

# Countries with low birthrates



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Fertility Rates in Germany and Italy and Population Policy According to Kemp (2004) the pattern of world population growth is complex and uneven.

In order to explain these changes, demographers including Jones (2004) have cited the 'Demographic Transition Model', which was originally a 4 stage model comparing the birth and death rates in countries since the industrial revolution, and the resulting population changes it entails. Since the 1930's, Jackson and Jackson (1996) believe a new 5th 'Senile Stage' in the cycle has developed in modern industrialized societies, which consists of a birth rate consistently below the death rate, causing a country's population to decrease. This report aims to highlight the changes in Italy and Germany's population structure and the population policies I'd implement to achieve future sustainable growth levels. Italy's population is expected to significantly decline from its current level of 61 million to around 55 million by 2050 (CIA, 2011). Italy's current population growth rate stands at 0.42%. This will result in an aging population as life expectancy increases (currently 81 years) and birth rates fall (currently 9.18 births per 1000 of the population). Italy's total fertility rate at 1.39 children per woman is also below the replacement level of 2.1. Only 13.8% of Italy's population is under the age of 14, compared with 20.3% of its population who are over 65. Germany's population has also started to decline by -0.208% from 82.5 million in 2004 to 81.47 million in 2011 (CIA, 2011). There are currently 8.3 births per 1,000 of the population and an average fertility rate of 1.41 children. Germany also has a great population imbalance in which 13.3% of the population are under the age of 14, whilst 20.6% of the population is over 65. In order for Germany and Italy to achieve a sustainable society, I believe a number of population policies should be implemented to reverse or

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mitigate their declining fertility and population rates. I believe that creating ‘ family friendly policies’ could encourage more people to have children. For example, I recommend increasing women’s paid maternity leave if they decide to have a baby. This could encourage more women to have babies whilst also being economically active and contribute to society at the same time. I would also encourage governments to set up part-time work schemes for women with children, so they can have a balanced family and work life. This would also include introducing free child care facilities and after-school clubs, to allow parents to pursue full time employment. Secondly, I would encourage governments to provide financial incentives to encourage people to have more kids, including child care subsidies and a monthly child benefit payment for families with 3 or more children. This benefit would off-set the financial cost on families to have more children, and the government would be reimbursed with greater numbers of people eventually in the workforce. However, Jones (2004) highlights that population policy, which aims to increase fertility rates can take a generation before the effects are felt, such as increased participation in the labor force. Therefore I believe a series of short term policies are also necessary. For example, I would encourage governments to raise their retirement age so people can work later in life, which would reduce pension crisis’s and state dependency of many people over 65. Governments could also introduce a selective immigration policy to attract highly skilled workers to the country. This would increase the labor force, add a substantial new tax base, ease the pension crisis and encourage multiculturalism. However, governments must be aware that an excess of immigrants could lead to a surplus labor force, and social, political and economic costs. In conclusion, post-industrial countries such as Germany and <https://assignbuster.com/countries-with-low-birthrates/>

Italy are starting to suffer from population decline as their fertility rates fall, and their population's age. In order to boost birth rates, governments are recognizing the importance a combination of financial incentives, family friendly policies and immigration can have on a population structure. However, this must be achieved through a holistic long-term approach in order to ensure sustainable population growth.

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