



April 27<sup>th</sup> 2021

VITAL STATISTICS 2020

## **NEGATIVE NATURAL BALANCE INCREASES IN 2020 AND BECOMES NEGATIVE IN ALL REGIONS**

In 2020, there were 84,426 live births of mothers residing in Portugal. This figure represents a decrease of 2.5% (2,153 fewer children) compared to the previous year. Of the total live births, 57.9% were born outside marriage, meaning they were the children of unmarried parents.

There were 123,358 deaths of people residing in the national territory, an increase of 10.3% (11,565) compared to 2019.

The increase in the number of deaths and the decrease in the number of live births determined a strong reduction of the natural balance from -25,214 in 2019 to -38,932 in 2020.

In 2020 there were 205 deaths of children under 1 year of age (41 fewer than in 2019), a decrease in the infant mortality rate from 2.8 to 2.4 deaths per thousand live births, the lowest rate observed in Portugal.

Also in 2020, 18,902 marriages were celebrated, the lowest number since there are civil registrations, 43.2% less than in the previous year. In almost two thirds of the marriages (63.4%), the spouses shared residence before marriage.

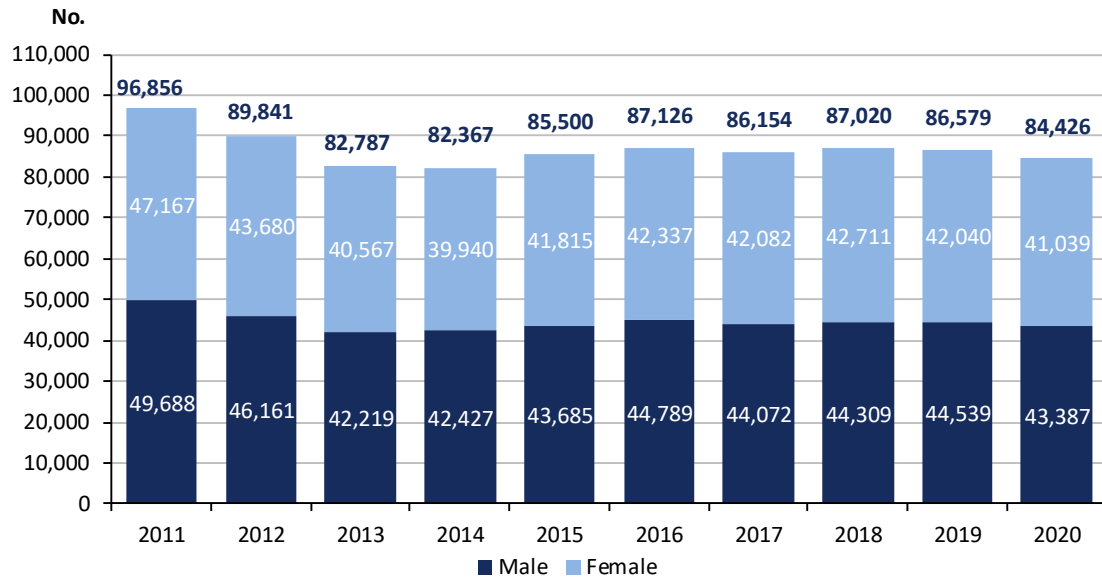
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### **Number of live births decreased 2.5%**

In 2020, 84,426 live births were born of mothers residing in Portugal, 2.5% less than in 2019 (86,579). Of the total live births, 43,387 were born male and 41,039 were born female, representing a sex ratio at birth of 106 (for every 100 females born, around 106 males were born).

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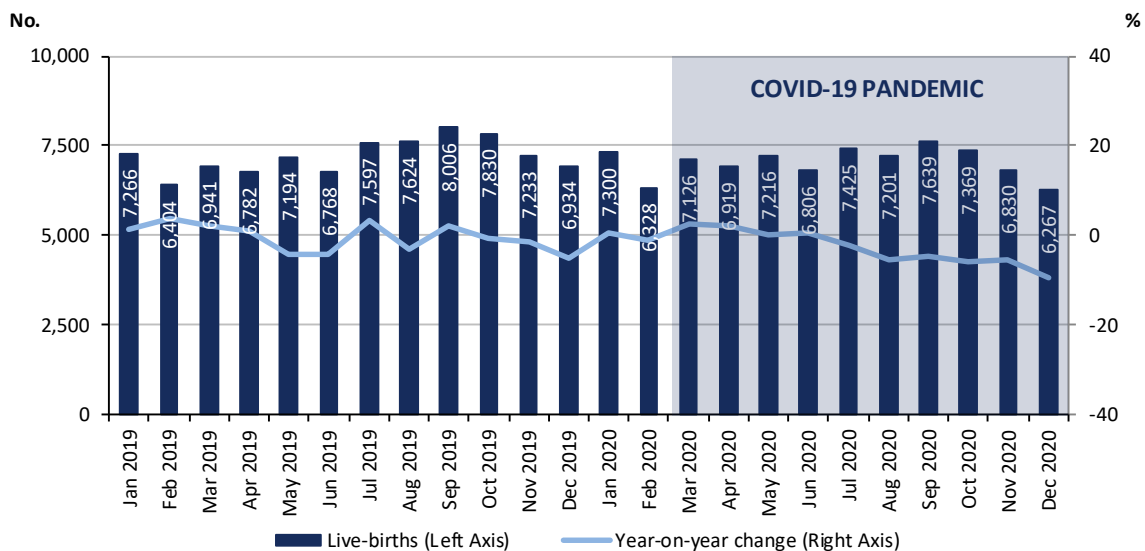
Figure 1.  
Live births by sex, Portugal, 2011-2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Live births.

As in previous years, also in 2020, September was the month in which the highest number of live births was registered. In the first half of 2020, except for February, the number of live births was higher than in 2019. From July to December, the year-on-year change was always negative, with the greatest decrease in December 2020 (-9.6% live births), corresponding to the month of birth of live births conceived already in the pandemic period.

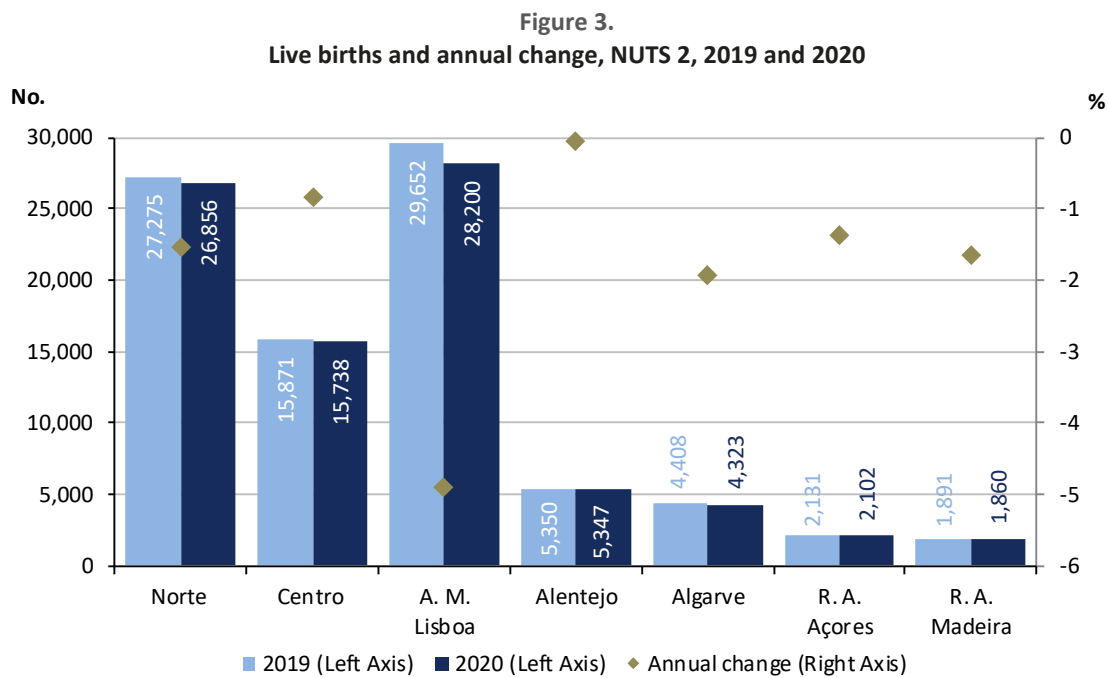
Figure 2.  
Live births and year-on-year change, Portugal, January 2019 to December 2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Live births.

