

Review of the population trends in Europe

The population of the 48 countries in Europe was 822 million on 1 January 2008. The most populated country and the only country with more than 100 million inhabitants is Russia followed in ranking by Germany, Turkey, France and Great Britain with a population number over 60 million. The population of the 27 EU Member States reached 497 million which amounted to 60.5 percent of the continent's population. Two of the three most populated countries in Europe – Russia and Turkey – are not members of the EU. More than one fourth of the total population of Europe lives in these countries, and together with Ukraine, the third most populated extra-EU country they amount to nearly one third of the total population. Hungary with its population over 10 million is the 16th in the rank of the 48 European countries. In terms of population size 10 European countries belong to the category of 5-9 million while 9 countries to the category 3-4 million. The population of 8 countries was under 1 million, 2 countries of them did not even reach the population number of 50 thousand.

Table 1

**Population of European countries by size categories
1 January 2008**

Population size categories (million)	Countries'		Distribution of the population (%)
	number	population (million)	
100-X	1	142	17,3
60-99	4	278	33,8
30-59	4	189	23,0
10-29	7	91	11,1
5- 9	10	75	9,1
3- 4	9	35	4,3
1- 2	5	10	1,2
1 alatt	8	3	0,4
Total	48	822	100,0

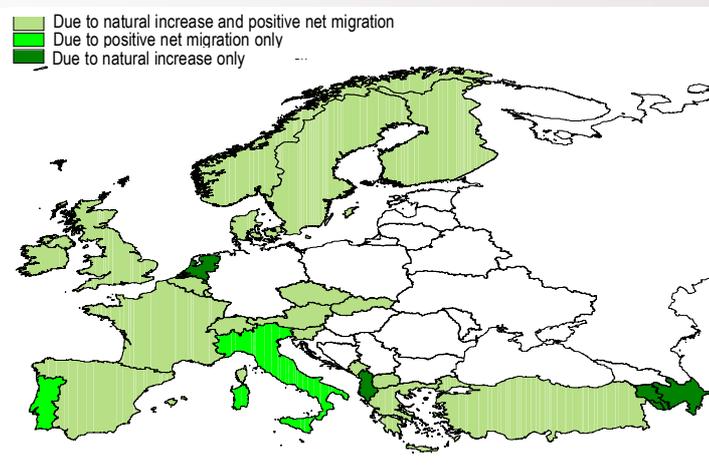
In 2007 the population of Europe increased by 3 million people (3.7 per mille), while that of EU countries grew to a larger extent, by 4.8 per mille. There are two basic factors of population growth: natural increase deriving from the balance of births and deaths and immigration surplus deriving from the positive international migration balance. The proportion of influence of the two factors changed significantly in the past decades. Positive net migration has a larger and larger weight: 76 percent of the population increase in Europe was due to this factor in 2007, while its rate was 80 percent in the EU-27 countries.

In respect of the direction and factors of population change, the picture is extremely varied. In 2007 the population number grew in 32 while it fell in 16 among the 48 countries of Europe. In 19 of the EU-27 countries the former tendency prevailed while in 8 countries the latter one.

In most of the countries where the population grew, immigration surplus played the leading role in the increase. The number of countries where natural increase is the determinant factor is much less. Among EU Member States, France and Great Britain belonged to this latter group. The situation is specific in Italy and in Portugal, where the balance of births and deaths is negative but the immigration surplus compensates successfully the natural decrease of the population, and thanks to it, their population actually grew in 2007.

Figure 1.

