

Population and gender

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An overview

INDICATORS	Population: female (% of total population)		Population ages 65 and above, female (% of female population)		Population ages 65 and above, male (% of male population)		Life expectancy at birth, female (years)		Life expectancy at birth, male (years)		Mortality rate, infant, female (per 1,000 live births)		Mortality rate, infant, male (per 1,000 live births)	
	2024	2023	2024	2023	2024	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	2023	
Amno	52.4	26.6	21.9	25.2	21.9	25.2	79.5	79.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	
PRT Portugal	52.4	26.6	21.9	25.2	21.9	25.2	79.5	79.5	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3	
ESP Spain	50.9	23.1	18.6	23.1	18.6	23.1	86.7	81.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.8	2.8	
FRA France	51.5	24.1	19.6	24.1	19.6	24.1	85.9	80.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.7	3.7	
ITA Italy	51.0	26.6	21.9	26.6	21.9	26.6	85.1	81.0	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.5	2.5	
SVN Slovenia	49.8	24.3	18.8	24.3	18.8	24.3	85.0	79.1	1.7	1.7	1.7	2.0	2.0	
HRV Croatia	51.8	26.3	19.5	26.3	19.5	26.3	81.7	75.4	3.5	3.5	3.5	4.2	4.2	
GRC Greece	51.6	26.1	21.2	26.1	21.2	26.1	84.2	79.0	2.9	2.9	2.9	3.4	3.4	
MLT Malta	48.1	22.4	17.8	22.4	17.8	22.4	85.3	81.8	4.5	4.5	4.5	5.2	5.2	
CYP Cyprus	49.6	15.7	13.2	15.7	13.2	15.7	83.7	79.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	3.1	3.1	
SRB Serbia	52.6	25.0	19.7	25.0	19.7	25.0	78.7	73.9	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.9	4.9	
XKX Kosovo	50.8	11.0	8.7	11.0	8.7	11.0	80.1	75.8	7.5	7.5	7.5	9.1	9.1	
BIH Bosnia and Herzegovina	52.4	25.9	17.6	25.9	17.6	25.9	80.9	74.4	4.9	4.9	4.9	5.8	5.8	
MNE Montenegro	51.9	20.2	14.9	20.2	14.9	20.2	80.2	75.1	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.2	2.2	
MKD North Macedonia	51.4	19.8	15.7	19.8	15.7	19.8	77.6	73.2	2.7	2.7	2.7	3.0	3.0	
ALB Albania	50.6	17.5	15.7	17.5	15.7	17.5	81.5	77.7	7.4	7.4	7.4	9.1	9.1	
TUR Turkey	50.1	11.3	9.0	11.3	9.0	11.3	79.9	74.5	8.5	8.5	8.5	9.7	9.7	
SYR Syrian Arab Republic	50.0	5.3	4.2	5.3	4.2	5.3	74.4	69.8	17.0	17.0	17.0	20.9	20.9	
LBN Lebanon	51.4	10.9	9.0	10.9	9.0	10.9	79.7	75.7	14.9	14.9	14.9	17.0	17.0	
JOR Jordan	48.4	4.7	4.2	4.7	4.2	4.7	80.2	75.7	11.0	11.0	11.0	13.4	13.4	
ISR Israel	50.2	13.7	11.2	13.7	11.2	13.7	85.5	81.0	2.5	2.5	2.5	2.9	2.9	
PSE West Bank and Gaza	50.4	4.2	3.5	4.2	3.5	4.2	59.7	55.7	13.3	13.3	13.3	15.2	15.2	
EGY Egypt, Arab Rep.	49.5	5.6	4.3	5.6	4.3	5.6	73.8	69.5	15.0	15.0	15.0	17.2	17.2	
LYB Libya	49.2	5.5	4.5	4.9	4.5	4.9	70.4	68.3	15.1	15.1	15.1	16.7	16.7	
TUN Tunisia	50.6	10.1	79.2	79.2	73.9	73.9	79.2	73.9	9.8	9.8	9.8	11.3	11.3	
DZA Algeria	49.0	6.9	6.1	6.9	6.1	6.9	77.7	74.9	17.9	17.9	17.9	21.5	21.5	
MAR Morocco	49.6	8.5	7.5	8.5	7.5	8.5	77.6	73.2	13.9	13.9	13.9	17.0	17.0	

Source: World Bank Development Indicators on data UN Population Division and national sources; Istat; UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation also for Italy.

Some highlighted topics

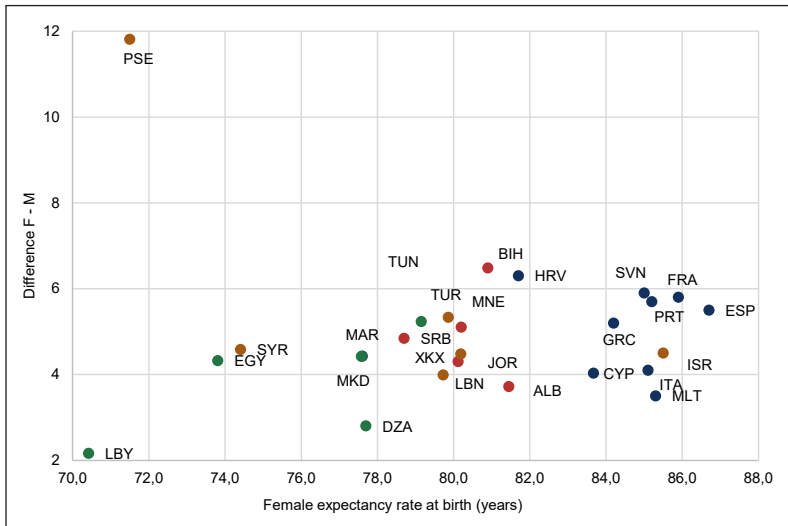
Demographic structure. The gender composition of the population in the Mediterranean region in 2024, calculated using the feminisation rate, shows a slight prevalence of women in all Western Balkan countries (51.9% of the total for the area) and in most European Union countries (51.3% of the total). In the Middle East, there is a levelling off between the female and male populations, while in North Africa the ratio is reversed, with a slight prevalence of men (49.5%). This indicator is influenced by complex phenomena, such as gender differences in migratory movements and the longevity of the population. The highest value in the Mediterranean region is in Portugal (52.4%), while the lowest is in Malta (48.1%).

