutions is not a necessary outcome of democratic governance, trust and satisfaction with public services facilitate effective governance, as they correlate with high rates of compliance with policies, participation in public life and social cohesion.
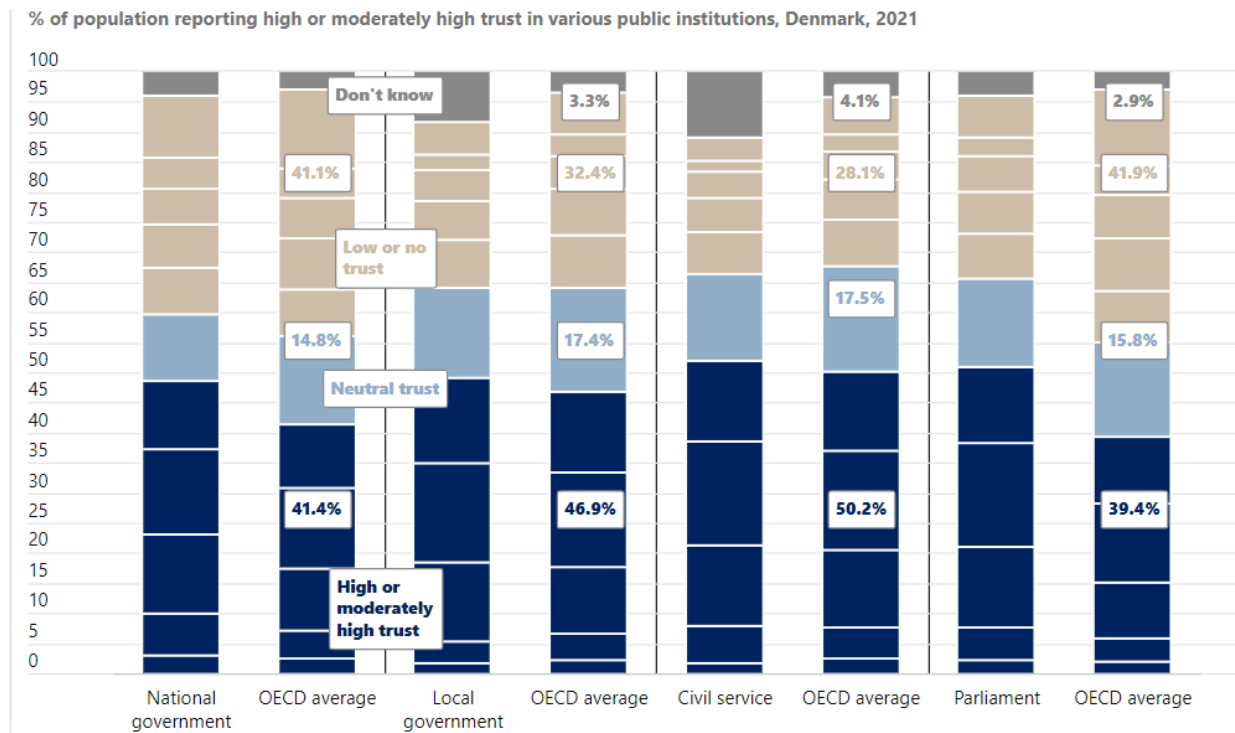
Denmark fares exceptionally well on people's satisfaction with public services. More than 80% of Danes are satisfied with the judiciary system, health care and the education system. Satisfaction with administrative services in Denmark is similar to the OECD average of 63%.

Figure 1. Satisfaction with public services, 2022

% of population, 2022 or latest available year

● Denmark   ● OECD

Around half of Danes report high or moderately high trust in the national (49%) and local government (47%). Trust in the civil service is higher (52%). In addition, 51% of Danes report high or moderately high trust in the parliament, which is 12 percentage points above the OECD average (39%).

