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Household Scenarios for the European Union, 1995-2025

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This paper reports on three Household Scenarios for the countries of the European Union. Just like population forecasts, demographic scenarios which focus on households, provide much needed information to government institutions as well as to the private sector. The scenarios predict the numbers of persons living alone, living with a partner, living as a child at the parental home and living in another household position, as well as the institutional population. The period covered is 1995-2025. In all three scenarios, the number of persons living alone will grow. According to the Individualisation Scenario, the number of persons living alone will show the strongest increase, whereas the slowest growth will take place according to the Family Scenario. In contrast, the number of children who live at the parental home will decline in all scenarios. The total number of households increases, whereas the average household size declines, the extent depending on the scenario.

1. Introduction

Forecasting household trends makes it possible to prepare for future demands of public and private services, for outlining policies in housing, social care, social security, welfare, and so on. These forecasts are also of interest to the private sector, since households are the basic consumer unit.

Statistics Netherlands has prepared internationally consistent household forecasts for all fifteen member countries of the European Union (EU). Most member states have not (yet) produced their own national household forecasts and the available household forecasts are not consistent with each other. To overcome this drawback, the European Commission commissioned Statistics Netherlands to produce a set of internationally consistent household scenarios¹⁾.

The scenarios cover the period 1995-2025. For each country, they project the number of persons in institutional households by sex and single year of age and the number of persons in the following four (private) household positions by sex and single year of age:

- living alone
- living as a couple
- living at the parental home with one or both parents
- living in another household position

Persons without a partner who live with children or with other persons belong to the latter category. Moreover, the scenarios specify the number of one- and multi-person households as well as the average number of persons per household. This article summarises the findings reported to the European Commission (Alders and Manting, 1998a and 1998b).

2. Converging and diverging trends in household positions in Europe

For the analysis of demographic trends and the compilation of the household scenarios the EU countries were clustered. Countries within each cluster experience rather similar demographic developments:

Northern cluster:	Denmark, Finland and Sweden
Central and Western cluster:	Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom
Southern cluster:	Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain

In the following three countries will represent the clusters: Italy, the Netherlands and Finland.

Before discussing the household scenarios, it may helpful to present some trends in the four household positions. Trends are discussed on the basis of uncorrected information from the Labour Force Surveys (LFS) 1983 - 1996. For the use of the scenarios, data were compared with other data sources. This comparison resulted in a number of corrections. The LFS time series are not always available. If available, figures before 1991 and after 1992 generally have to be interpreted with caution, as the time series for most countries are interrupted, due to a variety of reasons. Finally, the following overview does not include Sweden as this country does not provide household data on the basis of the LFS²⁾.

Table 1. Percentage of persons living at the parental home at age 20 and 30, by sex and country, LFS 1995-1996

	GR	IT	PT	ES	AT	BE	DE	FR	IE	LU	NL	UK	DK ¹	FI
Age	Males													
20	84	96	91	95	87	82	83	78	76	85	81	72	67	34
30	44	43	38	44	22	9	15	12	23	20	10	11	7	7
Age	Females													
20	76	91	83	92	75	77	67	64	63	77	65	55	48	24
30	20	27	24	30	10	4	6	6	13	10	2	6	1	1

N.B.: Greece (GR), Italy (IT), Portugal (PT), Spain (ES), Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Germany (DE), France (FR), Ireland (IE), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI).

1) Denmark, based on data of 1992-1993.

Living at the parental home

With respect to trends in the number of children, it is observed that the majority of them live at home until at least age 15. After this age, the proportion of children starts to decline in all countries, although to a different degree.

At almost every age and in every country, relatively more young men live at the parental home than young women. There is a clear-cut difference between Southern European and other European countries. To give an example, more than 40 % of 30 year-old Italian men still live at their parents' home, compared with only 10 % of Dutch men of that age (*table 1*). Northern European countries have the lowest proportions of children staying at the parental home. At age 30, only 7 % of Finnish men and 1 % of Finnish women live with their parents. The Finnish LFS-figures at age 20 would appear to be incorrect in that the proportion is much too low in comparison with other Finnish data sources.

Leaving home in Italy, as well as in the other Southern European countries, has been increasingly postponed since 1983. There are also countries in the Central and Western European cluster, like France, where leaving home is increasingly delayed. In other countries, such as the Netherlands, there has been almost no change.

Due to these different trends since the beginning of the 1980s, involving minor changes in Central and Western European countries and a large delay in Southern countries, countries now differ more from each other than they did at the beginning of the 1980s.

Living alone

Living alone is much less popular in Southern than in Northern European countries. Until about age 50, very few men and women in most Southern European countries live alone (between 1 % and 5 % on average). After age 50, living alone becomes increasingly more common both for men and women. Due to the fact that women generally live longer than men, more women live alone at old age. To give an example, about half the number of Italian women live alone at age 80, against less than a fifth of Italian men at age 80 (*table 2*).

Table 2. Percentage of persons living alone at selected ages, by sex and country, LFS 1995-1996

	GR	IT	PT	ES	AT	BE	DE	FR	IE	LU	NL	UK	DK ¹	FI	
Age															
Males															
20	8	1	1	0	4	3	9	10	2	3	10	5	25	21	
30	7	6	2	2	14	12	23	16	7	12	18	16	30	23	
65	4	8	4	4	10	11	11	12	14	9	12	14	17	16	
80	15	18	15	8	13	28	24	20	28	18	23	29	37	38	
Age															
Females															
20	8	1	2	0	4	3	12	12	3	4	14	5	30	25	
30	4	4	2	1	10	7	14	10	4	7	11	8	15	18	
65	12	13	9	6	17	15	20	18	13	13	19	19	27	27	
80	49	51	31	32	60	60	69	59	49	49	69	58	77	74	

N.B.: Greece (GR), Italy (IT), Portugal (PT), Spain (ES), Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Germany (DE), France (FR), Ireland (IE), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI).

1) Denmark, based on data of 1992-1993.

Age- and sex-specific patterns of people living alone are rather similar in all other EU-Member States. However, in Central, Western and Northern countries, a large proportion of young people tend to live alone for some time, whereas in the Southern countries almost no young adults live alone. At age 20, for instance, one out of ten of Dutch men live alone, compared with one out of hundred of Italian men. Due to the fact that this solitary phase is generally of a temporary nature, it leads to a peak in the proportions of persons living alone at ages between 20 and 30. On the whole this peak occurs a few years later in the course of life of men than of women, as men leave home and marry or form a union a few years later than women.

Through the years, the proportions of young persons living alone have increased significantly in almost all countries. In Southern European countries, these increases were much smaller than in Central and Western European countries. In some of the latter countries, such as the United Kingdom, a peak at young ages emerged during the 1990s. In most Central and Western European countries, this peak was already present from the beginning of the 1980s.

The proportion of middle-aged single persons has generally risen as well through the years. Only among people who are about 60 to 75 years old, the proportions of persons who live alone have decreased. In most countries this is the case for both men and women. More couples survive because both men and women have increasing life expectancies.

Living with a partner

Most people live with a spouse or with a partner without being married. The age pattern of men and women living with a partner resembles a mountain with a flat top. The proportion of persons living with a partner generally increases rapidly between the ages of 20 and 30. For example, about 4 % of Dutch men live with a partner at age 20, against 71 % at age 30 (*table 3*). Thereafter, it increases at a much lower rate or remains more or less stable. At later ages, between 50 and 70 years, the proportions of persons living with a partner decline relatively slowly, followed by a more rapid decline after about age 70.

