Births and fertility

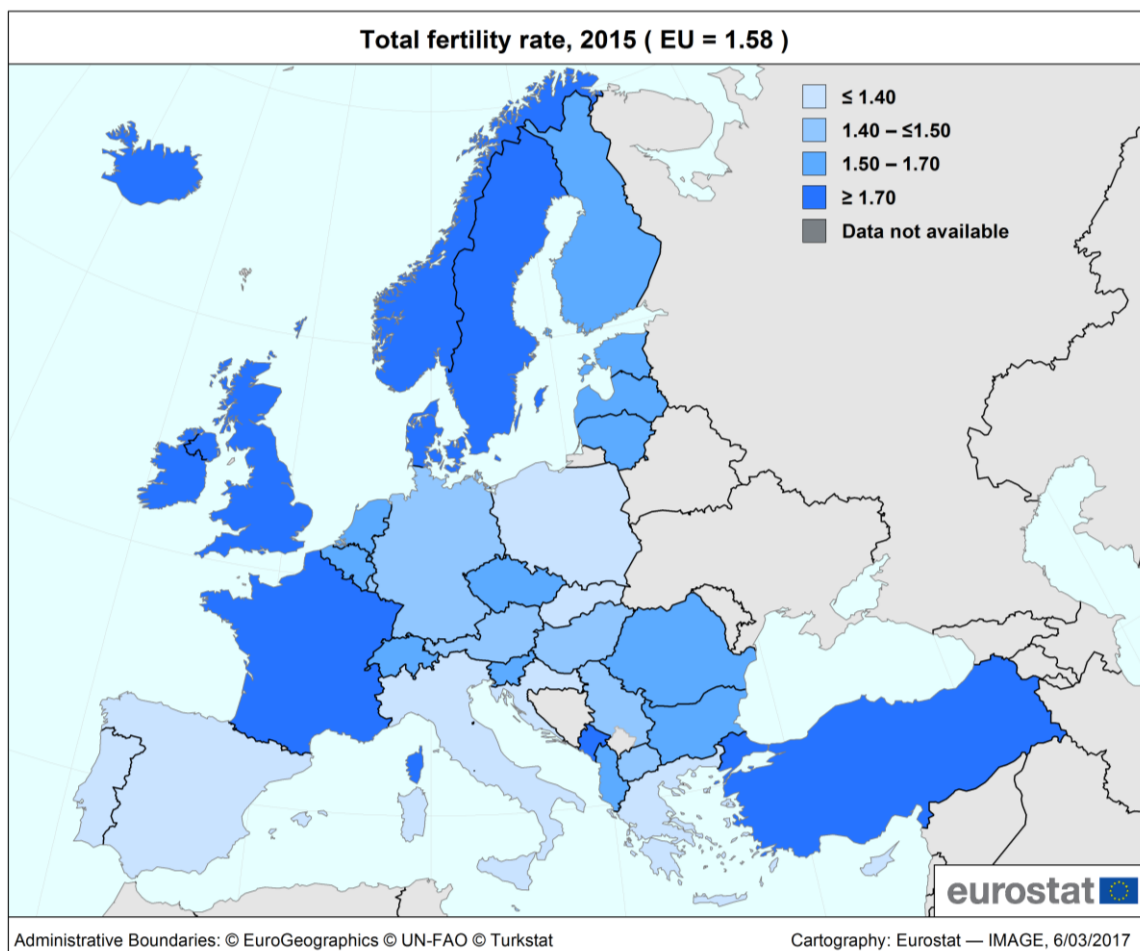# Over 5 million babies born in the EU in 2015

Women first became mothers at almost 29 on average

In 2015, 5.103 million babies were born in the **European Union** (EU), compared with 5.063 million in 2001 (the first year comparable statistics are available). Among Member States, **France** continued to record the highest number of births (799 700 in 2015), ahead of the **United Kingdom** (776 700), **Germany** (737 600), **Italy** (485 800), **Spain** (418 400) and **Poland** (369 300).

