

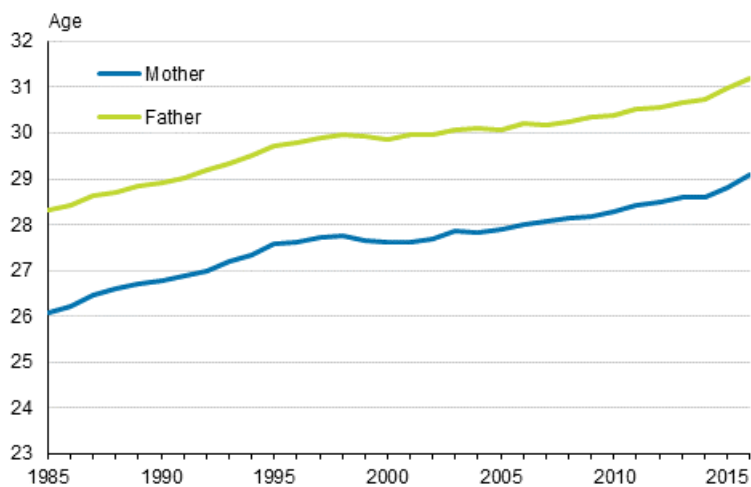
# Births 2016

## Annual Review

### Average age at first confinement rose in Finland to the top level of Nordic countries

According to Statistics Finland's data on population changes, the average age at first confinement has risen exceptionally much. The average age of first-time mothers was 29.1 years in 2016 rising by 0.2 years from 2015 and by 0.4 years from 2014. The average age at first confinement in Finland has risen to the same level as in Sweden, Norway and Denmark.

#### Average age of first-time mothers and fathers in 1985 to 2016



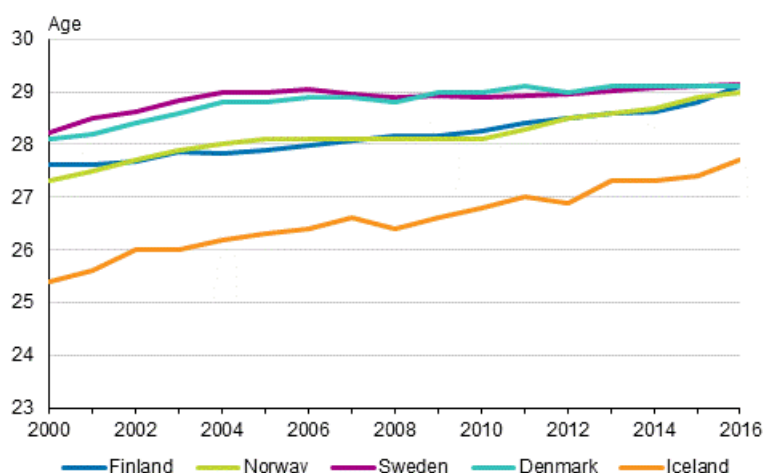
The average age of first-time fathers was 31.2 years. The age difference of first-time parents has stayed almost unchanged for decades. First-time fathers are slightly over two years older than first-time mothers.

The average age of all women having given birth was 30.8 years and the average age for becoming a father was 33.3 years in 2016.

For a long time, first-time mothers and fathers were older in the Nordic countries than in Finland, except for Iceland. In Finland, the ages of becoming mothers and fathers have grown closer to the corresponding ages in the other Nordic countries, and in 2016, the average age of becoming a mother was nearly the same in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark. In Finland, Sweden and Denmark, the average age of

becoming a mother was 29.1 years and in Norway 29.0 years. In Iceland, women became mothers at a clearly younger age, 27.7 years.

### Average age of first-time mothers in Nordic countries in 2000 to 2016



Men becoming fathers were oldest in Sweden and Norway, 31.5 years and youngest in Iceland, 30.3 years.

