

## 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  $\Leftrightarrow$  industrial growth and colonies (in Africa, America and Asia),  $>40$  national countries  $\Rightarrow$  2 world wars started here.  
Europe = amongst the smallest continents but the third highest population  $\Rightarrow$

- *high population densities ( $>100$  inh./km $^2$ )*
- *high rate of urbanisation ( $>70\%$ )*

### Population distribution and density

$>700$  million Europeans live in area bit larger than Australia  $\Rightarrow$  European countries have some of the highest population densities in the world (world average = 41 inh./km $^2$ )

- e.g. Netherlands 460 inh./km $^2$ , Germany 235 inh./km $^2$ , Monaco 16,000 inh./km $^2$

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

The lowest population density = Eastern Europe  $\Leftrightarrow$  large areas (Russia, Belarus, Ukraine)  $\Rightarrow$  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.*  $\Rightarrow$  European population is relatively elderly (large proportion of people in age of  $> 65$  yrs.).

### Cultural melting pot

Great variety of nations and cultures  $\Leftrightarrow$  immigrants from LDCs (former colonies)  $\Rightarrow$  ethnic minorities  $\Rightarrow$  *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  $\rightarrow >9$  million inhabitants*
- *London  $\rightarrow >8$  million inhabitants*
- *Moscow  $\rightarrow >8$  million inhabitants*
- *Berlin, Madrid, Milan, Kyiv, etc.*

### Keywords

conurbation, stable population, west-east gradient