

THE EVOLUTION OF THE MAIN DEMOGRAPHIC PHENOMENA IN ROMANIA

EVOLUȚIA PRINCIPALELOR FENOMENE DEMOGRAFICE ÎN ROMÂNIA

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The trends of the main demographic phenomena provide useful information about the future evolution of the number and age structure of Romania's population. The mutations in the social-economic structure of the country have led to a dynamic territorial mobility of the population; at the same time, they have direct consequences upon the socio-demographic structure of the population. 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 centers. Consequently, the remaining rural inhabitants are mostly old-aged. The aging of the rural population is also caused by a series of demographic and social-economic factors. The economic effects of the demographic evolution will be seen in time and will bring about changes in the various subpopulations (school children, fertile population, inhabitants able to work).

Key words: demography, birth rate, death rate, migration

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 inhabitants in 2001 to 21.58 million inhabitants in 2006. The average density also decreased from 94.0 inhabitants/km² in 2001 to 90.5 inhabitants/km² in 2006.

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 1)

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 represent the framework for the development, implementation and evaluation of the regional development policy and the economic and social cohesion programmes through which it is carried out (Figure 1).

Region 1 - North-East - the largest region, covering 36.850 km² (15.46% of the total area of the country), is made of six counties: Bacau, Botosani, Neamt, Iasi,

Suceava and Vaslui. It borders with Ukraine in the north, Galati and Vrancea Counties in the south (the South-East Region), the Republic of Moldova in the east, Maramures, Bistrita (the North-West Region), Mures, Harghita and Covasna (The Central Region) in the west.

Table 1

Romania's administrative-territorial organisation

Development regions	Total surface (km ²)	Number of inhabitants	Number of towns and municipalities	Of which municipalities	Number of villages	Number of hamlets
North-East	36,850	3,738,601	46	17	505	2,414
South-East	35,762	2,850,318	35	11	354	1,447
South-Muntenia	34,453	3,342,042	48	16	519	2,019
South-West	29,212	2,317,636	40	11	408	2,066
West	32,034	1,939,514	42	12	278	1,327
North-West	34,159	2,738,461	43	15	401	1,799
Center	34,100	2,539,160	57	20	357	1,788
Bucharest-Ilfov	1,821	2,207,596	9	1	32	91
Romania	238,391	21,584,365	320	17	2,854	12,951

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007



Figure 1 – Romania's Development Regions

Region 2 - South-East – borders with the North-East Region in the north, the Central Region in the west, the South Muntenia and the Bucharest-Ilfov Regions in the south-west, Bulgaria in the south, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and the Black Sea in the east. It covers 35,762 km² or 15% of the country area and is the second region in size. It consists of the following counties: Braila, Buzau, Constanta, Galati, Tulcea, and Vrancea.

Region 3 - South-Muntenia has an area of 34.453 km² (14.45% of the country's surface); it is situated in the south-east, and includes Arges, Calarasi, Dambovita, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Prahova and Teleorman Counties. Its neighbours are the Central Region in the North, the South-East Region in the East, Bulgaria in the south, the Danube being the natural border, and the South-West Region in the

West.

Region 4 - South-West – covers 29,212 km² and consists of five counties: Dolj, Olt, Valcea, Mehedinti and Gorj. Generally speaking, it coincides with the old historical region Oltenia within its natural borders: the Danube in the south, the Olt (Romania's third longest river) in the east, the Carpathians (the Transylvanian Alps) in the north and west.

Region 5 - West - lies on a surface of 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), which consists of the four mentioned countries, three Hungarian counties (Bács-Kiskun, Békés and Csongrád) and the autonomous region Vojvodina in Serbia.

Region 6 - North-West covers an area of 34,159 km² and represents 14.3% of the country's surface. 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. Within the national territory, it neighbours the West Region (Banat) in the south, the Central Region (Transylvania-Centre) in the south-east and the North-East Region (Northern Moldavia) in the east.

Region 7- Center, total area 34,100 km² (14.31% of the Romanian territory), includes Alba, Brasov, Covasna, Harghita, Mures and Sibiu Counties. It lies within the Carpathians curvature, on the upper course of the Mures and the Olt rivers.