Live births have decreased in all regions of the country, particularly in the Área Metropolitana de Lisboa (-4.9%). In the other regions, the decrease was lower than the national value (-2.5%), with Alentejo and Centro registering the smallest decreases (-0.1% and -0.8% respectively).

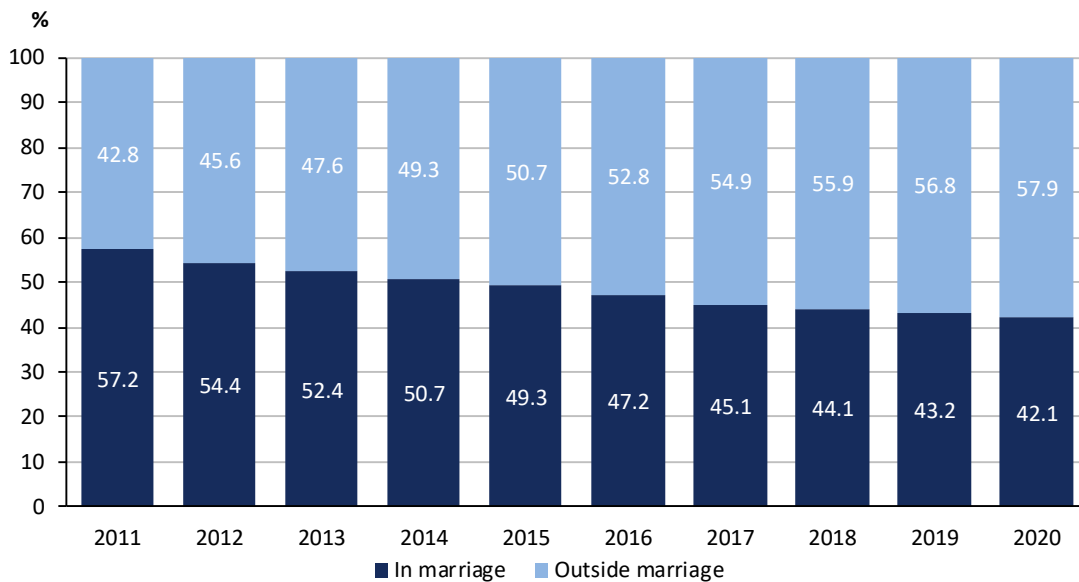
It should also be noted that the sex ratio at birth in the Região Autónoma dos Açores (116), Algarve, Centro, and Norte (the three with 107) was higher than the value for Portugal (106).



**Source:** Statistics Portugal, Live births.

In 2020, the proportion of live births born outside marriage, that is, children of unmarried parents, increased to 57.9% (56.8% in 2019 and 42.8% in 2011), representing, for the sixth consecutive year, more than half of the total births in Portugal.

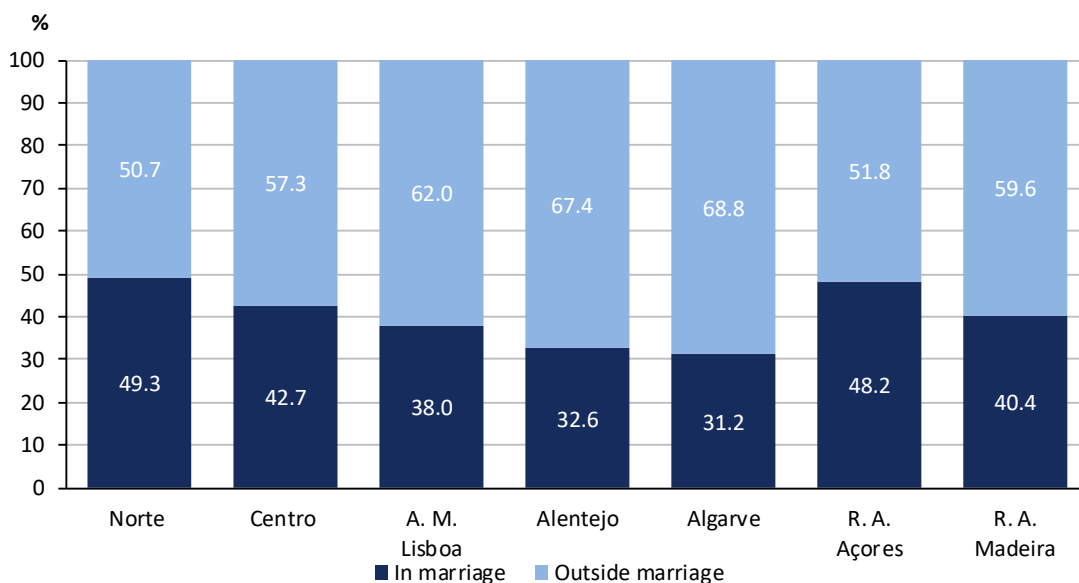
**Figure 4.**  
**Live births by legitimacy status, Portugal, 2011-2020**



Source: Statistics Portugal, Live births.

The highest proportions of live births born outside marriage, with values above 60%, were found in the Área Metropolitana de Lisboa (62.0%), Alentejo (67.4%) and Algarve (68.8%), in contrast to the Região Autónoma dos Açores (51.8%) and Norte (50.7%).

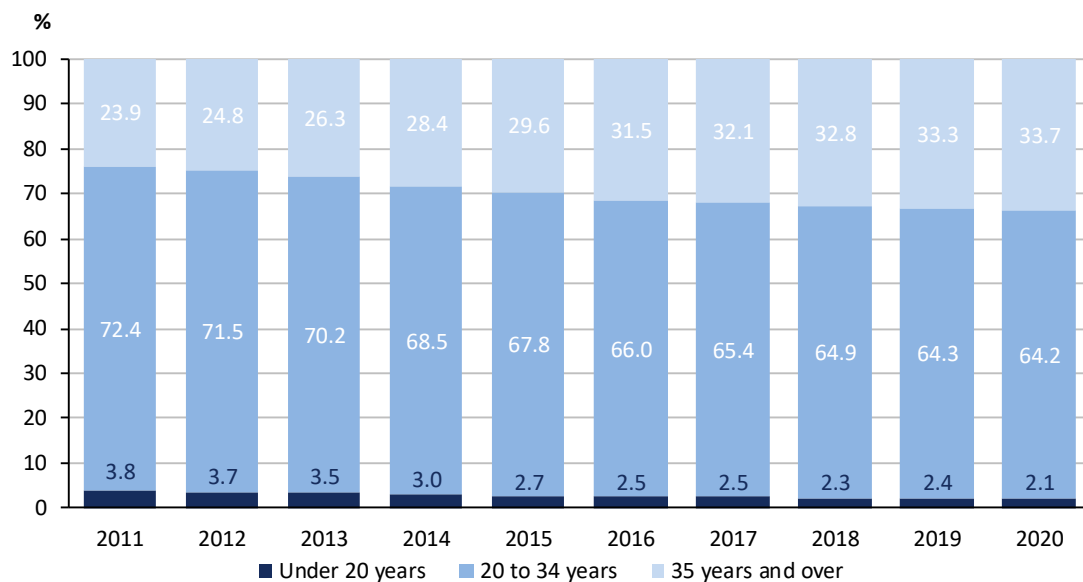
**Figure 5.**  
**Live births by legitimacy status, NUTS 2, 2019**



Source: Statistics Portugal, Live births.

In 2020, of all live births, 64.2% were of mothers aged between 20 to 34 years; 33.7% to mothers aged 35 and over, and 2.1% to mothers under 20 years of age. Between 2011 and 2020, there were decreases in the proportions of live births of mothers under the age of 20 and of mothers aged between 20 to 34 years, respectively by 1.7 and 8.2 percentage points (pp). On the other hand, over this period, there was an increase of 9.8 pp in the proportion of live births of mothers aged 35 and over.

