

POPULATION AS OF SEPTEMBER 7, 2021

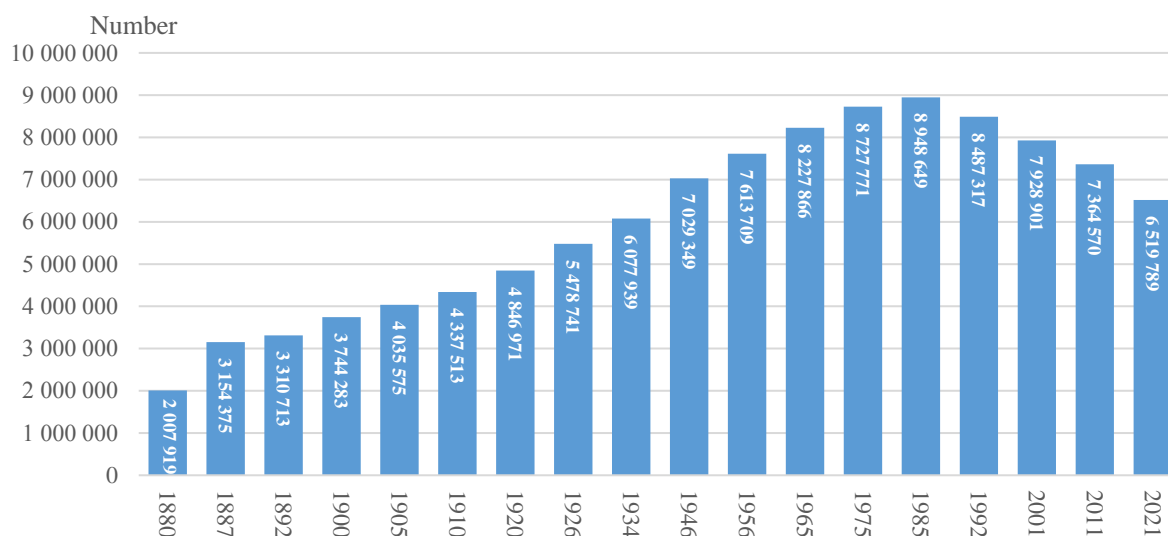
Final data

The 18th Population and Housing Census in Bulgaria was held from September 7 until October 10, 2021. We conduct censuses every ten years to present a detailed picture of the population and the conditions in which it lives, and although it is a snapshot as of a certain moment, it shows how we change during the decades between the censuses.

Number and growth of the population

The population of the country as of September 7, 2021, is 6 519 789. Women are 3 383 527 (51.9%), and men are 3 136 262 (48.1%), or there are 927 men per 1 000 women.

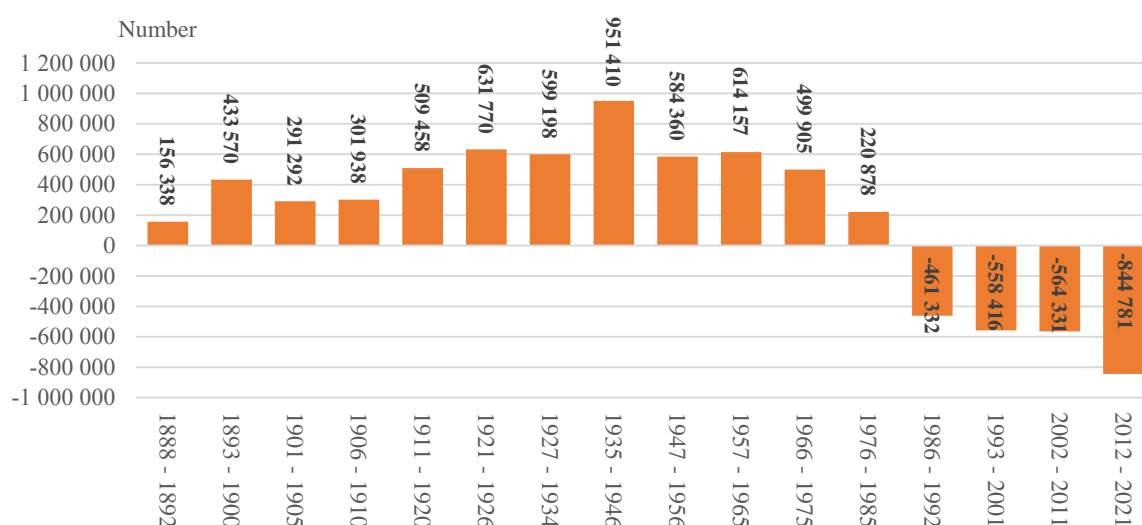
Figure 1. Population by census years



During the period between the last two censuses, the population of the country decreased by 844 781 people, or 11.5%. The results show that the average annual rate of decrease per year increased from 0.7 in the period 2001 - 2011 to 1.2 in the period 2011 - 2021.

The factors which influence the number of the population of the country are the natural movement (births and deaths) and the external migration.

Figure 2. Population growth between the censuses



The population decrease as a result of the negative natural growth is -501 thousand, or 59.3% of the total decrease. The natural growth for all years of the period between the censuses in 2011 and 2021 is negative, while the greatest is the population decrease in 2021 (-90 317 people).

The remaining 40.7% of the decrease is due to external migration, or the number of people who left the country during the period 2011 - 2021 (344 thousand people).

