

RELATION BETWEEN THE MAIN DEMOGRAPHIC PHENOMENA AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN ROMANIA

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Abstract: Romania's population has decreased continuously. Among the multiple causes of this decrease are low birth rate, high death, and emigration. The paper provides details about the current population situation, the demographic evolution in Romania in development regions and macroregions and the factors with a strong impact on the country's economic development. Romania's population decreased from 22.41 million in 2001 to 21.53 million in 2007; population density has also decreased from 94.0 inhab/km² in 2001 to 90.3 inhab/km² in 2007. The number of urban inhabitants has also diminished from 12.24 million to 11.87 million in 2007; rural population diminished from 10.16 million to 9.65 million. In 2007, 214,728 births were registered, (the number of new-borns was with 100,018 smaller than in 1990); the number of deaths was 251,965 (4,879 deaths more than in 1990). The birth rate was 10.0 per 1,000 inhabitants, against 13.6‰ in 1990, while the death rate increased to 11.7‰ from 10.6‰ in 1990. The economic conditions in general and the precarious medical services in particular, especially in rural areas, may have lead to the low birth rate. The main factors causing the low birth rate are of economic and social nature. The employment structure of the

population has changed significantly. As a result, territorial and professional mobility and longer training periods have characterized the young population. The income problem, the situation on the labour market, the difficulty in finding a place to live are obstacles that many young families find hard to overcome. The population decrease is caused chiefly by the negative natural growth (-1.7/1,000 inhab in 2007, against +3.00 in 1990). The negative natural growth is the result of the high death rate, low birth rate and domestic and international migration to other areas of the country or abroad. The estimations of the main demographic phenomena provide useful information about the future evolution of the number of inhabitants and age structure. The demographic effects will be seen in time and will bring about changes in subpopulations (school children, fertile population, employable population); they will be felt after 2005, when the employable population includes the numerically reduced generations born after 1990. Within the framework of sustainable development, the medium and long-term objectives of the national strategies and programmes and the regional and district projects must be set in accordance with the demographic prognosis.

Key words: structure of population, natural population movement, development regions

INTRODUCTION

Romania is Europe's twelfth country in point of size. It covers an area of 238,391 km² and lies in the south-east of Central Europe. The country's population decreased from 22.41 million in 2001 to 21.53 million in 2007. The average density also decreased from 94.0 inhabitants/km² in 2001 to 90.3 inhabitants/km² in 2007. A decline has also been noticed in the number of urban and rural inhabitants: the urban population decreased from 12.24 million to 11.87 million in 2007 and the rural population decreased from 10.15 million to 9.65 million.

Eight development regions were set as territorial units, each made up of 4-7 counties by the voluntary association of the county councils. These regions are the framework for the development, implementation and evaluation of the regional development policy and the economic and social cohesion programmes.

According to the law on the Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics and the requirements of the EC 1059/2003 Regulation on the establishment of a common classification of territorial units for statistics (NUTS), for macroregions have been established:

a) Macroregion 1

North-West – total area 34,159 km² (14.3% of the Romanian territory). It consists of six counties: Bihor, Bistrita-Nasaud, Cluj, Maramures, Satu Mare and Salaj. It has a strategic geographic position, as it is the gate to Romania from the European Union and Ukraine.

Centre - total area 34,100 km² (14.31% of the Romanian territory), includes Alba, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Mures and Sibiu Counties. It lies in the centre of Romania.

b) Macroregion 2:

North-East – the largest region of the country, covering 36,850 km² (15.46% of the Romanian territory), is made of six counties: Bacau, Botosani, Neamt, Iasi, Suceava and Vaslui.

South-East – 35,762 km² (15% Romanian territory) and is the second region in size. It consists of the following counties: Braila, Buzau, Constanta, Galati, Tulcea and Vrancea.

c) Macroregion 3:

South-Muntenia – 34.453 km² (14.45% of the Romanian territory); it is situated in the south-east, and includes Arges, Calarasi, Dambovita, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova and Teleorman Counties.