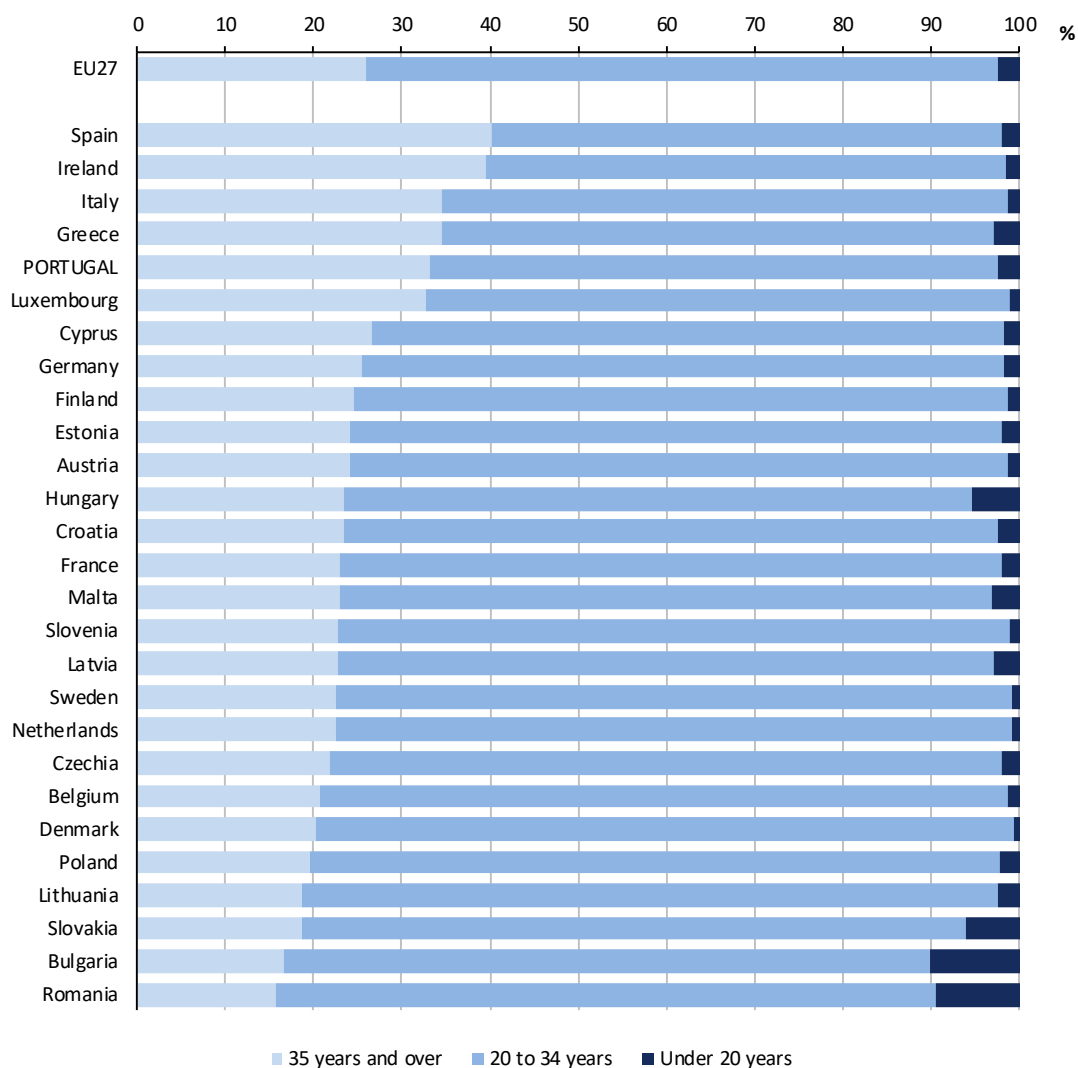
**Figure 6.**  
**Live births by age of the mother, Portugal, 2011-2020**



**Source:** Statistics Portugal, Live births.

In the European Union (EU27), in 2019, the most recent year for which comparable data are available from Eurostat, six countries registered more than 30% of their births to mothers aged 35 and over. Portugal was the fifth country in this group, with 33.3% of births observed in this age group, and Spain was the first, with 40.2%. In contrast, Bulgaria (10.1%) and Romania (9.4%) were the countries with the highest share of births to mothers under the age of 20.

Figure 7.  
Live births by age of the mother, EU27, 2019

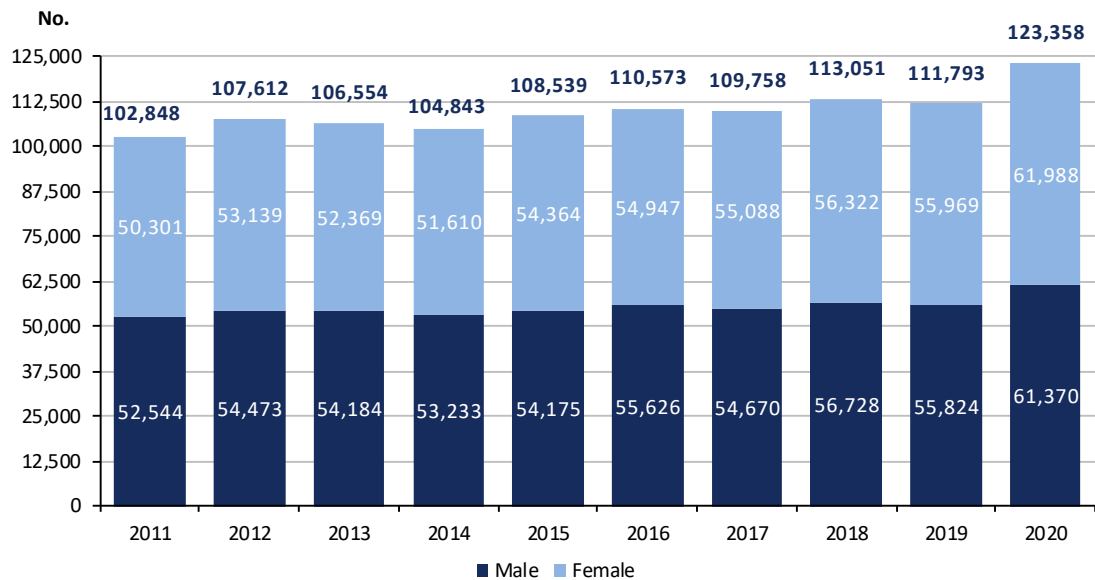


Source: EUROSTAT.

### Number of deaths increased 10.3%

In 2020 there were 123,358 deaths of residents in the national territory, an increase of 11,565 deaths when compared to 2019 (111,793), which represented a 10.3% increase. Of the total deaths recorded in 2020, 61,370 were of men and 61,988 were of women.

**Figure 8.**  
**Deaths by sex<sup>1</sup>, Portugal, 2011-2020**

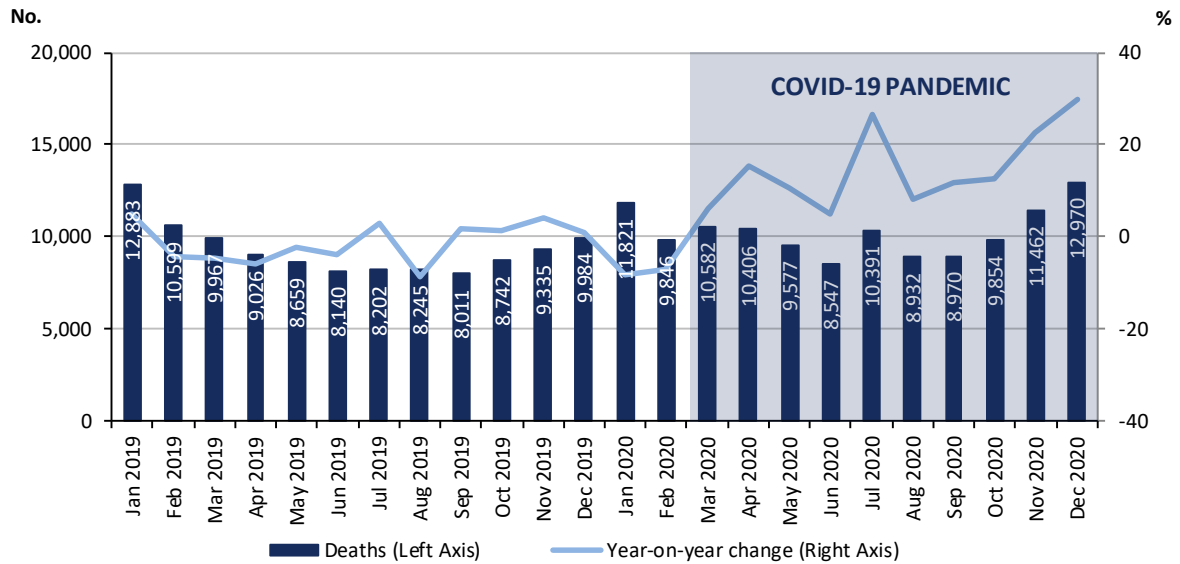


**Source:** Statistics Portugal, Deaths.

<sup>1</sup>The total number of deaths may not correspond to the sum of the partial figures by sex due to the existence of records with unknown sex.

