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NATIONAL REPORT

Submitted by the Government of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

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The age structure of the population is one of the most important factors in the population demographic development generally, in particular to the establishing of the national labour force. It both results from (or, better, evaluates) the recent population development and determines its future tendencies. The future age structure of the population of a country depends on many factors which are interrelated, complementary, and sometimes even contrary to each other. Thus, the age structure, which is the result of the long-term population change, depends on the same aspects as does the population change itself: natality, mortality, migration flows and external factors (economic crises, wars etc.). The beginning stages of this process are characteristic of the dominance of the young population while the old population prevails at the end of the process as such. These changes are inevitable and cannot be avoided by any population in the course of its socio-economic development.

Table 1 and graphic 1 below shows the population structure in the Republic of Macedonia by huge age groups.

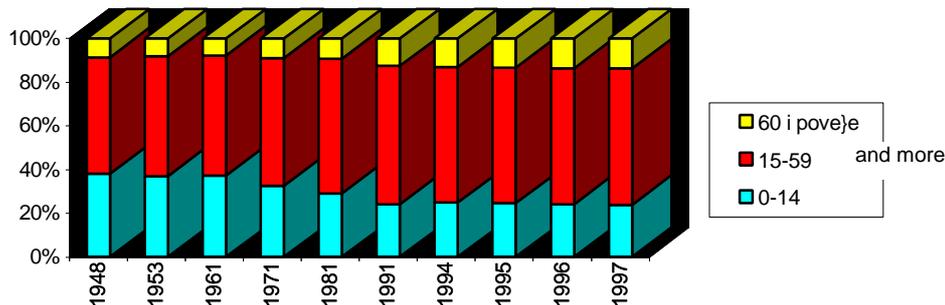
Table 1: Population Structure in the Republic of Macedonia, By Huge Age Groups; in %

Year	Age groups		
	0-14	15-59	60 and more
1948 ¹⁾	38.0	53.3	8.7
1953 ¹⁾	36.9	54.5	8.2
1961 ¹⁾	37.2	54.9	7.8
1971 ¹⁾	32.5	58.4	8.9
1981 ¹⁾	29.1	61.4	9.2
1991 ¹⁾	24.0	62.8	12.5
1994 ¹⁾	24.9	62.0	13.1
1995 ²⁾	24.6	62.1	13.3
1996 ²⁾	24.2	62.2	13.6
1997 ²⁾	23.8	62.4	13.8

¹⁾ Population censuses

²⁾ Population estimations at the middle of the year

Graphic 1: Population Structure in the Republic of Macedonia, By Huge Age Groups; in %



In the period between 1948 and 1994, the share of the population aged between 0 and 14 in the total population of Macedonia decreased by 38.4% and the share of the population aged beyond 60 increased by 58.6%. These changes in age groups shares in the total population figure point out to the fact that the process of population ageing has already started in the Republic of Macedonia. Namely, it is considered that a population begins to age if the share of the population aged beyond 60 in its total structure reaches 12%. In other words, this means that the age coefficient (i.e. the relation between the population aged beyond 60 and the total population) has reached its critical value of 12%. According to the 1997 data, this relation amounts to 13.8% one.

The statement that the population of the Republic of Macedonia has become subject to the process of demographic (biological) ageing is also illustrated by the indicator of the average population age and the coefficient of ageing (identified as the numerical correlation between the population aged beyond 60 and the population aged 0-19). In particular, in the period between 1953 and 1997, the average population age increased from 25.4 in 1953 to 33.5 in 1997. The critical value of this indicator amounts to 30 years. When the population age surpasses this value, it means that it has entered the ageing process. During this same period, the ageing process increased from 0.1728 to 0.4536 i.e. from 17.28% to 45.36%. The critical value of this index amounts to 0.40 or 40%.

Population ageing flows and intensity may be even more clearly expressed by using the method of ageing groups. Typologies by the basic age groups are very often in the professional demography literature; the changes in their structure are considered an important characteristics in the evaluation of the extent of the population age in a country. In such procedures, two or more indicators emerge which only when combined in a certain way, enable the evaluation mentioned. This is a rather complex procedure which greatly lowers the extent of reliability of the analysis itself. In our analysis, we intend to apply only the one-indicator-procedure i.e. the relation between the oldest and the youngest population groups. This correlation will be represented in such a way, as to show how many people aged beyond 65 appear per 1000 persons aged 0-14. The higher the quotient, the older the population; the lower the quotient, the younger the population. On the basis of this approach, seven population age groups have been specified, given in Table 2.