Bucharest-Ilfov – Bucharest - the capital of the country - and Ilfov County. It lies in the central part of the Romanian Plain, on an area of 1,821 km², of which 13.1% is the administrative territory of Bucharest and 86.9% belongs to Ilfov County.

d) Macroregion 4:

South-West Oltenia – 29,212 km²; has five counties: Dolj, Olt, Valcea, Mehedinti and Gorj. It coincides largely with the old historical region Oltenia.

West – 32,034 km² (13.4% of the country's area) and is made of Arad, Caras-Severin, Hunedoara and Timis Counties. It is part of the Danube-Cris-Mures-Tisa Euroregion (DCMT).

Macroregion is the fourth type of regional divisions created in Romania in 1998 and corresponds to the NUTS I nomenclature of the EU Member States. (Table 1) Like the development regions, the Romanian macroregions do not have administrative stature and a government form of their own; they serve only regional statistics purposes.

Table 1.

Administrative divisions of Romania

Macroregions (NUTS I)	Macroregion 1		Macroregion 2		Macroregion 3		Macroregion 4	
Development regions (NUTS II)	North - West	Center	North - East	South - East	Bucharest - Ilfov	South - Muntenia	South - West Oltenia	West
Counties (NUTS III)	Bihor	Alba	Bacău	Brăila	Ilfov	Argeş	Dolj	Arad
	Bistrița-Năsăud	Braşov	Botoşani	Buzău	Municipiul Bucureşti	Călăraşi	Gorj	Caraş-Severin
	Cluj	Covasna	Iaşi	Constanţa		Dâmboviţa	Mehedinţi	Hunedoara
	Maramureş	Harghita	Neamţ	Galaţi		Giurgiu	Olt	Timiş
	Satu Mare	Mureş	Suceava	Tulcea		Ialomita	Vâlcea	
	Sălaj	Sibiu	Vaslui	Vrancea		Prahova		
					Teleorman			

Romania's territory is divided into hamlets, villages, towns, municipalities and counties. In each county, the local authorities are represented by county councils, local, municipal, town and village councils. (Table 2)

Table 2.

Administrative-territorial organisation of Romania

Macroregion/ Development region	Total surface (km ²)	Number of inhabitants	Number of towns and municipalities	Of which municipalities	Number of villages	Number of hamlets
Macroregion 1	68,259	5,249,467	100	35	758	3,587
North-West	34,159	2,725,563	43	15	401	1,799
Center	34,100	2,523,904	57	20	357	1,788
Macroregion 2	72,612	6,557,072	81	28	860	3,861
North-East	36,850	3,726,642	46	17	506	2,414
South-East	35,762	2,830,430	35	11	354	1,447
Macroregion 3	36,274	5,526,733	57	17	551	2,110
Bucharest-Ilfov	1,821	2,225,932	9	1	32	91
South-Muntenia	34,453	3,300,801	48	16	519	2,019
Macroregion 4	61,246	4,204,291	82	23	687	3,397
South-West Oltenia	29,212	2,279,849	40	11	408	2,070
West	32,034	1,924,442	42	12	279	1,327
România	238,391	21,537,563	320	103	2,856	12,955

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2008

MATERIAL AND METHODS

The economic and social changes that have taken place in Romania since the 1990's have determined major changes in the demographic phenomena, and the number and the structure of the population. The constant decrease in Romania's population has several causes, such as low birth rate, high death rate, and internal and intense external migration. This paper provides information about the current state of the population and the demographic trends in development regions and macroregions, as these two elements have a great influence on the economic and social development of the country.

The demographic projection is a source of useful information about the future trend in the number and age structure of Romania's population.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

In 2007, Romania had 21,537,563 inhabitants, 86,286 less than in 2005. The population has decreased in all the development regions of the country, except Bucharest-Ilfov, where the population increased with 6,400 since 2006. (Table 3)

Table 3.

