

2. POPULATION AND FAMILY

By the end of 2008, the resident population in Sicily numbered 5.037.799 inhabitants, accounting for 8.4% of the national total, and exceeding the previous year's total by 8,116, which could be put down to both the natural and migratory components. Partly as a result of the high birth-rate of the foreign immigrant component, the number of births in Sicily amounted to 49,837, exceeding the number of deaths (47,762) by 2,075 units, whereas the number of officially registered foreigners (113,902) exceeded the number of deletions (107,861) by over 6,000 units.

In 2007, the last year available, there were 24,092 weddings in Sicily (corresponding to 4.8 legal unions per 1,000 residents), 20.7% of these (4,963) being celebrated with a civil marriage. There was no appreciable variation compared to the previous year in Sicily, whereas, in Italy as a whole, the trend towards fewer marriages over the preceding period was counterbalanced, in the last year, by a 1.8% increase in the overall number of weddings (+3.6% in the case of civil marriages). More specifically, by December 31st, 2008, the population of Sicily had increased by 1.6 units per 1,000 inhabitants over the previous year, 2007. There was a 651 unit (+ 1.3%) increase in the number of births, and a 524 unit decrease in the number of deaths (-1.1%). The natural component showed a positive balance of 2,075 births, a higher figure than the one registered in 2007 (900 births), which was still a long way from the maximum (7,010) recorded in 2004. The birth-rate was a little below 10 per 1,000 inhabitants, not too far from the national average of 9.6. The mortality-rate was 9.5 per 1,000 inhabitants, a little lower than for the country as a whole (9.7), and the centre-north (10.2), but higher than the overall figure for the south and the islands (9.0).

In 2007 there was a marked increase of 16,480 units (+16.8%) in the foreign component registered at the General Registry Offices in Sicily compared to 2006. In 2008 this component exceeded 114,600 units and now accounts for 2.3% of the island's population. 52.6% of resident foreigners were female. In the same year the percentage of children under the age of 6 years accounted for 6% of the total population, whereas 9% of the population was made up of people over the age of 74 years. The index of the elderly in Sicily reveals that there were 118.5 elderly persons (over the age of 64 years) for every 100 young people (under the age of 15 years), a figure that was considerably lower than the corresponding figure (143.4) for the nation as a whole.

Statistical analysis reveals slow, but constant growth in the population of Sicily, an increase of 4.9 units per 1,000 residents over the year 2004; this is mainly due to the continuing positive trend of the natural balance.

The number of foreign citizens resident in Sicily is also increasing noticeably, from 69,679 in 2004 to 114,632 in 2008, whereas the percentage of minors is constant (1 out of 5).

The ageing process of the population of Sicily is consistent with the number of elderly people as a percentage of the resident population (a figure which went from 7.9% in 2004 to 9% in 2008).

The percentage of the resident population aged under 6 years, in the period 2004-2008 was more or less stable (from 6.1% to 6%). In 2008, 25% of the island's population resided in the Province of Palermo (1,244,680 units), 21.5% in Catania (1,084,977) and 13% in Messina (654,601), whereas considerably lower figures were registered in the Provinces of Caltanissetta (5.4%, 272,289) and Enna (3.4%). With regard to birth-rate, data shows figures that are equal to, or higher than, 10 births per 1,000 inhabitants in the Provinces of Catania (10.6), Palermo (10.6), Caltanissetta (10.2) and Ragusa (10).

Trapani (8.9) and Messina (8.7 per 1,000 inhabitants) again find themselves in last place. On the other hand, analysis of the mortality-rate reveals a higher incidence in Messina (10.5 per 1,000 inhabitants), followed by Enna (10.3) and Trapani (10), whereas Catania had the lowest rate (8.8 per 1,000).