Countries with increasing population in Europe, 2007

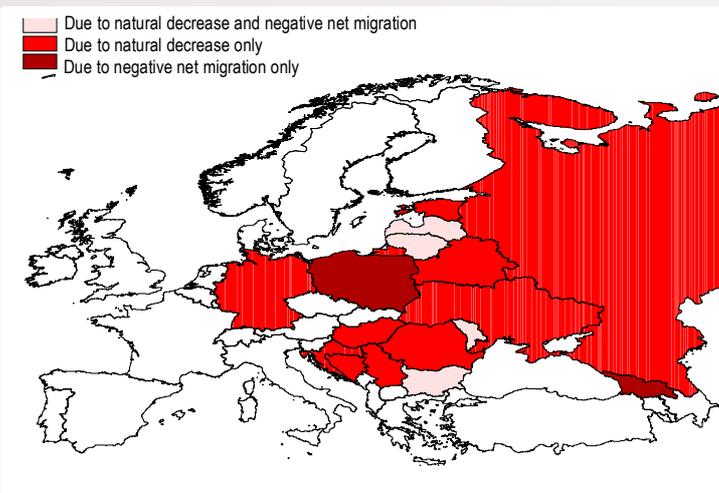


In countries with decreasing population number, natural decrease and positive net migration are characteristic. However, in Poland and in Georgia the population fell only due to emigration, as the balance of births and deaths was positive in 2007. On the other hand, in most countries the population decreases despite the positive net migration, as it cannot compensate natural decrease. This is the situation in 10 European countries, among the EU Member States in Hungary, Germany, Romania and Estonia. In some countries, beside natural decrease, net migration is negative as well. In 2007 4 countries belonged to this category: Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania and among extra-EU countries Moldavia.

According to the recent data of Eurostat, the population of the EU further increased in 2008, and with 499.7 million people it approached half billion. Natural increase exceeded the one in the previous year, while the surplus from international migration was less than one year earlier. On the whole, the population number of the EU increased in 2008 by 2.2 million people, i.e. by 4.4 per mille as opposed to the 4.8 per mille growth one year earlier. In two countries the situation changed compared with the one in the previous year. Poland came out of the group of countries with decreasing population number: in 2008 natural increase could compensate the population loss deriving from emigration and thus the population actually grew. At the same time, the Netherlands joined those rare countries like France and Great Britain, where beside positive net migration natural increase is also a main driver of population growth.

Figure 2.

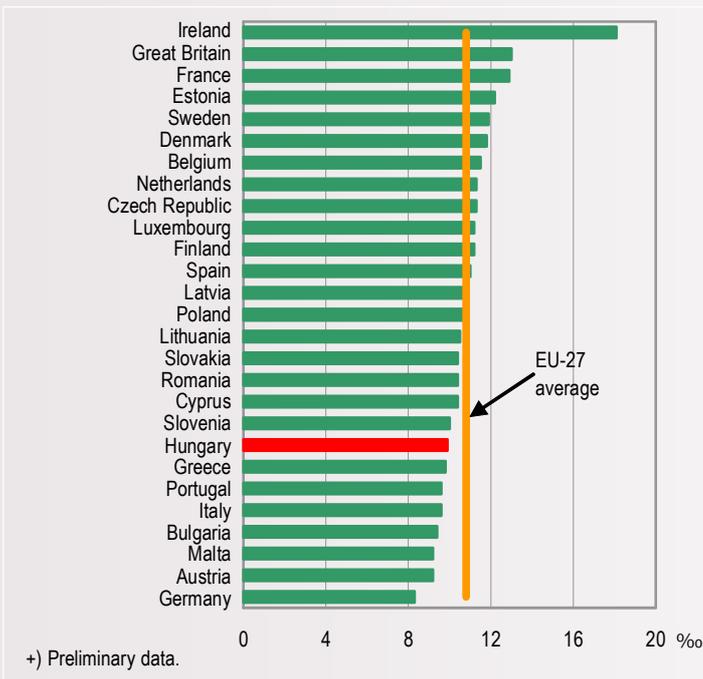
Countries with decreasing population in Europe, 2007



At the beginning of 2009 the four most populated EU Member States, Germany, France, Great Britain and Italy had a share of 54 percent in the total population of the EU-27. In terms of population size, Hungary ranks 13th in the EU-27.

