THE POPULATION PYRAMID OF FRANCE AND THE EUROPEAN UNION IN 2003

Reading the graph
On this graph, the ages are given along the central vertical axis. Males are represented on the left-hand side, and females on the right. The length of each bar for each age indicates the proportion of the total population made up by males or females of that age. For example, baby boys aged below one represent 0.65% of the total French population in 2003.

Here, two pyramids are superimposed: that of France and that of the 25 countries of the European Union on the same date, represented by a pink line. The age-sex structures of the two populations can thus be compared.

Higher fertility in France
The general shape of the French pyramid in 2003 is marked by the history of the twentieth century: a deficit of births during the First World War, a baby boom from 1946 to 1973, and a relatively stable annual number of births over the last 30 years. The numbers of males and females are practically equal, except at the oldest ages, when women outnumber men because they live longer.

Compared with the European Union as a whole, represented in pink, France is characterized by a larger relative share of young people up to age 22. Children below one represent 1.3% of the population (0.65% + 0.65%), compared with just 1.0% for EU-25.

Sources
This graph is taken from issue 398 of Population & Societies devoted to the extended European Union. Alain Monnier presents the population pyramids of the 25 EU members in 2003, and the changes resulting from successive enlargements. Population sizes are published by the Statistical Office of the European Communities, Eurostat, from information supplied by member states. The national statistical offices enumerate the population using registers or general censuses, and adjustments are made to take account of intercensal population movements, i.e. births, deaths and migration flows.

To find out more
- Alain Monnier, The enlarged European Union : fifteen + ten = 455, Population & Societies, 398, February 2004
- Eurostat website : http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/