In the first two months of 2020, the number of deaths was lower than in 2019. However, contrary to past trends, starting in March, the month in which the first deaths by COVID-19 were registered, mortality started increasing. Between March and December, in all months the number of deaths was higher than in 2019. The increase in deaths registered a first maximum in April, decreasing in the following two months. In July, there was the second largest increase in mortality, only surpassed by the increase registered in December. The month of December was the one with the highest number of deaths (12,970), 29.9% more than in December 2019. The month of June was the one with the lowest mortality (8,547 deaths) and the smallest increase compared to the same month of 2019 (5.0%).

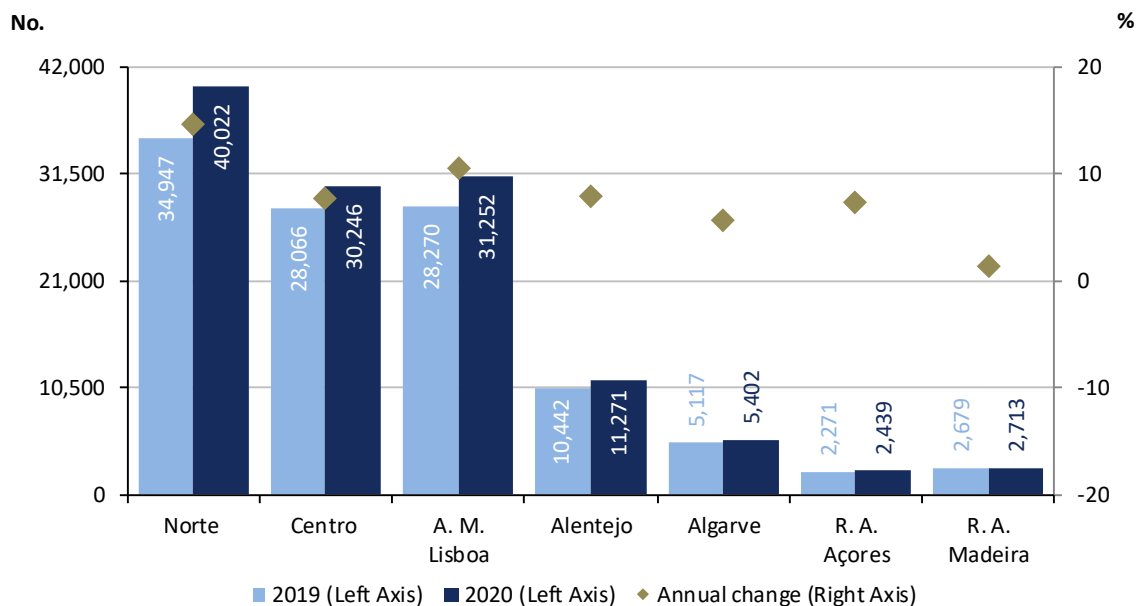
Figure 9.  
Deaths and year-on-year change, Portugal, January 2019 to December 2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Deaths.

Mortality increased in all regions, particularly in Norte (+ 14.5%) and in Área Metropolitana de Lisboa (+ 10.5%) where the increase was higher than the national value of 10.3%. The Região Autónoma da Madeira and the Algarve were the regions that registered the lowest increases, respectively, 1.3% and 5.6%.

Figure 10.  
Deaths and annual change, NUTS 2, 2019 and 2020



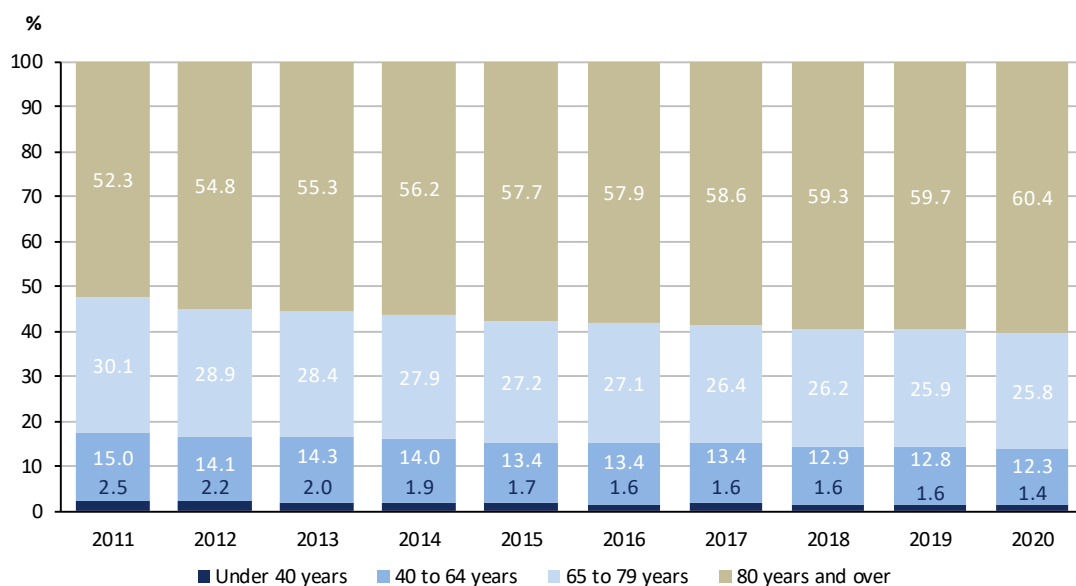
Source: Statistics Portugal, Deaths.



Most deaths occurred at older ages. In fact, 86.2% were of people aged 65 and over and more than half (60.4%) occurred at ages 80 and over.

Between 2011 and 2020, there were decreases in the proportions of deaths under the age of 65 and between the ages of 65 and 79, respectively of 3.8 and 4.3 pp. On the other hand, there was an increase of 8.1 pp in the proportion of deaths over the age of 80.

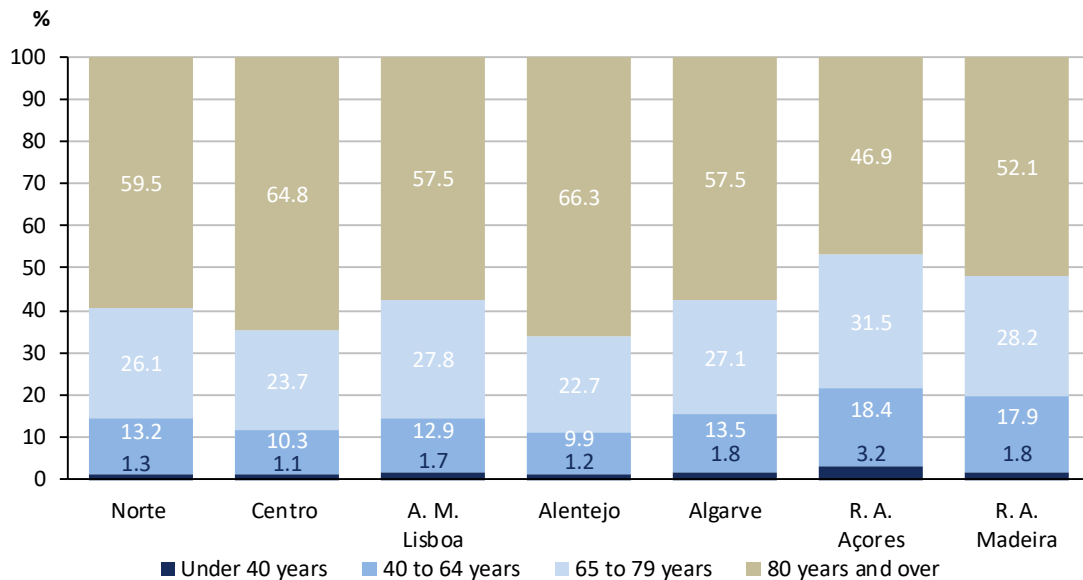
**Figure 11.**  
**Deaths by age group, Portugal, 2011-2020**



