



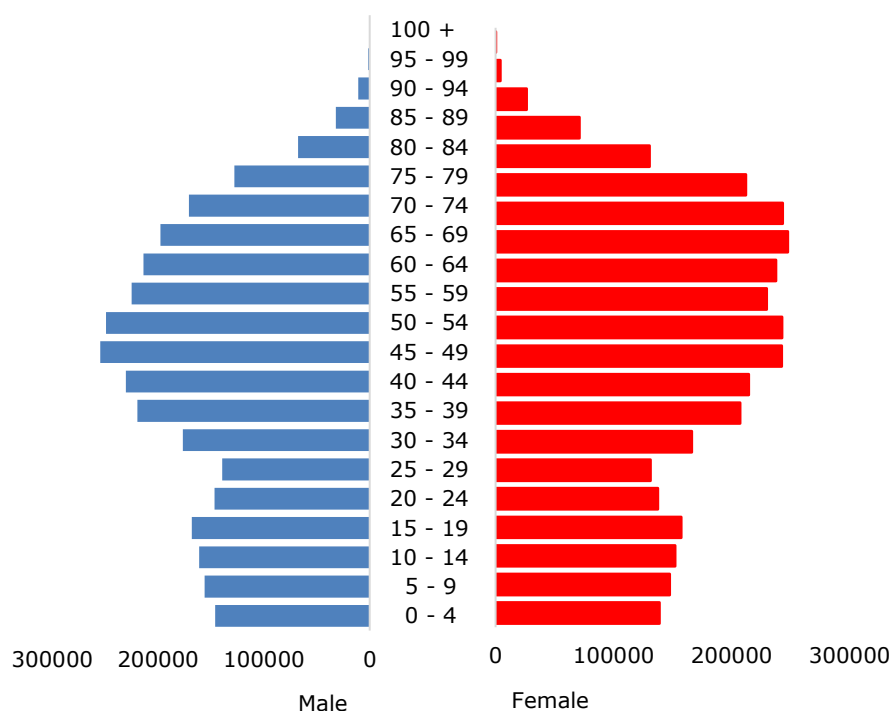
POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES IN 2024

Population number and structures

As of December 31, 2024, the population of Bulgaria was 6 437 360 persons. Compared to 2023, the country's population had decreased by 8 121 persons, or by 0.13%.

Male population was 3 095 140 (48.1%) and female - 3 342 220 (51.9%), or 1 000 males corresponded to 1 080 females. Males prevail among the population, aged up to 55 years (including). The number and share of females in the total population had increased among the elderly.

Figure 1. Age structure of the population as of 31.12.2024



By the end of 2024, the number of persons aged 65 and over was 1 544 245, or 24.0% of the country's population. The share of persons aged 65 and over was highest in districts Vidin (31.4%), Gabrovo (30.5%) and Smolyan (30.0%). The lowest was the share of the elderly population in districts Sofia (stolitsa) - 19.2%, Varna - 21.6%, and Sliven - 22.5%.

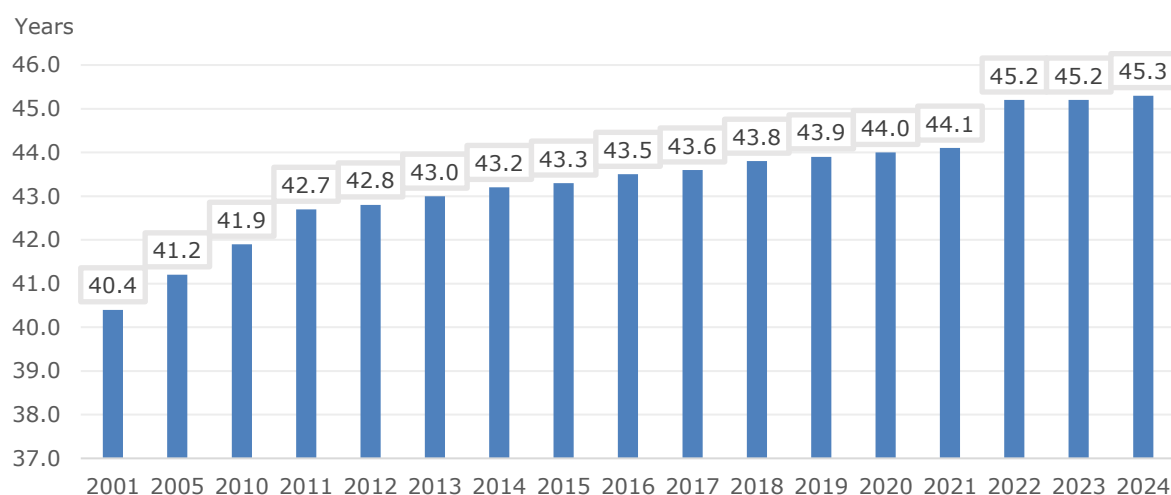
As of 31.12.2024, **children up to 15 years of age in the country were 901 843, or 14.0% of the total population number.**

