

### Fewer marriages, more divorces

In 2001, there were 5 marriages per 1000 inhabitants in the 15 nations of the European Union (EU-15) in contrast to over 6 in 1980. Several countries show either small increases or small decreases. Divorce rates have risen steadily from 1.4 per 1000 inhabitants in 1980 to 1.9 in 2001. Virtually all couples are married in the southern European member nations but marriage is less likely in many others. About 33% of young couples in the European Union are cohabiting compared to 6.3 percent of American young couples.

**Table 2.16: Marriage and divorce**

	Marriage		Crude marriage rate			Divorces		Crude divorce rate		
	(1000)		(per 1,000 population)			(1000)		(per 1,000 population)		
	1980	2002	1980	2001	2002	1980	2002	1980	2001	2002
EU-15	2 247.9	1 831.1 <sup>c</sup>	6.3	4.8 <sup>c</sup>	4.8 <sup>c</sup>	503.3	715.0 <sup>1p</sup>	1.4	1.9 <sup>c</sup>	:
Belgium	66.4	40.5 <sup>p</sup>	6.7	4.1	3.9 <sup>p</sup>	14.5	30.6 <sup>p</sup>	1.5	2.8	3.0 <sup>p</sup>
Denmark	26.4 <sup>5</sup>	37.2 <sup>5</sup>	5.2	6.8	6.9	13.6	15.3	2.7	2.7	2.8
Germany	496.6	388.3 <sup>p</sup>	6.3	4.7 <sup>p</sup>	4.7 <sup>*</sup>	141.0	197.5 <sup>1</sup>	1.8	2.4 <sup>p</sup>	:
Greece	62.4	57.0 <sup>*</sup>	6.5	5.5 <sup>p</sup>	5.2 <sup>*</sup>	6.7	12.0 <sup>*</sup>	0.7	1.1 <sup>p</sup>	1.1 <sup>*</sup>
Spain	220.7	206.3 <sup>1p</sup>	5.9	5.1 <sup>p</sup>	:	-	37.6 <sup>1</sup>	-	0.9	:
France	334.4	280.6 <sup>p</sup>	6.2	4.9 <sup>p</sup>	4.7 <sup>p</sup>	81.1	112.6 <sup>1p</sup>	1.5	1.9 <sup>p</sup>	:
Ireland	21.8	20.0 <sup>p</sup>	6.4	5.0 <sup>*</sup>	5.1 <sup>*</sup>	-	2.8 <sup>1</sup>	-	0.7 <sup>*</sup>	:
Italy	323.0	265.8 <sup>*</sup>	5.7	4.5 <sup>*</sup>	4.7 <sup>*</sup>	11.8	40.2 <sup>p</sup>	0.2	0.7 <sup>*</sup>	0.7 <sup>*</sup>
Luxembourg	2.1	2.0	5.9	4.5	4.5	0.6	1.1	1.6	2.3	2.4
Netherlands	90.2	89.3 <sup>p</sup>	6.4	5.0	5.5 <sup>p</sup>	25.7	33.6 <sup>p</sup>	1.8	2.3	2.1 <sup>p</sup>
Austria	46.4	36.6	6.2	4.2	4.5 <sup>c</sup>	13.3	19.6	1.8	2.5	2.4 <sup>c</sup>
Portugal	72.2	56.5 <sup>p</sup>	7.4	5.7	5.4 <sup>*</sup>	5.8	26.8 <sup>p</sup>	0.6	1.8	2.6 <sup>*</sup>
Finland	29.4 <sup>6</sup>	27.0 <sup>6</sup>	6.1	4.8	5.2	9.5	13.3	2.0	2.6	2.6
Sweden	37.6 <sup>6</sup>	38.0 <sup>6</sup>	4.5	4.0	4.3	19.9	21.3	2.4	2.4	2.4
United Kingdom	418.4	286.1 <sup>1p</sup>	7.4	4.8	:	159.7	156.8 <sup>1</sup>	2.8	2.6	:

Sources: Eurostat (2003). *Statistics in focus*, Population and Social Conditions, Theme 3 – 20/2003. Luxembourg.

Notes: The crude marriage/divorce rates are the ratios of the number of marriages/divorces to the mean population in a given year.

<sup>p</sup> provisional data <sup>\*</sup> national estimate <sup>c</sup> Eurostat estimate

<sup>1</sup> 2001

<sup>5</sup> marriages in which at least one spouse was resident in the country

<sup>6</sup> marriages of women resident in the country