

POPULATION & SOCIETIES

No. 388
MARCH 2003

The population of France in 2002

Gilles Pison*

On 1st January 2003, the population of metropolitan France was estimated to be 59.6 million, plus a further 1.8 million living in the French overseas departments, bringing the total to 61.4 million [1]. The population in metropolitan France increased by nearly 290,000 people (+ 0.5%) in 2002. This was very similar to 2001, with a slight fall in the surplus of births over deaths (natural increase) due to slightly fewer births and slightly more deaths offset by a slight rise in the surplus of immigration over emigration (net migration) as estimated by Insee (table page 3).

◆ Gender life expectancy gap still closing

There were an estimated 540,000 deaths in 2002, slightly more than in 2001 (+ 1.5%), producing a rise in the crude death rate from 9.0 to 9.1 deaths per 1,000 population (1). However, life expectancy at birth reached 75.6 years for males and 82.9 years for females, a slight improvement for males (75.5 in 2001) and unchanged from 2001 for females. In the past ten years, it has lengthened by 2.4 years for males and by 1.5 years for females. As male gains have outpaced female gains, the gender differential fell from 8.2 years in 1992 to 7.3 years in 2002.

* Institut national d'études démographiques

◆ Fertility stable but fewer births

The total fertility rate in 2002 remained unchanged from its 2000 and 2001 levels at 1.88 children per woman in metropolitan France. Total births, by contrast, slipped slightly from 775,000 in 2000 to 771,000 in 2001 and 763,000 in 2002 (figure 1a). Whether this slide continues will depend on the three predicating factors of total births: the potential parent population, their propensity to procreate, and age at childbirth.

An acceptable indicator of the potential parent population is the number of women aged 20-39, as 96% of childbearing women are in this age bracket. There were just over 6 million of these at the end of the 1960s, rising steadily to just over 8.5 million in 1986 (figure 1b) as the large cohorts of the baby-boom years (1946 to 1973) reached the age of 20 each year while the smaller inter-war cohorts exited the 20-39 age group on turning 40. The 20-39 age group stopped expanding in 1986, but still remained at the high level of over 8.5 million for ten years. Each year, this age group lost a cohort of baby-boomers on turning 40, but added another that had turned 20. Because of their similar size, the 20-39 age group remained stable in numbers. Replacement stopped in 1994, and the 20-39 year-old population

(1) Infant mortality fell below the level of 5 deaths under the age of 1 per 1000 live births in 1995 and has declined a further 15%, levelling-out at 4.2 per 1000 in 2002.

started to contract as the smaller post-baby-boom birth cohorts entered while the larger baby-boom cohorts continued to exit the 20-39 bracket. The number of women aged 20-39 has fallen from 8.6 to 8.2 million since 1994, and is expected to contract by 40,000 to 50,000 (–0.5%) a year until 2015 as the final baby-boomer cohorts turn 40. By 2015, the 20-39 year old female population may number only 7.6 million, i.e., 7% fewer than now, possibly producing a similar annual fall in births of up to 710,000 if fertility behaviours remained unchanged

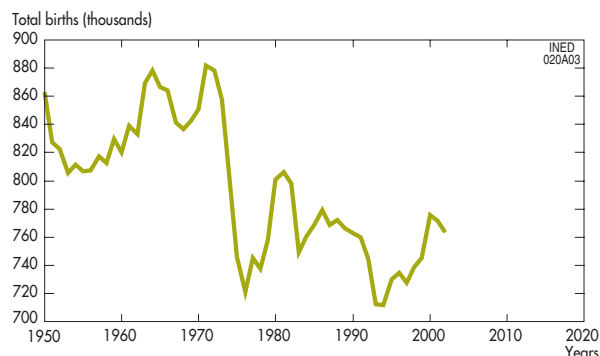
Potential parents' propensity to procreate, i.e. their fertility, is the second predicating factor in birth totals for a given year. Whereas women in the 1920s and 1930s birth cohorts—the mothers of baby-boom children—averaged more than 2.5 children per woman, those of the 1950s and early 1960s birth cohorts—the mothers of post-baby-boom children—had barely above 2 (figure 1c). Fertility data for subsequent cohorts are not yet available, but were it to be maintained at this replacement level, total births would be stabilized for a constant potential parent population.