Figure 3.

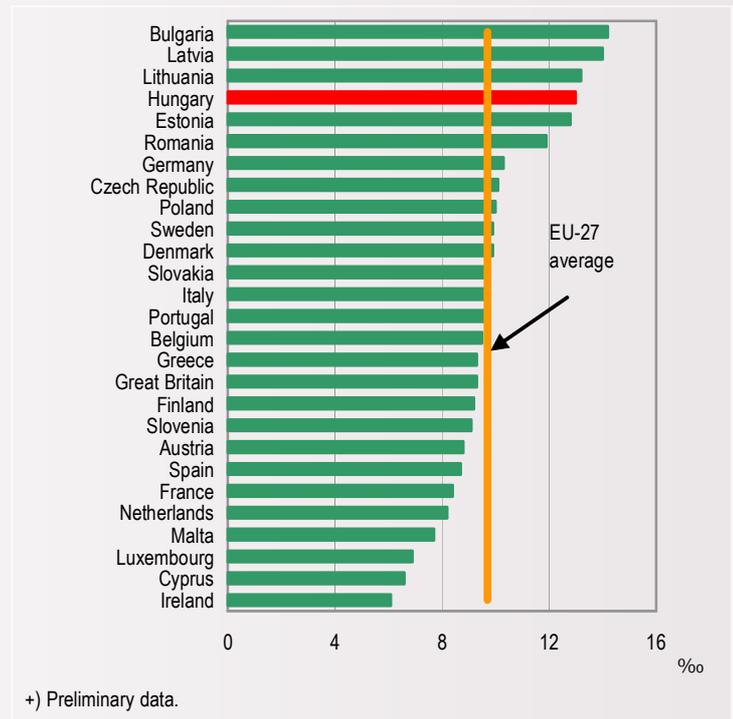
Number of births per thousand inhabitants in the EU-27 countries, 2008 +)



Among the major population indicators, birth rate was the highest in Ireland (18.1 per mille) and the lowest in Germany with 8.3 per mille. Birth rate was under 10 per mille in eight countries. Hungary is first in line among these countries with 9.9 per mille ranking 20th in EU-27. The ranking is different concerning death rates. Most deaths per thousand inhabitants occurred in Bulgaria (14.2) while the fewest in Ireland (6.1). The death rate of 13.0 per mille in Hungary is the fourth highest among the EU countries. Beside Bulgaria, death rate is higher in Latvia and Lithuania than in our country.

Figure 4.

Number of deaths per thousand inhabitants in the EU-27 countries, 2008 +)



In 2008 natural increase occurred in 18 EU countries. Birth rate was the highest and death rate was the lowest in Ireland, thus, the biggest natural increase (12 per mille) was registered here. Ireland is followed by France and Luxembourg with 4.5 and 4.3 per mille, respectively. In Portugal the value of the two rates was nearly the same. In 9 countries of the EU the number of deaths exceeded the number of births, which resulted in natural decrease. Among the old Member States, Germany and Italy belong to this group, the others, among them also Hungary, are newly joined Eastern European countries. In terms of natural decrease, the situation is the most disadvantageous in Bulgaria with a fall of 4.8 per mille. In 2008 natural decrease was 3.1 per mille in Hungary which is the third highest rate after Bulgarian and Latvia.

In 2008 positive net migration was registered in 23 countries of the EU-27. Compared to the population number, Ireland is on the top also in this respect with an immigration surplus of 14.1 per mille. She is followed by Slovenia, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Spain with a positive balance exceeding 10 per mille. Hungary with her positive balance of 1.7 per mille is the 16th in the ranking of countries with immigration surplus. All the four countries registering negative net migration are Eastern European countries having joined the EU since 2004. Beside two Baltic states, Lithuania and Latvia, Poland and Bulgaria formed this group in 2008.