Table 3. Percentage of persons living with a partner at selected ages, by sex and country, LFS 1995-1996

	GR	IT	PT	ES	AT	BE	DE	FR	IE	LU	NL	UK	DK ¹	FI
Age	Males													
20	1	0	2	1	2	2	5	5	2	3	4	6	8	14
30	45	44	50	47	56	62	59	69	58	60	71	66	63	62
60	92	83	90	86	84	71	86	83	73	80	84	81	81	75
80	74	69	67	72	73	60	70	73	51	58	74	63	63	16
Age	Females													
20	8	4	5	3	10	8	16	16	4	10	18	16	21	27
30	72	61	64	62	69	72	72	76	67	75	82	68	75	70
60	75	69	72	76	67	64	73	73	68	73	76	73	71	63
80	23	23	28	27	17	22	19	28	16	20	26	28	23	1

N.B.: Greece (GR), Italy (IT), Portugal (PT), Spain (ES), Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Germany (DE), France (FR), Ireland (IE), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI).

1) Denmark, based on data of 1992-1993.

Relatively more women live with a partner at young ages than men, because women are on average 2 to 3 years younger than men when they marry. Because wives generally survive their husbands, far more men aged 50 and over are married than women. In Italy, for instance, at age 80 about 70 % of men and just over 20 % of women live with a partner.

Because most young people from Southern Europe live at home, relatively fewer 20-30-year olds in these countries form a couple in comparison with the rest of the European Union. The proportion of middle-aged people living with a partner is generally highest in the Southern European countries, with Greece in front. Relatively many Dutch women compared to women in other Central and Western European countries live with their partners: over 80 % of those aged 30-55.

Between 1983 and 1996, fewer and fewer people live with a partner at young ages. Union formation and marriage have been increasingly postponed. Later in life, on the other hand, more and more men and women live together. This is to a major extent the result of a continued increase in life expectancy for both men and women. The proportions of people aged between 30 to 55 years living with a partner usually decrease.

Other household positions

All those who are not child, single, or living with a partner belong to the category 'other'. The household position 'other' therefore includes single parents and members of multi-family households. In general, the proportion of 'others' is low at young ages and high at old ages (*table 4*). Also, the proportion at old age is much higher for women than for men. In most countries, there is a peak at young ages, sometimes declining over the years, and sometimes rising. This peak is probably partly due to the phenomenon of students living in student's houses and partly due to the increase in the number of one-parent families. Finland is the only country with an irregular age pattern. This is probably due to fluctuation in the LFS. Other data sources show the common pattern.

In most countries, the proportion of persons living in another household position is on the decline, especially in the second half of life.

Table 4. Percentage of persons in other household positions at selected ages, by sex and country, LFS 1995-1996

	GR	IT	PT	ES	AT	BE	DE	FR	IE	LU	NL	UK	DK ¹	FI
Age														
Males														
20	6	3	6	4	7	13	4	7	20	9	4	16	79	32
30	5	7	10	7	7	18	3	3	12	9	1	7	9	8
60	4	8	5	8	6	18	3	4	12	10	3	4	2	9
80	11	13	17	20	14	12	5	6	22	24	3	8	0	47
Age														
Females														
20	8	4	9	5	11	12	5	7	30	10	4	24	51	25
30	4	9	10	6	11	17	9	8	16	8	5	19	1	11
60	12	16	17	15	16	20	6	8	18	13	8	8	2	10
80	29	26	40	42	23	17	12	13	35	30	14	0	0	26

N.B.: Greece (GR), Italy (IT), Portugal (PT), Spain (ES), Austria (AT), Belgium (BE), Germany (DE), France (FR), Ireland (IE), Luxembourg (LU), the Netherlands (NL), United Kingdom (UK), Denmark (DK), Finland (FI).

1) Denmark, based on data of 1992-1993.

Institutional population

Information on institutional households is scarce in both censuses and surveys. From the censuses around 1990 it is known that in the European Union about 1 % of the population does not live in a private household. For the purpose of this project, a few countries generated more detailed (age- and sex-specific) information on institutional households. The age patterns show a rise in the proportions with age, especially at advanced age. In the Netherlands, proportions are less than 1 % for persons younger than 60 years old, against 27 % for men and 40 % for women older than 90 years.

3. Background of household trends

The household developments described above are closely related to demographic developments and to socio-economic, cultural, technological and policy-related conditions.

Demographic backgrounds of household trends

Postponement of first marriage, for instance, is accompanied by higher proportions of young adults living at home (especially in the Southern European countries), by higher proportions of people living alone (especially in the Central, Western and Northern European countries) and by lower proportions of young couples. The mean age at first marriage for the EU increased from 26.0 years in 1980 to about 28.7 years in 1994 for men and from 23.3 to 26.3 years for women (Eurostat, 1997). Although marriage is also delayed in the Northern, and Central and Western European countries, the delay in marriage is no longer the most important factor influencing the time at which young people leave the parental home in these countries. This is caused by the fact that leaving home and marriage are no longer closely linked. In the Netherlands, it has become even more common to leave home alone than to leave home for the purpose of forming a union (Mulder and Manting, 1994). Within the Central and Western European countries, there are exceptions to this rule. In Belgium, for instance, the majority (still) leaves home to marry (Corijn and Manting, forthcoming). Postponement of entry into a union goes hand in hand with a lengthening of the period of living alone among young persons in some countries, but with a lengthening of the period of living at the parental home in other countries.

The decrease in the proportion of young couples and the increase in the proportion of young adults living alone is also closely linked to the timing and incidence of first childbirth. A relatively low fertility in the past two decades has led to high numbers of childless women and relatively high numbers of childless couples. Marriage and childbearing are, however, much more closely linked in the Southern European countries than in the Northern ones. For example, just under half of Danish children are born outside marriage, whereas the proportion is only three out of every hundred in Greece (Eurostat, 1997). And thus, postponement of family formation in Southern European countries is more closely linked to the number of young couples than in the Northern ones. A lower proportion of couples in their thirties and forties may also be the result of the increase in childlessness at these ages, since couples without children have much higher divorce rates than couples with children.

The higher proportions of people in their thirties living alone and the increasingly lower proportions of persons of that age living in a union are also influenced by the higher instability of unions, especially of consensual ones (Beets, 1989; Hoem and Hoem, 1992; Manting, 1995). Instability of unions is much higher in the Central, Western and, in particular, Northern European countries than in the Southern ones. It is also more common to cohabit (mostly before marriage) in these countries (for an overview, see Klijzing and Macura, 1996) and it is a well-known fact that these unions are more likely to break up than marriages. Moreover, marriages preceded by a period of cohabitation are more likely to break up than the 'traditional' ones which were not preceded by cohabitation (Bracher et al., 1993; Bumpass, 1990; Klijzing, 1992; Manting, 1993; Schoen, 1992; Teachman et al., 1991).

The increasing life expectancy has led to rising numbers of couples at ages between 60 and 70. An increasing tendency of children to stay at home also leads to a decrease in proportions of 60- to 70-year old women living alone.

The decreasing number of persons in other household positions is partly the result of the fact that the number of multi-family households is on the decline, although this is to a minor extent counteracted by an increase in the number of one-parent families.

Social and cultural backgrounds

Secularisation has led to a declining commitment of people to normative guidelines of the church (Lesthaeghe, 1983, 1991). As a result, non-traditional social bonds such as one-parent families and cohabitation, as well as living alone, have been increasingly accepted. Together with a quest for greater individual freedom, (non-traditional) relationships and sex before marriage have become increasingly common (Lesthaeghe and Surkyn, 1988).