Population and density of Romania (2005 - 2007)

Macroregion/ Development region	Total population			Density (inhabitants/km ²)		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Romania	21,623,849	21,584,365	21,537,563	90.7	90.5	90.3
Macroregion 1	-	-	5,249,467	-	-	76.9
North-West	2,737,400	2,730,132	2,725,563	80.1	79.9	79.8
Center	2,530,486	2,530,818	2,523,904	74.2	74.2	74.0
Macroregion 2	-	-	6,557,072	-	-	89.8
North-East	3,734,546	3,732,583	3,726,642	101.3	101.3	101.1
South-East	2,846,379	2,837,834	2,830,430	79.6	79.4	79.1
Macroregion 3	-	-	5,526,733	-	-	152.4
Bucharest-Ilfov	2,208,368	2,219,532	2,225,932	1212.7	1218.9	1222.4
South-Muntenia	3,329,762	3,312,342	3,300,801	96.6	96.1	95.8
Macroregion 4	-	-	4,204,291	-	-	68.6
South-West Oltenia	2,306,450	2,293,895	2,279,849	79.0	78.5	78.0
West	1,930,458	1,927,229	1,924,442	60.3	60.2	60.1

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006, 2007, 2008

On July 1 2007, North-East was the first of the eight macroregions as regards population, with 3,726,642 inhabitants (17.3% of the total population) and a density of 101.1 inhabitants/km², which is more than the national average. Also Macroregion two has the highest number of inhabitants (6,557,072), but the population decline within its components is constant. On the last place was the West Region with 1,924,442 inhabitants and 60.1 inhabitants/km², far below the national average of 90.3 inhabitants/km².

As far as the structure of population on sexes is concerned, on July 1 2007, the male share of the population was smaller than the female one, a situation common to all development regions. In the Bucharest-Ilfov Region, both the male and the female population increased. (Table 4)

Concerning the distribution of population on the two residential areas and sexes, the urban male share is lower than the urban female share in all the regions. In the rural areas, the male share is higher in the Centre, North-East and South-East regions, and lower than the female share in the others. The female population share is higher at a national level both in urban and rural areas.

The higher female population share is visible in all four macroregions; however, in Macroregion two, the rural male share is higher. (Table 5)

Table 4.

Population structure on sexes (2005 - 2007)

Macroregion/ Development region	Total (number of persons)						Share of male population (%)		
	Male			Female			2005	2006	2007
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007			
Macroregion 1	-	-	2,565,334	-	-	2,684,133	-	-	48.86
North-West	1,335,756	1,331,983	1,329,235	1,401,644	1,398,149	1,396,328	48.80	48.79	48.76
Center	1,240,560	1,240,041	1,236,099	1,289,926	1,290,777	1,287,805	49.02	49.00	48.97
Macroregion 2	-	-	3,230,628	-	-	3,326,444	-	-	49.26
North-East	1,847,526	1,845,864	1,842,670	1,887,020	1,886,719	1,883,972	49.47	49.45	49.44
South-East	1,397,017	1,392,153	1,387,958	1,449,362	1,445,681	1,442,472	49.08	49.06	49.03
Macroregion 3	-	-	2,653,743	-	-	2,872,990	-	-	48.01
Bucharest-Ilfov	1,034,340	1,039,704	1,043,044	1,174,028	1,179,828	1,182,888	46.84	46.84	46.85
South-Muntenia	1,625,399	1,616,406	1,610,699	1,704,363	1,695,936	1,690,102	48.81	48.80	48.79
Macroregion 4	-	-	2,047,015	-	-	2,157,276	-	-	48.68
Sud-Vest Oltenia	1,131,412	1,125,161	1,118,019	1,175,038	1,168,734	1,161,830	49.05	49.05	49.03
Vest	931,508	929,877	928,996	998,950	997,352	995,446	48.25	48.24	48.27
Romania	10,543,518	10,521,189	10,496,720	11,080,331	11,063,176	11,040,843	48.76	48.74	48.73

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006, 2007, 2008

Table 5.

