

BIRTHS AND FERTILITY OF THE RESIDENT POPULATION | YEAR 2024

Decreasing births and fertility at an all-time low



The decline in births continues: in 2024, there were 369,944 births, down by 2.6% over the previous year (a decrease of almost 10,000 units).

In 2025, based on provisional data for January-July, there were approximately 13 thousand fewer births than in the same period in 2024 (-6.3%).

The average number of children per woman reaches an all-time low: in 2024, it stands at **1.18**, down from 1.20 in 2023. The provisional estimate for the first seven months of 2025 shows a fertility rate of 1.13.

1.11

Average number of children per woman with Italian citizenship in 2024

It was 1.14 in 2023

31.9

The mean age of mothers at the birth of the first child

31.7 years in 2023

43.2%

Percentage of births outside marriage

It was 42.4% in 2023

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Less than 370 thousand births in 2024

In 2024, there were 369,944 births resident in Italy, almost 10 thousand fewer than in 2023. The relative change compared to the previous year (-2.6%) is in line with the average annual percentage change recorded from 2008 to 2023 (-2.7%). The birth rate in 2024 is 6.3 per thousand residents (it was 9.7 per thousand in 2008).

The decreasing trend in births has continued without interruption since 2008, the year in which the highest number of live births in the 2000s was recorded (over 576,000). Since then, the overall reduction has been of almost 207,000 births (-35.8%).

The decline in births, in addition to depending on the low propensity to have children (1.18 children on average per woman in 2024), is caused by the reduction in the number of potential parents, belonging to the increasingly scarce generations born since the mid-1970s, when fertility began to decline, falling from over 2 children on average per woman to 1.19 in 1995.

In 2024, both first and subsequent order births continue to decline. First children amount to 181,487, down by 2.7% compared to 2023. Second-order births (133,869) decrease by 2.9%, while subsequent order-births decrease by 1.5%. The decrease in first children affects all areas of the country, with a minor reduction in the Centre-North (-1.8% for the North, -2.0% for the Centre) and a more intense decline in the Mezzogiorno (-4.3%). The decrease in second and subsequent order births also affect the Mezzogiorno to a greater extent: -4.3% compared to -1.7% in the Centre and -1.4% in the North (-2.5% for Italy as a whole).

Therefore, difficulties persist both in having the first child and in transitioning from the first to the second. There are many factors contributing to the decline in births: longer periods of time spent in education, precarious employment conditions for young people and difficulties in accessing the housing market, which tend to delay young people leaving the family home. This can be accompanied by the decision to renounce or postpone parenthood.

The decline in births is almost entirely attributable to the decrease in births to couples where both parents are Italian, which account for over three-quarters of total births (78.2%). In fact, against an overall decline in births of 9,946, births to Italian parents, equal to 289,183 in 2024, decreased by 9,765 compared to 2023 (-3.3%). Births to couples in which at least one parent is foreign numbered 80,761 (21.8%), essentially stable compared to 2023, when there were 80,942 (-0.2%). Among these, the decrease recorded in births to parents who are both foreign nationals, equal to -1.7%, is offset by the increase in births to mixed couples (+2.3%).

MAIN INDICATORS OF BIRTHS AND FERTILITY. Years 2008, 2013 and 2018-2024.

	2008	2013	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Births	576,659	514,308	439,747	420,084	404,892	400,249	393,333	379,890	369,944
Birth rate	9.7	8.5	7.3	7.0	6.8	6.8	6.7	6.4	6.3 (a)
First order births (a) %	49.4	48.9	46.6	47.7	47.5	46.6	48.9	49.1	49.1
Births to at least one foreign parent (%)	16.8	20.4	22.0	22.0	21.8	21.5	20.9	21.3	21.8
Births to both foreign parents (%)	12.6	15.1	14.9	15.0	14.8	14.2	13.5	13.5	13.7
Births to mixed couples (%)	4.2	5.3	7.1	7.0	7.0	7.3	7.4	7.8	8.1
Births to both Italian parents (%)	83.2	79.6	78.0	78.0	78.2	78.5	79.1	78.7	78.2
Births outside marriage (%)	19.7	26.0	32.3	33.4	35.8	39.9	41.5	42.4	43.2
Total fertility rate	1.44	1.39	1.31	1.27	1.24	1.25	1.24	1.20	1.18 (a)
Total fertility rate Italian women	1.33	1.29	1.22	1.18	1.17	1.18	1.18	1.14	1.11 (a)
Total fertility rate foreign women	2.53	2.09	2.03	1.99	1.89	1.87	1.86	1.82	1.79 (a)
Mean age at childbirth	31.0	31.4	32.0	32.1	32.2	32.4	32.4	32.5	32.6 (a)
Mean age at childbirth Italian mothers	31.6	32.1	32.5	32.6	32.7	32.8	32.9	33.0	33.1 (a)
Mean age at childbirth foreign mothers	27.5	28.5	29.0	29.1	29.3	29.7	29.5	29.6	29.7 (a)

(a) estimate

The decline in births continues in 2025

The decline in births continues in 2025: according to provisional data for the period January-July, there were 197,956 births, down by about 13 thousand (-6.3%) compared to the same period in 2024 (211,250 births) (Table 1). The birth rate, which amounted to 3.6 per thousand in the same period of 2024, is 3.4 per thousand in 2025.

