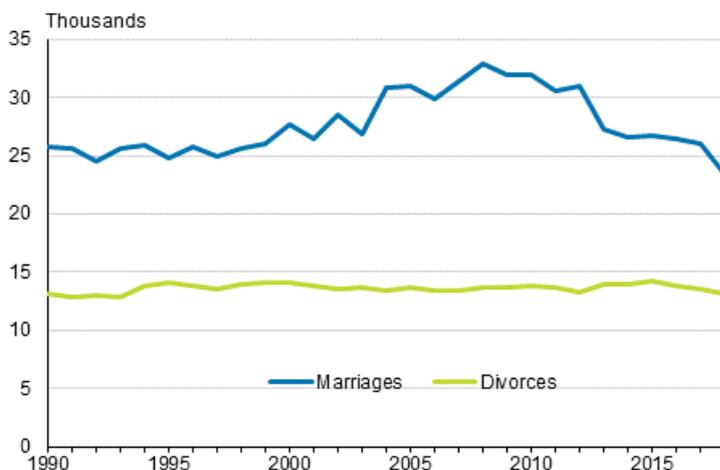


Changes in marital status 2018

Number of marriages contracted decreased considerably

According to Statistics Finland's data on population changes, 23,799 marriages were contracted in 2018, the number in 2017 was 26,542. The number of marriages contracted decreased by 2,743 in one year. A total of 23,412 marriages between opposite-sex couples were entered into, which was 2,576 fewer than in the year before. Same-sex partners entered into 387 marriages, while in the previous year the number was 554 in ten months. An amendment to the Marriage Act entered into force on 1 March 2017, according to which same-sex partners can contract marriages.

Number of marriages and divorces 1990–2018, opposite-sex couples



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 in the figure, the number for 2017 and 2018 does not include same-sex marriages, that numbered 554 and 387 in the above-mentioned years, or divorces that amounted to two and 29.

The marriage rate, i.e. the ratio of persons who have entered into marriage of those who could marry, has decreased nearly continuously since 2008. In recent years, it seemed that the decline in the total marriage rate had dampened but 2018 brought a clear decrease. Women's marriage rate decreased from 18 to 16 per one thousand women not married or not in a registered partnership from 2017 to 2018. The corresponding figure for men diminished from 19 to 17. Women's marriage rate decreased by eight per cent and men's by ten per cent.

In 2018, the marriage rate decreased in almost all age groups (Appendix figures 2 and 3).

Rise in the age at the time of first marriage stalled

In 2018, the average age of women and men entering into their first marriage remained unchanged for opposite-sex couples. The average age of women was 31.7 and that of men 33.9 years. The average age of women entering into their second marriage was 44.7 years and rose by one-tenth from 2017. The corresponding average age for men remained unchanged at 47.5 years.

In 2018, the average age in marriages between two women was 35.4 years, one year earlier it was 36.1. Correspondingly, the average age in marriages between two men was 44.3 years having been 41.3 in 2017.

The number of marriages contracted between opposite-sex couples decreased regardless of the order number of the marriage entered into. The share of first marriages in the decrease in marriages entered into was 59 per cent, the share of second marriages was 31 per cent and that of third marriages was eight per cent.

The number of remarriages decreased more in relative terms than the number of first marriages. Even so, the share of first marriages in all marriages entered into is still around three-quarters. The relative share has remained at the same level throughout the early 2000s. Twenty-one per cent of all marriages contracted were second marriages, and slightly under four per cent were third marriages.

Number of divorces continued declining

In 2018, in total 13,145 marriages ended in divorce. Apart from 29, all were divorces where the spouses were of opposite sexes. The number of divorces between spouses of opposite sexes decreased by 340 from the previous year. The annual number of divorces has fluctuated without a clear direction. However, 2018 was the third successive year when the number decreased. 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.

Changes by age in the divorce rate focus on women aged under 30 and men aged 25 to 34. The divorce rate only decreased in the above-mentioned age groups from the year before. As an exception to what is said above, the divorce rate of men aged 20 to 24 increased, which is caused by the fact: that the number divorces slightly increased but the number of married men in this age group decreased.

In first marriages between opposite-sex spouses, the average age for women at the time of divorce was 40.8 years. The corresponding average age of men was 43.0 in 2018. The average age of women at the time of divorce rose from the year before by two-tenths, that of men by one-tenth. A slight upward trend has been visible in the average age at the time of divorce for both sexes in recent years.

Clearly fewer marriages contracted between same-sex couples

In 2018, same-sex partners entered into 387 marriages of which 145 were between two men and 242 between two women. The number decreased clearly from 2017 when 554 marriages were contracted.

As a result of the amendment to the Marriage Act, starting from 1 March 2017, same-sex partners can enter into marriage in Finland and partnerships are no longer registered. After the amendment, more marriages were contracted in 10 months than what had been the highest number of registered partnerships in one year, 446 in 2002. The effect of the amendment to the Marriage Act entering into force on the number of marriages in the effective year seems to be similar as that of the Act of Registered Partnerships, 1 March 2002. In both cases, the number of marriages or registered partnerships entered into decreased clearly in the year following the year in which the Act entered into force: marriages by 30 per cent and registered partnerships by 57 per cent.