Region 8 - Bucharest-Ilfov, is made of 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. The two entities are the smallest territorial units of Romania.

Demographically speaking, the main factors that influence the size and the structure of the population are the birth rate, the death rate and the migration. The birth rate is the number of new-borns per one thousand inhabitants in a year. The death rate is the number of the deceased of all age categories per one thousand inhabitants in a year. The natural growth is the difference between the number of the new-borns and the number of the deceased in a year. Migration represents the changes in the population's domicile.

Materials and Methods

The economic and social changes that have taken place in Romania since the 1990's have led to 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, migration etc.

The present paper provides information about the current state of the population and the demographic evolution in Romania, as these two elements have a great influence on the economic and social development of the country.

Results and Discussions

The economic and social changes that have taken place in Romania since the 1990's have led to 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. In 2006, Romania had 21,584,365 inhabitants, 96,609 less than 2002. The population has decreased in all the development regions of the country (Table 2).

Table 2

Romania's population and density in 2002, 2004 and 2006

Development regions	Total population			Density (inhabitants/km ²)		
	2002	2004	2006	2002	2004	2006
Romania	21,680,974	21,673,328	21,584,365	90.9	91.2	90.5
North-East	3,674,367	3,738,601	3,732,583	99.7	101.6	101.3
South-East	2,848,219	2,850,318	2,837,834	79.6	79.9	79.4
South-Muntenia	3,379,406	3,342,042	3,312,342	98.1	97.5	96.1
South-West	2,330,792	2,317,636	2,293,895	79.8	79.7	78.5
West	1,958,648	1,939,514	1,927,229	61.1	60.8	60.2
North-West	2,740,064	2,738,461	2,730,132	80.2	80.4	79.9
Center	2,523,021	2,539,160	2,530,818	74.0	74.6	74.2
Bucharest-Ilfov	2,226,457	2,207,596	2,219,532	1,222.17	1,211.7	1,218.9

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2005, 2007

On July 1 2006, the North-East was the first of the eight regions as regards population, with 3,732,5583 inhabitants (17.29% of the total population) and a density of 101.3 inhabitants/km², which is more than the national average. On the last place was the West Region with 1,927,229 inhabitants and 60.2 inhabitants/km², far below the national average of 90.5 inhabitants/km².

As far as the structure of population on sexes is concerned, on July 1 2006, 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 3)

Table 3

Population structure on sexes in 2004 and 2006

Development regions	Total (number of persons)						Share of male population (%)	
	Both sexes		Male		Female		2004	2006
	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006		
North-East	3,738,601	3,732,583	1,849,638	1,845,864	1,888,963	1,886,719	49.47	49.45
South-East	2,850,318	2,837,834	1,400,055	1,392,153	1,450,263	1,445,681	49.12	49.06
South-Muntenia	3,342,042	3,312,342	1,632,432	1,616,406	1,799,610	1,695,936	48.85	48.80
South-West	2,317,636	2,293,895	1,137,358	1,125,161	1,180,278	1,168,734	49.07	49.05
West	1,939,514	1,927,229	935,812	929,877	1,003,702	997,352	48.25	48.24
North-West	2,738,461	2,730,132	1,337,548	1,331,983	1,400,913	1,398,149	48.84	48.79
Center	2,539,160	2,530,818	1,245,011	1,240,041	1,294,149	1,290,777	49.03	49.00
Bucharest-Ilfov	2,207,596	2,219,532	1,033,752	1,039,704	1,173,844	1,179,828	46.83	46.84
Romania	21,673,328	21,584,365	10,571,606	10,521,189	11,101,722	11,063,176	48.78	48.74

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2005, 2007

Concerning the distribution on the two residential areas, significant differences were noticed among the eight regions in 2006. In the South-East, West, North-West, Central, and Bucharest-Ilfov regions, most of the population lived in urban areas, whereas in the North-East, South-Muntenia and South-West regions the population was mainly rural. In all regions, the share of the male urban population was higher than that of the female urban population. The female population is predominant both in the rural areas and the whole country (Table 4).