Figure 2. Trust in public institutions, 2021

% of population reporting high or moderately high trust in various public institutions, Denmark, 2021
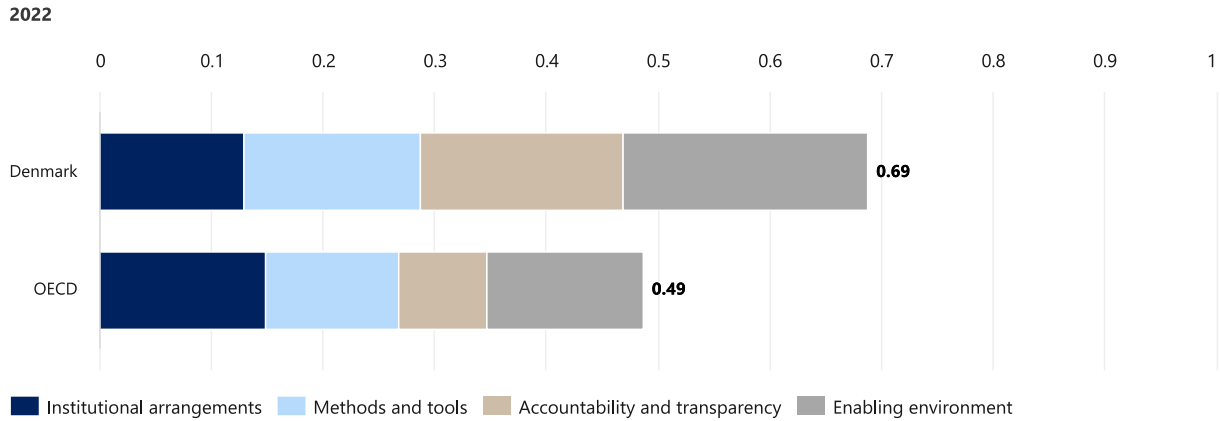

Achieving results with good governance practices

In an age of multiple crises, governments need to adopt more advanced practices to build trust in public institutions and enhance democratic resilience. Actions include building on democratic strengths, such as enhancing citizen and stakeholder engagement in decision making; reinforcing key competences to handle crises, such as budgeting and public financial management processes to address the green and digital transitions; and protecting against threats to democratic values, such as maintaining effective public integrity rules and promoting ethical use of artificial intelligence.

Budgeting management processes, such as green budgeting, can help address the climate crisis and achieve environmental goals. While there has been a rapid increase in the number of countries implementing green budgeting mechanisms, these could be used more effectively. Green budgeting mechanisms include institutional arrangements to assess the environmental impacts of budgetary and fiscal policies, methods for evaluating their consistency, mechanisms to enhance transparency and accountability, and an enabling budgetary governance framework.

Denmark is the fourth highest performer on the Green Budgeting Index across the OECD, with a score of 0.69 on a 0-1 scale. Denmark performs particularly well score on the dimension enabling environment, with a score of 0.22 out of a maximum value of 0.25. Only on the institutional arrangement dimension, Denmark fares below the average OECD value (0.13 against 0.15).
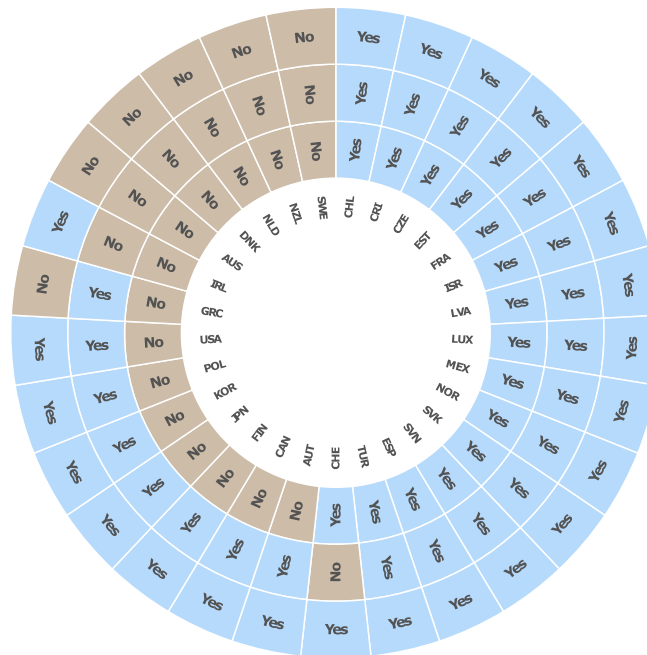
Figure 3. OECD Green Budgeting Index, 2022

2022

Legend: ■ Institutional arrangements ■ Methods and tools ■ Accountability and transparency ■ Enabling environment

Denmark: 0.69
OECD: 0.49

Financial contributions allow individuals and entities to support political candidates and parties. However, political finance needs to be adequately regulated to reduce risks of undue influence and policy capture.

