

The Demographic Development in the Åland Islands



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More than 6,500 islands

Åland consists of 6,757 islands (>0.25 ha), 60 of them occupied
 Land area: 1,527 km²
 Inhabitants: 26,530 (17,4 per km²)
 Capital: Mariehamn, 10,712 inhabitants
 GDP per capita: 34,200 EUR

Åland has been an autonomy since 1922

Åland is an autonomous, demilitarized and Swedish speaking territory that belongs to Finland

- The autonomy was decided by a League of Nations resolution
- Representation in the Nordic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Joined the EU 1995, but stayed outside the tax union
- The Parliament is called "Lagtinget" and the Government "Landskapsregeringen"
- Åland enacts its own laws concerning health services, communications, education, culture, industry, the police, the postal service, radio and TV, local administration.

Rapid population growth since 1970

After World War II: Strong urbanisation, the total population declined, emigration to Sweden.

Change about 1970: The urbanisation process slowed down.

The population began to increase every year.

Total growth 1970 – 2004: 28 per cent (Finland 14 per cent, Sweden 12 per cent). The population growth has been surprisingly rapid considering the size and the geographical position of Åland

About two thirds of the increase in the Åland population is due to a migration excess. Traditionally the majority of the immigrants have been from Finland. During the last years more and more immigrants have come from Sweden and non-Nordic countries (for example from the Baltic and Russia).

