POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES IN 2017

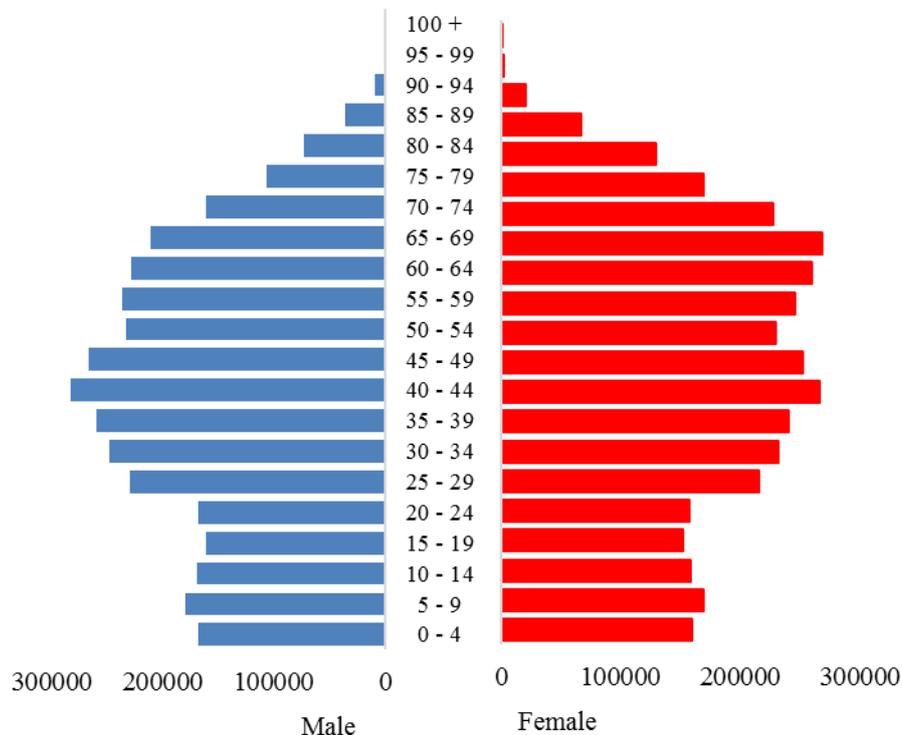Demographic situation in Bulgaria in 2017:

- Population number decrease and population ageing continue;
- Unbalanced territorial distribution of population go deeper;
- Number of live births and crude birth rate decrease;
- Number of deaths and crude death rate increase;
- Infant mortality decreases;
- Number of marriages increase and the number of divorces decrease;
- Life expectancy at birth increase.

Population number and structures

As of 31 December 2017 the population of Bulgaria was 7 050 034 persons representing 1.4% of the EU population[1]. Compared to 2016, the country population decreased by 51 825 persons or by 0.7%.

Male population was 3 422 409 (48.5%) and female - 3 627 625 (51.5%) or to 1 000 males correspond 1 060 females. Males prevail among the population aged up to 53 years. The number and share of females into the total population have increased among the elderly.

Figure 1. Age structure of population as of 31.12.2017

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[1] In the international comparisons, data on EU member states refer to 2016. Source: Eurostat - http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/
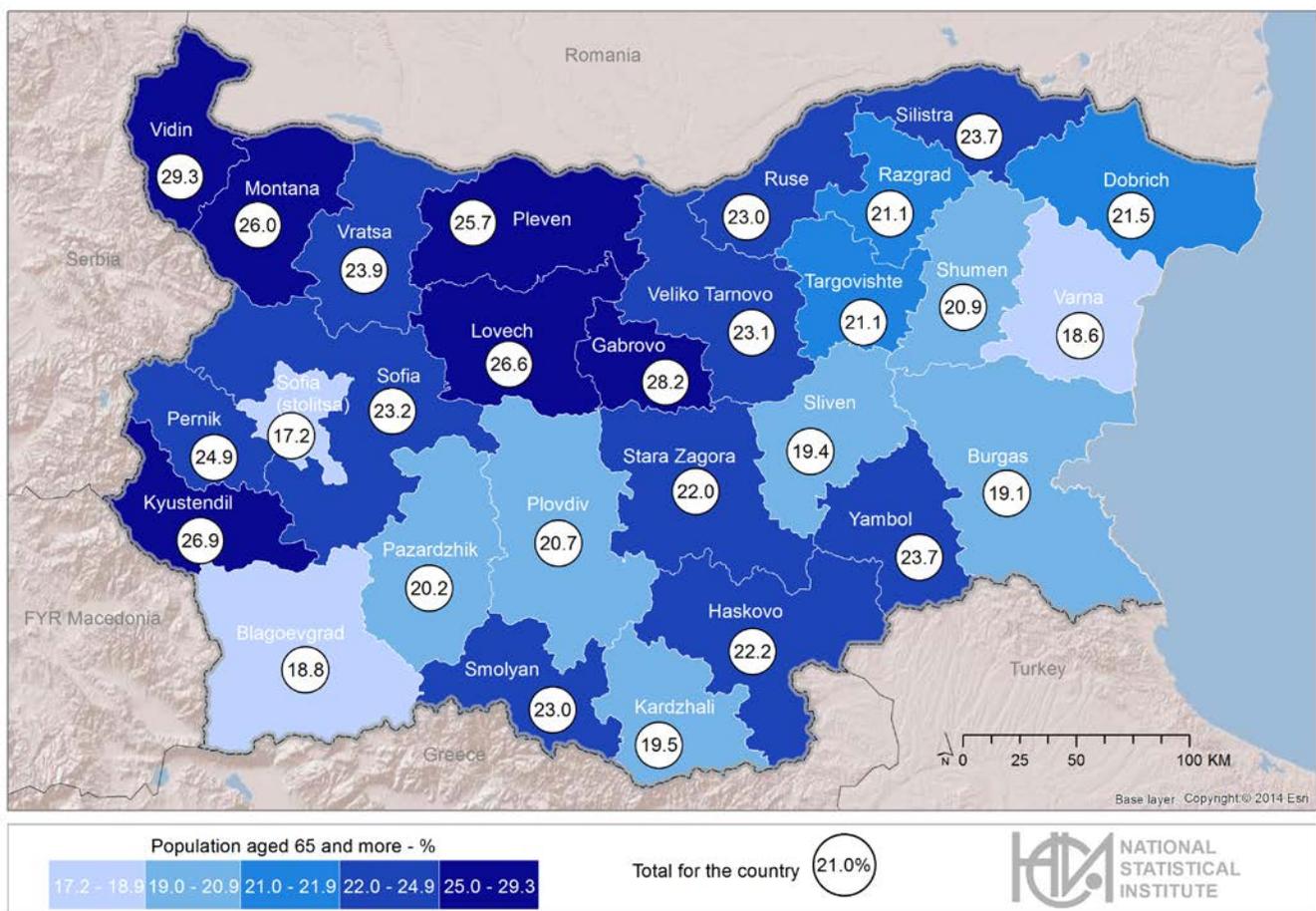
The process of population ageing continues. By the end of 2017 the number of persons aged 65 and over was 1 481 908, or 21.0% of the country population. Compared to 2016, the share of population aged 65 and over increases by 0.3 percentage points and compared to 2001 - by 4.1 percentage points.

The population aging is more intensive among female population than among male. The share of females aged 65 and over is 24.4%, compared to 17.4% - of males. The difference is due to the higher mortality among male population and consequently - lower life expectancy.

The share of persons aged 65 and more is highest in districts Vidin (29.3%), Gabrovo (28.2%), Kyustendil (26.9%) and Lovech (26.6%). In 19 districts share of people aged 65 and over is higher than the country average. Lowest is the share of elderly population in districts Sofia (stolitsa) - 17.2% and Varna - 18.6%.

