

# **Government at a Glance 2023**

## **Country Notes**

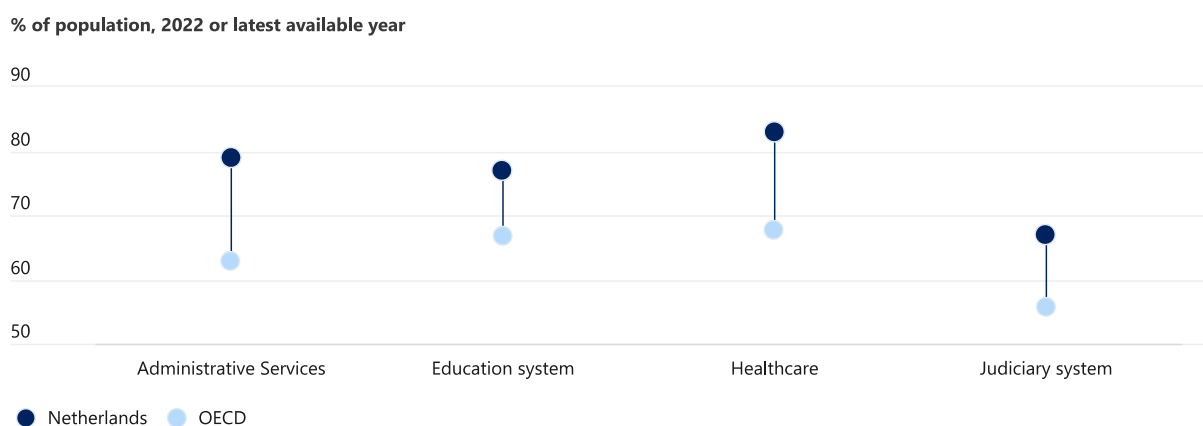
# The Netherlands

## 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.

**The Netherlands fares comparatively well on people's satisfaction with public services**, with the second highest share of people, among 22 OECD countries, reporting being satisfied with administrative services (79%). People in the Netherlands are most satisfied with the healthcare system (83%), which is well above the average across OECD countries (68%).

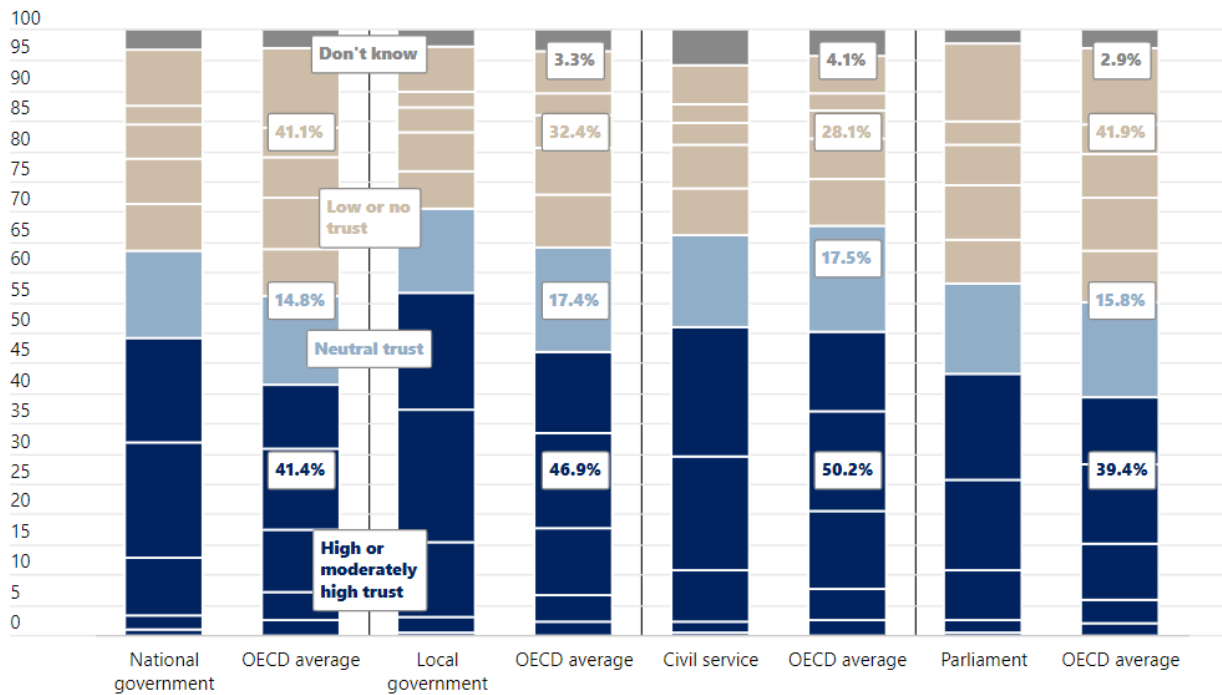
**Figure 1. Satisfaction with public services, 2022**



