A PROFILE OF CHILD MARRIAGE AND CHILD BRIDES in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

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Eastern Europe and Central Asia is home to 25 million girls and women who married in childhood

Number and distribution of girls and women who were first married or in union before age 18, by region


- Eastern Europe and Central Asia: 25 million, 4%
- South Asia: 285 million, 44%
- Sub-Saharan Africa: 115 million, 18%
- East Asia and Pacific: 75 million, 12%
- Latin America and the Caribbean: 60 million, 9%
- Middle East and North Africa: 35 million, 5%
- Other regions: 54 million, 8%
Levels of child marriage vary across countries, from a high of 15 per cent in Turkey to a low of 3 per cent in Belarus and Serbia.

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18.

Note: Confidence intervals for Azerbaijan are not available. Caution is necessary when interpreting results: difference in prevalence should take into account confidence intervals (set at 95%).

The prevalence of child marriage is dramatically higher among the Roma population

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

Note: Caution is necessary when interpreting results: difference in prevalence should take into account confidence intervals (set at 95%).
In most countries in the region, child brides are somewhat more likely to marry older men rather than men who are their peers.

Distribution of spousal age gap between women and their partners among currently married women aged 20 to 24 years, by age at first marriage.

Note: Only categories with 25 or more unweighted cases are presented. Women married before age 18 in Belarus, Montenegro and Serbia are based on 25-49 unweighted cases. Georgia’s spousal age gap is calculated based on ages of first husbands or partners.

The majority of young women who married in childhood gave birth before they completed adolescence

Percentage of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years who gave birth before ages 18 and 20, by age at first marriage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Married before age 18</th>
<th>Married at or after age 18</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Gave birth before age 18</td>
<td>Gave birth after age 18 but before age 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montenegro</td>
<td>92% (98)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serbia</td>
<td>87% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kyrgyzstan</td>
<td>87% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ukraine</td>
<td>89% (98)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kazakhstan</td>
<td>87% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkmenistan</td>
<td>89% (98)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia</td>
<td>89% (98)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>87% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Armenia</td>
<td>86% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tajikistan</td>
<td>75% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Republic of Moldova</td>
<td>60% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Albania</td>
<td>72% (95)</td>
<td>85% (95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Only categories with 25 or more unweighted cases are presented. The values in parentheses are based on 25-49 cases. Caution is necessary when interpreting results: difference in prevalence should take into account confidence intervals (set at 95%).

Young women who married in childhood are more likely to already have at least three children

Percentage of ever-married women aged 20 to 24 years have had two or more live births, by age at first marriage

Note: Only categories with 25 or more unweighted cases are presented. The values in parentheses are based on 25-49 cases. Caution is necessary when interpreting results: difference in prevalence should take into account confidence intervals (set at 95%).

Child marriage has become less common across the region since around 2000

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before ages 15 and 18

\[\text{Note}: \text{Regional average is calculated based on 15 countries covering 55 per cent of the regional population of women aged 20 to 24 years in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.}\]

\[\text{Source}: \text{UNICEF Global Database 2019, based on MICS, DHS and other nationally representative surveys, 2010-2017.}\]
Progress must accelerate if the SDG target of eliminating child marriage by 2030 is to be achieved

Percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years observed and expected to be married or in union before age 18

Average annual rate of reduction in the prevalence of child marriage (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Observed in the past 25 years</th>
<th>Observed in the past 10 years</th>
<th>Required for elimination by 2030</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The projected percentage applies the annual rate of reduction observed from around 1990-2015 (blue dotted line), around 2005-2015 (green dotted line), doubled the rate from around 2005-2015 (orange dotted line) and the required rate of reduction to achieve elimination by 2030 (red dotted line). For statistical purposes, “elimination” is defined as a prevalence of one per cent or below.

Most countries will require an acceleration of progress to eliminate child marriage by 2030; however, Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Belarus are on track to meet the target.

Average annual rate of reduction (%) in the percentage of women aged 20 to 24 years who were first married or in union before age 18, observed and required for elimination.

Note: A negative average annual rate of reduction indicates an increase in the prevalence in the given time period. For statistical purposes, “elimination” is defined as a prevalence of one per cent or below.