The number of registered same-sex partnerships ending in divorce has been around 130 in three previous years. In 2018, there were clearly fewer such divorces, 103. When the divorces of same-sex married couples, 29 are added to this figure, the total amount 132 is at the same level as same-sex partnerships ending in divorce in previous years. Thirty-two of same-sex partnerships that ended in divorce were between men and 71 between women. Correspondingly, six of same-sex marriages ending in divorce were between men and 23 between women.

Changes in marital status, mean age of men and women at first marriage in 2009–2018

	Year									
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Contracted marriages	31 975	31 925	30 557	31 008	27 238	26 551	26 735	26 503	26 542	23 799
Divorces	13 727	13 807	13 681	13 251	13 989	13 915	14 170	13 775	13 485	13 145
Mean age at first marriage, opposite-sex couples, women	30,2	30,3	30,6	30,8	30,6	30,7	31,2	31,4	31,7	31,7
Mean age at first marriage, opposite-sex couples, men	32,5	32,6	32,9	33,1	32,8	32,9	33,4	33,7	33,9	33,9
Mean age at first divorce, opposite-sex couples, women	40,0	39,9	40,4	40,0	40,0	39,9	40,4	40,5	40,6	40,8
Mean age at first divorce, opposite-sex couples, men	42,2	42,3	42,7	42,3	42,3	42,3	42,8	42,8	42,9	43,0
Divorces, same-sex couples and divorces from registered partnerships	53	64	85	103	101	109	133	127	133 ¹⁾	132

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

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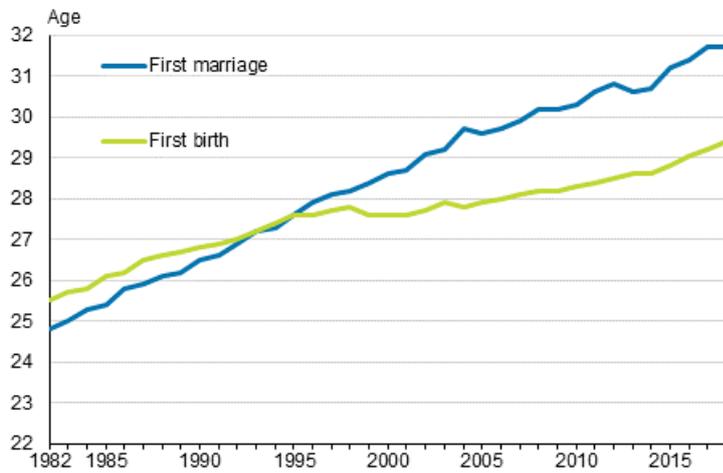
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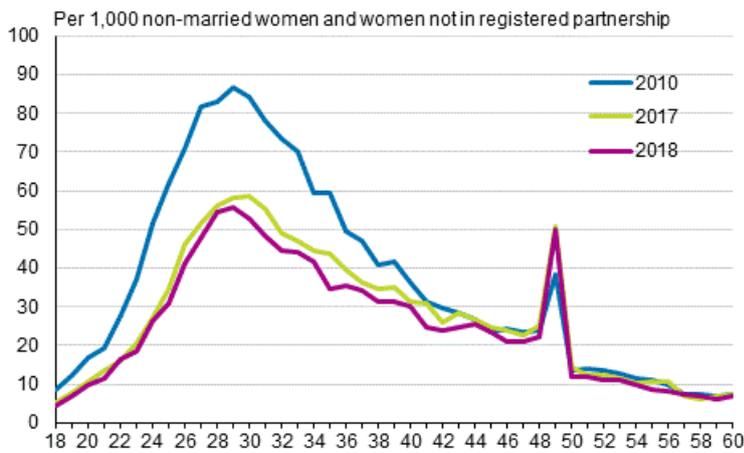
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Appendix figure 1. Average age of women by first marriage and first live birth 1982–2018

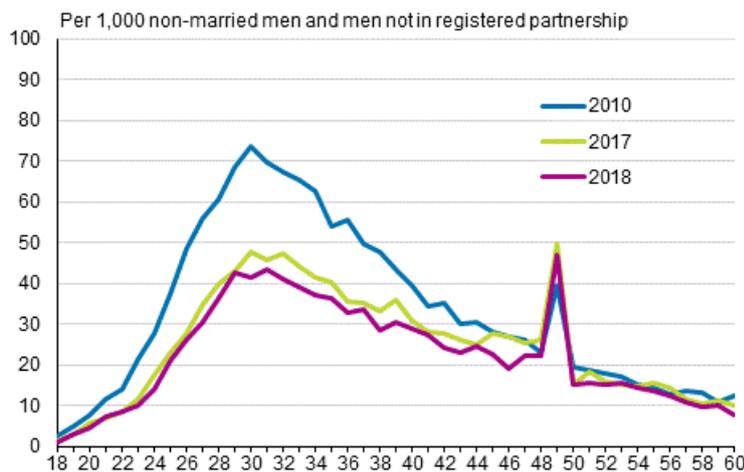


Age of women by first marriage, opposite-sex couples.

