# BIRTH RATE

Final data

The birth rate is one of the main factors influencing the number and structures of the population. Since the beginning of the 1950s, a permanent trend of decreasing birth rates has been observed in the country. The reasons for this are many and different during the different periods of the demographic development of Bulgaria. The change in the family model, the changing socio-economic environment, the general reduction of the population, in particular of the fertile contingents, the postponement of marriage and the birth of the first child and, last but not least, the emigration from the country mainly of the working-age population.

The main factors that determine the level of birth rate and reproduction of the population are the size of the fertile contingents and their fertility. In addition, while at the beginning of the last century, the birth rate was mainly influenced by the size of the fertile contingents, since fertility was high, with the changes in the family model and the role of women in society in recent decades, fertility has become increasingly important.

Fig. 1. Women in fertile age (15 - 49 years of age) and Total fertility rate[1] by census years
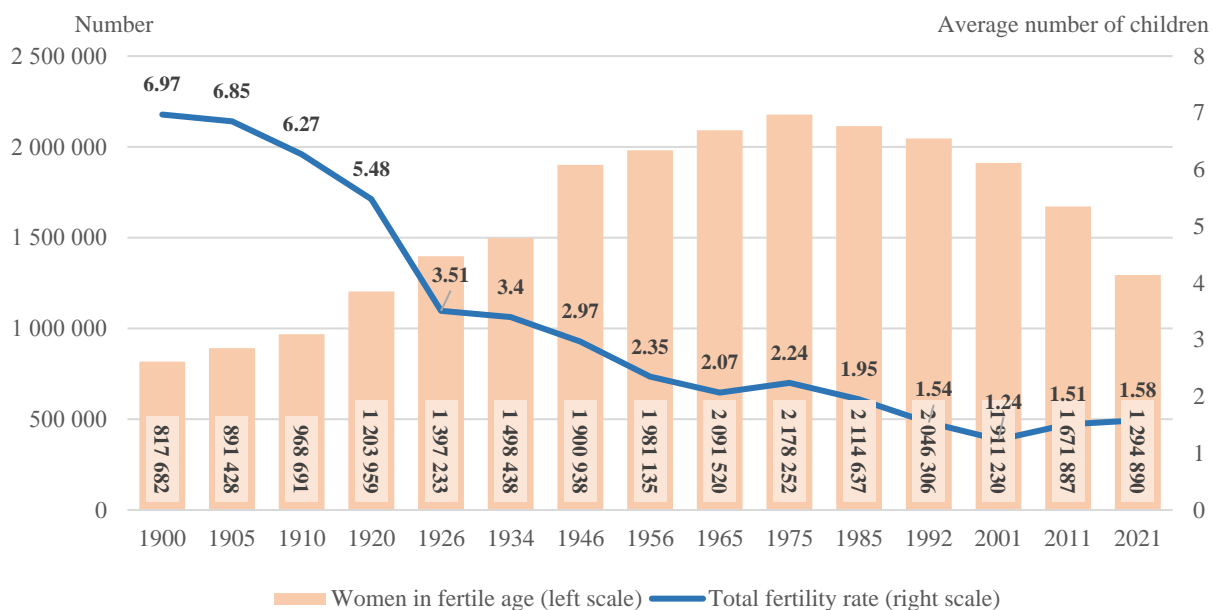
The number of women in fertile age increased until 1975, reaching 2 178 000, then began to decline to reach 1 295 000 women aged 15 - 49 in the 2021 census. The biggest decrease was registered in the last ten-year period (2011 - 2021) - 377 thousand, or 22.5%.

The fertility rate also saw a decline from 6.97 children in 1900 to 1.58 in 2021. In the last ten years, the indicator has remained at levels above 1.5, but nevertheless, its value is not sufficient for the simple reproduction of the population.

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[1] Average number of children a woman would bear during her entire fertile period. Source: Current Demographic Statistics.

The rich set of data collected during the censuses allows an assessment of the relationship between fertility and the main demographic, ethnocultural and socio-economic characteristics of women. For the purposes of the birth rate study, the indicator average number of live births[2] was used in this material.

As of September 7, 2021, 748 000 or 24.7% of women aged 12 and over have had one live birth. This share is higher among women who live in urban areas (27.1%) than among those who live in rural areas - 17.6%.

The absolute number and the relative share of women with two children are the highest - 1 353 thousand (44.6%).

204 000 or 6.7% of women have three children each, and this share is twice as high in rural as in urban areas - 11.3 and 5.1%, respectively. 78 000 or 2.6% of women have four or more children.

