

Changes in marital status 2020

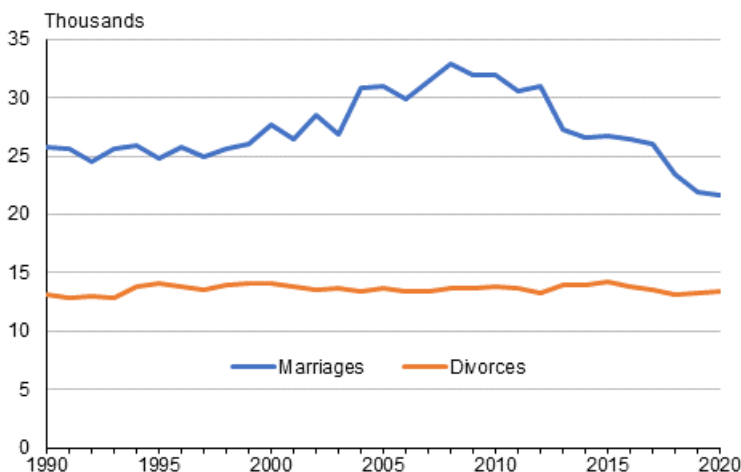
Decrease in the number of marriages contracted slowed down

Corrected on 18 June 2021. The corrected figures in the text are indicated in red. A figure in the release has also been corrected.

According to Statistics Finland’s data on population changes, 22,082 marriages were entered into in 2020, the number was 22,296 in the year before. The number of marriages entered into decreased by only 214 in a year, while the number went down by 1,503 in the year before. A total of 21,687 marriages between opposite-sex couples were entered into, which is 233 fewer than in the year before. Same-sex partners entered into 395 marriages, 19 more than in the previous year.

The statistical method for calculating the total number of annually contracted marriages and divorces was changed starting from the statistics for 2017 so that the statistics include all marriages and divorces where at least one of the spouses resides permanently in Finland on the day of the event. In 1980 to 2016, the total number consisted of cases where the woman was permanently residing in Finland on the day of marriage or divorce. In the figure and Table [121e](#) the number of contracted marriages and divorces is presented with the revised statistical method retrospectively starting from 1990. In order for the numbers for different years to be comparable, the figures for 2017 to 2020 do not include same-sex marriages, which numbered 554, 387 and 395 in the above-mentioned years, or divorces, which amounted to 2, 29, 54 and 88.

Number of marriages and divorces 1990–2020, opposite-sex couples

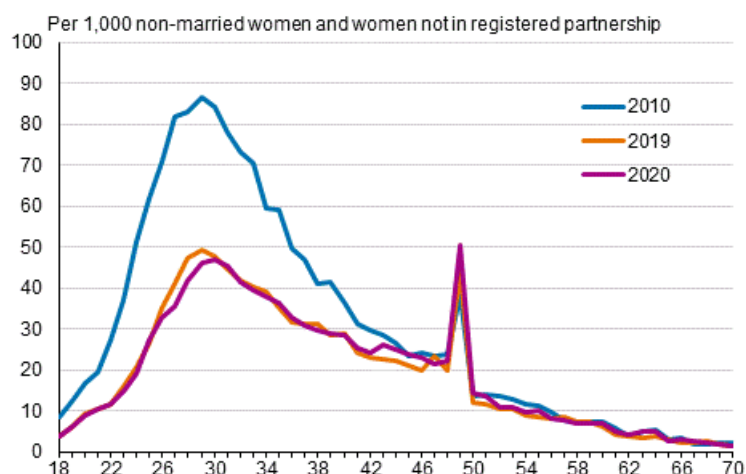


The marriage rate of opposite-sex couples, i.e. the ratio of persons who have entered into marriage of those who could marry, has decreased nearly continuously since 2008. In 2020, women’s decrease in the marriage rate halted, while the marriage rate for men continued to fall. In 2020, women’s marriage rate was 15.7 per one thousand women of age living in a non-married and non-registered partnership, which is the same as one year previously. The corresponding rate for men was 16.9 per cent, which was 0.4 percentage points lower than in the previous year.