**Source:** Statistics Portugal, Deaths.

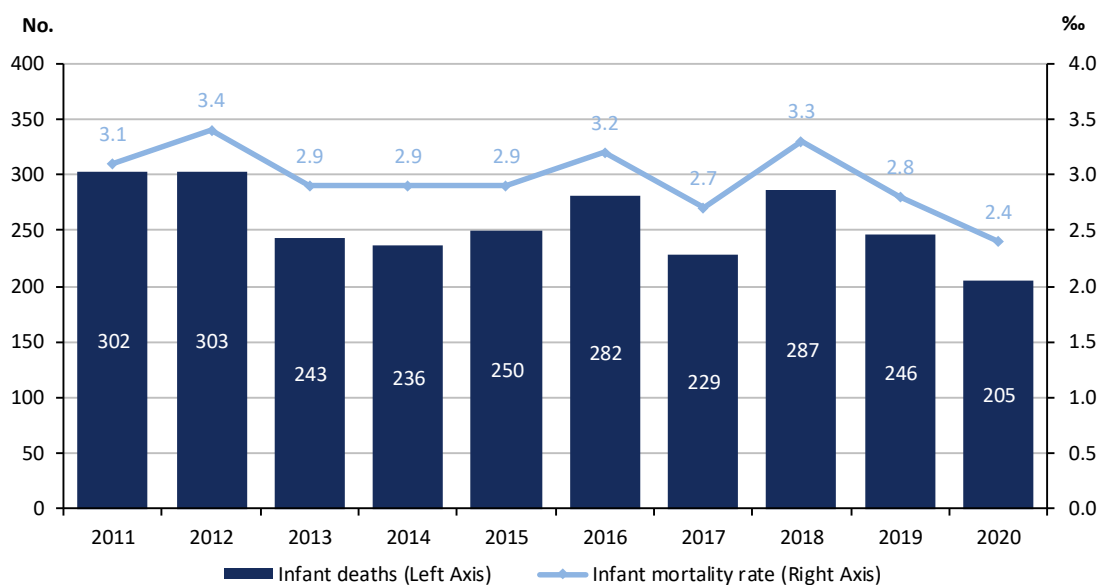
In line with what was observed for the country, in the NUTS 2 regions the highest proportion of deaths occurred in the age group of 80 and over, representing more than 50% of mortality in all regions, except for the Região Autónoma dos Açores (46.9%). In the regions Alentejo and Centro, mortality in this age group was proportionally higher than the national average (66.3% and 64.8%, respectively, against 60.4%).

Figure 12.  
Deaths by age group, NUTS 2, 2019



In 2020, there were 205 deaths of children under 1 year of age (41 fewer than in 2019). This decrease contributed to a reduction of the infant mortality rate, which stood at 2.4 deaths per thousand live births (2.8 % in 2019), the lowest value ever recorded in Portugal.

Figure 13.  
Infant deaths and infant mortality rate, Portugal, 2011-2020

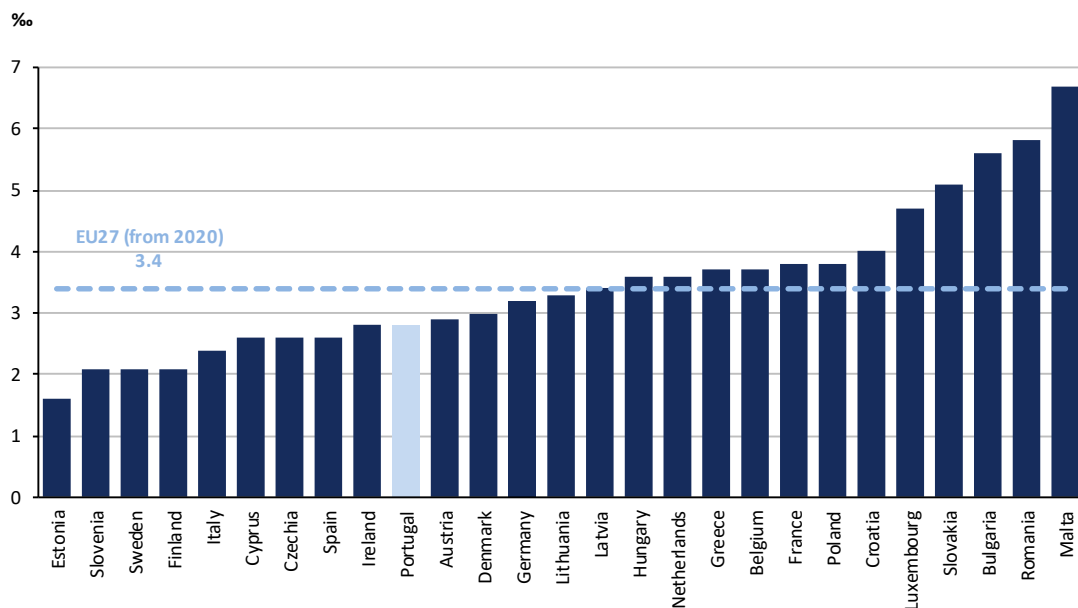


Source: Statistics Portugal, Deaths.



In 2019, the most recent year for which comparable data are available from Eurostat, Portugal ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in the group of EU27 countries regarding infant mortality, with 2.8 deaths per thousand live births, below the European average of 3.4 deaths per thousand live births. The lowest infant mortality rate was observed in Estonia (1.6 ‰) and the highest in Malta (6.7 ‰).

**Figure 14.**  
**Infant mortality rate, EU27, 2019**

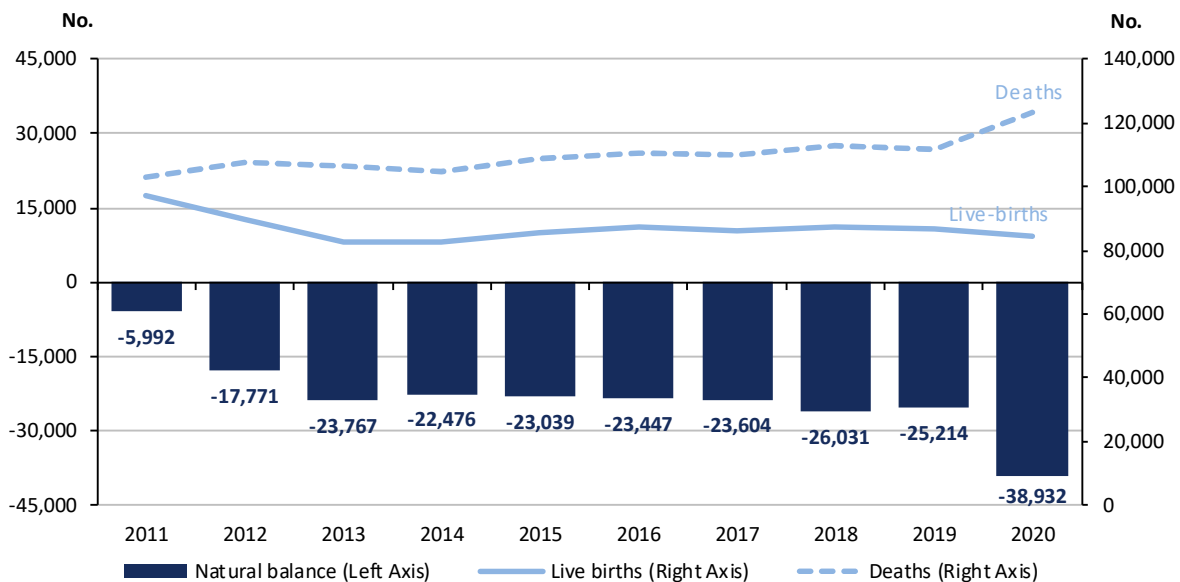


Source: EUROSTAT.