Figure 2. Share of population aged 65 and more as of 31.12.2017 by district

Share of population aged 65 and more for EU-28 is 19.4%. Highest is the share of elderly population in Italy (22.3%), followed by Greece (21.5%) and Germany (21.2%). In six countries, including Bulgaria, share of elderly is above 20.0%.

As of 31.12.2017, **children up to 15 years of age in the country were 1 004 376 or 14.3% of the total population number**. The share of children up to 15 years increases by 0.2 percentage points compared to 2016.

The share of population under 15 years of age is highest in districts Sliven - 18.4% and Burgas - 15.5% of the district population. As a total, in 15 districts the share of children up to 15 years is lower than the country average. Lowest is the share registered in districts Smolyan and Gabrovo - 11.5%.

Share of the youngest EU-28 population in the beginning of 2017 is 15.6%. Lowest shares are observed in Germany (13.4%) and Italy (13.5%), and highest - in Ireland (21.1%) and France (18.3%).
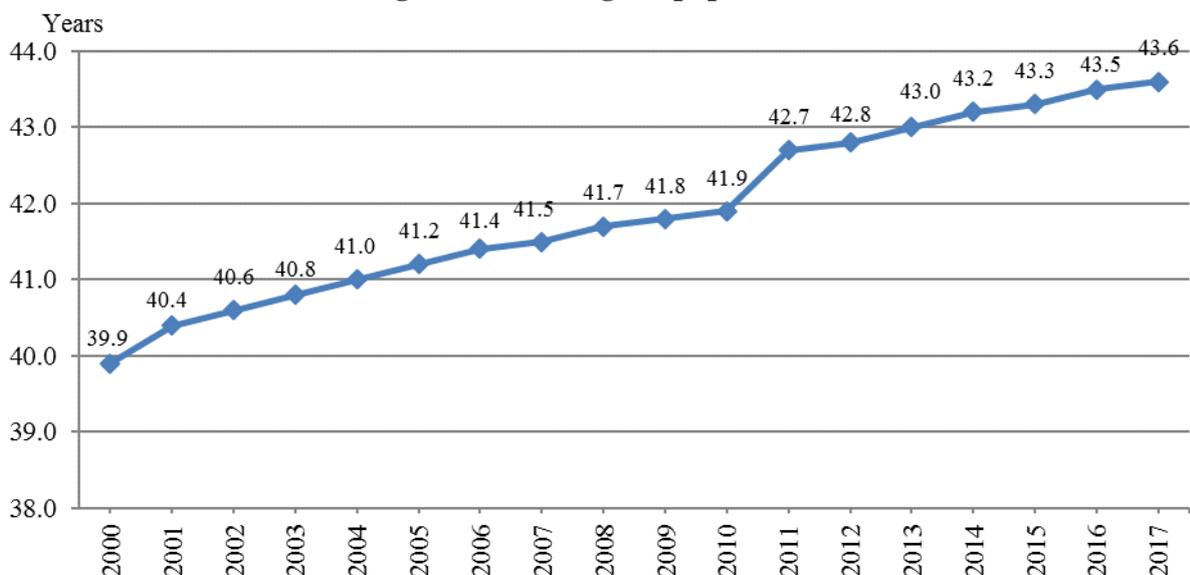
As of 31.12.2017, **the age dependency ratio[1]** in the country was **54.5%,** or to each person in 'dependent' ages (under 15 and over 65 years) correspond less than two persons in 'independent" ages. In 2005 and 2016, the ratio is 44.5% and 53.4% respectively.

The ratio is more favourable in urban areas - 50.3% than in rural - 67.5%. As a total, in all country districts except Sofia (stolitsa) - 46.3%, the age dependency ratio is over 50.0%. Most unfavourable is the ratio in districts Vidin (70.3%), Lovech (66.5%) and Gabrovo (65.8%).

The population ageing leads to increase of the population **mean age.** It increased from 40.4 years in 2001 to 41.2 years in 2005 and reached **43.6 years at the end of 2017**.

Ageing of population is observed both in urban and rural areas. In urban areas, the mean age of population is 42.6 years, compared to 46.3 years - in rural areas.

Figure 3. Mean age of population

The tendency of population ageing influences the distribution of population **under, at and over working age.** The last are influenced not only by the population aging, but also by legislative changes[2] concerning the retirement age. In 2017, at working age are women up to completion of 61 years and men up to completion of 64 years.

The number of population at working age as of 31.12.2017 was 4 248 thousand persons or 60.3% of the total population, of which men are 2 233 thousand and female - 2 015 thousand persons. The population at working age decreased by almost 56 thousand or by 1.3% compared to the previous year.

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[1] Number of persons in 'dependent' ages (persons under 15 years of age and 65 and more) per 100 persons in 'independent' ages (persons aged 15 to 64 years) calculated in percentage.
[2] Age limits used for distribution of population under, at and over working age are defined according to Ordinance on pensions and length of insurance, adopted by the Decree of the Council of Ministers No. 30 (State Gazette 21/17.03.2000).

By the end of 2017, the number of population over working age was 1 736 thousand persons or 24.6% and under working age were 1 066 thousand persons or 15.1% of the country population.

1. Population under, at and over working age as of 31.12.

<div align="right">(Per cent)</div>

Year	Age		
	Under working age	Working age	Over working age
1990	21.6	55.5	22.9
1995	19.1	56.6	24.3
2001	16.3	59.2	24.5
2005	14.8	62.4	22.8
2010	14.6	62.7	22.7
2011	14.3	61.7	24.0
2012	14.4	61.8	23.8
2013	14.6	61.7	23.7
2014	14.8	61.1	24.1
2015	14.9	60.8	24.3
2016	15.0	60.6	24.4
2017	15.1	60.3	24.6

The reproduction of population at working age is characterized by **the coefficient of demographic replacement,** showing the ratio between the number of persons entering working age (15 - 19 years) and number of persons exiting it (60 - 64 years). As of 31.12.2017, the ratio was 64. For comparison, in 2001 every 100 persons exiting working age have been replaced by 124 young people.

Most favourable is the ratio in districts Sliven - 84, Varna - 71 and Sofia (stolitsa) - 70. Lowest is the ratio in districts Smolyan - 44, and Gabrovo, Pernik and Kyustendil, where 100 persons exiting working age are replaced by 50 persons entering it.

Territorial distribution of population

As of 31.12.2017, 5 181 755 or 73.5% of the total country population resided in urban areas and 1 868 279 or 26.5% - in rural ones.

There were 5 256 settlements in Bulgaria by the end of 2017, of which 257 - towns and 4 999 - villages.
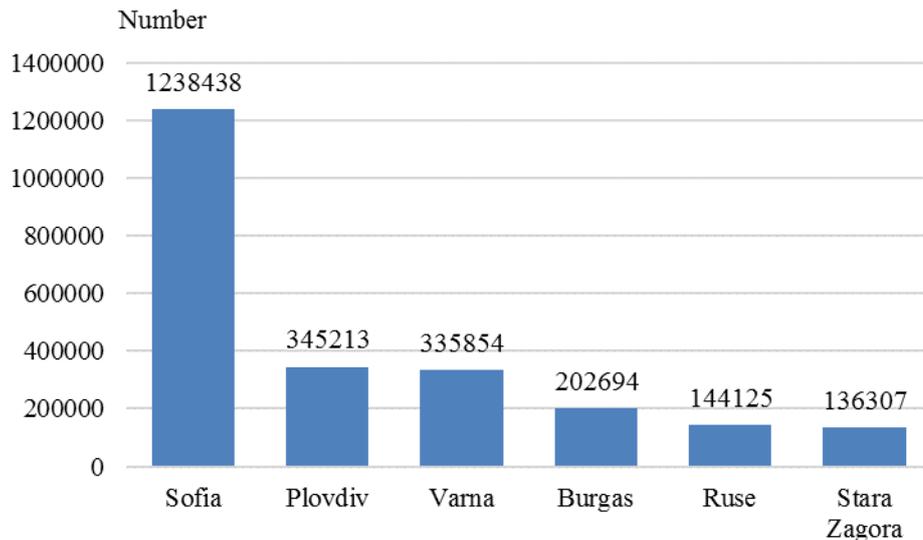
At the end of 2017, there are 162 settlements without population. Highest is the number of settlements without population in districts Gabrovo, Veliko Tarnovo and Kardzhali - 61, 58 and 11 respectively.