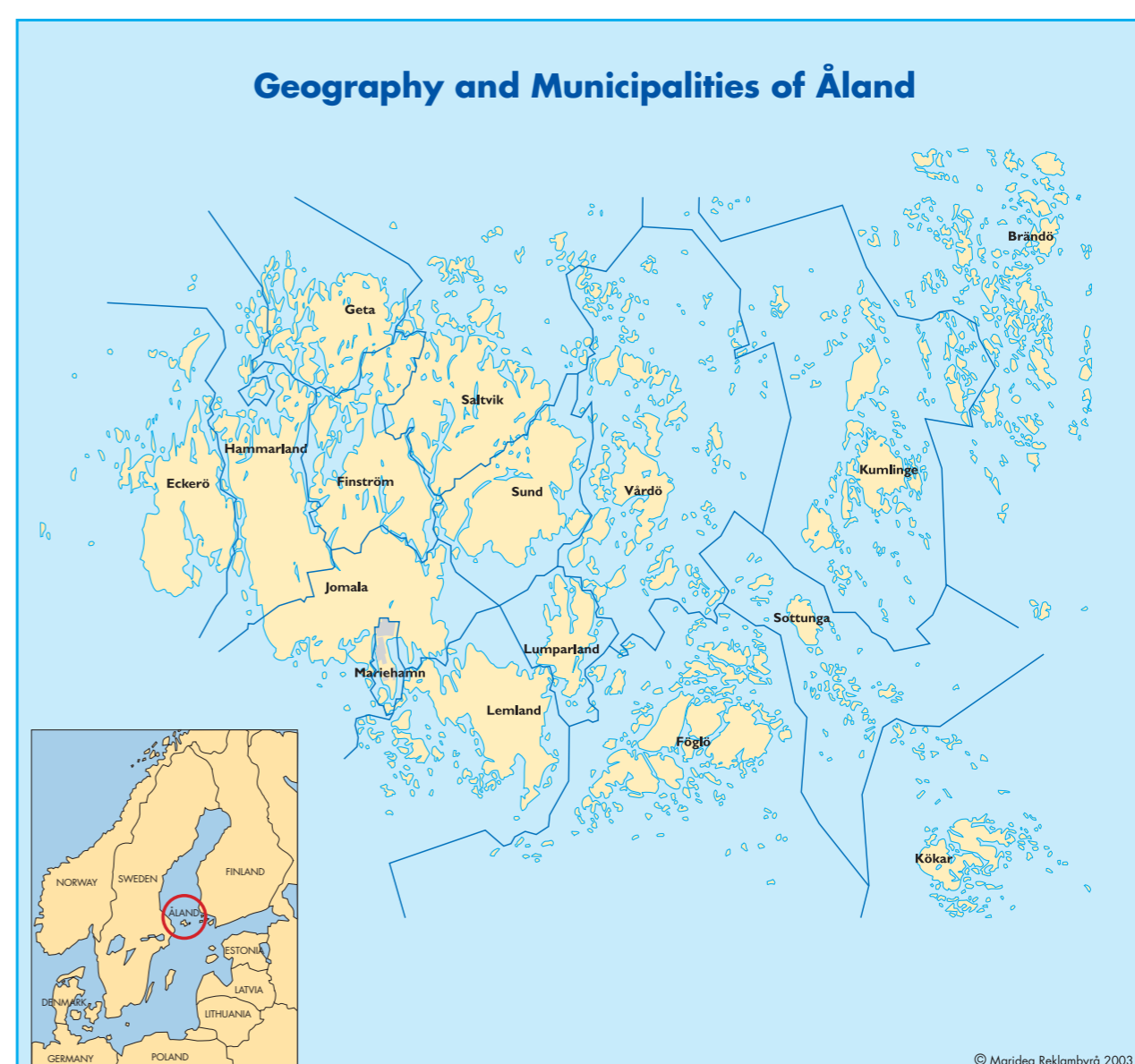
The shipping sector is very important

One explanation to the population growth is the strong economy dominated by the shipping sector, which has generated large income and many jobs in Åland. It provides Åland with cheap communications and has promoted a strong development in tourism and other services ashore.

Today the main part of the Åland shipping industry consists of passenger-ferries connecting Sweden, Åland and Finland.

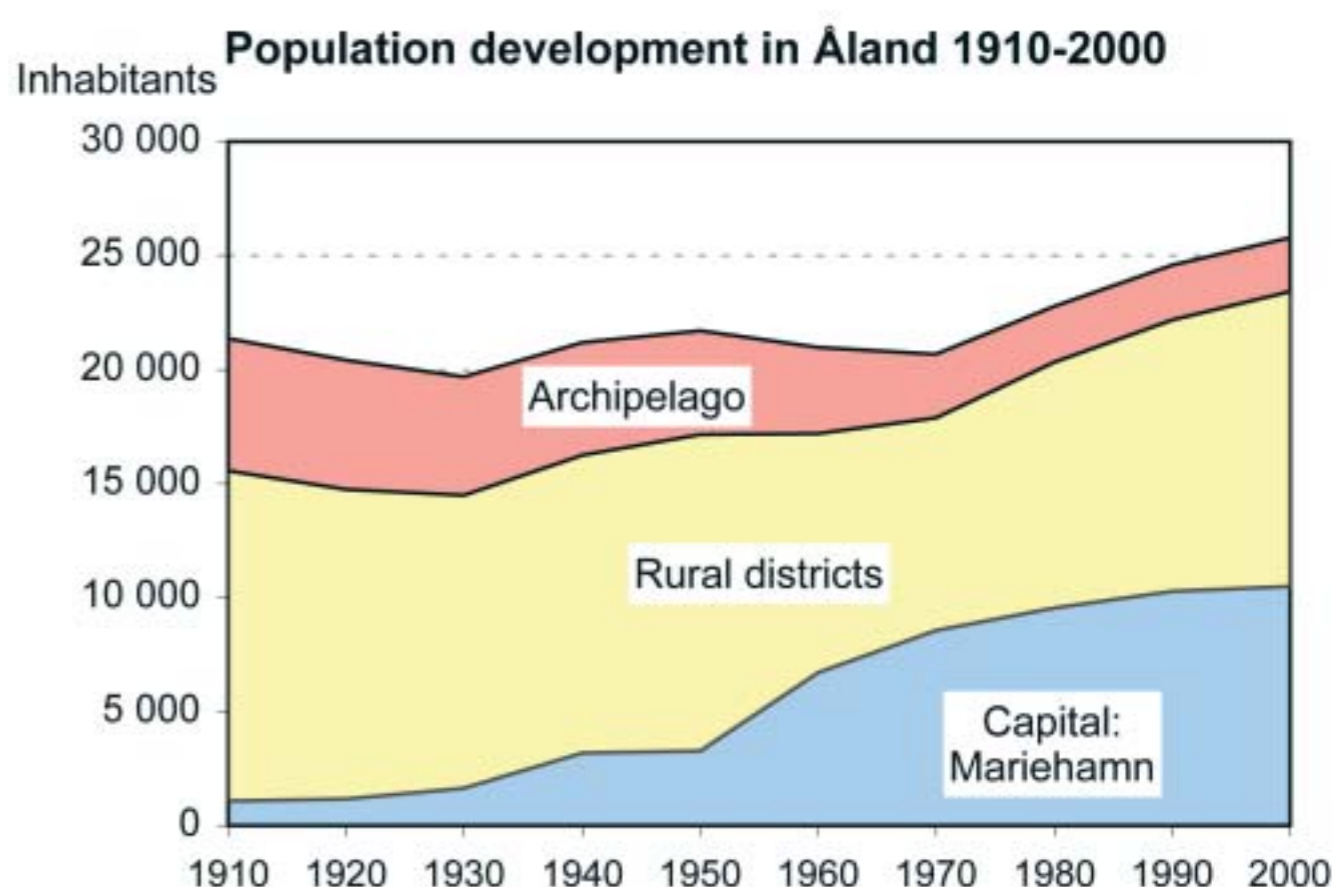
Åland stands outside the EU tax union, which makes it possible to preserve the tax-free sales on board the ferries that call at Åland ports.