The third factor is the age at which parents have children—conventionally, mean age at childbearing. This has fluctuated widely over the past 50 years, first falling by a year and a half between 1950 and 1977 (from over 28.0 to 26.5 years), then reversing and rising uninterruptedly to 29.5 years in 2002 (figure 1d). The current rise is due to younger cohorts delaying childbearing to a later age than their forebears. One consequence is a low birth total as females in the oldest cohorts have stopped childbearing while the younger cohorts have yet to start. If mean age at childbearing were to fall, by contrast, annual birth totals would rise as deferred births among the oldest cohorts combined with earlier births among the younger cohorts. Far from that, however, the twenty-plus-year trend towards birth deferral is continuing, and mean age at childbearing in 2002 had risen to 29.5 from 26.5 in 1977 (2).

All told, were future to equal past parity but with a growing lag in mean age at childbearing in the coming years, annual birth totals could continue to gradually decline as the potential parent population contracts. Should the birth deferral trend be halted, however, annual total births could rise by over 10%.

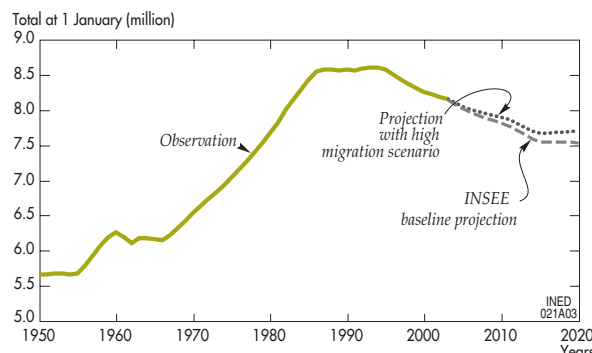
(2) Fertility among females aged 30 and over has risen since the end of the 1970s, while that of under-25s emerged from a steady decline and has been stable for some years.

Figure 1a - Annual births (metropolitan France)



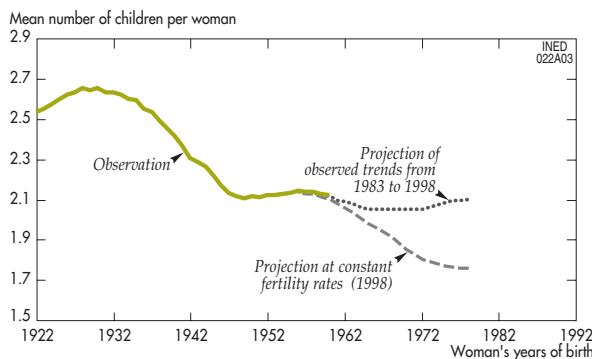
Sources: Daguet, 2002, [2]; Beaumel et al. 2002, [3].

Figure 1b - Total population of women aged 20-39



Sources: Beaumel et al. 2002, [3]; Daguet, 1995, [4]; Brutel, [5].

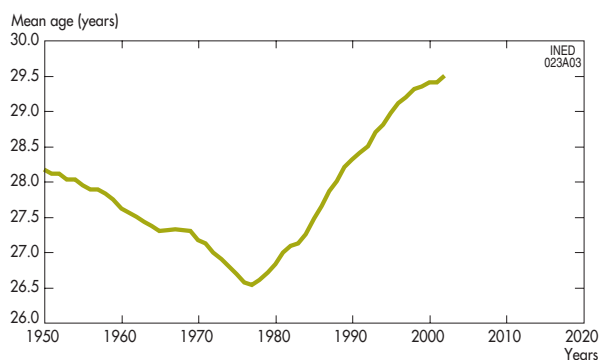
Figure 1c - Cohort lifetime fertility



Note: The women's birth years were adjusted by 28 years, which is the mean age at childbearing in this period.