The population number is between 1 and 49 persons incl. in 1 172 or 22.3% of the settlements.

There are six towns with a population above 100 thousand persons and 34.1% of the country population lives there.

Figure 4. Towns with more than 100 000 inhabitants as of 31.12.2017

According to the country administrative-territorial structure, there are 6 statistical regions, 28 districts and 265 municipalities in Bulgaria.

Statistical regions

Half of the country population (50.0%) lives in Yugozapaden and Yuzhen tsentralen regions. Smallest according to the population number is Severozapaden region - 756 thousand persons or 10.7% of the country population.

The population number decreased compared to 2016 in all statistical regions; highest is the decrease in Severozapaden region - by 1.8% and lowest - in Yugozapaden region - 0.3%.

2. Population as of 31.12.2017 by statistical region

Statistical region	Population as of 31.12.2017 - in numbers	Population as of 31.12.2017 - %	Population growth - in numbers	Population growth - %
Severozapaden	755956	10.7	-13667	-1.8
Severen tsentralen	794998	11.3	-10443	-1.3
Severoiztochen	933705	13.2	-5557	-0.6
Yugoiztochen	1039549	14.7	-6576	-0.6
Yugozapaden	2108394	29.9	-6950	-0.3
Yuzhen tsentralen	1417432	20.1	-8632	-0.6

Districts

Lowest is the number of population in district Vidin - 86 927 persons or 1.2% of the country population and highest in district Sofia (stolitsa) - 1 325 429 persons (18.8%). In 16 districts, the population number is under 200 thousand and the population living in them represents 30.1% of the country population. There are six districts with a population between 200 and 300 thousand persons and 20.2% of the country population is living there. Six districts have population above 300 thousand persons and in three of them, Sofia (stolitsa), Plovdiv and Varna, lives more than 1/3 of the total country population (35.0%).

3. Population as of 31.12.2017 by district

Districts	Population as of 31.12.2017 - in numbers	Population as of 31.12.2017 - %	Population growth - in numbers	Population growth - %
Total	**7050034**	**100.0**	**-51825**	**-0.7**
Blagoevgrad	307882	4.4	-2439	-0.8
Burgas	411579	5.8	-1105	-0.3
Varna	472120	6.7	-534	-0.1
Veliko Tarnovo	239132	3.4	-3127	-1.3
Vidin	86927	1.2	-1940	-2.2
Vratsa	165645	2.3	-3082	-1.8
Gabrovo	110254	1.6	-2080	-1.9
Dobrich	176145	2.5	-2293	-1.3
Kardzhali	151113	2.1	276	0.2
Kyustendil	121099	1.7	-2332	-1.9
Lovech	126961	1.8	-2261	-1.7
Montana	132214	1.9	-2455	-1.8
Pazardzhik	257965	3.7	-2849	-1.1
Pernik	122421	1.7	-1349	-1.1
Pleven	244209	3.5	-3929	-1.6
Plovdiv	669796	9.5	-1777	-0.3
Razgrad	113714	1.6	-1688	-1.5
Ruse	221336	3.1	-2153	-1.0
Silistra	110562	1.6	-1395	-1.2
Sliven	188433	2.7	-1355	-0.7
Smolyan	107282	1.5	-2143	-2.0
Sofia	231563	3.3	-2622	-1.1
Sofia (stolitsa)	1325429	18.8	1792	0.1
Stara Zagora	319067	4.5	-2310	-0.7
Targovishte	112474	1.6	-1220	-1.1
Haskovo	231276	3.3	-2139	-0.9
Shumen	172966	2.5	-1510	-0.9
Yambol	120470	1.7	-1806	-1.5

Compared to 2016, the population increased only in two district - Sofia (stolitsa) by 0.1% and Kardzhali by 0.2%. In all the rest, a decrease is observed, highest one in districts Vidin - 2.2% and Smolyan - 2.0%.

Municipalities

The distribution of population by municipalities is not uniform. There are 72 municipalities with population below 6 000 and hardly 3.9% of the country population lives there. At the same time, there are nine municipalities with population over 100 thousand people and 41.0% of the country population lives there. Highest is the number of population of municipality Stolichna (1 325 429), followed by Plovdiv (345 213) and Varna (344 748). Lowest is the number of population of municipality Treklyano - 798 persons.

4. Municipalities according to the population number as of 31.12.2017

Size of municipality	Municipalities		Population	
	Number	**%**	**Number**	**%**
Total	**265**	**100.0**	**7050034**	**100.0**
Up to 5999	72	27.2	277225	3.9
6000 - 19999	123	46.4	1403245	19.9
20000 - 49999	45	17.0	1361844	19.3
50000 - 99999	16	6.0	1115364	15.8
100000 and more	9	3.4	2892356	41.0

Basic factors influencing the changes of population number and structures are the demographic processes - fertility, mortality and migration.
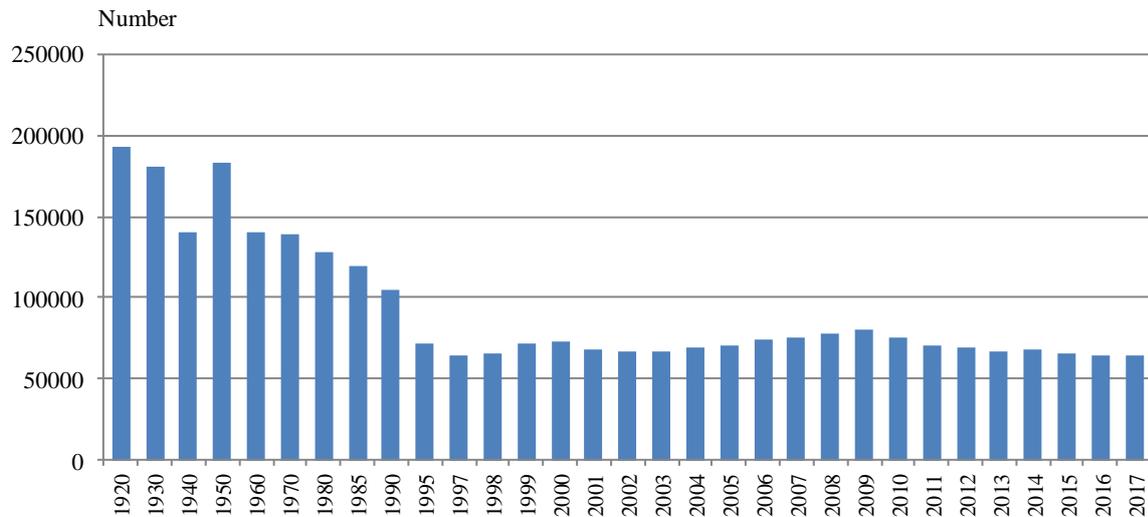
Fertility

There are 64 359 children born in 2017, of which **63 955 (99.4%) - live born.** The number of live births decreased by 1 029 children or by 1.6% compared to the previous year.