The share of the population under 15 years of age was highest in districts Sliven - 18.8%, Yambol - 15.2%, and Plovdiv - 14.7% of the district population. The lowest was the share registered in districts Smolyan - 10.3%, Vidin - 11.4%, and Gabrovo - 11.6%.

As of 31.12.2024, **the age dependency ratio¹** in the country was **61.3%**. The lowest was the ratio in districts Sofia (stolitsa) - 51.2%, and the highest was in Vidin - 74.9%.

The population ageing over the years lead to an increase of the population **mean age**. It has increased to **45.3 years at the end of 2024**. The mean age of the population is 44.5 years in urban areas, compared to 47.6 years in rural areas.

Figure 2. Mean age of the population



The number of population and relative share of population **under, at and over working age changes**. The last two are influenced not only by the population ageing, but also by legislative changes² concerning the retirement age.

In 2024, at working age were women up to completion of 62 years and 2 months and men up to completion of 64 years and 7 months. **The number of the population at working age as of 31.12.2024 was 3 765 thousand persons, or 58.5%** of the total population, of which males were 1 970 thousand and females - 1 795 thousand persons. By the end of 2024, the number of the population over working age was 1 701 thousand persons, or 26.4%, and under working age were 971 thousand persons, or 15.1% of the country's population.

Territorial distribution of population

As of 31.12.2024, 4 744 111, or 73.7% of the total country's population, resided in urban areas and 1 693 249, or 26.3% - in rural ones.

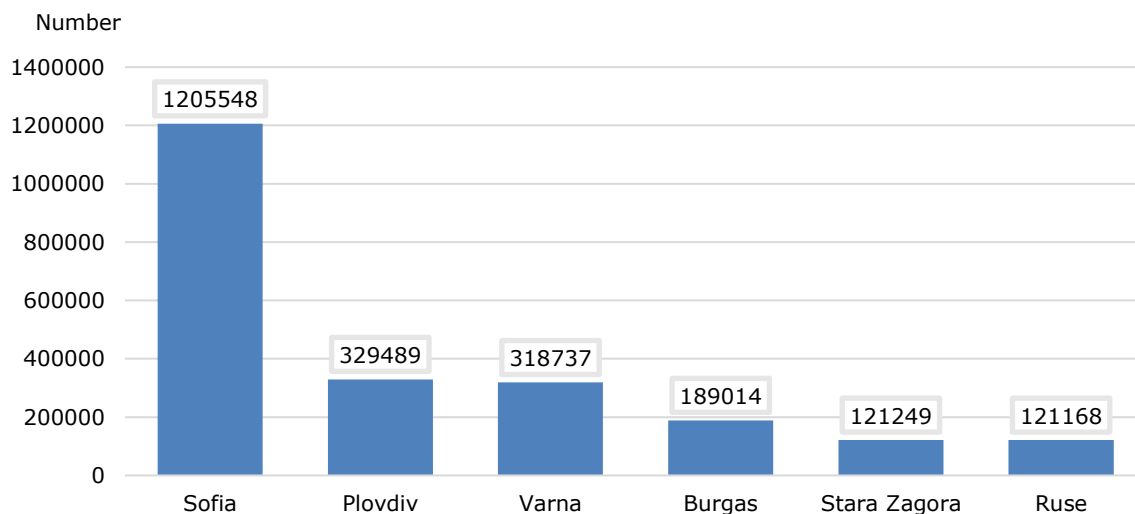
¹ Number of persons in 'dependent' ages (persons under 15 years of age and 65 and more) per 100 persons in 'independent' ages (persons aged 15 to 64 years) calculated in percentage.