A little more than a fifth of women - 650 thousand (21.4%) do not have children at the census critical time.

Fig. 2. Distribution of women aged 12 and over by number of children and place of residence as of September 7, 2021
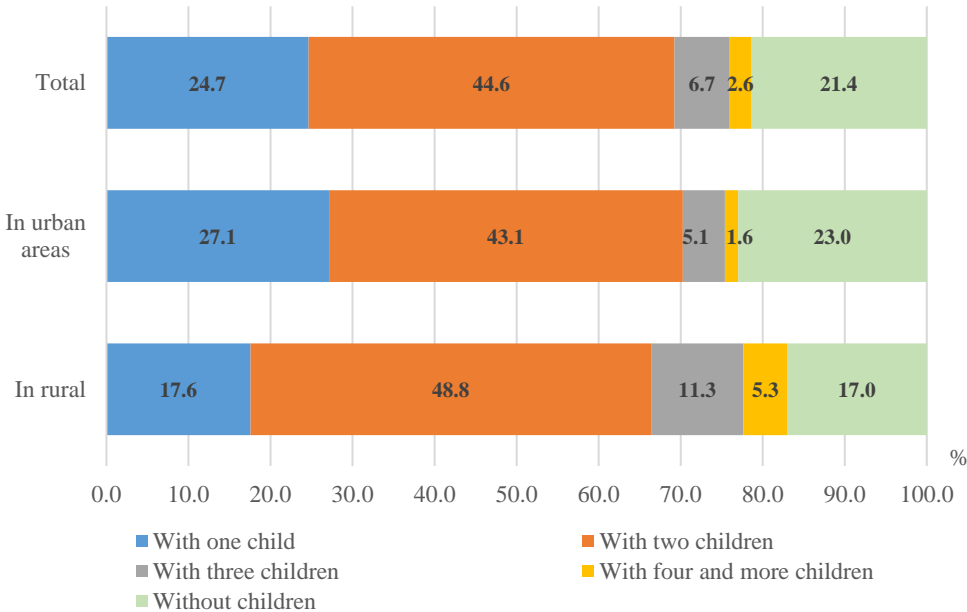
As of September 7, 2021, the average number of live births per woman aged 12 and over was 1.47. This indicator is higher in villages (1.75) than in cities (1.37).

The relationship between the age of women and the average number of children they have given birth to is directly proportional. As age increases, so does the average number of children, or women in higher age groups have already reached the desired number of children, while those in lower age groups could still increase their number of children.

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[2] Ratio of the number of live births/adopted children to the total number of women aged 12 and over.

Table 1. Average number of children by age and place of residence of the mother as of September 7, 2021

| Age	Total	In urban areas	In rural
Total	**1.47**	**1.37**	**1.75**
12 - 19	0.04	0.03	0.07
20 - 29	0.53	0.43	0.87
30 - 39	1.30	1.21	1.66
40 - 49	1.53	1.46	1.80
50 - 59	1.70	1.61	1.96
60 - 69	1.91	1.82	2.15
70 - 79	1.92	1.82	2.14
80+	1.84	1.73	2.07

The trend of increasing the educational level of the population affects the birth rate. As the educational level increases, the average number of live births decreases. Data from the latest census confirms this trend. The average number of children for women aged 12 and over with no education is the highest - 2.75 children. This indicator is similar in value for women with completed primary and lower secondary education - 1.72 and 1.63 children, respectively. The average number of children for women with tertiary education is the lowest - 1.25, with 1.47 children on average for all women