Figure 5. Live born children within the period 1920 - 2017

Number

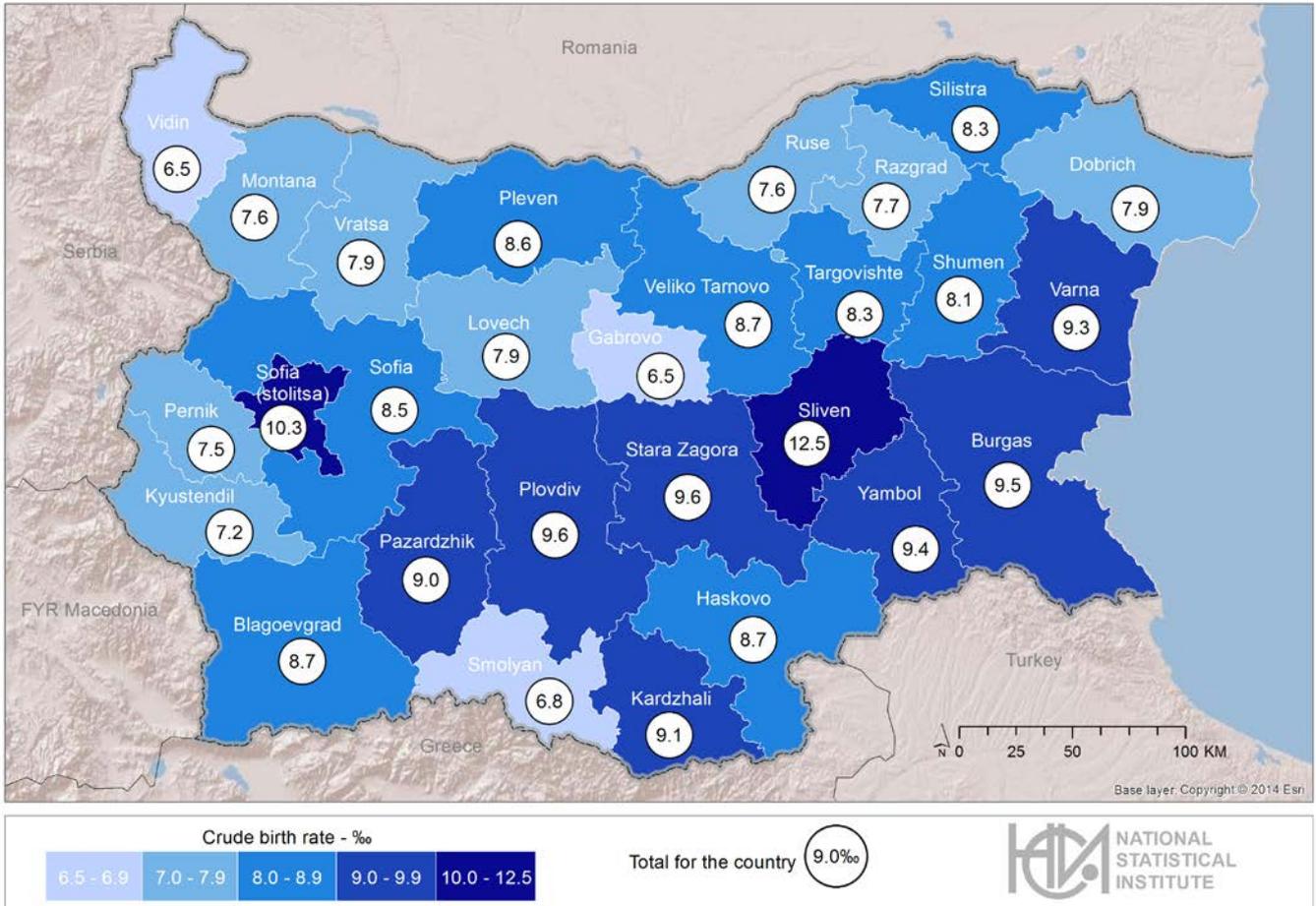**The crude birth rate[1] in 2017 is 9.0‰,** compared to 9.1‰ in 2016.

The number of live born males (32 787) is by 1 619 higher compared to the live born females (31 168), or 951 females correspond to 1 000 born males.

The number of live born children in urban areas is 48 005 and in rural - 15 950. Crude birth rate in urban areas is 9.2‰ and in rural - 8.5‰.

In Bulgaria, highest is the crude birth rate in districts Sliven - 12.5‰, Sofia (stolitsa) - 10.3‰ and Stara Zagora and Plovdiv - 9.6‰ each. The crude birth rate is lower than the country average in 19 districts and lowest in districts Gabrovo and Vidin - 6.5‰ each.

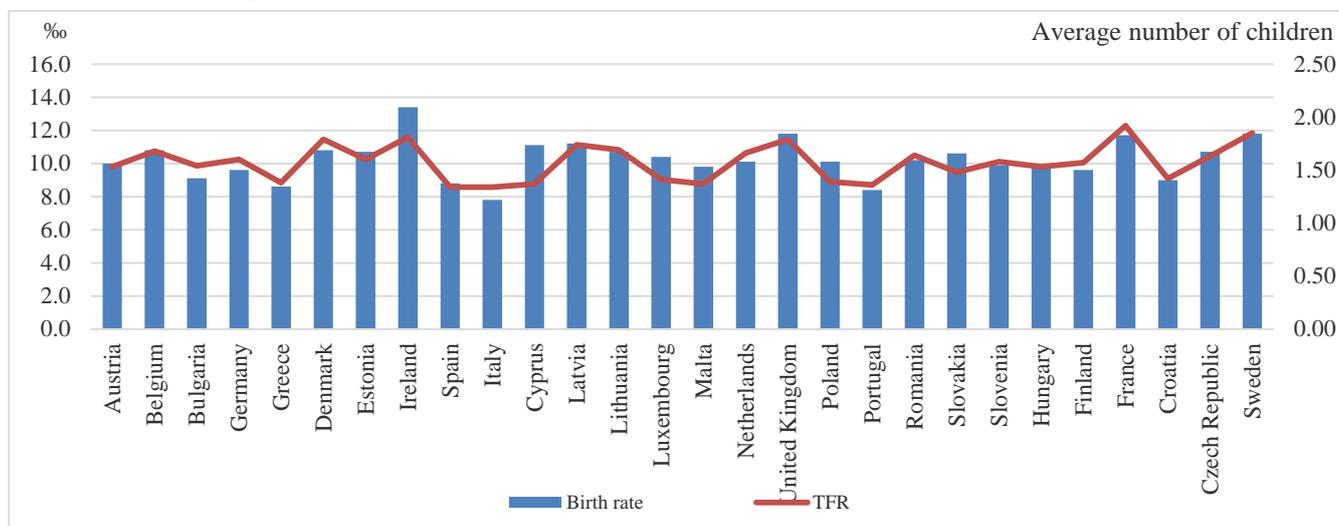**Figure 6. Crude birth rate in 2017 by district**

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[1] Number of live born children per 1 000 persons of the average annual population during the year.

The crude birth rate in 2016 for EU-28 is 10.1‰ according to Eurostat data. Highest crude birth rate is observed in Ireland (13.4‰), followed by United Kingdom and Sweden - 11.8‰ each. Lowest crude birth rate is registered in Italy - 7.8‰.

Figure 7. Crude birth rate and TFR in EU member states in 2016

The number of women in fertile age (15 - 49 completed years) or the size and fertility of the fertile contingents in the country influence considerably the fertility levels and the character of population reproduction.