Sources: Daguet, 2002, [2]; Toulemon and Mazuy, 2001, [6].

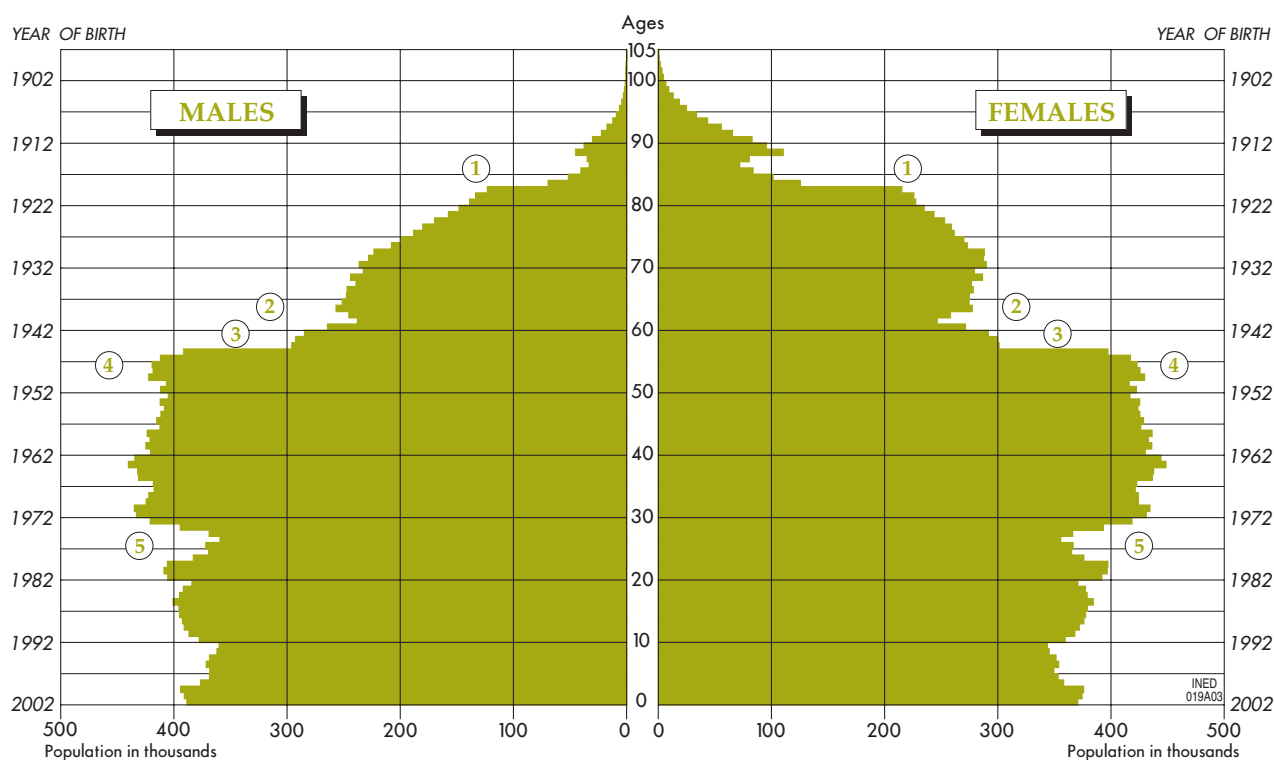
Figure 1d - Mean age at childbearing



Sources: Doisneau, 2003, [1]; Daguet, 2002, [2].

POPULATION OF FRANCE

PROVISIONAL ESTIMATE ON 1 JANUARY 2003



Source : Insee.