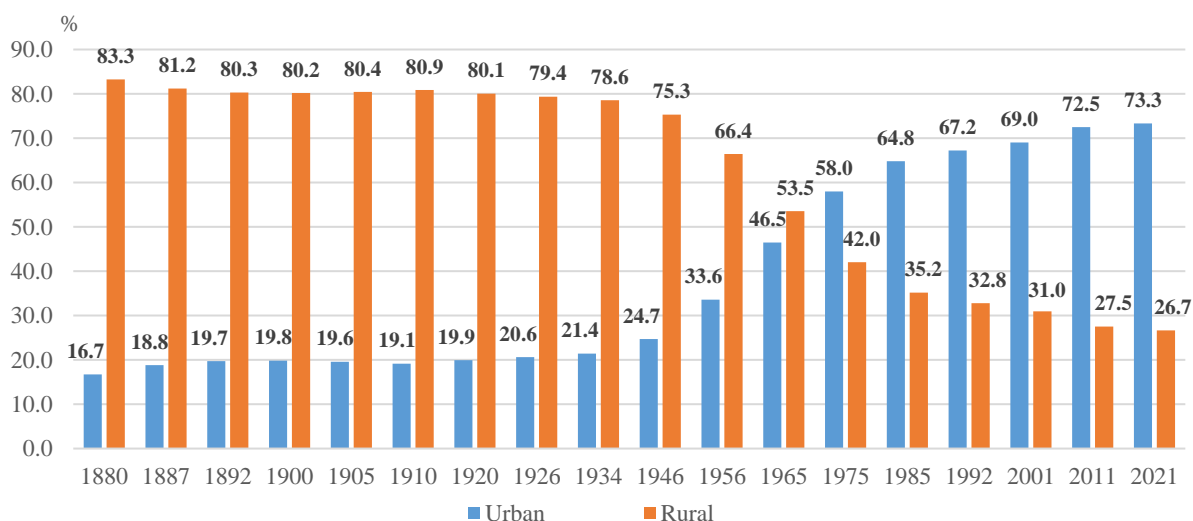
Territorial distribution of the population

The territorial distribution of the population is determined both by its natural movement (births and deaths) and by external migration, as well as internal migration and changes in the administrative and territorial structure of the country.

As of September 7, 2021, the settlements in the country number 5 257, of which 257 are towns and 5 000 are villages. 4 782 064 people live in the towns, or 73.3%, and 1 737 725 people live in the villages, or 26.7% of the population of the country.

During the period between the two censuses, the population in the towns decreased by 556 thousand, or 10.4%, and in the villages - by 289 thousand (14.2%).

Figure 3. Relative share of the population in the towns and villages by years of censuses



Six towns in the country (Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna, Burgas, Ruse and Stara Zagora) have a population of over 100 thousand people, where 34.5% of the population of the country lives, or every third person. The smallest town is Melnik, with a population of 161 people, and the greatest village is Lozen, with a population of 6 471 people.

The unpopulated settlements are 199. The greatest is their number in the regions of Gabrovo, Veliko Turnovo and Kyustendil - respectively 69, 64 and 11.

The greatest is the number of settlements with a population of 1 to 199 people - 2 561.

1. Distribution of the settlements by number of its population as of September 7, 2021

Size of the settlement	Settlements (number)	Population (number)
0	199	0
1 - 199	2561	176288
200 - 499	1124	361302
500 - 999	697	487986
1000 - 1999	367	507638
2000 - 4999	184	541592
5000 - 9999	55	375413
10000 - 19999	34	470438
20000 - 49999	19	610627
50000 - 99999	11	737711
100000 - 199999	3	437064
200000 - 499999	2	630276
over 600000	1	1183454
Total	5257	6519789

As of September, 2021, the country is divided into six statistical units, 28 regions and 265 municipalities.

Statistical regions

Half of the population of the country (51.2%) lives in the Yugozapaden and Yuzhen tsentralen statistical regions, and the smallest by population number is the Severozapaden statistical region - 691 thousand people, or 10.6% of the population of the country.

In all six statistical regions, the population decreased compared to the previous census, as the greatest is the relative decrease in the Severen tsentralen (-18.7%) and the Severozapaden (18.5%), while the smallest is in the Yugozapaden (-5.1%).

