

Marriages in Italy

2011-2012

In 2012, 207,138 marriages were celebrated in Italy (3.5 per 1,000 inhabitants), 2,308 more than in 2010. This slight increase is part of a downward trend in marriages that began in 1972 and in the 2008-2011 period resulted in over 45,000 marriages less (in relative terms -4.5% per years between 2007 and 2011, a value much higher than the average of -1.2% recorded over the past 20 years).

The rise of the weddings compared to 2011 is due to the recovery of marriages in which at least one of the two spouses is a foreign citizen: in 2012, 30,724 weddings with at least one foreign spouse were celebrated (15% of the total), over 4 thousand more than in 2011, but still lower than 6,000 compared to the peak of 2008.

Mixed marriages in which one partner is Italian and the other is a foreigner represent the prevalent typology (68% of marriages with at least a foreign spouse) and amounted to 20,764 in 2012.

The first weddings for couples with both Italian citizens are still sharply decreasing, with 153,311 ceremonies in 2012, approximately 39,000 fewer in the last five years; this difference accounts for 91% of the total fall in marriages between 2008 and 2012.

The second marriages, in continuous growth in the last 20 years, pass from 34,137 in 2008 to 32,555 in 2012, but their share is on the rise: from 13.8% in 2008 to 15.7% in 2012.

People are marrying increasingly late. The average age for a first wedding is 34 for men and 31 for women.

In 2012, 122,297 weddings followed a religious ceremony, 33,000 fewer in the last 4 years. The civil weddings, on the other side, have seen a recovery in the last two years: 5,340 ceremonies that represent 41% of the total. In the North, civil marriages (53.4%) exceed religious marriages and in the Centre they are now one in two (49.4%).

The rise of civil marriages increasingly affects also the first weddings of Italian couples. which passed from 18.8% in 2008 to 24.5% in 2012.

Marriages that follow a separation of property regime (more than two out of three) is still confirmed and there are no longer significant differences between the geographical areas.

TABLE 1. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF MARRIAGES CELEBRATED IN ITALY
2008-2012

	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Total marriages (absolute values)	246,613	230,613	217,700	204,830	207,138
Annual variations (absolute values)	-3,747	-16,000	-12,913	-12,870	2,308
<i>of which:</i>					
<i>Both husband and wife are Italian</i>					
First marriages (absolute values)	185,749	175,043	168,610	155,395	153,311
Variation compared to the previous year	-6,833	-10,706	-6,433	-13,215	-2,084
<i>At least one foreign partner</i>					
First and successive marriages	36,918	32,059	25,082	26,617	30,724
Variation compared to the previous year	2,359	-4,859	-6,977	1,535	4,107
<i>Marriages with religious ceremony</i> (absolute values)	155,972	144,842	138,199	124,443	122,297
<i>Marriages with civil ceremony</i> (absolute values)	90,641	85,771	79,501	80,387	84,841
Marriages with civil ceremony (per 100 total marriages)	36.8	37.2	36.5	39.2	41.0
<i>Separation of property regime</i> (per 100 total marriages)	62.7	64.2	66.1	66.9	68.9

FIGURE 1. TOTAL MARRIAGES, FIRST MARRIAGES AND SECOND MARRIAGES
1991-2012, absolute and percentage values

