

Government at a Glance 2023

Country Notes

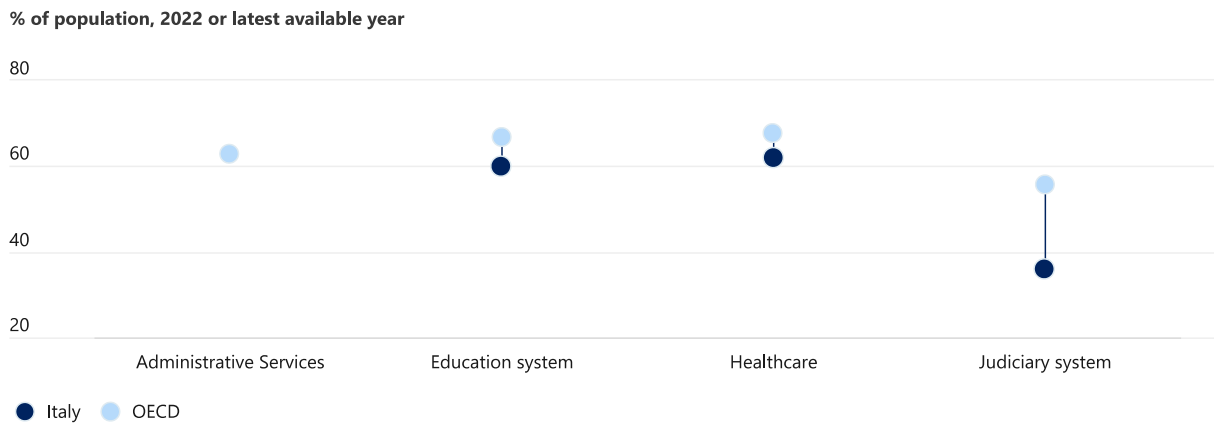
Italy

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.

A majority of Italians are satisfied with health and education, although in international comparison the results are mixed. An estimated 62% and 60% are satisfied with the healthcare and education systems, slightly below the averages across the OECD countries, 68% and 67% respectively. However, there is room for improvement with the judiciary system (36% satisfied), which fares lower than the OECD average (56%).

Figure 1. Satisfaction with public services, 2022



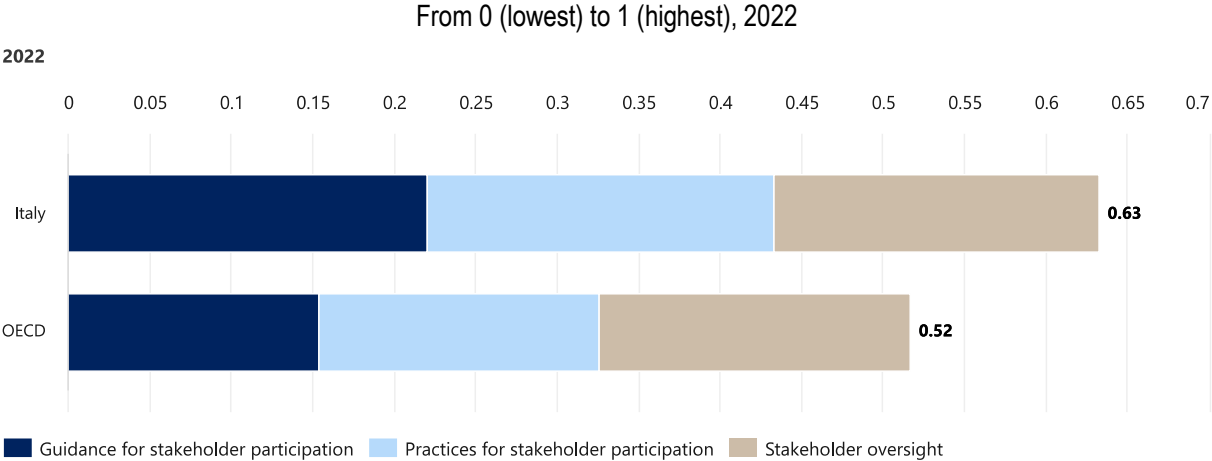
Achieving results with good governance practices

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.

Citizen and stakeholder engagement in decision making helps to improve the design, implementation, and public acceptance of policies, infrastructure and services. The OECD Infrastructure Governance Index (IGI) on stakeholder participation provides an overview of countries' performance in developing national guidance for stakeholder engagement, promoting their effective participation, and ensuring stakeholder oversight over infrastructure projects.

