

News Release



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Compiled by:
Demography Unit
e-mail: demography.nso@gov.mt
Tel: 25997229

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Special Observances

International Day of Families

*Call it a clan, call it a network, call it a tribe, call it a family.
Whatever you call it, whoever you are, you need one.*

Families, Jane Howard

The family unit can undoubtedly be defined as one of the main building blocks of society. And as such, it deserves to be at the centre of all social policy developments in an attempt to preserve its fundamental role in society and the world as a whole. Furthermore, there is an increasing need for awareness of the difficulties and challenges that families are being faced with. Consequently the promotion of appropriate action so as to address these problems is strongly felt.

Indeed it is in recognition of all this that the United Nations General Assembly, in its resolution 47/237 of 20 September 1993, proclaimed that 15th May of every year shall be observed as the International Day of Families. In particular, the international theme chosen for 2005 is "HIV/AIDS and Family Well-being". Thus, the observance of such a day is in itself a demonstration of support of family issues and possibly an opportunity to tackle further the problems, needs and weaknesses of families.

A potential starting point towards effectively addressing family issues might involve an understanding of the social and demographic processes affecting families. The 20th century has witnessed the emergence of major trends affecting family structures world-wide. As one would expect, these trends have also taken their toll on the structure of the Maltese family unit.

The average household size, for instance, has been on the decrease. According to estimates from the Labour Force Survey for the last quarter of 2004, the average household size is of 3 persons.

Population ageing is also another current characteristic trend of the Maltese population. The percentage of the population aged 60+ has almost doubled between 1921 and 2004. Clearly, ageing has a considerable impact on inter-generational solidarity, housing, social security systems, care-giving and health costs. Consequently, both directly and indirectly, the implications of demographic ageing affect the family unit.

The number of children most couples are opting to have is also on the decline. An indicator of this is the fact that the total fertility rate for 2004 stands at 1.37. This is well below the rate of 2.1 which is considered to be the replacement level for developed countries. This obviously translates into a smaller number of annual births. In fact, comparing figures for 1990 to those for 2004 we note that the total number of live births per year has decreased from 5,568 to 3,887. In contrast however, the proportion of births outside marriage has increased at a considerable rate. In 1990, there were 95 live births out of wedlock. By 2004, this figure has increased to 744 which accounts for 19.14 per cent of all live births in 2004.

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National Statistics Office
Library & Information Unit
Lascaris, Valletta CMR 02, Malta
Tel: (+356) 25997219
Fax: (+356) 25997205
e-mail: nso@gov.mt
<http://www.nso.gov.mt>

The creation of new parent-child relationships through adoptions also deserves a mention here. In 2004, a total of 70 children ranging in ages from newborns to 18 year-olds, were adopted in Malta. Slightly over a third of these adoptions involved Maltese-born children.

Changing trends in marriages constitute another significant shift in family structures and dynamics. Nuptiality is on the decrease and the crude marriage rate for 2003 was of 6.1. The proportion of marriages that are not first marriages, on the other hand, are on the increase. For 6.9 per cent of all brides and 8.2 per cent of all bridegrooms in 2003, their marriage in 2003 was not their first. The corresponding percentage of remarriage for both brides and bridegrooms in 1970 was of 0.6 per cent. Furthermore, when considering the age distribution of newly weds over the years, there appears to be a trend of postponement of marriage. For instance, in 1970 the majority of bridegrooms (50.3 per cent) belonged to the 20–24 age group. However, by 2003, the 25–29 age group accounted for 43.9 per cent of all bridegrooms for that year, thus becoming the most prevalent age group for bridegrooms. A similar but slower transition is also apparent for brides.

