VIENNA INSTITUTE OF DEMOGRAPHY

ÖAW Austrian Academy of Sciences

Birth Barometer

Monitoring Fertility in Austria

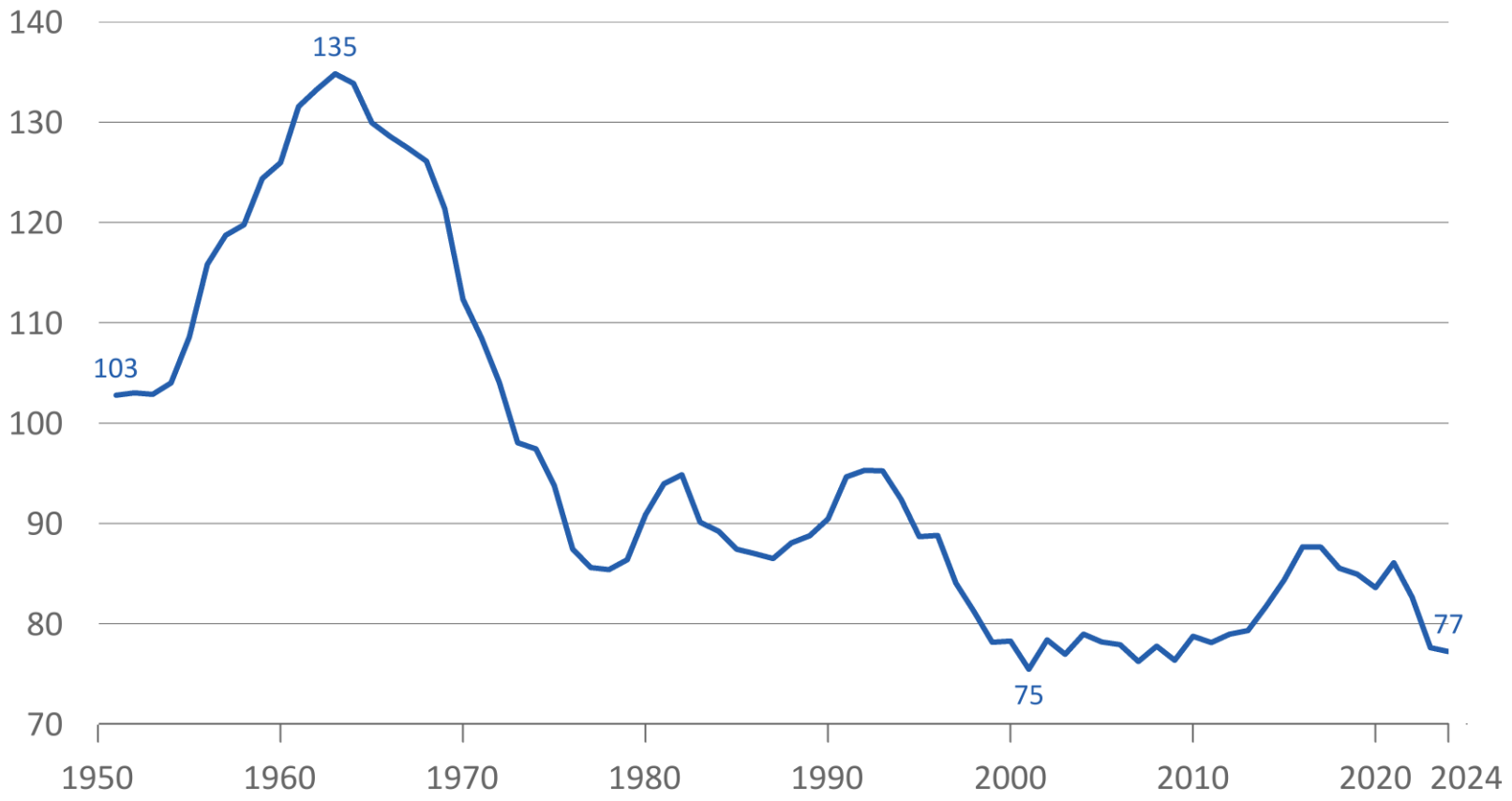
Main Trends

