



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Divorces down in number

Statistics Netherlands estimates that the number of divorces for 1999 will be 31 thousand. This would be the lowest figure since 1993. Statistics Netherlands assumes that the positive economic developments and the increase in the number of unmarried couples living together has influenced the number of divorces.

Economic influences

In 1998 32 500 marriages ended in divorce. Statistics Netherlands estimates that this number will be down 5% in 1999. Part of the explanation is sought in the positive economic developments. A strong economy means fewer marriage dissolutions.

More unmarried people living together

The drop in the divorce rate is also linked to the fact that people marry later. An increasing number of young unmarried people decide to live together first before they decide to get married. Many relationships break up before marriage becomes an issue. The relationships of unmarried people are a lot less stable than those of married people. The probability of a relationship breaking up within five years is three times as high for people living together than for married people. Each year an estimated 30 thousand relationships end between people living together, which is about the same as the divorce rate.

More single people

Divorce is one reason for the increase in the number of single people. Statistics Netherlands expects the number of single women to double between now and 2025 from 200 to 400 thousand. The increase in single men is expected to rise from 200 to 350 thousand. This is because divorced men remarry more often or start living together more often than divorced women.

Statistics Netherlands
Press Office

P.O. Box 4000
2270 JM Voorburg
The Netherlands
tel. +31 70 337 58 16
fax +31 70 337 59 71
e-mail:
persdienst@cbs.nl

Statistics Netherlands
is a department of
the Ministry of
Economic Affairs

Middle-aged men have better chances of getting a new relationship than women that age. One reason is that the children often live with the mother after the divorce.

Reasons for divorce

Most divorced people name a number of causes for their divorce. Problems in the relationship is the reason they mention most frequently. More than half say they could no longer talk together or had a clash of characters. Far fewer mention problem situations. One in three mentions that they or their partner had a relationship with someone else. One in four sees sexual problems as the reason, and one in five name financial problems as the cause.

The reasons mentioned by unmarried people who used to live together are quite similar. One difference is that they often mention disagreement about the future as the cause, another is that sexual problems are less frequent.

Mixed marriage end in divorce more often

One in five marriages people entered into ten years ago have ended in divorce. The divorce rate is highest for mixed marriages. Especially marriages between a man born abroad and a woman born in the Netherlands often end in divorce: 50% within a decade. This high percentage may be due to the number of marriages of convenience, since the divorce rate is remarkably high after four years and foreigners can apply for Dutch nationality after three years of marriage.

For further information please contact:

Dr. J.J. Latten, tel. +3170 337 52 32 or A. de Graaf, tel. +3170 337 52 30.

Reasons playing a major role in the break-up of relationships

Reasons	Divorce	Splitting up relationship between unmarried people
No longer able to talk together	62%	54%
Clash of characters	56%	52%
Relationship with someone else	36%	29%
Irreconcilable plans for the future	31%	42%
Seksual problems	27%	17%
Financial problems	20%	14%
Adictions	13%	12%
Disagreement about having children	9%	11%

N.B. Respondents could name more than one reason. So the figures do not total 100%