The migratory balance showed positive values in all Provinces except for Caltanissetta (-1.5 per 1000 residents) and Agrigento (-0.4). Compared to the resident population the highest proportion of foreigners was to be found in the Province of Ragusa (5.2%), a further increase over the year 2007, and in Siracusa (2.4%), whereas Caltanissetta (1.7%) and Enna (1.3%) had the lowest figures. The other provinces had percentage figures in line with the averages for Sicily (2.3%). Due to their greater population density the Provinces with the highest number of weddings were naturally Palermo, Catania and Messina (14,676 marriages in all, accounting for 60.9% of the total). The highest number of civil weddings was recorded in the Provinces of Siracusa (26.6%), followed by Catania (26.1%); Messina (20.6%) and Palermo (22.9%) had fewer weddings, but one wedding out of every five was still a civil wedding. Agrigento (12%) and Trapani (11.1%) had the lowest figures.

The province of Catania registered the lowest index of the elderly (103.6), followed by Palermo (110) and Caltanissetta (112.8), whilst much higher figures were recorded in Trapani (131.5), Enna (131.6) and especially in Messina with 150.6, a figure which exceeded the average corresponding national figure of 141.7 by 7.2 points and the figure for Sicily (118.5) by 32.1 points.

Glossary

Birth-rate: ratio between the number of live births in one year and the total average resident population (multiplied by 1000).

Deletion-rate: ratio between the number of those struck off at the registry office in a given year, and the average total resident population, multiplied by 1000.

Deletions: can be divided into:

- Deletions abroad (i.e. the number of persons struck off following transfer of residence abroad)
- Deletions domestically (i.e. the number of persons struck off following transfer of residence to another Italian Commune)

Family: a body of people living together and related or linked by matrimonial ties, affinity, adoption, guardianship or emotionally.

General Registry Office: a continuous system of registration of the population, constantly up-dated by the Communal administration via registration of births by resident parents, deletions because of death and changes of residence.

Index of child-dependence: percentage ratio between persons aged 0-14 years and persons aged 15-64 years.

Index of dependence of the elderly: percentage ratio between those aged over 64 years and those aged 15-64 years.

Migratory balance: surplus or deficit of registrations of immigrants from abroad (or another Commune) compared to the deletions of registrations for emigrants abroad (or to another Commune).

Mortality-rate: ratio between the number of deaths in one year and the average total resident population, multiplied by 1000.

Natural balance: surplus or deficit of births compared to deaths.

Index of the elderly: percentage ratio between those aged 65 years and over and those aged between 0-14 years.

Registered persons: can be divided into:

- Registered from abroad (i.e. the number of persons registered following transfer of residence from abroad)

- Registered domestically (i.e. the number of persons registered following transfer of residence from another Italian Commune)

Registration-rate: ratio of number of registered persons in one year to the average total resident population, multiplied by 1000.

Total dependence index: percentage ratio between persons who are not autonomous for demographic reasons (aged 0-14 and over 64) and persons who are presumed to be working and supporting them (aged 15-64)

Further reading

Publications

Italian Statistical Yearbook – 2009 – ISTAT

Causes of mortality in the Regions– Years 2000-2003 – ISTAT

Deaths – demographic and social characteristics – 2002 - ISTAT

Weddings, separations and divorces – 2007 – ISTAT

Having children in Italy – 2002 - ISTAT

Immigration Statistics Dossier 2008 – CARITAS

Compendium of official statistics for domestic administration

Internet

www.censimenti.istat.it/

14° General Census of the Population and Habitations – data consultation

<http://www.istat.it>

Daily life in 2006 - Multiscopo survey of the family "Aspects of daily life"

The foreign population living in Italy – demographic and social characteristics – 2008

Foreigners in surveys of the labour-force
Italian Statistical Yearbook 2009 – Chapter 2: “Population”
Income and living conditions – 2006-2007
Preliminary estimates of death by cause in the Italian Regions –2004

demo.istat.it

Population and demography: data-warehouse
Tables regarding mortality in the resident population – year 2004

www.minori.it

Thematic site of documentation and analysis of childhood and adolescence

www.caritas.it

ITALY - Resident foreigners
New statistical data about Italians in the world

www.alef-fvg.it

Data about immigration

www.starnet.unioncamere.it

Thematic area – population – analysis and data

www.cnel.it

Data-bank of territorial statistics – demography and foreign component of population
Immigration data-bank