

10 March 2021



Experimental Statistics - Monthly Estimate of Births (MEB)

In January 2021, the number of births decreased by 20.0% compared to the same month of the previous year

In December 2020, 23,226 children were born, the lowest in a month since the start of the statistical series

As part of its commitment to offer information that may be relevant in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the National Institute of Statistics (INE) is launching an experimental operation to provide a monthly estimate of the number of births, by province. This serves a compliment to the estimation of the number of deaths, which is also an experimental operation and is published every two weeks.

The INE will undertake this project using updated data received each month from the Civil Registries combined with historical information from the Birth Statistics, in order to estimate the births occurring during the COVID-19 outbreak.

The purpose is to estimate the number of births since July 2020 (data for the first semester have already been published provisionally) and to give a comparison with the historical data since 2016. This allows the number to be interpreted using a temporal perspective, given the ever-present variability and the gradual decrease observed in the number of births in recent years.

Updated birth estimates will be published during the first fortnight of each month m , covering up to the entire month $m-2$.

Three types of data will thus coexist in the project:

- Definitive data (births from 2016 to 2019)
- Provisional data (initially, the first half of 2020)
- Estimated data (as of July 2020)

Estimated births through January 2021

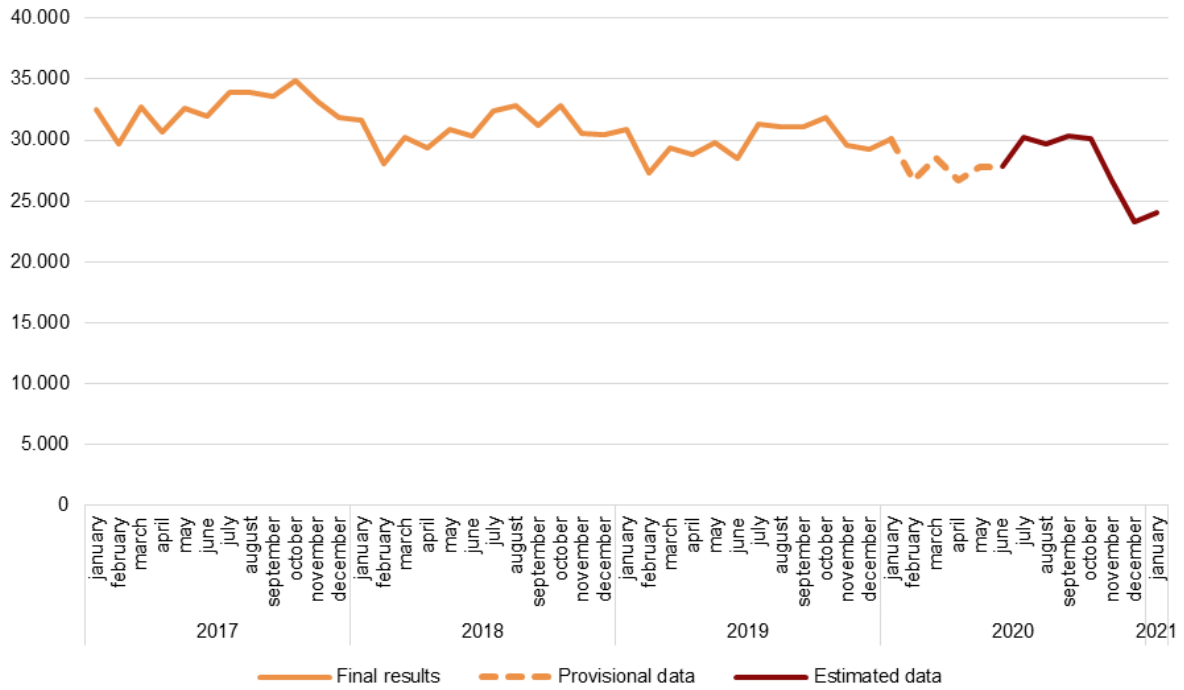
While the number of births has shown a constant downward trend for several years now, this decline was further accentuated nine months after the confinement of the Spanish population during the first state of alarm due to COVID-19.