The loss of the societal functions of marriage is also seen as a major cause of changes in living arrangements. Functions such as procreation, education, care and socialisation of children, economic and social security of the individual members of the family have increasingly been taken over by the state and private institutions. Both men and women have become less dependent on marriage and the family for the fulfilment of a variety of needs (Espenshade, 1985). As such, marriage has become less attractive, leading to a decline in the number of marriages. With it, a change in 'marriage models' was introduced, leading to a greater instability of marriage (Roussel, 1989). The goal of the old, traditional, model was to survive and to ensure (im)material security at old ages. Later on, a model based on solidarity between the members through affection was developed. Marriages based on such affection are much more vulnerable to divorce than marriages based on a number of societal functions. The most recent model is a model based on reason, in which a break-up of the marriage is implicitly accepted as a risk. These developments have led to an upsurge in divorce rates (Roussel, 1989).

Individualisation can be observed in most European countries. With the need for more privacy and independence from others, individualisation is one of the reasons for the increasing number of one-person households (Van de Kaa, 1987; Kuijsten, 1996). Young people increasingly tend to live alone before they commit themselves to others. This is especially the case in the Central, Western and Northern European countries.

A cultural trend towards avoiding risks in the sense of being independent in financing one's family has also been mentioned as reason for the changes in demographic behaviour (Galland, 1997). Young adults increasingly follow a strategy in which they try to keep their future flexible in the sense that they avoid long-term commitments in the household and housing career (Birg et al., 1990; Mulder and Manting, 1994). Sharing a residence with a partner means a first step in making such commitments. Marriage is a further step as it creates legal barriers to union disruption. Parenthood in particular involves a long-term commitment (Mulder and Manting, 1994). This flexible strategy may be accompanied by leaving home later. In the 1960s, young people wished to leave home as soon as possible in order to obtain residential independence. Today, material assistance at home and emotional support by the parents, combined with a large amount of personal freedom at the parental home, make young people hesitant to leave (Galland, 1997). This idea was also mentioned for the postponement of leaving home in Germany (Nave-Hertz, 1997) and the Netherlands (Mulder and Hooimeijer, 1995).

Economical backgrounds

Favourable economic conditions may allow people to choose between living alone and living with others, depending on their individual values and preferences. A relatively low income makes it more difficult to live alone or in a small household, as the latter is relatively more expensive than a large one (Burch and Matthews, 1987).

In the past years, an increasing uncertainty on the labour market, an increasing number of temporary contracts and a decreasing labour force participation among the young are seen as major causes of the delay of young persons in leaving home in France (Galland, 1997), in Germany (Nave-Hertz, 1997) and in the Netherlands (Latten, 1991). Another response to recent labour market situations is the increase in educational participation in order to enhance career opportunities. This is, for instance, visible in Spain, where parents judge longer education for their children to be important in view of the difficult employment situation (Cordon, 1997). In all countries, duration of educational participation has increased through the years, with major repercussions for demographic and household behaviour.

Up to now, increasing enrolment in the educational system and higher educational levels have greatly influenced the timing of demographic behaviour in Europe. This has led to postponement of union formation, marriage and fertility in several European countries (for Germany: Blossfeld, 1995; for Sweden: Hoem, 1986; for Spain: Delgado, 1995; for Great Britain: Kiernan and Lelièvre, 1995; for France: Leridon and Toulemon, 1995; for Belgium: Lesthaeghe and Moors, 1992; for the Netherlands: Manting, 1995; for Italy: Pinelli and De Rose, 1995). It has also influenced the process of leaving home, in as far as young people were obliged to leave their parents in order to follow an education in another city (for the Netherlands: Baanders, 1989), with the exception of Italy (Rossi, 1997). Furthermore, these trends have been responsible for a rise in the number of persons leaving home to live alone for a while (Mulder and Manting, 1994; Mulder and Hooimeijer, 1995). This is related to the general view that marriage (and non-married cohabitation) and college/university attendance are difficult to combine. People tend to get married or start cohabiting when they have completed their education.

The increasing level of education or, more generally, emancipation of women has stimulated the decline in marriage and fertility rates as well as the rise in divorce rates (Blossfeld, 1995). Emancipation also led to economic independence of women. This economic independence of women through their participation in the labour market or through individualisation of social security is thus accompanied by less material advantages of marriage and greater marriage instability (Roussel, 1989).

Policy-related conditions

Divorce laws differ strongly between the countries of the European Union. In the Southern European countries and in Ireland, the law is quite restrictive, contributing to low divorce rates.

Housing policies may have influenced the timing of leaving home to a large extent. In the Netherlands and Denmark, for instance, housing needs for young people are recognised (Jones, 1995), which probably explains the low proportions of young persons living at home in these countries. In the Netherlands, for example, there are special housing units for those who opt to live alone. In Italy and Belgium, on the other hand, the housing situation stands in the way of leaving home among the young: housing is rather expensive and rented accommodation is in limited supply, which implies that young adults need to have their own income. However, it is difficult to estimate the real impact of the

housing situation. Although there is an increasing shortage of housing for young people in the United Kingdom, the number of people leaving home has not diminished in this country (Jones, 1995).

Social security measures in the form of public assistance, student grants, child benefits, and rent subsidies may also have an important impact on household formation and dissolution. The choice between leaving home and studying, for example, partly depends on the availability of student grants. Rent subsidies provide a greater degree of independence to those who are not able to obtain a mortgage. The possibility of getting public assistance can influence the choice whether or not to divorce. Child benefits and facilities for combining parenthood and employment have been generated to stimulate higher fertility.

Technological backgrounds

The introduction of the pill initially went hand in hand with a decline in the number of families with relatively many children. Another consequence of the introduction was postponement of fertility among young couples. Nowadays, it also enables couples to realise their voluntary childlessness.

Other modern technological developments, such as urbanisation and increasing mobility have made individuals less dependent on other household members (Burch and Matthews, 1987). Telecommunications and cars made physical distance increasingly irrelevant, enabling people to act more independently. For older people, in particular, it has become easier to live alone.

4. Three Household Scenarios

The complexity of numerous determinants influencing past household behaviour makes it difficult to predict future behaviour. It is furthermore not always easy to predict whether or not differences between countries will become smaller or larger. To express the uncertainty about future household developments, two completely different scenarios have been drawn up: the Individualisation Scenario and the Family Scenario. A third scenario, the Baseline Scenario, is the average of the other two. Separate scenarios have been made for three clusters of countries already defined above: the so-called Northern, Southern and Central and Western clusters.

The household scenarios had to meet a number of conditions. First of all, they had to be made consistent with the latest set of long-term European Population Scenarios (De Beer and De Jong, 1996) and with the new Labour Force Scenarios (De Jong, forthcoming). Three long-term European Population Scenarios are distinguished: the Low, Baseline and High Population Scenario. Also, Low, Baseline and High Labour Force Scenarios were made. Furthermore, consistency with (six) national household projections was preferred. For several reasons, however, the scenarios do not completely correspond with these projections. The main reason is that the scenarios differ from official projections by their nature. National statistical agencies often attempt to make a projection of the most likely future, whereas the European Household Scenarios aim to explore realistic boundaries of future household developments within the context of consistency with European Population and Labour Force Scenarios.

The age- and sex-specific patterns of the three clusters are illustrated by the age patterns of Italy, the Netherlands and Finland (*figures 1, 2 and 3*).