On average in the **EU**, women who gave birth to their first child in 2015 were aged nearly 29 (28.9 years). Across Member States, first time mothers were the youngest in **Bulgaria** and the oldest in **Italy**.

Overall, the total fertility rate in the **EU** increased from 1.46 in 2001 to 1.58 in 2015. It varied between Member States from 1.31 in **Portugal** to 1.96 in **France** in 2015. A total fertility rate of around 2.1 live births per woman is considered to be the replacement level in developed countries: in other words, the average number of live births per woman required to keep the population size constant without migration.

This information comes from an article issued by **Eurostat, the statistical office of the European Union**. The fertility indicators presented in this news release show only a small part of the large amount of data related to demography available at Eurostat.

Total fertility rate, 2015 (EU = 1.58)

- ≤ 1.40
- 1.40 − ≤1.50
- 1.50 − 1.70
- ≥ 1.70
- Data not available

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Total fertility rate below the replacement level of 2.1 in all Member States

In 2015, **France** (1.96) and **Ireland** (1.92) were the two Member State with total fertility rates closest to the replacement level of around 2.1. They were followed by **Sweden** (1.85) and the **United Kingdom** (1.80). Conversely, the lowest fertility rates were observed in **Portugal** (1.31), **Cyprus** and **Poland** (both 1.32), **Greece** and **Spain** (both 1.33) as well as **Italy** (1.35).

In most Member States, the total fertility rate rose in 2015 compared with 2001. The largest increases were observed in **Latvia** (from 1.22 in 2001 to 1.70 in 2015, or +0.48), the **Czech Republic** (+0.42), **Lithuania** (+0.41), **Slovenia** (+0.36), **Bulgaria** (+0.32), **Romania** (+0.31), **Sweden** (+0.28) and **Estonia** (+0.26). In contrast, the highest decreases were registered in **Cyprus** (-0.25), **Luxembourg** (-0.19) and **Portugal** (-0.14). For the **EU** as a whole, the total fertility rate increased from 1.46 in 2001 to 1.58 in 2015 (+0.12).

Total fertility rate, 2001 and 2015

	2001	2015	Change 2015/2001
EU*	**1.46**	**1.58**	**+0.12**
Belgium	1.67	1.70	+0.03
Bulgaria	1.21	1.53	+0.32
Czech Republic	1.15	1.57	+0.42
Denmark	1.74	1.71	-0.03
Germany	1.35	1.50	+0.15
Estonia	1.32	1.58	+0.26
Ireland*	1.94	1.92	-0.02
Greece	1.25	1.33	+0.08
Spain	1.23	1.33	+0.10
France*	1.90	1.96	+0.06
Croatia	1.46	1.40	-0.06
Italy	1.25	1.35	+0.10
Cyprus	1.57	1.32	-0.25
Latvia	1.22	1.70	+0.48
Lithuania	1.29	1.70	+0.41
Luxembourg	1.66	1.47	-0.19
Hungary	1.31	1.45	+0.14
Malta	1.48	1.45	-0.03
Netherlands	1.71	1.66	-0.05
Austria	1.33	1.49	+0.16
Poland	1.31	1.32	+0.01
Portugal**	1.45	1.31	-0.14
Romania**	1.27	1.58	+0.31
Slovenia	1.21	1.57	+0.36
Slovakia	1.20	1.40	+0.20
Finland	1.73	1.65	-0.08
Sweden	1.57	1.85	+0.28
United Kingdom**	1.63	1.80	+0.17
Iceland	1.95	1.80	-0.15
Liechtenstein	1.52	1.40	-0.12
Norway	1.78	1.72	-0.06
Switzerland	1.38	1.54	+0.16
Montenegro	:	1.74	:
FYR of Macedonia	1.73	1.50	-0.23
Albania	:	1.67	:
Serbia	1.58	1.46	-0.12
Turkey	:	2.14	:

:   Data not available.
*   2015 data is provisional.
** 2015 data is estimated.
The source dataset can be found here.