**In the Netherlands, the share of people reporting high or moderately high trust in the national government (49%), the parliament (43%) and the civil service (51%) is slightly above the OECD average.** A majority of Dutch indicated high or moderately high trust in local government (57%), 10 percentage points above the average across OECD countries (47%).

**Figure 2. Trust in public institutions, 2021**

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



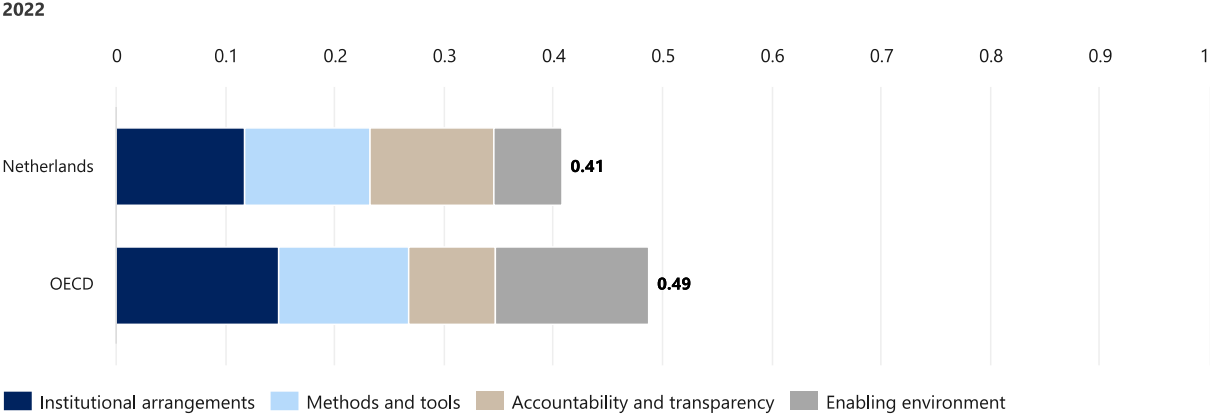
## Achieving results with good governance practices

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.

**The Netherlands fares below the average across OECD countries on the Green Budgeting Index,** with a score of 0.41 on a 0-1 scale. The only dimension of the index where the Netherlands fares above the OECD average is accountability and transparency, with a score of 0.11, out of a maximum value of 0.25, compared to the OECD average of 0.08.

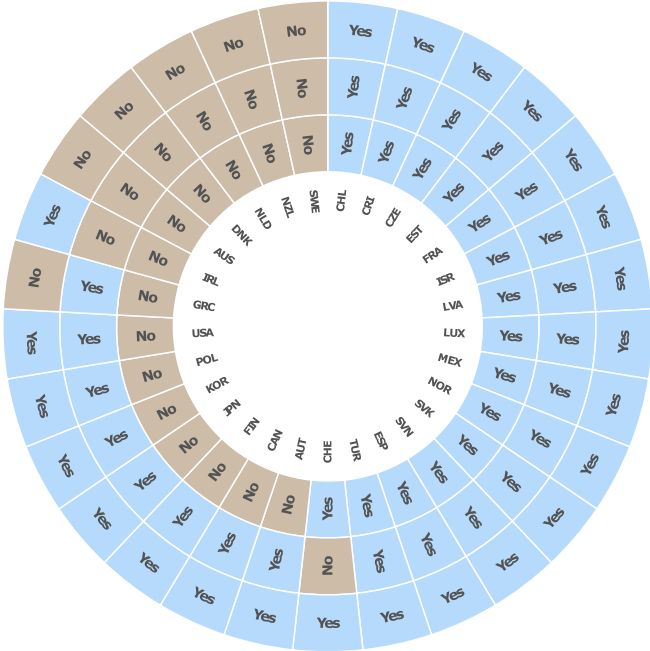
**Figure 3. OECD Green Budgeting Index, 2022**



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.

**The Netherlands has no regulations to ban contributions from private or public enterprises or foreign states to political parties and campaign.** Similarly, anonymous donations do not need to be registered or reported.

