

Controversy over law ordering 'cooling-off' period before divorce in China

In an effort to lower divorce rates, China's legislature approved a law that requires couples filing for separation to wait 30 days before their request can be processed. The measure, which was previously a recommendation implemented in some provinces, was met with widespread opposition when lawmakers first sought feedback last year.

On Thursday, internet users criticised the new rule — part of China's first civil code, approved on Thursday — with posts under the hashtag "oppose divorce cooling off period" **garnering** more than 30m views.

garner 获得; 储存

reckless 鲁莽的; 不顾后果的

The cooling-off period only applies in cases where both parties are seeking the divorce. It will not apply if one spouse is seeking divorce following domestic violence. Others questioned how judges would determine cases of domestic violence and whether the cooling-off period would leave some partners more vulnerable.

However, Cheng Xiao, vice president and professor of Law School of Tsinghua University, said the law still afforded couples the freedom to divorce.

"They may have **quarrelled** about family affairs and they are divorcing in a fit of anger. After that, they may regret it. We need to prevent this kind of **impulsive** divorce," he told local media in Chengdu.

quarrel 吵架; 争论

impulsive 冲动的; 任性的

The country's first-ever civil code, which comes into effect on 1 Jan, 2021, is a sweeping piece of legislation that will replace existing laws on marriage, adoption and property rights among others.

China's divorce rate has increased steadily since 2003, when marriage laws were liberalised and as more women become financially independent, leading to "**reckless** divorces" becoming increasingly common and not conducive to family stability, an official told China Women's Daily.