



Press release

Statistics Netherlands

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Number of marriages down

The number of marriages contracted started to slow down in the fall of the year 2000, bringing to an end the continuous increase that started in the mid-nineties. Most partners started out living together. The number of people having children while living together without being married is on the increase according to the latest figures by Statistics Netherlands.

Peak at the Millennium

The number of marriages started to increase in the second half of the nineties. The peak was in the twelve months around the new millennium in the period May 1999 - April 2000 when there were more than 90 thousand weddings. The number of marriages started to slow down in the fall of 2000. There were 87 thousand weddings between May 2000 and April 2001. This slowdown in the number of marriages coincides with the drop of confidence in the economy.

Eight out of ten bridal couples are already living together

In three out of four marriages both partners are marrying for the first time. In most cases the partners are already living together. Only a small minority of 20% is not living together at the moment of their wedding.

For many couples the fact that they want children is one of the reasons to marry. In two out of three cases couples have a child within four years after their wedding day.

More children born outside marriage

Although most couples decide to get married before their first child is born, it frequently occurs that couples living together have children first. This means that an increasing number of children is born out of wedlock. One in three new-born babies has unwed parents living together. Half of these parents decide to get married eventually, so that more and more children are involved in weddings. Some 6% of the women who married for the first time in 1995 had one or more children. In 2000 this percentage was up to 10%.

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Preference for special wedding dates

May, June and September are the favourite months for weddings. There are relatively few weddings in January and February. In February 2000, however, there were more weddings than normal. This can be attributed to the preference for special wedding dates. Wednesday 02-02-2000 saw five times as many weddings as normal Wednesdays. Other popular dates were 22-02-2000 and 29 February so that February 2000 counted 1 thousand marriages more than other Februarys.

Another popular wedding date was Thursday 09-09-'99. On that day five times as many marriages were contracted than on an average Thursday.

For more information please contact Jan Latten, tel. (070) 337 52 32.

Marriages contracted per 12 month period

	x 1 000
May 1995 – April 1996	81.5
May 1996 – April 1997	85.4
May 1997 – April 1998	85.6
May 1998 – April 1999	87.4
May 1999 – April 2000	90.3
May 2000 – April 2001	86.9

Source: CBS