The shipping sector has developed as a result of Åland's insular location. Consequently, there is a paradox in the fact that Åland's peripheral location has provided possibilities for a strong economic development.

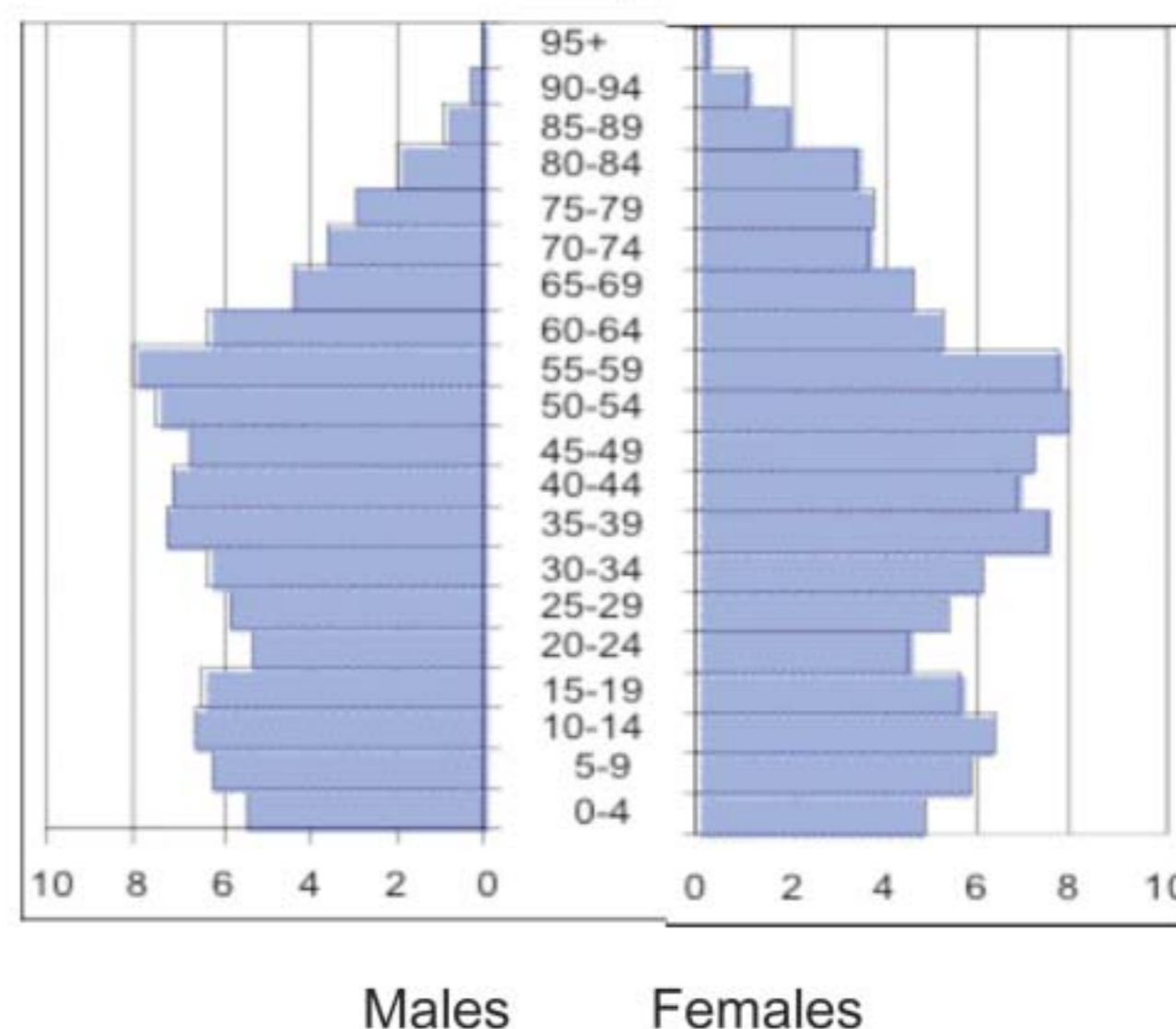


Population by country of birth and language

	1970	2004
Population	20 666	26 530
Country of birth, per cent:		
Åland	79,7	70,0
Finland	16,0	20,3
Other countries	4,2	9,7
- of which Sweden	..	6,1
Language, per cent:		
Swedish	96,3	92,4
Finnish	3,5	5,0
Other	0,1	2,5



Population in Åland by age and sex 31.12.2004, per cent



GDP per industry 1975 and 2002

