

Understanding Population Dynamics: Fertility and Migration in Europe

March 2024

2022 Total Fertility Rate Statistics (Live Births per Woman)



Statistics Explained <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/> - 07/03/2024



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Introduction:

Population dynamics in Europe are shaped by two primary factors: fertility rates and migration patterns. The total fertility rate, which indicates the average number of children per woman, plays a pivotal role in understanding population stability. This rate is influenced by various societal changes, particularly those stemming from modern lifestyles, such as women's employment, career aspirations, religious beliefs, and individual decisions related to family size and timing, as well as the financial considerations associated with childcare, education, and other expenses.

Migration profoundly influences the dynamics of Europe's population. The movement of people across borders brings about shifts in the composition and diversity of populations within European countries. This is evident in the influx of migrants, particularly from Africa, where the Mediterranean Sea has tragically become a perilous route for many attempting to cross. Additionally, migration has been fueled by events such as the Syrian civil war and, more recently, Russian aggression in Ukraine, resulting in a significant number of Syrian and Ukrainians seeking refuge in Europe. These dynamics underscore the complexity of population studies and emphasize the need to consider both academic insights and the lived experiences of individuals affected by migration.

Fertility Trends in Europe:

The total fertility rate for a particular year indicates the average number of children a woman would have if she experienced the fertility rates observed across various age groups during her reproductive years. If there's no migration and people's lifespans don't change, a total fertility rate of 2.1 children per woman would keep the population stable in the society. Simply, it's the average number of live births per woman needed to maintain a steady population size without any migration. The significant decline in birth rates over recent decades can be attributed to various factors. People are increasingly postponing starting families and having children, often desiring smaller families overall. This trend is particularly influenced by modern lifestyles, including women's employment, career ambitions, religious beliefs, and individual preferences regarding family size and timing. Additionally, financial considerations such as the costs of childcare, education, and other expenses play a significant role. Interestingly, modern societies with higher GDP per capita tend to have fewer children, as evidenced by Italy's birth rate, which dropped from 2.5% in 1970 to 1.24% in 2022, or as seen in South Korea, where the birth rate declined from 4.3% in 1970 to 0.78% in 2022.¹

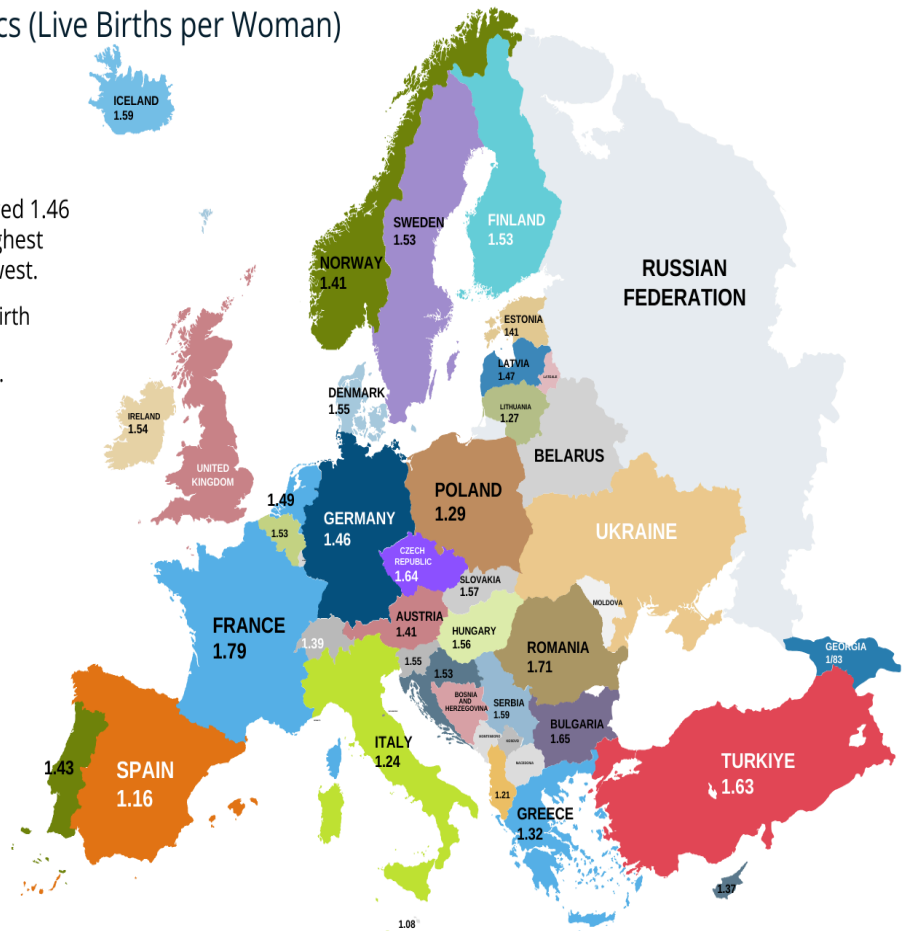
In 2022, the European Union had 3.88 million births. The total fertility rate averaged 1.46 live births per woman across the EU. France boasted the highest fertility rate at 1.79, while Malta