Analysis based on data from Statistics Austria covering the period until 2024

24 March 2026

Absolute number of live births

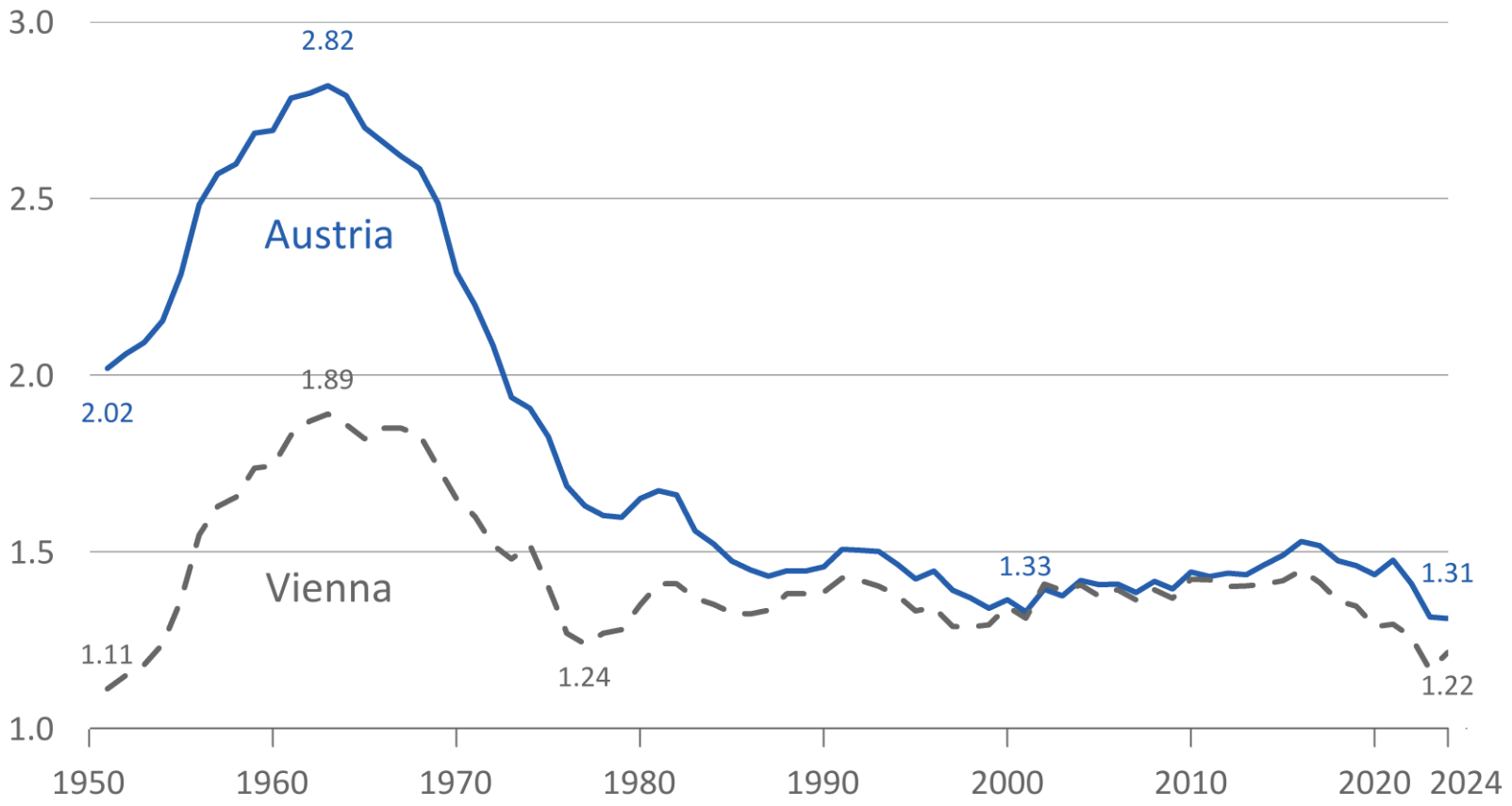
Children born in 1951–2024 (thousands)