Italy is among the highest performers on the IGI on stakeholder participation. It scores 0.63 on the IGI, compared to the average value 0.52 across OECD countries (1 is the maximum possible score, meaning full application of IGI on stakeholder participation). Italy performs particularly well on stakeholder participation guidance, with a score of 0.22 out of a maximum value of 0.33.

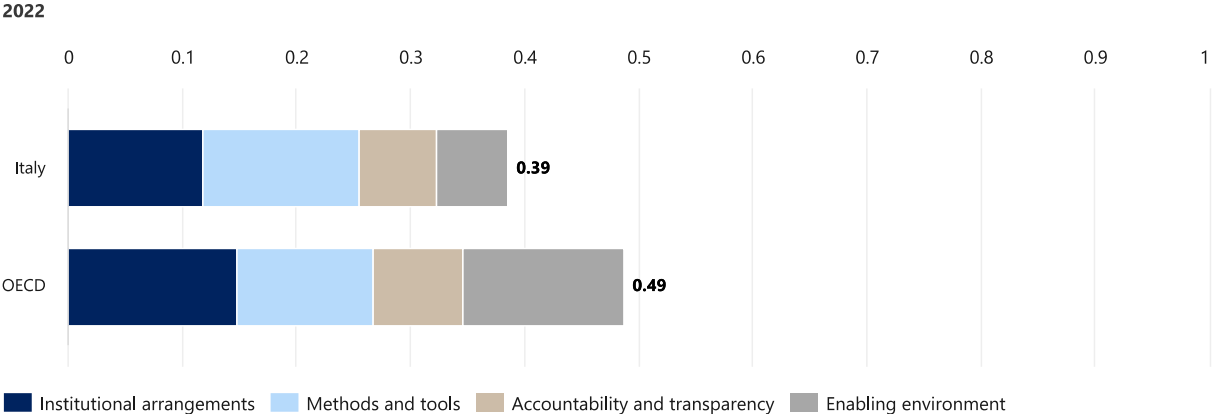
Figure 2. Index on stakeholder participation in infrastructure decision making



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.

Italy performs below the average across OECD countries in the application of green budgeting with a score of 0.39, on a 0-1 scale. Italy achieves its highest score in the methods and tools dimension (0.14 out of a maximum possible of 0.25) and its lowest score on the enabling environment (0.06).

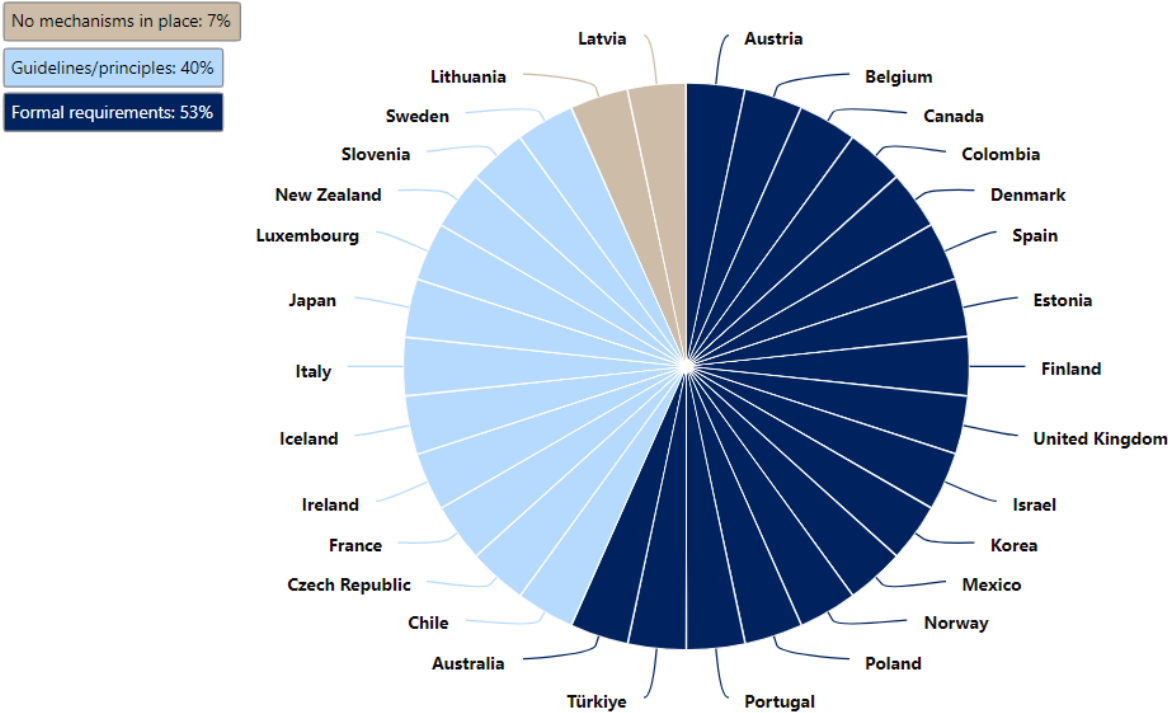
Figure 3. OECD Green Budgeting Index, 2022



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.