### Negative natural balance increases

The increase in the number of deaths, to which mortality due to COVID-19 contributed, as well as the decrease in the number of live births, resulted in a strong reduction of the natural balance (to -38,932). Portugal has had a negative natural balance for the last 12 consecutive years.

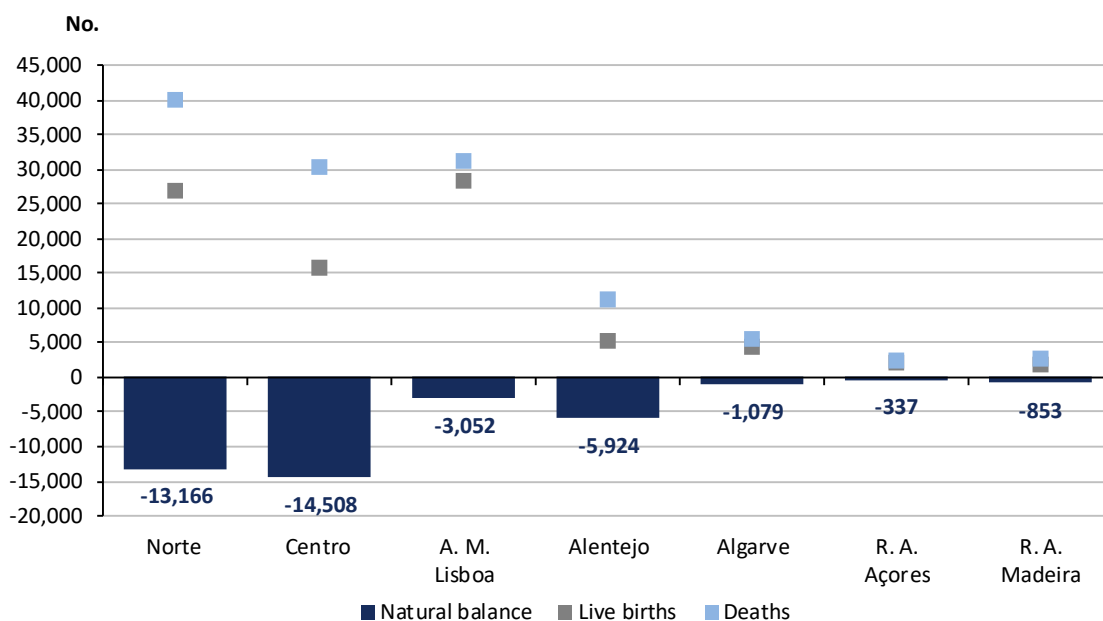
Figure 15.  
Live births, deaths and natural balance, Portugal, 2011-2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Live-births, Deaths and Demographic Indicators.

All NUTS 2 regions recorded a negative natural balance. The region Centro was the one with the most accentuated negative natural balance (-14,508) and the Região Autónoma dos Açores registered the least negative value (-337).

Figure 16.  
Live births, deaths and natural balance, NUTS 2, 2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Live-births, Deaths and Demographic Indicators.

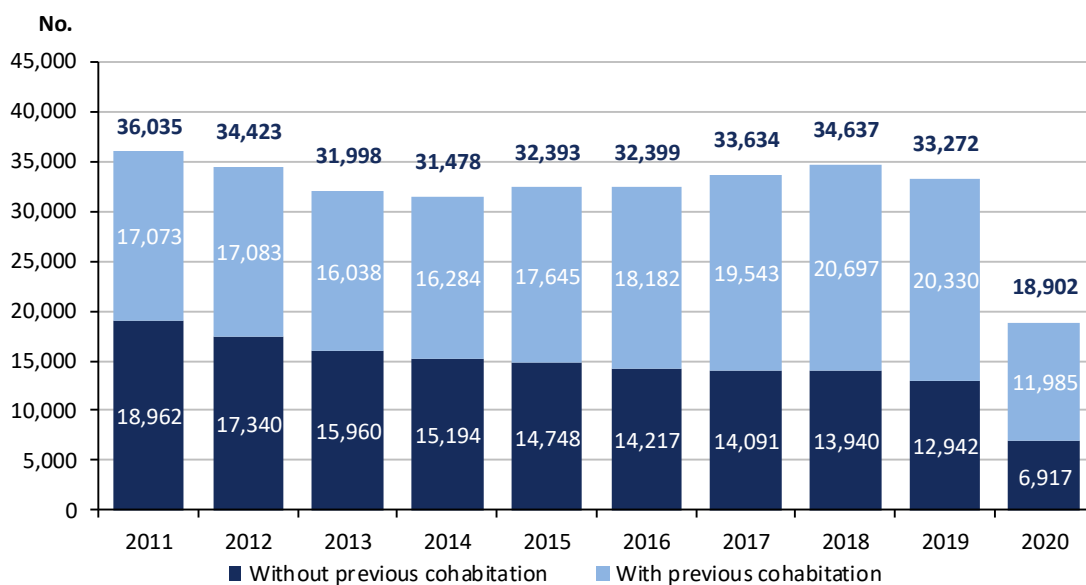
### Number of marriages decreased 43.2%

The declaration of the first state of emergency in the country, on March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and the corresponding measures to contain the pandemic, affected, among other aspects of the lives of citizens, the celebration of marriages. In 2020, 18,902 marriages were celebrated in Portugal, 14,370 less than in the previous year, representing a decrease of 43.2%. In the last decade, the number of marriages has always been over 30,000 and since there are civil records there has never been a value so low.

Of the celebrated marriages, 18,457 were opposite-sex marriages (32,595 in 2019) and 445 were same-sex marriages (677 in 2019), of which 236 marriages between men and 209 marriages between women (358 and 319, respectively, in 2019).

In more than half of the marriages held in 2020, spouses already cohabited (11,985 marriages). This proportion has grown considerably over the recent years, with an increase of 13.3 pp since in 2013 it exceeded 50% for the first time (50.1% in 2013 against 63.4% in 2020).

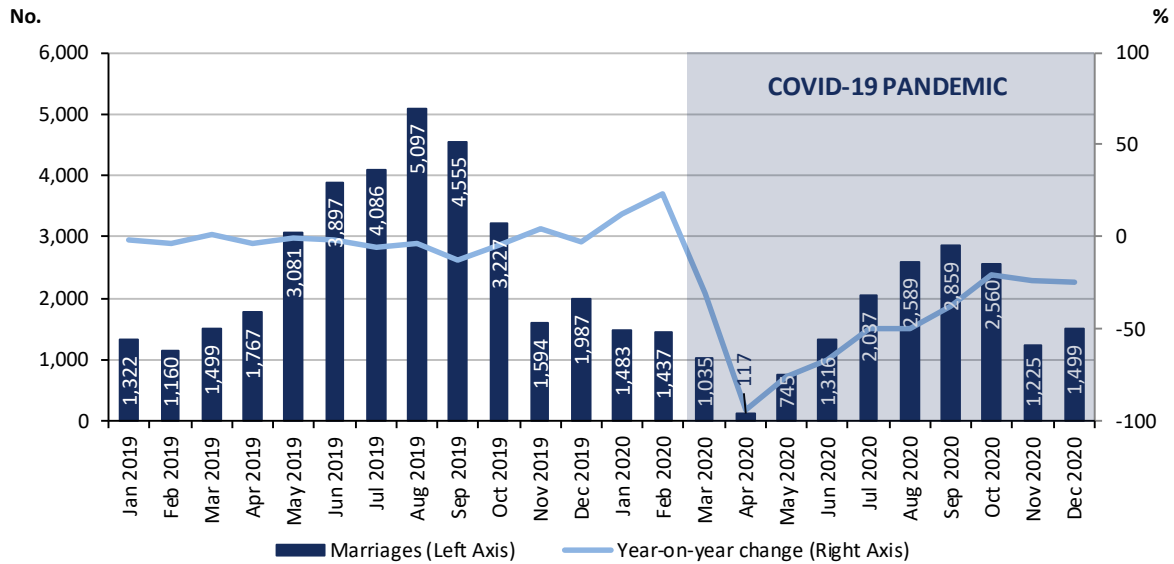
**Figure 17.**  
**Marriages, with or without previous cohabitation, Portugal, 2011-2020**



Source: Statistics Portugal, Marriage Statistics.

