

# MARRIAGE AND COHABITATION

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## MAIN FINDINGS

- » The number and proportion of married people fell drastically between 1990 and 2011, the share of the unmarried and the divorced increased, and that of the widowed remained unchanged in the population.
- » One of the central trends of the last quarter of a century has been the loss of the popularity of marriage. While the 1990s were characterised by the diffusion of cohabitation, since the turn of the millennium the increase in the proportion of young singles has been the key driving factor.
- » The number of marriages declined for decades until 2010; however there has been a modest increase over recent years. The propensity to marry for men and women in their thirties increased slightly between 2010 and 2013. In 2013 only 36,986 and in 2014 only 38,700 marriages were contracted, just over half of their number in 1990 (66,405) and well below the “marriage peak” of 2000 (48,100).
- » The total first marriage rate for women fell from 0.77 in 1990 to 0.44 in 2013; this means that currently a woman has a 44% probability of marrying in her lifetime.
- » The average age at first marriage has increased by about eight years for both sexes since the 1990s: in 2013 on average women first married at the age of 29.5 and men at 32.3 years. While in 1990 20% of women and 26% of men were aged 30 years or over when they first married, in 2013 this characterised 54% of women and 70% of men.
- » The spread of cohabitation as first-time partnership form accelerated after the regime change and it continued beyond the turn of the millennium. Currently nearly nine out of ten first-time unions are formed as cohabitation and only one in ten as direct marriage.
- » Different forms of cohabitation are present in contemporary Hungarian society. Decades ago postmarital cohabitation – after divorce or the death of the spouse – was the most common form, presently premarital cohabitation or cohabitation as an alternative to marriage are the most widespread.
- » Nearly half of those who start their first union as cohabitation marry their partner

within five years. This type of premarital cohabitation should be seen as part of the marriage process.

» 13% of 18–49 year olds have a long-term noncohabiting partner. This type of

partnership is most prevalent among young people under 25 years and can be considered a phase of the partner selection process. As age increases more people view living apart as an alternative partnership form that is suitable to maintain independence.

## MARITAL AND PARTNERSHIP STATUS

*Table 1: Composition of the population aged 15 and over by marital status and sex, 1990, 2001, 2011*

Although demography's traditional indicators to describe partnerships – the distribution of the adult population by marital status and indicators of the propensity to marriage – are still appropriate to describe basic trends, due to the diffusion of new partnership forms it is essential to have more information about the partnership situation of individuals. The differentiation of the population by partnership status as well as the description of the trends must take multiple characteristics into account.

As in most areas, the trends of recent decades have continued also in the composition of the population by *marital status*<sup>G</sup>. The number and share of *married people*<sup>G</sup> fell drastically, the share of *never married people*<sup>G</sup> and the *divorced*<sup>G</sup> increased and that of the *widowed*<sup>G</sup> remained the unchanged (*Table 1*). While in 1990 61% of the population aged over 15 years was married, in 2011 their share was much lower, 44%. The percentage of divorcees increased substantially from 7% to 12%; however the largest increase, of 12 percentage points, took place in the share of the never married population. Their proportion increased by nearly one and a half fold in two decades, thus in 2011 27% of women and 39% of men aged over 15 years were never married.

On July 1, 2009 a new official marital status category was introduced: *registered partnership*<sup>G</sup> between two same-sex individuals. Since its introduction until the end of 2014 a total of 301 partnerships were registered, the majority (71%) by men. The mean age at registration was 38 years for men and 32 years for women. In statistical reports registered partners are included among the married, widowed registered partners among the widowed and separated registered partners among the divorced due to the small size of the group.

	Never married	Married	Widow	Divorced	Total (%)
<b>Males</b>					
1990	25.1	64.6	3.9	6.4	100.0
2001	32.9	55.6	3.8	7.7	100.0
2011	38.8	47.2	3.8	10.1	100.0
<b>Females</b>					
1990	15.9	58.1	17.8	8.2	100.0
2001	22.1	49.4	18.5	10.0	100.0
2011	27.0	41.9	18.2	12.8	100.0
<b>Total</b>					
1990	20.3	61.2	11.2	7.4	100.0
2001	27.2	52.3	11.6	8.9	100.0
2011	32.6	44.4	11.5	11.6	100.0

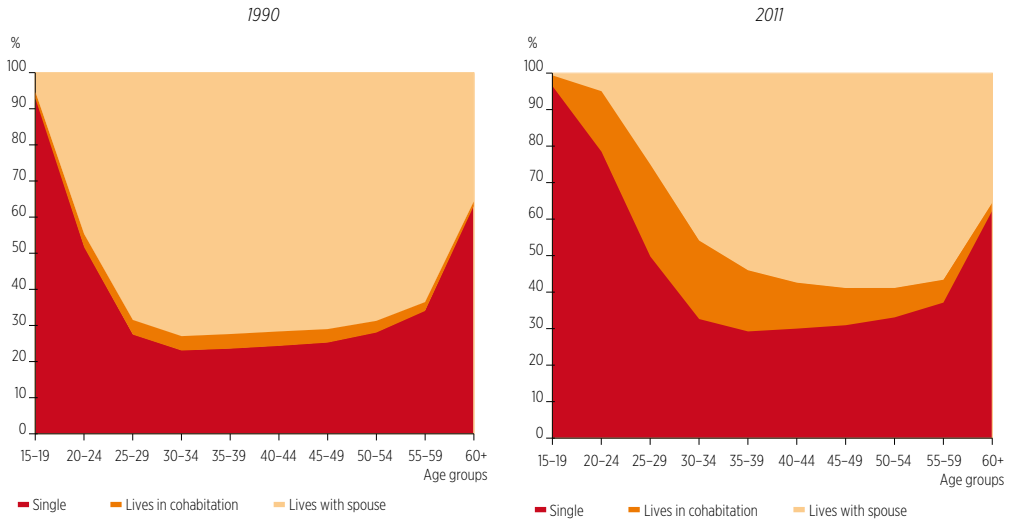
Source: HCSO Population Census 2011. Part 4: Demographic data, 2013.