Fig. 3. Average number of children by level of completed education of the mother as of September 7, 2021
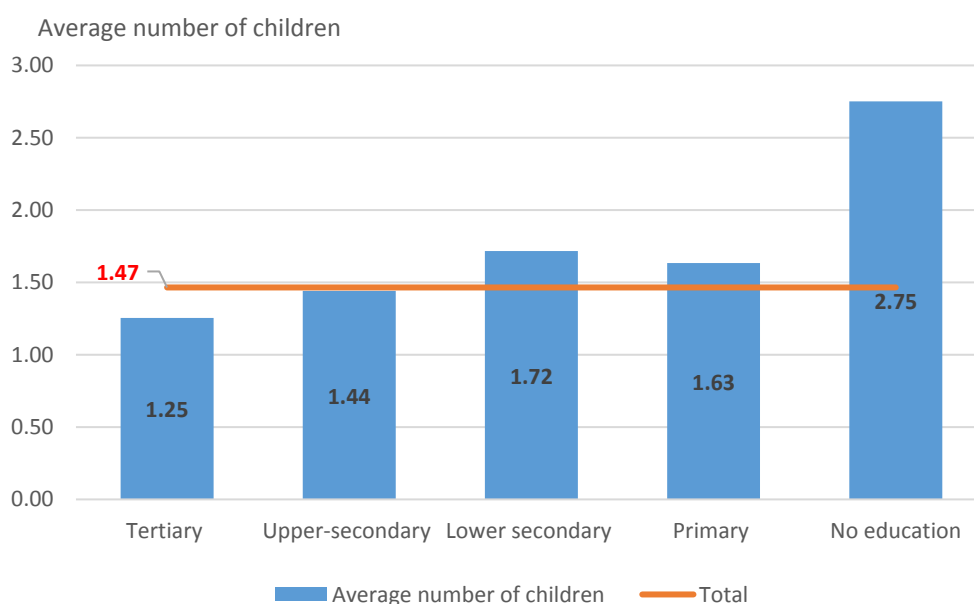
Unemployed and uneducated women aged 15 - 64 have the highest average number of children - 3.07. At the opposite pole are unemployed women with higher education with an average number of children of 0.90. In general, the average number of children is higher for unemployed women with elementary, primary and no education, while for women with higher and secondary education, the number of children is higher for employed women aged 15 - 64 years.

Fig. 4. Average number of children by degree of completed education and economic activity of the mother as of September 7, 2021
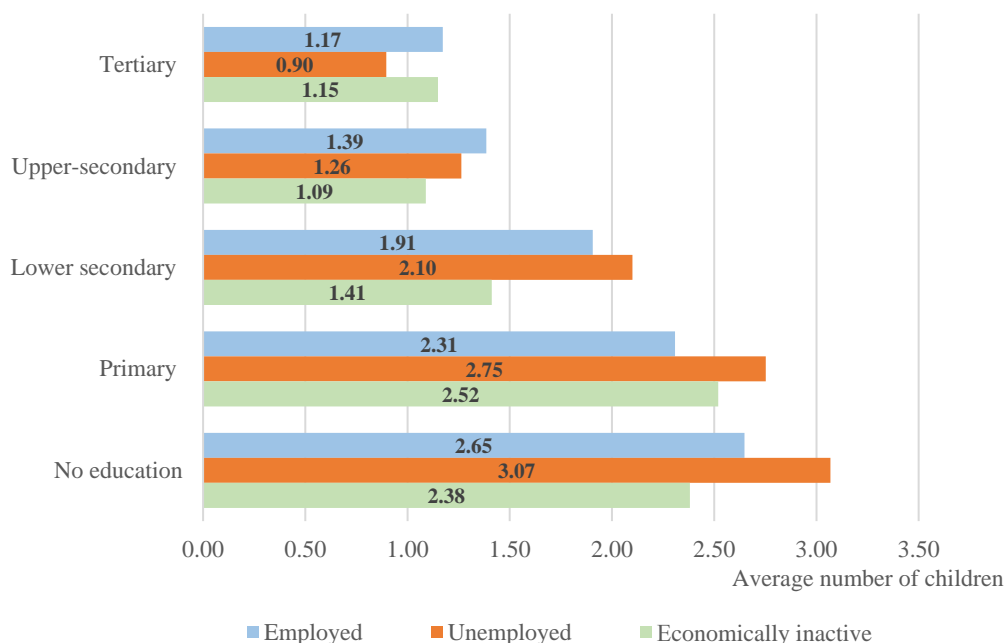
The distribution by ethnicity shows that only among women who identify themselves as belonging to the Roma ethnic group, the average number of children is sufficient for simple reproduction - 2.25 children. The significantly younger age structure and low educational level are factors that determine the higher birth rate among this group. This indicator is higher than the national average for the Turkish ethnic group - 1.79. The average number of live births for women who self-identified as belonging to the Bulgarian ethnic group is 1.41.