Only in the months of January and February 2020 there were higher numbers of marriages than in the same months of 2019 (+ 12.2% and + 23.9% respectively). April was the month with the lowest number of marriages (117), representing a 93.4% drop compared to April 2019.

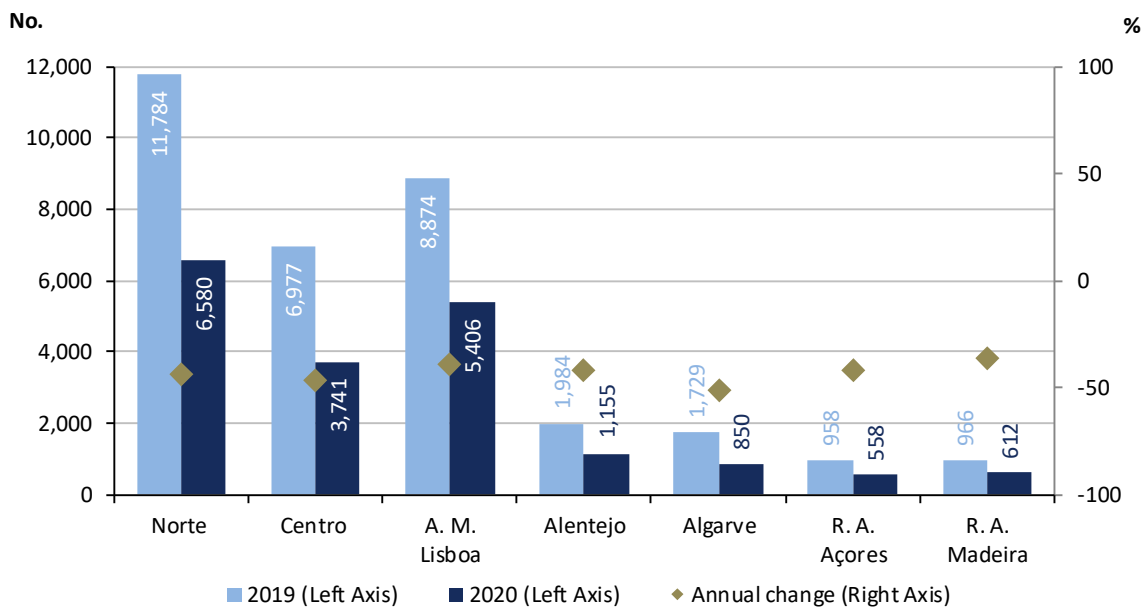
Figure 18.  
Marriages and year-on-year change, Portugal, January 2019 to December 2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Marriage Statistics.

All regions NUTS 2 followed the national downward trend in the number of marriages. However, this decrease was higher than the national value in Algarve (-50.8%), Centro (-46.4%) and Norte (-44.2%).

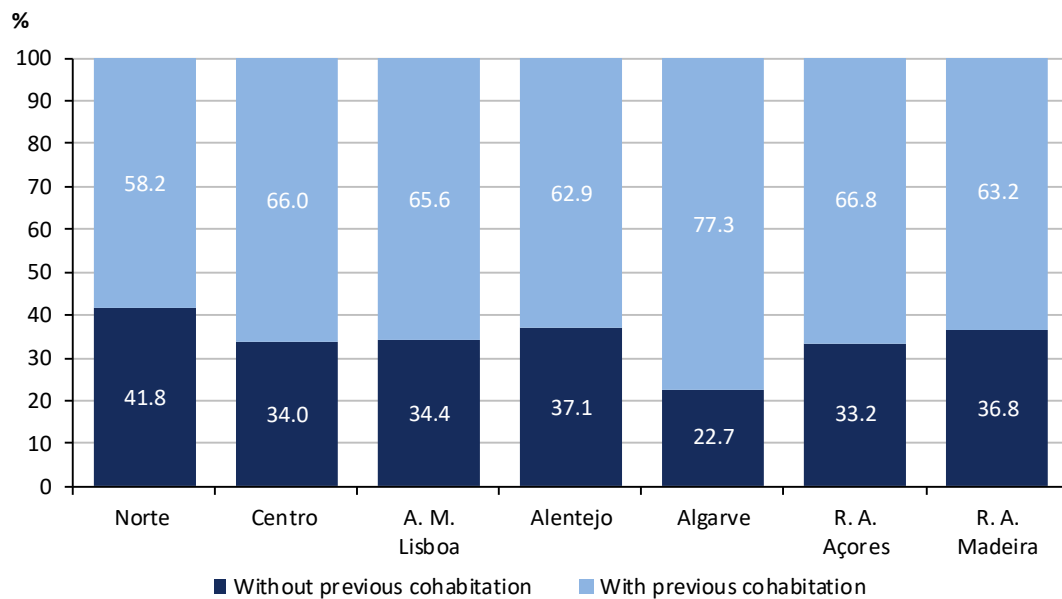
Figure 19.  
Marriages and annual change, NUTS 2, 2019 and 2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Marriage Statistics.

Likewise, in all regions NUTS 2, more than 50% of the spouses cohabited before marriage, and in Algarve that proportion exceeded 75% (77.3%). Only the regions Norte, Alentejo and Região Autónoma da Madeira had shares below the value for Portugal (58.2%, 62.9% and 63.2%, respectively).

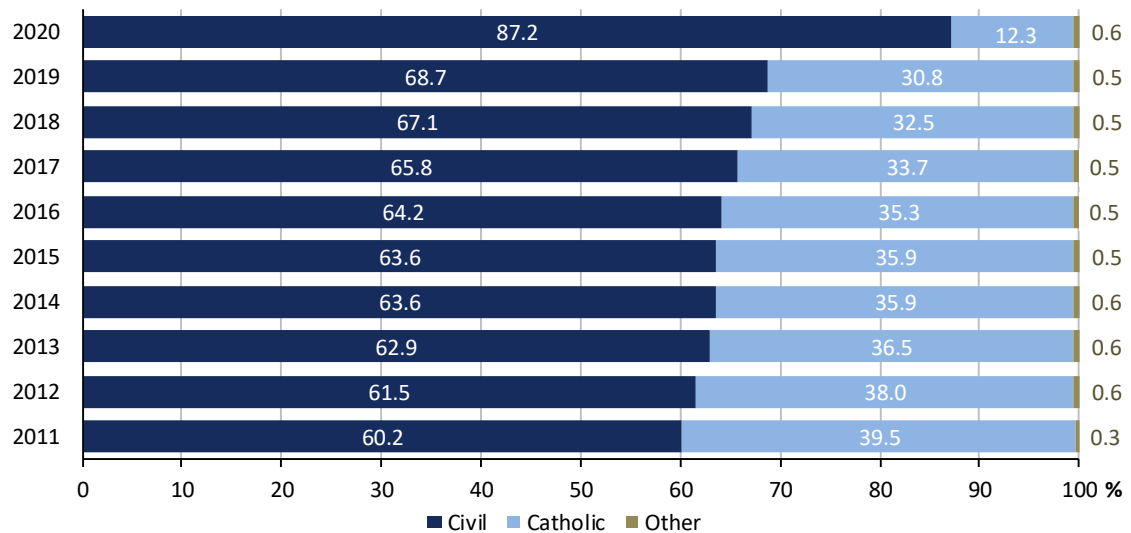
**Figure 20.**  
**Marriages, with or without previous cohabitation, NUTS 2, 2020**



**Source:** Statistics Portugal, Marriage Statistics.

Of all opposite-sex marriages celebrated, 12.3% (2,263) were Catholic marriages, 87.2% (16,087) were only civil marriages, and 0.6% (107) were celebrated according to other religious rites. The restrictions resulting from the containment of the pandemic imposed limitations on the celebration of marriages, and as such the data for 2020 should be read in this context.

