

Men and women in the populations of OECD countries

Did you know?

Up to their early teens, boys slightly outnumber girls in all the OECD countries. In the 25-54 age group – “prime working life” – the numbers of men and women are about equal in all countries. But in the older age groups women often outnumber men by more than two to one.

In 2005 women slightly outnumbered men in all OECD countries except Iceland, where the numbers were equal, and Korea and Turkey where there were slightly more men than women. In the OECD area as a whole there are 104 women for every 100 men.

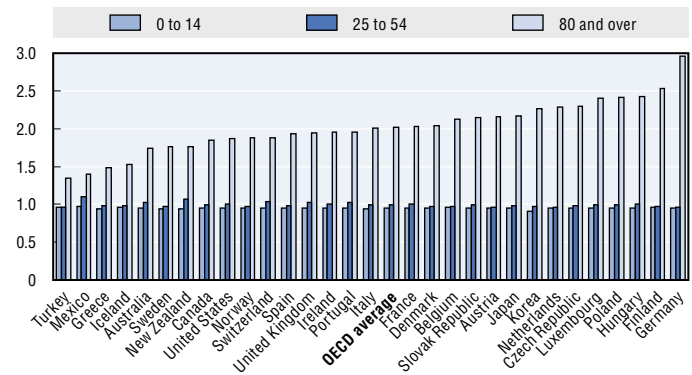
OECD populations in 2005 and ratios of women to men

	Population ('000)	W/M ratio		Population ('000)	W/M ratio		Population ('000)	W/M ratio
Iceland	295	1.00	Sweden	9 041	1.02	Spain	43 064	1.04
Luxembourg	465	1.03	Hungary	10 098	1.05	Korea	47 817	0.99
New Zealand	4 028	1.03	Czech Rep.	10 220	1.10	Italy	58 093	1.06
Ireland	4 148	1.01	Belgium	10 419	1.04	United Kingdom	59 668	1.05
Norway	4 620	1.01	Portugal	10 495	1.07	France	60 496	1.05
Finland	5 249	1.04	Greece	11 120	1.02	Turkey	73 193	0.98
Slovak Rep.	5 401	1.02	Netherlands	16 299	1.01	Germany	82 689	1.05
Denmark	5 431	1.06	Australia	20 155	1.03	Mexico	107 029	1.05
Switzerland	7 252	1.06	Canada	32 268	1.02	Japan	128 085	1.05
Austria	8 189	1.05	Poland	38 530	1.06	United States	298 213	1.03

In all OECD countries a few more boys are born than girls, so that boys predominate in the 0-14 age group. However, men smoke and drink alcohol more than women, have higher suicide rates, and indeed have higher mortality rates from many other causes. As a result, women are much more numerous than men in the 80+ age group.

High male death rates in the Second World War explain the women/men ratios in excess of 2.0 in the chart below. The male death toll was particularly high in Germany, Finland, Japan and the countries of central Europe.

Ratios of women to men at different ages
2005



Source: United Nations population projections, 2004 revisions.

Further reading:

OECD (2006), *Labour Force Statistics* – 2006 Edition, OECD, Paris.

Total fertility rates

Did you know?

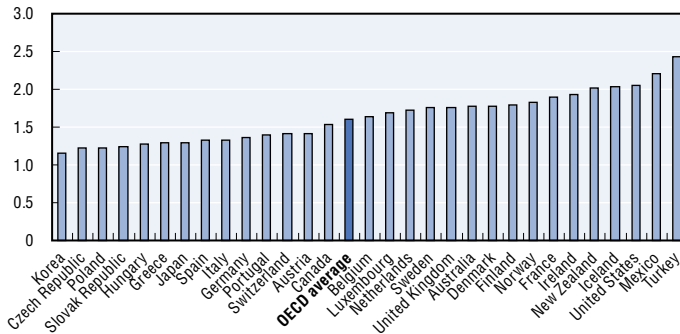
The *total fertility rate* is the number of children that are expected to be born to women of child-bearing age. A rate of about 2.1 will produce a stable population. Less than this, the population will decline unless the shortfall is made up by immigration.

Only two OECD countries have fertility rates above this level: Mexico and Turkey. The average fertility rate in OECD countries is now just 1.6.

In all OECD countries, fertility rates have declined for young women and increased at older ages, because women (and men) are postponing the age at which they start their families.