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).

There were 5 256 settlements in Bulgaria by the end of 2024, of which 257 – towns, and 4 999 – villages. There were 199 settlements without population.

There were six towns with a population above 100 thousand persons and 35.5% of the country's population lived there.

Figure 3. Towns with more than 100 000 inhabitants as of 31.12.2024



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

Statistical regions

Half of the country's population (51.7%) in 2024 lived in Yugozapaden and Yuzhen tsentralen regions. The smallest, according to the population number, was the Severozapaden region - 655 thousand persons, or 10.2% of the country's population.

The population number decreased compared to 2023 in two statistical regions - Severozapaden region - by 1.3%, and Severen tsentralen - by 1.0%.

1. Population by statistical region as of 31.12.2024

Statistical region	Population as of 31.12.2024 - in numbers	Population as of 31.12.2024 - %	Population growth - in numbers	Population growth - %
Severozapaden	655430	10.2	-8594	-1.3
Severen tsentralen	673331	10.5	-7028	-1.0
Severoiztochen	826742	12.8	608	0.1
Yugoiztochen	952383	14.8	1216	0.1
Yugozapaden	2022982	31.4	3815	0.2
Yuzhen tsentralen	1306492	20.3	1862	0.1

Districts

The lowest was the number of the population in district Vidin - 70 542 persons, or 1.1% of the country's population, and the highest was in district Sofia (stolitsa) - 1 295 931 persons (20.1%). Four districts had a population above 300 thousand persons - Sofia (stolitsa), Plovdiv, Varna and Burgas.

2. Population by districts as of 31.12.2024

Districts	Population as of 31.12.2024 - in numbers	Population as of 31.12.2024 - %	Population growth - in numbers	Population growth - %
Total	6437360	100	-8121	-0.1
Blagoevgrad	286333	4.4	-744	-0.3
Burgas	388919	6.0	4473	1.2
Varna	437521	6.8	3330	0.8
Veliko Tarnovo	200413	3.1	-1819	-0.9
Vidin	70542	1.1	-1231	-1.7
Vratsa	146002	2.3	-1617	-1.1
Gabrovo	93817	1.5	-1045	-1.1
Dobrich	145207	2.3	-1428	-1.0
Kardzhali	149478	2.3	2916	2.0
Kyustendil	106131	1.6	-1542	-1.4
Lovech	110823	1.7	-1402	-1.2
Montana	112737	1.8	-1789	-1.6
Pazardzhik	223494	3.5	-1767	-0.8
Pernik	109886	1.7	-1146	-1.0
Pleven	215326	3.3	-2555	-1.2
Plovdiv	635630	9.9	2044	0.3
Razgrad	99459	1.5	-1237	-1.2
Ruse	186093	2.9	-1737	-0.9
Silistra	93549	1.5	-1190	-1.3
Sliven	169299	2.6	-752	-0.4
Smolyan	90534	1.4	-1573	-1.7
Sofia	224701	3.5	-1719	-0.8
Sofia (stolitsa)	1295931	20.1	8966	0.7
Stara Zagora	288736	4.5	-1614	-0.6
Targovishte	94735	1.5	-874	-0.9
Haskovo	207356	3.2	242	0.1
Shumen	149279	2.3	-420	-0.3
Yambol	105429	1.6	-891	-0.8

Compared to 2023, the population had increased in six districts. The highest was the increase in districts Kardzhali - by 2.0%, and Burgas - by 1.2%. The highest decrease was observed in Vidin and Smolyan districts - by 1.7% each.

Municipalities

The distribution of population by municipalities in 2024 was not equal. There were 81 municipalities with a population below 6 000, and hardly 4.4% of the population lived there. At the same time, there were eight municipalities with a population over 100 thousand people and 41.1% of the country's population lived there. The highest was the number of the population of municipality Stolichna (1 295 931 persons), followed by Plovdiv (329 489 persons) and Varna (327 424 persons). The lowest was the number of the population of municipality Treklyano - 522 persons.