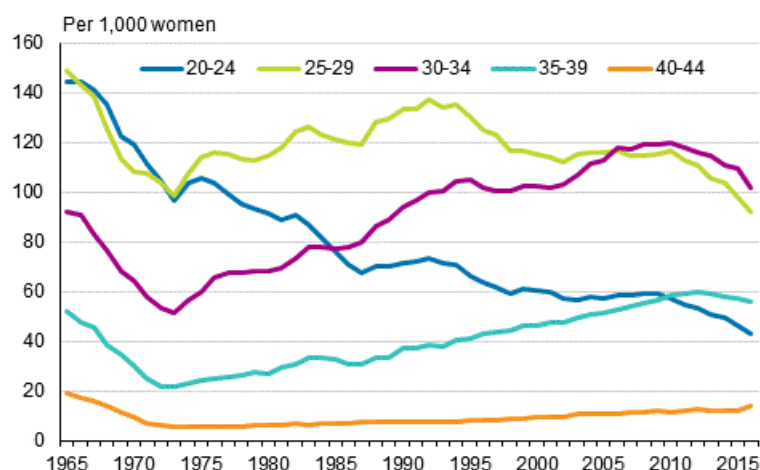
### Having children is most common in the 30 to 34 age group

Altogether 52,814 children were born in 2016. [Both the number of children born and the birth rate have decreased for six years in a row](#). The birth rate refers to the number of births as a proportion to the number of women of childbearing age.

Over the past six years, the birth rate has declined clearly in all age groups between 20 and 34. Having children is now most common for those aged 30 to 34, slightly more common than for those aged 25 to 29.

Having children is second most common for those aged 35 to 39 and 20 to 24. The birth rate has decreased considerably for those aged 20 to 24 in the past decades. The birth rate among those aged 40 to 44 has continued its slight growth, which started in the mid-1970s.

### Fertility by age group in 1965 to 2016



Because people are having children at a later age, an increasing number of people in the age group 35 to 39 are having their first child. When in 1990, six women per thousand women in this age group gave birth to their first child, in 2016 the corresponding figure had grown to 14.

The birth rate is also commonly measured with the total fertility rate, which indicates how many children a woman would give birth to during her life time if age group-specific fertility rates remained the same as in the year on which the calculation is based.

At the fertility rate prevailing in 2016, a woman would give birth to an average of 1.57 children. Of this total fertility rate, persons aged 30 or over formed 55 per cent. At the beginning of the 1970s, their share was one-quarter.

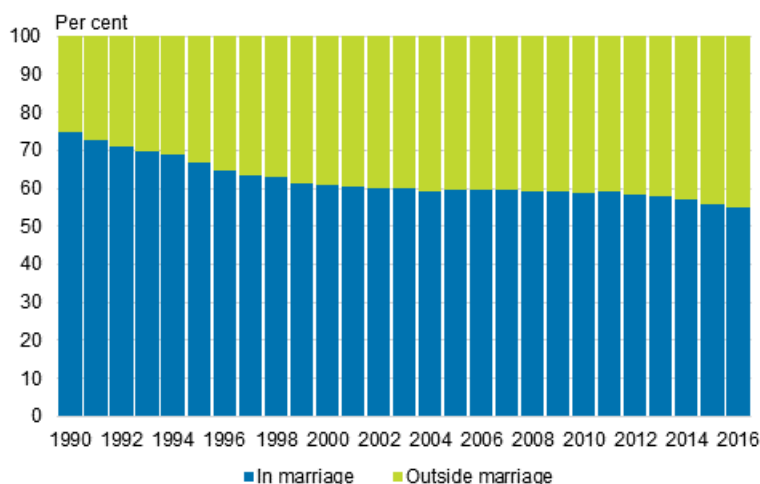
## Number of children born in marriage has decreased

Fifty-five per cent of children were born to married parents in 2016. The number and share of children born to married couples have diminished in recent decades. In 1990, three out of four children were born to married couples.