In 2008, as a result of natural increase or decrease and net migration, the population number grew in 20 countries and fell in 7 countries. The population grew the most dynamically in Ireland (by 26.1 per thousand inhabitants). Besides, Luxembourg, Cyprus, Slovenia and Spain could register actual population increase of 12-16.2 per mille. Hungary belongs to the 7 countries with decreasing population, which are - except for Germany - all Eastern European countries. The demographic situation seems to be the most crucial in Bulgaria, Latvia and Lithuania, where the population decreased by 4-5 per thousand inhabitants.

Figure 5.

Natural increase, decrease per thousand inhabitants in the EU-27 countries, 2008⁺⁾

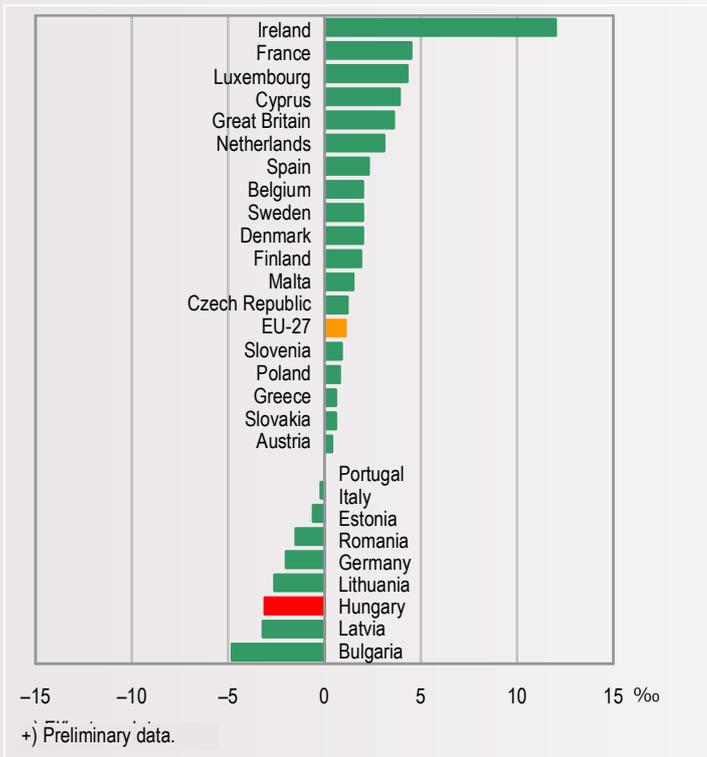


Figure 7.

Actual increase, decrease per thousand inhabitants in the EU-27 countries, 2008⁺⁾