Denmark has no regulations to ban contributions from private or public enterprises or foreign states to political parties and campaign. Anonymous donations of $3 297 or less to political parties do not need to be registered or reported. Anonymous donations to candidates do not need to be registered or reported. However, political parties and candidates must publish the total amount of anonymous donations received annually.

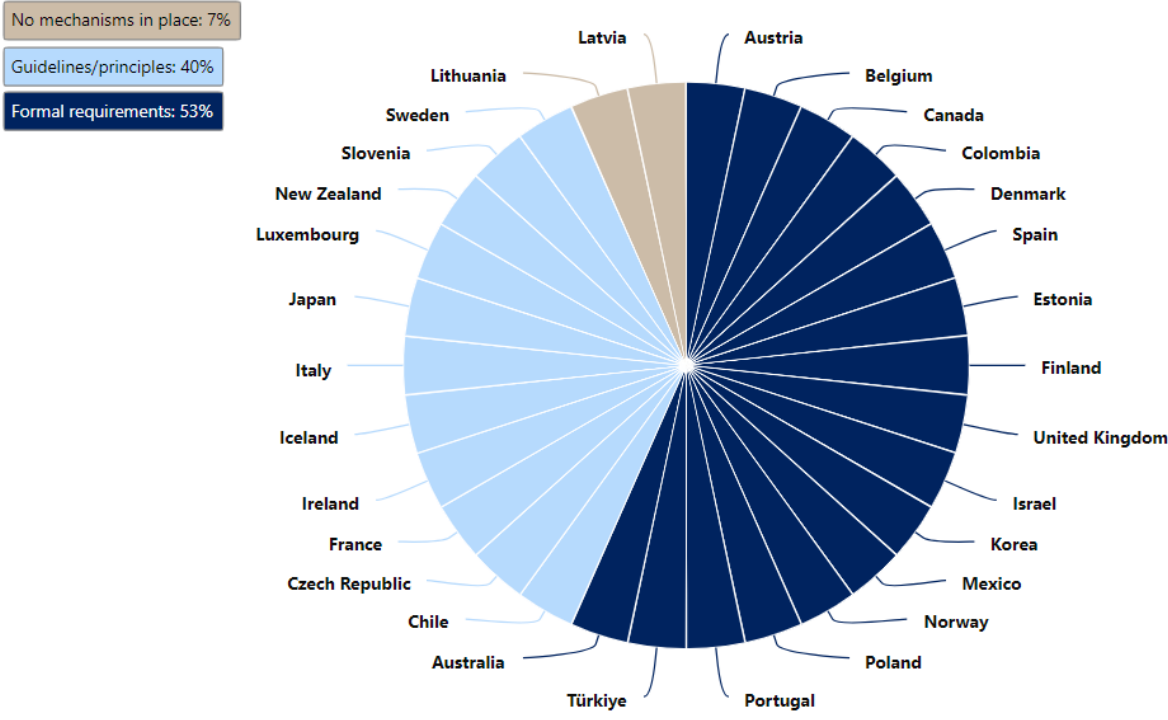## Figure 4. Regulation to ban financing political parties and election campaigns, 2022

Inner ring: Ban on anonymous donations, and all contributions made to political parties and/or candidates must be registered and reported.
Middle ring: Ban on contributions from publicly owned enterprises.
Outer ring: Ban on contributions from foreign states or foreign enterprises.

Strengthening information integrity has become particularly complex in the digital age. While digitalisation and artificial intelligence (AI) provide enormous opportunities, including in expanding and protecting the exercise of some democratic rights and freedoms, their use also brings challenges for governments such

as ensuring that they enhance people's willingness and ability to engage constructively in democratic life and that they benefit society as a whole.

Denmark, along with 16 other OECD countries, has introduced laws and regulations (formal requirements), to ensure the ethical management and use of algorithms for AI by public institutions.