- The number of children born in Austria peaked in 1963 at 135 thousand. Then it plummeted rapidly until the mid-1970s and again in the second half of the 1990s. It reached a minimum of 75 thousand in 2001.
- The number of births rose in the 2010s, reaching 88 thousand in 2016 and 2017, a level last seen in the mid-1990s. Since then, the number of births has declined, falling to 77 thousand in 2024.
- These changes are influenced not only by fertility levels, but also by changing size and age structure of the female population. Increases or declines in the number of women in reproductive age push the number of births up or down.

Total Fertility Rate (TFR)

Mean number of children per woman in 1951–2024



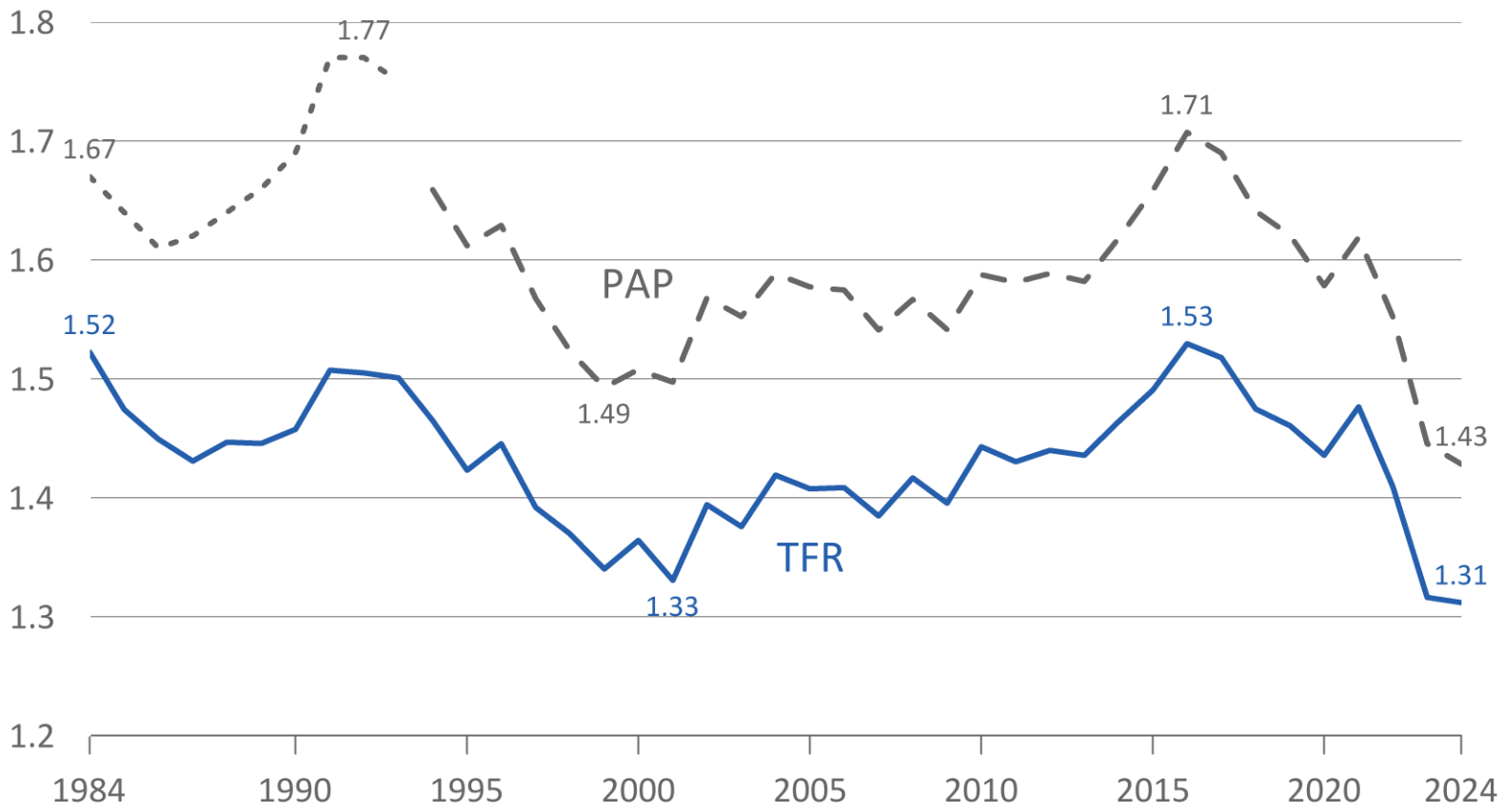
The Total Fertility Rate (TFR) is the most common indicator of fertility. It is not affected by the changing number and age structure of the female population. It is often interpreted as measuring the number of children per woman in a period. However, it is sensitive to shifts in the age at childbearing and can change rapidly from one year to the next.