Fig. 5. Average number of children by ethnicity of the mother as of September 7, 2021
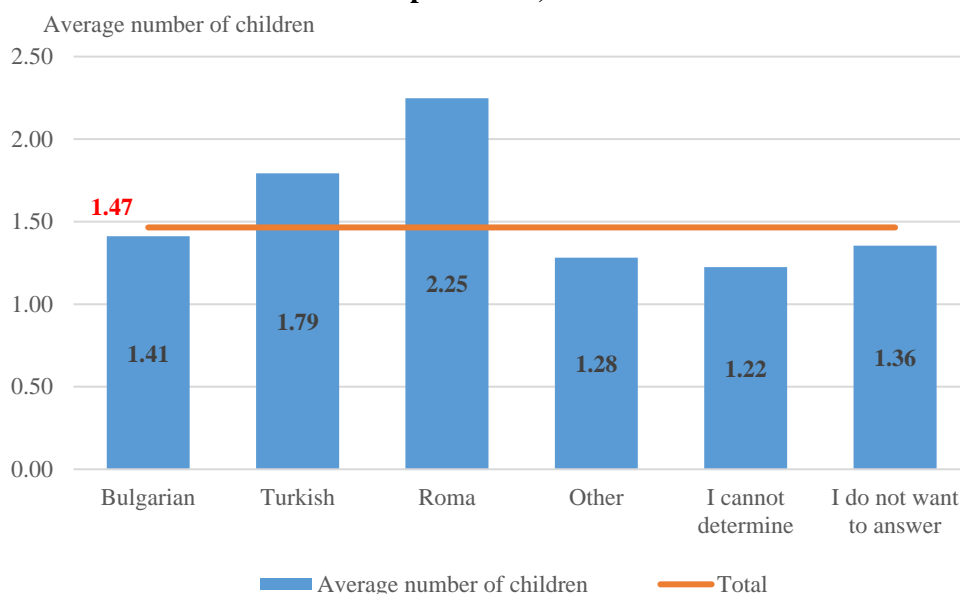
The average number of live births among women of the Roma ethnic group aged 25 - 49 is over 2.0, and that among women over 50 is over 3.0. Among women of the Turkish ethnic group, the average number of children is over 2.0 in ages 55 and over, and among the oldest women (70+) it is 2.71. Among those who self-identified as belonging to the Bulgarian ethnic group, the average number of live births

is highest (1.85) among those who are in the age group 65 - 69 years of age. Comparison with the data from the 2011 census shows a decrease in the average number of children in the older age groups for women who self-identified as Roma and Turkish ethnic groups. Therefore, it can be concluded that the birth rate is decreasing among these ethnic groups as well.

Table 2. Average number of children by age and ethnicity of the mother as of September 7, 2021

Age	Bulgarian	Turkish	Roma	Other	I cannot determine	I do not want to answer
Total	**1.41**	**1.79**	**2.25**	**1.28**	**1.22**	**1.36**
12 - 14	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
15 - 19	0.03	0.08	0.34	0.02	0.09	0.07
20 - 24	0.19	0.45	1.30	0.13	0.40	0.35
25 - 29	0.60	1.05	2.08	0.51	0.73	0.77
30 - 34	1.04	1.52	2.43	0.93	1.06	1.12
35 - 39	1.35	1.72	2.67	1.20	1.28	1.41
40 - 44	1.45	1.78	2.76	1.33	1.46	1.57
45 - 49	1.46	1.82	2.81	1.37	1.46	1.62
50 - 54	1.55	1.93	2.92	1.41	1.61	1.66
55 - 59	1.70	2.12	3.17	1.48	1.79	1.82
60 - 64	1.81	2.25	3.38	1.56	1.72	1.90
65 - 69	1.85	2.40	3.49	1.63	1.79	2.00
70+	1.82	2.71	3.55	1.80	2.02	2.00

The distribution by religion shows that the average number of live births is highest among Muslim women - 1.83 children.

Among professing Christian faiths, the average number of children is highest among Protestants - 1.82, followed by other Christian (1.63), Eastern Orthodox (1.43), Catholic (1.36) and Armenian Apostolic (1.26).

For women who indicated that they had no religion, the average number of children was 1.40.

Fig. 6. Average number of children by religion of the mother as of September 7, 2021