Figure 5. Mechanisms used to ensure the ethical use of artificial intelligence in government, 2022
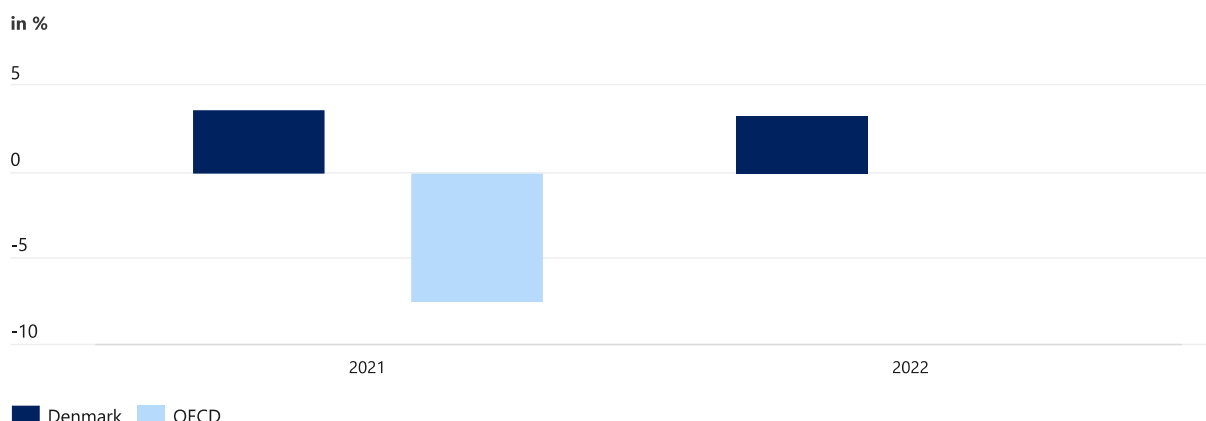

What resources public institutions use and how they are managed

After stark deterioration due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which required emergency measures and direct support mechanisms to business and people, public finances show positive signs, but the recovery remains fragile. The fiscal balance is the difference between a government's revenues and its expenditures in a year. When the government spends more than it collects, it has a fiscal deficit. When it spends less, it has a fiscal surplus.

Denmark maintained a positive fiscal balance of above 3% of GDP in 2021 and 2022, considerably higher than the average across OECD countries (-7.5%). In addition, Denmark is among the OECD countries with the lowest public debt as percentage of GDP. The public debt for 2022 was 37.4%, down from 50.3% in 2021, and significantly lower than the OECD average (120.8% in 2021).
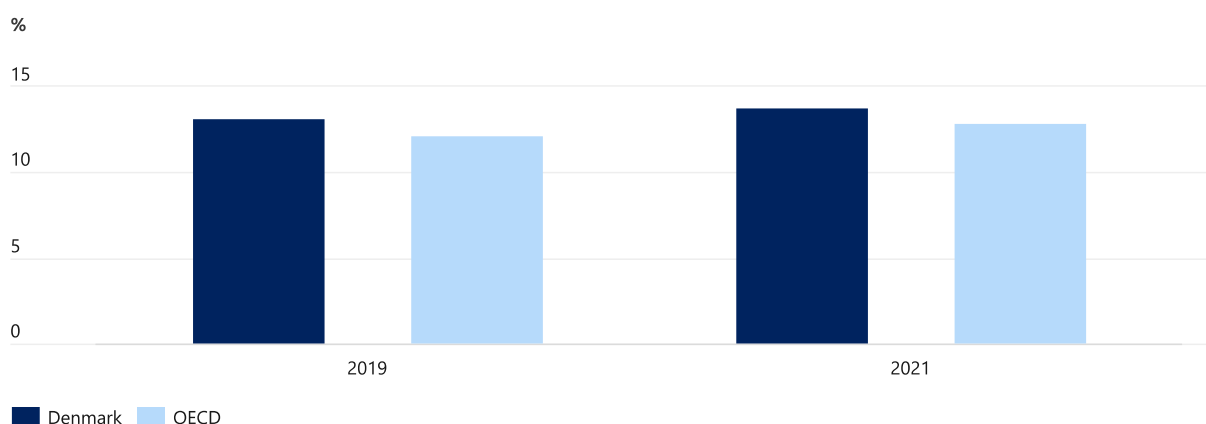
Figure 6. General government fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP

Public investment can enhance productivity and economic growth and help implement long-term policies, such as green energy infrastructure to support action on climate change. In turn, governments procure large amounts of goods, services and works to help them implement policies and deliver public services.