- The TFR in Austria had been relatively low (at 1.3–1.5) and stable since the mid-1980s.
- The TFR rose moderately between 2001 and 2016, exceeding 1.5 in 2016–2017, but declined subsequently and reached an all-time low of 1.31 in 2024.

➢ See also chapter on VIENNA

Period Average Parity (PAP)

PAP and TFR in 1984–2024

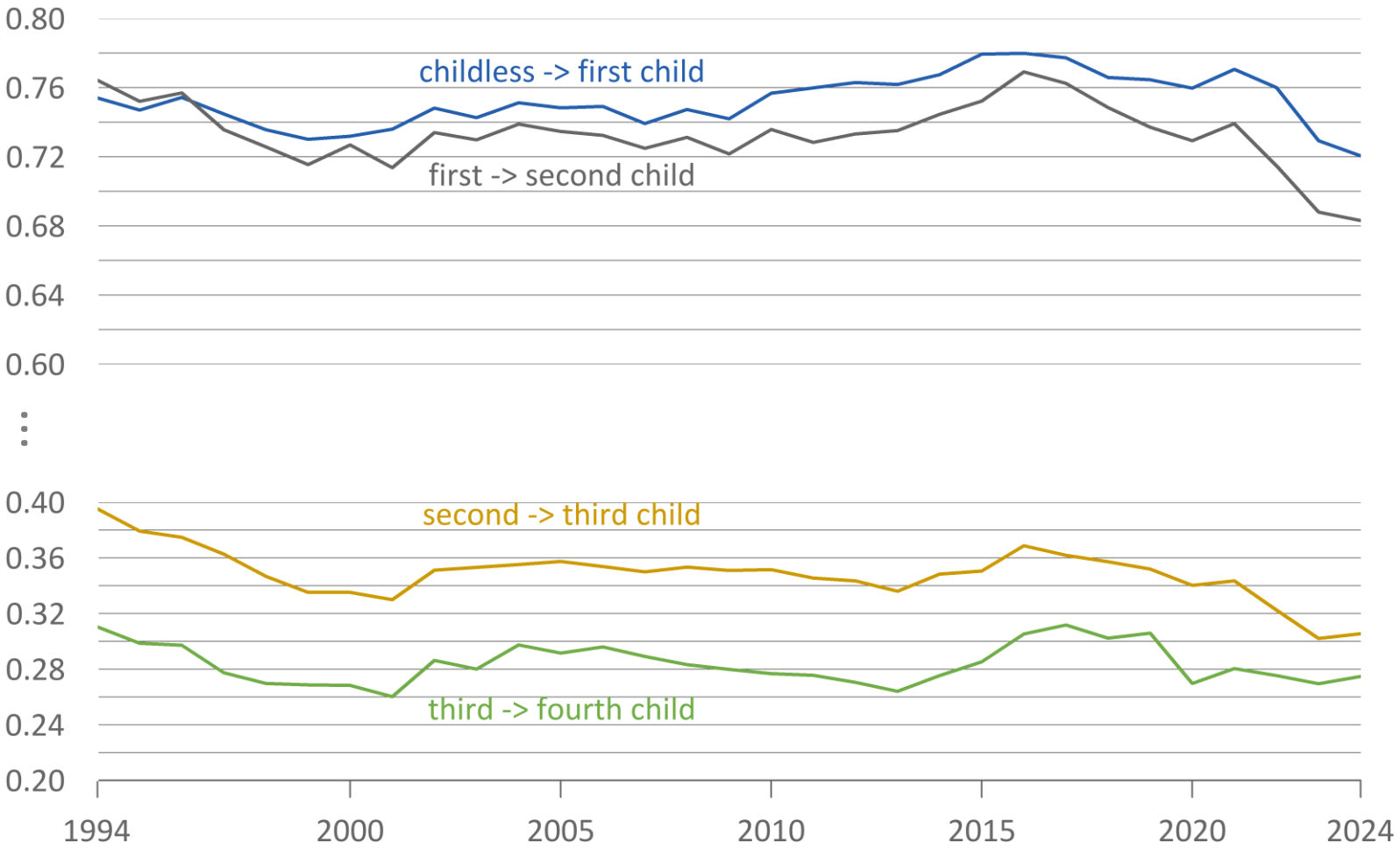


Period Average Parity (PAP) is an indicator of fertility that takes into account not only the age structure of women, but also their parity composition (number of children). It is computed separately for each birth order (a simplified method was used before 1994). Like the Total Fertility Rate, the PAP can be interpreted as a period indicator of the number of children per woman.

- PAP is on average 0.2 higher than the TFR because it has been less affected by the rising age at childbearing during the last decades.
- After reaching a low of 1.49 in 1999, the PAP increased in the early 2000s and again in the 2010s, peaking at 1.71 in 2016. Since then, it has declined and reached an all-time low of 1.43 in 2024.

Parity Progression Ratios (PPR)