Thus, in November 2020 the interannual birth rate fell by more than 10%, reaching decreases of more than 20% in December 2020 and in January 2021, according to INE estimates.

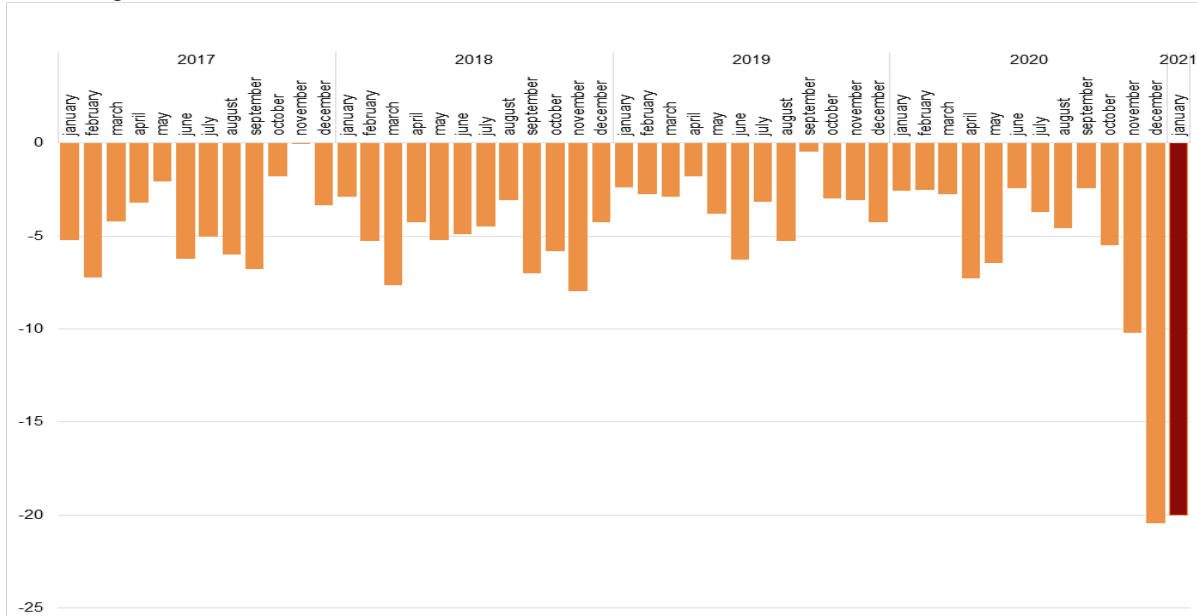
Specifically, only 23,226 children were born in the month of December 2020. This was 20.4% less than in the same month of 2019 and the lowest monthly value since the INE statistical series began, in the year 1941.

In January 2021, the number of births rose slightly, to 24,061, although this figure was 20.0% lower than the same month the previous year.

Monthly number of births (January 2017- January 2021). National total



Annual variation of the number of births. Years 2017 to 2021 National total Percentage