A comparison between the sexes in the age structure of the population shows that the age group of 65 years and over is where the differences between women and men are generally most marked. In all Mediterranean countries, the percentage of elderly women is higher than that of elderly men in their respective populations, but with differences within the four macro-areas. The Middle East and North Africa, which have a very low incidence of people aged 65 and over in the total population, which is also reflected in the gender composition (less than 10% of the female and male population), also show a limited gap between the two components of this population group. The EU countries bordering the Mediterranean, partly

due to the greater longevity of their population, have higher percentages of older people: on average, one in five men and one in four women. Italy stands out for having the highest incidence of older people in the population (26.6% for women and 21.9% for men). The largest differences, exceeding 5 percentage points, are found in Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia and Montenegro. The smallest gap is found in Jordan (-0.5 percentage points).

Life expectancy. Life expectancy at birth, calculated on the basis of mortality rates by age group in a given year, represents the average number of years a person can expect to live from birth if, throughout their life, the risks of mortality by age remain the same in the future. Therefore, it is considered a measure of the longevity of a population, which differs between males and females in relation to different mortality patterns.

The gender analysis for this indicator highlights the existence of gaps between countries belonging to the four macro-areas, reflecting those present in the total population, with a more favourable level of life expectancy for women (Figure 1). Spain continues to have the highest life expectancy, as it does for the total population (86.7 years for women and 81.2 for men); the most unfavourable, among all countries, is West Bank and Gaza for men (59.7 years) and Libya for women (70.4 years). The gender gap is also highest in West Bank and Gaza (+11.8 years for women). The smallest gap is found in Libya (2.2 years longer for women).



Source: World Bank Development Indicators on data UN Population Division and national sources; Istat.

Three types of country groups can be identified in 2023 based on female life expectancy at birth and the difference in life expectancy between the two components of the population. The group with the highest longevity, i.e. with the most favourable values in terms of female life expectancy (over 84 years), consists of seven European Union countries (excluding Croatia and Cyprus) plus Israel, with a low difference in life expectancy between men and women (less than six years). The second group can be divided into two subtypes. The first, in which female life expectancy is between 80 and 82 years, is found in most Western Balkan countries, Jordan, Israel and Croatia. The second subtype, with values between 77 and 80 years, is found in

the Middle East (Turkey, Lebanon and Syria), North Africa (Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco), Macedonia and Serbia. In these groups, the gender gap is less than six years of life, wider in Bosnia and Croatia (about 6.5 years more for women) and smaller in Algeria (+2.8 years for women).

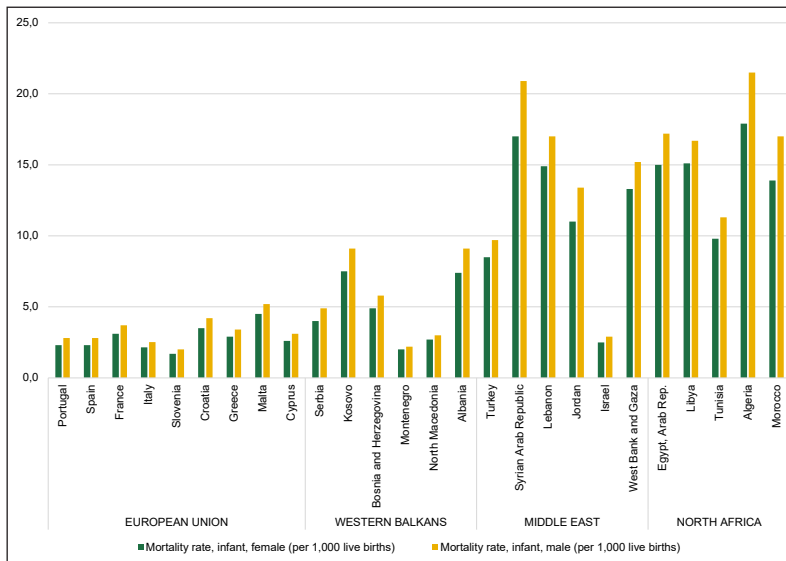
Finally, a third group comprising Libya, West Bank and Gaza, Egypt and Syria presents a more critical picture, with the lowest female life expectancy in Libya (70.4 years) but with the smallest gap in life expectancy between men and women; on the other hand, the widest gender gap is found in West Bank and Gaza.

Infant mortality. The gender analysis of infant mortality rates confirms, as

for the total population, a disadvantage for North African and Middle Eastern countries, a phenomenon closely linked to the different levels of socio-economic development in the Mediterranean area.

In all countries in the area, infant mortality is higher for males, with a minimal gender differential in the European Union and Western Balkan countries, but the disadvantage increases in the other two macro-areas with high health relevance for the indicator considered, with the largest gap in Syria, Algeria and Morocco (Figure 2).

Fig. 2. Infant mortality rates by gender. Year 2023 (per 1,000 live births).



Source: UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation also for Italy.