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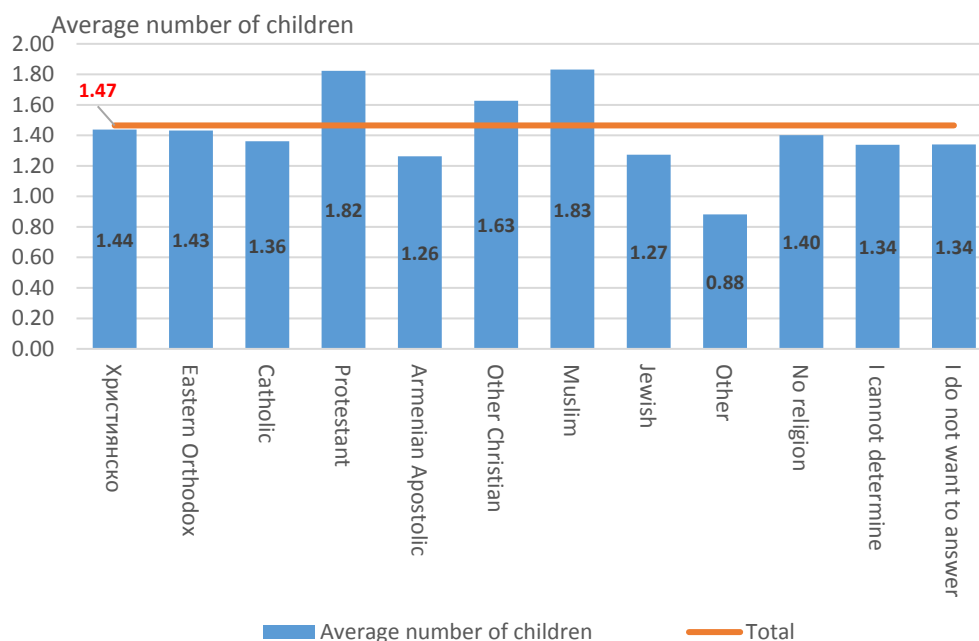
There are significant differences in the number of children between the districts. In all districts, women with two children predominate, and the relative share of women with two children varies from 53.4% for the Smolyan district to 36.1% for the Sofia (stolitsa) district.

The highest relative share of women with one child is in the district of Gabrovo (32.1%), and the lowest - in the district of Kardzhali (16.1%).

For women with three or more children, the highest relative share is in the districts of Kardzhali (21.1%), Sliven (15.5%), Targovishte (14.6%) and Razgrad (14.2%), and the lowest - in the districts of Gabrovo (6.0%)), Pernik (5.9%) and Sofia (stolitsa) - 4.6% of all women aged 12 and over in the district.

Fig. 7. Relative share of women according to the number of their children by district as of September 7, 2021
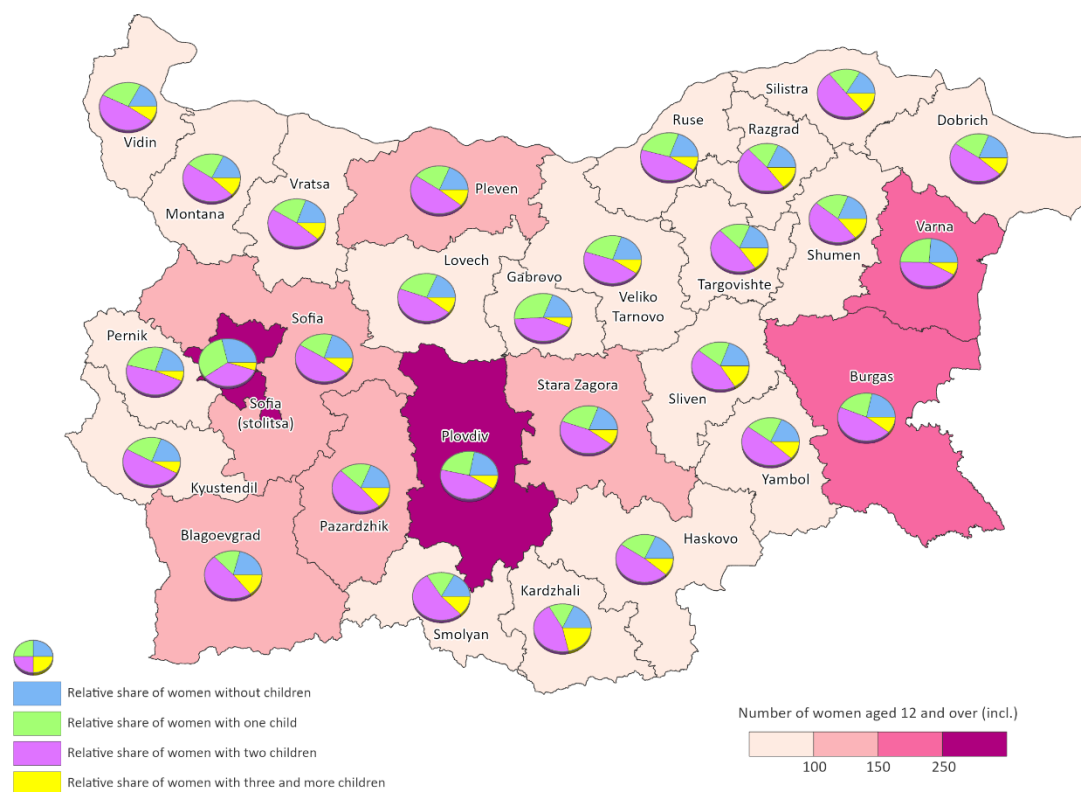
There are also differences in the average number of children by district. It is highest in the districts of Kardzhali (1.81) and Sliven (1.70). In total, in 23 districts, this indicator is above the national average (1.47). 5 districts are below the average for the country, with the lowest number of children in the Sofia district (the capital) - 1.18 children.