The Individualisation Scenario

The Individualisation Scenario assumes that long-term trends of individualisation, emancipation and secularisation will lead to higher proportions of people living alone and fewer people living together as a couple. A slowing down of economic growth will to some extent counteract the increase in the number of persons living alone.

Cultural trends accelerate the process of leaving home while economic trends hinder the same process: the proportions of young persons living at the parental home are therefore held almost constant. The relatively low proportions of people living in another household position do not change significantly in the Central and Western and in the Northern clusters. In the Southern cluster, proportions decrease at older ages, because of the diminishing influence of multi-family households.

It was decided to combine the Individualisation Scenario with the Low Population Scenario, which assumes a relatively low fertility, a slower increase in life expectancy and a relatively low international net migration. Differences in life expectancy between men and women will remain more or less constant. These assumptions will most likely be accompanied by an increase in the proportions of people living alone: low fertility is generally associated with a delay in union and family formation and with more young adults living alone. They will generally also go together with more childless couples and more small families at middle ages. Childless couples as well as small families have a much higher likelihood of divorce than couples with (relatively many) children. Future childless couples will more often cohabit than marry. Generally speaking, cohabiting couples are more likely to end up alone than those who are married. Due to a moderate increase in life expectancy and a constant level of excess male mortality there will be more one-person households among those who are 80 years or older.

The Individualisation Scenario is also consistent with the Low Labour Force Scenario in terms of qualitative economic assumptions. The assumption of an unfavourable economic climate in the Low Labour Force Scenario will somewhat counteract the assumed increase in the number one-person households. It will also make the wish of a growing number of young people to live independently from their parents impracticable. Both Scenarios are consistent with the population structure of the Low Population Scenario.

The Family Scenario

In the Family Scenario it is assumed that the slowing down of secularisation, emancipation and individualisation, together with a relatively strong economic growth, will lead to an increase in the number of couples at all ages. In the Family Scenario, the process of leaving home is accelerated due to a relatively strong economic growth. Leaving home earlier leads to earlier union formation and thus to more couples at young ages. The age pattern of living alone at young ages hardly changes. The proportions of middle-aged people living with a partner increase slightly, due to a slowing down of union instability. As a result the proportions of people living alone at these ages stabilise. The relatively low proportions of people living in another household position do not change significantly in the Northern cluster. In the Central and Western and especially in the Southern cluster, proportions decrease at older ages, because of the diminishing influence of multi-family households.

The Family Scenario is consistent with the High Population Scenario and the High Labour Force Scenario. The Family Scenario is therefore coupled with expectations such as high fertility, high life ex-

pectancy and a converging trend in sex-specific life expectancy. These assumptions, together with the assumption that this is a family-oriented scenario, will lead to a relatively large increase in the proportions of persons living with a partner. This increase is further stimulated by the fact that there will be a relatively strong economic growth, according to the High Labour Force Scenario, which is also consistent with the population structure of the High Population Scenario.

The Baseline Scenario

A third household scenario, called Baseline Scenario, is an average of the other two household scenarios. Until 2000, historical trends are largely continued. Its population structure is identical to the Baseline Population Scenario. This household scenario should not be interpreted as the scenario which predicts the most likely future.

Convergence or divergence?

As shown above, differences between Southern Europe and the rest of Europe with respect to children living at the parental home have increased. Trends in living alone show a completely different picture. In a general sense, there are leading, middle-bracket and lagging countries, closely corresponding with the Northern, Central and Western, and Southern European countries. This general picture is supported by a number of studies of household trends and living arrangements in Europe which show that the Northern European countries lead the way with regard to new demographic developments, whereas Southern European countries seem to be lagging behind (Blossfeld et al., 1993; Van de Kaa, 1987). On the other hand, delay of entry into a union is a common trend in most countries.

Empirical analyses provide mixed evidence with regard to the long-standing debate on the issue of convergence or divergence in future household trends in Europe. Broadly speaking, discussions evolve around the question of whether or not country-specific demographic differences in Europe since the mid-1960s will continue to diminish. Demographic changes since the beginning of the 1960s can be understood in terms of the so-called second demographic transition (Lesthaeghe and Van de Kaa, 1987). In principle, the second demographic transition assumes that at some time in the future, all countries will have gone through this transition. Those on favour of convergence argue that the transition will lead to more uniformity in household structures between countries. Opponents of convergence argue that there are many variations in time and space that do not really show a declining trend. They say that differences in household structures between countries cannot solely be interpreted as differences in the rate at which countries follow the basic demographic changes as described by the demographic transition (Kuijsten, 1996).

In the Individualisation Scenario, focusing on developments in trends in living alone, it is assumed that the Northern countries lead the way ahead of the Central and Western countries, which in turn are followed by the Southern countries. In the Family Scenario, it is assumed that differences between the various countries remain more or less stable over time. Within the clusters, future trends will differ between the countries to a certain degree, due to different population structures.

No time series are generally available for the institutional population, nor are there sufficient other sources of information. For these reasons (estimated) age profiles of the institutional populations are assumed to be constant over the period 1995-2025.

Figure 1. Population in Italy by sex, age and household position in 1995 and 2025, as percentages of the population in private households

