

Table 13 - *Demographic Yearbook 2008*

Table 13 presents legally induced abortions for as many years as available between 1999 and 2008.

Description of variables: There are two major categories of abortion: spontaneous and induced. Induced abortions are those initiated by deliberate action undertaken with the intention of terminating pregnancy; all other abortions are considered spontaneous.

The induction of abortion is subject to governmental regulation in most, if not all, countries or areas. This regulation varies from complete prohibition in some countries or areas to abortion on request, with services provided by governmental health authorities, in others. More generally, governments have attempted to define the conditions under which a pregnancy may lawfully be terminated and have established procedures for authorizing abortion in individual cases.

Information on abortion policies is collected by the United Nations Population Division and published in the *World Population Policies*¹. An overview is also published as a wall chart².

Reliability of data: Unlike data on live births and foetal deaths, which are generally collected through systems of vital registration, data on abortion are collected from a variety of sources. Because of this, the quality specification, showing the completeness of civil registers, which is presented for other tables, does not appear here.

Limitations: With regard to the collection of information on abortions, a variety of sources are used, but hospital records are the most common source of information. This implies that most cases that have no contact with hospitals are missed. Data from other sources are probably also incomplete. The data in the present table are limited to legally induced abortions, which, by their nature, might be assumed to be more complete than data on all induced abortions.

Earlier data: Legally induced abortions have been shown previously in all issues of the *Demographic Yearbook* since the 1971 issue.

NOTES

¹ *World Population Policies 2009* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.09.XIII.14), New York 2010. See also: http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/wpp2009/Publication_index.htm.

² *World Abortion Policies 2007* (United Nations Publication, Sales No. E.07.XIII.6), New York, 2007. See also: http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/2007_Abortion_Policies_Chart/2007AbortionPolicies_wallchart.htm.