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## Population ageing and unbalanced population development

Population ageing has emerged as one of the essential problems facing the developed countries. Japan is leading the statistics at 28 percent of its population being aged 65 and above, followed by Italy (23%), Finland (21.9%), Portugal and Greece (both 21.8%) in the world.

Population ageing and population growth affect the demand of health workers in the world. According to the United Nations Secretary-General High-Level Commission on Health Employment and Economic Growth, the world faces a global shortage of health workers. The demand for health workers is expected to increase, with around 40 million new health worker jobs created by 2030, particularly in high- and middle-income countries. According to the Commission, this demand is unequal since, despite the growth in jobs, there will be a projected shortage of 18 million health workers to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in low- and lower middle income countries.

As Finland is ranked, in relative terms, third of the countries in the world in ageing population, there are, however, remarkable differences at the regional level within the country. Table 1 is showing the demographic dependency ratio based on the lowest and highest shares of population in the top ten municipalities, in relation to other demographic indicators in Finland in 2020. The demographic dependency ratio is a measure of the number of dependents aged 0–14 and

65 and over, compared with the total population aged 15–64. This demographic indicator gives insight into the number of children and the amount of the elderly population, i.e. non-working population, compared with the number of those of working age.

There are municipalities whose demographic dependency ratio is around a half of those of the municipalities where it is the highest. In ten municipalities, including Helsinki, the capital of Finland, and many growth centers around the country, the share of 65 years old and older is clearly lower than in many rural municipalities. In several municipalities, over 40 percent of the population is classified as elderly. This is not a healthy age structure for the future development of remarkably aged municipalities. A healthy age structure is closely connected to the vitality of the region and to attracting new residents.

Natural population change, migration in terms of net country-internal migration and net international migration are also positive for many of the municipalities with a low dependency ratio. At the other extreme, there are municipalities for which many of these indicators are negative or population growth is very low. Finally, the share of population with a foreign background is the highest in growth centers and lowest in the rural municipalities. International migration is thus not compensating the loss of population with other demographic factors in these rural municipalities.

Population development plays out differently throughout Finland as the analysis indicates: many centers are flourishing, but at same time, rural municipalities face vulnerabilities. In regional development, one dimension of vulnerability can increase the likelihood for others. In other words, various indicators may lead to an accumulation of vulnerabilities, which poses distinct challenges for many regions not only in Finland, but in other European countries as well.

## Sources

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Table 1. Demographic dependency ratio based on the lowest and highest values in the top ten municipalities, in relation to other demographic indicators in Finland in 2020 (Data: Statistics Finland).

Municipalities	Demographic dependency ratio	65+, %	Natural population change	Net migration in country-internal migration	Net international migration	Foreign background persons, %
Helsinki	46,5	17,4	1293	-1044	2928	16,9
Tampere	48,2	19,2	117	2094	680	8,2
Vantaa	48,6	15,5	858	1039	1636	22,0
Turku	50,3	20,9	-85	659	849	12,6
Espoo	51,0	15,0	1384	-602	2379	19,1
Jyväskylä	51,1	18,6	209	378	423	5,5
Oulu	51,6	16,6	722	619	537	4,6
Vaasa	55,3	20,6	-13	-256	172	9,6
Järvenpää	55,5	18,9	127	539	90	6,4
Sipoo	55,7	17,8	8	457	52	6,0
Puumala	103,3	44,0	-42	30	-2	2,1
Parikkala	103,8	40,8	-70	-14	5	2,3
Pielavesi	104,5	37,6	-54	-17	1	1,9
Padasjoki	105,2	41,3	-39	-3	9	1,6
Vesanto	106,3	42,4	-41	0	-1	1,7
Sysmä	106,4	43,2	-49	18	3	1,8
Hailuoto	106,8	38,9	-14	3	2	1,7
Kuhmoinen	108,2	43,9	-47	5	-2	1,1
Kivijärvi	108,5	38,8	-13	21	3	1,4
Kaskinen	112,3	41,7	-6	7	31	11,1
Finland	61,9	22,7	-9025	296852*	17814	8,0

\*the number of total country internal migration between municipalities in Finland