

6 The demographic features of the Carpathian region

The macro-region of our analysis has 56 million inhabitants, of them nearly 8 million live in a capital city (Budapest, Vienna, Bratislava, Bucharest and Belgrade). Apart from the most densely populated urban areas (Bucharest is an extremely densely populated city with 8,000 inhabitants per square kilometre) the region's average population density is 100 per square kilometre. The most sparsely populated areas are the Western region of Romania and the central parts of Romania with Harghita and Kovászna counties populated mostly by Hungarian ethnic minorities and the majority of Serbian regions. Burgenland is also a sparsely populated region.

The population of the research area has decreased by 800 thousand during the past 5 years losing one and a half percent of the total population. By monitoring the population change of some NUTS2 regions two characteristic trends may be observed.

There are significant regional differences in the decrease of population. The decrease of the population is significantly exceeding the national average in the majority of Romanian counties especially in the southern and western parts and in the research territories of Serbia.

Significant population growth can be observed only in some economically advanced areas, the decreasing population of Budapest and Bucharest can be explained by suburbanization, which is verified by the significant population growth of their neighbourhood (Pest County and Judetul Ilfov). Besides these two suburbanizations only the Hungarian Győr-Moson-Sopron County, the Polish Kraków region, Vienna and Belgrade can show worthy of note population growth.

The region's age structure can be characterized by a balanced ratio of young and old generations, although the ratio of the below 15 year old population shows a slight prevalence over the age group of over 65 (*Table 14, Figure 2*).

Table 14

The age structure of the research area (2004)

| Age group | Ratio (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|
| 0–14 years old | 16.7 |
| 15–65 years old | 68.6 |
| Over 65 years old | 14.7 |

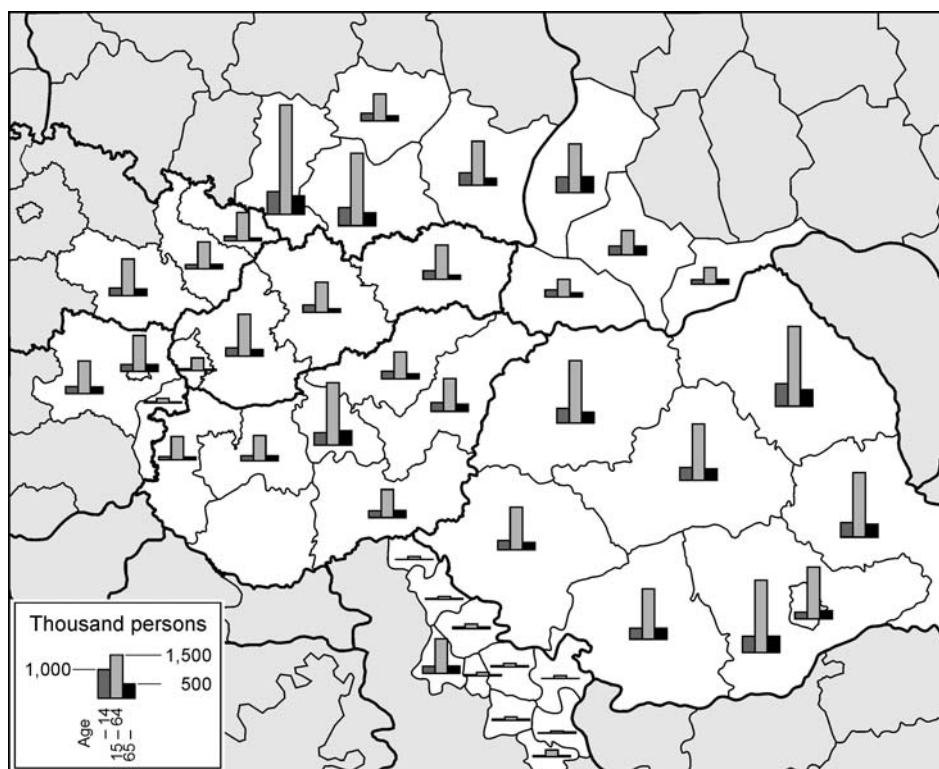
Source: Eurostat.

Regional level data are showing great differences. Several economically advanced regions have ageing population. Besides the Austrian provinces the population of Central-Hungary, West-Transdanubia and of the neighbourhood of Bucharest in Romania is ageing. The southern parts of Serbia, the macro-region's economically backward territories have malformed demographic structure with a predominant ratio of old-age population.

However in the majority of regions in our research area the ratio of young generation overweighs the old-aged one. This is extremely true in all the Polish regions, and in the central and northern regions of Romania.