Fig. 8. Average number of children by district as of September 7, 2021

Number of women aged 12 and over (incl.)

100   150   250

Average number of children

Table 3. Women aged 12 and over by number of live births, place of residence and age as of September 7, 2021

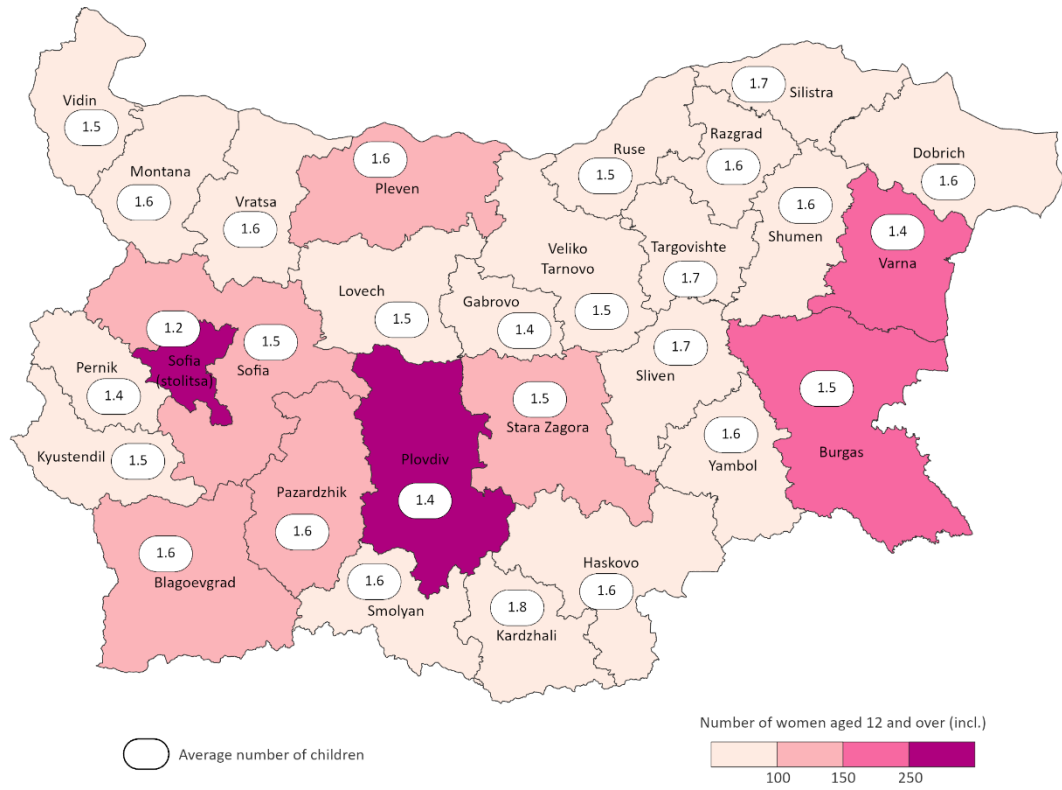| Place of residence Age | Total | Women by number of live births | | | | | Number of live births | Average number of children |
		With one child	With two children	With three children	With four and more children	Without children		
Total	**3033104**	**747717**	**1352748**	**204187**	**78382**	**650070**	**4443529**	**1.47**
12 - 14	95571	119	2	-	-	95450	123	0.00
15 - 19	138524	6329	1437	136	12	130610	9660	0.07
20 - 24	130006	16964	7215	1701	496	103630	38593	0.30
25 - 29	146236	42480	21035	4618	2132	75971	108038	0.74
30 - 34	195302	69877	55610	8547	3956	57312	225539	1.15
35 - 39	208862	70006	84064	12247	5088	37457	299890	1.44
40 - 44	230476	78687	99906	14579	6112	31192	352683	1.53
45 - 49	245484	90181	105688	14625	6235	28755	376677	1.53
50 - 54	238406	80115	113267	16074	6667	22283	387735	1.63
55 - 59	230017	57438	128647	19562	7636	16734	410543	1.78
60 - 64	249431	49896	150627	25110	9519	14279	471923	1.89
65 - 69	259130	47970	162462	27152	9545	12001	500055	1.93
70+	665659	137655	422788	59836	20984	24396	1262070	1.90
Urban areas	**2242644**	**608821**	**966782**	**115140**	**36460**	**515441**	**3061645**	**1.37**
12 - 14	71096	80	1	-	-	71015	82	0.00
15 - 19	102178	3444	757	60	4	97913	5155	0.05
20 - 24	98634	10373	3634	802	227	83598	21008	0.21
25 - 29	111961	31963	12718	2327	982	63971	68774	0.61
30 - 34	153960	57962	39989	4820	1886	49303	161224	1.05
35 - 39	165444	59079	64202	8020	2530	31613	223703	1.35
40 - 44	181938	66208	77112	9899	3032	25687	264866	1.46
45 - 49	191241	75470	79783	9662	3184	23142	279582	1.46
50 - 54	179477	66985	81987	9837	3310	17358	276588	1.54
55 - 59	169011	48173	92909	11416	3744	12769	286185	1.69
60 - 64	181251	41708	109122	14579	4896	10946	326848	1.80
65 - 69	184816	39702	116355	14861	4636	9262	338965	1.83
70+	451637	107674	288213	28857	8029	18864	808665	1.79
Rural areas	**790460**	**138896**	**385966**	**89047**	**41922**	**134629**	**1381884**	**1.75**
12 - 14	24475	39	1	-	-	24435	41	0.00
15 - 19	36346	2885	680	76	8	32697	4505	0.12
20 - 24	31372	6591	3581	899	269	20032	17585	0.56
25 - 29	34275	10517	8317	2291	1150	12000	39264	1.15
30 - 34	41342	11915	15621	3727	2070	8009	64315	1.56
35 - 39	43418	10927	19862	4227	2558	5844	76187	1.75
40 - 44	48538	12479	22794	4680	3080	5505	87817	1.81
45 - 49	54243	14711	25905	4963	3051	5613	97095	1.79
50 - 54	58929	13130	31280	6237	3357	4925	111147	1.89
55 - 59	61006	9265	35738	8146	3892	3965	124358	2.04
60 - 64	68180	8188	41505	10531	4623	3333	145075	2.13
65 - 69	74314	8268	46107	12291	4909	2739	161090	2.17
70+	214022	29981	134575	30979	12955	5532	453405	2.12

