



World Population Day, 11 July 2014

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In 1989, the United Nations (UN) declared 11 July the World Population Day as – according to estimates – the world's population reached 5 billion people this day two years earlier. The World Population Day aims to raise awareness of the ever increasing demographic problems such as overpopulation or the ageing of the population.

The world's population is continuously increasing

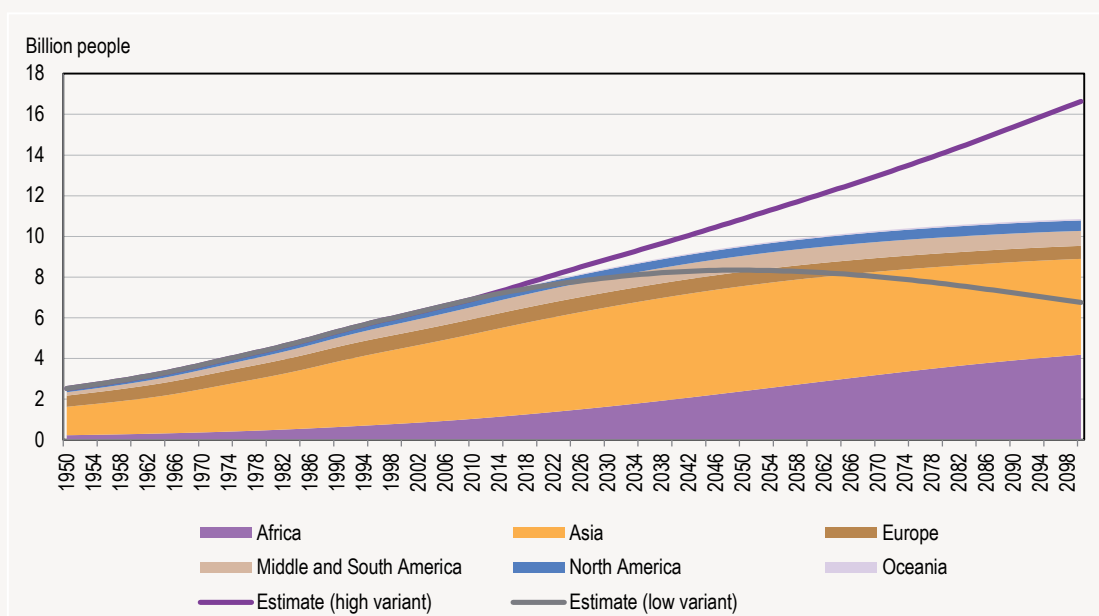
Currently, the world's population has already exceeded 7 billion people and will continue to increase, although the pace of growth is slower first of all due to the decline in fertility. The projections¹ for the future involve naturally large uncertainties, but show well the importance of demographic issues, namely that, even according to the projection calculated with medium-level fertility, the world's population will be more than 10 billion people fifty years from now and is expected to grow four-fold by 2100 compared to 1950.

The distribution of the population by continents is rearranged

Nowadays, 60% of the world's population, about 4.3 billion people live in Asia, but this ratio is likely to decline in the future in favour of Africa. The population number of Africa may grow from 1 billion to 4 billion by the end of the century, and thus, the share of this continent in the total population would increase from 15% to nearly 40%. The growth rate has already been the highest in this continent, and the population number increased here 4.5-fold over the past six decades. In the same period, the population of Europe also increased (by nearly 35%), yet its global share fell from 22% in 1950 to 10% by 2010, and it may decline to 6% by 2100.