The number of women in fertile age as of 31.12.2017 was 1 517 thousand. It has decreased nearly by 22 thousand compared to the previous year and nearly by 133 thousand compared to 2011.

The number of children born by mothers aged below 18 years in 2017 is 3 251. Tendency of increase the number of children born by mothers aged 40 and more continue - 1 947 in 2016 compared to 2 108 in 2017.

Half of births (50.7%) in 2017 are first ones, 36.5% second and 12.5% - third or higher of rank.
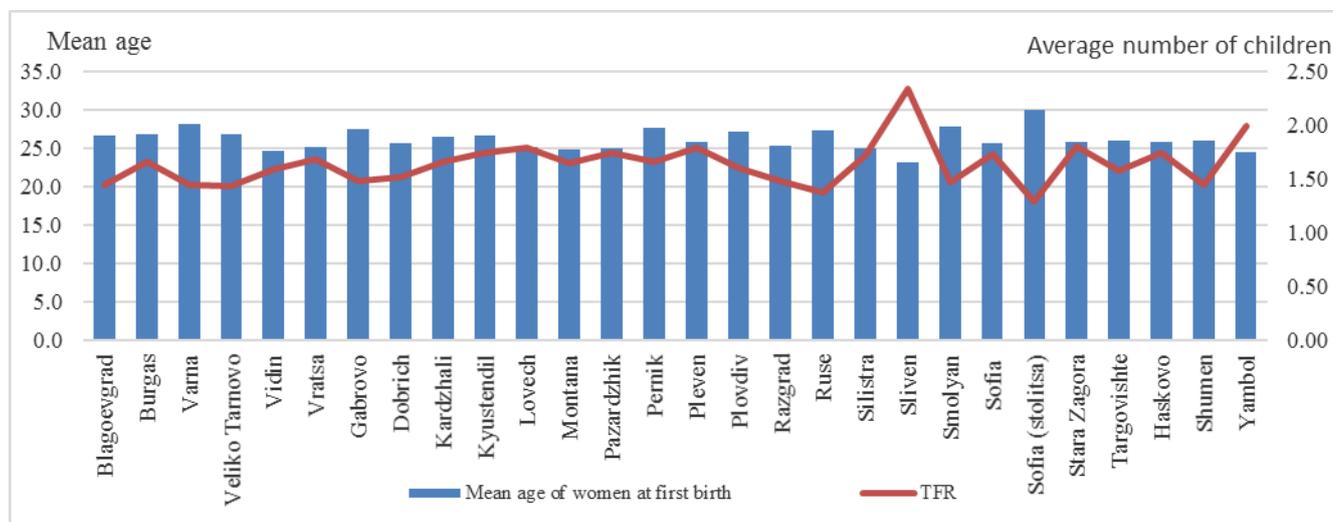
Total fertility rate (TFR)[1] is one of the basic indicators characterising the fertility. **The average number of live born children per women in 2017 is 1.56.** TFR in 2001 has been 1.24 children and in 2016 - 1.54 children.

The mean age of women at first birth increased from 27.0 in 2016 to **27.1 years in 2017.** Mean age of women at first birth vary from 30.0 in district Sofia (stolitsa) to 23.1 in district Sliven.

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[1] Average number of live born children, whom a mother would give birth to during her entire fertile period according to the age specific fertility rates during the reporting year.

Figure 8. Mean age at first birth and TFR in 2017 by district

There are 1 134 multi-foetal births registered in 2017 or 5 more than in 2016**.** In 1 127 of the cases, two children are born, in 7 - three children.

Stable tendency of increase of the number of extramarital births is observed since 1991. The share has increased from 18.5% in 1992 to 42.0% in 2001 and 59.2% in 2013. **The number of children born outside marriage in 2017 is 37 935 or 58.9%** of the total number of births. The share of extramarital births in rural areas (65.7%) is higher than in urban (56.7%). For 77.9% of the extramarital births data on the fathers exists, i.e. most probably the children are grown up in families, by parents cohabiting without marriage.
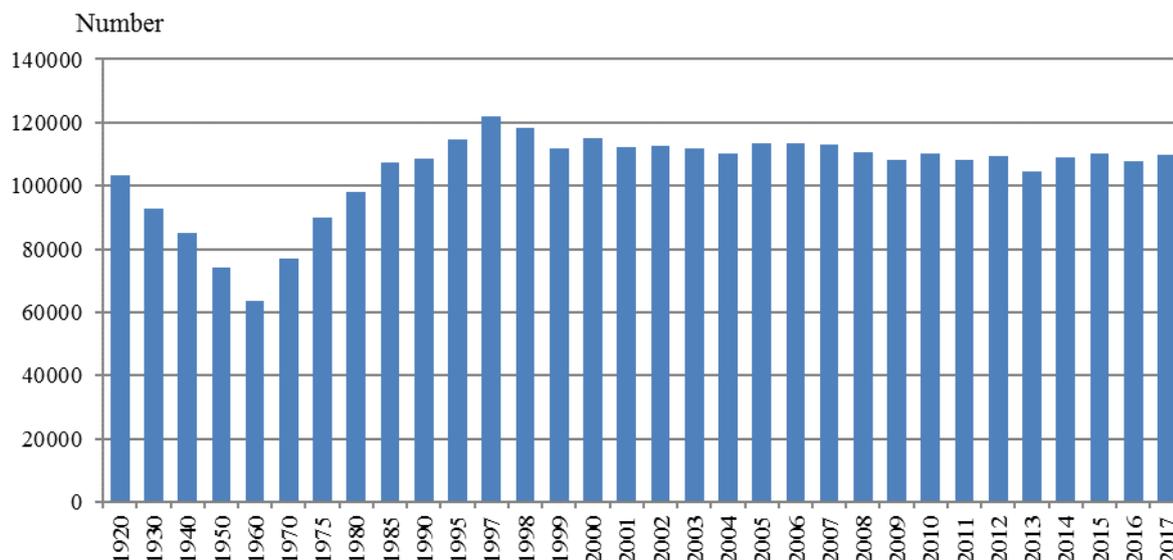
Highest share of extramarital births is registered in districts Vidin (78.3%) and Vratsa (73.3%). The share of extramarital births in all country regions is higher than 50.0% except in districts Razgrad (48.6%), Blagoevgrad (44.2%) and Kardzhali (35.7%).

Mortality

The number of deaths in 2017 is 109 791 and the crude mortality rate[1] - 15.5‰. Compared to the previous year the number of deaths increased by 2 211 or by 2.1%. The crude mortality rate remains too high.