Table 4

Population per sexes and residential areas in 2004, 2006

Development regions	Urban (number of persons)						Rural (number of persons)					
	Both sexes		Male		Female		Both sexes		Male		Female	
	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006
Romania	11,895,598	11,913,938	5,704,297	5,704,872	6,191,301	6,209,066	9,777,730	9,670,427	4,867,309	4,816,317	4,910,421	4,854,110
North-East	1,629,448	1,629,250	786,640	784,991	842,808	844,259	2,109,153	2,103,333	1,062,998	1,060,873	1,046,155	1,042,460
South-East	1,582,142	1,573,520	764,327	758,251	817,815	815,269	1,268,176	1,264,314	635,728	633,902	632,448	630,412
South-Muntenia	1,384,906	1,379,073	667,090	662,689	717,816	716,384	1,957,136	1,933,269	965,342	953,717	991,794	979,552
South-West	1,094,772	1,092,922	531,500	529,591	563,272	563,331	1,222,864	1,200,973	605,858	595,570	617,006	605,403
West	1,235,006	1,223,730	590,761	584,553	644,245	639,177	704,508	703,499	345,051	345,324	359,457	358,175
North-West	1,444,677	1,449,635	694,722	696,026	749,955	753,609	1,293,784	1,280,497	642,826	635,957	650,958	644,540
Center	1,524,022	1,513,670	736,379	730,602	787,643	783,068	1,015,138	1,017,148	508,632	509,439	506,506	507,709
Bucharest-Ilfov	2,000,625	2,052,138	932,878	958,169	1,067,747	1,093,969	206,971	167,394	100,874	81,535	106,097	85,859

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2005, 2007

Table 5 presents the large difference between the urban population (55.20%) and the rural one (44.80%) at the national level in 2006. The urban population is increasing, while the rural one is decreasing: South-East – urban population 55.45%, rural population 44.55%, West – urban population 63.50%, rural population 36.50%, Central – urban population 59.81%, rural population 40.19%), Bucharest-Ilfov - urban population 92.46%, rural population 7.54%

Table 5

Population of regions per sexes and residential areas in 2004, 2006

Development regions	Total (number of persons)		Sex (%)				Residential areas (%)			
			Male		Female		Urban		Rural	
	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006	2004	2006
North-East	3,738,601	3,732,583	49.47	49.45	50.53	50.55	43.58	43.65	56.42	56.35
South-East	2,850,318	2,837,834	49.12	49.06	50.88	50.94	55.51	55.45	44.49	44.55
South-Muntenia	3,342,042	3,312,342	48.85	48.80	51.15	51.20	41.44	41.63	58.56	58.37
South-West	2,317,636	2,293,895	49.07	49.05	50.93	50.95	47.24	47.64	52.76	52.36
West	1,939,514	1,927,229	48.25	48.25	51.75	51.75	63.68	63.50	36.32	36.50
North-West	2,738,461	2,730,132	48.84	48.79	51.16	51.21	52.76	53.10	47.24	46.90
Center	2,539,160	2,530,818	49.03	49.00	50.97	51.00	60.02	59.81	39.98	40.19
Bucharest-Ilfov	2,207,596	2,219,532	46.83	46.84	53.17	53.16	90.62	92.46	9.38	7.54
Romania	21,673,328	21,584,365	48.78	48.74	51.22	51.26	54.89	55.20	45.11	44.80

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2005, 2007

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 employment population has changed considerably and this has led to a greater territorial and professional mobility and a longer instruction 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 2006, 219,483 children were born, 95,263 less than in 1990, but 3,222 more than in 2004. In 2006, the birth rate was 10.2 new-borns per 1,000 inhabitants, lower than 1990 (3.6‰) and 2004 (10.0‰). In 2006, 258,094 people died, 796 less than 2004 and 11,008 more than in 1990. The general death rate was 12.0 deaths per 1,000 inhabitants. In 2004, it was 11.9‰ and in 1990 it was 6‰ (Table 6).