In addition to the significant increase in the share of the never married population, it is also well known that many of them do not live alone but cohabit with a partner, and the diffusion of *cohabitation*<sup>G</sup> is one of the main reasons for the restructuring of the population by marital status.

If the period between 1990 and 2011 is examined in terms of actual partnership status and by age group, two main changes stand out (*Figure 1*). The proliferation of cohabitation is noticeable: for women its share was under 5% in all age groups in 1990 but in 2011 it exceeded 10% in most age groups, with the exception of the 60+ group, where it was under 5%. Its prevalence is highest among the 25–29 year olds (25.3%) and it practically equals the percentage of married people (24.8%) in this age group.

While in the 1990s the proliferation of cohabitation was the defining trend, after the turn of the millennium it is the increase in the share of *singles*<sup>G</sup>, those without a long-term cohabiting partner (*Figure 1*). The increase affects all age groups, so it is only partly explained by the postponement

Figure 1: Distribution of the female population aged 15 and over by partnership status and age group, 1990 and 2011



Source: HCSO Population Census 2011. Part 4: Demographic data, 2013.

of first partnership. In addition to young adults (aged 20–24 years), the increase is also substantial among the young middle-aged (35–39, 40–44 year olds). In the latter group their share increased from just over 20% to approximately 30% and the growth was particularly significant after the turn of the millennium. It must be noted that single people include those who have never had a long-term partnership as well as individuals whose marriage or cohabitation ended due to divorce,

separation or the death of the partner. However this has always been the case, therefore our argument seems to hold also in the light of the above. Due to limitations of space, the graphs only depict changes in the proportion of women; however similar trends can be observed among men. There is one widely-known exception: due to the higher mortality of men, the share of single widowers is lower among the elderly population than the proportion of single widows (see Chapter 9).

### UNPARTNERED OR “SINGLE”?

“Singles” are often depicted in the media, although in reality they make up a rather small part of the population. Public discourse often depicts “singles” as young and young middle-aged (between 30 and 50 years) nonpartnered and childless individuals who intentionally opt for a lifestyle free from family commitments. Work, consumption and leisure play a key role in their lives, they

are free from financial difficulties, they live alone in cities and are highly educated. The share of singles defined as above is only 3% in the 30–49 age group in Hungary. On the contrary, the group of 30–49 year old *nonpartnered* people is much larger and more diverse; however, strictly speaking, most of them cannot be considered “single”.

22% of people in their thirties and forties do not have a long-term relationship – neither married nor cohabiting – and

The distribution of the 30–49 year old age group, including unpartnered respondents, by main socio-demographic characteristics, 2012–2013

		Unpartnered	Total 30–49 age group (%)
Sex	Females	50.4	50.6
	Males	49.6	49.4
Marital status	Never married	57.2	31.8
	Married, lives with spouse	-	49.9
	Married, lives apart from spouse	5.6	2.4
	Widowed	4.2	1.3
	Divorced	33.0	14.7
Level of education	At most 8 years of primary school	23.7	14.6
	Vocational school	29.6	30.3
	Secondary education	25.9	28.3
	Tertiary education	20.8	26.9
Labour market status	Employed	68.1	74.7
	Unemployed	19.2	11.6
	Receiving disability pension	7.3	3.6
	On child-care leave	1.4	6.1
	Other inactive	4.1	4.0
Perceived economic situation of the household	Have to go without	17.3	8.7
	Financial problems from month to month	28.1	21.9
	Can just make ends meet by budgeting carefully	35.9	41.3
	Live acceptably	16.7	24.8
Place of residence	Live without problems	2.1	3.3
	Budapest	18.0	18.0
	City with county rights	21.7	20.6
	Other town	33.0	31.9
Family experiences and intentions	Village	27.3	29.5
	Previous cohabitation dissolved	27.3	14.2
	Intends to move in with somebody within three years	41.2	-
	Intends to get married within three years	25.5	-
	Has child(ren)	49.9	74.8
	Child(ren) live with them	34.8	67.4
N	Lives with parents	40.3	16.2
	Lives in a one-person household	26.1	8.1
		(566)	(2590)

Source: HDRI GGS Turning Points of the Life Course, Wave 4 (2012–2013), new sample of 18–49 year olds; authors' calculation.

they do not have a non-cohabiting partner either. However, two thirds of them have previously lived in a cohabiting or married union. One in two has children; 9% of the men and 61% of the women in this group

are single parents. Although they are not in a relationship, 41% would like to move in with a partner within three years and 26% intends to marry. Those whose previous relationship broke up and/or have children

are less likely to want a new partner or marriage (for example 8% of the parents and 42% of childless respondents intends to marry within three years). People with children probably not only do not want to marry but their opportunities are also more limited than in the case of their childless counterparts and they are less attractive for potential partners.

The level of education and the labour market situation of nonpartnered respondents are somewhat worse than in the total age group: the share of

those with at most primary education is higher and the proportion of those with tertiary education is lower among them, they are less likely to have a paid job and more likely to be unemployed or claiming disability pension. They also perceive the economic situation of their household as worse than the total age group. Compared to the total 30–49 year old age group, the proportion of those living with their parents or in a one-person household is much higher among the unpartnered.