Figure 9. Deaths within the period 1920 - 2017

Mortality among males (16.5‰) continues to be higher than among females (14.6‰). In 2017 there are 1 071 deaths of males per 1 000 deaths of females. The considerable differences in mortality in urban and rural areas also remain unchanged. Mortality rate in rural areas (22.0‰) is higher than in urban ones (13.2‰).
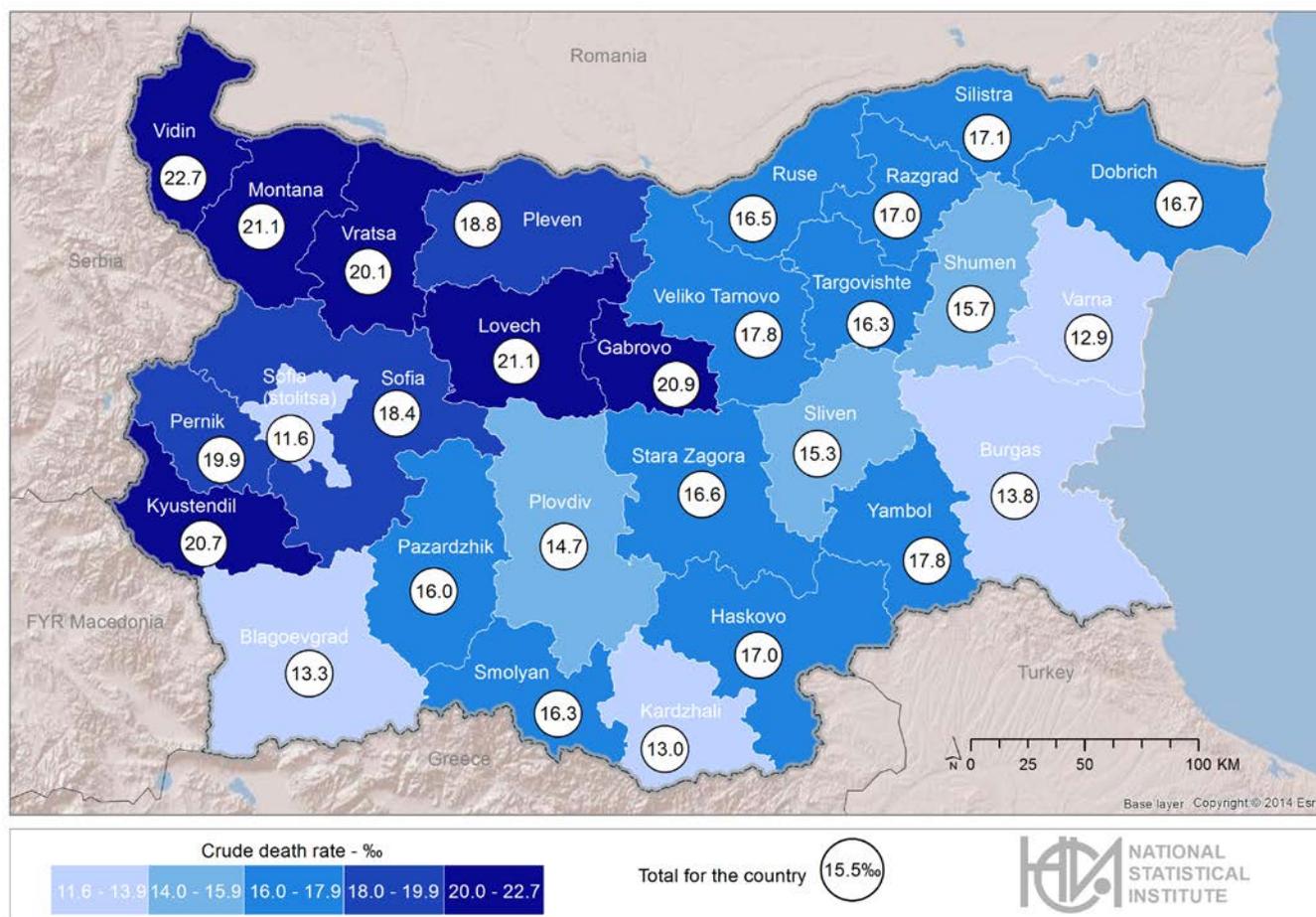
The mortality rate for EU-28 in 2016 is 10.0‰. Mortality rate in Bulgaria is highest among the European countries. Lowest is the mortality in Ireland and Cyprus - 6.4‰ each and Luxembourg - 6.8‰. Except in Bulgaria, rather higher compared to the average EU-28 value is the mortality in Latvia - 14.6 ‰ and Lithuania - 14.3‰.

Highest is the mortality in districts Vidin - 22.7‰ and Montana and Lovech - 21.1‰ each. There are seven districts where the mortality rate is lower than the country average. Lowest is the mortality rate in districts Sofia (stolitsa) - 11.6‰.

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[1] Number of dead persons per 1 000 persons of the average annual population during the year.

Figure 10. Crude death rate in 2017 by district

The premature mortality[1] in 2017 (20.9%) decreased compared to 2016 (21.8%). There are considerable differences in the premature mortality indicator for male and female population. The dead females aged under 65 years represent 13.7% of all dead females, while among the males it is 27.6%.

There are 408 children who die up to 1 year of age in 2017 and the infant mortality rate[2] is 6.4‰. The infant mortality has been 14.4‰ in 2001, 10.4‰ in 2005 and 6.5‰ in 2016.
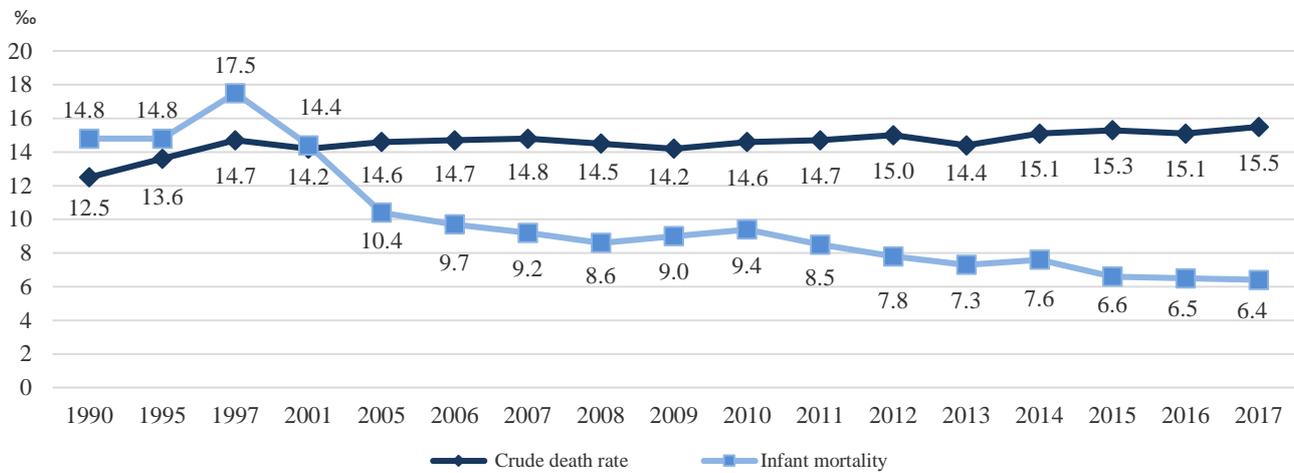
The infant mortality rate for 2017 is lower than the country average in 11 districts. Lowest values are registered in districts Vidin - 1.7‰ and Sofia (stolitsa) - 2.6‰. Highest infant mortality rate is registered in districts Dobrich (12.9‰) and Sliven (12.6‰).

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[1] Share of deaths of persons below 65 years of age of the total number of deaths.
[2] Number of children who die up to 1 year of age per 1 000 live born.