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



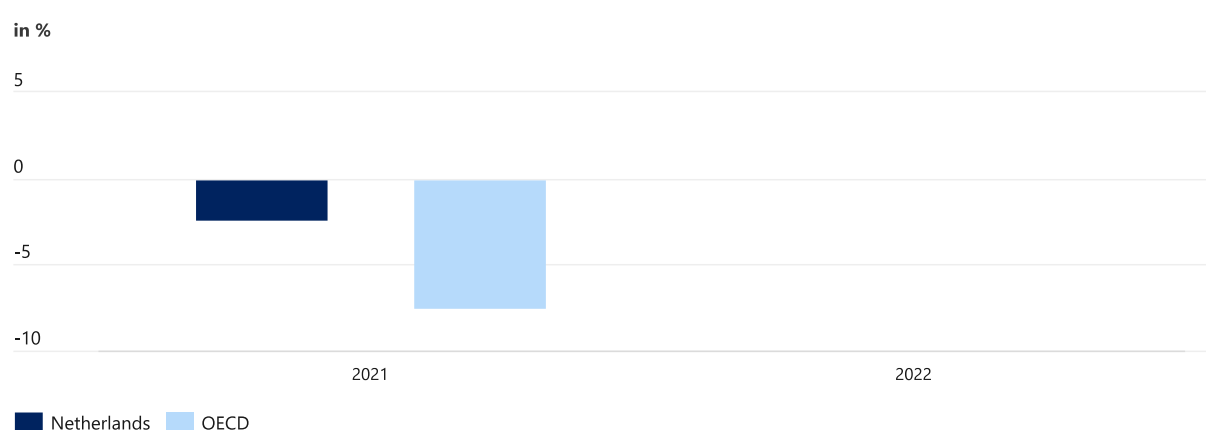
**Inner ring:** Ban on anonymous donations, and all contributions made to political parties and/or candidates must be registered and reported.  
**Middle ring:** Ban on contributions from publicly owned enterprises.  
**Outer ring:** Ban on contributions from foreign states or foreign enterprises.

## 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.

**From a fiscal deficit of -2.4% of GDP in 2021, the Netherlands achieved balanced public accounts in 2022.** The fiscal deficit across OECD countries for 2021 was considerably higher (-7.5%). The public debt has also diminished during the same period, from 66.6% of GDP in 2021 to 54.6% in 2022. The average debt in the OECD in 2021 was 120.8%.

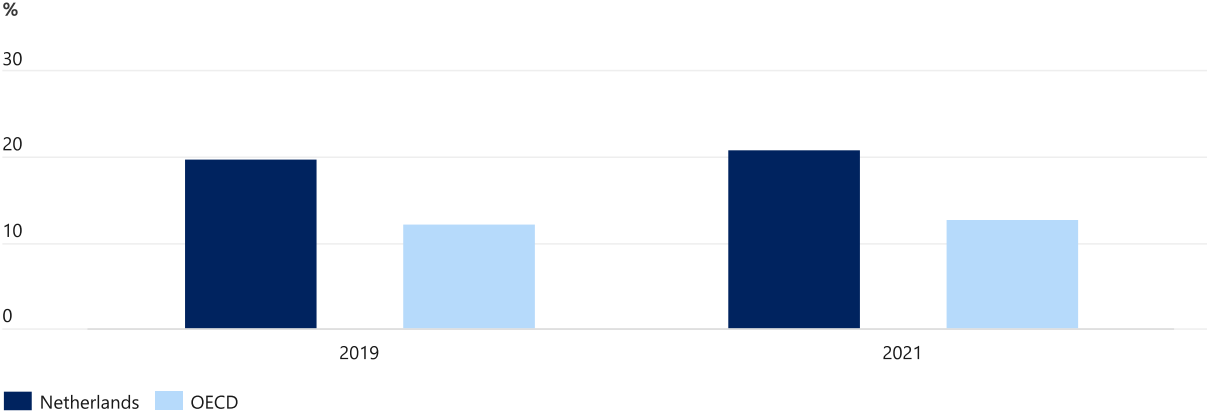
**Figure 5. General government fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP**



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.

**The Netherlands spending on procurement is among the highest in the OECD (20.9% of GDP compared to the OECD average of 12.9% of GDP in 2021). Procurement spendings as share of GDP has risen in the Netherlands by 1.1 percentage points since 2019.** The Netherlands investment spendings as share of GDP (3.2%) for 2021 is close to the OECD average (3.4%). No changes occurred in 2022 in terms of investment spending.