¹ <https://www.statista.com/statistics/1033293/fertility-rate-italy-1850-2020/>
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/1403684/south-korea-birth-rate/>

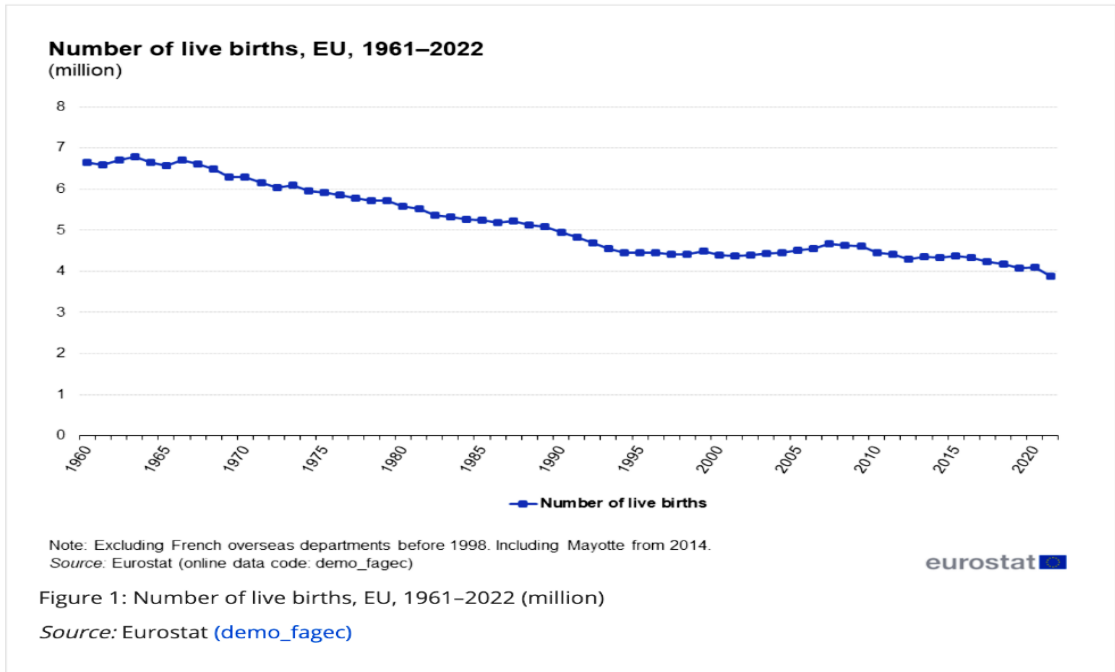
reported the lowest at 1.08. The average age of women at the birth of their first child in the EU was 29.7 years, ranging from 26.6 in Bulgaria to 31.7 in Italy. Notably, there were nearly half as many children born in the EU in 2022 compared to six decades ago.

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- In 2022, the EU's total fertility rate averaged 1.46 live births per woman. France had the highest total fertility rate, while Malta had the lowest.
- In 2022, the average age of women at the birth of their first child in the EU was 29.7 years, varying from 26.6 in Bulgaria to 31.7 in Italy.
- Almost 2 times fewer children born in the EU in 2022 than 6 decades ago