The majority of children born outside marriage were born to cohabiting parents.

In 2016, in total 29,200 children were born to married couples, which is 6,700 fewer than in 2010. In the period mentioned above, the number of marriages entered into also went down clearly. In 2016, the number of marriages entered into was 5,500 lower than in 2010. The decrease in the number of children born to married couples is naturally also affected by the decline in the total number of children born.

### Live births in and outside marriage in 1990 to 2016, per cent



Fifty-eight per cent of firstborn children were born outside marriage in 2016, while the percentage was 38 in 1990. The threshold of 50 per cent was exceeded in 1997. Of second or higher order children, 36 per cent were born outside marriage. In 1990, the corresponding percentage was 17.

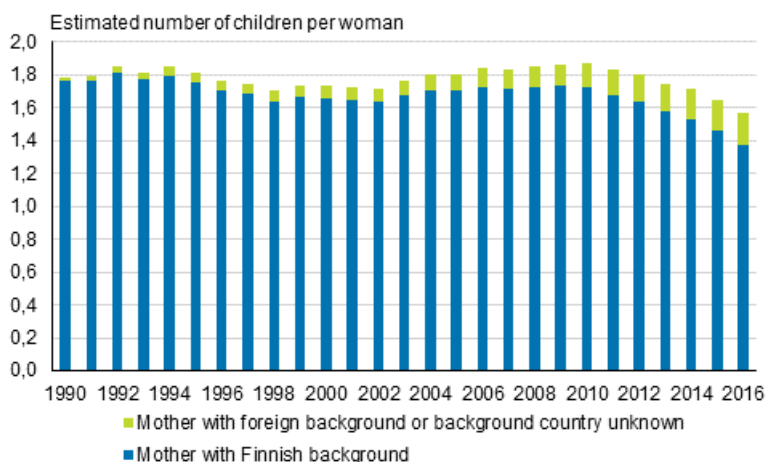
According to the most recent data of Eurostat, the Statistical Office of the European Union, the lowest number of children in European countries in 2015 were born outside marriage in relative terms in Greece, nine per cent. In relative terms, most children were born outside marriage in Iceland of European countries, 70 per cent of children born.

## Share of mothers with Finnish background in the birth rate decreases further

Fertility can also be examined based on the mother's origin. The share of people with Finnish background in the total fertility rate has gradually fallen, and that of persons with foreign background has correspondingly grown. In 1990, the share of people with foreign background in the total fertility rate was very small as the share of people with foreign background was still so low in Finland.

The share of persons with foreign background in the whole country's birth rate has increased slowly over 25 years and is currently close on 13 per cent of the country's birth rate. In the corresponding period, the share of women with foreign background in all women aged 15 to 49 has grown, however, slightly more slowly to 9.3 per cent.

### Total fertility rate by mother's origin in 1990 to 2016



According to the whole country's birth rate in 2016, women's average number of children would be 1.57 children per woman. Of this, the share of persons with Finnish background is 1.37 children per woman and of persons with foreign background 0.20 children per woman.

When we examine the decrease in the birth rate that began in 2010, we notice that only the birth rate of women of Finnish background has declined. The share of persons with Finnish background in the birth rate has gone down by 21 per cent in the past six years. By contrast, the share of persons with foreign background in the birth rate has increased by 36 per cent over the same period.

Further information about the birth rate according to origin is available on Statistics Finland's Immigrants and integration thematic pages in the section [Birth rate](#).