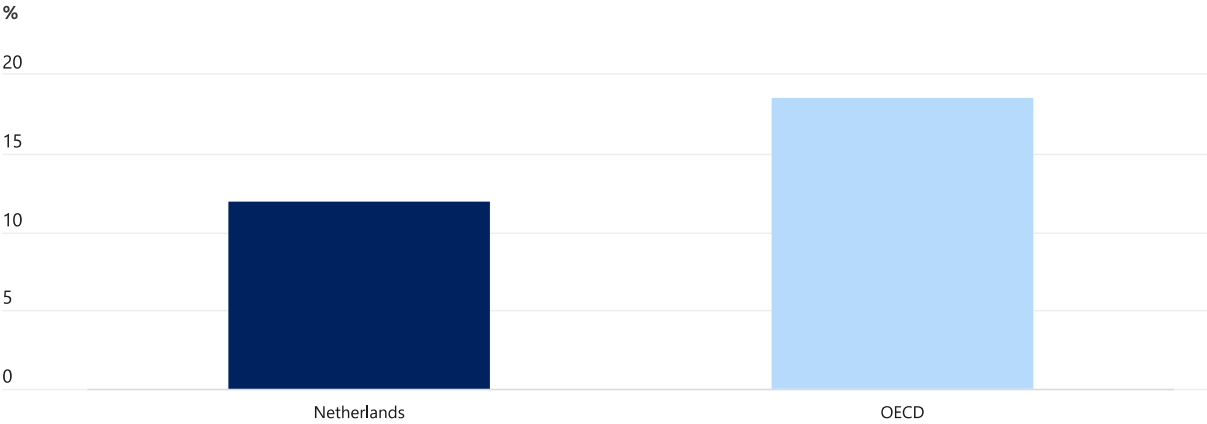
**Figure 6. Government procurement spending as a share of GDP**



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

**The Netherlands is among the OECD countries with the lowest share public employment**, with 12.1% public employment as share of total employment. The OECD average was 18.6% in 2021.

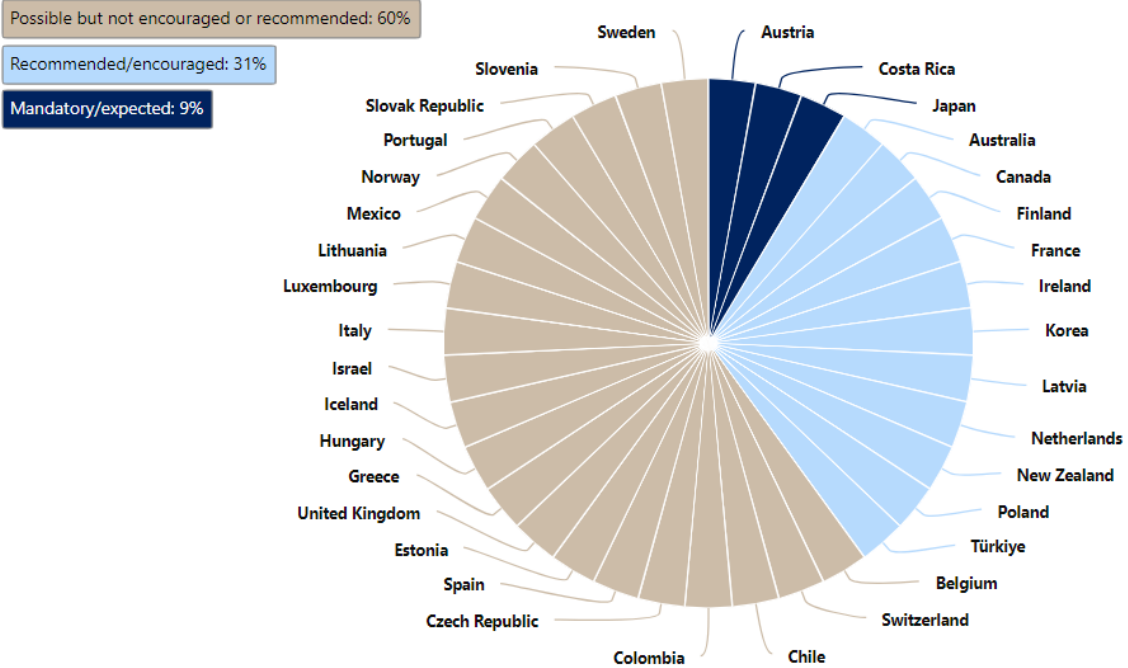
**Figure 7. Public employment as a percentage of total employment, 2021**



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.