Figure 1

World's population by continents, 1950–2100

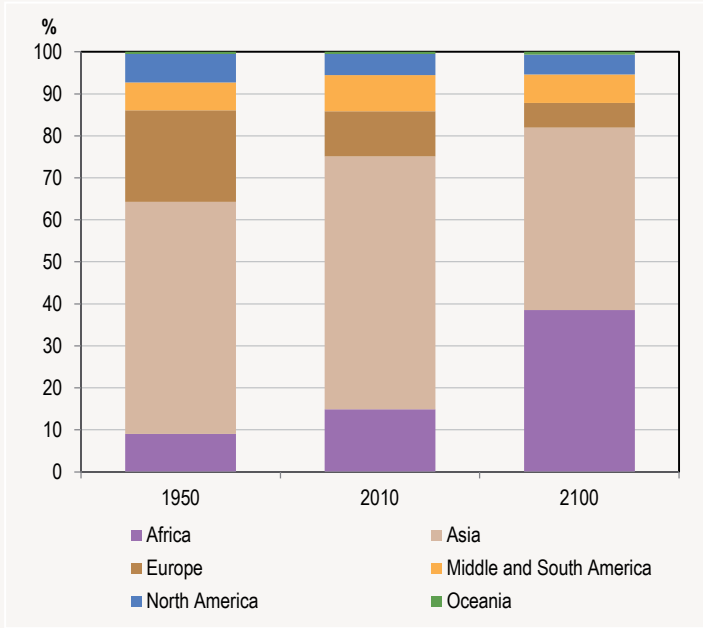


Source: UN, *World Population Prospects: The 2012 revision*, data after 2010 are calculated on the basis of the medium fertility variant.

¹ Population projection is the estimation of the number and composition of the population for future dates. It is generally made in more than one variant and is based on the assumption of different future development of basic demographic processes (fertility, mortality, migration). Three types of assumptions (scenarios) are usually formulated regarding the components of the projection: the medium or baseline variant shows the most probable future change, while the low and high variants designate the limits of the changes which can be conceived at the time of preparing the projection. In addition to the three basic scenarios, further scenarios can also be prepared, e.g. with constant fertility or mortality, with the exclusion of migration or on the basis of combinations of the different development of demographic processes. The UN projections presented here are based on the changes in fertility (normally its medium level) besides the normal trend of mortality and migration. Access to detailed methodology: http://esa.un.org/wpp/Documentation/pdf/WPP2012_Methodology.pdf.

Distribution of the world's population by continents

Figure 2



The population structure is changing considerably, the population is ageing

Demographic trends are basically determined by fertility: currently, total fertility rate is below the replacement level in more than 40% of countries, and this proportion will increase to more than 90% by 2100 according to the medium fertility variant; namely, in the vast majority of countries, women will not give birth to as many children as would be necessary to replace each woman by a girl in the next generation too. Due to the low number of births and the considerably longer life expectancy, the age composition of the world's population will be older and older. As a result of this, death rates will rise everywhere except for Africa according to the projections. The change in and the distribution of the population number by countries and continents may be affected by the third factor of the projections, i.e. international migration as well. This is considered the most uncertain component, as changes in the economic trends and the public migration policy of each country may significantly affect the migration behaviour even in the short run.

In parallel with the increasing world's population, the ageing of the population is expected to increase as well; the median age has increased by 5 years since 1950 and is expected to nearly double by 2100.

Change in median ages, 1950–2100

Table 1

(year)

Year	World	Africa	Asia	Europe	Middle and South America	North America	Oceania
1950	23.5	19.2	22.0	28.9	19.9	29.8	27.9
1970	21.5	17.9	19.5	31.8	18.6	28.0	24.8
1990	24.0	17.6	22.9	34.6	21.8	32.9	28.6
2010	28.5	19.2	28.8	40.3	27.3	37.3	32.2
2050	36.1	24.7	39.8	45.7	40.6	40.9	37.0
2100	41.2	34.9	45.4	46.8	48.1	44.6	44.1

Source: UN, World Population Prospects: The 2012 revision, data after 2010 are calculated on the basis of the medium fertility variant.

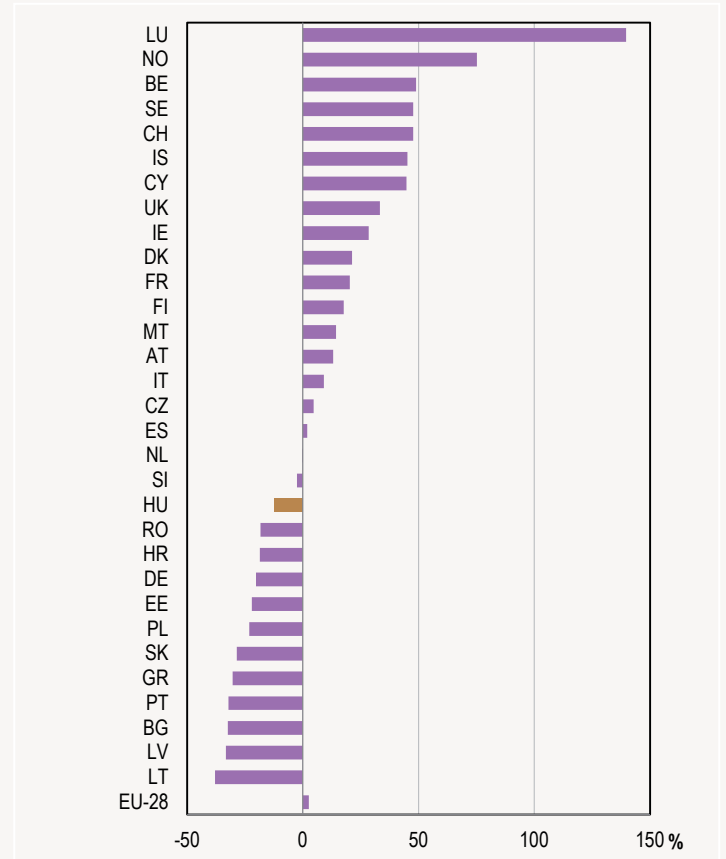
Africa is the least affected by this process due to the higher fertility and lower life expectancy. Based on 2010 data, the 'oldest' continent was Europe, but, according to the UN projections, this will change, and, by the end of the century, the median age will be around 45 years in each continent except for Africa.

