

Births and fertility

Over 5 million births in EU in 2017

Women in EU have first child on average at 29

In 2017, 5.075 million babies were born in the **European Union (EU)**, compared with 5.148 million in 2016.

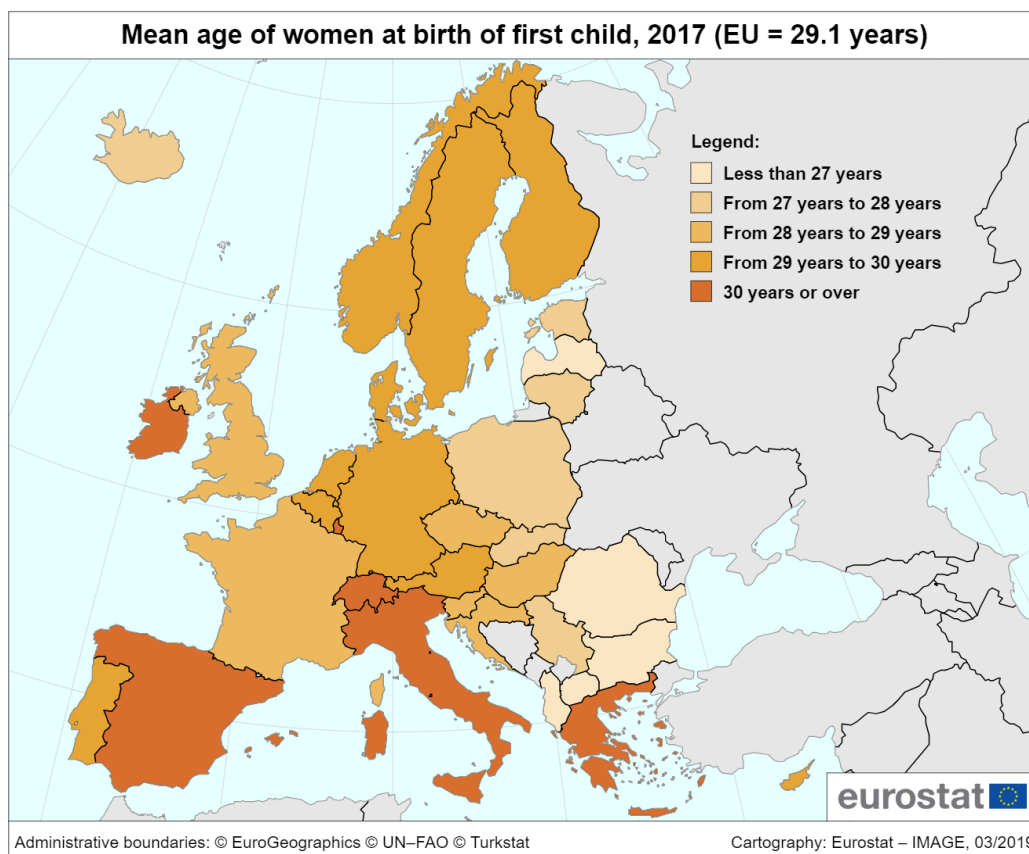
The total fertility rate in the **EU** stood at 1.59 births per woman in 2017, compared with 1.60 in 2016. The highest total fertility rate since the start of comparable time series was in 2010 when it reached 1.62, still below the replacement level, which is considered to be 2.1 live births per woman.

Among the 5.075 million births, 45% concerned a first child, 36% a second child and 19% a third or subsequent child.

On average in the **EU**, women who gave birth to their first child in 2017 were 29.1 years old. Over five years, the mean age has gradually increased from 28.7 in 2013 to 29.1 in 2017.