3. Municipalities according to the population number as of 31.12.2024

Size of municipality	Municipalities		Population	
	Number	%	Number	%
Total	265	100.0	6437360	100.0
Up to 5999	81	30.6	286311	4.4
6000 - 19999	123	46.4	1362606	21.2
20000 - 49999	41	15.5	1294238	20.1
50000 - 99999	12	4.5	846637	13.2
100000 and more	8	3.0	2647568	41.1

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

Fertility

There were 53 727 children born in 2024, of which **53 428 (99.4%) - live-born**. The number of live births decreased by 3 769 children, or 6.6% compared to the previous year.

The crude birth rate¹ in 2024 was 8.3‰.

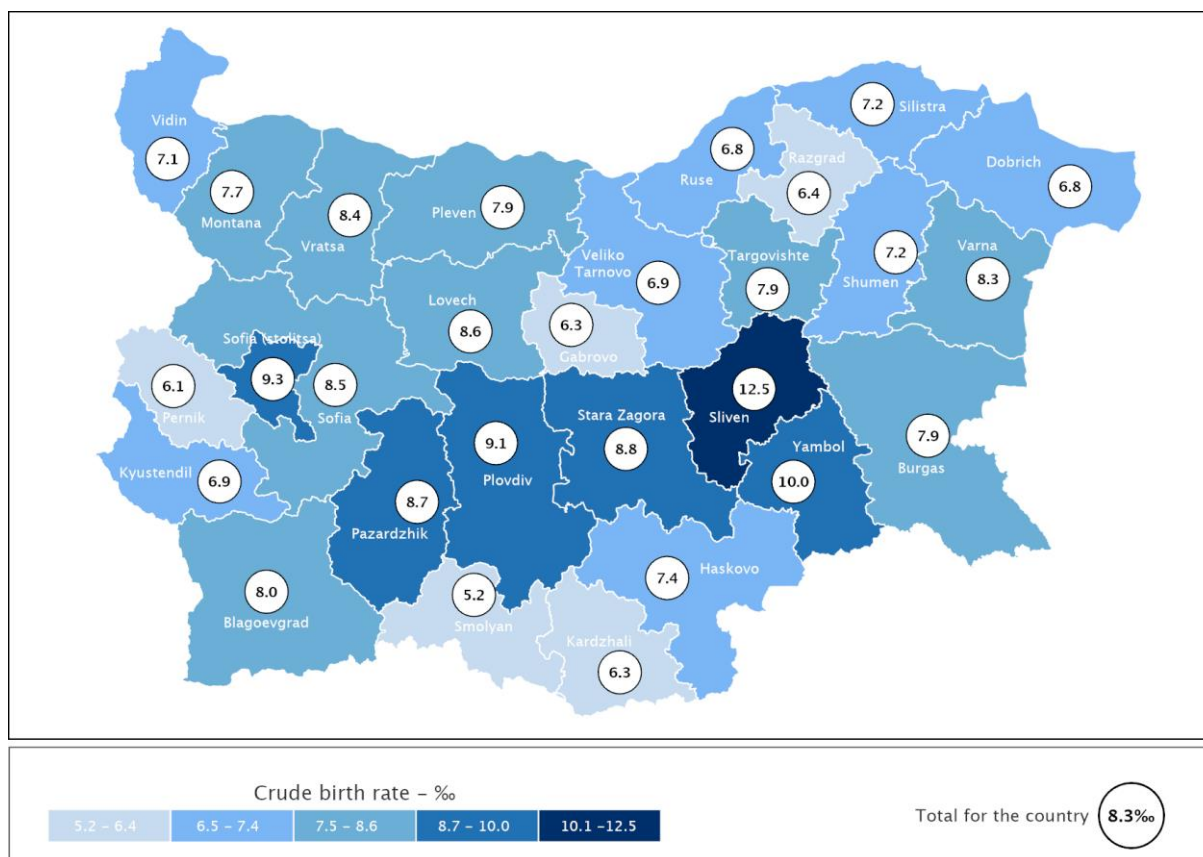
The number of live-born males (27 377) was by 1 326 higher compared to the live-born females (26 051), or 952 females correspond to 1 000 born males.

The number of live-born children in urban areas was 39 483 and in rural - 13 945. The crude birth rate in urban areas was 8.3‰ and in rural - 8.2‰.

In Bulgaria, the highest was the crude birth rate in the districts Sliven - 12.5‰, and Yambol - 10.0‰. The crude birth rate was the lowest in districts Smolyan - 5.2‰, and Pernik - 6.1‰.