**In the Netherlands, internal mobility is recommended or encouraged most civil servants.** In addition, the Netherlands is among the 4 surveyed countries where internal mobility for senior-level civil servants is expected or mandatory. The Netherlands has not implemented the practice of developing individual learning plans for most public employees.

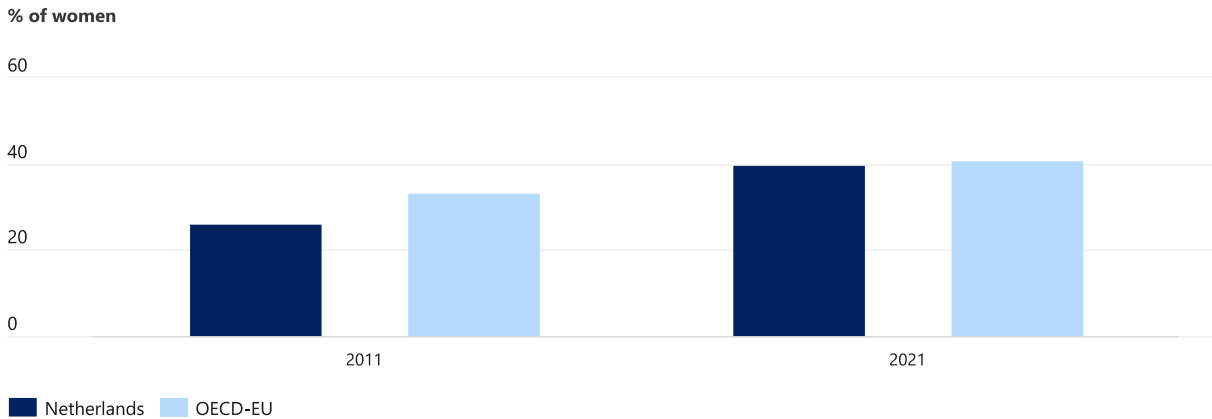
**Figure 8. Mobility of civil servants across public administrations in central government, 2022**



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 39.9% women in senior management position in the national administration, the Netherlands is slightly below the OECD-EU average (40.8%).** The Netherlands has, however, achieved gender equality in ministerial positions (50% women), compared to 36% on average across the OECD.

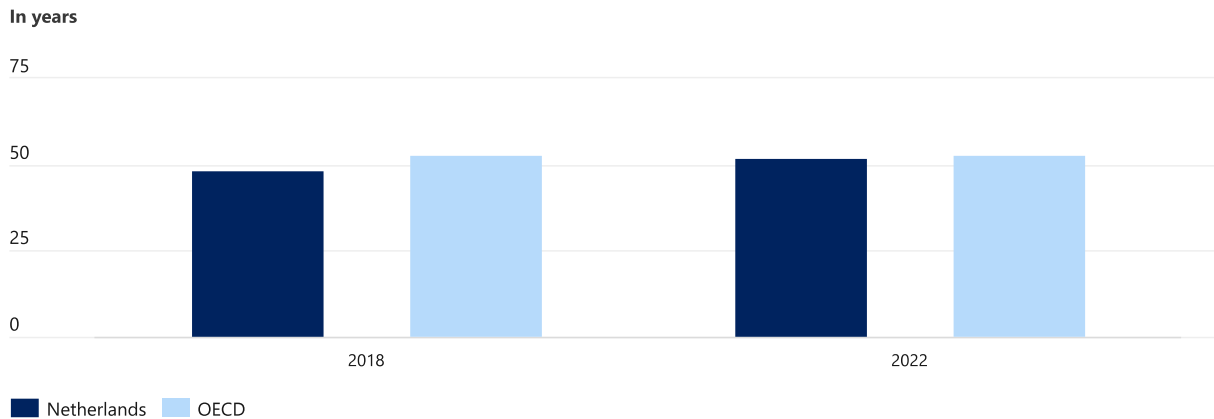
**Figure 9. Gender equality in senior management positions in national administration, 2021**



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.

**The average age for Dutch cabinet members is 52 years, which is 1 year younger than the average across the OECD countries (53).**

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



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### **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](http://www.oecd.org/governance/government-at-a-glance.htm)