2. Population growth by statistical units during the period 2011 - 2021

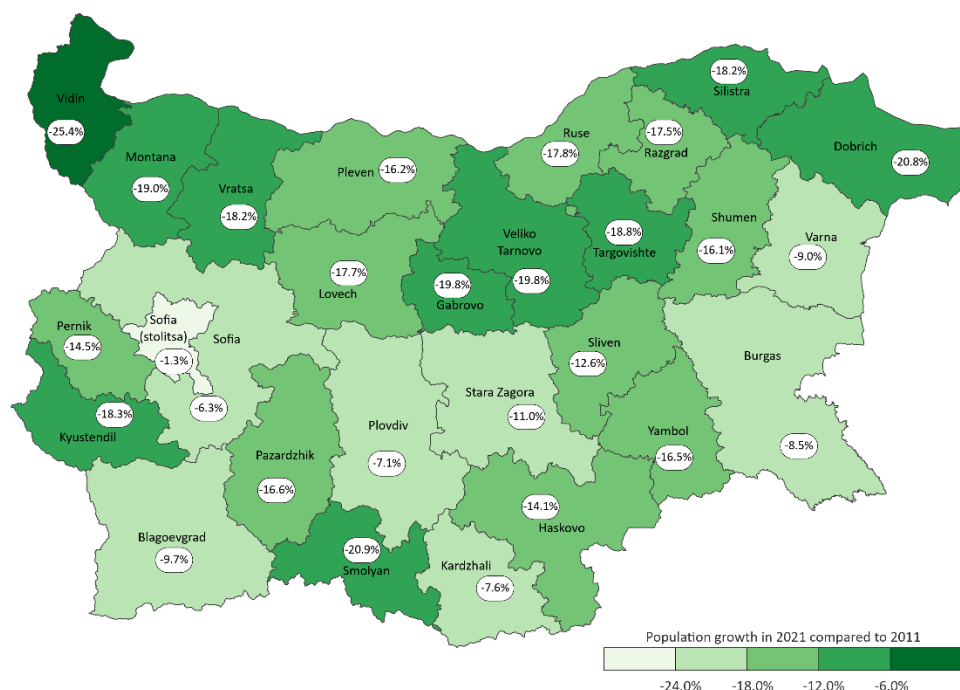
Statistical regions	Population as of February 1, 2011 (number)	Population as of September 7, 2021 (number)	Growth (number)	Growth (%)
Total	7364570	6519789	-844781	-11.5
Severen tsentralen	861112	700234	-160878	-18.7
Severozapaden	847138	690685	-156453	-18.5
Severoiztochen	966097	831953	-134144	-13.9
Yugozapaden	2132848	2024404	-108444	-5.1
Yugoiztochen	1078002	959176	-118826	-11.0
Yuzhen tsentralen	1479373	1313337	-166036	-11.2

Districts

The largest by size is the district of Sofia (stolitsa), with a population of 1 274 290, followed by the districts of Plovdiv (634 497), Varna (432 198) and Burgas (380 286). 41.7% of the country's population lives in the four largest regions. The smallest district is Vidin, with a population of 75 408, or 1.2% of the country's population.

During the ten-year period between the two censuses, a decrease in the population of all districts has been registered, as it is the highest in the districts of Vidin (-25.4%), Smolyan (-20.9%) and Dobrich (-20.8%). In total, for twenty regions, the reduction is above the national average. There is the least loss of population in the regions of Sofia (stolitsa) (-1.3%) and Sofia (-6.3%).

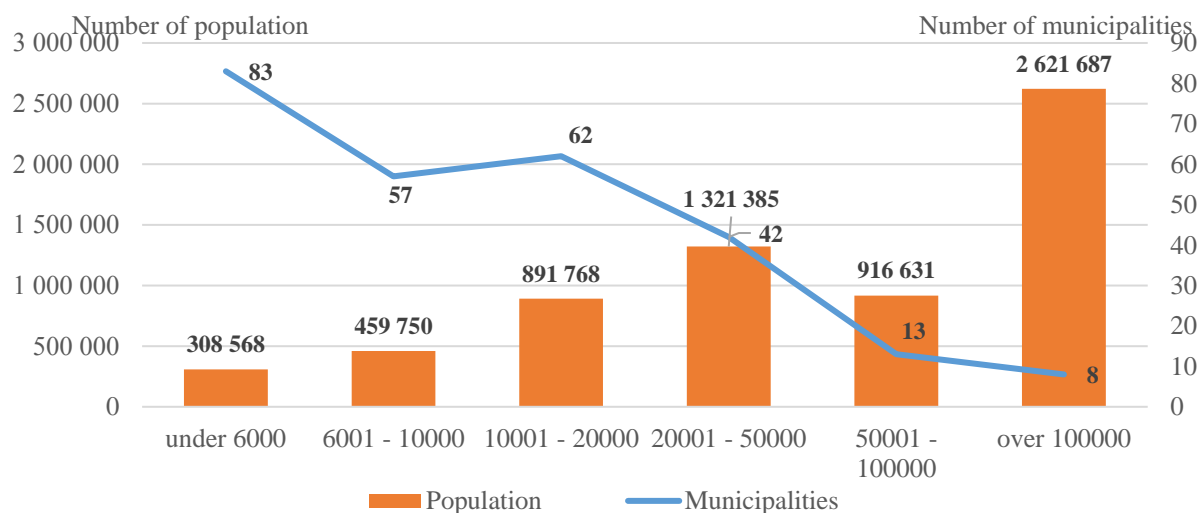
Figure 4. Population growth by regions during the period 2011 - 2021