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# Appendix tables

**Appendix table 1. Confinements by number of foetuses in 2000 to 2016**

Year	Number of foetuses				
	Total	One	Two	Three	Four
2000	56 056	55 148	899	9	–
2001	55 511	54 658	843	10	–
2002	54 882	54 043	829	10	–
2003	55 962	55 122	834	6	–
2004	57 067	56 206	844	17	–
2005	57 066	56 212	847	7	–
2006	58 136	57 252	871	13	–
2007	58 024	57 125	889	10	–
2008	58 845	57 981	854	10	–
2009	59 759	58 896	850	13	–
2010	60 216	59 284	919	13	–
2011	59 253	58 398	841	14	–
2012	58 836	58 030	794	12	–
2013	57 484	56 692	785	7	–
2014	56 605	55 825	771	8	1
2015	54 890	54 144	738	8	–
2016	52 230	51 494	730	5	1

**Appendix table 2. Stillbirths by age of mother, marital status and birth order of child calculated from mother's all children 2016**

Age	Marital status									
	Mother married					Mother not married				
	Birth order					Birth order				
	Birth order of child total	1	2	3	4+	Birth order of child total	1	2	3	4+
Age of mother total	87	37	17	15	18	72	41	16	10	5
- 19	1	1	-	-	-	2	2	-	-	-
20 - 24	5	4	-	1	-	12	9	3	-	-
25 - 29	18	10	6	2	-	15	10	4	1	-
30 - 34	33	9	8	9	7	21	11	4	2	4
35 - 39	21	10	-	2	9	15	5	4	5	1
40 - 44	8	2	3	1	2	6	4	1	1	-
45 -	1	1	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	-

# Quality description, births 2016

## 1. Relevance of statistical information

The main source used when producing Finnish population statistics is the Population Information System, which is maintained by the Population Register Centre and local register offices. Changes in the data on the vital events of the resident population are updated into the Population Information System continuously by local population register authorities. From 1975 Statistics Finland has obtained population data from the Population Register Centre.

The last population registration was carried out in Finland on 1 January 1989. After that the Population Information System has been updated by notifications of changes. The data stored in the Population Information System are specified in the act on Population Information System and the certificate services of the Population Register Centre (21 August 2009/661). Notifications on population changes for the past year are expected by the last day of January of the following year.

Statistics Finland's function is to compile statistics on conditions in society (Statistics Finland Act of 24 January 1992/48). These also include demographic statistics. Statistics Finland's Rules of Procedure defines the Population and Social Statistics unit as the producer of demographic statistics (Statistics Finland's Rules of Procedure, TK-00-1743-16).

In accordance with the Act on the Municipality of Domicile, the municipality of domicile and the place of residence of individuals are recorded in the Population Information System. The municipality in which a person lives or the one construed by the inhabitant as the municipality of domicile on the grounds of residence, family ties, livelihood or other equivalent circumstances, or to which the inhabitant has close links due to the aforementioned circumstances is deemed the municipality of domicile. (Act on the Municipality of Domicile, 201/1994.) The population registered in the Population Information System is divided into those present and those absent. Those present are permanent residents of Finland, either Finnish nationals or aliens. Those absent are Finnish nationals who when emigrating from the country have reported that they intend to be absent from Finland for more than one year, with the exception of Finnish nationals who are diplomats and those working in development co-operation (Act on the Municipality of Domicile, 201/1994.) Only changes in the population resident in Finland are taken into account when compiling statistics on vital events. Persons moving to Finland from abroad are classified in the population statistics if the place of residence they have declared as their municipality of domicile is later confirmed as their place of residence.

### Concepts

'Liveborn' is the term for a newborn who breaths or shows other signs of life after birth. Only liveborn children of women permanently resident in Finland are taken into account in the population statistics.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition, 'stillborn' is the term for a newborn with a birth weight of at least 500 g or, if the birth weight is not available, a newborn born dead after a pregnancy lasting 22 weeks or more. The WHO definition has been in use since 1987. From the 2003 vital statistics onwards, the same national definition is used as in the cause-of-death statistics: 'stillborn' is the term for a newborn with a birth weight of at least 500 g, or a newborn born dead after a pregnancy lasting 22 weeks or more.