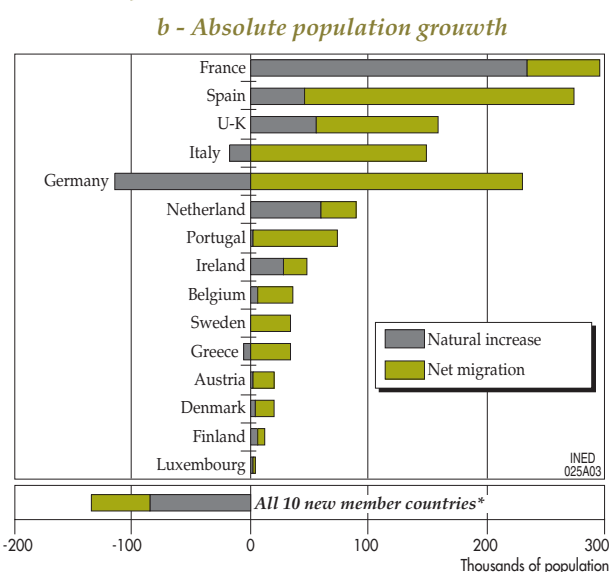
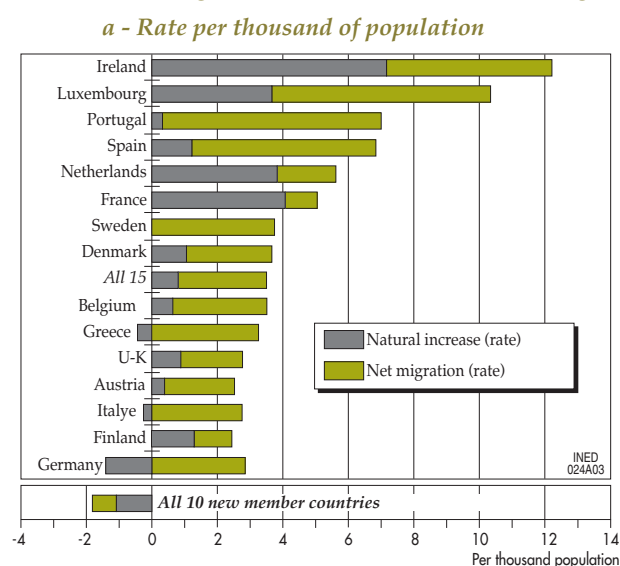
Table – Population indicators from 1950 to 2002, metropolitan France

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000(p)	2001 (p)	2002(p)
Births (m)	858	816	848	800	762	712	711	730	734	727	738	745	775	771	763
Deaths (m)	530	517	540	547	526	532	520	532	536	530	534	538	535	531	540
Natural increase (m)	328	299	308	253	236	179	191	198	199	196	204	207	240	239	223
Net migration (m)	35	140	180	44	80	70	50	40	35	40	45	45	50	60	65
Total growth (m)	362	439	488	297	316	249	241	238	234	236	249	252	290	299	288
Birth rate (t)	20.5	17.9	16.7	14.9	13.4	12.4	12.3	12.6	12.7	12.5	12.6	12.7	13.2	13.0	12.8
Death rate (t)	12.7	11.3	10.6	10.2	9.3	9.3	9.0	9.2	9.2	9.1	9.1	9.2	9.1	9.0	9.1
Infant mortality rate (r)	51.9	27.4	18.2	10.0	7.3	6.5	5.9	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.2
Total fertility rate (e)	2.93	2.73	2.47	1.94	1.78	1.65	1.65	1.71	1.73	1.73	1.76	1.79	1.88	1.89	1.88
Life expectancy :															
male (a)	63.4	67.0	68.4	70.2	72.7	73.3	73.7	73.9	74.1	74.5	74.8	75.0	75.2	75.5	75.6
female (a)	69.2	73.6	75.9	78.4	80.9	81.4	81.8	81.9	82.0	82.3	82.4	82.5	82.7	82.9	82.9
Total marriages (m)	331	320	394	334	287	255	254	255	280	284	271	286	298	288	281
Marriage rate (t)	7.9	7.0	7.8	6.2	5.1	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.8	4.9	4.6	4.9	5.1	4.9	4.7
Population (1) (m)	42 010	45 904	51 016	54 029	56 893	57 565	57 753	57 936	58 116	58 299	58 497	58 749	59 038	59 338	59 626
Under 20 (1) (m)	12 556	14 665	16 748	16 419	15 632	15 180	15 084	15 058	15 056	15 027	15 018	15 015	15 003	14 998	14 979
65 and above (1) (m)	4 727	5 288	6 174	7 541	8 036	8 524	8 686	8 858	9 011	9 164	9 285	9 414	9 519	9 628	9 720
Under 20 (1) %	29.9	31.9	32.8	30.4	27.5	26.4	26.1	26.0	25.9	25.8	25.7	25.6	25.4	25.3	25.1
65 and above (1) %	11.3	11.5	12.1	14.0	14.1	14.8	15.0	15.3	15.5	15.7	15.9	16.0	16.1	16.2	16.3