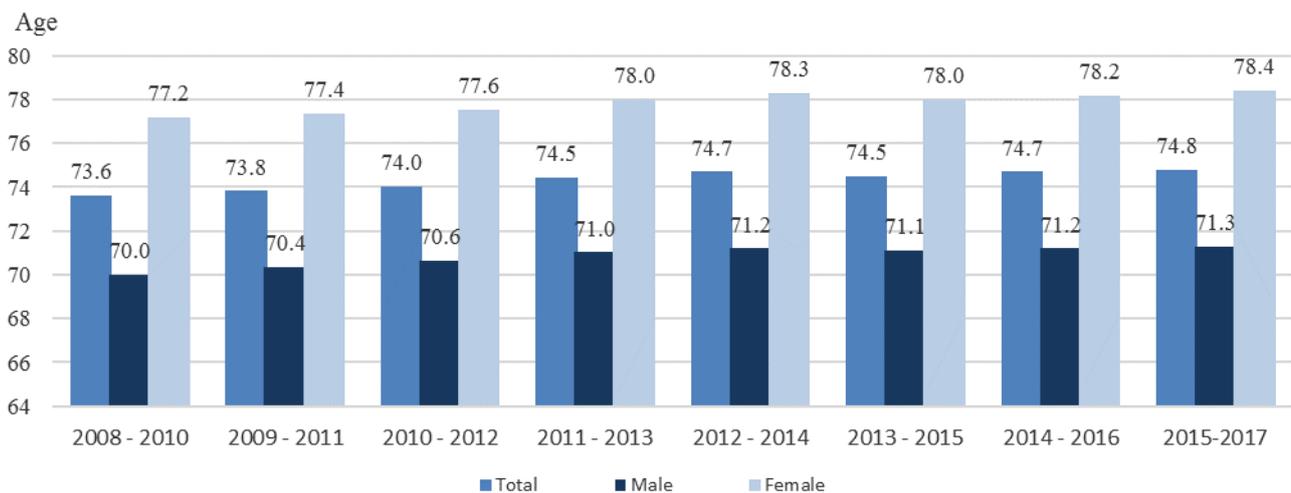**Figure 11. Crude death rate and infant mortality rate**

The different mortality rates among male and female population, as well as among the urban and rural population determine the difference in the life expectancy for separate population groups.

Life expectancy for the country[1], calculated for the period 2015 - 2017 is 74.8 years. Compared to the previous period (2014 - 2016) it increases by 0.1 years.

The life expectancy of male population is 71.3 years, whereas of female - 7.1 years higher or 78.4 years. The life expectancy of urban population (75.6 years) is higher than of rural one (72.8 years).

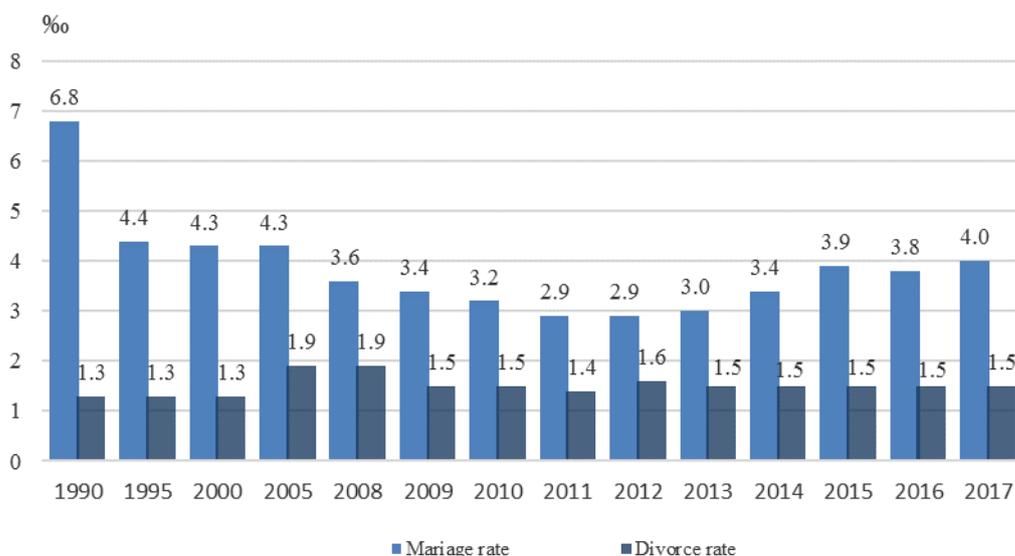**Figure 12. Life expectancy by sex and periods**

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[1] Preliminary data.

Marriages and divorces

There are 28 593 juridical marriages registered in 2017, or 1 790 more than the previous year. The marriage rate[1] is 4.0‰. Three quarters of the total marriages number (21 536) are registered among urban population.

Figure 13. Marriage and divorce rates (per 1 000 population)

The mean age at first marriage in 2017 is 31.4 years for males and 28.4 - for females. Compared to the previous year, the mean age at first marriage has increased by 0.3 years for both - males and females.

87.1% of females and 86.2% of males have married for the first time in 2017.

Highest is the marriage rate in districts Razgrad and Dobrich - 5.2‰ and 5.0‰ respectively. Lowest is the marriage rate in district Vratsa - 2.4‰.

The number of divorces in 2017 is 10 411 or 192 less than in 2016. Out of the total number of divorces, 81.0% refers to the urban population.

Highest is the number of divorces by 'mutual agreement' (63.4%), followed by divorces due to 'incompatibility of temperament' (26.6%) and 'virtual parting' (8.3%).

The divorce is not the first one for 9.8% of female and 10.7% of male who divorced in 2017.
The average duration of a marriage before the divorce in 2017 is 15.8 years.

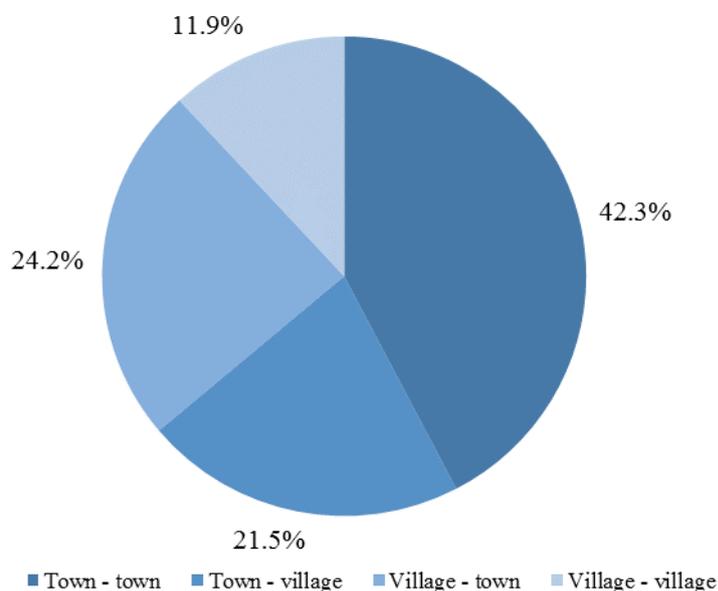[1] Number of marriages per 1 000 population.

Internal migration

113 471 persons changed their residence within the country in 2017. Among the migrants within the country, 43.0% are male and 57.0% - female.

Highest is the share of internal migrants aged 20 - 39 years (34.9%), followed by persons below 20 years of age (30.9%) and 40 - 59 years old (16.1%).

The share of flow 'town-town' is highest one (42.3%), followed by the flow 'village - town' - 24.2% and 'town - village' (21.5%). Considerably lower is the number and share of the flow 'village - village' (11.9%).

Figure 14. Directions of the internal migration in 2017

Out of the internal migrants, highest is the number of people who migrated to Sofia (stolitsa) - 18 286. Districts with highest shares of migrants to Sofia (stolitsa) are Sofia - 9.9%, Blagoevgrad - 7.0% and Plovdiv - 6.0%.

Lowest are the shares of migrants to Sofia (stolitsa) from districts Targovishte and Razgrad - 0.9% each.

International migration

31 586 persons changed their current address in Bulgaria with an address abroad in 2017 - 50.8% male. Every second emigrant (55.1%) is aged 20 to 39 years. The youngest emigrants (under 20 years) are 14.6% of the total number and the emigrants over 60 years of age - 6.9%.

Most preferred destination countries are Germany (22.0%), the United Kingdom (16.3%) and Spain (12.2%).