The growth in women’s marriage rate in the 43 to 46 and 48 to 50 age groups has most effect on that the decrease in the marriage rate among women halted in 2020. The marriage rate decreased for men in almost all age groups compared with the previous year. As an exception to above, the marriage rate grew slightly in the age group of men aged 50 to 54 (Appendix figure 2, marriage rate for men).

As with women, the marriage rate of men aged 49 differs clearly from the normal marriage age model, according to which the marriage rate decreases with age. The strong rise in the marriage rate for 49-year-olds is explained by the foundations of the survivor’s pension, by which getting married before the age of 50 is of key importance (Survivor's pension, Act 2007/568).

Marriage rate by age of woman 2010, 2019 and 2020, opposite-sex couples



Rise in the age at the time of first marriage continued

In 2020, the average age of women and men entering into their first marriage rose for opposite-sex couples. The average age of women was 32.6 years, in the previous year 32.1, and that of men 34.7 years, in the year before 34.2. The average age of women entering into their second marriage was 45.5 years and it rose by four-tenths from the year before. The corresponding average age of men was 48.7 years, up by seven-tenths in a year.

In 2020, the average age in marriages between two women was 35.8 years, the same as one year earlier. Correspondingly, the average age in marriages between two men was 42.2 years, five-tenths higher than in the previous year.

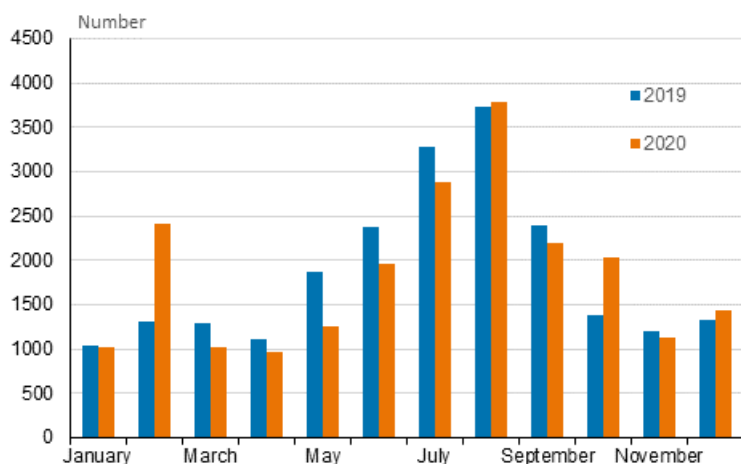
Number of remarriages slightly higher than before

The year 2020 was the third year when the number of remarried women grew slightly from the previous year. The number of remarriages also grew slightly among men. For both women and men, the share of first marriages in all marriages entered into decreased to 73 per cent.

Twenty-two per cent of all marriages contracted by women were second marriages, and nearly four per cent were third marriages. The corresponding shares for men were of the same magnitude.

August the most popular month for marriage in 2020

Number of marriages by month 2019 and 2020, opposite-sex and same-sex couples (The figure was corrected on 18 Juni 2021)



The most popular month for entering into marriage in 2020 was August, when 3,780 couples got married. July was the second most popular with 2,888 couples. In the 2010s, July and August have alternated as the most popular month of marriage. In 2020, the third most popular month for getting married was exceptionally February.

In February 2020, nearly twice as many marriages were entered into as in the corresponding period of the previous year. On the other hand, the exceptional number in February is due to the “extra day”, the leap day, which has often been a popular day for marriage. In addition, February had one particularly popular wedding day, 20 February 2020, when 19 per cent of all marriages for the whole month were entered into.

The number of marriages entered into in August and October also grew clearly from the year before. Correspondingly, the exceptionally large number of those married in October is explained by one day, 10 October 2020. On 10 October, 30 per cent of all marriages entered into in October were contracted.

To counterbalance the previous exceptional months, the numbers of marriages entered into went down significantly in May to July compared to the previous year.