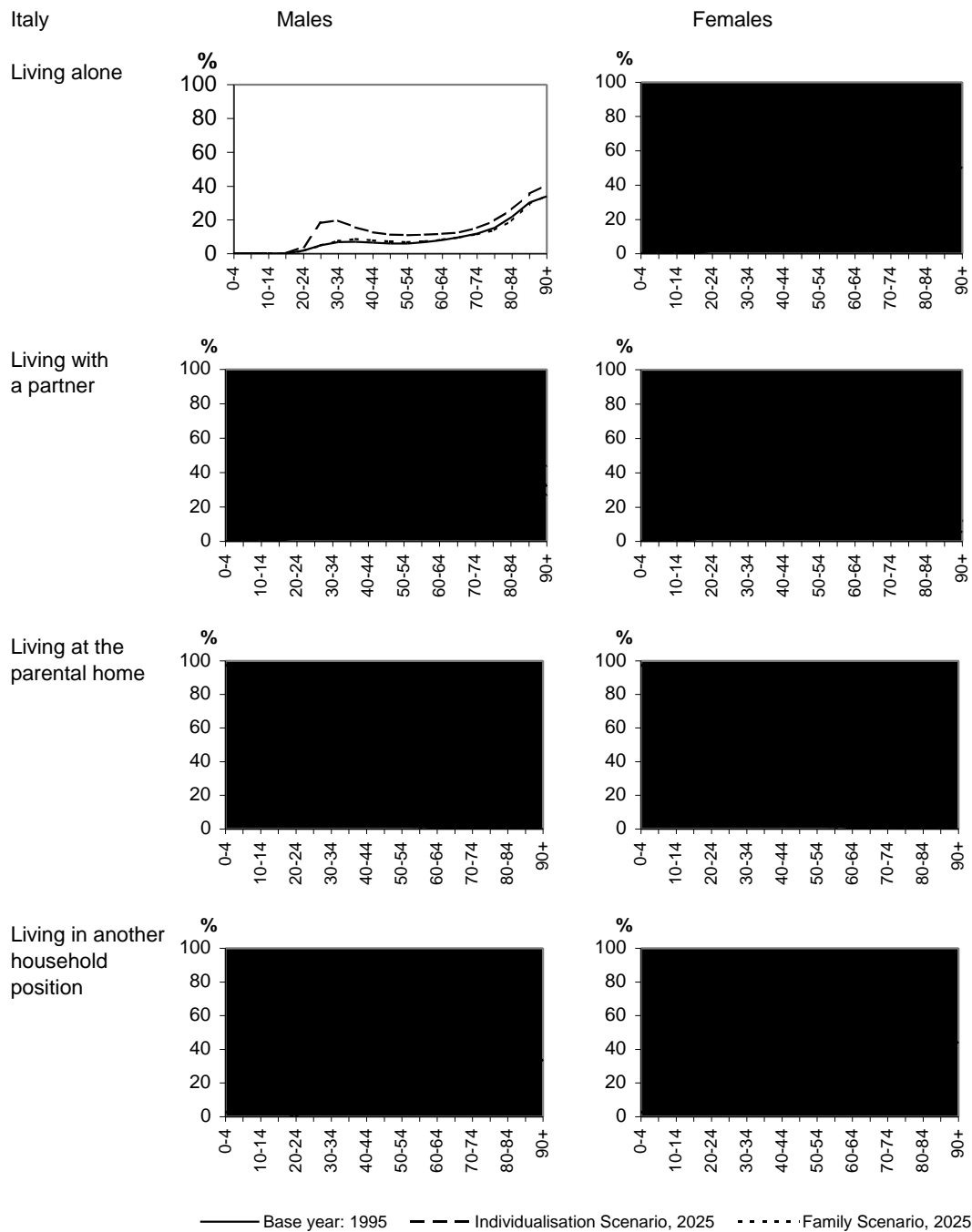


Figure 2. Population in the Netherlands by sex, age and household position in 1995 and 2025, as percentages of the population in private households

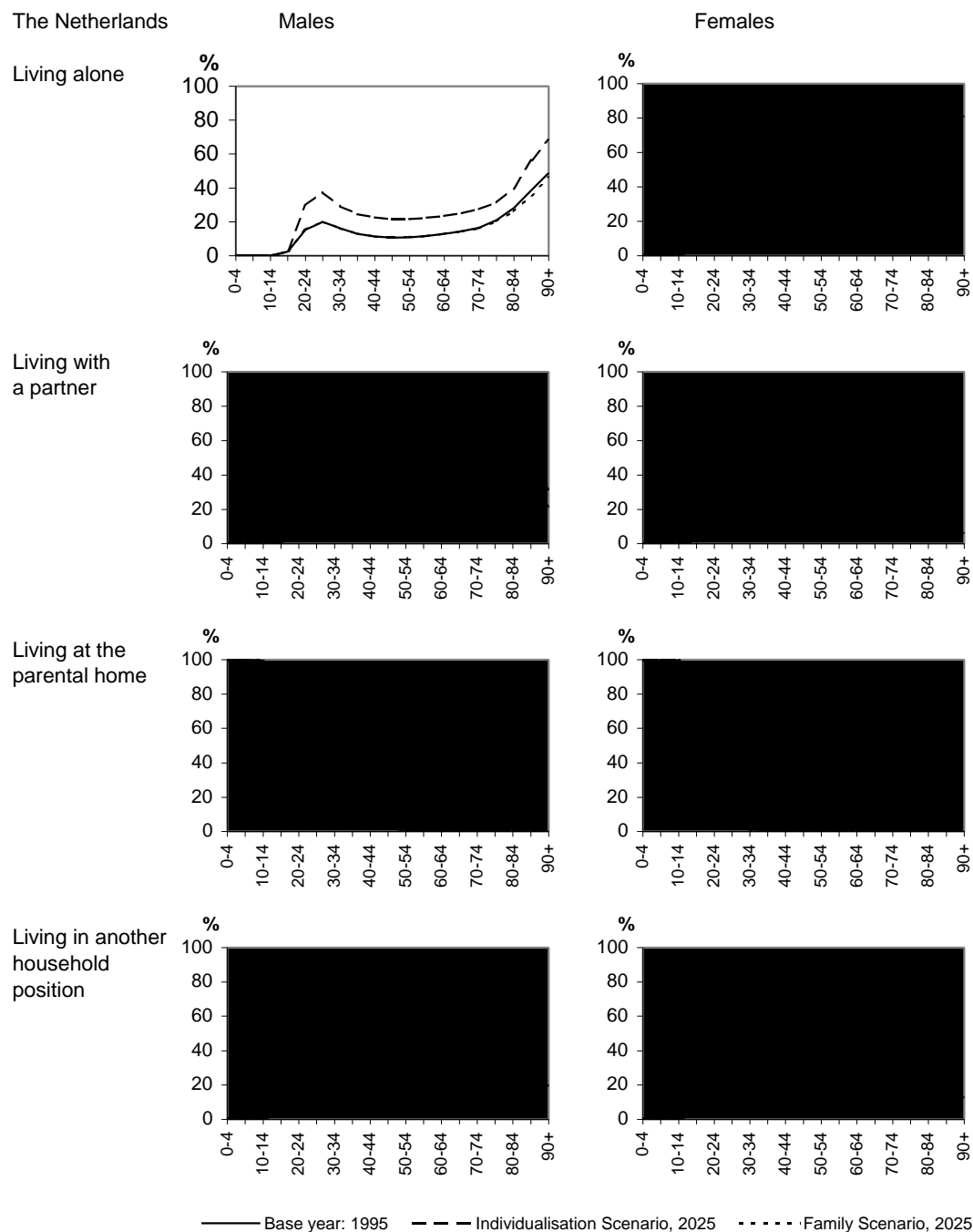
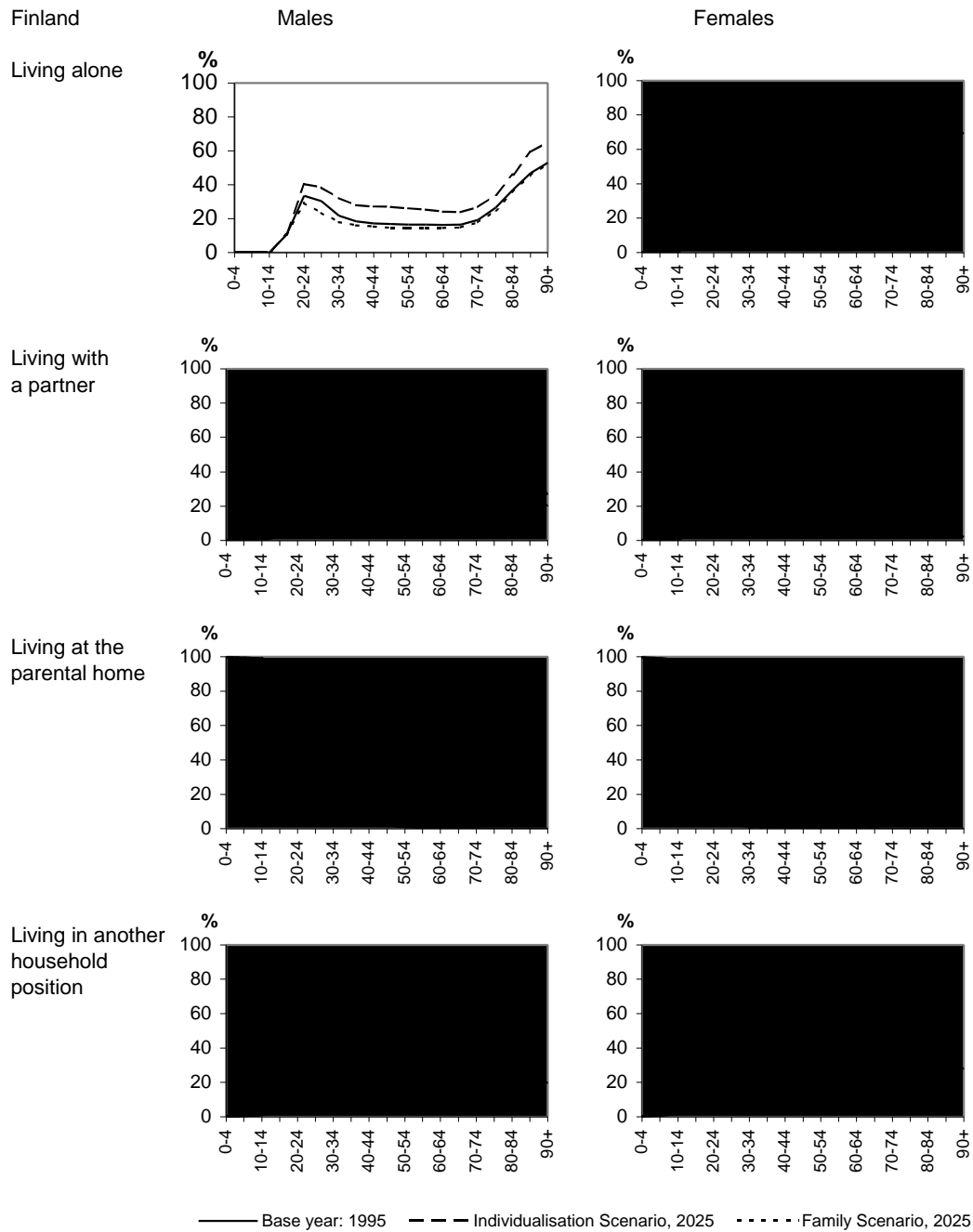