Figure 2

The age structure of population in the member regions of the Carpathian region (2004)



Source: Eurostat, national statistical yearbooks.

The region's demographic process shows a strong natural decrease. The number of births in the majority of the territorial units of our research area stays below the number of deaths. The most affected areas of natural decrease are the counties of Hungary, the southern parts of Romania, Burgenland and Serbia. On Serb territories the extremely high death rates are the major causes of natural decrease. Death rates are also higher than the average in the majority of Hungarian counties and Romania, where even high birth rates cannot keep the rate of natural decrease low.

In the regions of Poland due to high birth rates and to the relatively low death rates a natural increase of population can be observed on NUTS3 level. Although Slovakia and the Czech Republic are also hit by the natural decrease they are in a better situation and even in some eastern counties of Slovakia a natural increase of population was observed. While in Poland the number of births can partly be explained by the influence of religion in Eastern Slovakia the high ratio of Roma population also increases the birth rate indicators (*Table 15*).

It should be noted that microregional level analyses would show a more differentiated picture on demographic processes and their future trends (*Veres, 2006; Szalay, 2004*).

The region's demographic processes have negative impacts not only on the overall economic development of the Carpathian region but they also generate unfavourable trends in social policy as well. The highest ratio of ethnic Roma population lives in the eastern parts of Slovakia where the number of settlements with majority or exclusive Roma population is rather high. All the current trends are predicting that the number and ratio of Roma population will further increase in these territories which will result in a concentration of inactivity, unemployment and in an increase of social tensions in these areas.

The population of *Romania* has shown a decreasing trend during the past twelve years which, besides the natural decrease of population, can be explained by the increasing migration as well. The drastically decreasing trend of births started in the late 1980s and stopped only just before the millennium stabilising the current rate. While at the end of the 1980s the annual average rate of live births was 15–16 per one thousand it dropped to less than 11 per one thousand.

The ratio of urban population is 54.8% of the total. The ratio of live births decreased both in urban and rural environment by 8.9 and 12.3 per one thousand. The ratio of internal migration is 12.3 heads per one thousand.

Table 15

Main demographic indicators of the Carpathian area (2004)

| | Territorial units | Number of live births per 1000 inhabitants | Number of deaths per 1000 inhabitants | Natural increase or decrease |
|----------------|-------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Austria | Mittelburgenland | 7.8 | 11.6 | -3.8 |
| | Nordburgenland | 8.3 | 9.5 | -1.2 |
| | Südburgenland | 7.6 | 11.3 | -3.7 |
| | Mostviertel-Eisenwurzen | 10.6 | 8.7 | 1.9 |
| | Niederösterreich-Süd | 9.4 | 10.4 | -1.0 |
| | Sankt Pölten | 9.5 | 9.3 | 0.2 |
| | Waldviertel | 8.8 | 10.8 | -2.0 |
| | Weinviertel | 8.2 | 11.5 | -3.3 |
| | Wiener Umland/Nordteil | 8.3 | 9.4 | -1.1 |
| | Wiener Umland/Südteil | 9.1 | 9.5 | -0.4 |
| Vienna | 10.5 | 9.9 | 0.6 | |
| Czech Republic | Jihomoravský | 9.5 | 10.3 | -0.8 |
| | Olomoucký | 9.3 | 10.0 | -0.7 |
| | Zlínský | 8.8 | 10.1 | -1.3 |
| | Moravskoslezský | 9.4 | 10.4 | -1.0 |
| Hungary | Budapest | 8.8 | 13.5 | -4.7 |
| | Pest | 10.5 | 11.7 | -1.2 |
| | Komárom-Esztergom | 9.4 | 13.2 | -3.8 |
| | Győr-Moson-Sopron | 9.2 | 12.1 | -2.9 |
| | Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén | 10.0 | 13.8 | -3.8 |
| | Heves | 9.0 | 13.7 | -4.7 |
| | Nógrád | 9.2 | 15.0 | -5.8 |
| | Hajdú-Bihar | 10.2 | 12.0 | -1.8 |
| | Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok | 9.5 | 13.7 | -4.2 |
| | Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg | 10.7 | 11.9 | -1.2 |
| | Békés | 8.1 | 14.4 | -6.3 |
| Csongrád | 8.8 | 13.6 | -4.8 | |
| Poland | Krakowsko-tarnowski | 9.4 | 9.0 | 0.4 |
| | Nowosądecki | 11.5 | 8.1 | 3.4 |
| | Miasto Kraków | 8.1 | 8.9 | -0.8 |
| | Częstochowski | 8.2 | 10.7 | -2.5 |
| | Bielsko-Bialski | 9.4 | 8.8 | 0.6 |
| | Centralny Śląski | 8.2 | 10.0 | -1.8 |
| | Rybnicko-Jastrzebski | 9.3 | 8.2 | 1.1 |
| | Rzeszowsko-Tarnobrzeski | 9.8 | 8.1 | 1.7 |
| | Krośnieńsko-Przemyski | 9.8 | 9.2 | 0.6 |
| | Świętokrzyski | 8.7 | 10.3 | -1.6 |