Since 2008, i.e. since the beginning of the progressive decline in the number of births, a decrease of the same amount in the first seven months of the year has already occurred in 2013 (with 13 thousand fewer births than in 2012, for a change of -4.3%), in 2016 (-17 thousand births and -6.2% over the previous year) and in 2019 (-13 thousand births over 2018 and a percentage decrease of 5.1%).

At the sub-national level, according to provisional data for the period January-July 2025, the areas showing the largest decrease compared to the same period of the previous year are Centre (-7.8%) and Mezzogiorno (-7.2%), followed by North (-5.0%).

The regions that recorded the sharpest decline were Abruzzo (-10.2%) and Sardegna (-10.1%). In both regions, in the same period of the year, the decrease in 2024 compared to 2023 was significantly less pronounced (respectively, -1.0% and -0.1%). Among the other regions showing a decrease in the number of births are Umbria (-9.6%), Lazio (-9.4%) and Calabria (-8.4%). The least pronounced decreases were observed in Basilicata (-0.9%), Marche and Lombardia (-1.6% and -3.9% respectively).

According to provisional data, the only regions to record an increase were Valle d'Aosta/*Vallée d'Aoste* (+5.5%) and the autonomous provinces of Bolzano/*Bozen* (+1.9%) and Trento (+0.6%). In 2024, in the first seven months of the year, the same regions had instead recorded a decrease in births compared to 2023 (-7.5% in Valle d'Aosta/*Vallée d'Aoste*, -3.7% in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/*Bozen* and -1.6% in Trento).

TABLE 1. BIRTHS IN THE PERIOD JANUARY-JULY, CHANGES FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR AND BIRTH RATES. Years 2023, 2024 and 2025, absolute values, percentage changes and rates per 1,000 residents

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS	Births			Changes %		Birth rates		
	2023	2024	2025	2024-2023	2025-2024 (a)	2023	2024 (a)	2025 (a)
North-west	56,642	56,520	53,901	-0.2	-4.6	3.6	3.6	3.4
North-east	42,436	42,217	39,893	-0.5	-5.5	3.7	3.6	3.4
Centre	39,420	38,865	35,817	-1.4	-7.8	3.4	3.3	3.1
South	52,437	50,809	47,202	-3.1	-7.1	3.9	3.8	3.5
Islands	23,472	22,839	21,143	-2.7	-7.4	3.7	3.6	3.3
Italy	214,407	211,250	197,956	-1.5	-6.3	3.6	3.6	3.4

(a) provisional data

Stable number of births to couples with at least one foreign partner

In 2024, the number of children born to parents where at least one of the partners is foreign remains essentially unchanged from the previous year. These births, which account for 21.8% of the total, have in fact fallen from 80,942 in 2023 to 80,761. Since 2012, the last year in which an increase was observed over the previous year, the decline has been more than 27,000 births.

Births to mixed couples (Italian father and foreign mother or foreign father and Italian mother) represent 8.1% of total births and show a slight increase over 2023 (+2.3%), reaching 30,168 (compared to 29,495 in the previous year). In particular, the increase is 1.3% for children born to mixed couples where the mother is foreign and 4.5% for children born to a foreign father and Italian mother. Births to parents who are both foreign nationals, which account for 13.7% of total births, amounted to 50,593 in 2024 (51,447 in 2023). Over the last year, there has been a significant decline of 1.7%, but this is lower than the decline recorded among births to Italian couples (-3.3%).

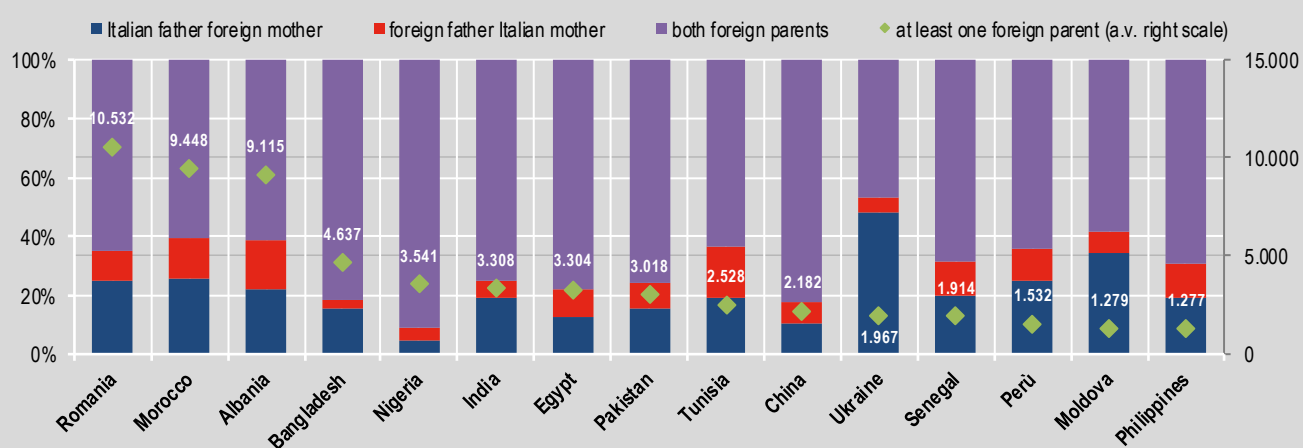
The proportion of children born to couples in which at least one parent is foreign is higher in the Centre-North, where the foreign presence is more stable and deeply rooted. In the North, the percentage of births to at least one foreign parent out of the total is 30.6% in 2024, while in the Centre it is 24%, above the national average (21.8%). In the Mezzogiorno, by contrast, the incidence is much lower, at 9.3%.