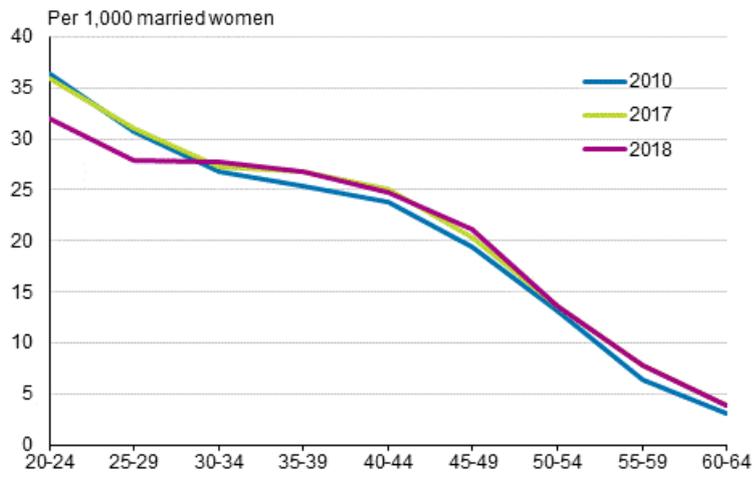
Appendix figure 2. Marriage rate by age of woman 2010, 2017 and 2018, opposite-sex couples



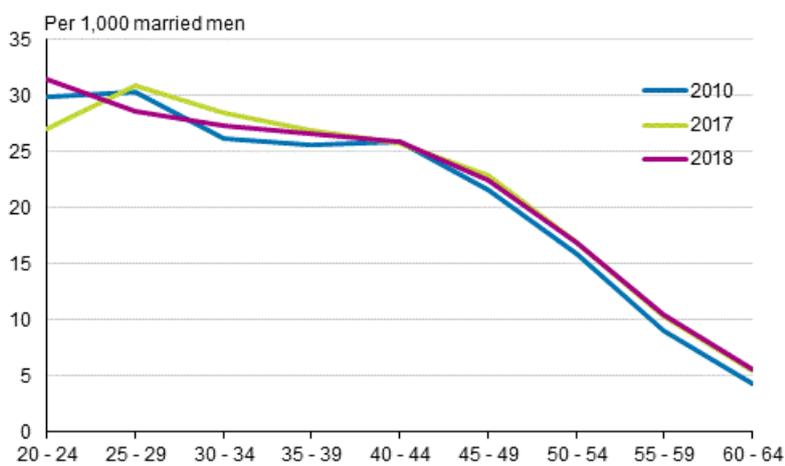
Appendix figure 3. Marriage rate by age of man 2010, 2017 and 2018, opposite-sex couples



Appendix figure 4. Divorce rate by age of woman 2010, 2017 and 2018, opposite-sex couples



Appendix figure 5. Divorce rate by age of man 2010, 2017 and 2018, 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 Population Register Centre and local register offices. Changes in the data on the vital events of the resident population are updated into the Population Information System continuously by local population register authorities. From 1975 Statistics Finland has obtained population data from the Population Register Centre.

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 Population Register Centre (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. Statistics Finland's Rules of Procedure defines the Population and Social Statistics unit as the producer of demographic statistics (Statistics Finland's Rules of Procedure, TK-00-954-18).

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.

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 Population Information Centre. Local register office updates a Population Information System with information it gets from persons experiencing vital events and parishes of the Evangelical-Lutheran and Greek Orthodox churches. Hospitals send information of births in machine-language format to maintenance of Population Information System. Local courts take information of decisions of adoptions and divorces dealt in the court into the Population Information System. Statistics Finland receives the updated data on vital events in machine-language format on a weekly basis.

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.

3. Correctness and accuracy of data

In general, the Population Information System of the Population Register Centre 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 Population Register Centre 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.

In connection with municipal elections, returned notifications of voting sent to foreigners usually reveal around 1,000 persons who have moved from the country without giving notice and are thus still included

in the Finnish population. The Population Register Centre removes them from the resident population in the Population Information System before the following turn of the year.

4. Timeliness and promptness of published data

Final vital statistics are published yearly in April to May, 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.

http://www.stat.fi/til/vamuu/tau_en.html.

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 births, deaths and marriages contracted are available free from 1749 onwards. From 1773 there are data about mothers having given birth by five-year age group and from 1936 about all children born by age of mother. After the statistical revision of 1877 collection of data on deaths was started by one-year age group, which made it possible to begin calculation of accurate mortality and lifetime tables from the 1880s onwards. On account of this statistical revision, annual collection of data on migration and 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 2018. Statistics Finland