

## ***2. POPULATION AND FAMILY***

By the end of 2007, the resident population in Sicily exceeded 5 million inhabitants (5,029,683), accounting for 8.5% of the national total. Partly as a result of the high birth-rate of the foreign immigrant component, the number of births in Sicily amounted to 49,186 units, a little higher than the number of deaths (48,286), whereas the migratory balance shows an inversion of trend when compared to the previous year; registrations exceed overall deletions recorded in Sicily by almost 12,000 units. As a result of several new member states joining the European Union in 2007, the number of persons from abroad and officially registered at the General Registry Office increased to about 20,000.

There was again a marked trend towards fewer weddings in Italy, and especially in central-southern regions; however this has not been the case in Sicily, where there was a 1.3% increase in weddings over the previous year (+0.8% celebrated with a religious rite and +1.3% celebrated with a civil marriage).

More specifically, on December 31st, 2007, the population of Sicily increased by 12,822 inhabitants over the previous year (equal to 2.6 units per 1,000 residents).

The natural component showed a positive balance of 900 units, which was a long way from the maximum (7,010) recorded in 2004. The birth-rate was close to 10 per 1,000 inhabitants, not too far from the national average of 9.5. The mortality-rate was 9.6 per 1,000 inhabitants, a figure similar to that for the whole country, but higher than the overall figures for the south and the islands (9.0). During the year 2007 the number of persons registered at the General Registry Offices in Sicily totalled 115,871, with 103,949 deletions, and a consequent migratory balance of +11,922 residents. Compared to the previous year there was a marked increase (25.4%) in the foreign component, which exceeded 98,000 units in 2007, and now represents almost 2% of the island's population. In 2006, a total of 24,119 weddings were celebrated in Sicily, 310 more than in the previous year, with religious rites accounting for 78.9% of the total (66% in Italy). The index of the elderly in Sicily reveals that there were 114 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 (141.7) for the nation as a whole.

Statistical analysis highlights slow, but constant growth in the population of Sicily, an increase of 5.3 units per 1,000 residents over the year 2003; this is mainly due to the continuing positive trend of the natural balance (though this is gradually slowing).

The number of people living in Sicily with foreign citizenship is increasing noticeably: from 62,900 in 2003 to 98,152 in 2007, divided equally between males and females; the percentage of minors is constant (1 out of 5). With regard to the ageing process, figures for the population of Sicily tally with figures for the elderly as a percentage of the total number of residents (a figure which has gone from 7.7% in 2003 to 8.6% in 2007). On the other hand the analogous indicator calculated for individuals aged under 6 years, showed a fall from 6.1% to 6%.

In 2007, over 59% of the island's population resided in the Provinces of Palermo (1,243,385 units), Catania (1,081,915) and Messina (654,032), with a mere 8.9%

spread over the Provinces of Caltanissetta (272,570) and Enna (173,723). 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 (10.4), Palermo (10.4) and Ragusa (10); Messina (8.7 per 1000 inhabitants) again finds itself in last place. On the other hand, analysis of the mortality-rate reveals the highest incidence in Messina (10.8 per 1000 inhabitants), followed by Enna (10.3) and Trapani (10.1), whereas Catania had the lowest rate (9 per 1000). The migratory balance showed positive values in all Provinces except for Caltanissetta (-1.2 per 1000 residents).

The foreign proportion of the total resident population was relatively high in the Province of Ragusa (4.6%), a further increase over the previous year. There was a less marked incidence in Messina (2.5%), whereas Siracusa and Trapani were in line with the average Regional figure (2%). The other Provinces showed lower figures, Enna being the lowest with a mere 1%.

Due to their higher population density, the Provinces with the highest number of weddings were naturally Palermo, Catania and Messina (14,514 marriages accounting for 60.2% of the total). The highest number of civil weddings were recorded in the Province of Siracusa (29.1%, or almost one out of three marriages) and Catania (26.4%); Messina (22.2%) and Palermo (21.5%) were further back, but still with one civil wedding out of five. Agrigento (13.1%) and Trapani (12%) had the lowest figures.

Catania registered the lowest index of the elderly (99.8) indicating a higher density of young people in the population when compared to the elderly. Palermo positioned itself a little above 100 (105.4) along with Caltanissetta (107.6), whereas the highest figure for the indicator turned out to be that of the Province of Messina (145.3), which was 3.5 percentage points higher than the corresponding national average (141.7).

### ***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 – 2008 – ISTAT

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

Deaths – demographic and social characteristics – 2002 - ISTAT

Weddings, separations and divorces – 2003 – ISTAT

Having children in Italy – 2002 - ISTAT

Immigration Statistics Dossier 2007 – CARITAS

Compendium of official statistics of the domestic administration

Internet

[www.censimenti.istat.it/](http://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 – 2003-2005

Foreigners in surveys of the labour-force

Italian Statistical Yearbook 2008 – Chapter 2: “Population”

Income and living conditions - 2004

Preliminary estimates of death by cause in the Italian Regions –2004

[demo.istat.it](http://demo.istat.it)

Population and demography: data-warehouse

Tables regarding mortality in the resident population – year 2004

[www.minori.it](http://www.minori.it)

Thematic site of documentation and analysis of childhood and adolescence

[www.caritas.it](http://www.caritas.it)

ITALY - Resident foreigners

New statistical data about Italians in the world

[www.alef-fvg.it](http://www.alef-fvg.it)

Data about immigration

[www.starnet.unioncamere.it](http://www.starnet.unioncamere.it)

Thematic area – population – analysis and data

[www.cnel.it](http://www.cnel.it)

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

Immigration data-bank