(a) in years - (e) children per woman - (m) in thousands - (p) provisional - (r) per 1 000 live births - (t) per 1 000 population - (1) at year-end.

Source : INSEE.

Figure 2 - Natural increase and net migration in the 15 European Union countries in 2002



* Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia.
Source: Eurostat, 2002, [7].

French population growth is unique in Europe

The total population of the 15 European Union countries is estimated to have increased by 0.4% in 2002, reaching 378 million on 1st January 2003, according to Eurostat provisional estimates [7]. There were slightly more births than deaths, producing a natural increase of 310,000 people (0.1% of the population). But this accounts for only a quarter of total population growth in the EU: migration is the main growth factor. Net immigration estimated at just over a million, accounts for three quarters. All 15 Member States grew in 2002, but the pace and patterns of growth varied considerably (figure 2a). Growth was highest in Ireland (over 1%) and lowest in Germany and Italy (around 0.1% and 0.2%). France and the Netherlands experienced similar growth just above the European average. But France stands out for having the lowest net migration rate of the Fifteen. Unlike most European countries, population growth in France mainly stems from a net births surplus. This stands out even more from the comparative absolute population growth of the Fifteen (figure 2b). France and Spain head the table, adding between 250,000 and 300,000 people each in 2002, followed by the United Kingdom and Italy with approximately 150,000 extra inhabitants. Germany ranks fifth among the big countries with an additional 115,000 people. The French net births surplus, amounting to 220,000 inhabitants in 2002, is unique in Europe and accounts for over two-thirds of the all-EU surplus. Spain and Portugal present a surprising

picture—both were until recently sending countries whose populations grew substantially in 2002 due to what is now one of the most significant net immigration counts, and a low surplus of births over deaths. Without migration, the populations of Greece, Italy and Germany would have decreased and that of Sweden would not have increased.

The ten new countries that will join the European Union in 2004 (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia) have a total population of 75 million, or nearly 20% of that of the Fifteen. Their population is estimated to have decreased by 0.2% in 2002 due to a net births deficit coupled with net emigration.

REFERENCES

- [1] Lionel DOISNEAU - « Bilan démographique 2002. Légère diminution des naissances », *INSEE Première*, no. 882, January 2003 • *Bulletin mensuel de statistique*, no. 1-2003, INSEE, p. 129-144
- [2] Fabienne DAGUET - *Un siècle de fécondité française*, coll. « INSEE Résultats, Société », no. 8, 2002, INSEE, 306 p.
- [3] Catherine BEAUMEL, Lionel DOISNEAU and Mauricette VATAN - *La situation démographique en 2000*, coll. « INSEE Résultats, Société », no. 10, 2002, INSEE, 44 p. + cédérom
- [4] Fabienne DAGUET - *Un siècle de démographie française*, coll. « INSEE Résultats », no. 434-435, 1995, INSEE, 306 p.
- [5] Chantal BRUTEL - *La population de la France métropolitaine en 2050: un vieillissement inéluctable*, *Economie et statistique*, no. 355-356, 2002, Insee
- [6] Laurent TOULEMON et Magali MAZUY - « Les naissances sont retardées mais la fécondité est stable », *Population*, 2001/4, INED
- [7] Eurostat - « Premières estimations démographiques pour 2002 », *Statistiques en bref*, no. 25, 2002, p. 1-7