



June 2017 #023

European Crisis Levels of Fertility; an expression of our selfishness and powerlessness?

A picture speaks a thousand words.

This Eurostat graph shows the average age of first deliveries of babies across Europe (x axis), and the fertility rate of these countries (y axis). Take time to picture what these numbers mean for our nations and continent. It is alarming to see how, the more affluent societies are, the later they leave it before having children. For example, in Germany the average age of women is 29 before they bring a pregnancy to full term.

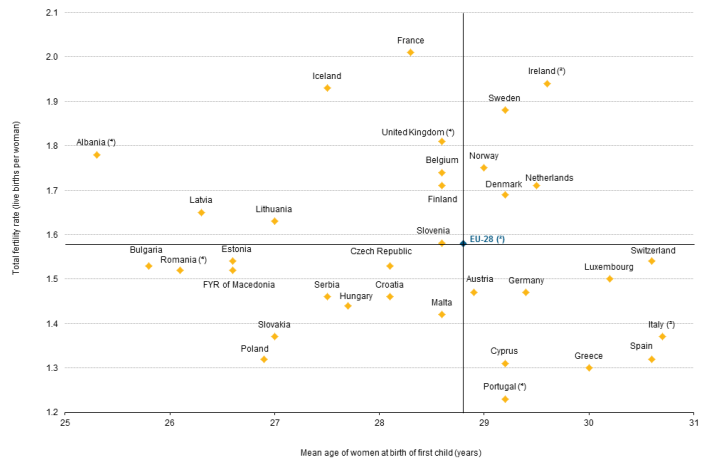
We also know that our children are more sexually aware and more likely to engage in sexual activity from their mid teens. Therefore young people are pressured to make life changing choices about contraception and abortion without understanding the impact on them and society. If a country like Germany has a birth rate of only 1.5 children per woman this affects not just Germany but also the rest of Europe.

The question is, has our desire for material comfort and a selfish work/lifestyle balance led to a society which is no longer able to sustain itself? Our individual choices have an enormous impact on the whole of society. As the church we are uniquely guided by God's word to have insight into these questions. And that also means we have a responsibility to play our part. We should understand that our choices as individuals have a direct effect on questions such as immigration, abortion and secular ideology. We cannot simply abdicate our individual responsibility to our governments and authorities because their responses will be influenced by lobby groups that oppose the sanctity of all human life. This leads to decisions that are at best misguided, and at worst, positively harmful to our nations and the continent's long term survival.

The need to awaken to the importance of productive families is real, where children are seen as our future and a blessing; please pray that Europe awakes before it's too late. Let us remember as we pray that God is the author of life and his plan for each one of us is from conception to natural death.

Please also pray for

- The UK, for the minority government that will need to respond to recent terrorist attacks and an uncertain time of Brexit negotiations.
- The "Awakening Europe" conference in Prague from 29th June – 2nd July focusing on "New Reformation".



(*) Note that the axes do not start at 0.
 (*) Provisional.
 (*) Total fertility rate: estimate.
 (*) Estimates.
 Source: Eurostat (online data code: demo_find)

Let us pray

- **Let us repent**, that we as a continent have not taken God's command seriously to 'go forth and multiply'. We have preferred entertainment, comfort and convenience over the investment of having a family.
- Please take the time to **pray over these nations**, imagining their future if the decline in fertility is not reversed. Empty schoolrooms, birthday parties with few friends, elderly parents and no grandparents, poor social skills for children without siblings to practice with and even the lack of a suitable mate because your peers weren't born or have left the country.
- **Pray for those without a spouse or couples without fertility**, but who long to have children.
- And **thank God for the babies** that are surviving the most dangerous nine months of their lives - their time in the womb. Celebrate their God-given design, the joy and hope they bring.

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