Italy, along with 10 other OECD countries, has introduced policy initiatives (e.g. guidelines, standards or principles), to ensure the ethical management and use of algorithms for AI by public institutions.

Figure 4. Mechanisms used to ensure the ethical use of artificial intelligence in government, 2022

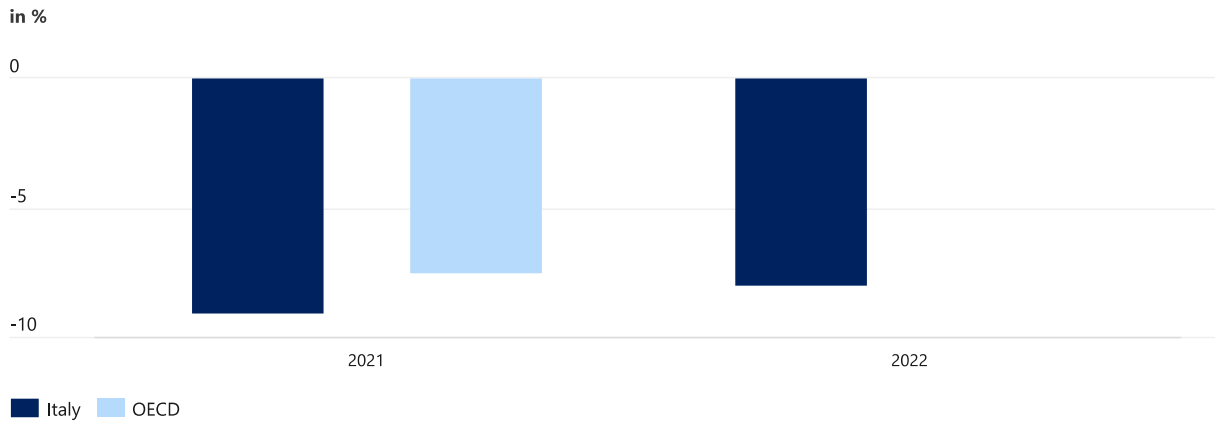


What resources public institutions use and how they are managed

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.

The fiscal deficit in Italy was reduced from -9% of GDP in 2021 to -8% in 2022. The deficit is higher than the average across OECD countries at -7.5% in 2021 and remains significantly higher than the OECD-EU deficit (-3.5%) in 2022. In addition, Italy’s public debt decreased from 174.7% of GDP in 2021 to 151.3 % in 2022. The level of debt is high in comparison to the OECD average of 120.8% in 2021.

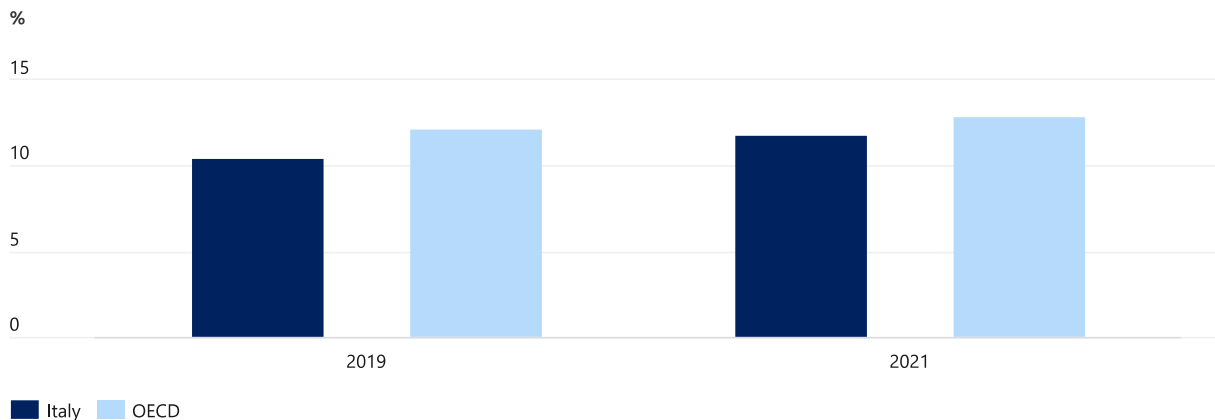
Figure 5. General government fiscal balance as a percentage of GDP



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.