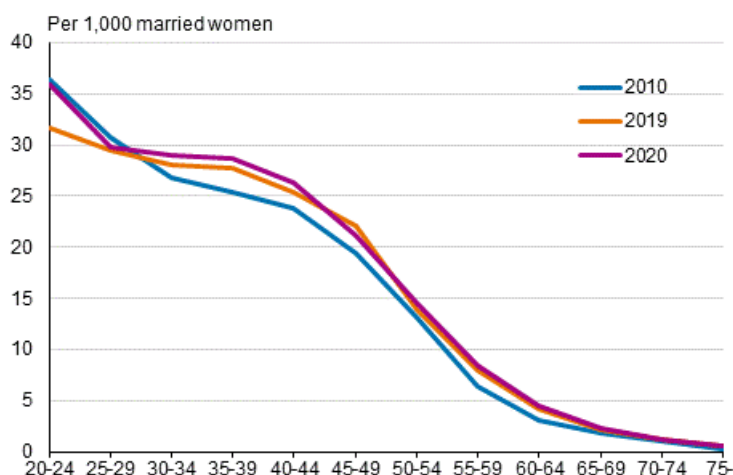
In 2020 the number of marriages entered into was highest on 8 August, when 705 couples were married. The second most marriages were entered into on 10 October, 583 couples, and the third most on 1 August, 467 couples.

Number of divorces grew slightly

In 2020, a total of 13,478 marriages ended in divorce. Except for 88 of them, all were divorces where the spouses were of opposite sexes. The number of divorces between opposite-sex spouses increased by 79 from the previous year. The annual number of divorces has fluctuated without a clear direction. The year 2020 was the second successive year when the number of divorces grew. The annual changes in the numbers have, however, been so small that the divorce rate, i.e. the number of divorces in relation to married persons, has remained at the same level for over 20 years: 13 to 14 divorces per one thousand married women or men.

The divorce rate grew for women in nearly all age groups compared with the previous year. The divorce rate also increased for men in most age groups, with the exception of the 45 to 54 age group and those aged 65 or over, whose divorce rate decreased from the previous year (Appendix figure 3).

Divorce rate by age of woman 2010, 2019 and 2020, opposite-sex couples



In first marriages between opposite-sex spouses, the average age for women at the time of divorce was 41.1 years. The corresponding average age of men was 43.4 in 2020. The average ages of both sexes at the time of divorce remained unchanged from the year before..

Nearly 400 same-sex couples got married, almost 160 divorced

In 2020, same-sex partners entered into 395 marriages of which 123 were between two men and 272 between two women. The number increased only a little from the previous year when 376 marriages were contracted. Women entered into nine marriages more than in the previous year, men into 10 more.

The number of same-sex partnerships ending in divorce in 2015 to 2017 was close to 130. After that, the number of divorces has decreased. In 2019, they numbered 72 and in 2020 slightly fewer, 69. In order to gain a better understanding of the total number of divorces of same-sex couples, divorces of married same-sex couples, 88 in 2020, must be added to the figure above. Then the number is 157, which is clearly higher than the divorces of the previous year, 126. The sizeable increase in the number is due to growth in the number of same-sex divorces, from 54 to 88.

Although the number of divorces between same-sex couples was highest in statistical history, it was not in relative terms, 21 divorces per 1,000 married couples or registered partnerships. At its highest, the divorce rate was 29 in 2007. However, that year seems to have been an exceptional year, because in the year preceding it the figure was 15 and in the following year it fell to 17. In the last five years, the figure has varied between 18 and 22.

Twenty-one of same-sex partnerships that ended in divorce were between men and 48 between women in 2020. Correspondingly, 25 of same-sex marriages ending in divorce were between men and 63 between women.

