

Population Trends in Germany (2017)

Abstract

Predicting the size of the German population is challenging due to changing immigration rates and a slight increase in birth rate in recent years. Aging, however, remains a societal fact and a political issue. This report published by the federal government summarizes recent trends.

Source

The demographic trend in Germany

Current developments

The demographic situation in Germany has changed in recent times. The migration developments of the past two years have played a major role in this. The year 2015 alone saw a net immigration of 1,139,000. That number represents the arrival of 2,137,000 and the departure of 998,000 individuals. Net migration declined between the early 1990s and 2008. Since then it has risen again sharply. The net influx of 2015 represents the highest immigration rate since registration began in 1950. A smaller migration surplus is expected for 2016; but it will presumably still be much higher than it was in 2014 (550,000 individuals).

Signs point to a change in the birth rate. This is indicated by the rise in the number of so-called final number of children within female cohorts. That number declined continuously for decades, until the 1968 cohort. With 1.49 children per woman, the 1968 cohort had the lowest number of children. That decline seems to have been halted. Projections show that women born in the 1970s are once again giving birth to more children; for example, those born in 1973 about 1.56 children.^[1] For the subsequent cohorts down to 1980, a further rise to just below 1.6 children is becoming apparent.

The average life expectancy at birth stands in Germany at 78.2 for men and 83.1 for women. At this time, 65 year-old men can expect on average another 17.7 years of life, women of the same age another 20.9 years. On average for the last few decades, life expectancy rose by around 2.6 months per year, whereby mortality is declining especially in the higher age groups. A differentiated examination of the temporal trend in recent years shows that the pace of a rising life expectancy has slowed compared to the 1980s and 1990s. This concerns especially women. [...]

Moreover, the population in Germany has become more diverse in terms of its background. At the end of 2015, it was made up of 73.5 million Germans and 8.7 million foreigners; 17.1 million individuals had a migrant background.^[2] The proportion of foreign persons has risen by 2.6 percent compared to 2011; the proportion of people with a migrant background by 2.5 percent. Of the 11.5 million who not only have a migrant background, but have migrated themselves, 37.6 percent hail from the EU member states. Another 31.2 percent come from other European countries, with Turkey (11.9 percent) and the Russian Federation (8.4 percent) as the most important countries of origin.

In spite of the high immigration especially of young people, the aging of the population has continued also in recent years. While in 2011 there were 34 persons 65 and older for every one hundred persons between 20 and 64, in 2015 that figure was already 35 persons.

Consequences for the long-term trend

The most recent trends in migration, but also in the birth rate, raise the question of whether the

assumptions behind the existing projections still seem realistic from today's perspective. These trends have especially short- and medium-term consequences for the development of the population size and the age structure. Although the high net migration in 2015 cannot simply be projected forward, the assumptions behind the population projections that were made before the migration of refugees must be reassessed from the perspective of today.

The 13th coordinated population projection by the Federal Office of Statistics from the beginning of 2015 sketched out scenarios until 2060. [...]

Whether Germany's population will decline by 2060 is therefore still an open question from a demographic point of view.[3] However, the aging of the population would progress markedly in all of the listed scenarios. Thus, the ratio of the elderly would be only moderately smaller under a net migration of 300,000 than it would be under the variants with a lower immigration. According to today's estimates, the share of young people and the resulting youth quotient will change little in the coming decades; in contrast, the share of those 65 and older and thus the resulting old-age quotient will rise noticeably. Especially the strong cohorts of the baby boom generation born between the middle of the 1950s and the end of the 1960s will substantially drive the aging process forward in the coming years.

NOTES

[1] Martin Bujard and Harun Sulak (2016): "Mehr Kinderlose oder weniger Kinderreiche?," in: *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 68 (3), pp. 487-514.

[2] According to the microcensus, individuals with a migrant background (in the broader sense) include "all those who migrated onto the territory of what is today the Federal Republic of Germany, as well as all foreigners born in Germany and all those born in Germany as Germans with at least one parent who immigrated or was born in Germany as a foreigner."

[3] Martin Bujard and Kai Dreschmitt (2016), as Note 1.

Source: *Jedes Alter zählt. „Für mehr Wohlstand und Lebensqualität aller Generationen“*. Eine demografiepolitische Bilanz der Bundesregierung zum Ende der 18. Legislaturperiode. Berlin, 2017, pp. 4-6, http://www.demografie-portal.de/DE/Informieren/Dialogprozess/Dialogprozess_node.html

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