Restricting the analysis to children born to foreign parents, the geography remains similar. In 2024, the proportion of foreign-born children is 19.1% in the North and 15.3% in the Centre. In Mezzogiorno, the proportion is 5.7%, well below the national average of 13.7%.

Emilia-Romagna remains one of the regions with the highest incidence of foreign births compared to the total (21.9%), followed by Liguria (21.3%). Among the other regions of the North, almost one in five births is foreign: in Lombardia 19.3%, followed by Friuli-Venezia Giulia (18.5%), Veneto (18.4%) and Piedmont (17.9%). In the Centre, Toscana stands out (17.5%), while in the Mezzogiorno the percentage is significantly lower, with a minimum of 4.1% in Sardegna and a maximum of 10.1% in Abruzzo.

For the group of children born to at least one foreign parent, in first place are those born to couples in which at least one parent is Romanian (10,532 births in 2024), followed by those with at least one Moroccan (9,448) and Albanian parent (9,115) (Figure 1). Regarding these three nationalities, on average, about 60% of parents are both foreign, while 40% are in mixed couples. When examining individual nationalities, the highest proportion of children born to parents who are both foreign, out of the total number of children born to at least one foreign parent, is observed for Nigerian nationality (91.1% of cases). Regarding the proportion of children born to mixed couples, the highest percentage is recorded for Ukrainian nationality (52.9%, of which 48.0% are composed of a Ukrainian mother and an Italian father). As for mixed couples in which the father is foreign, the percentage is highest for Tunisian citizenship (17.1%).

FIGURE 1. BIRTHS WITH AT LEAST ONE FOREIGN PARENT FOR THE TOP 15 COUNTRIES OF CITIZENSHIP (a)
Year 2024, absolute values and percentage composition



(a) The 15 countries of citizenship refer to the countries with the highest number of births to at least one foreign parent in Italy.

The trend of having children outside of marriage is becoming increasingly common among young people.

In a context of declining births, in 2024, as already observed in 2023, births to unmarried couples also decreased, albeit to a lesser extent than births to married couples. Children born outside marriage, which increased by more than 46 thousand between 2008 and 2024, stand at 159,671 in 2024, down by 0.8% over 2023. Births within marriage, numbering 210,273 in 2024, decreased by 4.0% compared to the previous year. Despite an absolute reduction, the incidence of births to unmarried couples continues to grow: 43.2% in 2024, +0.8 percentage points over 2023 and +23.5 percentage points over 2008. In particular, the proportion of births to parents who have never been married increases compared to 2023 (from 35.9% in 2023 to 36.9% in 2024), while the proportion of births to couples in which at least one parent has been married before decrease, albeit slightly (from 6.5% in 2023 to 6.2% in 2024).

Differences between areas of the country remain, but they tend to narrow year after year. The highest proportion of children born to unmarried parents is observed in the Centre (49.6%), followed by the North (42.8%). The Mezzogiorno still has the lowest proportion but, thanks to an increase of 1.8 percentage points, it has reached 40.3%, continuing to reduce the gap with the other areas.

The region with the highest proportion of births outside marriage is Sardegna (56.6%). In the Centre, Umbria (stable at 50.7%) and Lazio (50.6%) stand out; in the North, Valle d'Aosta/*Vallée d'Aoste* (stable at 49.3%) and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/*Bozen* (49.0%). In Mezzogiorno, the highest proportion is observed in Abruzzo (47.5%). The lowest percentages are recorded in Basilicata (30.0%) and Calabria (33.4%).

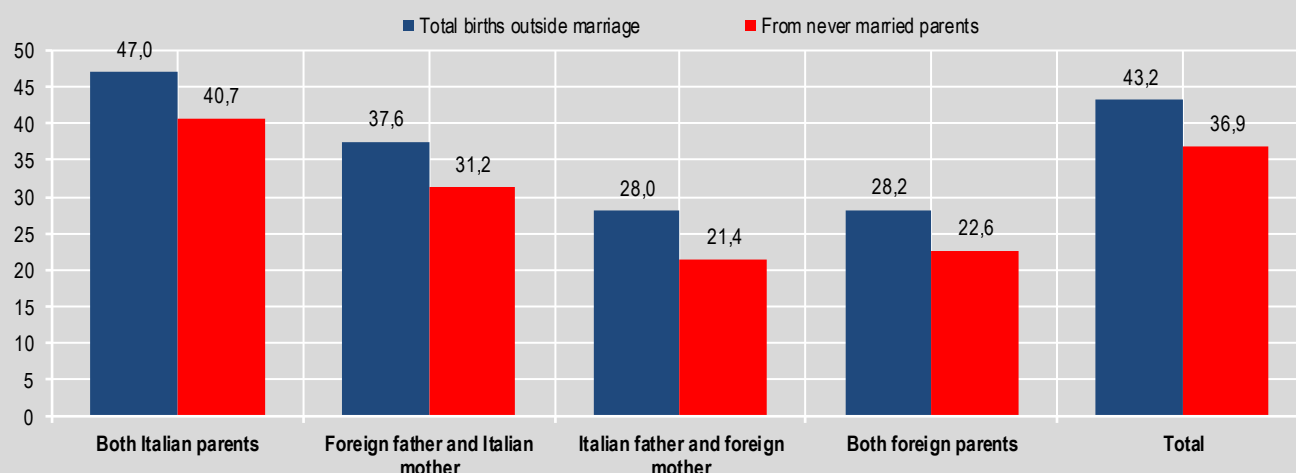
The incidence of births outside marriage is highest among parents who are both Italian, reaching 47.0% in 2024. In mixed couples, the incidence of births outside marriage is higher if the father has foreign citizenship (37.6%) than if the mother has foreign nationality (28.0%). For children born to parents who are both foreign nationals, the rate is 28.2%, 18.8 percentage points lower than the incidence observed among children born to Italian couples (Figure 2).