Table 2: Population Age Groups in the Republic of Macedonia

Age groups		Number of inhabitants aged beyond 65 per 1000 inhabitants aged 0-14
Ordinal No.	Title	
I	Demographic childhood	up to 150
II	Younger population	151-200
III	Young population	201-290
IV	Middle-aged population	291-360
V	Population almost old	361-430
VI	Older population	431-500
VII	Old population	beyond 500

Although more detailed typologies may be found in the relevant professional literature, we hold the one given here rather appropriate as it is neither too narrow to neglect some important aspects nor too broad to “melt” the basic features. The central place in this typology belongs to the middle-aged population; there are three levels (degrees) of younger population before it, and three levels (degrees) of older population after it.

In 1948, the number of persons aged beyond 65 per 1000 inhabitants aged 0-14 in the Republic of Macedonia amounted to 164 (age group II); in 1997, this figure amounted to as many as 383 (age group V). This means that in the period specified above, the number of inhabitants aged beyond 65 per 1000 inhabitants aged 0-14 increased by 134% (index 234), which actually means that the population of the Republic of Macedonia has come under the influence of an intensive ageing process.

The demographic transition, from the aspect of the changes in the age structure, has not been going on with the same intensity among the population of the different nationalities that live in the Republic of Macedonia.

Table 3: The participation of the big age groups in the total population in the Republic of Macedonia - in %

	1953			1961			1971			1991			1997		
	0-14	15-59	60+	0-14	15-59	60+	0-14	15-59	60+	0-14	15-59	60+	0-14	15-59	60+
Macedonians	23.9	36.5	5.6	25.7	39.7	5.8	20.1	42.4	6.7	14.9	41.1	8.7	13.3	41.8	10.4
Albanians	4.8	6.7	1.0	5.3	6.7	0.9	7.3	8.4	1.2	5.4	13.5	2.6	7.6	13.8	2.1
Turks	6.3	8.2	1.2	4.0	4.7	0.6	2.8	3.3	0.4	1.2	2.2	0.3	1.2	2.4	0.4
Roms	0.7	0.8	0.1	0.7	0.7	0.1	0.7	0.7	0.1	0.9	1.5	0.1	0.8	1.4	0.1
Vlachs	0.2	0.4	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.1
Serbs	0.8	1.7	0.2	0.9	1.9	0.2	0.7	1.9	0.2	0.4	1.4	0.3	0.3	1.3	0.4
Others	0.2	0.7	0.1	0.4	0.9	0.1	0.7	1.3	0.1	1.2	2.8	0.4	0.6	1.4	0.3

On the basis of the data given in Table 3 it can be noted that the participation of the age group of 0-14 in the total population for the Macedonian has decreased from 23.9% in 1953 to 13.3% in 1994 and that decrease represents 44.4%. At the same time among the population from the Albanian nationality an increase is noted in the participation of the age group of 0-14 (as entry generation)

from 4.8% to 7.6% and this represents an increase of 58.3%. Among the population from the Turk, Serb and Vlach nationality a decrease is noted in the participation of the age group of 0-14 in the total population in the reviewed period, while among the population of the Rhoma nationality an increase of 17.1% is noted. In the period 1953-1997 there is an increase in the participation of the population on the age of 60 years and more among the Macedonians (85.6%), Albanians (106.9%), Rhomas (43.6%), Vlachs (13.7%) and Serbs (117.2%), and the decrease is noted among the Turks (65.6%).

The changes in the participation of the age group of 0-14 has had very significant reflection on the aging process among the population of different nationalities.

For example, the population of Macedonian nationality (that participates in the total population with 65.5%) has been affected by an intensive process of aging in difference to the Albanians (that participate in the total population with 23.4%). This statement is confirmed also by the value of the age coefficient and the aging index.

The age coefficient for the Macedonians in 1953 was 0.0844 or 8.44%, and in 1997 - 0.5651 or 56.51%, while for the population of Albanian nationality the age coefficient in 1953 was 0.0806 or 8.06% and in 1997 it was 0.2106 or 21.06%.

