

15 November 2007

## **Statistics on Annulments, Separations and Divorces. Year 2006**

**In 2006 there are 145,919 marriage dissolutions, 6.5% more than in 2005**

**Divorces increase 74.3%, whereas separations decrease 70.7%**

**The average duration of the marriages dissolved is 15.1 years**

During the year 2006, 145,919 marriages were dissolved, 6.5% more than the previous year. This increase confirmed the rising trend observed in recent years.

The number of divorces was 126,952, indicating an increase of 74.3% as compared with the figure registered the previous year. On the other hand, in 2006 there were 18,793 separations and 174 annulments (70.7% fewer and 3.6% more, respectively, than in 2005).

Such an uneven behaviour of separations and divorces, observed with much lesser intensity in 2005, is explained for the most part by the change produced in the regulatory framework with the entry into force of Law 15/2005 of 8 July, allowing for divorce without the requirement of prior separation.

	Number	Interannual variation (%)
<b>Total</b>	145,919	6.5
Annulments	174	3.6
Separations	18,793	-70.7
Divorces	126,952	74.3

As regards the **type of marriage break-up**, 52% of the separations were by mutual agreement and 48% were contested. Likewise, 65.3% of the divorces were by consensus and the remaining 34.7% were not by consensus. There was a previous separation in 38,630 cases (30.4%) of the total divorces.

### **The average age at the marriage dissolution is higher for men**

For the three types of marriage dissolution, we observed that **most break-ups took place between the ages of 40 and 49 years**, for both men and women. The average age, however, was higher for men.

Thus, the average age of women at the time of marriage dissolution was 40.5 years (42.8 years in separations, 40.2 years in divorces and 40.5 years in annulments). On the other hand, the average age of men at the time of marriage dissolution was 43.2 years (45.4 years in separations, 42.8 years in divorces and 44.1 years in annulments).

### **The average duration of the marriages dissolved is 15.1 years**

By type of break-up, the marriages dissolved by annulment had had an average duration of nine years, those dissolved by separation had lasted 17.8 years and those dissolved by divorce had lasted 14.7 years.

Most of the separations (36.5%) took place after more than 20 years of marriage, followed by marriages that had lasted between six and 10 years (16.4%). In the case of divorces, 27.1% corresponded to marriages with a duration longer than 20 years, followed by those that had lasted between six and 10 years (20.6%).

It is worth noting the **exceptional increase in marriages dissolved before completing one year** (330.6% as compared with 2005), which is not unrelated to the aforementioned change in the regulatory framework.

As regards the marital status of the divorcees upon marrying, most were single. In the case of men, only 4.4% were divorcees and 0.6% were widowers. In the case of women, barely 3.7% were divorcees and 0.3% were widows.

### **Almost 45% of the marriages dissolved have no children.**

For the majority of the marriage break-ups (51.3%), there were underage children. Within this group, the most frequent option (29.8%) was to have an only child. On the other hand, 44.9% of the marriages dissolved had no children.

Among the couples with an underage child, **the obligation of maintenance and support usually corresponded to the father** (specifically in 78.7% of the cases). In 2.5% of the break-ups, the mother was in charge of maintenance and support, while in 3.6% of the break-ups, said obligation corresponded to both spouses. In the remaining cases, the information was not available.

### **Seven out of ten petitions for divorce are resolved in less than six months**

The spouse filing the petition varied by type of marriage dissolution. In annulments, the husband took the first step (40.8%); in separations, the wife did so (45.7%); and in divorces, both spouses filed the petition (42.4%).

57.2% of the petitions for separation were resolved in less than six months, while 12.5% took more than one year.

In the case of divorces, 72% of the petitions were resolved in less than six months, whereas 4.9% took more than one year.

## Results by Autonomous Communities

The number of marriage dissolutions per 1,000 inhabitants in Spain was 3.26. The Autonomous Communities that recorded the highest rates were Canarias (4.31), Illes Balears (3.94) and Cataluña (3.85).

In contrast, the Autonomous Communities with the lowest rates of marriage break-ups were Extremadura (2.23), Castilla y León (2.30) and Castilla-La Mancha (2.39).

	Divorces	Separations	Annulments	Total	Dissolutions/ 1,000 inhab.
<b>Total</b>	126,952	18,793	174	145,919	3.26
Andalucía	21,219	4,084	35	25,338	3.18
Aragón	2,952	338	2	3,292	2.58
Asturias (Principado de)	3,533	489	1	4,023	3.74
Balears (Illes)	3,554	390	5	3,949	3.94
Canarias	7,637	969	11	8,617	4.32
Cantabria	1,458	235	3	1,696	2.99
Castilla y León	4,984	821	3	5,808	2.30
Castilla-La Mancha	3,818	811	3	4,632	2.40
Cataluña	24,423	3,039	31	27,493	3.85
Comunitat Valenciana	15,372	1,996	24	17,392	3.62
Extremadura	2,039	393	1	2,433	2.24
Galicia	7,522	1,140	11	8,673	3.13
Madrid (Comunidad de)	17,033	2,533	29	19,595	3.26
Murcia (Región de)	3,699	556	4	4,259	3.11
Navarra (Comunidad Foral de)	1,378	184	4	1,566	2.60
País Vasco	5,110	626	6	5,742	2.69
Rioja (La)	765	71	1	837	2.73
Ceuta	232	54	0	286	3.77
Melilla	224	64	0	288	4.31

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## **Methodological note**

The *Statistics on Annulments, Separations and Divorces* is prepared with the information provided by the Courts of First Instance, First Instance and Criminal Court and Courts for Violence Against Women, regarding marriage dissolution processes.

The collection of the information takes place through a paper bulletin, which the courts submit quarterly.

Information is requested on the date that the petition is filed, the date of the judgment, data on the marriage (date held and number of underage children), data on the spouses (date of birth and marital status at the time of the current marriage) and ruling of the judgment (type of ruling, applicant, compensatory allowance (alimony), maintenance and support, and the existence of a previous legal separation).

The results are presented, on a national and autonomous level, allowing for the analysis of marriage dissolution, bearing in mind different aspects, such as the age and sex of the spouses, the duration of the marriage and the characteristics of the ruling.

As of 1 January 2007, the INE is carrying out an improvement of this statistical investigation, which affects both the collection method (with the implanting of a questionnaire via Internet) and the updating of the content of the bulletin (including new variables such as the nationality of the spouses and the custody of the children), and which will result in the improved quality of these statistics in the near future.