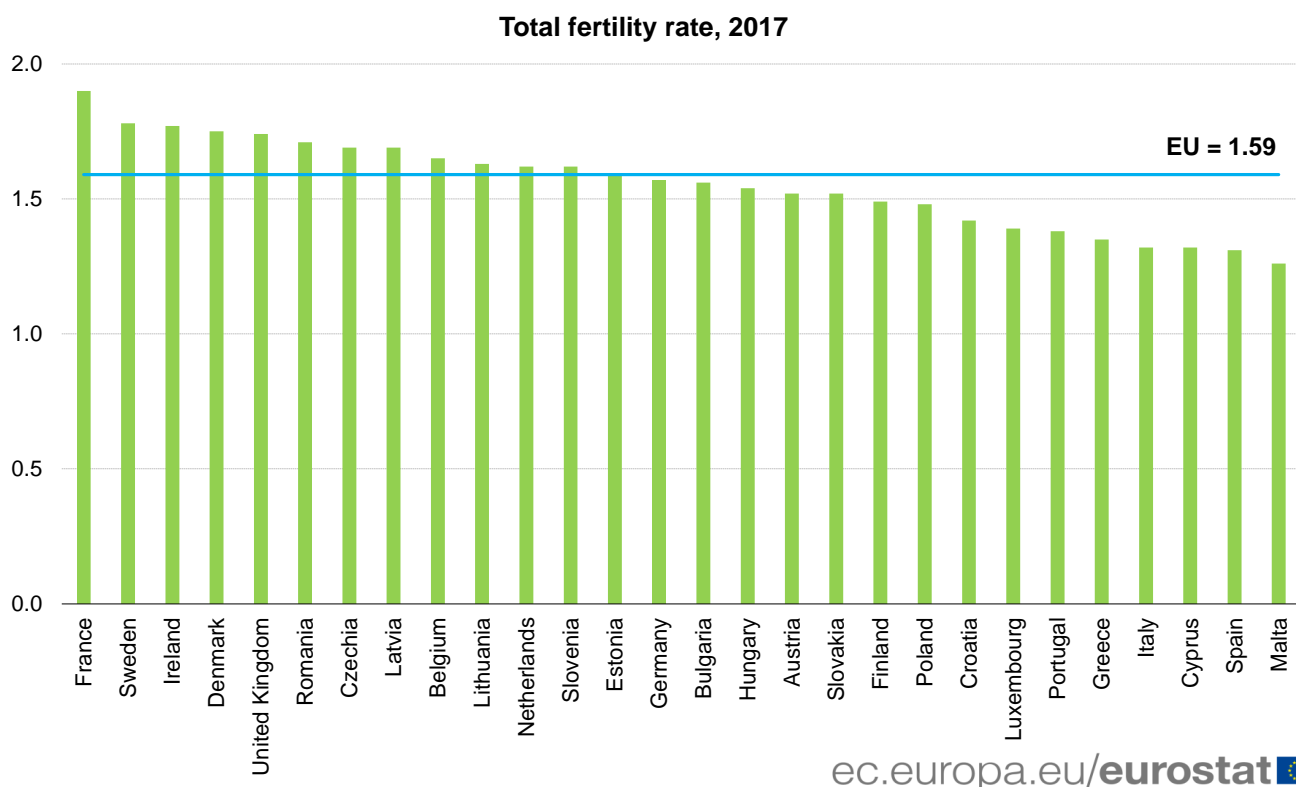
Almost 5% of births of first children in the **EU** in 2017 were to women aged less than 20 (teenage mothers) and around 3% to women aged 40 and over.

This information comes from recently published data 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 highest in France

In 2017, **France** (1.90 births per woman) was the Member State with the highest total fertility rate in the EU, followed by **Sweden** (1.78), **Ireland** (1.77), **Denmark** (1.75) and the **United Kingdom** (1.74). Conversely, the lowest fertility rates were observed in **Malta** (1.26 births per woman), **Spain** (1.31), **Italy** and **Cyprus** (both 1.32), **Greece** (1.35), **Portugal** (1.38), and **Luxembourg** (1.39).



The source dataset can be found [here](#).

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

In 2017, the mean age of mothers at the first childbirth varied between the EU Member States. The lowest mean age for the first childbirth was recorded in **Bulgaria** (26.1 years), followed by **Romania** (26.5), **Latvia** (26.9), **Slovakia** (27.1), **Poland** (27.3), **Lithuania** (27.5) and **Estonia** (27.7). In contrast, the mother's age for the first childbirth was above 30 in **Italy** (31.1 years), **Spain** (30.9), **Luxembourg** (30.8), **Greece** (30.4) and **Ireland** (30.3).

In Bulgaria and Romania around 14% of first children born to teenage mothers

The highest shares of births of a first child to teenage mothers (less than 20 years old) were recorded in **Romania** (13.9% of total births of first child in 2017) and **Bulgaria** (13.8%), ahead of **Hungary** (9.9%), **Slovakia** (9.5%), **Latvia** (6.7%) and the **United Kingdom** (6.1%). On the other hand, the lowest shares were observed in **Denmark** (1.5%), **Italy** and **Slovenia** (both 1.6%), the **Netherlands** (1.7%), **Luxembourg** (1.9%) and **Sweden** (2.0%).

In contrast, the highest proportions of births of a first child to women aged 40 and over were registered in **Spain** (7.4% of total births of first child in 2017) and **Italy** (7.3%), followed by **Greece** (5.6%), **Luxembourg** (4.9%), **Ireland** (4.8%) and **Portugal** (4.3%).

One out of ten births in Finland was to a mother who already had at least three children

In the **EU**, 81.5% of births were first or second children, while births of third children accounted for 12.5% of the total, and fourth or subsequent children accounted for 6.0% in 2017.

Across the EU Member States, the highest share of mothers giving birth to their fourth or subsequent children was recorded in **Finland** (10.3%), followed by **Ireland** (9.0%), the **United Kingdom** (8.8%), **Slovakia** (8.1%), and **Belgium** (8.0%).

Geographical information

The **European Union** (EU) includes Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, 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. The full set of demographic statistics has been recently updated in the Eurostat database with data for 2017.