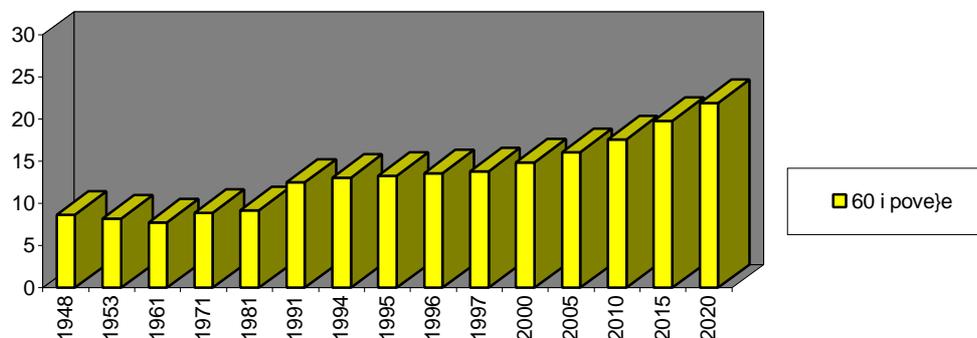
In the light of the above stated, one may conclude that the intensity of changes with the age structure of the population in a country is not fully (and only) determined by the level of economic development that country has attained. This may be illustrated by the example of the Republic of Macedonia ageing. Namely, the technological development is currently making its first steps while the demographic transition in the Republic of Macedonia, at least at one of its parts, has gone rather far.

It is expected that the ageing process is going to continue in the future with very high intensity. According to the most expectable variant projection for the Republic of Macedonia, in 2020, the participation of the age group of 0-14 in the total population will be 17.22% (decrease of 28% compared with 1997), the participation of the age group 15-59 will be 60.89% (insignificant decrease of 2% compared with 1997) and the participation of the population at the age 60 and more will be 21.89% (increase of 57% compare with 1997).

If we analyse the population age groups (how many people aged beyond 65 appear per 1000 persons aged 0-14) for this future situation, we will find Macedonia in the last (VII) age group - Old population, with coefficient 909 which is far above than the minimum for this age group (see Table 2).

This changes in the age structure are going to happen as a result of decreasing of birth rate (it is

expected that the birth rate will be 10.72 liveborn children per 1000 inhabitants), increased life expectancy (for male 73.6 and for female 77.6) and existing of still high level of emigration.



Graphic 2: changes in the participation of the age group 60 and more in the total population

Everything mentioned above, without doubt, leads to conclusion that a concrete and long-term population policy, with adequate resources for implementation, is indispensable.

In order to address these issues, in December 1987, the State parliament adopted “The Resolution on Population Policy”, with the goal of supporting people’s desire to plan parenthood, and contributing to improvement of living and working conditions, and harmonization of demographic, social, and economic development in the Republic.

The Resolution provided for undertaking broadbased measures that included economic, social, educational, health, and tax policies that would tend to decrease the birthrate in the high natality areas and boost in the low natality areas. In accordance with this Resolution, the state and local communities have been undertaking a broad range of specific activities encompassing measures in the fields of employment, spatial development, small business development, health care, social protection, education and upbringing, scientific research and information dissemination.

In addition, the population policy was incorporated into the social development plans, and into the municipalities’ programs, measures and activities; annual reports have been prepared that evaluate progress and a Center for humane reproduction has been established.

However, with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia and the ensuing difficulties, many of the programmed activities could not be carried out.

In order to influence the overall demographic development, it is necessary to have a complex

population policy that is integrated into other related policies, because all policies and activities have an impact on the needs of the population.

In view of all of the above considerations, the basic goals of the population policy in the Republic of Macedonia should be:

- to achieve a population growth with a low natality and small losses from mortality and emigration, i.e. with low total increase, which provides for faster human development;
- to realize a more balanced reproduction of the population, by stopping the decrease of fertility in those population groups that have less than simple reproduction, and reducing the increase of those population groups with a high reproduction rate in order to avoid possible ethnic and religious conflicts that are a result of uneven population growth due to different reproduction patterns;
- to further decrease the mortality of all age groups of the population in order to increase life expectancy and to achieve a more rational reproduction;
- to improve the population structures for a higher impact upon economic and human development;
- to remove the causes of the high rate of migration from the villages and alter the migration patterns, in order to use resources in the whole country more rationally;
- to stimulate an organized temporary economic emigration abroad versus the permanent emigration and encourage return of migrants from abroad and productive investment of their foreign currency remittances;
- to stimulate a daily migration of the labor force and students;
- to achieve a harmonized interaction between demographic, economic, and social development.