1994 to 2024

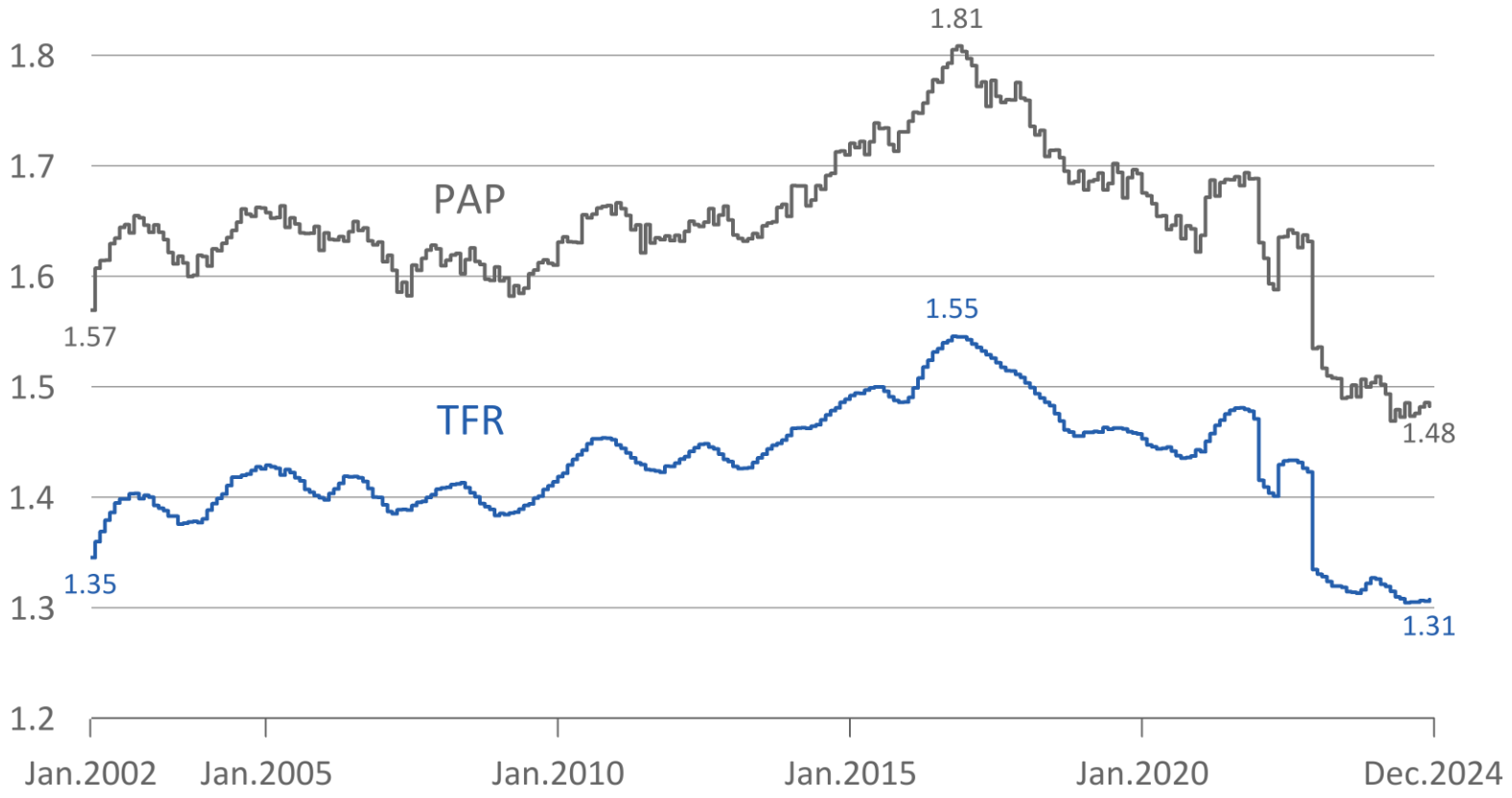


Parity Progression Ratios (PPR) measure the probability that a woman with a given number of children (parity) will have another child. Their computation accounts for the age structure of women, the number of children they have, and the number of years since their previous birth.

- Based on the data for 2024, 72% of initially childless women would give birth to a first child, 68% of women with one child would have a second one, 31% of women with two children would have a third one, and 27% of women with three children would have a fourth one.
- The recent fertility decline in 2022-2024 was driven by declining progression rates across all parities except for progression rate to a fourth birth, which remained stable.

