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Levels of recent union formation Six European countries compared

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Abstract

We offer a comparison between the age profiles of risks of formation of marital and non-marital unions in Russia, Romania, Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Italy. We show that there is considerable variability across these populations in the level and age pattern of union-entry risks, ranging (i) from the high and early risks in Russia to the slow and late entries in Italy, and (ii) from an emphasis on marriage in Russia, Poland, Italy, and particularly Romania, to the dominant role of cohabitation reported for Bulgaria. Some of this mostly re-iterates known features (like the patterns for Italy), but they are displayed with unusual clarity in the comparative framework, which also highlights unusual patterns like those for Bulgaria. We cannot see much commonality in union-entry risks among ex-communist countries.

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