Table 4. Women aged 12 and over by number of live births, place of residence and degree of completed education as of September 7, 2021

Place of residence Education	Total	Women by number of live births					Number of live births	Average number of children
		With one child	With two children	With three children	With four and more children	Without children		
Total	**3033104**	**747717**	**1352748**	**204187**	**78382**	**650070**	**4443529**	**1.47**
Higher	932127	321788	380117	26027	2039	202156	1168726	1.25
Secondary	1366808	342093	685393	68824	11323	259175	1969237	1.44
Elementary	526811	67909	238990	72994	29821	117097	904153	1.72
Primary	151263	10656	35591	23936	18871	62209	247068	1.63
No education	56095	5271	12657	12406	16328	9433	154345	2.75
Urban areas	**2242644**	**608821**	**966782**	**115140**	**36460**	**515441**	**3061645**	**1.37**
Higher	832257	292811	335023	22414	1705	180304	1037289	1.25
Secondary	1025888	271205	497413	46821	7261	203188	1438333	1.40
Elementary	275163	36766	112510	30807	12775	82305	413945	1.50
Primary	82698	5324	15644	9401	7449	44880	101591	1.23
No education	26638	2715	6192	5697	7270	4764	70487	2.65
Rural areas	**790460**	**138896**	**385966**	**89047**	**41922**	**134629**	**1381884**	**1.75**
Higher	99870	28977	45094	3613	334	21852	131437	1.32
Secondary	340920	70888	187980	22003	4062	55987	530904	1.56
Elementary	251648	31143	126480	42187	17046	34792	490208	1.95
Primary	68565	5332	19947	14535	11422	17329	145477	2.12
No education	29457	2556	6465	6709	9058	4669	83858	2.85

Table 5. Women aged 12 and over by number of live births, place of residence and ethnicity as of September 7, 2021

