

MARRIAGE IN ITALY

2009 and provisional data for 2010

- 230,613 marriages were celebrated in Italy in 2009 and just over 217,000 in 2010 (provisional data), equalling 3.6 marriages for every 1,000 inhabitants.
- In just two years almost 30,000 fewer marriages were recorded: in 2008 the total was 246,613, or 4.1 for every 1,000 inhabitants.
- The downward trend in marriages has been underway since 1972. However, in the two-year period 2009-2010 the decline was particularly marked, with the average annual decrease in fact reaching -6%, a decidedly higher figure than the average -1.2% recorded over the last 20 years.
- The decrease in the number of marriages in the two-year period 2009-2010 concerned all areas of the country; of the major regions, those which saw the sharpest fall were Lazio (-9.4%), Lombardy (-8%), Tuscany (-6.7%), Piedmont and Campania (-6.4% in both cases).
- Above all it was the number of first marriages between partners both with Italian citizenship which declined, with 175,043 marriages in 2009, 10,706 fewer compared with 2008; this difference alone accounts for the 67% decrease observed in the total number of marriages between the two years (-16,000).
- A further 30% of the 2008-2009 decrease was due to marriages in which at least one of the two partners had foreign citizenship: 32,059 marriages were celebrated in 2009 (14% of total marriages), almost 5,000 fewer than in 2008. The 2010 data suggest a further contraction.
- Of marriages in which one of the two partners was foreign, it was above all mixed marriages (in which one partner is Italian and the other foreign) that recorded the most marked reduction: over 21,000 marriages in 2009 (3,191 down on 2008).

SUMMARY TABLE 1. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF MARRIAGES CELEBRATED IN ITALY
2008-2010, absolute values

	2008	2009	2010 (a)
Total marriages	246,613	230,613	217,076
Change on previous year	-3,747	-16,000	-13,537
of which:			
With both partners Italian			
First marriages	185,749	175,043	-
Change on previous year	-6,833	-10,706	-
With at least one foreign partner			
First and subsequent marriages	36,918	32,059	-
Change on previous year	2,359	-4,859	-

(a) Provisional data

FIGURE 1. TOTAL MARRIAGES AND FIRST MARRIAGES
1991-2010, absolute values

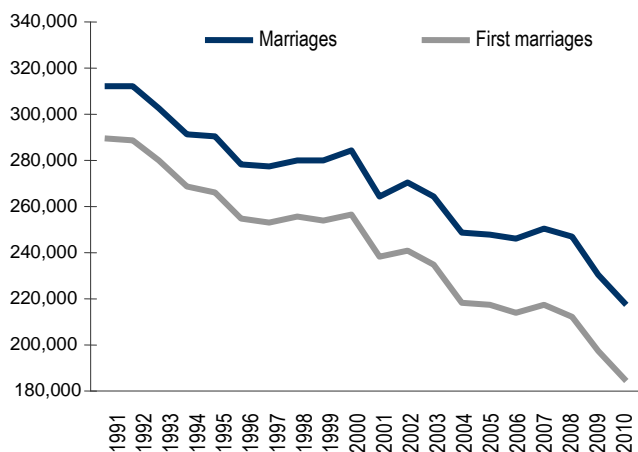
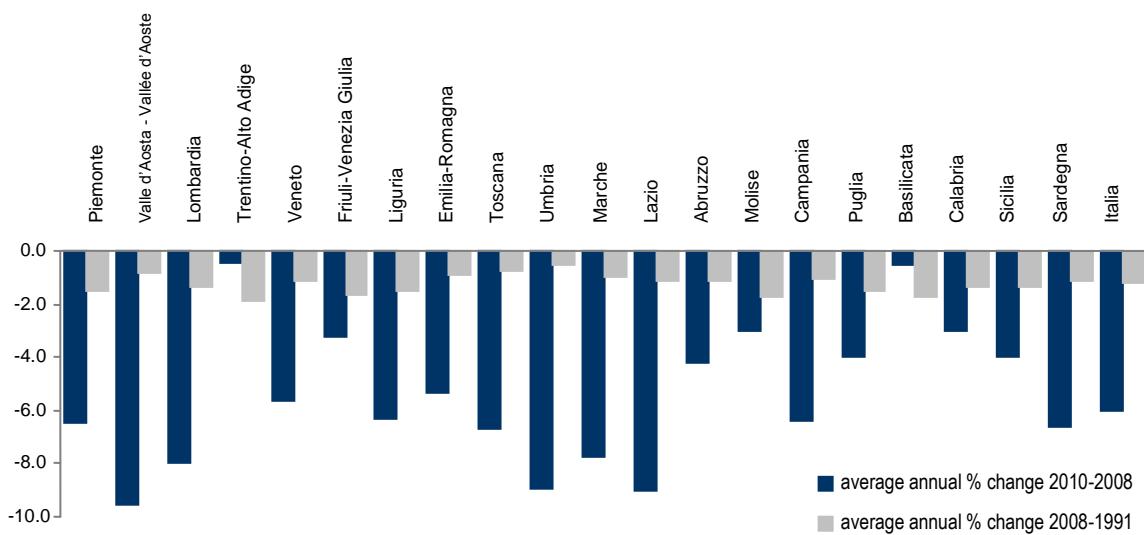