Population structure on sexes and residential areas (2005 - 2007)

Macroregion/ Development region	Urban (number of persons)						Rural (number of persons)					
	Male			Female			Male			Female		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Romania	5,692,516	5,704,872	5,683,983	6,187,381	6,209,066	6,193,676	4,851,002	4,816,317	4,812,737	4,829,950	4,854,110	4,847,167
Macroregion 1	-	-	1,423,762	-	-	1,536,818	-	-	1,141,572	-	-	1,147,315
North-West	698,293	696,026	698,182	755,539	753,609	756,947	637,463	635,957	631,053	646,105	644,540	639,381
Center	731,795	730,602	725,580	783,189	783,068	779,871	508,765	509,439	510,519	506,737	507,709	507,934
Macroregion 2	-	-	1,532,880	-	-	1,650,635	-	-	1,697,748	-	-	1,675,809
North-East	781,767	784,991	779,502	838,670	844,259	839,046	1,065,759	1,060,873	1,063,168	1,048,350	1,042,460	1,044,926
South-East	761,994	758,251	753,378	817,416	815,269	811,589	635,023	633,902	634,580	631,946	630,412	630,883
Macroregion 3	-	-	1,618,980	-	-	1,808,651	-	-	1,034,763	-	-	1,064,339
Bucharest-Ilfov	932,381	958,169	960,171	1,066,592	1,093,969	1,095,652	101,959	81,535	82,873	107,436	85,859	87,236
South-Muntenia	667,989	662,689	658,809	720,719	716,384	712,999	957,410	953,717	951,890	983,644	979,552	977,103
Macroregion 4	-	-	1,108,361	-	-	1,197,572	-	-	938,654	-	-	959,704
South-West Oltenia	531,557	529,591	526,066	564,503	563,331	560,464	599,855	595,570	591,953	610,535	605,403	601,366
West	586,740	584,553	582,295	640,753	639,177	637,108	344,768	345,324	346,701	358,197	358,175	358,338

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006, 2007, 2008

Table 6 shows the significant difference between the urban population (55.14%) and the rural population (44.86) at the national level. In most regions, the urban population is

decreasing and the rural population is increasing: (59.64%, - 40.36%), North-East (43.43% - 56.57%), South-East (55.29% - 44.71%), Bucharest-Ilfov (92.35% - 7.65%), South Muntenia (41.55% - 58.45%) and West (63.36% - 36.37%).

Table 6.

Regional population on sexes and residential areas (2005-2007)

Macroregion/ Development region	Sex (%)						Residential areas (%)					
	Male			Female			Urban			Rural		
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Macroregion 1	-	-	48.86	-	-	51.14	-	-	56.39	-	-	43.61
North-West	48.80	48.79	48.76	51.20	51.21	51.24	53.11	53.10	53.38	46.89	46.90	46.62
Center	49.02	49.00	48.97	50.98	51.00	51.03	59.87	59.81	59.64	40.13	40.19	40.36
Macroregion 2	-	-	49.26	-	-	50.74	-	-	48.55	-	-	51.45
North-East	49.47	49.45	49.44	50.53	50.55	50.56	43.39	43.65	43.43	56.61	56.35	56.57
South-East	49.08	49.06	49.03	50.92	50.94	50.97	55.49	55.45	55.29	44.51	44.55	44.71
Macroregion 3	-	-	48.01	-	-	51.99	-	-	62.01	-	-	37.99
Bucharest-Ilfov	46.84	46.84	46.85	53.16	53.16	53.15	90.52	92.46	92.35	9.48	7.54	7.65
South-Muntenia	48.81	48.80	48.79	51.19	51.20	51.21	41.71	41.63	41.55	58.29	58.37	58.45
Macroregion 4	-	-	48.68	-	-	51.32	-	-	54.84	-	-	45.16
South-West Oltenia	49.05	49.05	49.03	50.95	50.95	50.97	47.52	47.64	47.65	52.48	52.36	52.35
West	48.25	48.25	48.27	51.75	51.75	51.73	63.59	63.50	63.36	36.41	36.50	36.37
Romania	48.76	48.74	48.73	51.24	51.26	51.27	54.94	55.20	55.14	45.06	44.80	44.86

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006, 2007, 2008

The low birth rate in our country has certain particularities. The main factors that have reduced it are economic and social. The structure of the employed population has changed considerably and this has led to a greater territorial and professional mobility and a longer training period.