Denmark's procurement spending as share of GDP was slightly above the OECD average in 2021 (13.8% against 12.9%), with minor changes since 2019 (13.2%). Denmark's investment spending as a share of GDP was around 3% in 2021 and 2022, similar to the average value across OECD countries (3.4% in 2021).
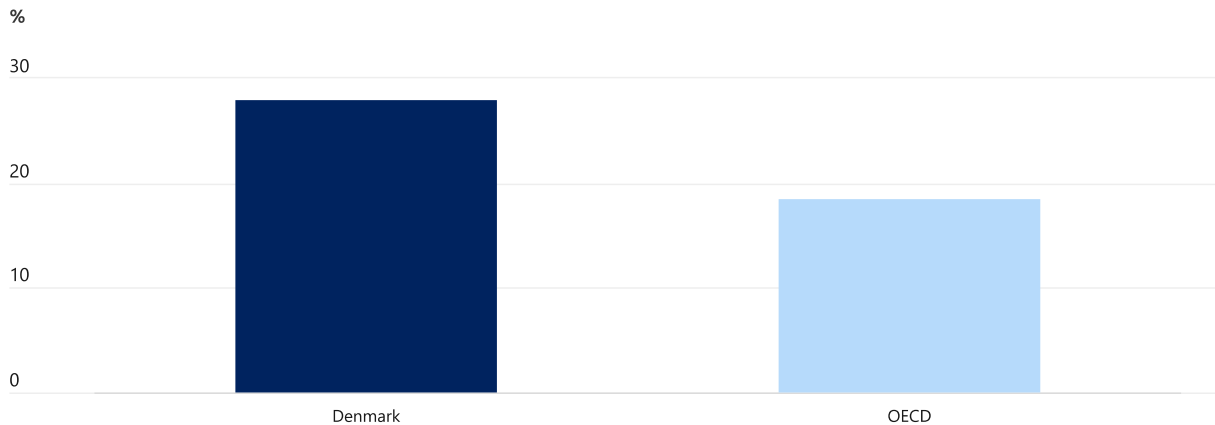
Figure 7. Government procurement spending as a share of GDP

The size of public employment varies significantly among OECD countries, ranging from around 10% to just above 30%.

Denmark has one of the highest rates of public employment as a share of total employment, 28% compared to 18.6% on average across OECD countries.

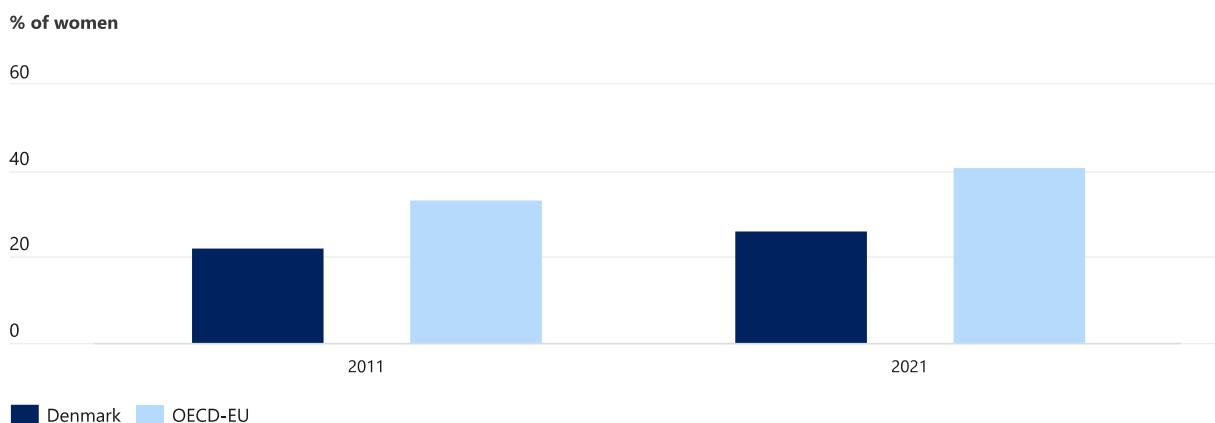## Figure 8. Public employment as a percentage of total employment, 2021

Governments use different mechanisms to harness and develop the capacity of their workforce. For example, internal mobility in public administrations helps to pool human resources across government and attract and retain civil servants.

Denmark has the practice of developing individual learning plans for all or most public employees. On the other hand, no information is available on practices regarding mobility of civil servants.

Equal representation of women and men in the public sector is a key indicator of progress towards gender equality, diversity and better representation. In 2020, a majority of employees in the public sector in OECD countries were women (58.9%), with large differences among countries. However, women are often under-represented in managerial positions.

