



REPUBLIKA SLOVENIJA



STATISTIČNI URAD REPUBLIKE SLOVENIJE

Demography and social statistics » Population



Father's Day

Wednesday, June 15, 2011, Special release

In Slovenia fathers are ever more active in taking care of and educating their children, using paternity leave and being present at childbirth. They also acknowledge paternity more frequently, since Slovenia has the lowest share of marriages in the EU.



The International Father's Day is an informal holiday, which is in most countries in the world celebrated every third Sunday in June; this year the date is 19 June. As Mother's Day, this day too originated in the United States of America. After Mother's Day was introduced in 1909, Ms Sonora Smart Dodd thought that fathers also deserved to have their own day. Despite her efforts for official recognition of the holiday, only after decades of people mocking, parodying and satirising the day in 1972 President Nixon established a permanent national observance of the day.

In Slovenia Father's Day is becoming increasingly recognised since men play an increasingly important role in taking care of and educating their children. This reflects in ever greater use of the right to paternity leave and childcare leave.

Every father in Slovenia has the right to use paternity leave in the duration of 90 calendar days;

however, he must use the first 15 days before the child is six months old. For these 15 days the government provides paternity benefit, while for the subsequent 75 days of leave, which can be used up to the child's third birthday, the government provides only payment of social security contributions. In addition to paternity leave, a father can use childcare leave, which starts immediately after maternity leave and usually lasts 260 days. The right to this leave can be used by one of the child's parents or by both if they agree on it in writing.

Paternity leave is much more popular than childcare leave

According to the Labour Force Survey, in 2010 75% of fathers whose children were less than 15 years old used the 15-day paternity leave. Among people who used childcare leave, which lasts at least one month and starts when the child completes three months, only 7% were men and 93% were women.

Data of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Affairs show that the number of fathers who use either paternity leave or childcare leave is constantly increasing. The number of fathers who used less than 15 days of paternity leave increased from 14,098 in 2006 to 17,534 in 2009, while the number of those who used more than 15 days of paternity leave (who were thus on unpaid leave) jumped from 1,441 to 3,329. Despite the fact that the share of fathers using childcare leave is much lower than the share of mothers, the number of fathers using childcare leave is also rising. Between 2006 and 2009 it increased from 921 to 1,382, i.e. by more than 50%.

Ever more fathers present at childbirth, the highest share in the Goriška region

That fathers are ever more active in taking care of children is also confirmed by the data collected by the Institute of Public Health on fathers being present at childbirth; in 1995 the share was below 25%, while in 2009 it was almost 75%. However, there are large regional differences in the presence of fathers at childbirth. In 2009, fewer than half of fathers in the Pomurska region were present at childbirth, while in the Goriška region the share was 87.2%. In general, fathers are more frequently present at first childbirth (78.7%) than at the birth of subsequent children (70.0%).

Families with fathers

Because the latest data on families from the register-based population census conducted this year are not yet available, the main source of data on families in Slovenia is still the population census conducted in 2002. At that time 338,621 fathers were living with children; this means that 42% of men who were at least 15 years old at the census were fathers. Of the 105,683 children younger than 6 who were living in families at the 2002 census, 83.2% were living in families with children. Of the 548,720 children younger than 25 who were living in families at the 2002 census, 85.9% were living in families with fathers.

Age of fathers continues to increase

In recent decades couples have been deciding to have children later in their lives. In 2009, the mean age of fathers at childbirth was 33.0 years, which is more than 3 years more than in 1991, when their mean age was 29.7. The share of men who decided to become fathers at age 20-30 decreased the most, while the share of men who decided to become fathers after completing 30 years of age increased significantly, especially the share of men aged 35+. First-time fathers were on average 31.4 years old: on average, fathers were the oldest in the Obalno-kraška region (32.2 years) and the youngest in the Koroška region (30.2 years).

Fathers are mostly older than mothers. In 2008, only every sixth father was younger than the child's mother. The age difference between mothers and fathers is usually less than two years. In 2008, the highest difference between a young father and an older mother was 15 years.

Few marriages, many acknowledgments of paternity

Since fewer people marry in Slovenia and our country is the last in the EU as regards the number of marriages per 1,000 population, the number of children born to unmarried parents is rising. As a result, ever more fathers acknowledge their children; if a child is not born to married parents, the father in accordance with valid legal regulations acknowledges paternity. In 2009, 11,709 children in Slovenia were acknowledged by their fathers, which is the highest number ever. Since 2005 fathers can acknowledge their children even before they are born and ever more fathers decide to do that. In 2009, 60% of fathers acknowledged their children before they were born and almost 35% did this within a month after birth.

Chart 1: Marriages, divorces and acknowledgment of paternity, Slovenia

The number of divorces has not changed much in the past 25 years. In 1985, 2,547 divorces were recorded and in 2009 2,297. What did change was the structure of divorces. The number of divorces without children increased; 25 years ago the share was 26.5% and in 2009 43.1%. At the same time the share of cases in which after the divorce the child was assigned to the mother decreased from 66.6% to 45.1%, while the share of cases in which after the divorce the child was assigned to both parents increased from 1.8% to 6.7%. In the past 25 years the share of cases in which after the divorce the child was assigned to the father has been around 4%.

Few single fathers in the EU

There are few single fathers; many times fewer than single mothers. But they do exist. In 2009, 0.4% of households in Slovenia were single men with children, while the share of single women with children was 2.9%. On average, the share of single parent families in the 200 million private households in the EU was slightly higher (4%), while in no Member State the share of households with male single parents was higher than 1%. Taking into account only households with children, the shares are, of course, higher. The highest share of single parents (24%) was recorded in

2005 in the United Kingdom; in Slovenia it was much lower – among households with children only 8% were single parent households.

Prepared by: [Lenart Lah](#)

Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia
Vožarski pot 12, SI-1000 Ljubljana | Tel: +3861/241-51-00 | Fax: +3861/241-53-44
E-mail: info.stat@gov.si | URL: www.stat.si

© Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia.
Use and publication of data is allowed provided the source is acknowledged.