The issue of providing the necessary income, the situation on the labour market, the difficulty in finding a house are serious obstacles for many couples in starting a family. Most young couples do not have children or postpone having them. This decision is determined by the cultural and psychological background and by the economic and social life of the family.

In 2007, 214,728 children were born, with 100,018 less than in 1990 and 3,222 less than in 2005. In 2007, the birth rate was 10.0 new-borns per 1,000 inhabitants, lower than in 1990 (13.6‰) and 2005 (10.2‰). The decreasing trend was constant in 2005. In 2007, 251,965 people died, with 10,136 less than in 2005 and 4,879 more than in 1990. The general death rate was 11.7 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. In 2005, it was 12.1‰ and in 1990 it was 10.6‰ (Table 7).

Table 7.

Natural population movement in Romania (2005 – 2007)

Macroregion/ Development region	Rates per 1,000 population															Still births			Deceased before 1 year of age		
	Live birth			Deaths			Natural increase			Marriages			Divorces			2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007	2005	2006	2007
Romania	10.2	10.2	10.0	12.1	12.0	11.7	-1.9	-1.8	-1.7	6.6	6.8	8.8	1.54	1.51	1.69	5.7	5.2	4.7	15.0	13.9	12.0
Macroregion 1	-	-	10.3	-	11.3	-	-	-	-1.0	-	-	9.0	-	-	1.64	-	-	5.4	-	-	12.1
North-West	10.7	10.5	10.2	12.4	12.2	11.7	-1.7	-1.7	-1.5	6.7	6.8	8.7	1.44	1.39	1.53	6.3	5.3	5.6	13.5	14.1	11.8
Center	10.8	10.7	10.4	11.4	11.4	10.9	-0.6	-0.7	-0.5	6.1	6.2	9.4	1.60	1.49	1.75	5.5	5.9	5.2	14.0	12.6	12.5
Macroregion 2	-	-	10.7	-	11.1	-	-	-0.4	-	-	8.5	-	-	1.73	-	-	4.2	-	-	13.6	
North-East	11.7	11.6	11.4	11.0	10.8	10.8	0.7	0.8	0.6	6.4	6.5	8.4	1.57	1.54	1.59	5.5	4.3	3.8	17.2	15.3	14.2
South-East	9.9	9.9	9.8	11.4	11.3	11.4	-1.5	-1.4	-1.6	6.4	6.5	8.7	1.71	1.82	1.91	5.8	6.5	4.9	16.5	13.9	12.7
Macroregion 3	-	-	9.7	-	12.2	-	-	-2.5	-	-	8.9	-	-	1.71	-	-	4.6	-	-	9.7	
Bucharest-Ilfov	9.8	10.2	10.2	11.6	11.5	11.4	-1.8	-1.3	-1.2	9.3	9.3	9.1	1.46	1.35	1.71	4.1	3.5	4.0	9.5	9.3	7.2
South-Muntenia	9.6	9.5	9.3	13.3	13.1	12.8	-3.7	-3.6	-3.5	5.6	6.1	8.7	1.52	1.56	1.71	6.2	5.7	5.1	16.5	15.7	11.4
Macroregion 4	-	-	8.8	-	12.5	-	-	-3.7	-	-	8.8	-	-	1.65	-	-	4.6	-	-	12.1	
South-West Oltenia	8.9	8.6	8.5	13.4	13.0	12.7	-4.5	-4.4	-4.2	6.0	6.4	9.3	1.16	1.17	1.23	4.8	4.0	2.8	16.0	16.1	12.0
West	9.5	9.5	9.2	13.0	12.9	12.2	-3.5	-3.4	-3.0	6.9	7.3	8.2	1.80	1.73	2.15	7.0	6.4	6.5	13.9	12.4	12.2

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2006, 2007, 2008

In 2007, the marriage rate increased at the national level and in all development regions, except Bucharest-Ilfov. The national and regional divorce rate has also increased. Most couples separate because they have differences, but financial difficulties, unemployment

and one spouse leaving abroad are also common divorce grounds.