Persons who changed their address abroad with an address in Bulgaria, or the immigration flow, includes Bulgarian citizens who have returned to Bulgaria and citizens of other countries granted residence permit or status in Bulgaria. **There are 25 597 persons who have changed their address abroad with an address in Bulgaria in 2017**. Male represent 48.7% of the total number of immigrants and female - 51.3%.

Among the immigrants to Bulgaria, 36.2% are aged 20 - 39 years and 27.0% - 40 to 59 years. The youngest immigrants (under 20 years) are 20.5% and the oldest, over 60 years of age - 16.3%.

Highest is the share of immigrants from Turkey (23.7%), the Russian Federation (11.7%) and Germany (6.9%).
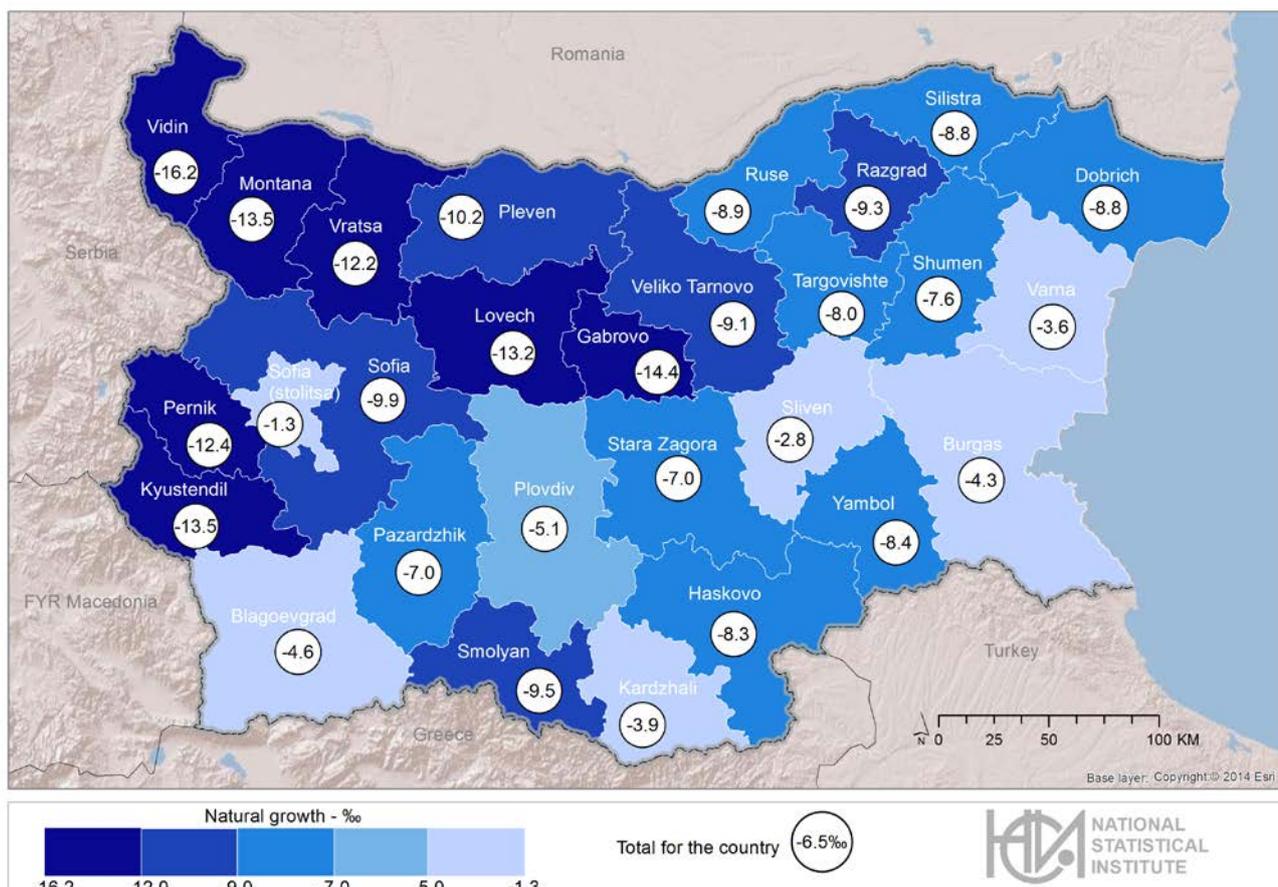
Population natural and migration growth

The population number and structures are defined by the size and intensity of the natural and migration growth.

The difference between the number of live births and deaths represents the natural increase of population. The country's demographic development after 1990 is characterised by a negative natural increase. **Due to the negative natural increase the country population has decreased by 45 836 persons in 2017.**

The population decrease, **measured through the natural increase rate is minus 6.5‰[1].** The natural increase rate in urban areas is minus 4.0‰, compared to minus 13.5‰ in rural areas.

Figure 15. Natural growth in 2017 by district (per 1 000 population)

The natural increase in all country districts in 2017 is negative.

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[1] Difference between the number of live births and number of deaths per 1 000 of the average annual population.

Lowest is the negative growth in districts Sofia (stolitsa) (-1.3‰) and Sliven (-2.8‰). Highest is the population decrease due to the high negative growth in district Vidin (-16.2‰), followed by Gabrovo (-14.4‰) and Kyustendil and Montana - minus 13.5‰ each. Higher than minus 10.0‰ is the natural growth in eight country districts.

The natural increase rate for EU-28 in 2016 is 0.0‰.

In 14 EU member states the natural increase is positive and highest is the rate in Ireland (7.0‰), Cyprus (4.7‰) and Luxembourg (3.6‰). Except in Bulgaria, rather high negative natural increase is registered in Lithuania (-3.7‰), Latvia and Croatia - minus 3.4‰ each.

Net migration (growth due to international migration) influences considerably the population number and structures. The net migration growth in 2017 is also negative - minus 5 989 persons. The last is the difference between the number of emigrants and number of immigrants.

The decrease of population due to the international migration measured through the coefficient of net migration is minus 0.8‰[1].

There are six districts with a positive migration growth in 2017: Kardzhali (5.7‰), Sofia (stolitsa) - (2.7‰), Plovdiv (2.5‰), Varna (2.4‰), Burgas (1.6‰) and Pernik (1.4‰). Highest population decrease due to the negative migration growth is registered in districts Smolyan (-10.3‰), Yambol (-6.4‰) and Vratsa (-6.2‰).

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[1] Ratio of the net migration to the average annual population.

Methodological notes

The population number and structures by the end of year are calculated based on the population data for the preceding year and data on the population natural and migration movement during the reference year.

Source of data on population number and structures is the Information System Demography of the NSI.

Data source on natural and migration movement of population (births, deaths, marriages, divorces, migration) is the Unified System for Civil Registration and Administrative Service of Population (Bulgarian acronym ESGRAON). Demographic events are registered through standard documents ESGRAON-CDS (Current Demographic Statistics): notification for birth, notification for marriage, notification for divorce, notification for death and address card for change of a present (current) address.

Data source on international migration are the Unified System for Civil Registration and Administrative Service of Population, document ESGRAON-CDS: notification for change of present address; National Revenue Agency; National Social Security Institute; Ministry of Interior; Estimates of emigration flows.

Data on population number and demographic events are distributed according to the administrative-territorial division of the country as of 31.12 of the reference year (settlements, municipalities, districts) and statistical regions according to the 'present address'. The last is the address corresponding to the residence declared by the person and officially registered.

The age of population by the end of year is calculated as of 31.12. in completed years.

The persons' age at occurrence of a demographic event is calculated in completed years based on the date of birth and the date of respective event, i.e. the age completed at the time of event.

The demographic indicators are calculated based on the average annual population. The last is an arithmetical average of the population number by the end of previous and the end of reference year.