The trend of having children outside of marriage is particularly widespread among young people: 61.7% for mothers up to 24 years of age and 43.6% for those between 25 and 34 years of age. However, if both partners in the couple are Italian, these percentages rise to 77.1% and 48.1% respectively. Finally, after the age of 34, the proportion of children born outside marriage stands at 38.5% for all couples and 40.8% for Italian couples only.

Births outside marriage mostly concern couples who have never been married (85.6% of the nearly 160 thousand *more uxorio* births in 2024), confirming an increasingly widespread tendency not to consider marriage a necessary condition for having children. Among mothers aged up to 24, for example, the proportion of births to parents who have never been married represents 57.3% of the total, compared with 38.5% for those aged between 25 and 34 and 30.2% for mothers over the age of 34.

FIGURE 2. BIRTHS OUTSIDE MARRIAGE BY PARENTS' CITIZENSHIP

Year 2024, percentage values



Fertility at an all-time low

In 2024, the average number of children per woman stands at 1.18, down from the previous year (1.20) and below the all-time low of 1.19 children per woman in 1995. It is therefore well below the maximum value for the new millennium, equal to 1.44 children per woman recorded in 2010.

The decline in fertility is due to both Italian and foreign women. In 2024, the average number of children for the latter is 1.79; this value is higher than that of Italian women, but down from 1.82 in 2023 and, more significantly, from 2.31 in 2010. The fertility rate of Italian women in 2024 is equal to 1.11 (in 2023 it was 1.14 and in 2010 it was 1.33).

The decline in fertility is observed throughout the country. The Centre, which has the lowest fertility rate, records the slightest decrease, from 1.12 in 2023 to 1.11 in 2024. In the North, the average number of children per woman decreases from 1.21 in 2023 to 1.19 in 2024, while in the Mezzogiorno it falls from 1.24 to 1.20. The autonomous province of Bolzano/*Bozen* continues to have the highest fertility rate, at 1.51 (down from 1.57 in 2023). It is followed by the autonomous province of Trento and Sicilia (1.27), Campania (1.26) and Calabria (1.24). Sardegna continues to be the region with the lowest total fertility rate, below one (0.91) but stable compared to 2023.

In the period January-July 2025, based on preliminary data on births and estimates that can be made on this basis, the average number of children per woman continues to decline. In the first seven months of 2025, fertility is estimated at 1.13 children per woman, a sharp decrease compared to the same period in 2024 and 2023 (1.21) (Table 2). The Centre continues to be the area with the lowest fertility rate (1.04), followed by the North and Mezzogiorno (1.15 and 1.16 respectively). Sardegna, with a fertility rate of 0.86, and the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/*Bozen*, with a provisional rate of 1.55, remain the regions with the lowest and highest fertility rates, respectively, in the first seven months of 2025. The autonomous provinces of Bolzano/*Bozen* and Trento, Valle d'Aosta/*Vallée d'Aoste* and Basilicata are the only areas where there was a slight increase in fertility in the first seven months of 2025 compared with the same period of the previous year.

Period fertility, measured by the average number of children per woman in a given calendar year, summarises the reproductive behaviour of different generations, reflecting the phenomena of postponement or recovery of reproductive choices. Fertility by mothers' birth cohort, on the other hand, measures the propensity to have children among different generations. The analysis for generations of women who have completed their reproductive period (15-49 years) shows a steady decline in fertility: from 2.01 children per woman in the 1947 generation (the last to have reached the so-called generational replacement threshold) to 1.44 for women born in 1975 (who turned 49 in 2024). The decline in fertility per cohort is associated with an increase in the number of women without children. While this figure stands at 10% for women born in 1947, in the 1975 cohort, women without children account for almost a quarter of the total (23.0%). This increase reflects the challenges associated with having children but also suggests the emergence of lifestyle choices that involve alternatives to parenthood.

TABLE 2. AVERAGE NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER WOMAN, ANNUAL YEARS (years 2023-2024) AND ESTIMATES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY-JULY (years 2023-2025).

