France Statistical Profile

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INTRODUCTION TO FRANCE

France is located in Western Europe, with its borders stretching from the English Channel to the Mediterranean. The total area of France is approximately 675,417 km², including overseas territories. It is often referred to as The Hexagon because of the geometric shape of its territory. Paris is the nation’s capital. As of 2009, the population is estimated to be 64.3 million, while total fertility rate (TFR) stands at 2 children per woman, with a population growth rate of 0.549%.

The primary language is French, with a number of regional dialects such as Breton, Provencal, and Catalan still in existence. Because of colonization, French is spoken in parts of Canada, African countries, the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific.

French people are attached to the Republic and to the spirit of the “Lumières.” The President is directly elected by universal suffrage and maintains overall responsibility in foreign affairs and defense, while the Prime Minister is responsible for day-to-day government. Parliament is divided into the National Assembly and the Senate, with members of the National Assembly directly elected every five years, and members of the Senate chosen by an electoral college.

Freedom, equality and fraternity are core values that translate into a Welfare State and citizens’ expectations towards public provisions, a redistributive tax system, an inclusive healthcare system and a high-quality education system (subsidized daycare, and free public school starting at the age of 3). France is also a highly centralized country with elites governing from Paris.

France is a secular country. According to polls, 51% identify as being Catholics, about 30% as being agnostics or atheists, 10% from other religions or without opinion, 4% as Muslim, 3% as Protestant, 1% as Buddhist and 1% as Jewish. Laïcité, or separation between Church and state, is an important concept; the French government does not recognize any religion and religious organizations are not allowed to intervene in policy-making.

France possesses the fifth largest economy by nominal GDP. Currently France is a founding member of the European Union and the United Nations, as well as a member of the G8, G20, NATO, OECD, and WTO. Together with four other countries, France is a member of the UN Security Council. The official currency of France is the euro.

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LABOR FORCE HIGHLIGHTS

- 63.9% of the total French population is in the labor force.¹

- The economically active population is projected to increase from 27.9 million in 2007 to 28.1 million in 2020. “Economically active population” comprises all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labor for the production of goods and services during a specified time reference period.⁴

- The unemployment rate in 2007 was 8.3%.⁴

- According to the Labour Force Survey by Eurostate, the average hours worked by employees in France in 2008 was 38.4 hours per week. France has the lowest average working hours of all the countries surveyed. In comparison, the average number of hours worked for the EU15 is 39.9 hours.¹

- In 2007, approximately 13.42% of the labor force was working part time.⁴

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Figure 1a. Economically Active Population as Percent of Total Population (Aged 15+)
– Selected Regional Countries, 2007

- Italy: 48.9
- Belgium: 44.6
- France: 56.3
- Germany: 58.7
- Spain: 49.7

Source: International Labor Organization⁴

Figure 1b. Economically Active Population As Percent of Total Population (Aged 15+)
– Selected GNI Countries, 2007

- United Kingdom: 51.1
- United States: 65.3
- France: 56.3
- Germany: 58.7
- Italy: 48.9
- Japan: 60.4

Source: International Labor Organization⁴

Figure 1b compares the employment as a percent of the total population in France with other countries with high gross national incomes.
Employment rates for the age group of 25-54 is the highest in France in comparison to selected regional countries.
Figure 5a. Current and Projected Economically Active Population Rates in France, within age group, 2007 and 2020

Figure 5a compares the current (2007) and projected (2020) economically active population rates. The economically active age groups of 20-59 are projected to decrease in 2020 in comparison to those in 2007.

Source: International Labor Organization.

Figure 5b. Current and Projected Economically Active Population as % of Total Population in France, by Gender, 2007 and 2020

Source: International Labor Organization.
**ECONOMIC HIGHLIGHTS**

The 2007 Gross Domestic Product in France was $32,686 per capita. This compares to $30,220 in Italy, $46,090 in the United States and $34,977 in Germany.1

In 2005, GDP growth dipped to 1.89%, down from 2.47% in 2004. GDP growth then rose and stabilized at 2.17% for both 2006 and 2007.2

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Figure 6. GDP Growth, France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium 1995 - 2007

![GDP Growth Chart](image)

*GDP growth figures for Germany and Italy are missing from OECD for 2002 and 2003 respectively*

Source: OECD Factbook 2009

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Figure 7. Total External Debt as Percentage of GDP, Selected Regional Countries, 1995-2007

![Debt as % of GDP Chart](image)

Source: OECD Factbook 2009
FIGURE 8. Median Age, by Gender, Selected Countries, 2009

FIGURE 9. Life Expectancy at Birth, selected countries, 2009

Source: CIA World Factbook 2009

http://www.bc.edu/agingandwork
In France, 13.9% of the male population and 18.7% of the female population is 65 or older. In comparison,

- In Belgium, 14.9% of the male population and 20.2% of the female population is 65 or older.
- In Germany, 18.9% of the male population and 23.1% of the female population is 65 or older.
- In Italy, 17.2% of the male population and 23.1% of the female population is 65 or older.

Source: United States Census Bureau

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**Figure 10a. Population Distribution of France, 2009**

**Figure 10b. Population Distribution of Belgium, 2009**

Source: United States Census Bureau
Figure 10c. Population Distribution of Italy, 2009

In Figure 10c the Population Distribution of Italy is shown. It is interesting to note that females age 80 and above is the second largest group in terms of female population distribution, next to females aged 55 – 59.

Source: United States Census Bureau

Figure 10d. Population Distribution of Germany, 2009

Source: United States Census Bureau
REFERENCES


ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

Established in 2007 by the Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College, the Global Perspectives Institute is an international collaboration of scholars and employers committed to the expansion of the quality of employment available to the 21st century multi-generational workforce in countries around the world.

The Global Perspectives Institute focuses on innovative and promising practices that might be adopted by employers and policy-makers.

The Institute’s research, publications, and international forums contribute to:

- a deeper understanding of the employment experiences and career aspirations of employees of different ages who work in countries around the world;
- informed decision making by employers who want to be employers-of-choice in different countries; and
- innovative thinking about private-public partnerships that promote sustainable, high-quality employment.

The Sloan Center on Aging & Work at Boston College promotes quality of employment as an imperative for the 21st century multi-generational workforce. We integrate evidence from research with insights from workplace experiences to inform innovative organizational decision making. Collaborating with business leaders and scholars in a multi-disciplinary dialogue, the Center develops the next generation of knowledge and talent management.

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