

40. Europe – population and settlements

Europe = large and rich continent, many European countries are amongst the wealthiest in the world with high standard of living compared to most other parts of the world ⇔ industrial growth and colonies (in Africa, America and Asia), >40 national countries => 2 world wars started here.

Europe = amongst the smallest continents but the third highest population =>

- *high population densities* (>100 inh./km²)
- *high rate of urbanisation* (>70%)

Population distribution and density

>700 million Europeans live in area bit larger than Australia => European countries have some of the highest population densities in the world (world average = 41 inh./km²)

- e.g. Netherlands 460 inh./km², Germany 235 inh./km², Monaco 16,000 inh./km²

Europeans live mainly in coastal and fluvial lowlands ⇔ concentration of industries + communications (Po lowland, Costa Liguria, Ruhr region, Randstadt) => copying the Hot (Blue) banana region.

The lowest population density = Eastern Europe ⇔ large areas (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine) => West-East gradient of population density = the more to the east, the higher population density



Population features

Populations are quite stable without any extensive increase/decrease.

Low birth rates + high average life expectancy – 75 yrs. => European population is relatively *elderly* (large proportion of people in age of > 65 yrs.).

Cultural melting pot

Great variety of nations and cultures ⇔ immigrants from LDCs (former colonies) => ethnic minorities => *social and ethnic conflicts* (Muslims vs. natives, richer and poorer) mainly in large cities, e.g. Paris, Madrid, Lisboa, London, etc.

Settlements

Majority of Europeans live in cities (urban areas), especially in the western part of Europe.

- e.g. Belgium 97%, Luxembourg 91%, UK 89%, Germany 88%

In eastern part, people live mainly in country (rural) areas.

Conurbations in the Hot banana region (1 city merges into another)

Largest cities in Europe:

- *Paris* → >9 million inhabitants
- *London* → >8 million inhabitants
- *Moscow* → >8 million inhabitants
- *Berlin, Madrid, Milan, Kyiv, etc.*

Keywords

conurbation, stable population, west-east gradient