Regions	Annual data		Period January-July			Regions	Annual data		Period January-July		
	2023	2024	2023	2024	2025 (a)		2023	2024	2023	2024	2025 (a)
Piedmont	1.17	1.14	1.18	1.19	1.09	Abruzzo	1.14	1.12	1.15	1.16	1.04
Valle d'Aosta/Vallée d'Aoste	1.17	1.05	1.15	1.11	1.15	Molise	1.10	1.05	1.14	1.08	1.03
Liguria	1.17	1.17	1.17	1.21	1.11	Campania	1.29	1.26	1.30	1.30	1.22
Lombardia	1.21	1.19	1.22	1.22	1.16	Puglia	1.20	1.16	1.21	1.19	1.12
Prov. Aut. di Bolzano/Bozen	1.57	1.51	1.60	1.53	1.55	Basilicata	1.09	1.09	1.12	1.08	1.09
Prov. Aut. di Trento	1.28	1.27	1.27	1.26	1.27	Calabria	1.28	1.24	1.29	1.29	1.19
Veneto	1.21	1.20	1.23	1.25	1.15	Sicilia	1.32	1.27	1.33	1.31	1.23
Friuli-Venezia Giulia	1.21	1.19	1.24	1.22	1.13	Sardegna	0.91	0.91	0.91	0.94	0.86
Emilia-Romagna	1.22	1.19	1.24	1.23	1.13	North-west	1.20	1.18	1.20	1.21	1.14
Toscana	1.12	1.12	1.13	1.16	1.06	North-east	1.24	1.21	1.25	1.25	1.17
Umbria	1.11	1.11	1.12	1.17	1.05	Centre	1.12	1.11	1.14	1.14	1.04
Marche	1.17	1.11	1.16	1.13	1.12	South	1.24	1.21	1.25	1.24	1.16
Lazio	1.11	1.10	1.14	1.12	1.01	Islands	1.23	1.19	1.24	1.23	1.15
						ITALY	1.20	1.18	1.21	1.21	1.13

(a) estimates on provisional data.

The postponement of births continues

In 2024, the mean age at childbirth reached 32.6 years, slightly up on the previous year (32.5), but almost three years higher than in 1995. Limiting the analysis to first-born children only, on average, in 2024, women in Italy became mothers for the first time at almost 32 years of age (31.9). The mean age at first birth was 31.7 in 2023 and less than 30 (28.1) in 1995. The postponement of childbirth to increasingly advanced ages is closely linked to the general decline in fertility, since the longer the decision to become a parent is delayed, the shorter the time available for realising family plans.

The increase in the mean age at childbirth in 2024 is observed among both foreign and Italian women. For the latter, it rises from 33.0 years in 2023 to 33.1 in 2024. The mean age at childbirth for foreign women continues to be below 30 years, increasing from 29.6 to 29.7.

The shift in fertility towards increasingly mature ages is evident when comparing fertility rates by mother's age in time series. Compared to 1995, age-specific fertility rates are higher among women over 30 and lower among younger women (Figure 3).

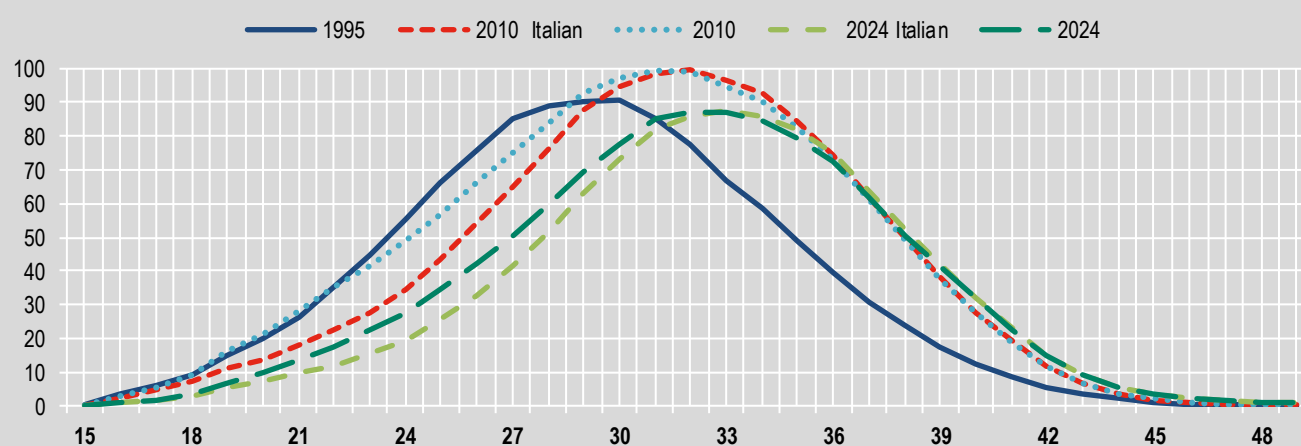
At the regional level, the mean age at childbirth continues to be higher in the Centre and North (33.0 and 32.7 years) than in the Mezzogiorno (32.3). Lazio, Basilicata and Sardegna are the regions with the highest average age at childbirth (33.2 years in all three regions), while Sicilia is still the region with the youngest mothers (31.7 years in 2024, stable compared to 2023). In the North, the highest mean age at childbirth is recorded in Lombardia (32.8 years), followed by the Autonomous Province of Trento and Veneto (32.7 years in both), while the lowest is recorded in the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen (stable at 31.9 years). In the Mezzogiorno, in addition to Sardegna and Basilicata, Molise also has a rather delayed reproductive calendar (33.1 years).

The extent to which postponement and decline in fertility are linked is evident in the case of the Islands, with Sardegna having the lowest and latest fertility, and Sicilia, with the youngest mothers in Italy, having one of the highest fertility rates in the country, albeit also in decline.

The postponement of parenthood to increasingly mature ages is also evident from the analysis by generation. For the 1975 cohort, which completed its reproductive life in 2024, the average age at childbirth was 31.4 years, with women becoming mothers for the first time at 30.0 years. For women born in 1947, the last to have recorded fertility at the end of their reproductive life equal to the replacement level (2.01), the average age at childbirth was 26.9 years and that at the birth of the first child was 24.8 years.