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

Figure 4. Crude birth rate by district in 2024



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

The number of women in fertile age as of 31.12.2024 was 1 257 thousand. It had decreased by 12 thousand compared to the previous year.

The number of live-born children born by mothers aged below 18 years increased from 2 753 in 2023 to 2 817 in 2024. The number of live-born children born by mothers of age 40 and more years decreased from 2 641 in 2023 to 2 528 in 2024.

Total fertility rate (TFR)¹ is one of the basic indicators characterising the fertility. **The average number of live-born children per woman in 2024 was 1.72.**

The mean age of women at first birth was 27.6 in 2024. The mean age of women at first birth had varied between 22.1 in Sliven district to 30.9 in Sofia (stolitsa) district.

There were 926 multi-foetal births registered in 2024. In 914 of the cases, two children were born, in 12 - three children.

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. The total fertility rate, calculated on the basis of the fertile contingent of women, which includes women aged 15 - 49 years of age.

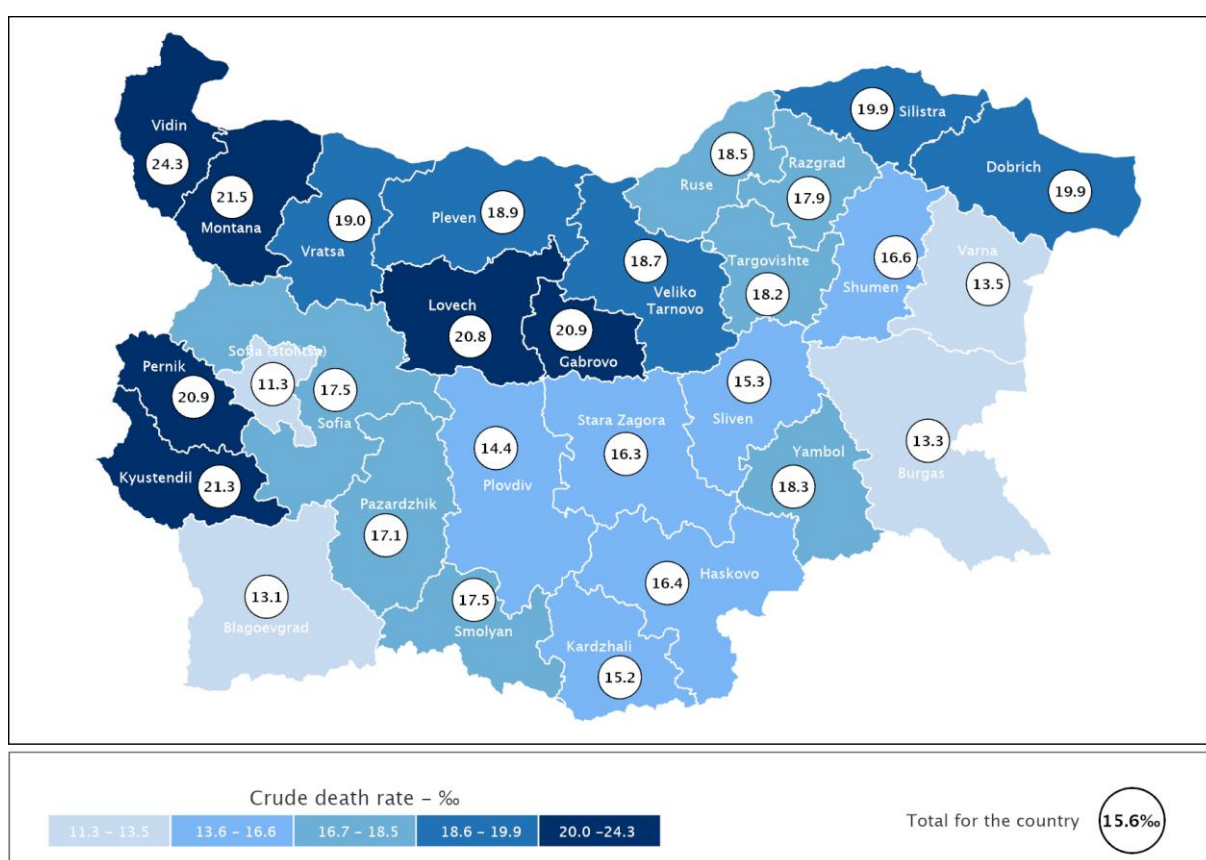
Mortality

The number of deaths in 2024 was 100 736 and the crude mortality rate¹ - 15.6‰. Compared to the previous year, the number of deaths had decreased by 270, or by 0.3%.

