



**Central Statistics Office**  
An Phríomh-Oifig Staidrimh

**Press Statement**  
Preas Ráiteas

**Population and Labour Force Projections, 2006-2036**

**Rapid rise in population projected to continue**

Ireland's population, which only recently passed the 4 million mark, is expected to top 5 million within the next fifteen years if current fertility, mortality and migration patterns continue. This can be seen from a report on population and labour force projections published today by the CSO. However, if net immigration continues at more moderate levels than those experienced in recent years it will be 2026 at the earliest before the 5 million figure is reached.

*Population and Labour Force Projections 2006 – 2036* presents population projections from 2006 to 2036 and Labour Force projections from 2006 to 2016.

**Old persons to account for one fifth of population in 2036**

The CSO publication reveals that old persons (those aged 65 years and over) will account for one fifth of the population by 2036 under all combinations of assumptions chosen. This compares with 11 per cent in 2001. The projections show more than 1.1 million old people in 2036 compared with 430,000 in 2001.

The number of "oldest old" persons (those aged 80 years and over) is projected to more than treble from a 2001 level of 98,000 to about 320,000 in 2036.

**Annual number of births to increase for rest of decade**

The annual number of births will continue to grow up to 2011 under all assumptions with the upward growth path being maintained up to 2016 for the high migration and high fertility assumptions. All the projection assumptions show annual births decreasing in the period 2016-2031, after which a small recovery in the number of births will take place.

Under the high migration and high fertility assumptions, the number of young people (aged 14 years and under) will increase from its 2001 level of 828,000 to reach over 1 million by 2016 – on a par with the peak 1981 level. By 2036, the number of young people is projected to be in the range of 750,000 to over 1 million.

The number of children of primary school-going age is projected to reach over half a million under all combinations of assumptions by 2016 – up from 434,000 in 2001.

The number of children of secondary school-going age will decline from its 2001 level of 375,000 over the next few years, with a recovery by 2016, when the numbers will be about 360,000.

More /...

## Labour Force of nearly 2.4 million by 2016

The labour force is projected to increase from its 2004 level of 1.92 million to reach nearly 2.4 million by 2016, assuming that current rates of migration continue. This would represent an average annual gain of 38,000 persons.

Over two-thirds of the projected change in the labour force will result from demographic changes rather than from labour force participation factors.

The percentage of women in the labour force, which currently stands at 42 per cent, is projected to increase to 44 per cent by 2016.

### Editor's note

The following is a summary of assumptions underlying the projections:

- ◆ The high fertility assumption (F1) envisages the total fertility (TFR), i.e. the average number of children per woman, settling at 2. The medium assumption (F2) would see a decline in the TFR from its current level of 1.98 to 1.85 by 2011, remaining constant thereafter, while for the low fertility assumption (F3) the TFR would fall to 1.7 by 2011.
- ◆ Both migration assumptions envisage strong net inward migration continuing in the short term. In the case of M1 the decline thereafter will be gradual, while for M2 it will be more marked.
- ◆ Life expectancy is assumed to increase from its current level of 75.1 years for males to 82.5 years by 2036. The corresponding figures for females are 80.3 and 86.9 years.
- ◆ The participation rates of married females in the labour force are projected to continue to rise.

The assumptions used in the population and labour force projections were agreed by a broadly based expert group.

### For copies of the publication contact:

Central Statistics Office, Information Section, Skehard Road, Cork

or

Government Publications Sales Office, Sun Alliance House, Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

Price: €15.00

Copies can also be downloaded from the CSO website (see below).

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*15 December 2004*

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