Place of residence Ethnicity	Total	Women by number of live births					Number of live births	Average number of children
		With one child	With two children	With three children	With four and more children	Without children		
Total	**3033104**	**747717**	**1352748**	**204187**	**78382**	**650070**	**4443529**	**1.47**
Bulgarian	2445276	643539	1131169	128970	34068	507530	3451820	1.41
Turkish	231229	37029	101702	34930	14756	42812	414564	1.79
Roma	107035	13870	29652	20555	20547	22411	240614	2.25
Other	38927	7151	13628	3486	1120	13542	49907	1.28
I cannot determine	5466	921	1545	482	254	2264	6695	1.22
I do not want to answer	27267	5811	9676	2233	1040	8507	36947	1.36
Nonindicated	177904	39396	65376	13531	6597	53004	242982	1.37
Urban areas	**2242644**	**608821**	**966782**	**115140**	**36460**	**515441**	**3061645**	**1.37**
Bulgarian	1903572	538172	843364	81423	16990	423623	2547147	1.34
Turkish	88440	17479	37258	10328	4330	19045	143332	1.62
Roma	56234	7747	16684	10706	9601	11496	121792	2.17
Other	22999	5088	7551	1223	306	8831	25242	1.10
I cannot determine	3260	636	844	210	85	1485	3367	1.03
I do not want to answer	19458	4647	6706	1173	422	6510	23604	1.21
Nonindicated	148681	35052	54375	10077	4726	44451	197161	1.33
Rural areas	**790460**	**138896**	**385966**	**89047**	**41922**	**134629**	**1381884**	**1.75**
Bulgarian	541704	105367	287805	47547	17078	83907	904673	1.67
Turkish	142789	19550	64444	24602	10426	23767	271232	1.90
Roma	50801	6123	12968	9849	10946	10915	118822	2.34
Other	15928	2063	6077	2263	814	4711	24665	1.55
I cannot determine	2206	285	701	272	169	779	3328	1.51
I do not want to answer	7809	1164	2970	1060	618	1997	13343	1.71
Nonindicated	29223	4344	11001	3454	1871	8553	45821	1.57

Table 6. Women aged 12 and over by number of live births and districts as of September 7, 2021

Districts	Total	Women by number of live births					Number of live births	Average number of children
		With one child	With two children	With three children	With four and more children	Without children		
Total for the country	**3033104**	**747717**	**1352748**	**204187**	**78382**	**650070**	**4443529**	**1.47**
Blagoevgrad	133816	22841	65162	13920	4267	27626	214805	1.61
Burgas	175180	39868	80702	12178	4989	37443	261869	1.49
Varna	199687	52206	84971	11484	3726	47300	274198	1.37
Veliko Turnovo	97942	25541	45087	6127	2277	18910	144996	1.48
Vidin	35852	9373	17149	2244	1010	6076	55338	1.54
Vratsa	70502	15863	33600	5182	2391	13466	110343	1.57
Gabrovo	47410	15197	20399	2170	698	8946	65773	1.39
Dobrich	70799	15993	33993	5419	2253	13141	110973	1.57
Kardzhali	65173	10524	29430	9345	4386	11488	118226	1.81
Kyustendil	52809	12492	26578	2969	831	9939	78525	1.49
Lovech	54084	14398	24539	3382	1900	9865	83261	1.54
Montana	55858	13364	26454	4171	2180	9689	89614	1.60
Pazardzhik	106002	21201	51490	9797	3892	19622	172120	1.62
Pernik	53776	14457	25579	2477	714	10549	76408	1.42
Pleven	105862	24079	51609	7303	3442	19429	166197	1.57
Plovdiv	296157	74067	133202	18032	6575	64281	426406	1.44
Razgrad	48363	9484	23423	5186	1658	8612	79694	1.65
Ruse	92059	24835	42100	5710	1863	17551	134933	1.47
Silistra	45722	9234	23167	4425	1554	7342	76269	1.67
Sliven	76967	15971	34380	7034	4864	14718	130689	1.70
Smolyan	46035	8173	24575	4494	1115	7678	75877	1.65
Sofia	106051	23537	51280	7379	2952	20903	162392	1.53
Sofia (stolitsa)	595953	181220	215290	22437	5155	171851	703179	1.18
Stara Zagora	137246	35695	62599	8777	4217	25958	208055	1.52
Targovishte	45496	8976	21569	4746	1895	8310	75299	1.66
Haskovo	97924	22894	47256	7309	3044	17421	154044	1.57
Shumen	70305	14920	32878	6863	2622	13022	113569	1.62
Yambol	50074	11314	24287	3627	1912	8934	80477	1.61