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Postponement of childbearing and low fertility in Europe

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Changing fertility conditions in Europe, postponement of childbearing and lengthening periods of lowest-low fertility (Kohler et al., 2002) have motivated scholars to understand the processes involved. Research on intentions intensified when, after an accurate description of processes at the societal (macro) level, interest then focused on describing and understanding individual (micro) level behaviour and fertility decision-making. The findings of these approaches help us to understand the extent to which actual levels of fertility are intended and whether intentions are signalling possible f Is lowest-low fertility explained by the postponement of childbearing? * In 2001, more than half of Europe's population lived in countries with a total fertility rate (TFR) at or below 1.3. Using the adjusted TFR proposed by Bongaarts and Feeney, which takes into account the effects of the ongoing fertility postponement, changes the European fertility map considerably. All 27 countries analyzed had adjusted TFRs in 1995-2000 above 1.4. Thus, the "lowest-low" fertility in Europe may be interpreted as a temporary consequence of the increasing age at motherhood. However, substantial regional differences exist. The determinants of low fertility in Europe By Hans-Peter Kohler. Europe's looming population bust By David E. Bloom, David Canning. Low fertility, low modern contraceptive prevalence and the high number of abortions - the case of Serbia By Mirjana Rašević, Katarina Sedlecki. Defending the family - the Latvian experience By Linda Anderson. Sexual and reproductive health in low fertility countries By Radosveta Stamenkova, Todor Chernev. The postponement of births, TFRs under-estimate somewhat the completed fertility that will be reached by the cohorts currently in childbearing ages. The map in figure 2 presents the mean ages of mothers at first birth in Europe around 2003, and shows the extent of postponement in the timing of parenthood.