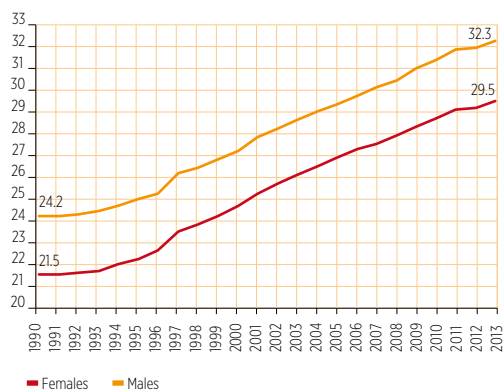
## THE PROBABILITIES OF FIRST MARRIAGE AND REMARRIAGE

The number of marriages declined for decades until 2010; however there has been a modest increase from its lowest level over recent years. In 2013 36,986 and in 2014 38,700 marriages were contracted in Hungary. Despite the increase in the last few years, the number of marriages in 2014 was just over half of their number in 1990 (66,405) and well below the “marriage peak” of 2000 (48,100) (*Figure 3*). The low number is mainly the result of a decline in the propensity to marry and the postponement of marriage.

Therefore, it seems that the long-term trend of the loss of popularity of marriage has halted. The number of marriages has increased to a small extent year on year since 2010; however, it remains very low. So far it is unclear whether the increase will be long-term or only a temporary rise.

Mean age at first marriage steadily increased after 1990 (*Figure 2*): while in 1990 it was 21.5 years for females and 24.2 years for males, in 2013 women were on average 29.5 and men 32.3 years old when they first married. After 1990 the mean age increased by about three years in the first decade and then by five years.

*Figure 2: Mean age at first marriage by sex, 1990–2013*



Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

First marriage rates per thousand never married women and men of corresponding age show a marked decline in nearly all age groups between 1990 and 2010. However, between 2010 and 2013 the decline did not continue but there was a slight increase for women and men in their thirties (*Table 2*).

There have been major changes in the age composition of people getting married for the first time. While in 1990 men most often got married at age 20–29 and women did so at age 20–24, later it shifted to the

Table 2: First marriages per thousand never married males and females of corresponding age, 1990–2013

Age group	Males				Females			
	1990	2000	2010	2013	1990	2000	2010	2013
15–19	9.4	2.2	0.9	0.8	50.7	11.7	3.3	2.7
20–24	120.9	32.5	7.4	6.5	185.2	60.8	18.1	16.0
25–29	122.0	72.9	30.1	30.4	114.2	82.8	48.5	51.7
30–34	49.4	53.2	41.0	43.2	50.7	42.4	41.4	45.5
35–39	21.8	22.2	26.9	28.5	25.2	19.6	21.5	24.0
40–49	9.9	8.0	10.4	11.9	9.5	6.8	8.8	9.1
50–59	4.0	3.3	3.9	3.7	3.1	2.8	2.7	3.6
60–	1.9	2.1	2.1	2.3	0.7	0.6	1.0	1.0
Total	53.3	29.5	17.4	17.7	74.8	38.9	22.2	22.5

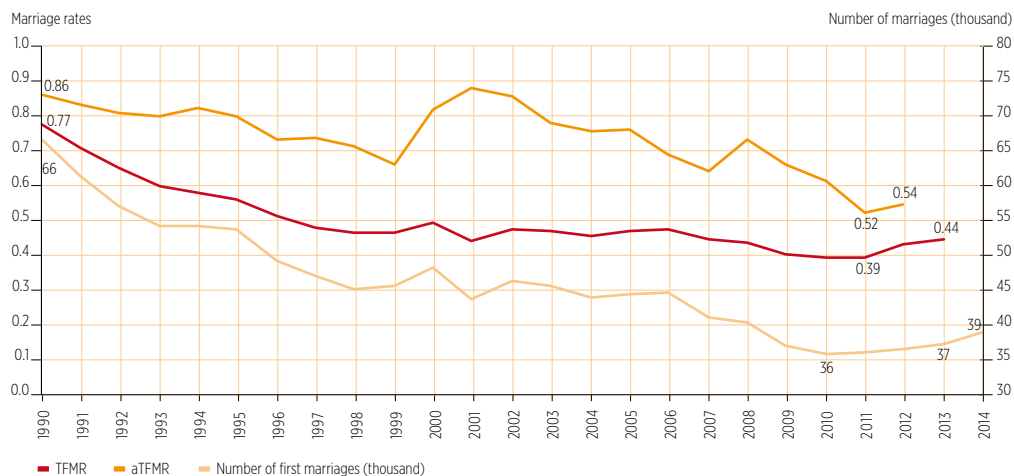
Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

second half of their twenties and then to the first half of their thirties in the case of men. In 2010 men were more likely to marry for the first time after the age of 40 than before 25. For women, the probability of marriage has been the highest in the age group 25–29 since 2000. In 1990 20% of women and 26% of men first married aged 30 or over, while in 2013 this characterised 54% of women and 70% of men.

The propensity to marry is calculated from age-specific marriage rates. The *total*

*first marriage rate*<sup>G</sup> (TFMR) indicates the probability of a woman (or man) to marry during her lifetime if her age-specific marriage probability corresponds to the age-specific marriage rates of the given calendar year. Based on this indicator a woman currently has a 44% probability of getting married at least once in her lifetime (Figure 3). The rate was 0.77 in 1990, fell to 0.46 by 1998, then it fluctuated between 0.4 and 0.5, and it increased slightly in the last few years.