In 2007, in Romania the natural growth (the number of new-borns minus the number of the deceased) was -1.7 per 1,000 inhabitants. It had a positive value only in the North-East region: 0.6 per thousand inhabitants. The natural growth has the highest values in South Muntenia (-3.5), South-West Oltenia (-4.2) and West (-3.0). The low birth rate is the result of the economic conditions in general and the lack of medical services in particular, mainly in the rural areas.

In 2007, the highest infant death rate was in the North-East Region: 14.2 deaths (infants less than one year old) per thousand inhabitants, compared to the national average of 12.0. This may be explained by the high level of poverty, poor health education minimum hygiene requirements mainly in the rural areas.

The difference of the death rates between sexes has been the same in the past years, a fact best reflected in average life expectancy. Life expectancy is seven years longer for the female population both at the national level (6.97 years) and in the residential areas (6.68 in urban areas and 7.37 in rural areas). (Table 8)

In Romania, in 2005-2007, average life expectancy was 72.61 years. In these years, life expectancy for women was 76.14, while for men it was only 69.17. The EU27 average was 75 years for men and over 80 for women. Life expectancy is higher in the urban areas than in the rural ones: 73.34 - 71.64. Life expectancy trends are influenced by a set of factors among which the most important are life style, health, food, the level of health education and the economic and social conditions.

Table 8.

Life expectancy in 2004-2006, 2005-2007 (years)

Macroregion/ Development region	Per sexes						Per residential areas											
	Total		Male		Female		Urban			Rural								
Macroregion 1	-	72.29	-	68.90	-	75.78	-	73.07	-	69.64	-	76.47	-	71.29	-	67.92	-	74.98
North-West	71.38	71.76	68.01	68.43	74.86	75.17	72.15	72.51	68.78	69.14	75.51	75.84	70.50	70.89	67.11	67.57	74.18	74.47
Center	72.48	72.89	68.88	69.43	76.24	76.47	73.26	73.59	69.62	70.11	76.90	77.05	71.34	71.84	67.78	68.39	75.33	75.69
Macroregion 2	-	72.72	-	69.20	-	76.42	-	73.38	-	69.93	-	76.85	-	71.91	-	68.36	-	75.88
North-East	72.39	72.78	68.86	69.32	76.11	76.42	73.12	73.48	69.71	70.15	76.53	76.81	71.68	72.08	68.09	68.55	75.69	76.01
South-East	72.35	72.66	68.78	69.07	76.10	76.41	72.95	73.32	69.43	69.75	76.49	76.91	71.42	71.64	67.80	68.08	75.47	75.65
Macroregion 3	-	73.14	-	69.56	-	76.69	-	73.94	-	70.48	-	77.20	-	71.83	-	68.09	-	75.92
Bucharest-Ilfov	73.98	74.15	70.42	70.69	77.28	77.34	74.24	74.41	70.73	70.93	77.44	77.58	71.35	71.23	67.35	67.90	75.59	74.63
South-Muntenia	72.07	72.50	68.45	68.87	75.85	76.28	72.72	73.17	69.31	69.77	76.11	76.53	71.48	71.88	67.72	68.10	75.57	76.03
Macroregion 4	-	72.22	-	69.01	-	75.50	-	72.67	-	69.63	-	75.69	-	71.54	-	68.17	-	75.18
South-West Oltenia	72.00	72.49	68.85	69.33	75.27	75.78	72.97	73.34	70.03	70.54	75.94	76.16	70.91	71.51	67.64	68.10	74.49	75.27
West	71.46	71.89	68.17	68.63	74.76	75.17	71.69	72.13	68.42	68.87	74.91	75.33	71.04	71.50	67.73	68.23	74.53	74.95
Romania	72.22	72.61	68.74	69.17	75.80	76.14	72.98	73.34	69.56	69.96	76.34	76.64	71.23	71.64	67.69	68.13	75.13	75.50

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007, 2008

The mutations in the social-economic structure of the country have led to a dynamic territorial mobility of the population. This has direct consequences upon the number and the social-demographic structure of the population. Domestic migration indicates that the urban-rural flow (31.60%) is larger than the rural-urban and rural-rural flow (21.44%), but smaller than the urban-urban flow (25.50%).

