MELONI REITERATES VOW TO COMBAT ITALY'S DEMOGRAPHIC WOES

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Italy’s birth rate continues to be among the lowest in Europe and while some pro-family policies have been enacted, Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has promised
more to come and reiterated her vow to push back against demographic decline.

**Category:** NEWS  
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Western Europe is facing a demographic crisis and has been for years as birth rates across the West have fallen well below the replacement rate of 2.1 children per woman, with some countries seeing record-low birth rates recently.

Among the European countries with the lowest overall birth rates is Italy, which saw its birth rate **drop to under 400,000 births** for the first time last year, or an average of just 1.25 children per woman, and the country now records more deaths than births.

Italy’s Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, leader of the Fratelli d’Italia (FdI), has previously stated that the country’s ongoing demographic crisis is an issue she wants to tackle and promised to address falling birth rates in **her party’s manifesto** prior to last year’s national election.

The plans announced in the manifesto included payments of up to €300 per month for children during their first year and subsequent monthly payments of €260 until the child turns 18. Her party also promised to reduce taxes on children’s products, such as baby formula, and cut taxes on first home purchases.

This week, Prime Minister Meloni reiterated her commitment to solving the country’s birth rate crisis, while speaking during the “Demografica” conference at the Palazzo dell’Informazione in Milan, held on Tuesday, June 27th, a report from *Il Giornale* states.

“Winning the demographic winter, Pope Francis reminded us, means fighting something
that goes 'against our families, against our homeland, and also against our future'. That is our challenge. An ambitious challenge, but one that we are not afraid to face,” Prime Minister Meloni said.

While Meloni is seen as a staunch conservative and Pope Francis is seen as more of a liberal reformer, the two have been in sync on the issue of demographics and birth rates with Pope Francis joining Meloni in May and calling on Italians to have more children at a conference in Rome.

“Let us not resign ourselves to sterile dullness and pessimism,” Pope Francis said and added, “Let us not believe that history is already marked, that nothing can be done to reverse the trend.”

Meloni stated at the conference this week that the measures already enacted, the increase of child allowance and the tax cut, were “only the beginning and there are many measures in the pipeline.”

“We want to give back to Italians a nation in which being fathers is no longer considered out of fashion and being mothers is not seen only as a private choice, but a socially recognized value,” Meloni said. She added,

Children, children, are life and hope, like the seeds to be planted to grow a forest. For decades the dominant culture has told us exactly the opposite. Now it's time to break this narrative and reverse the trend, promoting the beauty of parenting.

While Meloni has stated that more policies are being worked on, it remains unclear what those policies may be and if they will continue on the theme of further tax cuts and subsidies or be more radical, like the pro-family policies of Hungary.
Hungary’s pro-family policies are broad in scope and include large loans in the tens of thousands of euros that are forgiven after having three children and other policies that include exempting women with four children from income tax for life.

The government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban has also sought to increase the number of childcare places and offers couples free access to in-vitro fertilization (IVF) treatments as well.

“If we want Hungarian children instead of immigrants, and if the Hungarian economy can generate the necessary funding, then the only solution is to spend as much of the funds as possible on supporting families and raising children,” Prime Minister Orban said in 2020.

Hungary's broad pro-family policies seem to be reversing the birth rate decline as the country has seen a 27% increase in births from 2010 to 2021, the largest percentage increase of any EU member state in that period as the country went from 1.25 births per woman to 1.59.

Statistics show that in the European Union, it is largely central and eastern states that have seen a rise in birth rates, while western states have nearly all declined, with Czechia now boasting a birth rate of 1.83, on par with France for the highest birth rate in the bloc, though the French rate has fallen for several years and appears to be on a downward trend.

The decrease in births in France has not gone unnoticed as the country saw a historically low birth rate in 2022, the lowest in around 70 years.