Figure 3: Number of marriages, total (TFMR) and adjusted (aTFMR) first marriage rates for females, 1990–2013



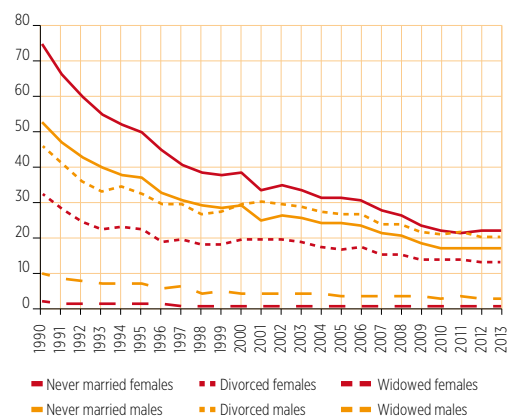
Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks, authors' calculation; HCSO Statistikai tükör (Statistical Review), Population Statistics, 2014.

It is well known that TFMR is more sensitive to changes in legislation than the fertility rate and large annual increases in the average age at first marriage – the key trend after 1990 – affect its values. To eliminate this bias – similarly to the case of fertility – the *adjusted total first marriage rate*<sup>6</sup> (aTFMR) can be calculated. This indicates the probability of getting married if the timing of marriages did not change, i.e. if there were no postponement. *Figure 3* depicts changes in the value of this indicator for the period of 1990–2012. Although there were large fluctuations in aTFMR due to the great degree of postponement, it appears that up until the mid-2000s the total marriage rate declined primarily because of postponement; in other words, because people married later and not because they did not marry at all. Based on the aTFMR the probability of an individual to marry at least once in their lifetime was between 70–80%. However, when the rate of postponement decreased, the TFMR did not start to increase, so the aTFMR also fell. Therefore it might be concluded that the actual propensity to marry is somewhat higher than indicated by the total first marriage rate. Currently (in 2012) the probability for a woman to marry in her lifetime is 54%.

In addition to changes in the probability and timing of first marriage, it is also worthwhile to consider remarriage separately because the proportion of the divorced and the widowed has increased among those getting married in the last more than two decades. In 1990 72% of the marriages were first marriages, in 16% of the marriages one of the parties and in 12% both parties had been married previously. The percentage of couples contracting their first marriage fell to 67% by 2013, in 19% of marriages one and in 14% both spouses had been married before. This means that in 1990 one in five and in 2013 one in four people getting married had already been married before.

The increase in the proportion of remarriage might be explained by the fact that the marriage rate of divorcees declined less than that of the never married (the marriage rate of the widowed started from a low baseline and also declined). Differences in marriage rate by marital status have gradually decreased since the 1990s, particularly among women (*Figure 4*). In 2013 never married women were still more likely to marry than divorcees; however, divorced men have been more likely to marry than their never married counterparts since 2000.

*Figure 4: Marriages per thousand females and males of corresponding marital status in the population aged 15 and over, 1990–2013*



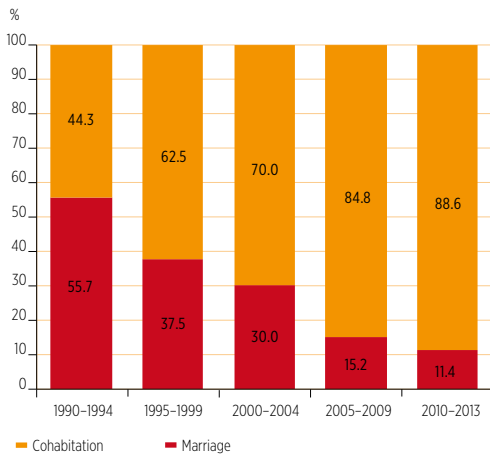
Source: HCSO, Demographic Yearbooks.

## ON THE NATURE AND DIFFUSION OF COHABITATION

In the last quarter of a century it has become common for young people to form their first union as cohabitation. Prior to the regime change two thirds of first unions were formed as marriages; however this rate fell below 50% by the mid-1990s and currently it is around one in ten (11%) (*Figure 5*). It is known that first-time cohabiters often get married eventually; therefore, these cohabitations can be seen as parts of the marriage process.



Figure 5: Type of first long-term union by the period of its formation



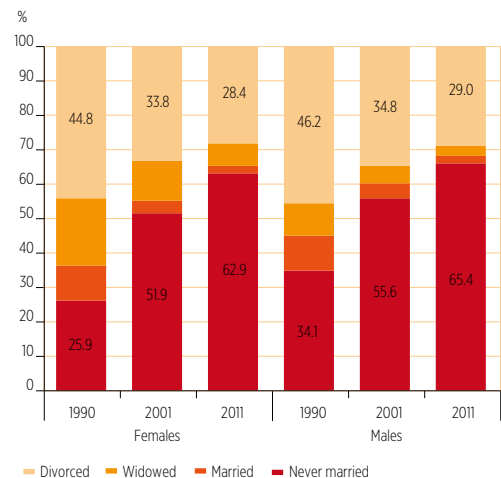
Source: Spéder – Kapitány 2007; HDRI GGS Turning Points of the Life Course, Wave 4 (2012–2013), new sample of 18–49 year olds; authors' calculation.

Many different forms of cohabitation are present in contemporary Hungarian society. In 1990 3%, in 2001 7% and in 2011 already 11% of the population aged 15 and over lived in cohabitation. During this time the composition of the group by marital status has also undergone major transformations; the most prominent changes took place between 1990 and 2001 (Figure 6).