Mortality among males (16.8‰) continues to be higher than among females (14.6‰). In 2024, there were 1 064 deaths of males per 1 000 deaths of females.

The mortality rate in rural areas (20.7‰) was higher than in urban ones (13.8‰). In regional aspect, the highest mortality rate was in the districts Vidin - 24.3‰, Montana - 21.5‰, and Kyustendil - 21.3‰. The lowest was in Sofia (stolitsa) - 11.3‰.

Figure 5. Crude death rate by district in 2024



The premature mortality² in 2024 (20.2%) had slightly increased compared to 2023 (20.1%). There were considerable differences in the premature mortality indicator for male and female population. The dead females aged under 65 years represented 13.0% of all dead females, while among the males it was 27.0%.

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

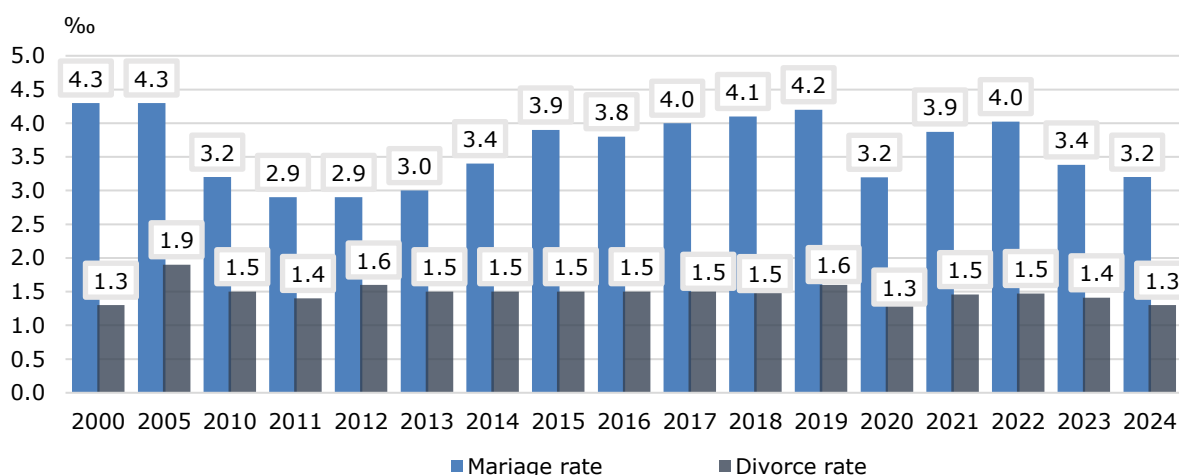
² Share of deaths of persons below 65 years of age of the total number of deaths.

238 children up to 1 year of age died in 2024 and the infant mortality rate¹ was 4.5‰. The infant mortality rate was 7.6‰ in 2014 and 4.9‰ in 2023.

Marriages and divorces

There were 20 643 juridical marriages registered in 2024, or 1 157 less than the previous year. The marriage rate² was 3.2‰. Nearly three quarters of the total marriages number (15 210) were registered among the urban population.

Figure 6. Marriage and divorce rates (per 1 000 population)



The mean age at first marriage in 2024 was 33.8 for males and 30.9 years for females. Compared to the previous year, the mean age at first marriage had increased by 0.4 years for males and 0.5 for females. 83.8% of females and 83.6% of males had married for the first time in 2024. The most marriages per 1 000 people of the population were registered in districts Sofia (stolitsa) and Razgrad - by 3.9‰ each. The marriage rate was the lowest in district Vidin - 2.4‰.

The number of divorces in 2024 was 8 650, or 438 less than the registered in 2023. The highest is the number of divorces by 'mutual agreement' (67.0%), followed by divorces due to 'incompatibility of temperament' (20.2%) and 'virtual parting' (11.8%). The average duration of a marriage before the divorce in 2024 was 15.2 years.

Internal migration

96 833 persons changed their residence within the country in 2024. Among the migrants within the country, 44.6% were males and 55.4% - females.