Italy spent 11.8% of GDP on public procurement in 2021 compared to 12.9% on average across the OECD. Italy's public investment is close to the OECD average. In 2021, Italy invested 3.0% of its GDP, compared with 3.4% on average across OECD countries. It remained the same in 2022 (3.0%).

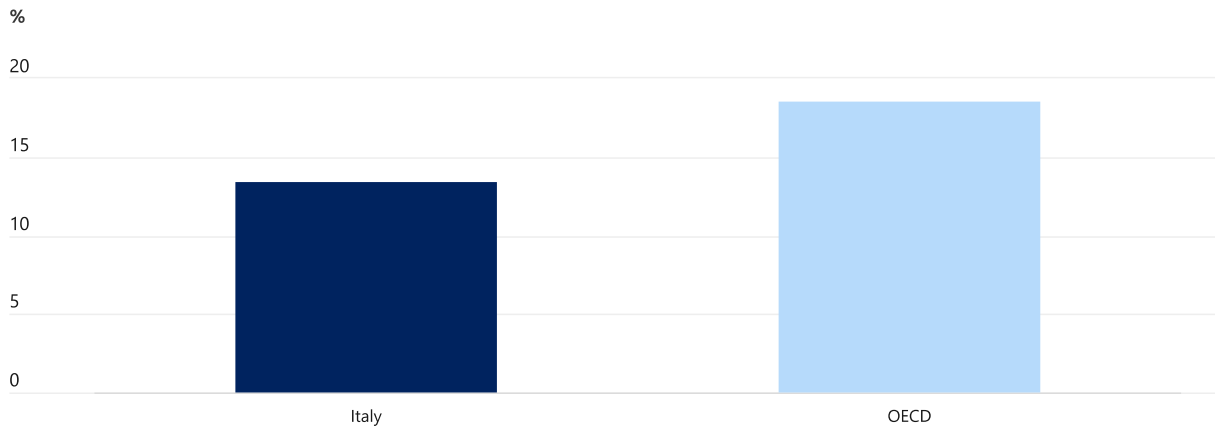
Figure 6. Government procurement spending as a share of GDP



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

Public employment amounts to 13.5% of total employment in Italy. This number is below the OECD average (18.6%).

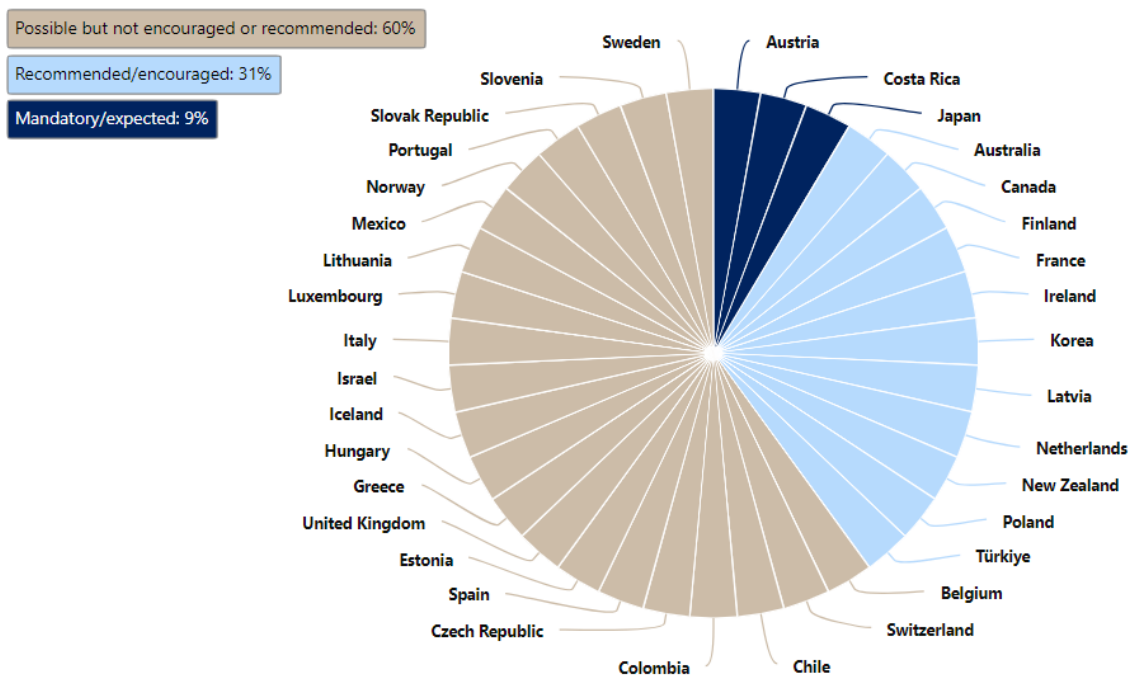
Figure 7. Public employment as a percentage of total employment, 2021