In conclusion and on a different note, the Time-Use Survey conducted by NSO in 2002 sheds some light on the amount of time the Maltese spend on housework and family care. Per weekday, the survey indicates that a person dedicates an average of 3.3 hours to domestic work. This figure is slightly less – 2.8 hours – for weekend days. There are also significant differences between males and females, and between single and married individuals. Overall, married women constitute the category of individuals that spend most time on housework and family care. In fact married women spend on average 6.3 hours on domestic work during weekdays, and 4.9 hours on weekend days ■

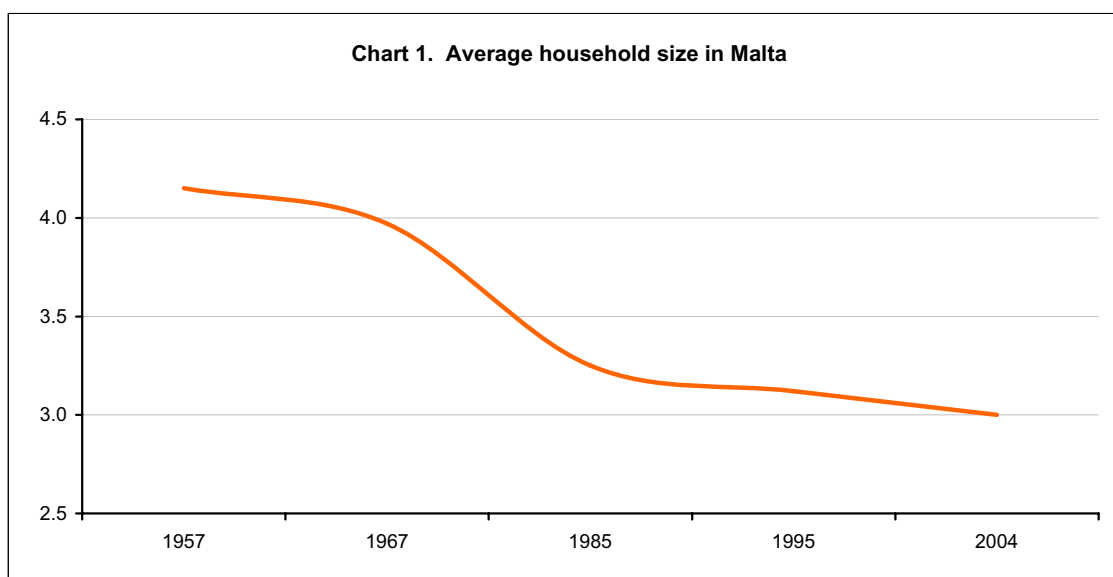


Table 1. Percentage distribution of Maltese population by age groups: 1921-2004

Age group	1921	1931	1948	1957	1967	1975	1985	1995	2004
	percentages								
0-14	31.8	32.1	35.0	37.5	29.8	25.3	24.1	22.1	17.8
15-59	58.6	58.5	56.1	52.1	57.4	62.1	61.5	62.0	64.1
60+	9.6	9.4	8.9	10.5	12.9	12.6	14.3	15.9	18.1