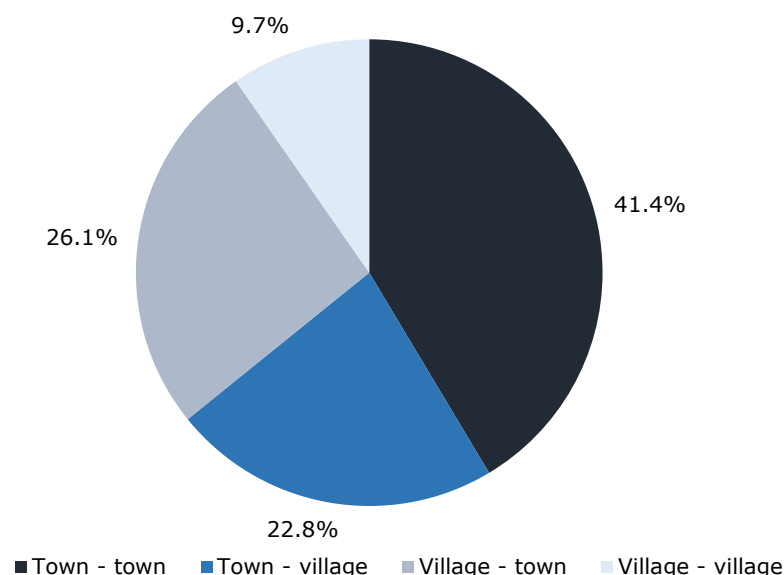
The share of internal migrants in the age group 0 - 14 years was 18.1%, persons aged 15 - 64 years - 63.9%, and persons aged 65 years and over - 18.0% of all internally migrated persons.

¹ Number of children who die up to 1 year of age per 1 000 live born.

² Number of marriages per 1 000 population.

The share of the flow 'town-town' was the highest one (41.4%), followed by the flow 'village-town' (26.1%) and 'town-village' (22.8%). Considerably lower were the number and share of the flow 'village - village' (9.7%).

Figure 7. Directions of the internal migration in 2024



International migration

13 002 persons changed their current address in Bulgaria with an address abroad in 2024 - 55.1% males. The emigrants aged 0 - 14 were 7.7%, those aged 15 - 64 years were 82.7% and emigrants over 65 years of age - 9.6%. The most preferred destination countries were Germany (16.9%), the United Kingdom (13.9%) and France (8.9%).

Persons, who changed their address abroad with an address in Bulgaria, or the immigration flow, included Bulgarian citizens who have returned to Bulgaria and citizens of other countries granted residence permits or status in Bulgaria. **There were 52 189 persons who changed their address abroad with an address in Bulgaria in 2024** of which 51.5% were citizens of countries outside the European Union, 34.9% had Bulgarian citizenship, and 13.6% were citizens of EU countries. Males represented 55.9% of the total number of immigrants and females - 44.1%.

Among the immigrants to Bulgaria, 16.0% were in the age group 0 - 14 years, persons aged 15 - 64 years were 72.9% and the oldest, persons aged 65 years and over - 11.1%. The highest was the share of immigrants from Türkiye (21.8%), Ukraine (16.6%) and Syria (10.5%).