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 Italy, for most public servants, internal mobility is possible but not encouraged. At the same time at the senior level, internal mobility is encouraged. In addition, Italy has recently upgraded the e-learning platform *Syllabus*, devoted to individual learning and upskill of all civil servants, and has introduced binding targets on learning for all Public Administrations

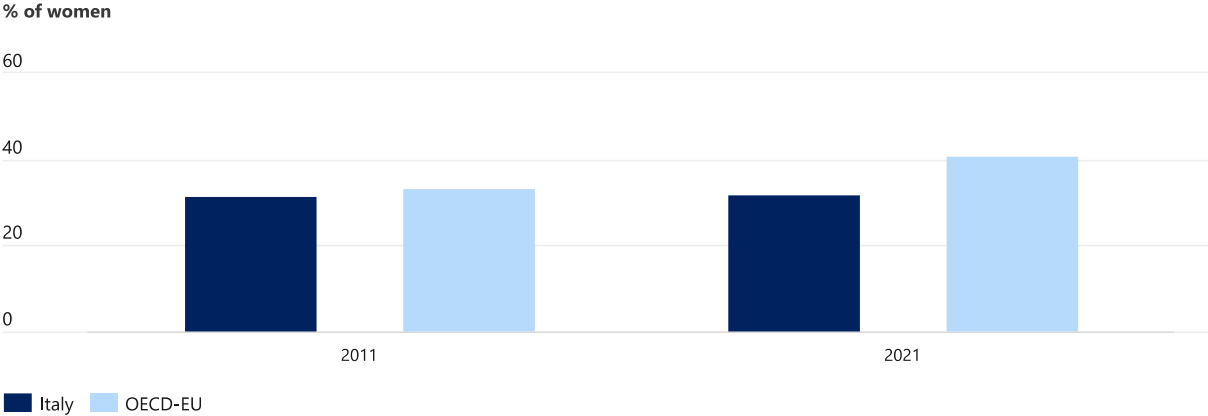
Figure 8. Mobility of civil servants across public administrations in central government, 2022



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.

Gender equality in public employment can improve in Italy. Only 32.1% of senior positions in Italy are held by women, below the OECD-EU average (40.8%). There is also scope to improve women’s representation in parliament. In 2023, 27% of parliamentarians are women compared to 36% on average across the OECD.

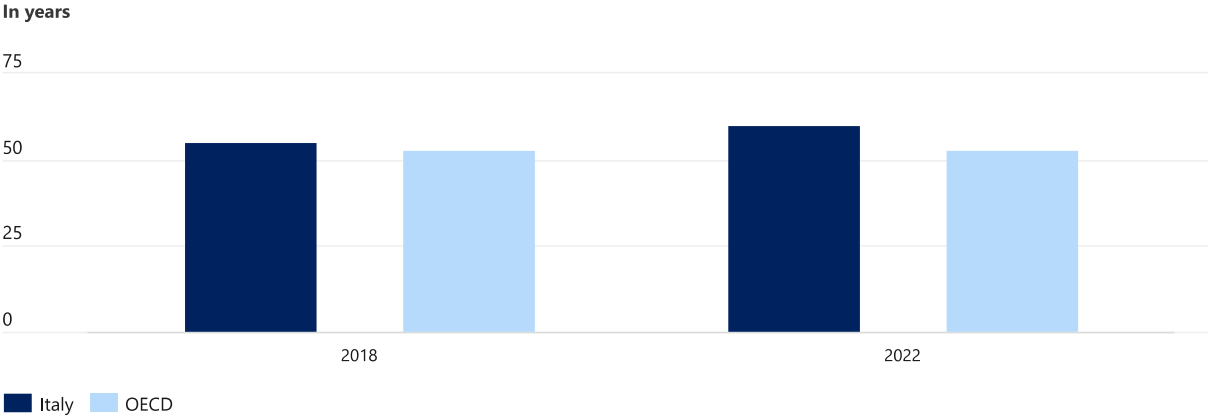
Figure 9. Gender equality in senior management positions in national administration, 2021



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.

In Italy, the average age of cabinet members – 60 years – is among the highest in the OECD. The average across the OECD is 53 years.

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



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 for satisfaction in administrative services are not available for Italy.

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