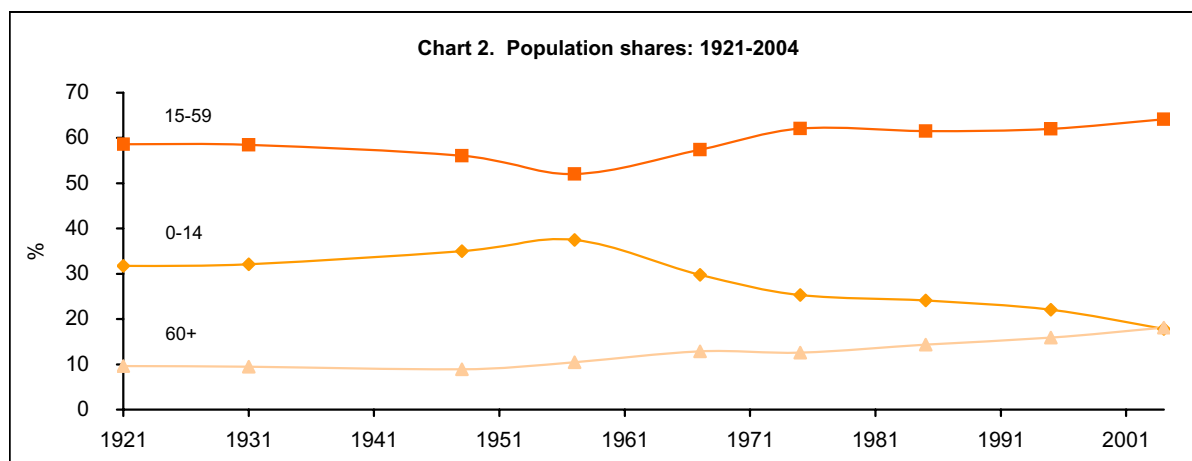


Table 2. Total fertility rates: 1957-2004

Year	1957	1967	1977	1987	1997	2004
Total fertility rate	3.80	2.25	2.13	1.97	1.95	1.37

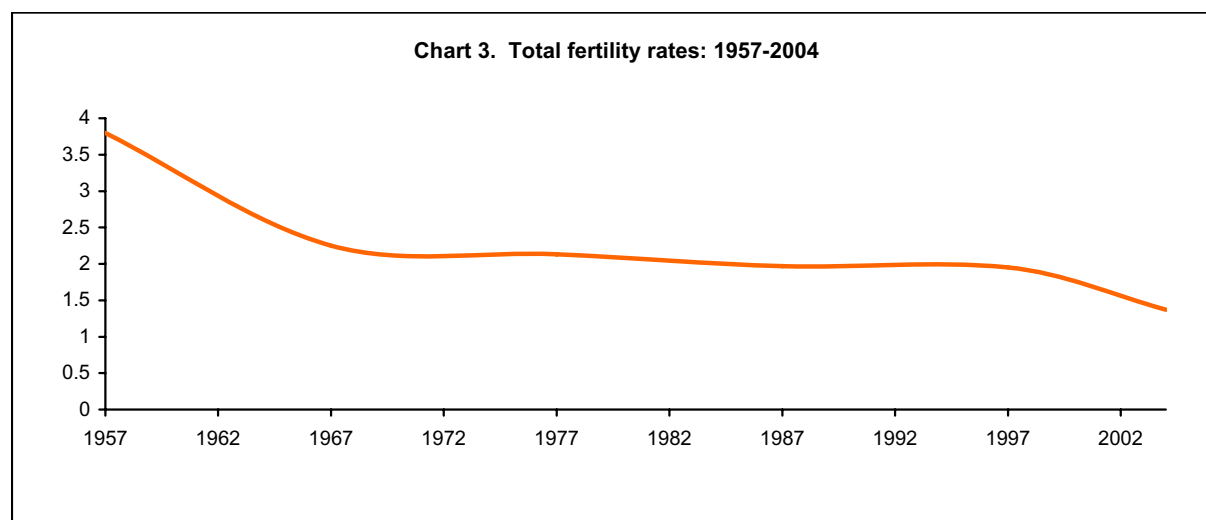


Table 3. Total live births and births outside marriage: 1990-2004

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total live births	5,568	5,510	5,733	5,386	5,152	5,003	5,045	4,936	4,621	4,410	4,386	3,935	3,906	4,036	3,887
Of which outside marriage	95	106	126	115	139	213	289	356	367	434	464	499	569	678	744
Percentage of births outside marriage	1.71	1.92	2.20	2.14	2.70	4.26	5.73	7.21	7.94	9.84	10.58	12.68	14.57	16.80	19.14