Children are classified according to family status as legitimate or illegitimate. A child born in wedlock is legitimate. A widow can give birth to a legitimate child if the pregnancy began while still married. A child born out of wedlock is illegitimate. Cases where the mother has married the child's father after the child's birth are also considered illegitimate in these statistics. According to law, such children only become legitimate as of the date when their parents enter into a marriage contract with each other. In this vital statistics publication the child's family status is primarily given by the mother's marital status, that is, whether the mother was married or not. Unmarried, widowed and divorced women, and women widowed after a registered partnership, separated from a dissolved registered partnership or living in a registered partnership are classified as not being married at the time of the child's birth.

The birth order is determined in two ways: either all live births to the mother are taken into account, or only the live births during the present marriage are included.

The health care unit has to report liveborn children to the Population Information System or to the register office of the mother's place of domicile to enter the information in the Population Information System. In exceptional cases the report is made to the register office of the child's place of birth. (Statute, 128/2010).

The population registrar ensures that a child is entered in the Population Information System within two months of birth. Registration in an Evangelical-Lutheran or Greek Orthodox parish presupposes baptism. Where parents belong to different parishes, the child is usually registered in the mother's parish. According to the Freedom of Religion Act (767/1969), where parents belong to different religious affiliations and have not agreed otherwise, the child is entered in the mother's register. The Population Register Centre issues the child an identity number on the basis of the child's notice of registration.

The Population Register Centre does not collect data on stillbirths. These data are obtained from stillbirth certificates written out by physicians. The health care unit or the physician in question forwards the certificate to the National Institute for Health and Welfare, which sends it to Statistics Finland (Statute 948/1973 and Act 459/1973).

In the vital statistics the number of stillbirths may differ somewhat from the number of stillbirths in the cause of death statistics. The deadline for data on stillbirths is shorter for the vital statistics than for the cause of death statistics.

The excess of births over deaths, that is, natural population increase means the difference between births and deaths. The crude birth rate refers to the number of births per 1,000 persons of the mean population. The proportion of stillbirths refers to the number of stillborn children per 1,000 liveborn and stillborn children. The general fertility rate indicates the number of liveborn children per 1,000 women of the mean population aged 15 to 49. The age-specific fertility rate indicates the number of live births per 1,000 women of the mean population in the age group in question. This same principle is applied for calculating age-specific legitimate or non-marital fertility rates. The legitimate fertility rate is calculated per married women and the non-marital fertility rate per non-married women. The total fertility rate is obtained by adding up the fertility rates calculated for one year. The rate refers to the estimated number of children born to a woman, given that the fertility rate of that statistical year prevails during the whole reproductive period of this woman on condition that the woman does not die before the end of the said period. The reproduction of the population refers to a change of a generation into a new one. Reproduction is measured by gross reproduction rates or net reproduction rates that generally indicate the ratio between the sizes of the daughter's and mother's generations. The fertility and mortality of the mother's generation before the end of the childbearing age is taken into account in the calculation of the net reproduction rate. In the gross reproduction rate this mortality is not taken into consideration. If the net reproduction rate calculated per one woman is less than one, the daughter's generation is smaller than the mother's generation and the mother's generation has not reproduced itself.

## 2. Methodological description of survey

The main source used when producing Finnish population statistics is the Population Information System of the Population Information Centre. Local register office updates a Population Information System with information it gets from persons experiencing vital events and parishes of the Evangelical-Lutheran and Greek Orthodox churches. Hospitals send information of births in machine-language format to maintenance of Population Information System. Local courts take information of decisions of adoptions and divorces dealt in the court into the Population Information System. Statistics Finland receives the updated data on vital events in machine-language format on a weekly basis.

The deadline for delivering data to Statistics Finland on vital events in the statistical year is the end of January of the following year. The exception to this is the data on stillbirths, which were expected by the end of September. Data on population changes in statistical year delivered to Statistics Finland after this date are included in the data of the following year. Data on events relating to years (statistical year-4) through to (statistical year-1) and reported between Februari (statistical year) and January (statistical year+1) are included in the statistical year data.