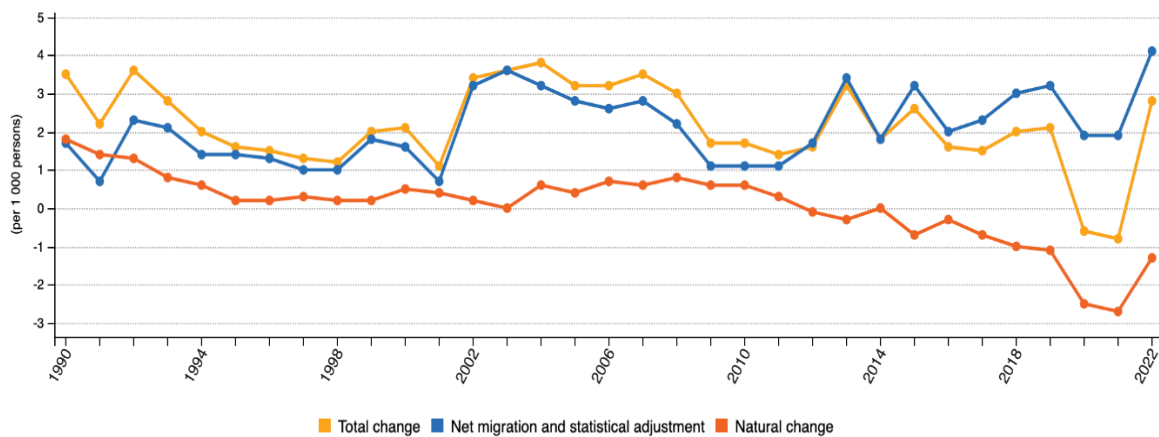
Source : Statistics Explained
<https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statisticsexplained/> -
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Migration Dynamics and Population Stability:

Europe's declining birth rates have led countries to rely on migration as a key strategy for stabilizing their populations. While migration contributes to economic growth, it also brings forth social and demographic challenges throughout the continent. The influx of migrants from non-EU nations highlights the multifaceted relationship between migration and population dynamics. Moreover, the cultural, religious, and traditional disparities among immigrants, along with their integration into society, have contributed to the surge of far-right movements. Over the past two decades, migration has evolved into a pivotal political issue across Europe, influencing the entire region.

Population change by component (annual crude rates), EU, 1990-2022



Note: Excluding French overseas departments up to and including 1997. Breaks in series: 1991, 1998, 2000-01, 2008, 2010-12, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2019, 2021 and 2022.

2022: Eurostat estimate

Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_gind)

eurostat

The chart presented above provides an overview of the European Union (EU) population's development, delineating the two main components of population change: natural population change, net migration, and total statistical adjustment.

Once more, the population of the European Union across its 27 countries witnessed growth in 2022, rising from 446.7 million on January 1, 2022, to 448.4 million on January 1, 2023. However, it's important to note that this increase is not solely attributed to birth fertility but also includes immigration counts entering the EU. For instance In 2021, the European Union witnessed an influx of 2.3 million immigrants from non-EU countries, representing a nearly 18% increase compared to 2020.² The chart shows that in the European Union (EU), there was a negative natural change, marked by a higher number of deaths than births. However, this decline was counterbalanced by positive net migration, resulting in an overall increase in population size. The negative trend in natural change is typically attributed to factors such as aging demographics and declining birth rates. Despite these demographic challenges, the EU experienced population growth, primarily due to positive net migration. Consequently, while natural factors contributed to a decrease in population size within the EU, the influx of migrants mitigated this decline, leading to a net increase in population across the continent.

Outside the European Union in Turkiye also there been a notable decline in fertility rates. In 2001, the total fertility rate stood at 2.38 children per woman, but by 2022, it had dropped to

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https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/index.php?title=Migration_and_migrant_population_statistics

1.62 children.³ However, despite the decline in fertility rates, Turkey's population is experiencing growth, largely due to its status as the world's leading refugee-hosting country. With approximately 3.6 million forcibly displaced people, particularly from Syria, finding refuge in Turkey, the population continues to increase

Conclusion:

In Europe, despite the decline in fertility rates, the population is experiencing growth attributed to the influx of migrants. While migration serves to counteract population decline, stimulating economic growth and workforce participation, it also presents challenges in terms of social integration, which, in turn, contribute to the resurgence of far-right movements across the continent. Addressing these multifaceted challenges requires a comprehensive understanding of population dynamics and informed policy decisions that prioritize human dignity and foster inclusive societies.

³ <https://data.tuik.gov.tr/Bulten/Index?p=Dogum-Istatistikleri-2022-49673>

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