With 26.4%, Denmark is among the OECD-EU countries with the lowest share of women in senior management positions in the national administration. The average share across the OECD-EU is 14 percentage points higher (40.8%). Denmark has not achieved gender equality in ministerial positions either. In the Danish government, 32% of ministers are women, while 36% on average across OECD countries.
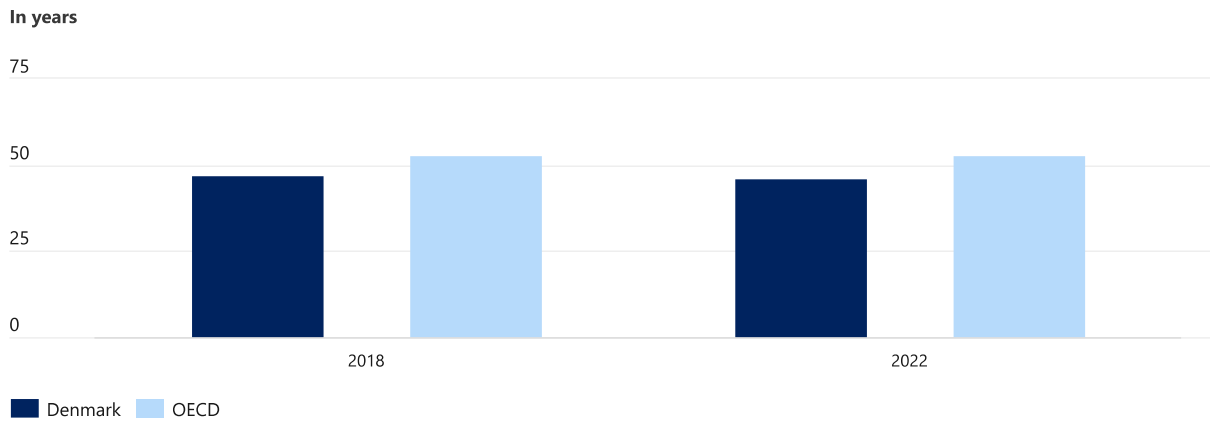
Figure 9. Gender equality in senior management positions in national administration, 2021

Young people are under-represented in public and political life across the OECD, with the risk that their voice and interests are not sufficiently taken in consideration in policymaking.

In Denmark, the average age of cabinet members – 46 years – is the lowest in the OECD, and 7 years lower than the OECD average (53 years).

Figure 10. Average age of cabinet members, 2018 and 2022

In years

■ Denmark ■ OECD

About the report

Government at a Glance presents the most up-to-date internationally comparable data on how public administrations function and perform in OECD countries, accession countries, and other major economies. Country factsheets highlight key indicators against the OECD average. Data included in the factsheets are derived from the new Government at a Glance data portal, which allows for a more user-friendly and interactive way of comparing countries with each other and the OECD average. The factsheets do not provide a comprehensive picture of public governance performance, but rather a snapshot of key indicators in the three sections of the publication: a) trust and satisfaction with public services; b) achieving results with good governance practices and c) what resources public institutions use and how they are managed.

Figure notes

People who express satisfaction with public services: for the judiciary and the courts the data reflect the proportion of citizens who express having confidence in the institution. Data on satisfaction with administrative services come from the OECD 2021 Survey on the Drivers of Trust in Public Institutions. Data on satisfaction with the education and health systems and confidence in the judiciary are from the Gallup World Poll.

Data on public finance and economics are derived from the System of National Accounts (SNA) and were extracted on 5 May 2023.

Fiscal balance as reported in SNA framework, also referred to as net lending (+) or net borrowing (-) of government, is calculated as total government revenues minus total government expenditures.

Government gross debt is reported according to the SNA definition, which differs from the definition applied under the Maastricht Treaty. It is defined as all liabilities that require payment or payments of interest or principal by the debtor to the creditor at a date or dates in the future. All debt instruments are liabilities, but some liabilities such as shares, equity and financial derivatives are not debt.

Public employment refers to employment in the general government as defined in the System of National Accounts (SNA). Data on employment in general government were extracted on 17 April 2023.

Data on employment in general government for Iceland, Japan, Korea, Mexico, Türkiye and the United States are from the International Labour Organization (ILO), ILOSTAT.

Data show women as a share of cabinet members who head ministries as of 1 January 2023 (excluding ministers without portfolios).

The data on age of cabinet members reflects the situation as of 20 December 2022.

OECD average refers to the unweighted average with the exception of public finance indicators.

For more information see

www.oecd.org/governance/government-at-a-glance.htm