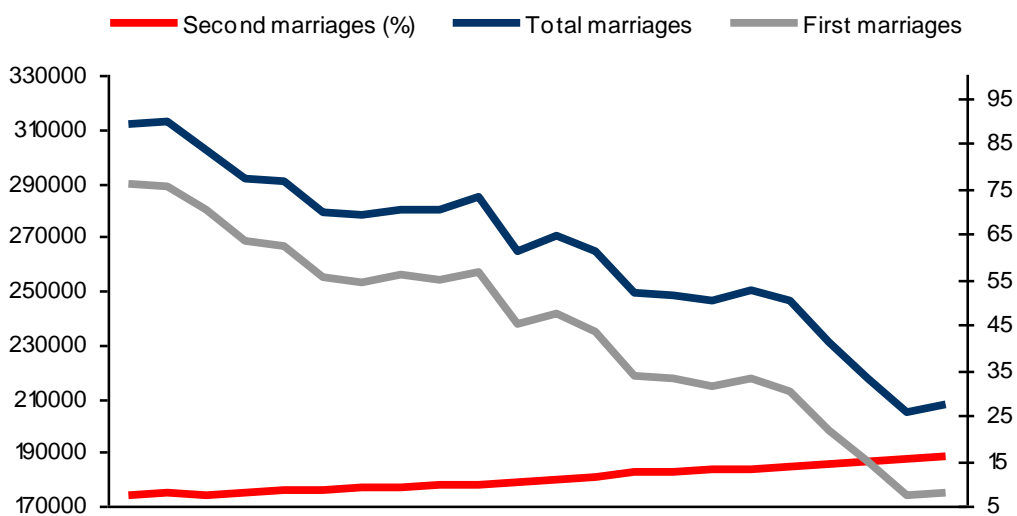
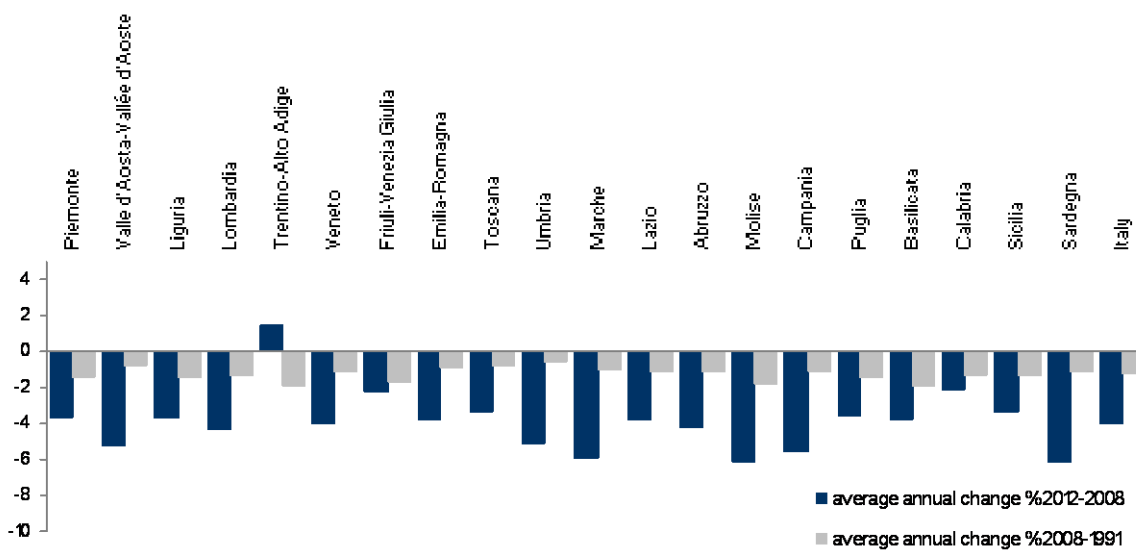


FIGURE 2. AVERAGE ANNUAL CHANGES IN MARRIAGES CELEBRATED IN ITALY BY REGION
1991-2008 and 2008-2012, percentage values



Glossary

Marriage rate (ratio). Ratio between number of marriages celebrated in a year and average total resident population (per 1,000).

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/>.

Contact persons:

ISTAT – National Institute of Statistics
Division for Socio-demographic and environmental
statistics
Viale Liegi, 14 171 - 00198 Rome, Italy

Giancarlo Gualtieri
ph. +39.06.4673.7356
Antonella Guarneri
ph. +39.06.4673.7332
Sabrina Prati
ph. +39.06.4673.7337