When presenting the diversity of cohabiting unions and trying to understand their diffusion, it is useful to acknowledge that originally this form of partnership was primarily post-marital in Hungary. The increase in the proportion of cohabitation can be attributed to the proliferation of divorce and long-term unmarried cohabitation after divorce (Carlson – Klinger 1987). At the beginning of its diffusion the proportion of those who moved in together without marriage after the death of a spouse was also noteworthy. In 1990 typically widowed or divorced people (or those separated from their spouses) cohabited with their partner without marriage, and only one in four female and one in three male cohabiters

were never married (Figure 6). However, by 2001 the majority of cohabiters (63–65%) were never married and the share of those opting for cohabitation after the dissolution of their marriage or the death of a spouse fell significantly (from 74% to 37% among women and from 66% to 35% among men). Therefore decades ago postmarital cohabitation after divorce or the death of a spouse was the most common form of cohabitation, now premarital cohabitation or cohabitation as an alternative to marriage are the most widespread. The majority of these are first-time unions; however, some are new relationships after the dissolution of a previous cohabiting partnership.

Figure 6: Distribution of the female and male population aged 15 and over living in cohabitation by marital status, 1990, 2001, 2011



Source: HCSO Population Census 2011. Part 4: Demographic data, 2013; authors' calculation.

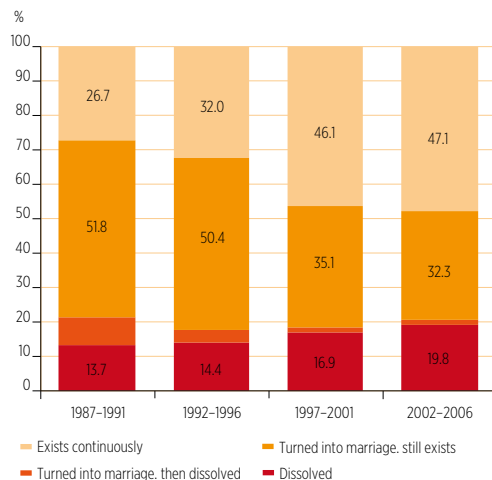
The analysis of cohabitation over time also helps us understand the nature of this form of partnership. One option is to examine what happens with cohabitation after a certain period of time (Figure 7). Three different outcomes can be considered. First, the cohabitation survives for a certain period of time (in this case for five years), second it turns into marriage, and third it

ends in separation. Although the first two options differ from each other only formally because the same couple continues to live together, demography interprets the two types of unions differently. In the first case, cohabitation is considered as an alternative to marriage, in the second case it is seen as part of the marriage process, as the “prelude” to marriage.

In the late 1980s and at the turn of the 1990s (1987–1991) three fifths (60%) of first-time cohabiters married within five years. Just over one fourth (27%) continued to live in the same cohabiting union and one in seven relationships (14%) ended in separation. It is important to note that in four out of five first partnerships that started as cohabitation the same two individuals continued living together in a long-term relationship. The stability of cohabitations that started around 15–20 years later, in the period following the turn of the millennium (2002–2006), did not decline; the percentage of those staying together was still around 80%. (It should be noted that the stability of partnerships is somewhat higher for those who start their partnership history with direct marriage; the percentage of marriages that dissolved within five years was around 10% among them).

We can observe an important change in the somewhat decreasing proportion of those turning cohabitation into marriage. While earlier approximately 60% of couples whose first union started as cohabitation married their partner within five years, now only one in three couples do. However, it appears that in the latest period (in 2002–2006) the percentage of those marrying hardly declined. Therefore it is safe to conclude that cohabitation as a form of premarital relationship will continue to exist, and long-term cohabitation as

Figure 7: Partnership trajectory in the first five years after the start of cohabitation as first-time union by partnership cohorts



Source: Spéder 2005; HDRI GGS Turning Points of the Life Course, Wave 4 (2012–2013), new sample of 18–49 year olds; authors' calculation.

an alternative to marriage is also a key phenomenon.

The proportion of cohabitations that survive for five years seems to level off, so it is worthwhile to examine in more detail what happens with partnerships that started as cohabitation between 1997 and 2001 ten years later – nearly half of the couples (32%) still cohabit and the other half (36%) got married in the meantime. Relationships are more stable in the second five years of their life course than in the first five years: fewer cohabitations turn into marriage and they are also less likely to end. Overall, the probability of union disruption between the fifth and the tenth year of the relationship was similar for partnerships that turned into a marriage and partnerships that continued as cohabitation (data not shown).

## LIVING-APART-TOGETHER RELATIONSHIPS: APART BUT STILL TOGETHER?

As it has been shown in the section on marital and partnership status, one of the key changes of the decade following the turn of the millennium was the increase in the proportion of singles, those without a cohabiting partner, among young adults and the young middle-aged. However, this group is as diverse as that of cohabiters. We have to note that strictly speaking some of them cannot be considered single because they have a long-term partner but they do not live together.

In the literature a *living-apart-together relationship (LAT)*<sup>6</sup> is usually defined as a long-term monogamous relationship that the partners publicly acknowledge, however they do not live together in the same household. Living apart might be a voluntary and conscious decision but it can also result from external constraints. It can be a temporary situation that will be followed by cohabitation sooner or later; however, it might also be a long-term arrangement. Some of the literature uses a narrower definition of LAT and only includes couples that consciously opted for this arrangement and they do not live apart because of external constraints (see the review of Kapitány 2012). This type of relationship is best illustrated by two life situations: some people would like to keep the independence provided by separate households, while others do not move in with their partner because they consider their relationship with their children especially important. However, we should not include those who are in the initial stages of their relationship and would consider cohabitation premature and those who cannot move in together due to external constraints although they would like to (e.g. they still study, live with their parents, or cannot afford it).