Figure 3. Population in Finland by sex, age and household position in 1995 and 2025, as percentages of the population in private households



5. Main results of the scenarios

All three scenarios predict an increasing institutional population, varying from 6.0 to 7.5 million in 2025 for the European Union. As the proportions of persons in institutional households are held constant over time, this is a consequence of the ageing of the population. This fact emphasises the importance of the underlying Population Scenarios for the outcomes of the different Household Scenarios.

The Individualisation Scenario projects a declining population in private households, from about 366 million in 1995 to 352 million in 2025. This is mainly the result of the combination with the Low Population Scenario, which predicts a declining overall population. The number of children living with their parents declines from 118 to 86 million in 2025, despite the assumption that the proportion of children living at home remains more or less constant (*table 5*). The number of couples as well as the number of persons in other household positions decline as well. In contrast, the number of persons living alone increases from 42 to 71 million. In 2025, almost one out of every five persons lives alone, against only one out of nine today. Consequently, the average household size declines from about 2.5 in 1995 to 2.1 in 2025. The number of households increases from 148 to 172 million in 2025.

Even in the Family Scenario, in which it is assumed that the proportions of persons in one-person households will remain stable, the number of persons living alone increases to almost 46 million in 2025. This increase is mainly due to the growing number of people, in particular the elderly people. The growing number of persons living with a partner, from 180 to 233 million in 2025, is the result of the decline in the age at union formation together with a slowing down in the increase in divorce rates, a higher life expectancy of men and women and a growing population. Both the number of persons living at the parental home and the number of persons living in another type of household decline. As a result of these trends, the number of private households grows by 30 million in the next three decades, while the average household size decreases to about 2.4.

The Baseline Scenario figures for the EU in 2025 are 388 million for the total population and 382 million for the private population. The number of persons living alone rises to 60 million in 2025. Whereas the number of persons living with a partner increases as well, the number of children living at home and the number of persons living in another type of household decline. Again, the number of private households will increase to 175 million in 2025, whereas the average household size will decrease to 2.2 in 2025.

Figures 4, 5 and 6 show the level of convergence and divergence in the proportions of persons living alone between countries. *Figure 4* shows proportions of persons living alone in 1995. The differences between the clusters are clearly visible. The Individualisation Scenario assumes convergence in household structures, in particular living alone. In most countries more than 16 per cent of the population lives alone in 2025, except in the Southern European countries (*figure 5*). On the contrary, *figure 6* shows that no convergence is assumed in the Family Scenario. The proportions of persons living alone are very similar to the proportions observed in 1995, which means that existing differences between countries will persist.

Developments in the numbers of people by household position differ between men and women and between age groups (*table 6*). In all scenarios and countries, the number of men living with a partner is similar to the number of women living with a partner.

The numbers of men and women living alone in the EU both increase by about 15 million until 2025 in the Individualisation Scenario. The increase in absolute numbers is, for both sexes, largest for the age group 20-64 years. The relative increase among men, however, is largest for those in the age group 65-79 years.

The Family Scenario projects an increase in the number of men living alone and a stabilisation of the number of women living alone. The increase for men takes place in all age-groups, whereas an increase for women only occurs among those younger than 20 and older than 80 years. Among 65-79 year old women a relatively large decline takes place, which is the result of the increase in the number of women living with a partner.

The Individualisation Scenario projects a decline in numbers of persons living with a partner in 2025, caused by decreasing numbers of these people aged between 20 and 65 years. There is, however, an increase in the number of people older than 65 years, especially for women.

In the Family Scenario the total number of men and women living with a partner increases by 30 % to about 233 million in 2025. The assumption of union formation at an earlier age in the Family Scenario leads to an increasing number of people younger than 20 years living with a partner. The increasing numbers for the age groups 20-64 years and 65-79 years are the result of increasing population numbers and increasing proportions of people, especially women, living with a partner.

It has been assumed that the majority of people younger than 20 years live at the parental home. For this age group the number living at home decreases in the Individualisation Scenario and the Baseline Scenario, whereas it increases in the Family Scenario. The decrease in the Individualisation Scenario is the result of low fertility leading to smaller new birth cohorts together with a stabilisation or a small decrease in the proportions of persons living at the parental home. The increase in the Family Scenario is due to a relatively high fertility, despite the assumed decrease in the proportions of people living at the parental home. The number of people of 20 years or older living at the parental home falls in all three scenarios.

The numbers of people in other household positions are comparatively small. These numbers usually decrease for men and for women. They increase, however, for men of 65 years or older. In all three scenarios fewer women live in another household position. Fewer elderly women, in particular, are members of a multi-family household.

Table 5. Number of persons by household position; three scenarios.