Table 6

Natural migration/movement of population in Romania in 2006

Development regions	Rates per 1,000 population					Still births	Deceased before 1 year of age
	Live birth	Deaths	Natural increase	Marriages	Divorces		
Romania	10.2	12.0	-1.8	6.8	1.51	5.2	13.9
North-East	11.6	10.8	0.8	6.5	1.54	4.3	15.3
South-East	9.9	11.3	-1.4	6.5	1.82	6.5	13.9
South-Muntenia	9.5	13.1	-3.6	6.1	1.56	5.7	15.7
South-West	8.6	13.0	-4.4	6.4	1.17	4.0	16.1
West	9.5	12.9	-3.4	7.3	1.73	6.4	12.4
North-West	10.5	12.2	-1.7	6.8	1.39	5.3	14.1
Center	10.7	11.4	-0.7	6.2	1.49	5.9	12.6
Bucharest-Ilfov	10.2	11.5	-1.3	9.3	1.35	3.5	9.3

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

In 2006, the natural growth was -1.8 per 1,000 inhabitants. It had a positive value only in the North-east region: 0.8 per thousand inhabitants. 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 2006, the highest infant death rate was in the South-West Region: 16.1 deaths (infants less than one year old) per thousand inhabitants, compared to the national average of 13.9. This may be explained by the high level of poverty mainly in the rural areas and the poor education about health and minimum hygiene.

The difference of the death rates between sexes has been the same in the past years, a fact best reflected in life expectancy. It has been noticed that both at the national level and in the residential areas, life expectancy is seven years longer for the female population (Table 7).

In Romania, in 2004-2006, life expectancy was 72.22 years. In these years, life expectancy for women was 75.80, while for men it was only 68.74. Life expectancy is higher in the urban areas than in the rural ones: 72.98 – 71.23.

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. In the domestic

migration, the urban-rural flow (28.12%) is larger than the rural-urban flow (22.54%), but smaller than the urban-urban flow (30.18%).

Table 7

Average life span per sexes and residential areas in 2004-2006 (years)

Development regions	Per sexes			Per residential areas					
	Total	Male	Female	Urban			Rural		
				Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
North-East	72.39	68.86	76.11	73.12	69.71	76.53	71.68	68.09	75.69
South-East	72.35	68.78	76.10	72.95	69.43	76.49	71.42	67.80	75.47
South-Muntenia	72.07	68.45	75.85	72.72	69.31	76.11	71.48	67.72	75.57
South-West	72.00	68.85	75.27	72.97	70.03	75.94	70.91	67.64	74.49
West	71.46	68.17	74.76	71.69	68.42	74.91	71.04	67.73	74.53
North-West	71.38	68.01	74.86	72.15	68.78	75.51	70.50	67.11	74.18
Center	72.48	68.88	76.24	73.26	69.62	76.90	71.34	67.78	75.33
Bucharest-Ilfov	73.98	70.42	77.28	74.24	70.73	77.44	71.35	67.35	75.59
Romania	72.22	68.74	75.80	72.98	69.56	76.34	71.23	67.69	75.13

Source: Romanian Statistical Yearbook, 2007

In 2006, although the national migration balance was zero, the West (+4,196), North-West (+730) and Bucharest-Ilfov (+10,269) regions were the only regions with a positive migration balance.

Together with 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 the EU states, USA and Canada.

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

Conclusions

The decrease of the population in the past twelve years has been caused mainly by the negative natural growth, a consequence of the higher death rate, the smaller 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.

The urban population is concentrated in the developed urban centers. 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 centers. Consequently, the remaining rural inhabitants are mostly old-aged. The aging of the rural

population is also caused by a series of demographic and social-economic factors.

The most important factor that has caused a reduction of the rural population is migration, a complex demographic, social and economic phenomenon with major implications in the evolution of the number of rural inhabitants and the rural demographic structure. Another demographic factor with a major impact on the dynamics of the rural population and communities in the region was the negative natural growth.

The economic effects of the demographic evolution will be seen in time and will bring about changes in the various subpopulations (school children, fertile population, inhabitants able to work). They will be felt after 2005, when the generations born after 1990, small in number, will be part of the population fit for work.

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