Data from the 2012–2013 wave of the *Turning Points of Life Course* panel survey (the *Hungarian Generations and Gender Survey*) allow us to examine the group of people who do not live with a partner in more detail and determine the percentage of those with a noncohabiting partner. The survey did not collect information about the other characteristics of living-apart-together relationships (using the broader definition), therefore the group of those with a noncohabiting partner will be examined here – although it is assumed that these two categories overlap to a large extent.

Based on the above survey 13% of 18–49-year-old respondents had a noncohabiting partner. The comparison by age group, marital and relationship status shows that there are people with a noncohabiting partner among both the young and the middle-aged, as well as the unmarried, the divorced and the widowed (*Table 3*).

This form of partnership is most common among young people under the age of 25 and it seems justified to assume that it is one phase of the partner selection process (“dating”) and those involved do not live together because they cannot or do not (yet) want to (*Table 4*). Some of the older people in our sample may regard it as an alternative lifestyle that, even if temporary, helps them maintain their independence. (They are not “single” because they have a long-term relationship, thus they definitely constitute a key group of those with a LAT partnership.) Finally, many of the divorced, widowed and separated individuals have a long-term noncohabiting partner. Living apart may be due to a variety of reasons; however, in this group a major barrier to cohabitation might be having child(ren) from a previous union and their potentially conflicting relationship with the new partner. Moving in together would result in a new family constellation that the children and adults involved might find difficult to handle. This is also suggested by the fact

*Table 3: Distribution of singles with and without a noncohabiting partner, respondents living in cohabitation and with a spouse, aged 18–49, by sex, age group and marital status*

		Single, does not have a non-cohabiting partner	Has a non-cohabiting partner	Lives in cohabitation	Lives with spouse	Total (%)
Sex	Female	27.4	13.9	19.5	39.2	100.0
	Male	35.8	12.6	18.3	33.3	100.0
Age group	18–20	60.9	29.0	9.1	1.1	100.0
	21–24	52.9	27.9	16.2	3.0	100.0
	25–29	36.2	17.3	28.3	18.3	100.0
	30–34	23.6	10.9	30.3	35.1	100.0
	35–39	22.6	8.0	19.8	49.6	100.0
	40–44	23.4	5.3	13.5	57.9	100.0
	44–49	23.3	7.9	11.7	57.2	100.0
	Marital status	Never married	48.4	21.8	29.9	–
Lives with parents		62.8	30.3	6.9	–	100.0
Does not live with parents		29.4	10.6	60.0	–	100.0
Married, lives with spouse		–	–	–	100.0	100.0
Married, lives apart from spouse		54.7	19.6	25.7	–	100.0
Widowed		77.6	15.4	7.0	–	100.0
Divorced		52.2	16.8	31.0	–	100.0
Total		31.6	13.3	18.9	36.2	100.0
N		(1423)	(623)	(755)	(1534)	(4335)

Source: HDRI GGS Turning Points of the Life Course, Wave 4 (2012–2013), new sample of 18–49 year olds; authors' calculation.

that 76% of those without children but only 54% of those with children intend to move in with their partner, and 15% of parents indicate children as the reason for living apart. People who have had a previous long-term relationship which broke up are also less likely to plan to turn their relationship into cohabitation.

Noncohabiting partners have been together on average for 2.5 years and one third of them for less than a year. The older the respondent is, the longer the relationship is: the duration of the relationship was 1.7 year among 18–29 year olds, 3.2 years among people in their thirties, and six years among those in their forties. Among people aged less than 30, the longer the relationship is, the more

likely it is that the partners plan to move in together (75% in the case of relationships that are less than one year old and 83% in the case of relationships that are longer than three years). They probably view this partnership form as the “prelude” to cohabitation. On the contrary, those in their thirties and forties are the less likely to plan to start cohabitation the longer they have been together. Among those aged 40–49 only 32% of people who have been together with their partner for at least three years plan to cohabit, as opposed to 68% of those who have been together for less than one year. This suggests that the LAT relationship can potentially turn into a long-term, permanent form of partnership for some of the people aged over 30 years.

Table 4: Opinion of people with a noncohabiting partner on moving in together by age group

	(%)			
	18–29 years	30–39 years	40–49 years	Total
Proportion who intends to move in with their partner within three years	78.8	73.3	42.4	71.5
Reasons for living apart among those who do not plan to live together				
<i>Internal reasons (the respondent does not want to move in with the partner)</i>	<i>49.4</i>	<i>62.5</i>	<i>67.1</i>	<i>58.1</i>
The relationship is not stable enough for cohabitation	10.8	30.9	10.2	15.1
To maintain independence	22.7	25.5	33.5	26.8
For financial reasons	1.7	0.0	1.7	1.3
Because of children	0.0	3.6	7.2	3.2
Other reasons	14.2	2.5	14.5	11.7
<i>External reasons (cannot live together due to external barriers)</i>	<i>50.7</i>	<i>37.5</i>	<i>32.9</i>	<i>42.1</i>
Housing problems	7.2	7.4	10.0	8.1
Work circumstances	4.3	4.5	4.8	4.5
Financial problems	10.0	12.7	0.0	7.4
Partner has family commitments (e.g. married, getting divorced)	0.0	0.0	8.6	2.8
Other legal issues	2.0	6.9	0.0	2.5
Other external reasons	27.2	6.0	9.5	16.8
<i>Total</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>100.0</i>

Source: HDRI GGS Turning Points of the Life Course, Wave 4 (2012–2013), new sample of 18–49 year olds; authors' calculation.