First time mothers youngest in Bulgaria, Romania and Latvia, oldest in Italy and Spain

In 2015, the mean age of women at birth of their first child stood at 27 or below in **Bulgaria** (26.0), **Romania** (26.3), **Latvia** (26.5) and **Poland** (27.0). In contrast, this age was above 30 in **Italy** (30.8), **Spain** (30.7), **Luxembourg** and **Greece** (both 30.2).

Highest growth in number of births over last 15 years in Sweden, largest drop in Portugal

In the **EU**, 40 217 more babies were born in 2015 than in 2001 (+0.8%). Across Member States, the largest relative increases were in **Sweden** (+25.6%), the **Czech Republic** (+22.1%), **Slovenia** (+18.1%) and the **United Kingdom** (+16.1%). In contrast, the highest decrease was in **Portugal** (-24.2%), followed by the **Netherlands** (-15.8%), **Denmark** (-11.1%), **Romania** (-10.4%) and **Greece** (-10.2%).

Number of live births and mean age of women at birth of first child

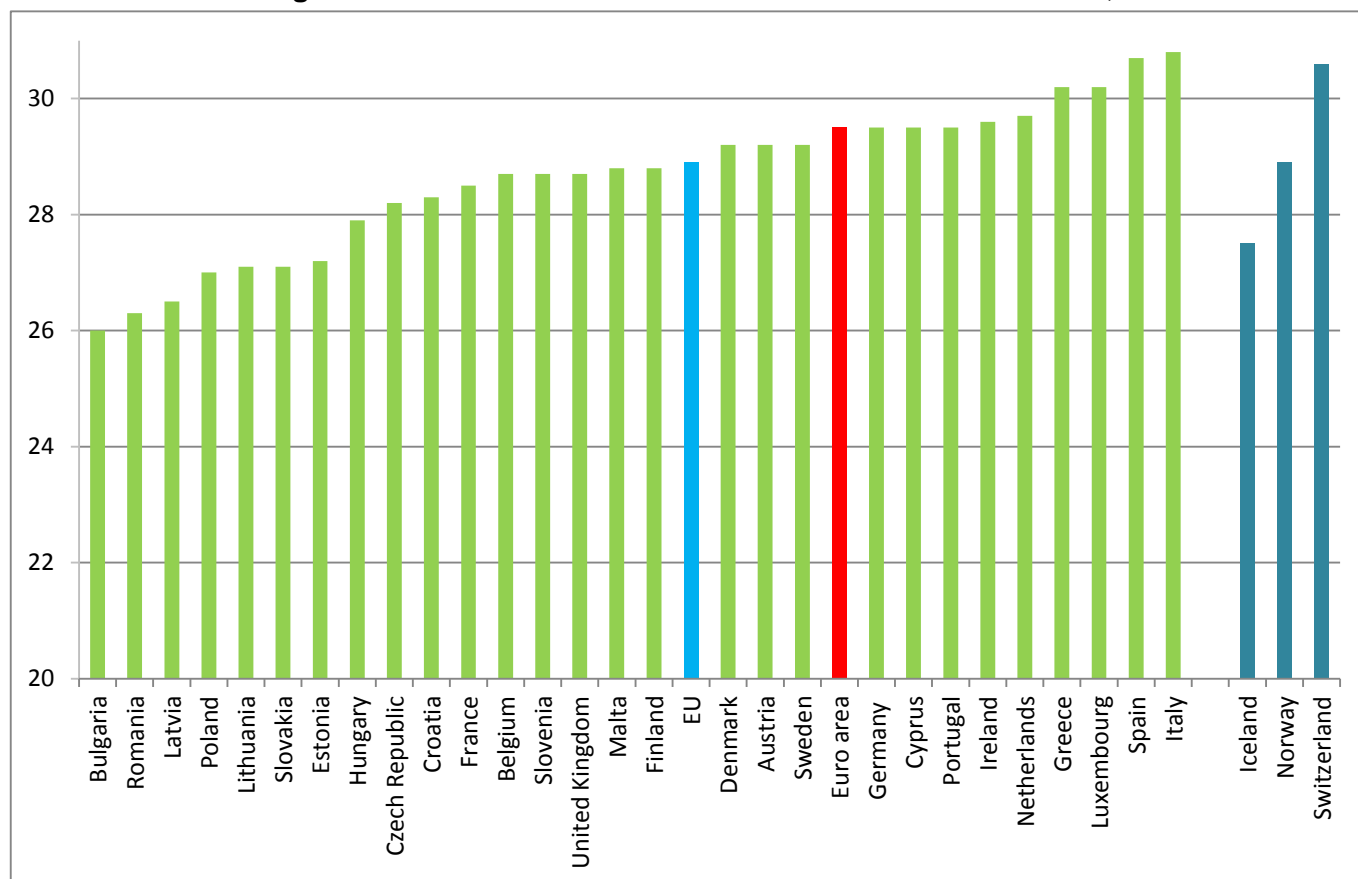|	Number of births		Mean age of women at birth of first child, 2015
	2001	**2015**	
EU	**5 062 948**	**5 103 165**	**28.9**
Belgium	115 372	122 274	28.7
Bulgaria	68 180	65 950	26.0
Czech Republic	90 715	110 764	28.2
Denmark	65 458	58 205	29.2
Germany	734 475	737 575	29.5
Estonia	12 632	13 907	27.2
Ireland	57 854	65 537	29.6
Greece	102 282	91 847	30.2
Spain	405 313	418 432	30.7
France*	804 052	799 671	28.5
Croatia	40 993	37 503	28.3
Italy	535 282	485 780	30.8
Cyprus	8 167	9 170	29.5
Latvia	19 726	21 979	26.5
Lithuania	31 185	31 475	27.1
Luxembourg	5 459	6 115	30.2
Hungary	97 047	92 135	27.9
Malta	3 957	4 325	28.8
Netherlands	202 603	170 510	29.7
Austria	75 458	84 381	29.2
Poland	368 205	369 308	27.0
Portugal*	112 774	85 500	29.5
Romania*	220 368	197 491	26.3