Monthly trends in PAP and TFR

January 2002 to December 2024

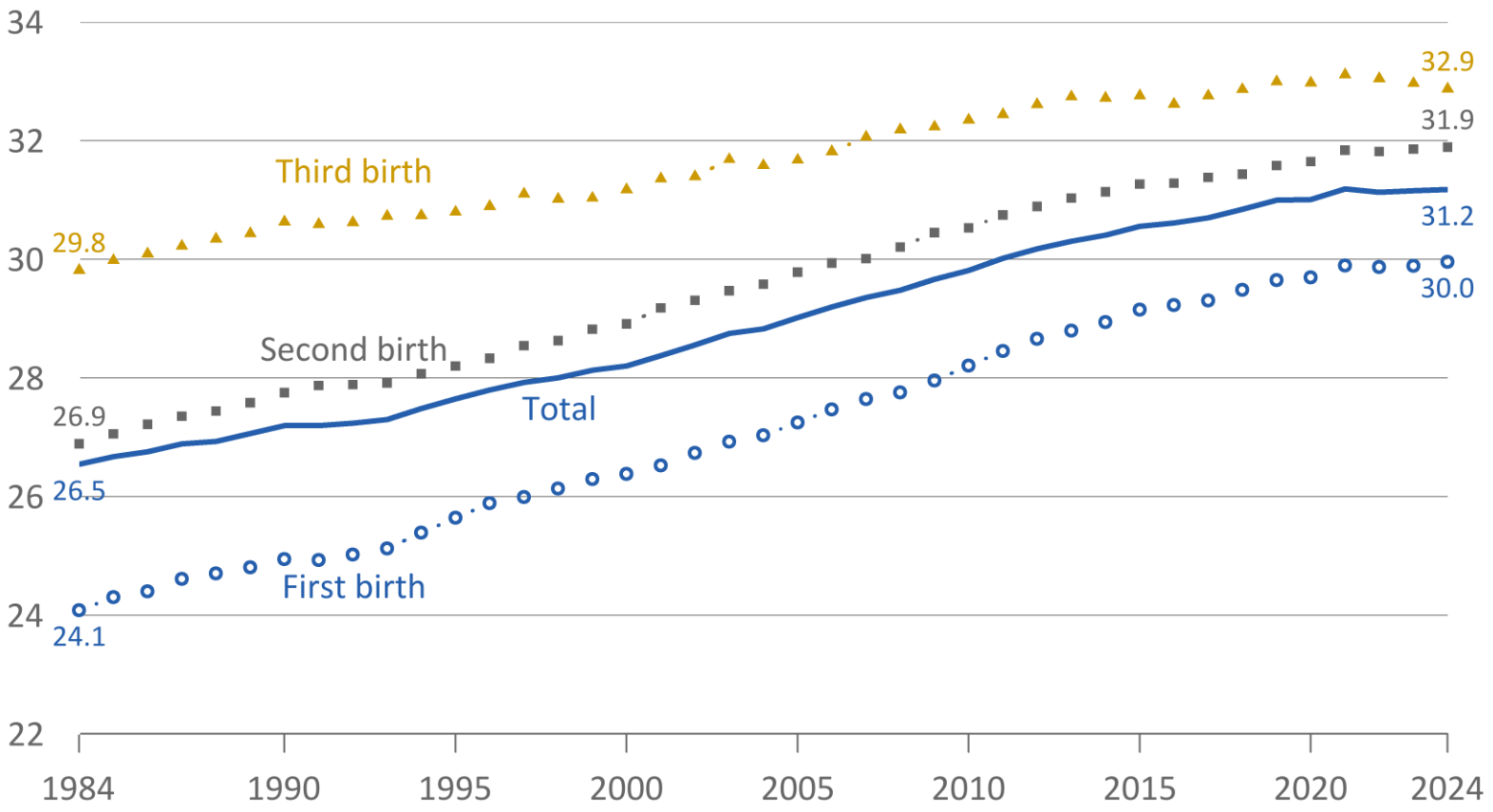


- Monthly data allow a more precise identification of the periods when fertility starts to increase or fall. This helps us to better understand the underlying factors behind fertility change.
- The computations behind monthly indicators account for differences in month length, weekly and seasonal patterns in births, and smooth out short-term irregular fluctuations.
- Fertility rates peaked in October to December 2016 with the TFR at 1.55 and PAP at 1.81. They have mostly declined thereafter. This decline was interrupted by brief upswings during the COVID-19 pandemic, in June to November 2021 and in May to October 2022.