Municipalities

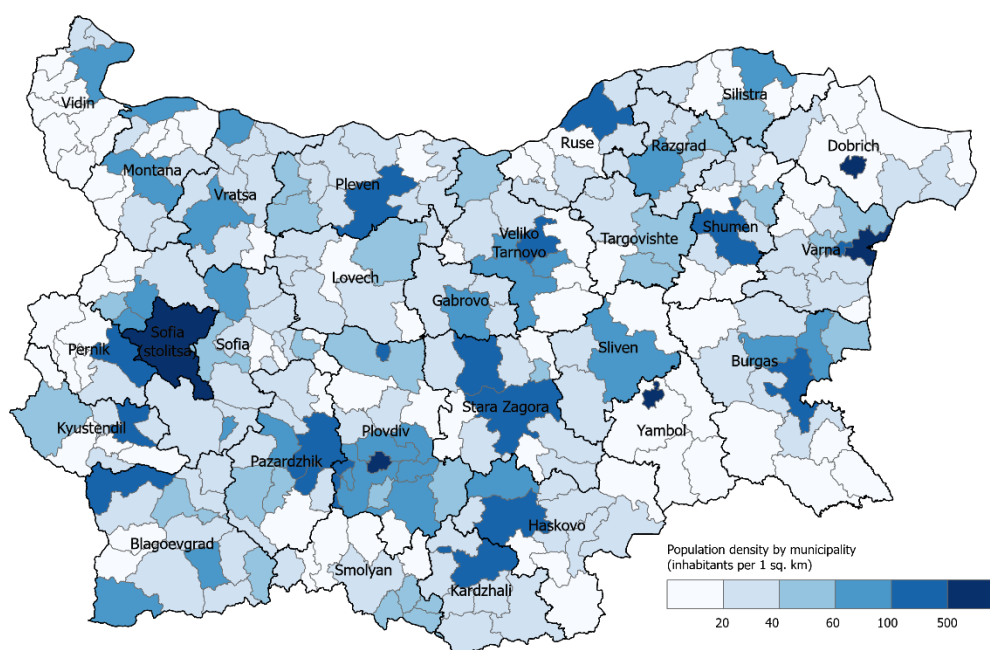
The differences in the population number are great by municipalities. In 83 municipalities, the counted population is below 6 000 people, and 4.7% of the country's population lives there. Eight municipalities have a population of over 100 000 people, or 40.2% of the country's population. The greatest is the number of municipalities with a population of 10 000 to 20 000 people - 62, and the relative share of the population in them is 13.7%.

Figure 5. Distribution of the municipalities by their population number as of September 7, 2021



Population density by municipalities varies from 1.68 persons per sq. km for the municipality of Treklyano up to 3 135.75 persons per sq. km in the municipality of Plovdiv.

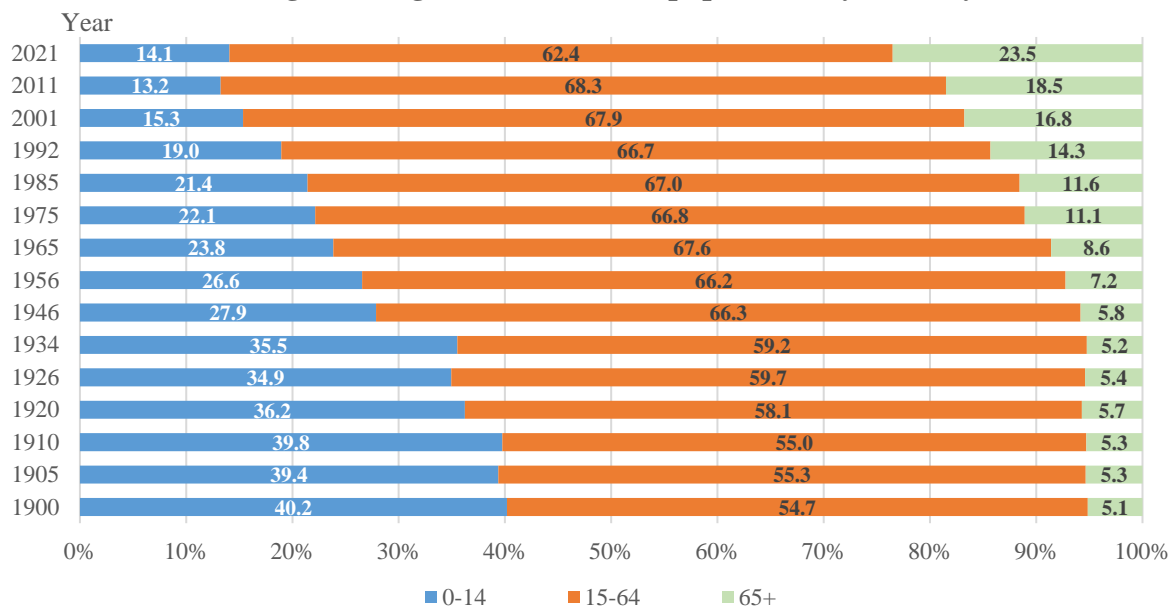
Figure 6. Population density as of September 7, 2021



Age

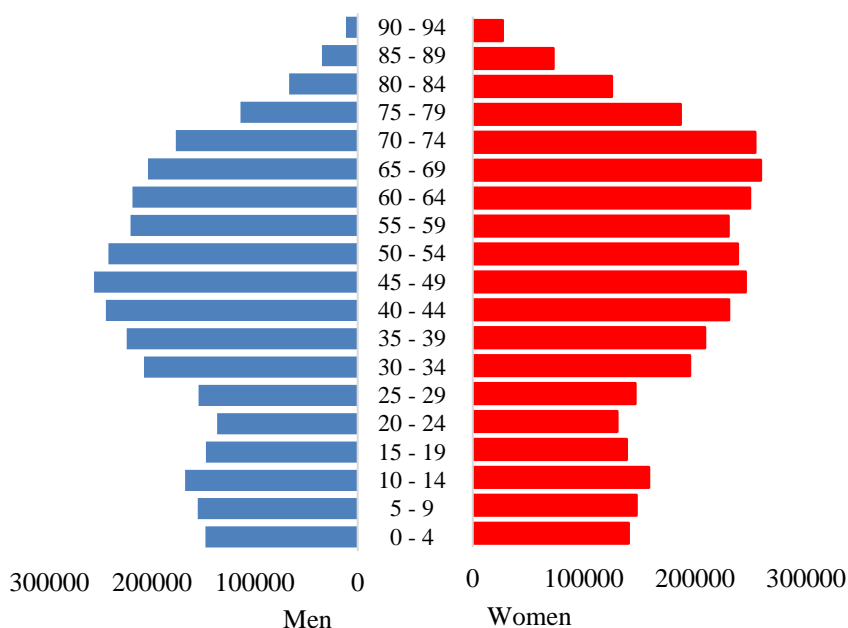
The negative trends in the variation of the population age structure continue to deepen. There is an ongoing process of demographic aging, which is expressed in an increase in the absolute number and relative share of the population aged 65 and over.