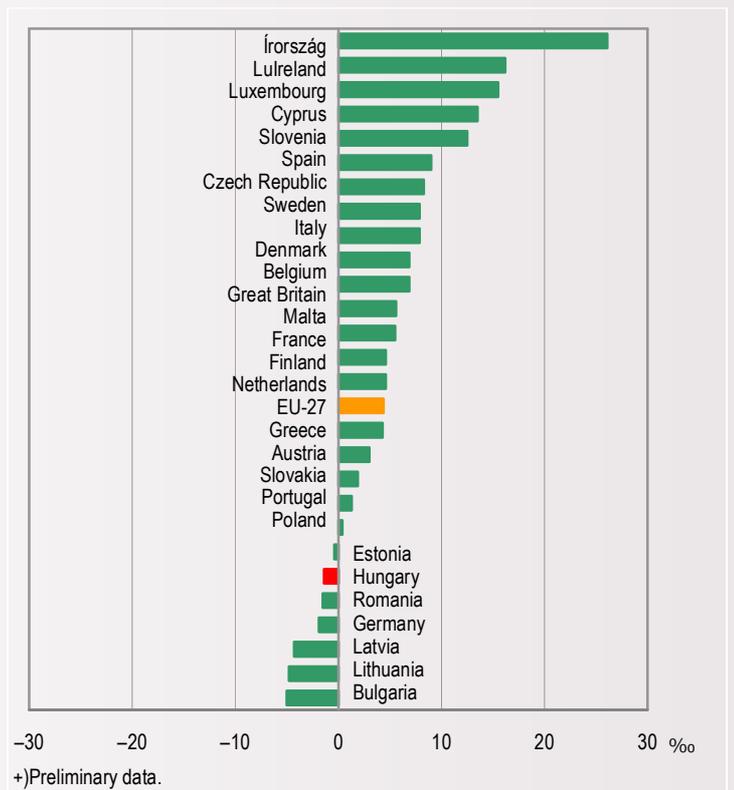
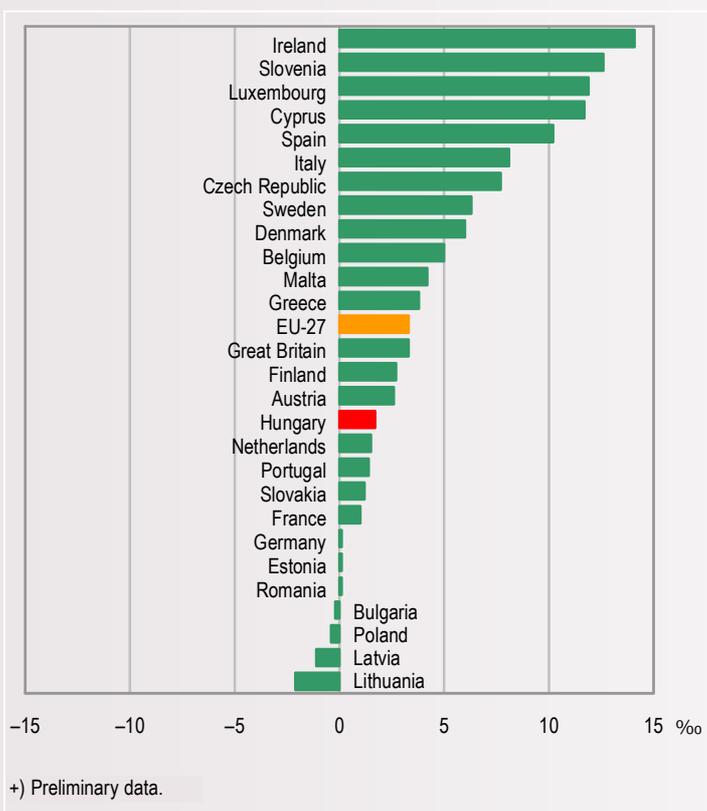


Figure 6.

Net migration per thousand inhabitants in the EU-27 countries, 2008⁺⁾



The most important demographic trends are described most expressively by indicators/rates compared to the population number. Nevertheless, it is worth to publish also some absolute figures concerning vital events. The most populated state of the EU is Germany with more than 82 million inhabitants. All the same, the most children are born in France, where 824 thousand infants were born in 2008. It was also France where the population growth deriving from natural increase was the highest, nearly 290 thousand. The two largest host countries were however Italy and Spain with an immigration surplus of 484 thousand and 464 thousand persons, respectively. They were followed by Great Britain with a positive net migration of 204 thousand. Natural increase and positive net migration together increased the most, by nearly 570 thousand inhabitants the population of Spain followed in the ranking by Italy and Great Britain with an actual population growth of 471 thousand and 426 thousand, respectively. On the other hand, the population of Germany fell by nearly 156 thousand people.

Further information, data (links)::

[stADAT-tables](#)

Availabilities:

Ferenc.Kamaras@ksh.hu

Telephone: 345-6565

[Information service](#)

Telephone: 345-6789

www.ksh.hu

© HUNGARIAN CENTRAL STATITICAL OFFICE, 2009

All rights concerning the layout graphics and design work of this publication are reserved for HCSO. Any kind of reproduction of them have to be approved by HCSO.