FIGURE 3. AGE-SPECIFIC FERTILITY RATES

Years 1995, 2010 (Italian and total) and 2024 (Italian and total) (a), values per 1.000 women



(a) estimate

Leonardo and Sofia continue to be popular names for newborns in 2024.

The most popular male name chosen by parents at national level continues to be Leonardo, which maintains the record it achieved in 2018; Edoardo remains in second position. Tommaso also remains stable in third position, while Francesco, which already dropped out of the top three last year, loses another two positions and now ranks sixth (Figure 4).

The situation remains unchanged from 2023 in the top five female names, with Sofia in first position, Aurora in second, Ginevra in third, and Vittoria and Giulia in fourth and fifth position, respectively.

Leonardo ranks first in all northern regions, except for the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/*Bozen*, where Noah ranks first, and in Valle d'Aosta/*Vallée d'Aoste*, where Edoardo and Tommaso share the first place. Leonardo also ranks first in the Centre (except for Umbria and Marche, where Edoardo ranks first). In the South, where nothing has changed since 2023, Leonardo continues to be the preferred name only in Abruzzo. Francesco remains stable in first position in Molise, Puglia and Calabria, while Antonio leads in Campania and Basilicata. In the two Islands, Leonardo returns to first position.

Among female names, Sofia ranks first in many regions of the Centre-North, except for the Autonomous Province of Bolzano/*Bozen* where Emma continues to rank first, Valle d'Aosta/*Vallée d'Aoste* with Beatrice, Marche and Lazio, where Vittoria and Ginevra rank first respectively. The situation is more mixed in the Mezzogiorno, where Sofia ranks first only in Puglia and Sardegna; Aurora ranks first in Sicilia and Abruzzo (here together with Sofia); Giulia ranks first only in Basilicata, Vittoria only in Campania and Ginevra only in Calabria. In Molise, Aurora, Beatrice and Ginevra rank first together.

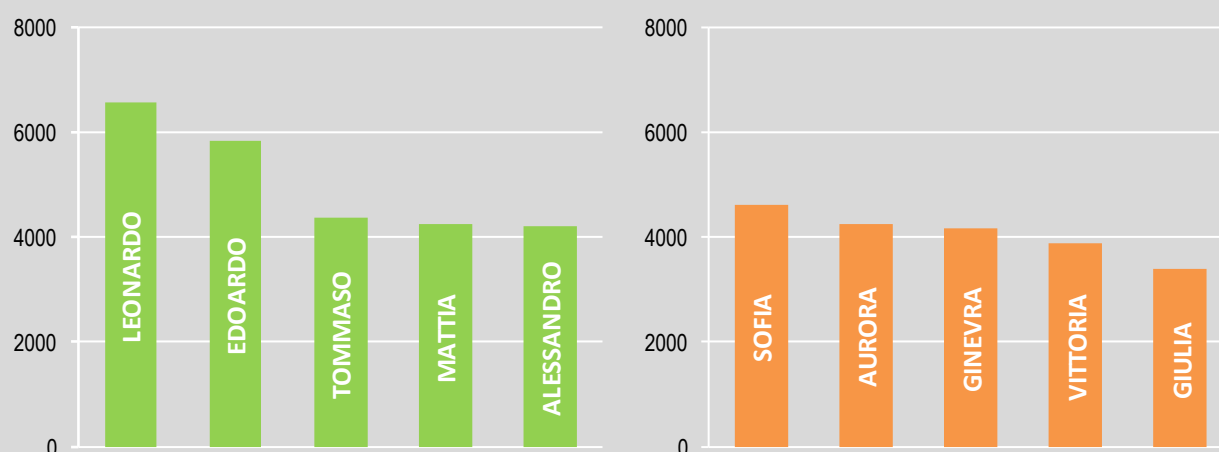
Foreign children born to parents residing in Italy are mainly called Rayan, Adam, Amir, Liam, but also Matteo and Leonardo. Among foreign-born females, as among Italian ones, Sofia is the most popular name, followed by Sara and Amira.

The preferences of foreign parents differ depending on their nationality. Considering the four nationalities with the highest number of children born to foreign parents, the tendency to choose a name that is common in the host country for their children continues to be more pronounced in the Romanian community. In fact, among the most frequent names for Romanian male births are Matteo, Luca and Leonardo, while for females we find Sofia, Melissa and Eva Maria. Albanian parents are more inclined to choose names from their country of origin when it comes to the sons (mainly Amar, Liam and Aron), less so in the case of the daughters (Luna, Emily and Amelia).

Behaviour linked to the traditions of the country of origin can be seen among parents from Morocco and Bangladesh. Moroccan male births are mainly called Adam, Amir and Rayan; Moroccan female births are called Amira, Sara and Nour. Parents from Bangladesh mainly choose Abdullah, Ayan and Anas for the sons and Anabia, Sara, Inaya and Anaya for the daughters.

FIGURE 4. THE FIVE MOST COMMON MALE AND FEMALE NAMES AMONG BIRTHS

Year 2024, absolute values



The diffusion of births with double surnames continues

Analysis of births data allows to verify the extent to which the new legislation on the attribution of the mother's surname to the child (Constitutional Court sentence no. 286 of 21 December 2016) has been accepted by parents in Italy.