Figure 7. Age structure of the population by census years



The aging process is more pronounced among women than among men. The relative share of women aged over 65 is 27.3%, and of men - 19.4%. This difference is due to the greater mortality among men and, as a result of it, to the lower average life expectancy among them. The number of men predominates in the age groups up to 52 years. After that age, the number and relative share of women in the total country's population increases.

Figure 8. Population age structure as of September 7, 2021



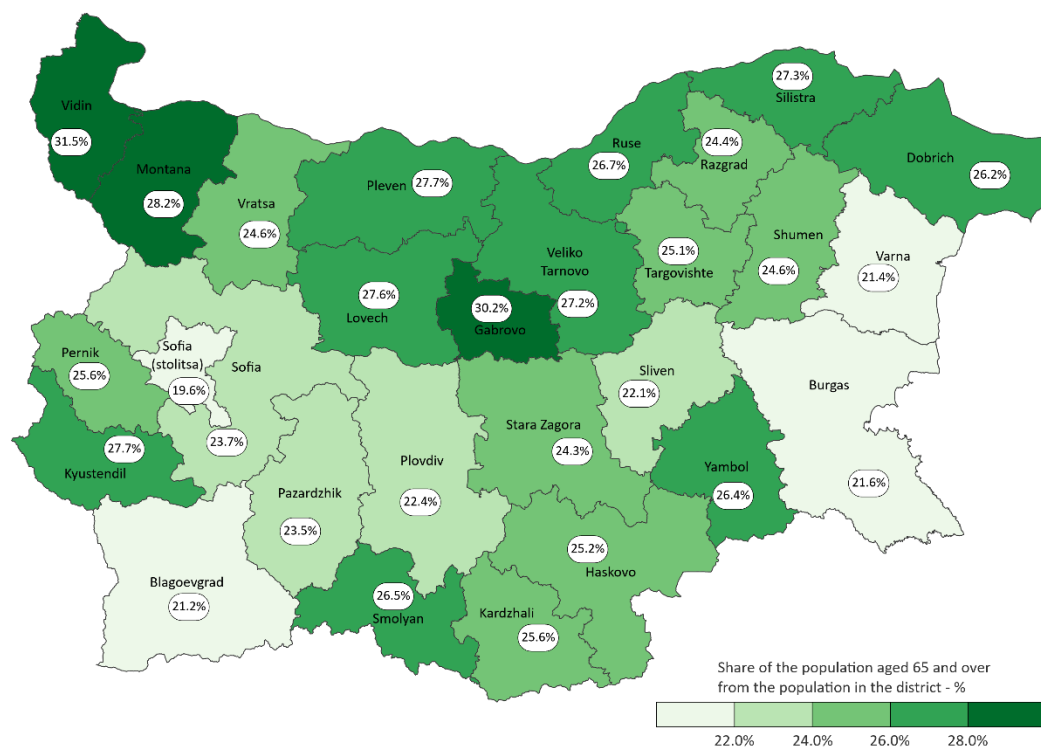
As of September 7, 2021, the population aged 65 and over is 1 532 667 people, or 23.5% of the country's population. Compared to the previous census, the population of that age group **increases** by 171 270, or by 12.6%.

The population in the 15 - 64 age group is 4 069 400 people, or 62.4%. Compared to 2011, it **decreases** by 958 501, or by 19.1%.

The share of the youngest population increases from 13.2% in 2011 up to 14.1% of the total population in 2021, but the absolute population number in the 0 - 14 age group decreases from 975 thousand in 2011 to 918 thousand in 2021, or by 5.9%.