Changes in marital status, mean age of men and women at first marriage in 2011–2020

	Year									
	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Contracted marriages	30 557	31 008	27 238	26 551	26 735	26 503	26 542	23 799	22 296	22 082
Divorces	13 681	13 251	13 989	13 915	14 170	13 775	13 485	13 145	13 365	13 478
Mean age at first marriage, opposite-sex couples, women	30,6	30,8	30,6	30,7	31,2	31,4	31,7	31,7	32,1	32,6
Mean age at first marriage, opposite-sex couples, men	32,9	33,1	32,8	32,9	33,4	33,7	33,9	33,9	34,2	34,7
Mean age at first divorce, opposite–sex couples, women	40,4	40,0	40,0	39,9	40,4	40,5	40,6	40,8	41,1	41,1
Mean age at first divorce, opposite-sex couples, men	42,7	42,3	42,3	42,3	42,8	42,8	42,9	43,0	43,4	43,4
¹⁾ Divorces, same-sex couples and divorces from registered partnerships	85	103	101	109	133	127	133	132	126	157

1) Until 2016 divorces from registered partnerships. From 2017 on divorces from same-sex marriages and divorces from registered partnerships.

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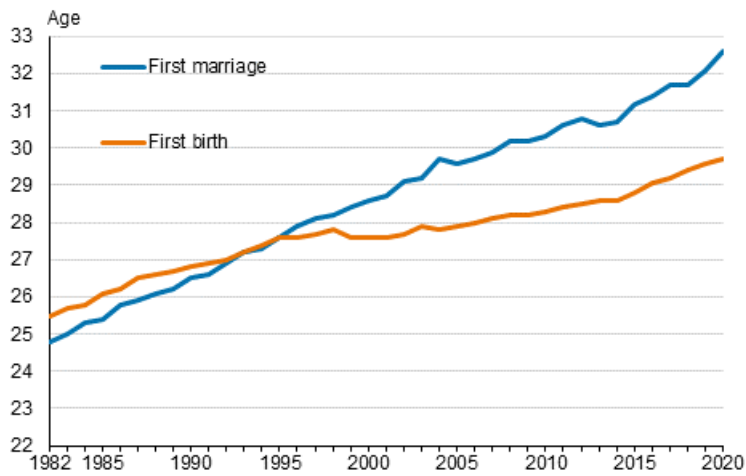
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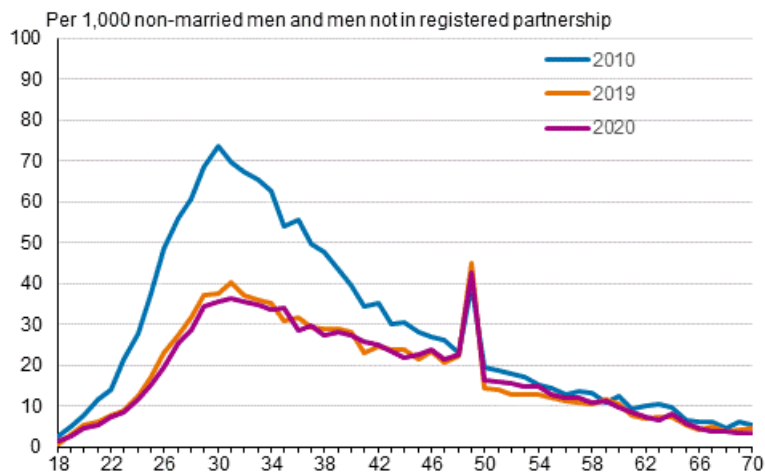
Appendix figures

Appendix figure 1. Average age of women at first marriage and at first live birth 1982–2020

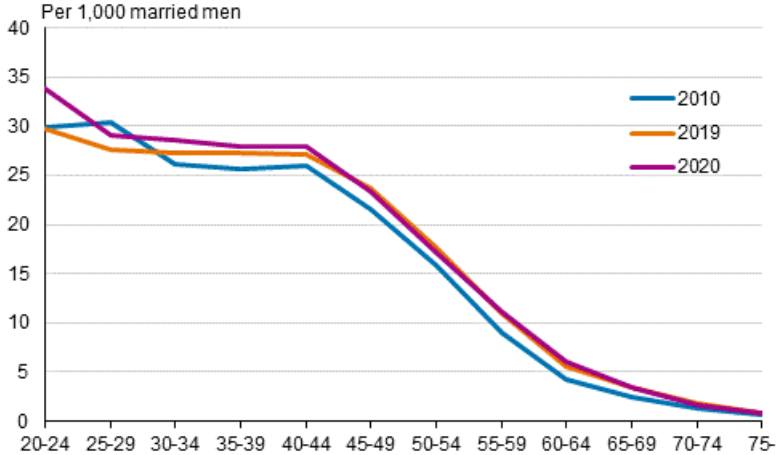


Age of women by first marriage, opposite-sex couples.