Chart 4. Total live births and births outside marriage: 1990-2004

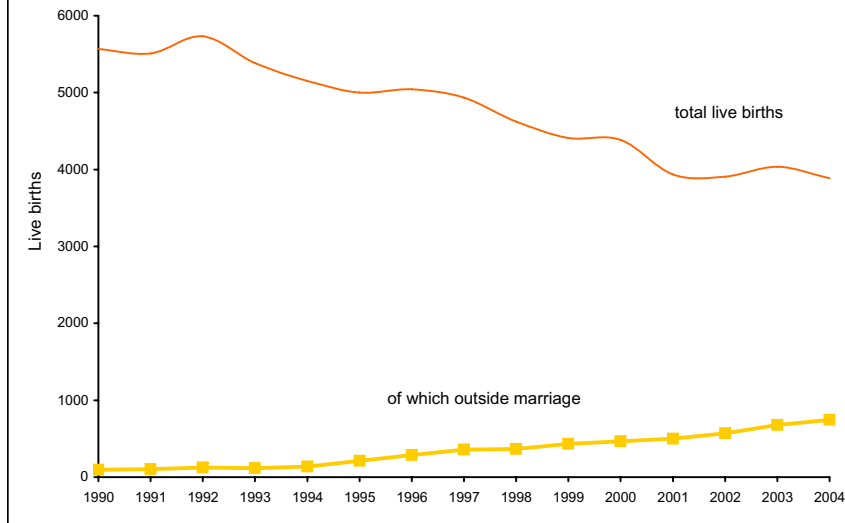


Chart 5. Percentage of births outside marriage: 1990-2004

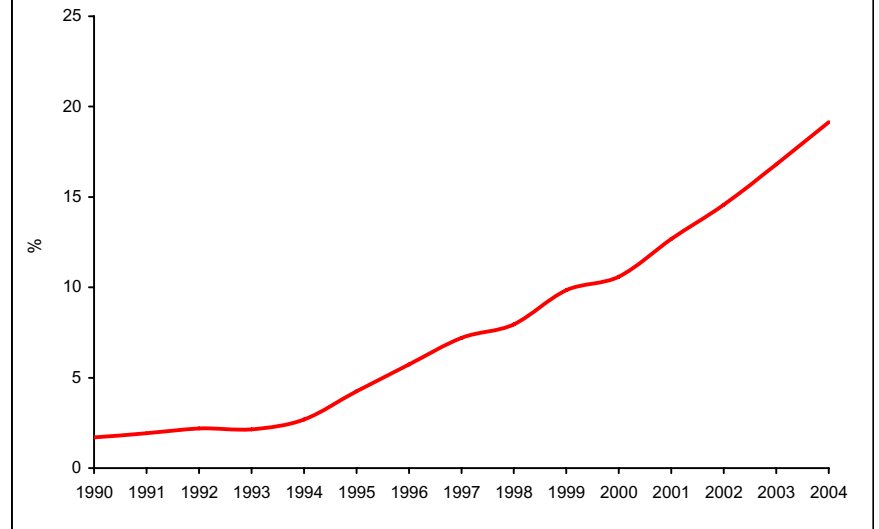


Table 4. Adoptions classified by age groups and country of birth of child: 2004

Age group	Country of birth of child							
	Malta	Ethiopia	Pakistan	Romania	Albania	Kenya	Russia	Other
0 - 4	10	15	5	4	1	4	-	1
5 - 9	11	1	1	1	2	-	-	1
10 - 14	3	-	-	-	1	-	3	1
15 - 19	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	3
All ages	24	18	6	5	4	4	3	6

Source: Public Registry, Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs

Table 5. Crude marriage rates: 1943-2003

Year	1943	1953	1963	1973	1983	1993	2003
Crude marriage rate*	19.6	12.9	6.1	4.1	8.4	6.8	6.1

* The Crude marriage rate relates the number of marriages per 1000 mid-year population

Source: Demographic Review, various issues

Table 6. Remarriages as a percentage of total marriages per year classified by spouses: 1970-2003

	Brides	Bridegrooms
1970	0.6	0.6
1980	1.4	1.3
1990	1.4	1.7
2000	4.5	5.5
2003	6.9	8.2

Source: Demographic Review, various issues

Table 7. Percentage distribution of marriages classified by age group of spouses: 1970-2003

