

POPULATION AND HOUSEHOLDS

SOCIOECO 2

Households are key actors in the dynamics of production and consumption. By living in houses, travelling and consuming goods and services, they exert multiple pressures on natural environments, fossil energy resources, raw materials and water. In addition, their activities generate waste and various types of discharges and emissions (waste water, atmospheric emissions, etc.).

An increasing number of smaller households

In 2015, Wallonia had 3,589,744 inhabitants and 1,548,312 households. The number of private households is growing faster than the population: +16.4% versus + 8.4% between 1995 and 2015. The average size of private households is therefore gradually decreasing: over the same period, it fell from 2.49 to 2.32 inhabitants/household (i.e. a decrease of 6.9%). As in most industrialised countries, this decrease is due to:

- the increase in the number of one-person households and family units made up of one adult with children (life choices, late marriage, separations, etc.);
- the ageing of the population, with more older people living alone;
- the reduction in the number of children per family.

Annual growth set to slow significantly

In the long term¹, the Walloon population will increase by 15.6% by 2060 compared to 2015, which corresponds to an average annual growth rate of 0.41% over the period 2015-2030 and 0.28% over the period 2030-2060, whereas this was 0.47% over the period 2000-2015. For its part, the number of Walloon households will increase by 24.2% between now and 2060, with an average annual growth rate of 0.65% over the period 2015-2030 and 0.40% over the period

2030-2060, versus 0.77% over the period 2000-2015. The average size of private households will therefore continue to reduce.

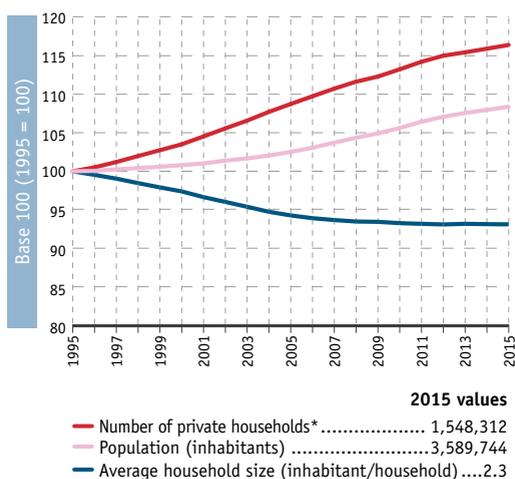
Household pressures on the environment: complex relationships

The increase in the number of households, combined with the decrease in their size, contributes to an increase in the number of houses, private vehicles² and domestic appliances. This evolution exacerbates the pressures on the environment: the consumption of raw materials³, space⁴, energy⁵ and water⁶, emissions of air pollutants⁵ and waste generation⁷. However, the links between household activities and environmental quality are difficult to identify and measure, given the multiple variables involved:

- the psychosocial characteristics (age, household composition, cultural and social affiliation, etc.);
- the living environment (urban, semi-rural or rural environment, existing public infrastructure, etc.);
- consumption patterns (influenced by psychosocial characteristics, the living environment, disposable income, prices, preferences, habits, etc.).

[1] FPB & FPS Economy - DG Statistics, 2016 | [2] → TRANS 5 | [3] → RES 1 | [4] → HOUSE 1 | [5] → HOUSE 5 | [6] → HOUSE 3 | [7] → HOUSE 9

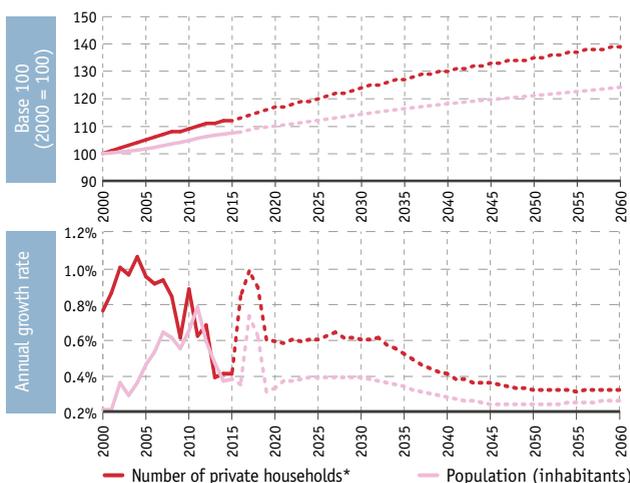
Fig. SOCIOECO 2-1 Population and private households in Wallonia



* Based on the legal situation

SOERW 2017 – Source: FPS Economy - DG Statistics

Fig. SOCIOECO 2-2 Population and private households in Wallonia: evolution 2000 - 2015 and outlook 2016 - 2060



* Based on the de facto situation

SOERW 2017 – Sources: FPB; FPS Economy - DG Statistics