Appendix figure 2. Marriage rate by age of man 2010, 2019 and 2020, opposite-sex couples



Appendix figure 3. Divorce rate by age of man 2010, 2019 and 2020, opposite-sex couples



Quality description, changes in marital status

1. Relevance of statistical information

The main source used when producing Finnish population statistics is the Population Information System, which is maintained by the Digital and Population Data Services Agency and the State Department of Åland. The registration of the information is based on statutory notifications made by municipalities, private individuals and public authorities. Most of the information for the Population Information System is supplied directly by public authorities. For example, hospitals send information on births and deaths, and the names of baptised children are provided by parishes, which transfer the details directly from their own system as electronic data. In addition to the public authorities, information is also supplied by private individuals. The notification of move required when you move to a new home is the most common of these documents.

From 1975 Statistics Finland has obtained population data from the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

The last population registration was carried out in Finland on 1 January 1989. After that the Population Information System has been updated by notifications of changes. The data stored in the Population Information System are specified in the act on Population Information System and the certificate services of the Digital and Population Data Services Agency (21 August 2009/661). Notifications on population changes for the past year are expected by the last day of January of the following year.

Statistics Finland's function is to compile statistics on conditions in society (Statistics Finland Act of 24 January 1992/48). These also include demographic statistics.

In accordance with the Act on the Municipality of Domicile, the municipality of domicile and the place of residence of individuals are recorded in the Population Information System. The municipality in which a person lives or the one construed by the inhabitant as the municipality of domicile on the grounds of residence, family ties, livelihood or other equivalent circumstances, or to which the inhabitant has close links due to the aforementioned circumstances is deemed the municipality of domicile. (Act on the Municipality of Domicile, 201/1994.) The population registered in the Population Information System is divided into those present and those absent. Those present are permanent residents of Finland, either Finnish nationals or aliens. Those absent are Finnish nationals who when emigrating from the country have reported that they intend to be absent from Finland for more than one year, with the exception of Finnish nationals who are diplomats and those working in development co-operation (Act on the Municipality of Domicile, 201/1994.) Only changes in the population resident in Finland on 31 December are taken into account when compiling statistics on vital events. Persons moving to Finland from abroad are classified in the population statistics if the place of residence they have declared as their municipality of domicile is later confirmed as their place of residence.

Divorces

The divorce statistics are based on data on granted decrees of divorce transmitted to the Population Information System by district courts. The statistics also include cases where a permanent resident of Finland is granted a divorce by a foreign court. If the divorce is granted abroad, it must be reported to the register keeper for registration of divorce. Exceptions are divorces granted to Finnish citizens in Sweden, on which the Swedish register keeper notifies the Finnish counterpart directly.

A divorce granted to a Finnish citizen abroad usually requires validation by the Helsinki Court of Appeal before registration. Divorce decisions given in the Nordic Countries and in the EU countries as of 1 March 2001 can be registered without validation.

In 1980 to 2016, divorces referred to divorces of women living permanently in Finland unless otherwise stated. Starting from the statistical reference year 2017, divorces where at least one of the spouses has resided permanently in Finland on the day the divorce was granted are included in the statistics as divorces. The amendment to the Marriage Act that entered into force on 1 March 2017 enabled same-sex couples to enter into marriage (156/2015).

Since 2017, the total number of divorces consists of the number of divorces of marriages between opposite-sex and same-sex couples.

The amendment to the Marriage Act (411/1987), effective from the first of January 1988, simplified divorce proceedings. Divorce figures began to rise towards the end of 1988, when the first divorces (after a reconsideration period of six months) became effective under the amendment to Marriage Act. The Marriage Act no longer has regulations on "cancellation of marriage". Before the amendment to the act came into force in 1988 these were in separate groups, now among divorces.