There will be a perceptible difference in the demographic trends of Eastern and Western Europe even 70 years from now

In more than half of European countries, a population growth is expected in the next nearly 70 years, but this will probably mean only a slight surplus for the European Union as a whole. It is likely that the losers of the demographic trends will be the Central and Eastern European countries as well as Portugal and Greece with a population decline of more than 30% in some cases.

Figure 3

Change in the population number in the European Union between 2013 and 2080, %



Source: Eurostat, population projection according to the baseline scenario. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-RA-11-019/EN/KS-RA-11-019-EN.PDF
 Approvements used in figure

The largest numerical growth can be assumed in the United Kingdom (more than 21 million) and France (13.2 million), in which the fact that both countries are among the main target areas of immigration may have an important role. In respect of population decline, Germany will be in the worst situation; according to the calculations of Eurostat, it is likely that they have to face a serious decline of nearly 17 million people in the next few decades.

Hungary's population is expected to decline

In Hungary, the population number has decreased every year except for 1992 since 1981, and all calculations show a further decline for the future. Even the most optimistic projection calculating with high fertility indicates a loss of nearly 1.4 million between 2011 and 2060.²

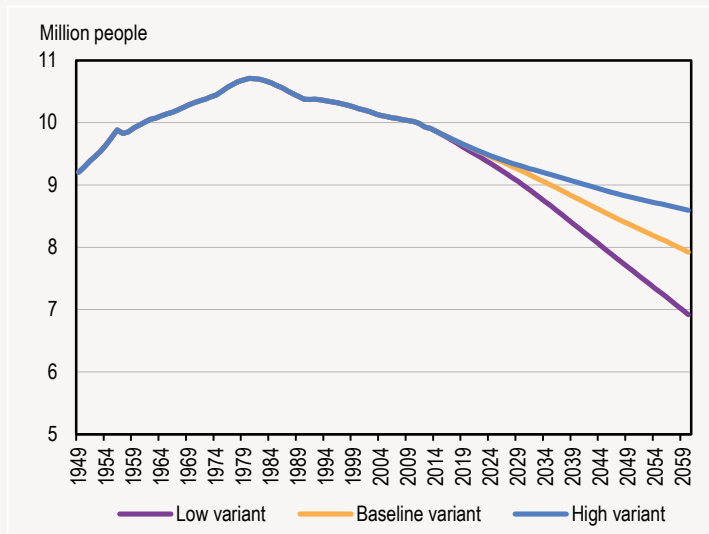
² In the framework of the SEEMIG project, further projections are prepared on national level and for Pécs on regional level; these will be accessible on the website www.seemig.eu.

Population of Hungary, 1949–2060

Figure 4

Although, compared to the current low fertility (total fertility rate of 1.34 in 2012), some of the hypotheses calculate with a slightly improving trend (with 1.45 even in case of the low fertility variant), but this probably will not be able to compensate the higher mortality resulting from the ageing population composition.

On the website of HCSO, the change in the world's population based on the UN projection, as well as in the composition of the Hungarian population by sex and age (population pyramid) can be seen on interactive charts.



Source: HCSO: 1949–2012; population projections of the Demographic Research Institute: 2013–2060.
<http://demografia.hu/index.php/kutatasok/nepelo>

Further information, data (links):

[Abbreviations used in figures](#)

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