THE DEMOGRAPHIC FEATURES OF THE CARPATHIAN REGION

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Count. Table 15

| | Territorial units | Number of live births per 1000 inhabitants | Number of deaths per 1000 inhabitants | Natural increase or decrease |
|----------------------|-------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Romania | Bihor | 10.3 | 13.7 | -3.4 |
| | Bistrița-Năsăud | 10.8 | 10.5 | 0.3 |
| | Cluj | 8.6 | 11.8 | -3.2 |
| | Maramureș | 11.0 | 11.2 | -0.2 |
| | Satu Mare | 11.0 | 13.5 | -2.5 |
| | Sălaj | 10.4 | 14.5 | -4.1 |
| | Alba | 9.4 | 12.4 | -3.0 |
| | Brașov | 9.7 | 9.8 | -0.1 |
| | Covasna | 11.7 | 11.2 | 0.5 |
| | Harghita | 11.1 | 11.5 | -0.4 |
| | Mureș | 11.0 | 12.3 | -1.3 |
| | Sibiu | 10.7 | 10.7 | 0.0 |
| | Bacău | 10.8 | 10.9 | -0.1 |
| | Neamț | 10.5 | 11.0 | -0.5 |
| | Suceava | 12.4 | 10.8 | 1.6 |
| | Buzău | 9.5 | 13.0 | -3.5 |
| | Vrancea | 10.3 | 11.8 | -1.5 |
| | Argeș | 9.4 | 11.7 | -2.3 |
| | Dâmbovița | 10.1 | 11.7 | -1.6 |
| | Prahova | 9.5 | 11.8 | -2.3 |
| | București | 2.6 | 3.0 | -0.4 |
| | Ilfov | 15.3 | 18.9 | -3.6 |
| | Gorj | 9.5 | 11.4 | -1.9 |
| | Mehedinți | 9.1 | 13.8 | -4.7 |
| | Vâlcea | 8.9 | 12.4 | -3.5 |
| | Arad | 9.2 | 14.2 | -5.0 |
| | Caraș-Severin | 9.8 | 13.6 | -3.8 |
| | Hunedoara | 8.8 | 12.5 | -3.7 |
| | Timiș | 9.4 | 12.0 | -2.6 |
| | Slovakia | Bratislavský kraj | 9.1 | 9.4 |
| Trnavský kraj | | 9.0 | 10.0 | -1.0 |
| Trencianský kraj | | 8.4 | 9.5 | -1.1 |
| Nitrianský kraj | | 8.3 | 10.7 | -2.4 |
| Zilinský kraj | | 10.4 | 9.2 | 1.2 |
| Banskobystrický kraj | | 9.7 | 10.7 | -1.0 |
| Presovský kraj | | 12.2 | 8.1 | 4.1 |
| Kosický kraj | 11.8 | 9.6 | 2.2 | |

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| | Territorial units | Number of live births per 1000 inhabitants | Number of deaths per 1000 inhabitants | Natural increase or decrease |
|---------|------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Serbia | Grad Beograd | 9.8 | 12.6 | -2.8 |
| | Central Banat | 8.7 | 17.0 | -8.3 |
| | North Banat | 9.0 | 17.5 | -8.5 |
| | South Banat | 9.8 | 15.2 | -5.4 |
| | Podunavski | 9.7 | 14.4 | -4.7 |
| | Branicevski | 8.8 | 17.0 | -8.2 |
| | Pomoravski | 9.0 | 17.2 | -8.2 |
| | Borski | 7.8 | 16.3 | -8.5 |
| | Zajecarski | 7.1 | 19.9 | -12.8 |
| | Nisavski | 9.4 | 14.8 | -5.4 |
| Ukraine | Zakarpattia Oblast | 12.4 | 12.4 | 0.0 |
| | Lviv Oblast | 10.1 | 13.1 | -3.0 |
| | Ivano-Frankivsk Oblast | 10.7 | 12.9 | -2.2 |
| | Chernivtsi Oblast | 10.6 | 13.1 | -2.5 |

Source: Eurostat; National Statistical Yearbooks.