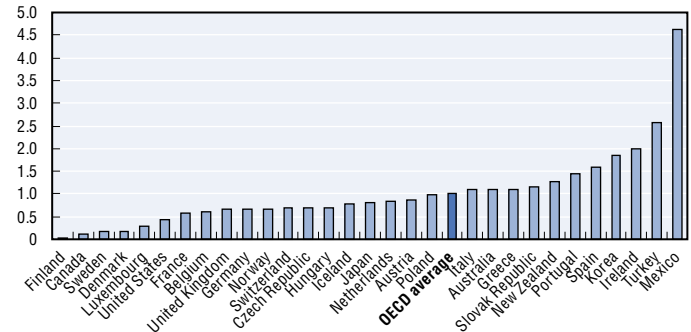
Many reasons have been given for the dramatic change in fertility rates. The most convincing is that young women, now better educated than those of earlier generations, wish to have a career as well as a family. The countries with the lowest fertility rates tend to be those with the highest female employment rates.

Total fertility rates: number of children expected to be born to women aged 15 to 49
2004 or latest year available



The chart below shows the long-term decline in total fertility rates. The countries which had the highest fertility rates in 1970 have, unsurprisingly, recorded the largest subsequent declines. Finland, Denmark and Sweden are among those countries which recorded the smallest declines: these are countries which have traditionally had family-friendly employment policies including generous maternity/paternity leave and widely available child-care facilities. Even here, their current rates are below the replacement threshold.

Decline in total fertility rates since 1970
Absolute difference between 1970 and 2004 fertility rates



Source: Council of Europe (2006), *Recent Demographic Developments in Europe, 2004*; Eurostat and national statistical offices.

Further reading:

OECD (2005), *Society at a Glance: OECD Social Indicators*, OECD, Paris.
OECD (2002-2004), *Babies and Bosses – Reconciling Work and Family Life*, series, OECD, Paris.

Immigration

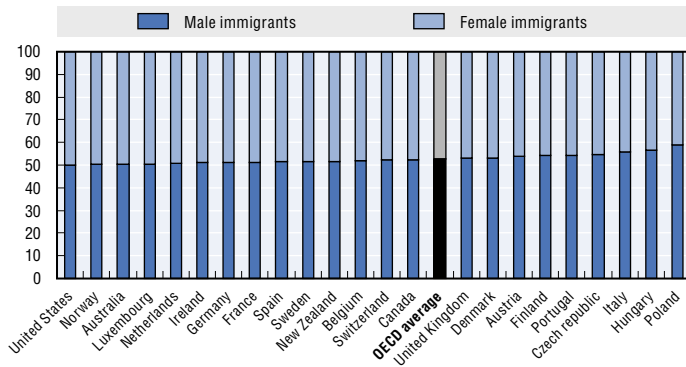
Did you know?

There are more female immigrants than male in 20 of the 23 countries for which data are available – the three exceptions being the United States, Norway and Australia where the numbers are about equal. In other countries women, on average, emigrate about as often as men in these countries.

Immigrants are usually defined as those born in a different country from where they are now living – they are “foreign-born” as opposed to “native-born”.

In the past, in most OECD countries, the majority of immigrants came from other OECD countries, especially from OECD Europe. This is no longer the case. Asia is now the main source continent of immigrants.

Ratios of male to female immigrants
2004 or nearest year available, percentages

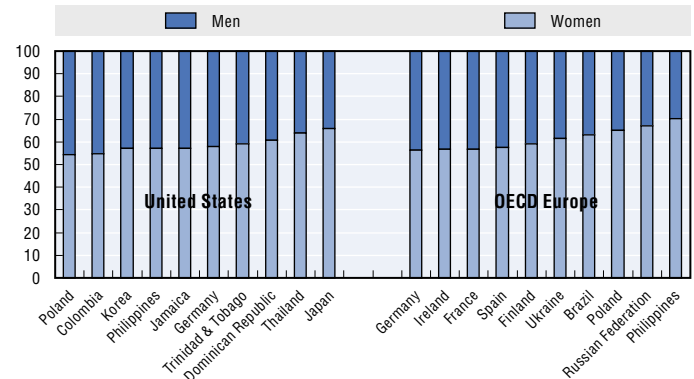


The chart below shows the gender breakdown of immigrants living in European OECD countries and in the United States according to their countries of birth, where the countries considered are limited to those with at least 100 000 immigrants. Percentages of women immigrants are especially high in Europe for immigrants from the Philippines, the Russian Federation and Poland, whereas in the United States, women are more numerous among immigrants from Japan, Thailand and the Dominican Republic.

Note that this chart shows only countries of birth from which substantially more women than men emigrate. More men than women emigrate from some of the other sources of migration such as Central America, Ecuador and India in the case of the United States, and Tunisia, Pakistan, Albania and Morocco in the case of Europe.

Gender breakdown of immigrants in OECD Europe and the United States by country of birth

Selected countries of birth: 2004 or latest year available, percentages



Source: OECD (2006), *International Migration Outlook*, OECD, Paris.

Further reading:

OECD (2006), *International Migration Outlook – 2006 Edition*, OECD, Paris.