	1995	2010			2025		
		Individualisation Scenario	Baseline Scenario	Family Scenario	Individualisation Scenario	Baseline Scenario	Family Scenario
x 1 000 000							
Number of persons living alone							
EU	42.0	62.6	51.0	38.9	71.3	59.4	45.5
Greece	0.8	1.3	1.0	0.8	1.4	1.2	0.9
Italy	4.6	6.6	5.5	4.4	7.3	6.2	4.9
Portugal	0.5	1.0	0.7	0.3	1.3	0.9	0.5
Spain	1.5	4.0	2.6	1.3	5.3	3.7	2.0
Austria	0.9	1.4	1.1	0.8	1.6	1.3	0.9
Belgium	1.1	1.8	1.4	1.0	2.1	1.7	1.2
France	7.0	10.9	8.9	6.8	12.7	10.6	8.1
Germany	12.7	16.8	14.2	11.5	17.8	15.4	12.5
Ireland	0.3	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.4
Luxembourg	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.03	0.09	0.07	0.04
The Netherlands	2.0	2.9	2.4	1.8	3.5	3.0	2.3
United Kingdom	7.1	10.7	8.7	6.7	12.4	10.4	8.0
Denmark	1.1	1.3	1.1	0.9	1.4	1.2	1.0
Finland	0.9	1.2	1.0	0.8	1.3	1.1	0.9
Sweden	1.7	2.2	1.9	1.6	2.4	2.1	1.8
Number of persons living with a partner							
EU	179.5	175.5	195.0	215.4	172.8	201.2	232.7
Greece	5.1	5.3	5.7	6.2	5.4	6.1	6.9
Italy	26.1	26.3	28.6	30.9	26.0	29.3	32.8
Portugal	4.6	4.7	5.2	5.8	4.8	5.6	6.5
Spain	17.9	18.6	20.6	22.8	18.6	21.4	24.6
Austria	3.7	3.7	4.1	4.5	3.7	4.3	5.1
Belgium	4.7	4.2	4.8	5.4	4.3	5.1	6.0
France	28.5	27.9	30.9	33.9	27.7	32.0	36.7
Germany	41.6	40.1	45.0	50.2	38.1	45.1	53.1
Ireland	1.4	1.4	1.6	1.7	1.4	1.7	2.0
Luxembourg	0.20	0.20	0.23	0.26	0.20	0.25	0.31
The Netherlands	8.1	7.9	8.8	9.7	7.7	9.2	10.7
United Kingdom	28.4	26.5	29.7	33.1	26.3	31.0	36.1
Denmark	2.5	2.4	2.7	3.0	2.3	2.8	3.3
Finland	2.4	2.3	2.5	2.8	2.2	2.6	3.0
Sweden	4.3	4.1	4.5	5.1	4.0	4.8	5.7

Table 5. (continued)

	1995	2010			2025		
		Individualisation Scenario	Baseline Scenario	Family Scenario	Individualisation Scenario	Baseline Scenario	Family Scenario
x 1 000 000							
Number of persons living at parental home							
EU	118.4	103.7	108.1	114.5	85.6	96.9	111.7
Greece	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.5	2.7	3.1	3.4
Italy	20.4	16.6	17.1	17.7	12.8	14.3	16.0
Portugal	3.8	3.3	3.4	3.5	2.8	3.1	3.4
Spain	15.9	13.0	13.4	14.2	10.2	11.5	13.3
Austria	2.5	2.2	2.3	2.5	1.8	2.1	2.5
Belgium	2.9	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.2	2.6	2.9
France	18.1	16.4	17.1	18.3	14.1	16.0	18.6
Germany	22.2	20.0	20.9	22.5	16.4	18.6	21.9
Ireland	1.5	1.2	1.3	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.4
Luxembourg	0.13	0.13	0.14	0.15	0.11	0.14	0.17
The Netherlands	4.6	4.2	4.6	4.8	3.6	4.4	4.9
United Kingdom	17.6	16.1	16.5	17.7	13.9	15.2	17.7
Denmark	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.1	1.3	1.5
Finland	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.2	1.4
Sweden	2.4	2.2	2.4	2.5	1.9	2.3	2.7
Number of persons living in other household positions							
EU	26.4	24.7	25.4	26.1	22.2	23.9	25.8
Greece	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.7
Italy	4.9	4.5	5.0	5.4	3.7	4.3	5.0
Portugal	1.0	0.8	0.9	1.0	0.7	0.8	1.0
Spain	3.7	3.2	3.4	3.7	2.6	3.1	3.6
Austria	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.6	0.7	0.8
Belgium	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.0	1.1	1.2
France	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.3	3.2	3.3	3.5
Germany	4.2	3.9	3.8	3.6	4.0	4.0	3.9
Ireland	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.5
Luxembourg	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.04	0.05
The Netherlands	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
United Kingdom	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.2	4.1	4.0	4.0
Denmark	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2
Finland	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.5
Sweden	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4

Figure 4. Proportions (in %) of persons living alone in the EU, 1995 (observations)

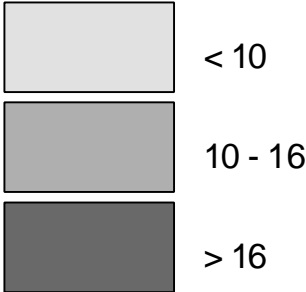
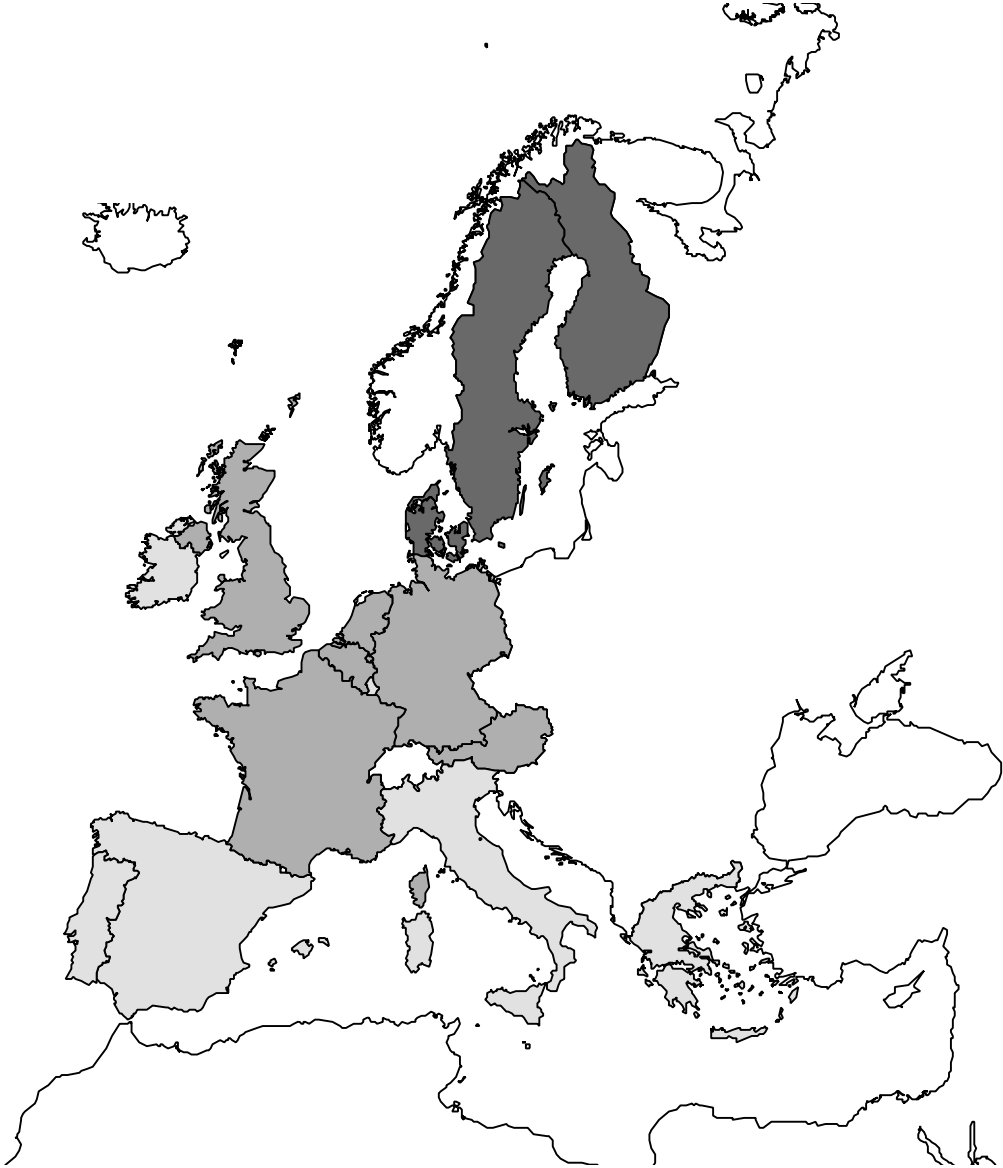


