Population trends in France

Since January 2004, under the Law of 27 February 2002 on neighbourhood management - la loi du 27 février 2002 relative à la démocratie de proximité (Part V, Art. 156), the French census procedure has changed: annual surveys are now conducted instead of the general count of the entire population that used to be carried out every eight or nine years, the last of which in 1999. The population census is now carried out by means of annual population surveys; some are conducted exhaustively every five years and cover one-fifth of communes each year – in communes with a population of less than 10,000, while other surveys are conducted yearly by polling a sample of 8 per cent of the population – in communes with a population of 10,000 or more. These more regular surveys make it possible to gain a more accurate picture showing the latest population changes and to help government authorities frame forward-looking housing and labour market management policy.

Population censuses are the responsibility of the State. Information gathering, data processing and the publication of results are carried out and supervised by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies – INSEE.

On 1 January 2008, the population of Metropolitan France and French Overseas Departments was estimated at 63.8 million people. The French population has been increasing since 2000 with 367,600 additional people in 2006. Three-quarters of this growth is due to natural increase. France ranks second among the most highly populated countries in Europe, behind Germany (82.3 million) and just ahead of the United Kingdom (60.9 million) and Italy (59.1 million). (Source: Insee, 2008)

Life expectancy for men is now 77.1 years of age and for women 84 years. Life expectancy in France, as in Spain, is above the European average (moyenne européenne – link to INSEE website, French only) of 71 years for men and 79 years for women. In
Germany, life expectancy for men is 76 years and for women 82 years; in Italy, it is 78 years and 83 years respectively and 76 years and 81 years in the United Kingdom.

**Fertility – Birth rate**

With 2 children per woman, France has one of the highest birth rates in the European Union, after Ireland. North European countries like Denmark, Finland, the United Kingdom, Sweden, the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg have a total fertility rate (indice conjoncturel de fécondité – link to INSEE website, French only) – the number of children a woman has in her entire life – that exceeds 1.7 children per woman. In more eastern countries like Slovakia, Slovenia, Poland, Lithuania, Greece and the Czech Republic, that rate is often lower than 1.3 children per woman.

The average childbearing age in France is 29.8 years with 816 500 births recorded in 2007.

**Natural Increase**

Natural increase (L'accroissement naturel – link to INSEE website, French only) – i.e. the difference between the number of births and the number of deaths – was of 310,000 people in 2006. This positive natural increase, resulting from an increase in the number of births, accounts to a great extent for population growth.

**Population Distribution**

- According to age:

  The population is continuing to age with 16.2 per cent of the population being over 65 years of age. Despite the great number of births, the number of young people under 20 years of age is diminishing, accounting for only 25 per cent of the population.

- On the French territory:

  11.3 million French people live in the Ile-de-France region (French only), accounting for almost 19 per cent of the total French population. The regions experiencing the highest population growth since 1999 are the Languedoc-Roussillon region, the Midi-Pyrénées region, Alsace, the Rhône Alpes region, the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur (PACA) region and the Pays-de-la-Loire region and Brittany.

  The small rural communes located on the outskirts of cities have been attracting families and pensioners in increasing numbers.

**Unions: Marriages and PACS**

Marriages have been decreasing for about ten years. 266,500 marriages were celebrated in 2007. In 2006, the mean age at first marriage for women was 29.3 years of age and for men 31.3 years.
Civil Solidarity Pacts (pactes civils de solidarité (PACS), link to the Service-Public.fr website, French only) – a contract between two persons of full age of different sex or of the same sex – are on the increase. 77,362 PACS were entered into in 2006.

Migration balance

In 2007, the migration balance (solde migratoire – link to INSEE website, French only), i.e. the difference between the number of immigrants and that of out-migrants – was estimated at 71,000 people. The migration balance accounts for a little over 20 per cent of the annual growth of the French population.

For more information

Sites

¥ INSEE
  http://www.insee.fr

¥ Institut national d'études démographiques (French National Demographic Institute – INED): Scientific and technological public institution supervised both by the Ministry of Research and the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity. INED is responsible for studying national and international population trends and changes.
  http://www.ined.fr/ (Website available in English)

¥ Population, link on the theme of population to the vie-publique.fr (French only) website that provides references of surveys, reports and online documents and lists relevant websites.

Statistics: définitions and surveys

¥ Définitions des concepts les plus souvent utilisés dans le système statistique public (Definitions of most commonly used concepts in the government statistical system), Insee. – regularly updated.
  http://www.insee.fr/fr/nom_def_met/definitions/html/accueil.htm

¥ Tout savoir sur le recensement (All you need to know about censuses): what are population censuses for? Why has the census procedure changed? Why are censuses mandatory? - Portail Recensement (Census portal – French only)
  http://www.insee.fr/fr/recensement/nouv_recens/ vous/generalites.htm
**INSEE 2007 population survey**


- Population census: English version
- Censo de la población: Spanish version
- Volkszählung: German version

**Results of annual population surveys: France – Regions and Departments**

http://www.insee.fr/fr/recensement/nouv_recens/resultats/premiers-resultats-recensement.htm (French only)


http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/ipweb/ip1118/ip1118.html (French only)

**L’évolution démographique récente en France (Recent population changes in France),** P. Prioux.- Population-F, 61(4), 2006, pp. 393-436

http://www.INED.fr/fichier/t_telechargement/7768/telechargement_fichier_fr_public_pdf1_popf.4_2006_prioux.pdf

**L’évolution démographique de la France depuis 10 ans (Population development in France for the past 10 years),** Lucile Richet-Mastain.- dans : Données sociales : la société française, Insee. - May 2006, 8 p. (French only)


**Les chiffres-clés de la région Ile-de-France (Key figures for the Île-de-France region),** Chambre Régionale de Commerce et d’Industrie Paris, IAURIF (Institut d’aménagement et d’urbanisme de la région Île-de-France, 2007) – in French