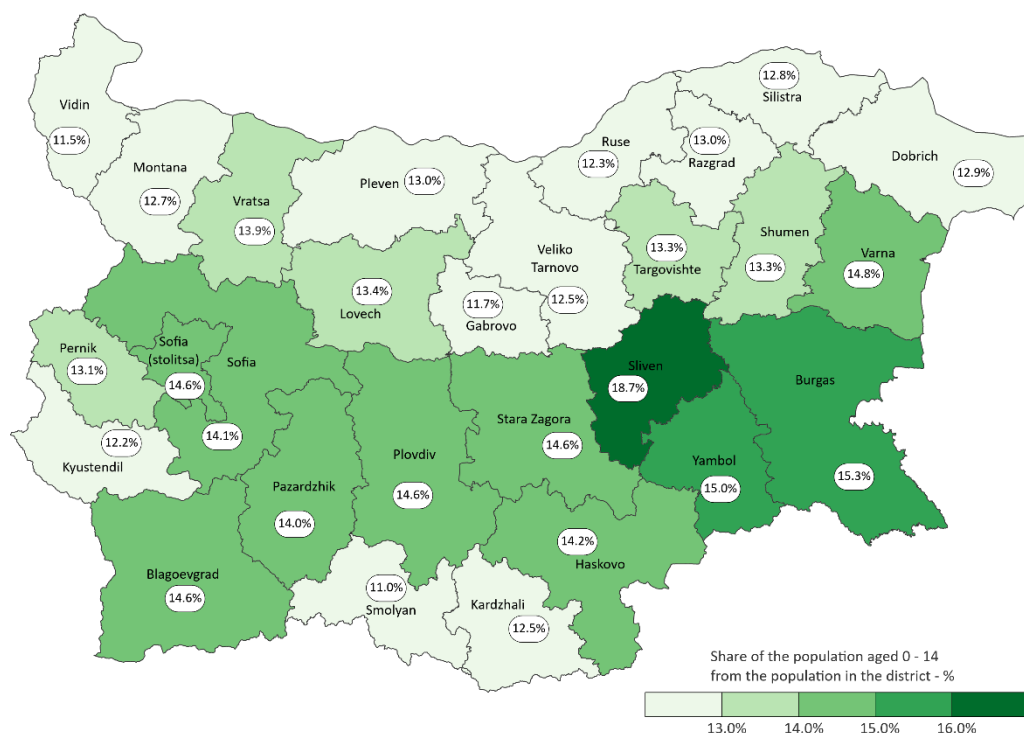
In regional aspect, the share of the oldest population varies from 19.6% for the district of Sofia (stolitsa) up to 31.5% for the district of Vidin. In total, for 21 regions, that share is greater than the average for the country.

Figure 9. Relative share of the population aged 65 and over by regions as of September 7, 2021



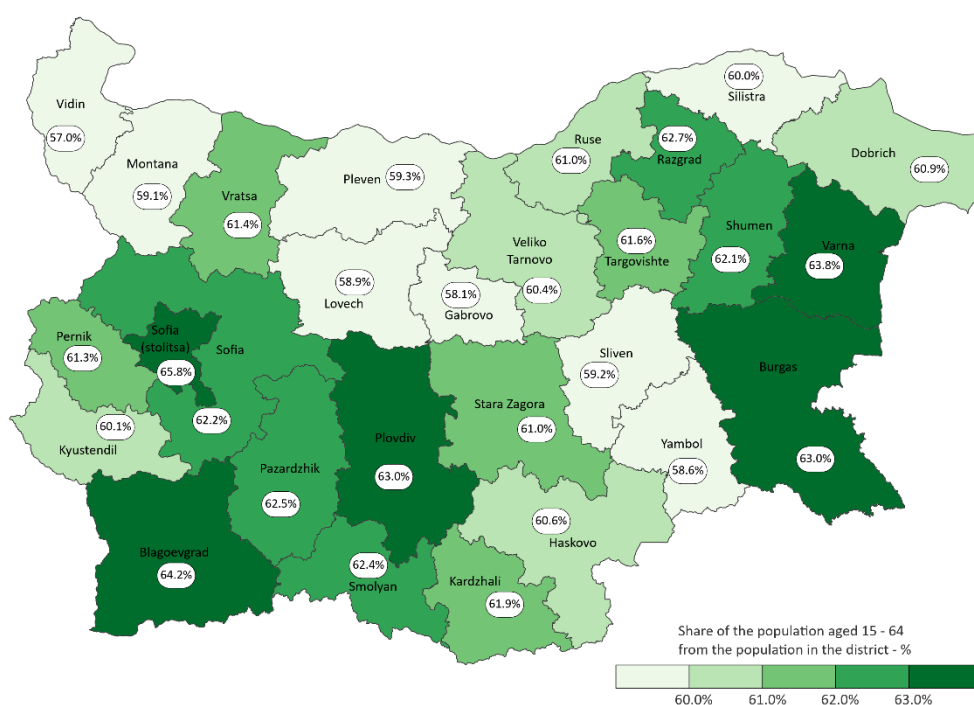
The greatest is the share of the young population in the districts of Sliven (18.7%), Burgas (15.3%) and Yambol (15.0%), and the lowest is in Smolyan (11.0%), Vidin (11.5%) and Gabrovo (11.7%).

Figure 10. Relative share of the population aged 0 - 14 by regions as of September 7, 2021



The share of the population in active age (15 - 64) is greatest in the district of Sofia (stolitsa) - 65.8% of the district's population. In total, in eight regions, this share is higher than the average for the country.