In 2006, although the national migration balance was zero, West (+4,347), North-West (+760), Bucharest-Ilfov (+5,487) and South Muntenia (+497) had positive migration balance due to domicile change, while the North-East region had the highest negative balance of domestic migration (-6,619).

Besides domestic migration, external migration is a very important factor for the population structure. The changes in the Romanian political and social system has made it possible for the population to immigrate in other EU states – especially in Germany and Italy –, USA and Canada.

The national statistics indicate the most legal emigrants have had high education and qualification levels, proving the selective character of the immigration policy in the destination countries.

CONCLUSIONS

In Romania, the population decrease in the past years has been caused mainly by the negative natural growth, a consequence of high death rate, low birth rate and the migration to other parts of the country or abroad. Although in the last years there has been some concern regarding health improvement and providing health care services, the trends of the death rate are not encouraging at all.

Unemployment, low-paid jobs and poor skills determine the massive migration of the active population to other economically developed areas in the country or abroad.

The urban population is concentrated in the developed urban centres. The migration from cities to villages is the result of the people's necessity to provide for their basic needs, not only because the industrial sector in which they worked (situated mainly in the urban areas) is now undergoing a massive reorganisation process, but also because the farmland is being restored, as stipulated by law.

In the past years, demographic migration has become a common fact. The young and mature population migrates from the rural to the urban environment, motivated by the living and working conditions in the urban centres. Consequently, the remaining rural inhabitants are mostly old-aged.

Demography has great influence on regional economic and social development; as a result, the analysis of the demographic situation and the medium and long-term demographic prognosis are the foundation of realistic development plans and strategies. The population changes of the past decades have become a major issue of European and global concern; as many demography experts and economists have already drawn attention to worrying demographic trends such as reduced fertility and birth rates, significant differences among age groups, ageing, intense external migration.

The EU27 population is also projected to continue to grow older, with the share of the population aged 65 years and over rising from 17.1% in 2008 to 30.0% in 2060, and those aged 80 and over rising from 4.4% to 12.1% over the same period.

The EU27 population is projected to become older throughout the projection period, due in particular to persistently low fertility and an increasing number of survivors to higher ages. This ageing process will occur in all Member States. In 2060, the share of the population aged 65 or more is projected to range from 23.6% in Luxembourg, 24.7% in the United Kingdom and 25.0% in Denmark to 36.2% in Poland, 36.1% in Slovakia and 35.0% in Romania.

It is not the population decline that is most worrying, but the fact that this decline is associated with continuous degradation on age groups because of ageing. This means that younger age groups will decrease, while older age groups will increase. The causes of this phenomenon are, above all, the low fertility rate, the parent generation being replaced only partially, and migration – external migration in particular – which affects many young people with high professional degrees.

In modern developed states, the birth rate will not change considerably and the natural population growth will not change its trends. Death will occur later in man's life thanks to health services and progress in medicine. Major population losses can be avoided through migration only in economically healthy regions.

In some states, birth rate will stabilise through the emancipation of women and the government's responsibility towards children. Furthermore, positive demographic growth

means that we live longer and we are healthier on one hand, and that we must take an increase in healthcare costs into consideration, on the other.

Demographic evolution and its effects on various areas of the social economic life are among the most major issues of the century. Demographic trends affecting European states are highlighted in demographic prognosis and require a complex approach from the sustainable development perspective. This calls for the development of national strategies that are to diminish the negative consequences of population changes, population ageing and low birth rate, as well as in other areas with demographic implications.

The economic effects and demographic effects will be seen in time and will bring about changes in the various subpopulations (school children, fertile population, employable population). They will become obvious after 2005, when the generations born after 1990, small in number, will be part of the employable population.

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