➢ **See the chapter on fertility trends during and after COVID**

Mean age of mother at birth

By birth order, 1984–2024



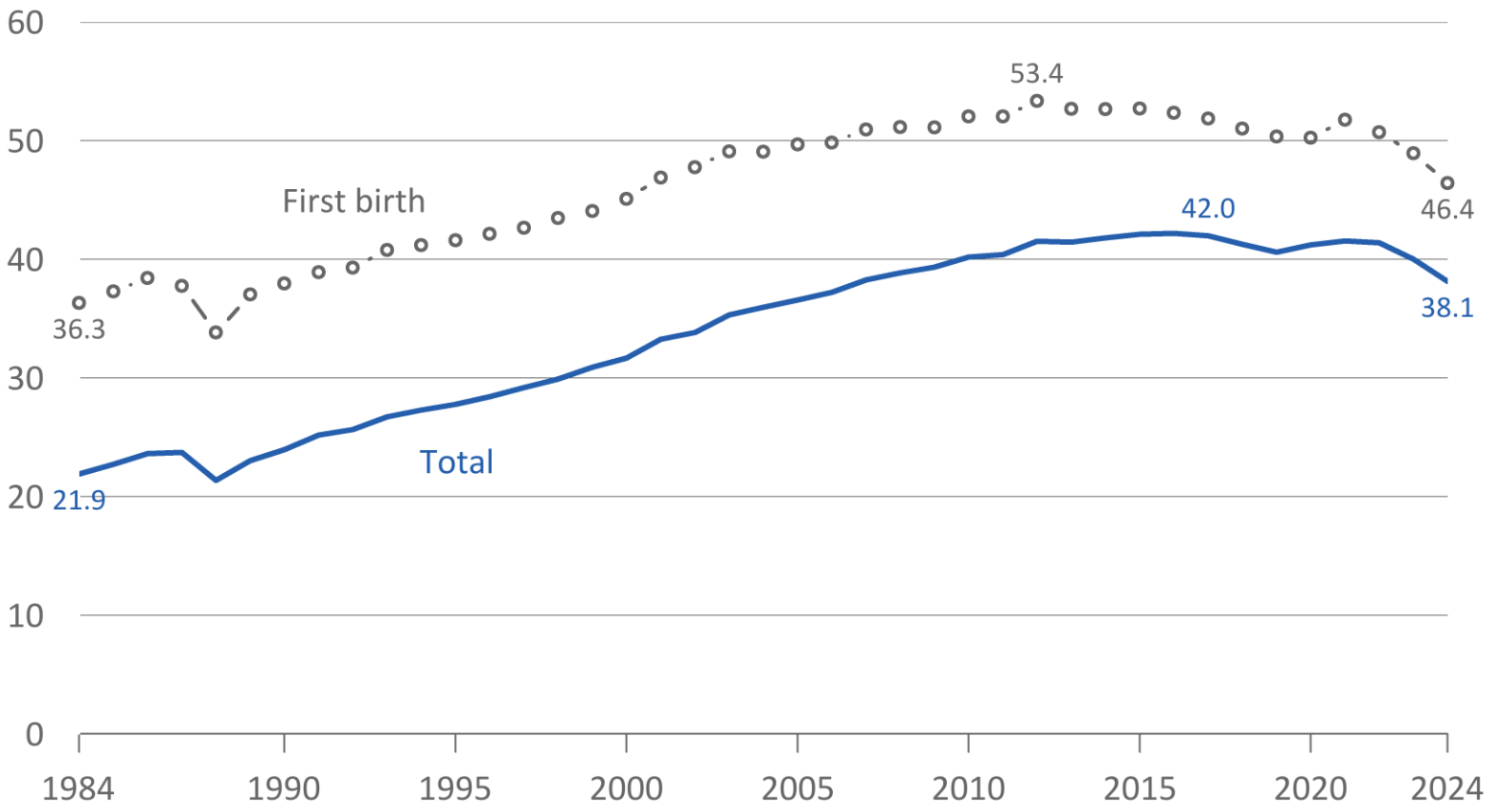
The mean age of mothers at childbirth (MAB) is computed from fertility rates by single years of age and therefore it is not affected by the changing age structure of women in reproductive age.

- Fertility trends in the last four decades have been strongly influenced by the rising age of mothers.
- The shift to a later age at birth started in the early 1970s and it continued until 2021, when the mean age of mother at birth stabilized at around 31.2.
- The mean age at first birth increased faster than the mean age at second and later births. It went up by six years between 1984 and 2024, when it reached 30 years.

➢ **See more details in the chapter on TIMING OF FERTILITY**

Births outside marriage

Share of non-marital births (%), 1984–2024



- Four out of ten of all children are born to unmarried mothers.
- First births outside of marriage are even more frequent: in 2007–2022, a majority of first births were non-marital.
- The share of children born outside of marriage increased continuously over half a century, between 1965 and the 2010s.
- This trend reflects long-term changes in the family—especially the increase in unmarried cohabitation and higher frequency of divorce—that have taken place across Europe.
- The long-term increase in non-marital childbearing has recently reversed. Both the share of births and first births outside of marriage peaked in 2016 and dropped in the most recent years.

Birth Barometer: Monitoring Fertility in Austria

Data Source: STATISTICS AUSTRIA. Vital Statistics

Authors: Kryštof Zeman, Tomáš Sobotka, Richard Gisser, Maria Winkler-Dworak, Caroline Berghammer, Bernhard Riederer

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