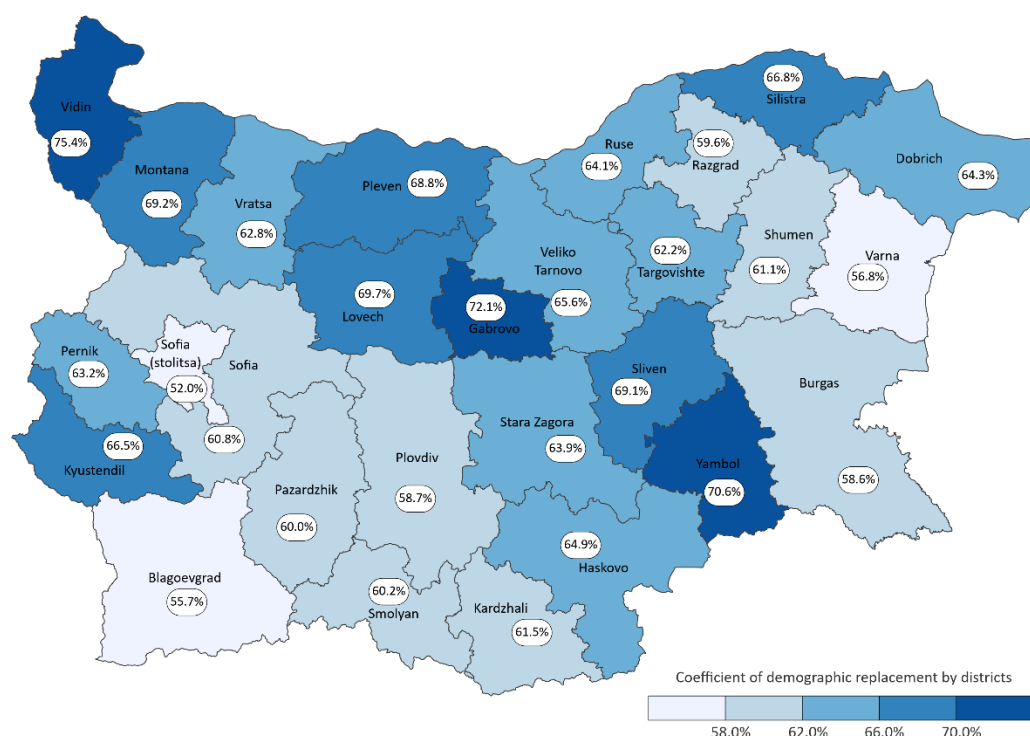
Figure 11. Relative share of the population aged 15 - 64 as of September 7, 2021



The **total age dependency ratio**¹, calculated according to data from Census 2021, is 60.2, or for every 100 persons in the age group 15 - 64, there are 60 persons under 15 and 65 and over. Compared to 2011, this ratio was 46.5, meaning the increase in the burden of persons of active age continues to grow.

In regional aspect, this ratio is most favourable in the districts of Sofia (stolitsa) (52.0), Blagoevgrad (55.7) and Varna (56.8), while the most unfavourable is in Vidin Region (75.4).

Figure 12. Age dependency ratio by regions as of September 7, 2021

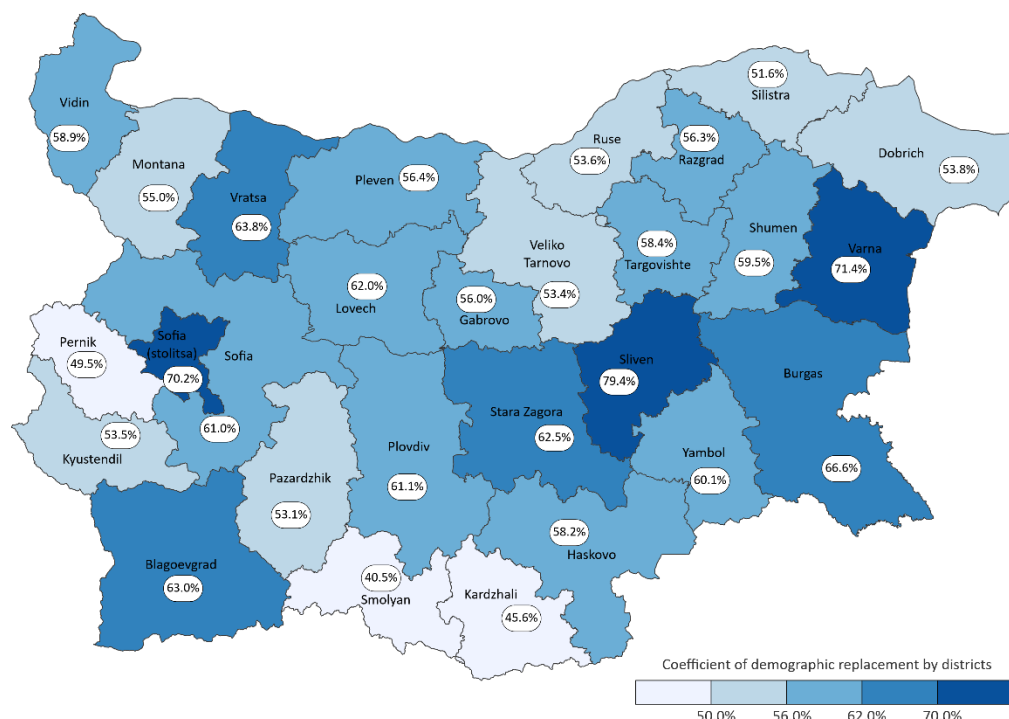


The reproduction of the employable population is characterized best by the **demographic replacement rate**, which shows the ratio between persons entering working age (15 - 19 years) and persons exiting working age, i.e. persons aged 60 - 64 years. **According to data from Census 2021, this rate is 61.** Compared to 2011, every 100 persons exiting working age were replaced by 70 young people, while in 2001 by 124.