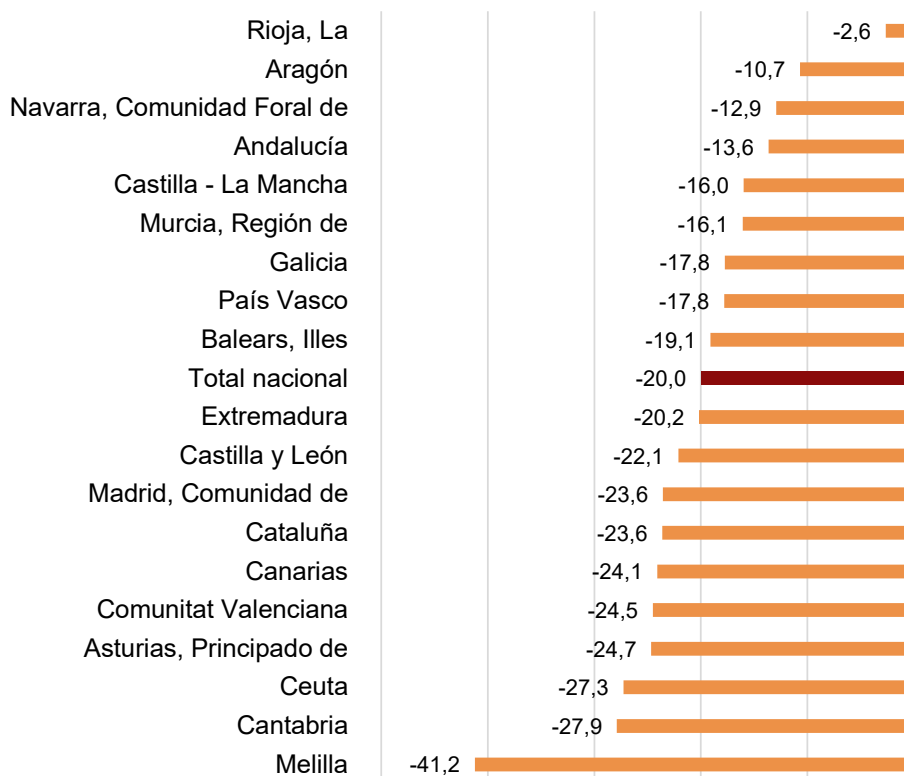
Births by Autonomous Community

The number of births declined in January 2021 in all autonomous communities compared to the same month the previous year.

The greatest decreases occurred in Cantabria (-27.9%), Principado de Asturias (-24.7%) and Comunitat Valenciana (-24.5%), as well as in the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla.

On the other hand, the most moderate declines were registered in La Rioja (-2.6%), Aragón (-10.7%) and Comunidad Foral de Navarra (-12.9%).

Annual variation in the number of births by Autonomous Community. January 2021



All the information regarding the 'Monthly Estimate of Births' experimental statistic at the national level, by autonomous communities, and by provinces is available at:

https://www.ine.es/experimental/nacimientos/experimental_nacimientos.htm

How is the information prepared?

Several years ago, the Ministry of Justice launched the Infogeg application to record various registry entries, including births. This application has been established in the majority of Civil Registries and has achieved a high degree of implantation and stability throughout the national territory (in 2019, only 4% of births were not recorded with Infogeg). To correct this lack of data (which represents 4% of records in the national total), an expansion or under-coverage coefficient is applied to the births recorded in Infogeg, specific to each province.

On the other hand, the up-to-date nature of Inforeg offers a significant advantage: on the first day of each month, the INE receives the births registered in the previous month. Although there may be certain delays, they rarely exceed two weeks. Thus, with the data received on day 1 of month m , we already have 98% of the births that will ultimately be recorded in Inforeg for month $m-2$. This allows the number of births to be estimated with a fair amount of accuracy and with little delay.

In addition to the under-coverage coefficient, a coefficient must be applied to correct the lag, but only for data from the last month received. These coefficients are calculated from a historical comparison between the Inforeg data and the data ultimately recorded by the INE as births from the birth reports, which collect 100% of births a few months later.

MEB Publication Schedule

The MEB experimental statistic will be published every month, always within the first two weeks and offering data relating to the penultimate full month. At the beginning of April 2021, data for the month of February 2021 will thus be published, and the estimates for the previous months (from July 2020 onwards) will be updated.

For further information see **INEbase**: www.ine.es/en/ Twitter: [@es_ine](https://twitter.com/es_ine)

All press releases at: www.ine.es/en/prensa/prensa_en.htm

Press Office: Telephone numbers: (+34) 91 583 93 63 /94 08 – gprensa@ine.es

Information Area: Telephone number: (+34) 91 583 91 00 – www.ine.es/infoine/?L=1