In 2024, births registered with both father's and mother's surnames account for 6.7% of the total, an increase of 4.3 percentage points over 2020. Although an increase was observed in all geographical areas, the phenomenon continues to be more significant in the Centre-North: here, in 2024, percentages exceeded 8% (8.6 in the North and 8.3 in the Centre), while the Mezzogiorno stands at 6.4%.

The percentage of children born with a double surname is higher among first children (9.2% in 2024, +6.3 percentage points over 2020) than among second order births (4.7%) or third and subsequent order births (3.0%). The reason for this difference can be attributed to the fact that parents of first children are more inclined to take the opportunity to give their child a double surname, compared to those who, having already had other children before the legislative change, prefer to continue with the choice of giving only the father's surname.

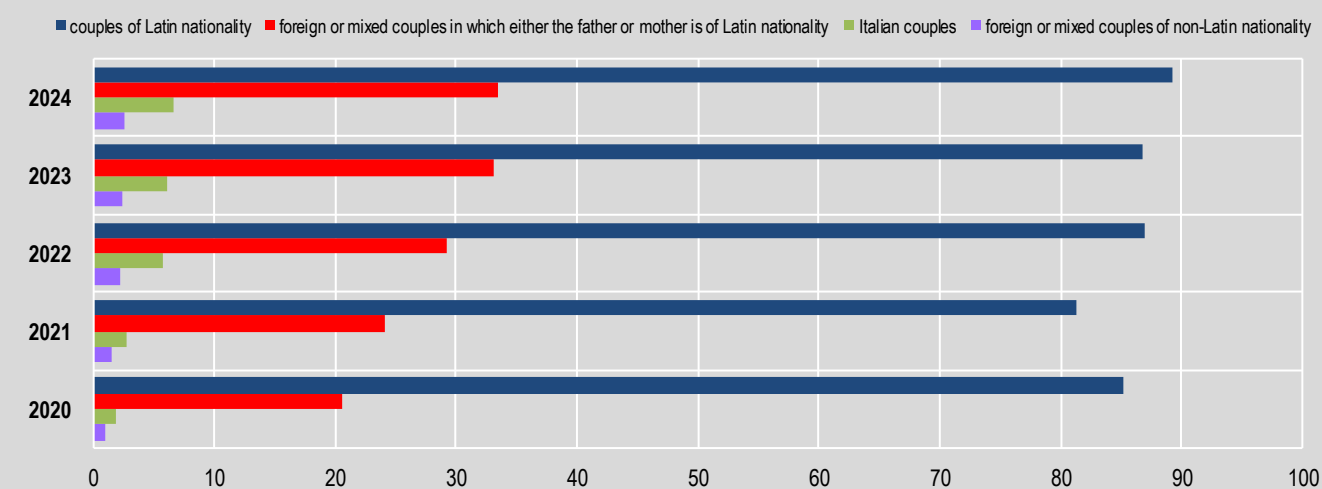
Married couples are less likely to give their children a double surname, with only 5.3% doing so in 2024 (compared to 4.9% in 2023). Among unmarried couples, the proportion rises to 8.5%.

Regarding the parents' citizenship, there are significant differences. The choice of a double surname is influenced by the legislation and cultural traditions in use in the parents' countries of origin, which are not uniform from one country to another. The highest percentage of double surnames is found among children born to mixed couples consisting of an Italian mother and a foreign father (14.1% in 2024). This is followed by children born to couples where the mother is foreign and the father is Italian (7.1%), while the percentage for Italian couples is 6.6% (a slight increase compared to 2023, when it was 6.1%). At the bottom of the list are couples where both parents are foreign; among these, only 5.2% give their children a double surname.

However, if we consider only those foreign and mixed couples in which at least one parent is of Latin American origin (Spain, Portugal and Central and South America), the number of children born with double surnames is much higher. In these countries, in fact, the rule of double surnames applies, making it compulsory for children to take the first surname of both parents. This is a practice that these parents have maintained even after deciding to come and live in Italy, which is why it was already very common in 2020 and has remained almost unchanged in subsequent years. If both parents are Latin, the percentage of children born with a double surname is 89.3%, while if only one of the parents is Latin, the percentage drops to 33.4% (Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. BIRTHS WITH DOUBLE SURNAME BY PARENTS' CITIZENSHIP

Years 2020-2024, percentage values



Glossary

Citizenship: legal bond between an individual and a State, required and documented for the exercise of rights and subjection to particular duties.

Foreign resident: a person with foreign citizenship or who is stateless.

Mean age at childbirth: the mean age at birth of mothers expressed in years and tenths of a year. The indicator is calculated for the female population in the ages 15-49 years.

Fertility rate by age (age-specific fertility rate): the ratio between the number of live births to women aged between x and $x+1$ and the average number of resident women of that age in a year.

Birth rate: ratio of the number of live births for the year to the average population, multiplied by 1,000.

Births outside marriage: births to parents who are not married to each other.

Births to never-married parents: births to parents who have never been married.

Births to mixed couples: births with Italian citizenship who have one Italian parent and one foreign parent.

Foreign births: births to parents who are both foreign nationals.

Births to at least one foreign parent: total number of foreign births plus births to mixed couples.

Average number of children per woman (or total fertility rate): sum of specific fertility rates calculated by relating, for each childbearing age (15-49 years), the number of live births to the average annual female population.

Resident population: persons who are normally resident in a Municipality, even if they are absent because they are temporarily present in another municipality or abroad.

