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ON SWABIAN HEDONISM
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The people of Europe, already the oldest in the world, are getting older. The median age of the EU-28's population was 42.6 years in 2016. By comparison, in the United States it is 37.9 and in Niger only 15.3.

Between 2001 and 2016, the median age in the EU increased by 4.3 years. Put another way, Europe's median age increased by more than three and a half months per year of that period. But this disguises significant variation. Germany's median age, at 45.8 years, is almost ten years more than Ireland's, which currently stands at 36.4. At 37, an Irishman will have more compatriots younger than him than he does older, while his German cousin will need to wait until he's 46 for the same sensation.

Europe is ageing in part because people are living longer. A German born in 1980 could expect to live until 73, but one born in 2015 should pass 80. Life expectancy for all Europeans increased by 2.9 years between 2001 and 2016, though there is wide variation in life expectancy between countries. A man born in Sweden can expect to live 11 years longer than one born in Lithuania (80.4 and 69.2 years respectively).

Women live longer than men. The UK has one of the lowest gender gaps in life expectancy at birth in the EU, with females only expected to live for 3.6 years longer than males. In Lithuania females are expected to outlast males by ten and a half years.

Childhood mortality has declined because of the development of vaccines and other medical technologies, improved public health systems, and better nutrition. For example, measles, which in 1915 was the leading cause of death in children, killed only three people in the UK between 2001 and 2013. Life has also become safer in other ways. In rich countries, interstate war has become negligible as a contributor to mortality. Cars have also become less deadly: Between 1955 and 1995, traffic accidents were the leading killer of children in Britain. By 2015 they weren't in the top ten (replaced by cancer as the most frequent cause of death).

As people are dying less from accidents, violence and epidemics, 'old age' diseases are becoming the leading causes of mortality. Alzheimer's disease and dementia first made it into the top 10 causes of death in the UK in 2015. However, the biggest factor in demographic change has been a decline in birth rates. This has resulted in a 'demographic bulge', the clearest example of which is the 'baby boomer' generation. There may be many reasons for this, including shifting cultural norms, an increase in living standards, rising education costs, or even a decrease in sperm counts (which have halved in the past forty years in Western countries, though the link between this and lower fertility is not yet clear).

The proportion of the population over 65 is increasing in every EU state, EFTA member and candidate country. By 2080, the share of those over eighty years old is expected to more than double, from 5.4% to 12.7% of the population. At this point over-65s will account for almost a third of the total population (29.1% compared with 19.2% in 2016). In Germany's 2017 Bundestag elections, 22 million voters were older than 60, which represented more than a third of the electorate. In 2040 this could exceed 40% according to these same forecasts.

Increased longevity has meant a major shift in the proportion of working age people (15 to 64 years old) to dependents, particularly retirees, with significant implications for the provision of public services. At 13.2%, Germany has the lowest number of young people as a proportion of population in the EU (by comparison Ireland, the highest, has 21.9%). Concurrently, it has the third highest proportion of old people (21.1%), behind Italy and Greece.

This confluence is a headache for Germany's policy makers, only improved marginally by a recent uptick in births or the resettlement of refugees from Syria.

The age dependency ratio is a measure of the ratio of the working age population to dependents (younger and older people). While in the EU as a whole there are approximately 4 working age people to every adult over 65, in Germany it is closer to 3. Across Europe this is expected to drop to less than 2 by 2080. At that point, combining the young and old age ratios into a

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total dependency ratio, Europe is projected to have less than 1.3 working age adults for every dependent person, a decrease from 2 now.

Since 2015, more people have been dying each year in Europe than are being born, in fact last year more children were born in Nigeria than in the EU-28 combined. Overall population growth, therefore, is caused in some part by immigration. While more people are entering the EU-28 than leaving, free movement has meant that some countries are experiencing population decline as people move within the union. For example, Poland is projected to lose 40% of its working age population by 2060. However, across the continent, migration acts as a countervailing trend in the statistics, because migrants tend to be younger than the population as a whole. Indeed, in 2015 approximately 6.8% of the population had been born outside of the European Union, though this is smaller than in the United States (14.5%), Canada (21.8%) and Australia (28.2%).

Growing older will change Europe's place in the world. In 1960, 13.5% of the world's population lived in what are now the twenty eight countries of the European Union. By 2015 this had shrunk to 6.9% and will decline further to 5.1% by 2060. By comparison, with a median age of 19.7, Africa's share of world population will increase from 13% in 2012 to 24% by 2050. Then the median age of the continent will still be around 25 years old (in Germany it is expected to be nearly double that figure).

Some of the effects of an ageing population can be seen in Japan, which is the oldest of any large country. In 2015, more than ten thousand dementia sufferers went missing. Adult diapers now outsell those of infants. There are proposals to raise the retirement age to 75, and under new proposals advanced by a joint committee of the Japan Gerontological Society and the Japan Geriatrics Society, people aged 65-74 would be classified as pre-old age and those over 75 would be in the old age category. People who have passed their 90th birthday would be described as "super-old".

The sum of human experience is growing as the world gets older and lives longer. By the end of this century the average person will be a little over 42 years old, compared with around 30 now. The world's population will have stabilised at just over 10 billion and those people will have accumulated 430 billion years of human experience between them. Given the challenges the planet may be facing by then, it might be hoped such experience brings them wisdom as well.

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Tanya Leighton is very pleased to announce *On Swabian Hedonism*, Oliver Osborne's first solo exhibition at the gallery. He will present a group of new paintings that include elements of figuration, appropriation and abstraction. These new paintings have been made using oil, silkscreen, and embroidery. The imagery in the show has been drawn from a variety of sources, including a history of a 19th century mineral bath in Stuttgart, a comic co-created by the American cartoonists Brant Parker and Johnny Hart, and a selection of motifs that recur in Osborne's work such as bread, pregnancy, apples and a young Angela Merkel.

Oliver Osborne (b. 1985, Edinburgh) received a BA in Fine Arts from Chelsea College of Art and a postgraduate Diploma from the Royal Academy Schools, London. Forthcoming and recent solo exhibitions include; Bonner Kunstverein, Bonn (2018); Peles Empire, Berlin (2016); Vilma Gold, London (2016); Gió Marconi, Milan (2015); Catherine Bastide, Brussels (2015). Other recent exhibitions include: *Plant Scenery of the World*, Inverleith House, Edinburgh (2017); *Home is not a place*, German Embassy, London (2017); *The Written Trace*, Paul Kasmin, New York (2015); *The Funnies*, MOT International, Brussels (2015); *The Go Between*, Museo di Capodimonte, Naples and Sprovieri, London (2014); *Everything Falls Faster Than An Anvil*, Pace Gallery, London (2014); *Bloomberg New Contemporaries*, ICA, London (2012). He lives and works in Berlin.