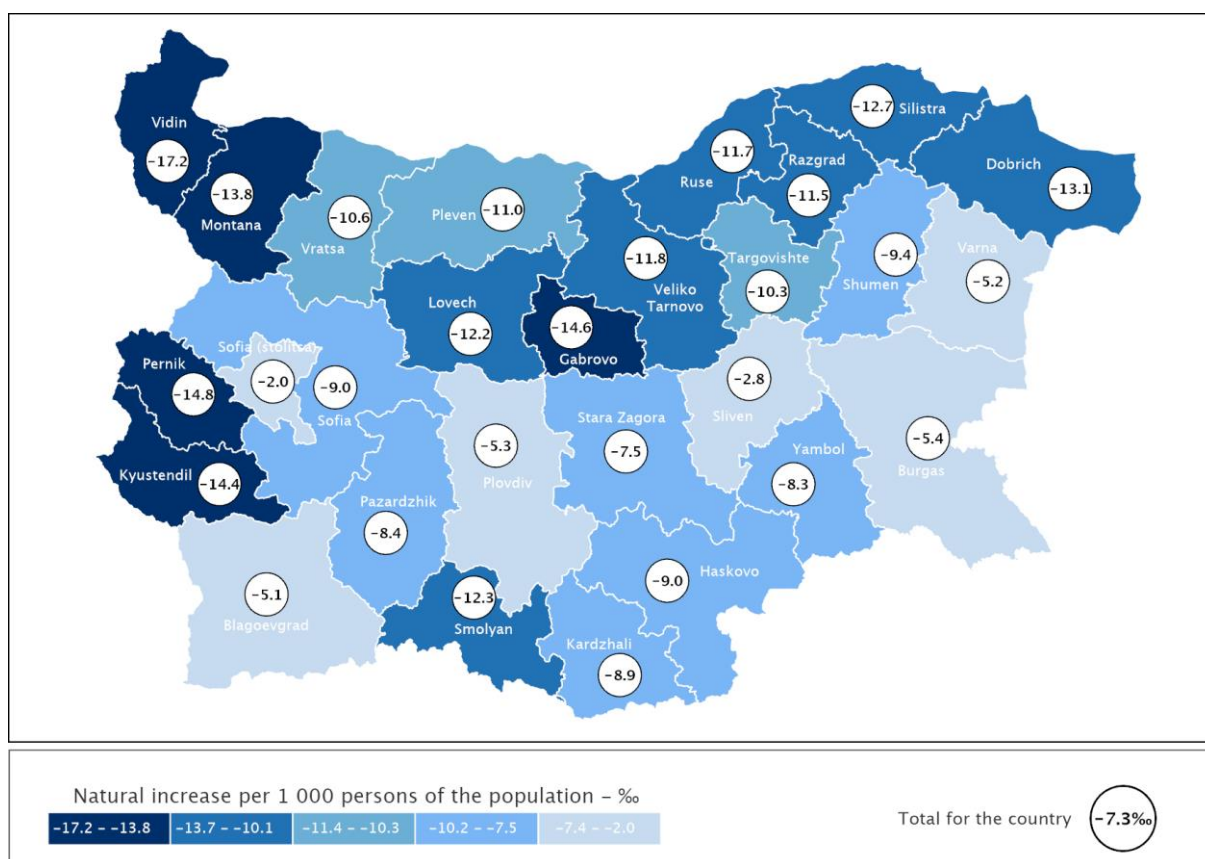
Population natural and migration growth

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's population decreased by 47 308 persons in 2024.**

The population decrease, **measured through the natural increase rate, was minus 7.3‰¹**. The natural increase rate in urban areas was minus 5.5‰, compared to minus 12.5‰ in rural areas.

Figure 8. Natural growth by districts in 2024
(per 1 000 persons of the population)



The natural increase in all of the country's districts in 2024 was negative. The lowest was the negative growth in the districts Sofia (stolitsa) (-2.0‰), Sliven (-2.8‰) and Blagoevgrad (-5.1‰). The highest was the population decrease due to the high negative growth in the district Vidin - minus 17.2‰, followed by Pernik - minus 14.8‰, and Gabrovo - minus 14.6‰.

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

Net migration (growth due to international migration) influences considerably the population number and structures. The net migration growth in 2024 was positive - plus 39 187 persons - the difference between the number of immigrants and the number of emigrants.

The decrease of population due to the international migration measured through the coefficient of net migration was +6.0‰¹.

In 2024, highest migration growth was registered in Kardzhali (28.6‰), Burgas (17.0‰) and Varna (12.9‰). Highest population decrease due to the negative migration growth was registered in districts Smolyan (-5.0‰) and Montana (-1.9‰).

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

Methodological notes

The population number and structures by the end of the year are calculated based on the population data for the preceding year and data on the population's natural and migration movement during the reference year. In the census years, recalculation of the population is done as of the end of the respective year.

For calculation of the demographic indicators average annual population number is used. The average annual population is an average value calculated on the bases of population at the end of the previous year and at the end of the reported year.

The source of the data on population number and structures is the Statistical Register of the Population maintained by NSI. Data source on natural and migration movement of population (births, deaths, marriages, divorces, migration) is the Unified System for Civil Registration and Administrative Services of the 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 sources on international migration are the Unified System for Civil Registration and Administrative Services of the 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 the population by the end of the 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 the respective event, i.e., the age completed at the time of the event.