Slovenia	17 477	20 641	28.7
Slovakia	51 136	55 602	27.1
Finland	56 189	55 472	28.8
Sweden	91 466	114 870	29.2
United Kingdom*	669 123	776 746	28.7
Iceland	4 091	4 129	27.5
Liechtenstein	401	325	:
Norway	56 696	58 815	28.9
Switzerland	72 295	86 559	30.6
Montenegro	:	7 386	:
FYR of Macedonia	27 010	23 075	26.8
Albania**	:	32 715	25.2
Serbia	78 435	65 657	27.7
Turkey	:	1 325 783	:

:   Data not available.
*   Data on mean age of women at birth of first child are estimated.
**   2014 data on mean age of women at birth of first child instead of 2015.
The source dataset can be found here for number of births and here for mean age of women at birth of first child.

Mean age of women at birth of first child in the EU Member States, 2015

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Estonia, Ireland, Greece, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Hungary, Malta, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

Methods and definitions

The source of the data on fertility indicators at national level is the annual demographic data collection in the field of demography carried out by Eurostat.

Live births refer to births of children that showed any sign of life. It is the number of births excluding stillbirths.

The **total fertility rate** is defined as the mean number of children who would be born to a woman during her lifetime, if she were to spend her childbearing years conforming to the age-specific fertility rates, which have been measured in a given year.

For more information

Eurostat website section dedicated to statistics on demography.

Eurostat database on births and fertility data.

Eurostat Statistics Explained article on fertility statistics.

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