Age group	Brides					Bridegrooms				
	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003	1970	1980	1990	2000	2003
	percentages									
16 - 19	17.5	14.5	11.6	6.6	5.2	3.3	2.4	2.6	1.6	1.3
20 - 24	56.4	51.4	48.3	48.3	35.8	50.3	38.5	30.4	28.4	18.6
25 - 29	18.0	22.6	28.7	30.5	35.9	30.7	40.3	46.7	44.1	43.9
30 - 34	4.3	7.1	6.0	8.3	12.4	8.7	11.9	12.0	14.9	18.3
35 - 39	1.8	1.9	2.5	2.6	4.7	2.8	2.9	4.1	5.2	7.9
40 - 44	1.1	1.0	1.6	1.7	2.3	1.5	1.4	1.9	2.4	4.1
45+	0.9	1.5	1.2	2.0	3.7	2.7	2.8	2.4	3.3	5.9

Source: Demographic Review, various issues

Table 8. Distribution of average time spent on housework and family care per weekend-day by sex and marital status: 2002

Type of activity	Males			Females			Total		
	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total
	minutes								
Food management	27.6	13.2	21.8	118.3	49.5	89.5	73.2	32.2	56.4
Household upkeep	17.1	8.6	13.7	65.5	37.1	53.6	41.4	23.5	34.1
Sewing and laundry	3.9	3.4	3.7	44.7	11.2	30.6	24.4	7.5	17.5
Shopping and services	17.2	13.9	15.8	23.1	18.6	21.2	20.1	16.4	18.6
Child rearing	16.5	1.1	10.3	27.6	11.0	20.6	22.1	6.2	15.6
Help to an adult family member	4.0	0.5	2.6	4.6	3.2	4.0	4.3	1.9	3.3
Other	47.1	18.1	35.5	9.4	5.6	7.8	28.1	11.6	21.4
Total	133.3	58.7	103.5	293.1	136.3	227.3	213.6	99.2	166.8

Source: Time-Use Survey, 2002

Table 9. Distribution of average time spent on housework and family care per weekday by sex and marital status: 2002

Type of activity	Males			Females			Total		
	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total	Married	Single	Total
	minutes								
Food management	25.2	13.2	20.4	137.4	47.3	99.8	81.5	31.1	61.0
Household upkeep	11.3	10.7	11.0	93.8	44.4	73.2	52.8	28.4	42.8
Sewing and laundry	1.3	2.8	1.9	71.6	18.1	49.3	36.6	10.8	26.1
Shopping and services	22.3	16.3	19.9	37.5	26.1	32.7	29.9	21.5	26.5
Child rearing	14.7	0.1	8.9	30.9	7.9	21.3	22.8	4.2	15.2
Help to an adult family member	3.1	0.3	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.8	1.3	2.2
Other	45.6	20.9	35.8	2.2	6.4	8.6	27.9	13.3	21.9
Total	123.5	64.3	100.1	375.9	152.6	287.4	254.3	110.5	195.8

Source: Time-Use Survey, 2002

Methodological notes

Population Share

Classification of the Maltese Population as: Young Age Dependant Population (0-14 years), Working Age Population (15-59 years) and Old Age Dependant Population (60+ years). Main source used was Census data, with the exception of 1975 and 2004. No census took place in the 1970's and therefore the population estimates published in the Demographic Review for the year 1975 were used. The 2004 population figures are the latest data available.

Births

Monthly records are received from Public Registry in order to produce births data to be published in the annual publication of the Demographic Review.

Total Fertility Rate

The mean number of children that would be born alive to a woman during her lifetime if she were to pass through her childbearing years conforming to the fertility rates by age of a given year. It is therefore the completed fertility of a hypothetical generation, computed by adding the fertility rates by age for women in a given year (the number of women at each age is assumed to be the same). The total fertility rate is also used to indicate the replacement level fertility; in more developed countries, a rate of 2.1 is considered to be replacement level.

Adoptions

The source of data on adoptions is the Public Registry, Ministry for Justice and Home Affairs.

Marriages

The Public Registry is also the source of marriage data.

Crude Marriage Rate

Relates the number of marriages per 1,000 mid-year population.

Time-Use Survey, 2002

The Time-Use Survey was conducted by the NSO in 2002. The target population consisted of Maltese residents aged 10 years and over living within private households. A sample of 500 dwellings was drawn using systematic sampling from the electoral register. The response rate was of 59 per cent.