Figure 5. Proportions (in %) of persons living alone in the EU, Individualisation Scenario, 2025

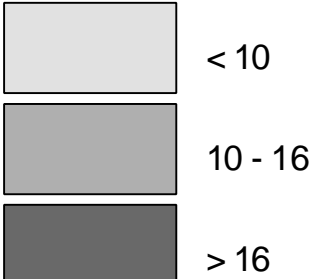


Figure 6. Proportions (in %) of persons living alone in the EU, Family Scenario, 2025

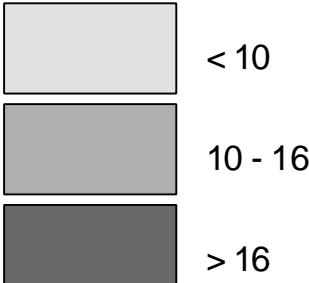
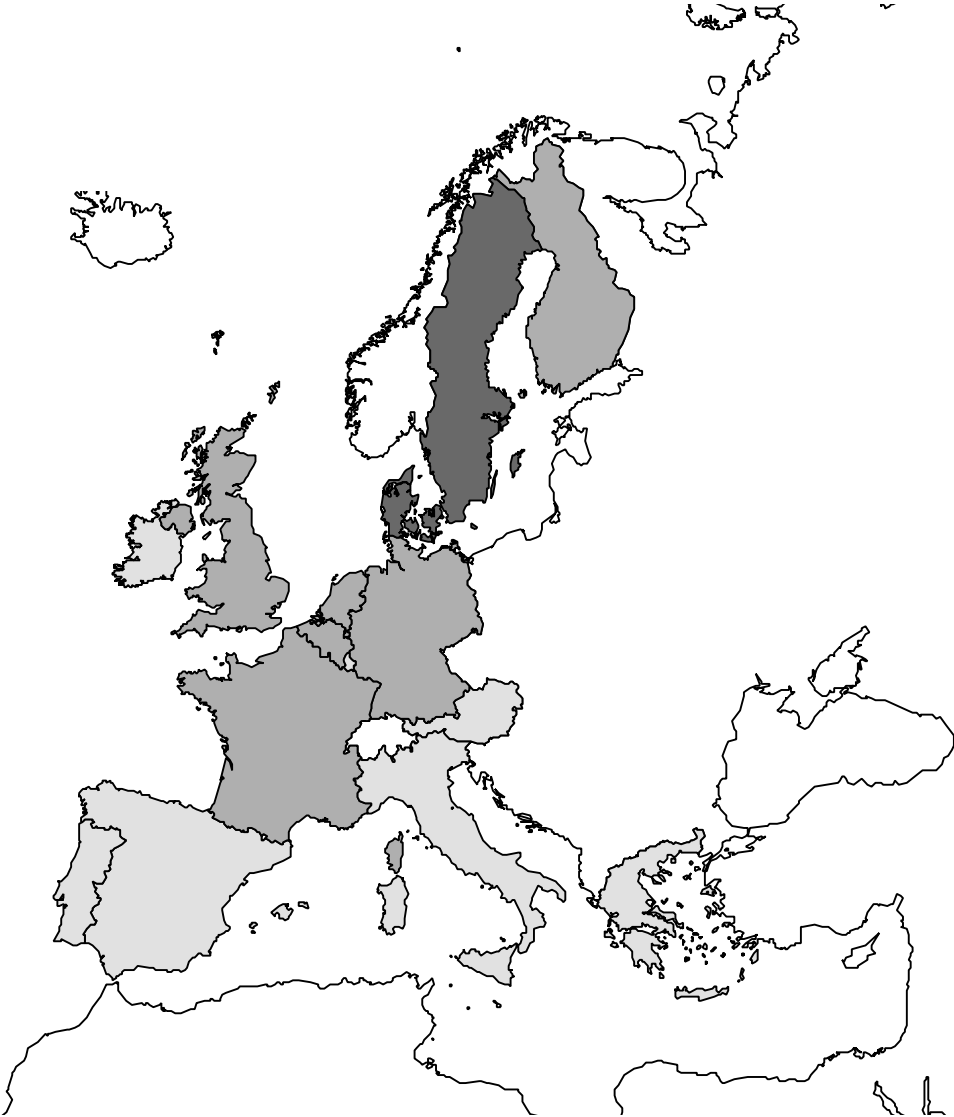


Table 6. Number of persons in the EU (in millions) by sex, age and household position; three scenarios.

		1995		Individualisation Scenario, 2025		Baseline Scenario, 2025		Family Scenario, 2025	
		Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Alone	0-19	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.4	0.2	0.3
	20-64	12.6	10.7	23.3	19.9	18.5	15.0	13.1	9.6
	65-79	2.5	9.3	6.0	11.8	5.2	10.1	4.1	8.0
	80+	1.2	5.3	2.4	7.2	2.6	7.5	2.6	7.5
	Total	16.5	25.5	31.9	39.4	26.5	33.0	20.0	25.4
With partner	0-19	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.4	1.0
	20-64	73.2	76.6	64.7	67.3	74.8	77.0	86.1	88.0
	65-79	14.0	11.5	18.5	16.7	21.3	19.6	24.0	22.5
	80+	2.4	1.3	3.2	2.3	4.5	3.4	6.1	4.7
	Total	89.8	89.7	86.4	86.3	100.7	100.5	116.5	116.2
At parental home	0-19	43.7	41.3	31.9	30.2	38.2	36.0	46.3	43.5
	20-64	20.1	13.3	14.2	9.2	14.1	8.6	13.9	7.9
	65-79	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	80+	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Total	63.8	54.6	46.2	39.4	52.3	44.6	60.3	51.4
Other	0-19	1.1	1.1	0.8	0.8	1.0	0.9	1.2	1.1
	20-64	6.1	10.9	5.1	9.0	5.5	9.2	6.0	9.4
	65-79	1.2	3.3	1.4	2.9	1.6	2.9	1.8	3.0
	80+	0.6	2.2	0.7	1.6	0.9	1.9	1.1	2.2
	Total	9.0	17.5	8.0	14.2	8.9	15.0	10.0	15.8

Notes:

¹⁾ For several reasons this first set of internationally consistent household scenarios should be used with caution. First, due to the use of sample survey data (LFS), the base population structure is subject to measurement errors (see also Alders and Manting, 1998a). Second, most countries of the European Union have little or no experience with household projections, and therefore our knowledge on their errors is limited. Third, first comparisons with observed trends indicate that the Family Scenario might underestimate the number of one-person households in the short run.

²⁾ Due to the late arrival of Swedish data, no thorough analyses could be made for Sweden. The data for Sweden arrived in July 1998 when the project was already finished. For this reason there is no extensive assessment of the data source, no description of recent trends in household positions in Sweden and no trend projection up to 2000 for the case of Sweden. It has been decided to include scenarios for Sweden, in order to give a complete picture of the future development in numbers and types of households for the whole European Union instead of for the European Union without Sweden.

Household figures for the base year are estimated from the EU-regulated 1995/1996 Labour Force Surveys. These Eurostat data sets do not always correspond exactly with the data published by the countries. This is due to various aspects, such as different weighing procedures, different kinds of data subsets, mid-year figures instead of figures for 1 January, and possibly differing definitions.

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