**Figure 21.**  
**Marriages between opposite-sex couples, by celebration type, Portugal, 2011-2020**



Source: Statistics Portugal, Marriage Statistics.

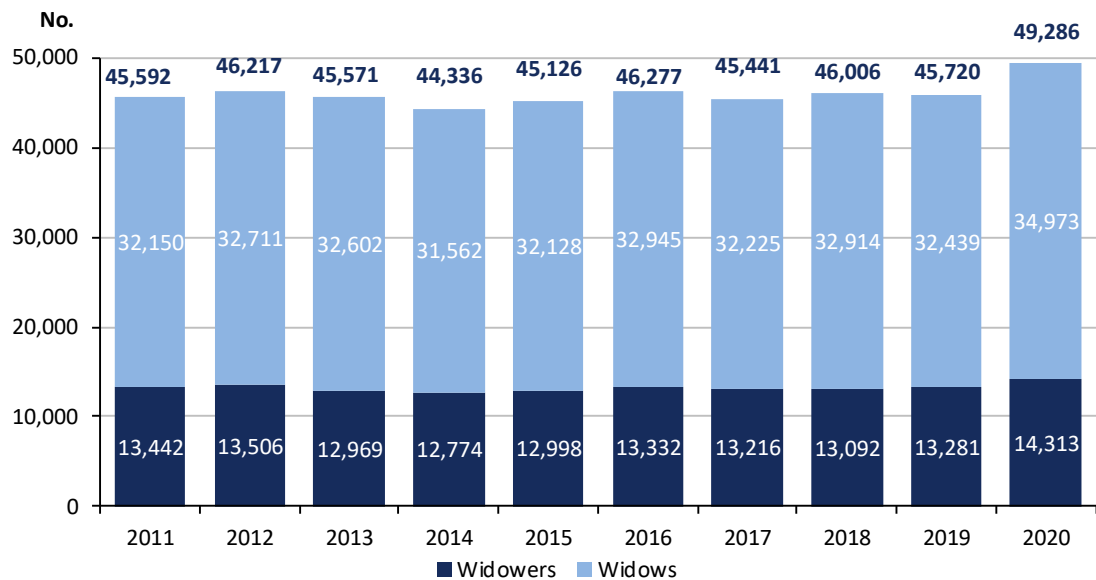
### More widows than widowers

In 2020, due to the increase in mortality, there were 49,286 marriages dissolved by death of a spouse, which represented an increase of 7.8% compared to 2019 (45,720 dissolutions), of which resulted 14,313 widowers and 34,973 widows.

Regarding the regions NUTS 2, the situation is similar to the national total, except for the Região Autónoma da Madeira, the only region where marriages dissolved by death decreased (-5.0%). Both in Portugal and in the regions NUTS 2, the number of widows was always higher than the number of widowers, as a result of the higher female life expectancy.

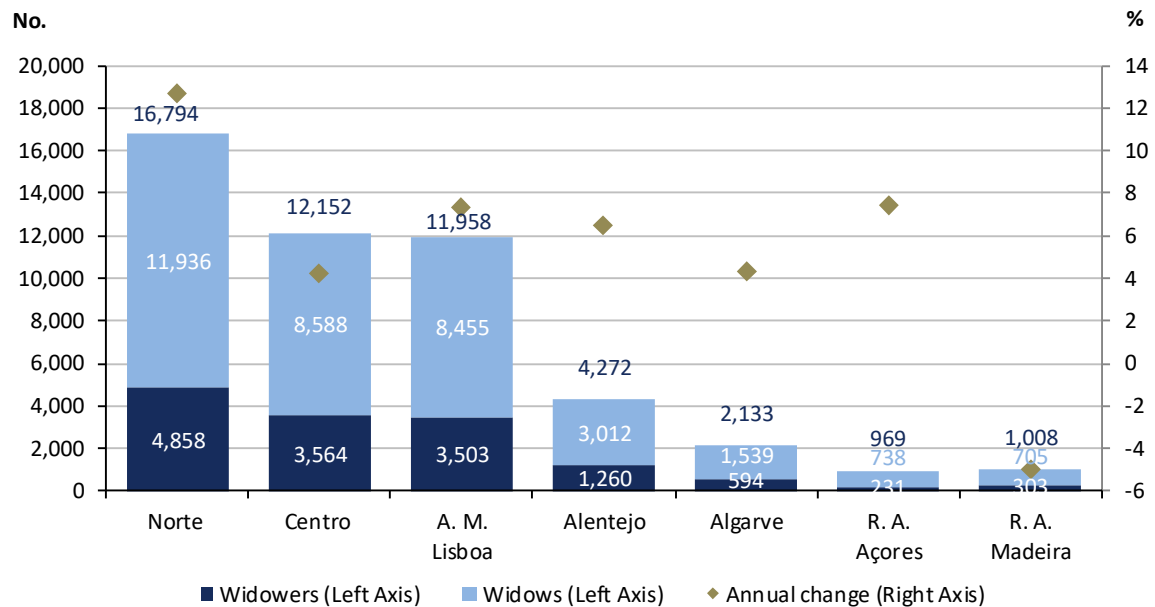


Figure 22.  
Dissolved marriages by death and surviving spouses, Portugal, 2011-2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Demographic Indicators.

Figure 23.  
Dissolved marriages by death and surviving spouses, and annual change, NUTS 2, 2020



Source: Statistics Portugal, Demographic Indicators.



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## TECHNICAL NOTE

Statistics Portugal releases indicators on live births, deaths, and marriages with information for 2020, by NUTS 1, 2, 3, Municipalities and parishes geographical breakdowns, based on the information registered in the Civil Register Offices until the end of March 2021. Revisions of data, namely regarding deaths, may occur after the codification of the causes of death recorded in 2019 and 2020. In the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may be a greater gap between the moment of birth and the moment of registration, with implications on the entry of live birth records at Statistics Portugal and the consequent possibility of revising the data now released.

Data on live births, deaths and marriages are obtained from statistical operations of direct and exhaustive collection of information on these demographic events that occurred in Portuguese territory using facts that are subject to compulsory civil registration (birth, death, and marriage) in the Sistema Integrado do Registo e Identificação Civil (SIRIC).

In addition to administrative information obtained from Civil Register Offices, Statistics Portugal collects still an additional set of variables identified as statistically pertinent to the National Statistic System (NSS) and the European Statistical System (EES).

Data are recorded and sent electronically, in compliance with the requirements set out by Statistics Portugal and laid down in liaison with the Instituto de Registos e Notariado (IRN) and the Instituto de Gestão Financeira e Equipamentos da Justiça (IGFEJ).

## DEFINITIONS

**Marriage:** Contract signed by two persons that intend to start a family in full partnership and cohabitation according to legislation. Note: marriage can be held between persons from different or same sex.

**Live birth:** This is the complete expulsion or extraction from the mother's body, irrespective of the duration of the pregnancy, of a product of fertilization that, after separation, breathes or shows any other signs of life, such as a beating of the heart or umbilical cord or actual contraction of any muscle subject to voluntary movement, whether the umbilical cord has been severed or not and whether the placenta is retained or not.

**Infant mortality:** Deaths of live-born children aged less than one year.

**Death:** The permanent disappearance of vital functions.

**Natural balance:** The difference between the number of live births and the number of deaths during a given period, usually a calendar year.

**Sex ratio at birth:** Ratio between male and female live births in a certain period (usually expressed as 100 female live births).

**Infant mortality rate:** The ratio of the number of deaths of children under one year of age during a specific period, usually a calendar year, to the number of live births in that period (usually expressed as the number of deaths of children under one year of age per 1000 ( $10^3$ ) live births).

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**Annual change:** The annual change compares the level of a variable between two reference years (year t and year t-1).

**Year-on-year change:** The year-on-year change compares the level of a variable between the reference month and the same month of the previous year.

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Detailed methodological information available at: [www.ine.pt](http://www.ine.pt), option Products, Metadata system.

Detailed statistical information available at: [www.ine.pt](http://www.ine.pt), option Products, Statistical data, database, theme Population.