The key figures defined below can be calculated for women and men, although they are defined to be calculated for women only.

The age-specific divorce rate indicates the number of divorced women per 1,000 married women of the mean population in the age group in question. The probability of divorce for women's first marriages where the spouses are of opposite sexes is produced by applying multistate life tables. The life tables are based on women's age-group specific marriage, mortality, widowhood and divorce rates in the statistical reference year regardless of the husband's age or whether the marriage is the first one or not for him.

Marital status

The marital status of a person refers to the status according to the Finnish Marriage Code (234/29). It should be noted that cohabiting is not a marital status. People representing all marital status categories may be cohabiting, including those who are still officially married.

Current divorce regulations no longer recognize the concept of legal separation. Those persons who are legally separated on the basis of the old divorce provisions prior to 1 January 1988 and still living apart have been slotted under married persons in the statistics.

The marital status classification is as follows: unmarried, married, divorced, widowed, partner in a registered partnership, dissolved registered partnership, widowed after a registered partnership.

Marriages

In 1980 to 2016, contracted marriages referred to marriages of women living permanently in Finland unless otherwise stated. Starting from the statistical reference year 2017, contracted marriages refer to marriages where at least one of the spouses has resided permanently in Finland on the day when the marriage was contracted. The amendment to the Marriage Act that entered into force on 1 March 2017 enabled same-sex couples to enter into marriage (156/2015). The number of marriages contracted annually is, thus, the number of marriages entered into by same-sex and opposite-sex spouses.

The number of men and women from marriages between opposite sexes is not the same because the number of contracted marriages where the parties are a woman living permanently in Finland and a man living permanently abroad is different than that where the parties are a man living permanently in Finland and a woman living permanently abroad.

As a result of the amendment to the Marriage Act, starting from 1 June 2019, a person under 18 years of age shall not marry in Finland (351/ 2019).

The key figures defined below can be calculated for women and men, although they are defined to be calculated for women only.

The age-specific marriage rate indicates the number of married women per 1,000 non-married women and women not in registered partnership of the mean population in the age group in question.

Registered partnership

“Registered partnership” refers to registered partnership of two persons of the same sex aged 18 or over (Act on Registered Partnerships of 9 Nov. 2001/950). Partnership is registered by an authority entitled to perform civil marriage ceremonies. Registered partnership is dissolved when one partner dies or is declared dead, or when it is dissolved by court order.

The possibility to register partnerships started in Finland on 1 March 2002 and ended on the last day of February 2017 (Act to amend the Act of Registered Partnerships 250/2016). Starting from the beginning of March 2017, same-sex couples have been able to enter into marriage (156/2015).

As a result of the amendment to the Marriage Act, parties to a partnership registered in Finland can convert their partnership into a marriage by making a joint notification of this to the local register office. A registered partnership continues as a marriage from the day on which the local register office has received the notification.

In the statistics, registered partnerships that have been converted into marriages based on such notification are not included as contracted marriages in the annual statistics.

2. Methodological description of survey

The main source used when producing Finnish population statistics is the Population Information System of the Digital and Population Data Services Agency and the State Department of Åland. The registration of the information is based on statutory notifications made by municipalities, private individuals and public authorities. For example, local courts take information of divorces dealt in the court into the Population Information System.

Statistics Finland receives the updated data on vital events on a weekly basis from the Digital and Population Data Services Agency.

The deadline for delivering data to Statistics Finland on vital events in the statistical year is the end of January of the following year. The exception to this is the data on stillbirths, which were expected by the end of September. Data on population changes in statistical year delivered to Statistics Finland after this date are included in the data of the following year. Data on events relating to the years statistical year – 4 through to statistical year – 1 and reported between February statistical year and January statistical year + 1 are included in the statistical year data.

Starting from the statistical reference year 2018, additions or corrections are expected to the background data in the population change data until the end of February following the statistical reference year. The total number of vital events established at the end of January does not change, however, but the aim of the additions and corrections is to improve the quality of the data.