In summary, approximately half of those with a noncohabiting partner probably opt for this lifestyle intentionally and do not view it as a temporary phase before cohabitation or marriage but as a distinct, alternative form of partnership. They are the ones who fit the narrow definition of “living-apart-together relationships”.

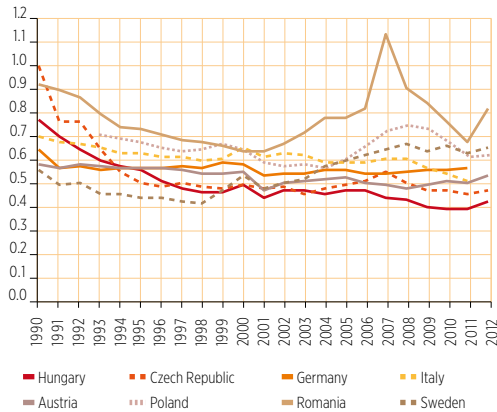
## MARRIAGE AND PARTNERSHIP STATUS IN INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

The decline in marriage is not an exclusively Hungarian phenomenon but the trend can be observed in the majority of European countries (*Figure 8*). During the 1990s the total first marriage rate for women was generally falling (out of the countries examined here particularly sharply in the Czech Republic), although in Austria or Germany there were only minor changes

from the already low baseline values (around 0.6). By the end of the 1990s the Swedish and Hungarian marriage rates were the lowest among the eight countries. By the end of the first decade of the new millennium the probability of marriage increased slightly in some countries (e.g. Poland, Sweden), however the Hungarian value continued declining. In 2012 out of the eight examined countries Romania, Poland and Sweden had the highest rates and Hungary had the lowest.

Two issues should be noted here in relation to international comparative data. On the one hand TFMR is rather sensitive to changes in legislation: for example the peak in the Romanian values around 2007–2008 was caused by a law (abolished since then) that granted a substantial financial subsidy to first-time marriages. On the other hand, the continued increase in the propensity to marry in Sweden is particularly noteworthy. Long-term demographic trends rarely get

Figure 8: Total first marriage rate for females in selected European countries, 1990–2012



Source: Eurostat (TRFM, 1990–2012).

“reversed”, but the Swedish increase seems to suggest this.

The diffusion of cohabitation and long-term noncohabiting partnership makes it difficult to examine changes in these areas from an international comparative perspective. However, some comparative datasets allow us to contrast international trends. For clearer comparison the age group of 30–34-year-old females was selected because the trends discussed above are especially visible in this group. There are large differences in the situation of women aged 30–34 in terms of partnership status across Europe, and even the different regions cannot be considered homogenous groups of countries (Table 5). The majority of women aged 30–34 are in a long-term relationship in all countries: the percentages range between 65 and 89%. The share of partnered women is the lowest in Italy (64%), mainly due to the very low prevalence of cohabitation (2%).

The percentage of cohabiting women is also relatively low, under 10% in Romania, Poland and Lithuania. In contrast, one in three women aged 30–34 lives in cohabitation in Belgium, Estonia and Norway. Hungary is in the low mid-range of the international comparison.

Between 2 and 13% of women aged 30–34 have a *long-term noncohabiting partner*. This rate is highest in Austria and Italy and lowest in Estonia and Georgia. In Hungary 6% of the analysed group have such a relationship.

Between 9 and 24% of 30–34-year-old women are *single*, that is they do not have a noncohabiting, cohabiting or marital partner. This percentage is lowest in Romania (9%), while the share of married women is the highest in Romania (82%) among the countries examined here.

A large number of 30–34-year-old single women or those with a noncohabiting partner in Eastern, Central and Southern Europe live with one or both parents. Leaving the parental home becomes possible for many of them only when they move in with a long-term partner or get married (due to social expectations, the characteristics of the housing market and/or the relatively lower levels of economic welfare). Thus the postponement of first partnerships also means that they leave the parental home later. In contrast the percentage of those who still live in the parental home is negligible in some Western and Northern European countries (e.g. France, Germany, the Netherlands and Norway). In these countries women tend to move out of the parental home relatively early regardless of their partnership status and live alone or with friends during one phase of their lives.

Table 5: Distribution of females aged 30–34 by partnership status and living arrangement in selected European countries

(%)

Country	Single		Has a noncohabiting partner		Lives in cohabitation	Lives with spouse	Total
	Total	Out of which lives with parent(s)	Total	Out of which lives with parent(s)			
Austria	16.9	26.3	13.4	30.3	25.9	43.8	100.0
Belgium	13.9	20.7	4.1	12.6	32.3	49.7	100.0
Bulgaria	16.3	67.0	4.4	67.0	10.7	68.6	100.0
Czech Republic	24.1	21.3	8.0	11.9	10.8	57.0	100.0
Estonia	23.0	33.3	1.1	40.0	31.8	44.1	100.0
France	15.7	4.1	7.0	10.2	25.0	52.3	100.0
Georgia	19.7	80.4	1.8	67.0	18.8	59.8	100.0
Germany	17.0	7.9	6.0	0.0	16.4	60.6	100.0
Hungary	20.4	44.0	5.8	42.6	13.7	60.2	100.0
Italy	23.1	70.0	12.6	55.7	1.7	62.7	100.0
Lithuania	22.2	33.8	7.8	10.5	6.8	63.2	100.0
Netherlands	21.2	1.8	8.9	2.1	21.2	48.6	100.0
Norway	18.0	3.2	6.3	3.0	32.5	43.3	100.0
Poland	17.4	35.5	4.7	35.6	7.3	70.6	100.0
Romania	8.7	46.1	3.6	54.1	5.9	81.7	100.0
Russia	13.0	55.8	8.3	57.0	15.1	63.6	100.0

Source: Generations and Gender Survey (2004–2009); authors' calculation.