Marital status: the status of each citizen in relation to the State regarding marriage or civil union. A citizen who has never been married or entered into a civil partnership is defined as never-married; a citizen who is married and has not obtained the dissolution or termination of the civil effects of marriage is defined as married; a citizen who is married and has obtained the dissolution or termination of the civil effects of marriage is defined as divorced; a widowed citizen is one whose marriage has ended due to the death of their spouse; a citizen in a civil union who has not obtained the dissolution of the civil union is defined as being in a civil union; a citizen in a civil union who has obtained the dissolution of the civil partnership is considered as having been in a civil union (due to the dissolution of the union); a citizen whose union has ended due to the death of their partner is defined as already civilly united (due to the death of their partner).

Nota metodologica

Normative framework

The national normative framework refers to:

Law 24 december 1954, n. 1228 “Ordinamento delle anagrafi della popolazione residente”.

D.P.R. Decree of the President of the Republic 30 May 1989, n. 223 “Approvazione del nuovo regolamento anagrafico della popolazione residente”.

Law 27 October 1988, n. 470 “Anagrafe e censimento degli italiani all'estero”.

D.P.R. Decree of the President of the Republic 6 settembre 1989, n. 323 “Approvazione del regolamento per l'esecuzione della legge 27 ottobre 1988, n. 470, sull'Anagrafe ed il censimento degli italiani all'estero”.

At European level:

Regulation (EU) n. 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on “European demographic statistics”.

Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) n. 205/2014 of 4 March 2014 on “laying down uniformed conditions for the implementation of Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament and the Council on European demographic statistics, as regards breakdowns of data, deadlines and data revisions”.

The data collection is part of the official statistics information, as it is included in the National Statistical Programme.

Description of sources

The systematic collection of births among the resident population is carried out through the National Register of the Resident Population (ANPR) administrative system.

Complementary sources are:

Provisional estimates of demographic and social indicators.

Permanent census of population and housing.

Intercensal reconstruction of the resident population by age, sex and municipality. Years 2002-2019.

Reconstruction of the demographic balance, years 2001-2018.

Survey design, population, unit of analysis and unit of measurement

The collection is exhaustive and takes place annually. From 2020 onwards, the reference year for the collection is the year of the event; in previous years, the reference year was the year of registration in the Population Register.

The survey units are the Population Registers of Italian municipalities where live births are registered as residents.

The analysis units are live births (in Italy or abroad) residing in municipalities following registration in the Population Register at birth.

Data collection

Currently, all data is collected electronically, through the accounting of individual models relating to birth registrations acquired through notifications sent by Italian municipalities to the ANPR (National Register of Resident Population) system.

The variables are, for the birth, name, gender, place of residence and birth, citizenship, birth order and marital status of parents (births to married or unmarried parents) and, for the parents, citizenship, marital status and age.

Classification systems used

Two Istat classifications are used:

The classification of municipal codes (Istat codes with 6 numbers with provincial and municipal code): <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/6789>

The classification of foreign countries (Istat codes with 3 numbers) for the unique coding of foreign citizenships: <https://www.istat.it/it/archivio/6747>

Data elaboration techniques and tools

The variable 'birth order', not being directly measured, is estimated based on the variable 'number of minor children' reconstructed using municipal registry lists (LAC).

Output

For the study of demographic determinants of births, data are published on live births by age of the mother, by age and citizenship of the mother, by birth order of the child, by foreign country of citizenship of the foreign-born child, and by citizenship of the parents. The information provided is produced through numerous classifications of live births, including with respect to various socio-demographic variables of the parents (age, marital status of the parents).

For the study of the demographic determinants of fertility, the commonly used indicators are:

Total fertility rate, which measures fertility intensity; it is calculated as the sum of specific fertility rates (f_x), obtained by comparing the number of live births to women aged between 15 and 49 with the average annual female population for each individual age (15-49 years); age-specific fertility rates and the total fertility rate are also calculated by birth order and by citizenship of the mother of the births.

Mean age at childbirth, which measures fertility calendar, is calculated as the sum of the products of individual fertile ages (for women between 15 and 49 years of age) and the corresponding specific fertility rates, relative to the average number of children per woman. The mean age at childbirth is also calculated by birth order and mother's citizenship.

Age-specific fertility rates (without distinction by birth order and father's citizenship) are also calculated with reference to the male population. In this way, the mean age at childbirth is also provided for fathers.

Confidentiality

In compliance with regulations on statistical confidentiality and personal data protection, the basic data collected during the process may be made available to users who specifically request it and released in anonymous form.

Dissemination and timeliness

At the end of the data collection process, the results are published annually in final form in the Statistical Report entitled "Births and fertility rates of the resident population".

The main results are available on the datawarehouse I.Stat at <http://dati.istat.it/> and on the thematic site Demo at <http://demo.istat.it/>.

Some of the data can also be consulted on the Eurostat website in accordance with European Regulation 1260/2013 on demographic statistics.

Annual overview data are published in the Annuario statistico italiano and in the Istat publication "Noi Italia": <http://noi-italia.istat.it/>.

For the various dissemination channels, the time between the reference year of the investigation and the dissemination of the results is approximately eleven months.

Territorial detail

The data are collected at the municipal level. Statistics are available at national, geographical distribution, regional and provincial levels. Only some statistics are disseminated at the level of provincial capitals.

For technical and methodological information

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