FIGURE 2. AVERAGE ANNUAL CHANGES IN MARRIAGES CELEBRATED IN ITALY BY REGION
1991-2008 and 2008-2010, percentage values



Glossary

Marriage rate (ratio). Ratio between number of marriages celebrated in a year and average total resident population (per 1000).

Average age at first marriage. The average of ages at first marriage weighted with specific marriage rate ratios by age of bride/groom.

First-marriage index (or rate). Sum of specific marriage-rate ratios calculated from the ratio, for each age class, of the number of first marriages to the average total annual population.

Mixed marriage. Celebration in which one of the two partners has foreign citizenship and the other has Italian citizenship.

Simple index number. An index number is a number that expresses the change in intensity of a given phenomenon in different circumstances. A simple index number is the ratio between two numbers. The number placed as the denominator is called the index base.

First marriage. Marriage in which the marital status of the bride/groom at the moment of the wedding is single.

Property regime. Marriage automatically establishes the property regime of community of property (legal community of property), introduced by the family law reform of 1975. With the separation of property regime (article 215, Civil Code), in contrast, each partner retains exclusive ownership of any property acquired during the marriage.

Marriage rite. Marriages may be celebrated before a registrar, a Catholic minister or minister of one of the other religions recognised by the State. In the latter case, the marriage may in any case produce civil effects (termed *matrimonio concordatario*, that is, a marriage contracted in keeping with the Concordat).

Marital status. The condition of each citizen in relation to their status concerning marriage.

- Single: a male or female citizen who has never entered into marriage
- Married: a married citizen who has not obtained the dissolution or termination of the civil effects of the marriage
- Divorced: a married citizen who has obtained the dissolution or termination of the civil effects of the marriage
- Widow/Widower: a citizen whose marriage has ended due to the death of her/his partner.

Absolute change. Difference between the total of a phenomenon at the end of the period considered and the one at the beginning.

Percentage change. The ratio between the absolute change and the initial total. It is then multiplied by 100.

Average annual percentage change (or average annual rate of change). Obtained by dividing the percentage change, with reference to a multi-year time period, by the number of years in the period.

Methodological note

The survey of marriages from registry office sources was established by Istat in 1926. The subject of the survey, which is individual and exhaustive, is all marriages of the present population, and makes it possible to analyse the phenomenon of the marriage rate in relation to the main socio-demographic characteristics of the partners.

Conduction of the survey is based on the Istat D.3 form completed by the registrar of the municipality in which the marriage was celebrated.

The form is divided into two parts: information about the marriage and information about the partners. For each event, in the section dedicated to the marriage, the following information is collected: date, type of ceremony (religious or civil), municipality of marriage and property regime chosen by the couple (community or separation of property). Information collected for each partner regards: date of birth, municipality of birth, municipality of residence at time of marriage, couple's future place of residence, previous marital status, level of education, occupational status, position within profession, branch of economic activity, and citizenship.

The most recent changes to the form were made in 1995, with the addition of the variable regarding property regime and in 1997 with more precise information regarding citizenship, asking in the case of Italian citizenship whether this is by birth or acquired.

The release of the main statistical information takes place ever more promptly following the date of the event to which it refers. For this purpose the information contained in Form D.7.A. (survey of demographic events by registry office records) is also processed, providing – on a monthly basis and by the municipality in which the event occurred – the number of religious and civil marriages (provisional data, subject to correction when data from the individual surveys is made available).

The data collected through the survey were published for a long time jointly with information on separations and dissolutions and terminations of the civil effects of the marriage. In the Istat Yearbook *Matrimoni, separazioni e divorzi (Marriages, Separations and Divorces)*, published up until the 2003 survey year, the main summary indicators are published, compared yearly with the preceding four-year period, and a series of analytical tables at the national and provincial geographical levels. Summary data are also published (at the regional level) in the *Annuario statistico italiano (Italian Statistical Yearbook)* and in the volumes *Italia in cifre (Italy in Figures)* and *Noi Italia*.

The main results are available online by consulting the I.Stat datawarehouse at <http://dati.istat.it/> and Demo, the topic-based system, at <http://demo.istat.it/altridati/matrimoni/>.