## Vital events of prior years included in the data for 2016

Total	2015	2014	2013	2012
11	6	1	4	–

### 3. Correctness and accuracy of data

In general, the Population Information System of the Population Register Centre can be considered very exhaustive as regards persons. In order that a person obtains a personal identity code, he or she has to be registered in the Population Information System. It is practically impossible to live in Finland without a personal identity code. A personal identity code is needed so that one can work legally, open a bank account, have dealings with authorities and so on. It can be safely assumed that Finland cannot have any substantial numbers of 'moonlighters' who receive their pay in cash for periods of over one year, for example. Staying in Finland for at least one year is the prerequisite for registering into the population of Finland.

After abolishment of yearly checking of domicile registers (January 1) in 1989 the Population Information System has been maintained only by notifications of changes to population information. Their correctness is determined by a reliability survey made on the addresses in the Population Information System.

The Population Register Centre charges Statistics Finland with the task of conducting yearly a sample survey on correctness of address information. Around 11,000 people are asked whether their address in the Population Information System is correct. In the 2012 survey, the address was correct for 98.9 per cent of the respondents. The nonresponse rate of the survey was 16.9 per cent.

Incorrect addresses influence population statistics by municipality only if the incorrect address is in a different municipality than the correct one. Only some of the incorrect addresses are also in an incorrect municipality. In connection with municipal elections, returned notifications of voting sent to foreigners usually reveal around 1,000 persons who have moved from the country without giving notice and are thus still included in the Finnish population. The Population Register Centre removes them from the resident population in the Population Information System before the following turn of the year.

### 4. Timeliness and promptness of published data

Final vital statistics are published yearly in April to May, except for those on stillbirths, which are available in September. Since 1999 the regional division used has been that of the first day of the following year. Thus the municipalities that unite on the first day of the new year are already combined in the statistics on the last day of the previous year. Information on the vital statistics of the united municipalities before the unification is available from 2003 onwards.

Preliminary population data by municipality are available by month.

[http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/vamuu/index\\_en.html](http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/vamuu/index_en.html)

### 5. Accessibility and transparency/clarity of data

Basic population data are available in electronic form by municipality or with larger regional divisions than municipality in Statistics Finland's free 'Population' online service (Statistical databases) at: [http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/tilastotietokannat/index\\_en.html](http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/tilastotietokannat/index_en.html)

General information and long time series on the population of the whole country can be found from the home page of Demographic Statistics at: [http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/synt/tau\\_en.html](http://tilastokeskus.fi/til/synt/tau_en.html)

The chargeable information service contains more specified information about the population by sub-area of municipality, for example.

## 6. Comparability of statistics

Comparable regional vital statistics series are available free from 1987. The tables always indicate which regional division is used.

Vital statistics data on the numbers of births, deaths and marriages contracted are available from 1749 onwards. From 1773 there are data about mothers having given birth by five-year age group and from 1936 about all children born by age of mother. After the statistical revision of 1877 collection of data on deaths was started by one-year age group, which made it possible to begin calculation of accurate mortality and lifetime tables from the 1880s onwards. On account of this statistical revision, annual collection of data on migration and divorces was also started.

The population time series in the free “Population” online service begin from the year 1980 or 1987. Vital statistics time series for the whole country is available from 1749.

## 7. Coherence and consistency/uniformity

Statistics Finland’s other statistics use the data of demographic statistics as basic information on population. Consequently, Statistics Finland’s other statistics correspond to demographic statistics.

THL, the National Institute for Health and Welfare, maintains a register of births and publishes information about childbirths, births and newborn. The figures of THL differ somewhat from those of Statistics Finland. Statistics Finland's figures include among women giving birth those who are permanently resident in Finland at the time of the birth of the child, while the THL register of births contains all women having given birth in Finland and their children.

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Source: Births 2016. Statistics Finland