## TYPES OF COHABITING UNIONS IN EUROPE

(Based on Hiekel et al. 2014)

Cohabitors can be categorised into different groups according to their views on marriage, marriage intentions and perceived economic situation; the share of these groups varies widely between countries. Some groups consider cohabitation part of the marriage process; others view it as an alternative to marriage.

Cohabitation – according to an international comparative study (Hiekel et al. 2014) – can be considered the “prelude to marriage” for couples that intend to get married within three years and do not think that marriage is an outdated

institution. This group is the largest in Georgia (66%) and Romania (39%) and smallest in Norway (11%). Those in the trial marriage group do not consider marriage an outdated institution but do not plan to get married within three years because they have not decided whether they want to turn their relationship into marriage. The percentage of those in a trial marriage is relative high (26–30%) in Western and Northern Europe – with the exception of Austria. Those struggling to make ends meet might give up their intentions to get married because of financial difficulties (the category “economic reasons”). This group is the largest in Russia (17%).

Conformists constitute a special group: they intend to get married but at the same time their views on the institution

of marriage are negative or neutral. In Eastern and Central Europe (except Georgia) 21–39% of cohabiters belong to this category. They plan to get married because of social pressure or perhaps the anticipated economic or legal advantages of marriage rather than personal conviction.

Some of those not intending to get married reject the institution of marriage

and others have a more neutral attitude. The percentage of those considering cohabitation an alternative to marriage is generally higher in Western and Northern Europe (where unmarried cohabitation is more widespread) than in Eastern and Central Europe, although Bulgarian and Hungarian values are similar to those observed in the Western part of the continent.

*Frequency of different types of cohabitation in selected European countries*

	Western and Northern Europe				Eastern and Central Europe					
	Austria	Germany	France	Norway	Bulgaria	Georgia	Hungary	Lithuania	Romania	Russia
Prelude to marriage	27.0	20.2	24.8	10.5	16.0	66.0	24.2	23.2	39.0	25.9
Trial marriage	15.2	26.4	19.3	29.3	1.7	5.7	13.4	8.1	5.2	9.8
Economic reasons	1.2	2.2	6.8	0.9	9.6	10.5	2.6	2.4	5.2	16.9
Conformist	20.5	13.0	12.3	6.9	26.8	13.7	27.9	38.7	35.0	21.3
Refusal of marriage	17.9	21.0	21.5	20.5	32.3	2.1	19.3	13.6	4.8	14.5
Marriage is irrelevant	18.3	17.1	15.4	31.9	13.7	1.9	12.7	14.2	10.7	11.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
<i>Proportion of unmarried cohabitation of all co-resident unions</i>	<i>30.2</i>	<i>12.2</i>	<i>19.7</i>	<i>23.0</i>	<i>10.8</i>	<i>14.2</i>	<i>13.6</i>	<i>11.4</i>	<i>5.3</i>	<i>15.4</i>

*Source:* Hiekel et al. 2014; Generations and Gender Survey (2004–2009). Respondents aged 18–79 years (Austria: 18–45 years).



## GLOSSARY

*Marital status:* The categorisation of population by marital status is based on the existing legal status. *Never married* is the person who has not (yet) married or been in a registered partnership. *Married* is the person who has contracted a marriage and whose legal marriage has not been dissolved by a final judgement, whose spouse is alive, regardless of whether he/she does or does not live together with his/her spouse. *Registered partner* is the individual who registered his/her partnership with a same sex partner in front of the registrar. (Due to the small size of this group data on persons living in registered partnership are included among the married, widowed registered partners among the widowed and separated registered partners among the divorced.) *Widowed* are those who have not remarried or registered a civil partnership after the death of their spouse. *Divorced* are the persons whose marriage was dissolved by a final judgement and they have not remarried or registered a partnership. (Persons living separately without an official judgement are included among the married). The marital status of cohabiters is defined on the basis of their legal status (HCSO 2013).

*Cohabitation:* Long-term marriage-like relationship between two individuals who are not married to each other, regardless of their marital status and whether they are of different or same sex. The number of cohabiters includes couples who registered their relationship with a notary and those that did not.

*Living-apart-together relationship (LAT):* a long-term monogamous relationship that the partners publicly acknowledge and they do not live together in the same household. (On the alternative definitions of the concept see: Kapitány 2012.)

*Single:* Broadly defined, singles are those who are neither married nor cohabiting with a partner. A narrower definition includes only those who live neither in a co-resident union (marriage or cohabitation) nor have a long-term LAT partner.

*Total first marriage rate (TFMR):* It indicates what proportion of people aged over 15 would marry by a certain age (49 years for women, 59 years for men). It is based on the assumption that men or women turning 15 in a given calendar year would have the same probability to marry until a given age than women or men of corresponding age of the given year.

*Adjusted total first marriage rate (aTFMR):* It is a modified version of the total first marriage rate that also takes changes in the mean age at first marriage (postponing or bringing it forward) into account. The aTFMR shows what the probability to marry would be if the timing of marriage remained the same. It is computed by subtracting half of the difference between the mean ages at first marriage at years  $t+1$  and  $t-1$  from 1 and then using this to divide the TFMR value of year  $t$ . The value of aTFMR would be higher than the TFMR for the same year if the mean at first marriage was increasing and lower if it was decreasing.

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