3. Correctness and accuracy of data

In general, the Population Information System can be considered very exhaustive as regards persons. In order that a person obtains a personal identity code, he or she has to be registered in the Population Information System. It is practically impossible to live in Finland without a personal identity code. A personal identity code is needed so that one can work legally, open a bank account, have dealings with authorities and so on. It can be safely assumed that Finland cannot have any substantial numbers of ‘moonlighters’ who receive their pay in cash for periods of over one year, for example. Staying in Finland for at least one year is the prerequisite for registering into the population of Finland.

After abolishment of yearly checking of domicile registers (January 1) in 1989 the Population Information System has been maintained only by notifications of changes to population information. Their correctness is determined by a reliability survey made on the addresses in the Population Information System.

The Digital and Population Data Services Agency has charged Statistics Finland with the task of conducting a sample survey on correctness of address information. Around 11,000 people are asked whether their address in the Population Information System is correct. In the most recent survey in 2012, the address was correct for 98.9 per cent of the respondents.

4. Timeliness and promptness of published data

Final vital statistics are published yearly in April to August, except for those on stillbirths, which are available in October. Since 1999 the regional division used has been that of the first day of the following year. Thus the municipalities that unite on the first day of the new year are already combined in the statistics on the last day of the previous year. Information on the vital statistics of the united municipalities before the unification is available from 2003 onwards.

Preliminary population data by municipality are available by month.

5. Accessibility and transparency/clarity of data

Basic population data are available in electronic form by municipality or with larger regional divisions than municipality in Statistics Finland's free 'Population' online service (Statistical databases) at:

http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/tilastotietokannat/index_en.html

Population statistics from 1750 on have been digitised into PDF format in the National Library's Doria service.

[Publications on Population structure in Doria \(in Finnish\).](#)

[Publications on Vital statistics in Doria \(in Finnish\).](#)

[Publications on Population censuses in Doria \(in Finnish\).](#)

The chargeable information service contains more specified information about the population by sub-area of municipality, for example. More information about Statistics Finland's chargeable services is available at: <http://tilastokeskus.fi/tup/vaestotilastopalvelu/index.html> (in Finnish).

6. Comparability of statistics

Comparable regional vital statistics series are available from 1990. The tables always indicate which regional division is used.

Vital statistics data on the numbers of marriages contracted are available free from 1749 onwards. After the statistical revision of 1877 annual collection of data on divorces was also started.

The amendment to the Marriage Act on 1 March 2017 enabled same-sex couples to enter into marriage. This means that starting from 2017, the total number of marriages contracted during the year consists of contracted marriages of same-sex or opposite-sex couples.

From 1980 to 2016, the total number of marriages contracted during the year consisted of marriages where at least the wife was permanently residing in Finland. Starting from 2017, the total number of opposite-sex marriages contracted also includes marriages entered into where only the husband is permanently residing in Finland at the time the marriage was contracted. When applying the new calculation method it is possible to tabulate comparable numbers of opposite-sex marriages contracted retrospectively starting from 1990.

When tabulating data on changes in marital status by area, e.g. by municipality, in cases where the couple is permanently residing in Finland but the municipalities of residence of the spouses or the parties at the time of the event are not the same, in opposite-sex change events the municipality of residence of the woman is selected and in change events involving same-sex couples the municipality of residence of the younger spouse or party is selected. The principle of the procedure is the same as before. In other cases, the municipality of residence of the spouse or party who is permanently resident in Finland is used.

Data on the number of registered partnerships is available from 2002 to 2017 and on the number of divorces of registered partnerships from 2002 on. Data on the number of marriages and divorces between same-sex couples are available from 2017 onwards.

Vital statistics time series for the whole country is available from 1749.

7. Coherence and consistency/uniformity

Statistics Finland's other statistics use the data of demographic statistics as basic information on population. Consequently, Statistics Finland's other statistics correspond to demographic statistics.

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Source: Changes in marital status 2020. Statistics Finland