In this news release, births refer to live births. **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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Births of first child by mother's age, 2017

	Total births of first child	Proportions by age group, %				Mean age of women at birth of first child
		Under 20	20-29	30-39	40 and over	
EU	2 302 218	4.7	49.0	43.0	3.4	29.1
Belgium	51 656	3.0	57.1	37.6	2.2	29.0
Bulgaria	32 426	13.8	55.7	28.2	2.3	26.1
Czechia	55 726	4.0	55.4	38.9	1.7	28.2
Denmark	28 444	1.5	59.7	36.5	2.3	29.4
Germany	369 659	3.6	47.3	46.6	2.5	29.6
Estonia	5 539	4.7	61.7	31.6	2.0	27.7
Ireland	23 595	3.9	34.4	56.9	4.8	30.3
Greece	42 267	3.7	36.8	53.9	5.6	30.4
Spain	194 465	3.5	30.4	58.8	7.4	30.9
France	328 461	4.3	55.8	37.2	2.8	28.7
Croatia	16 378	4.8	53.4	39.7	2.1	28.6
Italy	214 267	1.6	36.9	54.2	7.3	31.1
Cyprus	4 254	2.9	49.9	44.5	2.7	29.7
Latvia	8 342	6.7	64.0	27.9	1.5	26.9
Lithuania	13 286	5.9	65.8	27.4	1.0	27.5
Luxembourg	3 293	1.9	38.0	55.1	4.9	30.8
Hungary	42 286	9.9	48.4	39.0	2.8	28.0
Malta	2 283	5.3	48.8	44.2	1.6	29.0
Netherlands	76 507	1.7	51.3	44.8	2.2	29.9
Austria	41 646	3.0	51.1	43.2	2.6	29.3
Poland	173 394	5.2	62.5	31.2	1.1	27.3
Portugal	44 540	4.4	41.8	49.5	4.3	29.6
Romania	107 386	13.9	54.5	29.9	1.6	26.5
Slovenia	9 268	1.6	55.8	39.9	2.6	28.8
Slovakia	26 831	9.5	55.3	34.0	1.1	27.1
Finland	20 448	3.1	53.6	40.6	2.7	29.1
Sweden	48 566	2.0	56.5	39.2	2.4	29.3
United Kingdom	317 005	6.1	49.6	41.4	2.9	28.9
Iceland	1 681	3.7	67.9	26.5	1.8	27.9
Liechtenstein	:	:	:	:	:	:
Norway	24 187	1.8	56.8	39.2	2.2	29.3
Switzerland	42 413	1.1	40.9	54.2	3.9	30.7
Montenegro	:	:	:	:	:	:
North Macedonia	9 452	7.7	64.2	26.7	1.5	26.9
Albania	12 918	10.8	72.1	16.1	1.0	26.1
Serbia	30 515	6.6	55.5	35.4	2.6	27.8
Turkey	:	:	:	:	:	:

: Data not available.

Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The source dataset can be found [here](#) for births of first children and [here](#) for mean age of women at birth of first child.

Births by birth order, 2017

	Total births	Proportion by birth order, %			
		First child	Second child	Third child	Fourth or subsequent child
EU	5 074 875	45.4	36.1	12.5	6.0
Belgium	119 690	43.6	34.6	13.9	8.0
Bulgaria	63 955	50.9	36.6	7.9	4.5
Czechia	114 405	48.7	36.6	10.5	4.2
Denmark	61 397	46.3	36.5	13.1	4.1
Germany	784 901	47.1	35.0	12.1	5.8
Estonia	13 784	40.2	36.8	16.6	6.4
Ireland	61 824	38.2	34.7	18.0	9.0
Greece	88 553	47.7	38.4	10.3	3.6
Spain	391 265	49.7	38.1	9.2	3.0
France	770 045	42.7	35.3	14.7	7.3
Croatia	36 556	45.3	35.1	13.3	6.3
Italy	458 151	46.8	38.3	11.2	3.7
Cyprus	9 229	46.6	36.9	12.7	3.8
Latvia	20 828	40.1	37.9	15.6	6.4
Lithuania	28 696	46.4	38.2	11.1	4.3
Luxembourg	6 174	53.4	33.9	9.6	3.0
Hungary	94 646	46.5	32.4	13.9	7.2
Malta	4 319	52.9	33.6	9.5	4.0
Netherlands	169 836	45.0	36.7	13.0	5.2
Austria	87 633	47.5	35.3	11.9	5.3
Poland	401 982	43.1	40.3	12.2	4.3
Portugal	86 154	51.7	36.0	9.2	3.1
Romania	202 151	53.1	30.5	9.0	7.4
Slovenia	20 241	45.8	39.5	11.1	3.6
Slovakia	57 969	46.3	34.1	11.5	8.1
Finland	50 321	40.6	34.0	15.0	10.3
Sweden	115 416	42.2	36.5	14.4	6.9
United Kingdom	754 754	42.0	35.0	14.2	8.8
Iceland	4 071	41.3	34.6	18.9	5.2
Liechtenstein	338	:	:	:	:
Norway	56 633	42.7	37.9	14.4	5.0
Switzerland	87 381	48.5	36.9	11.3	3.2
Montenegro	7 432	:	:	:	:
North Macedonia	21 754	43.6	35.8	15.1	5.5
Albania	30 869	45.5	37.4	13.2	3.9
Serbia	64 894	47.0	36.1	12.3	4.6
Turkey	1 291 055	:	:	:	:

: Data not available.

Figures may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

The source dataset can be found [here](#) for the total number of births and [here](#) for births by order.