This rate is most favourable in the districts of Sliven (79), Varna (71) and Sofia (stolitsa) (70). In two districts, the demographic replacement rate is below 50 - Smolyan (41) and Kardzhali (46).

¹ The age dependency ratio shows the number of persons of the population in the 'dependent' ages (the population under 15 and those aged 65 and over) per 100 persons of the population in the 'independent' ages (from 15 up to 64).

Figure 13. Demographic replacement rate by regions as of September 7, 2021



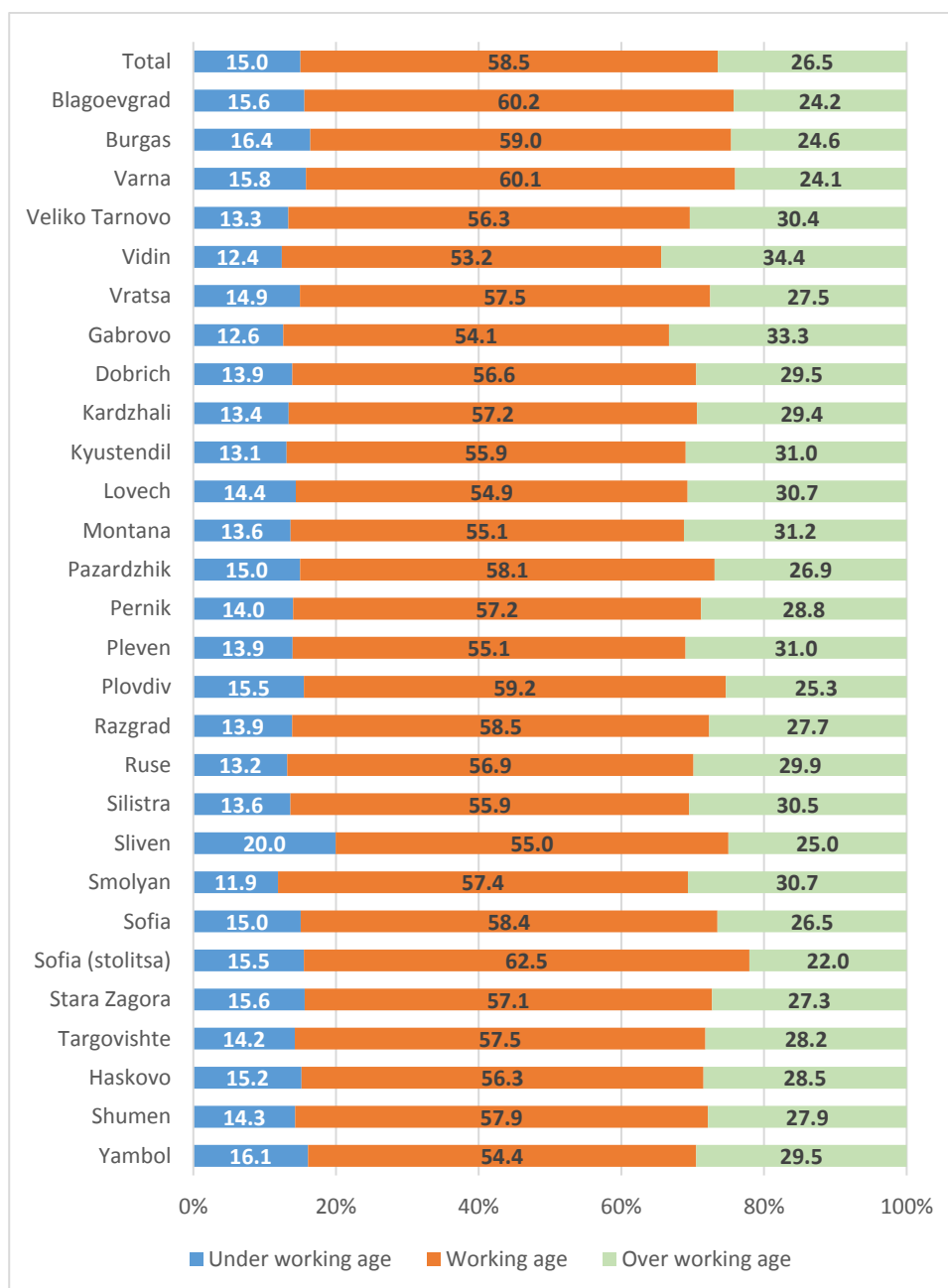
The population aging trend leads to variations in its main age structure - below, at and over working age. The population aggregations at and over working age are influenced by population aging, as well as by legislative amendments in determining the age limits for retiring². For 2021, these limits are from 16 to the age of 61 years and 8 months for women and 64 years and 4 months for men.

As of September 7, 2021, the population at working age is 3 815 thousand people, or 58.5% of the country's population. Compared to 2011, the employable population decreases by 762 thousand, or by 16.7%. The men are 1 997 thousand, and the women - 1 818 thousand.

The population over working age is 1 726 thousand people, or 26.5%, and below working age - 979 thousand people, or 15.0% of the country's population.

² The age limits for the distribution of the population by the categories under, at and over working age are determined according to the Ordinance on pensions and insurance service, adopted by Decree No 30 of the Council of Ministers (promulgated in State Gazette, Issue 21 dated March 17, 2000).

Figure 14. Relative share of the population below, at and over working age as of September 7, 2021



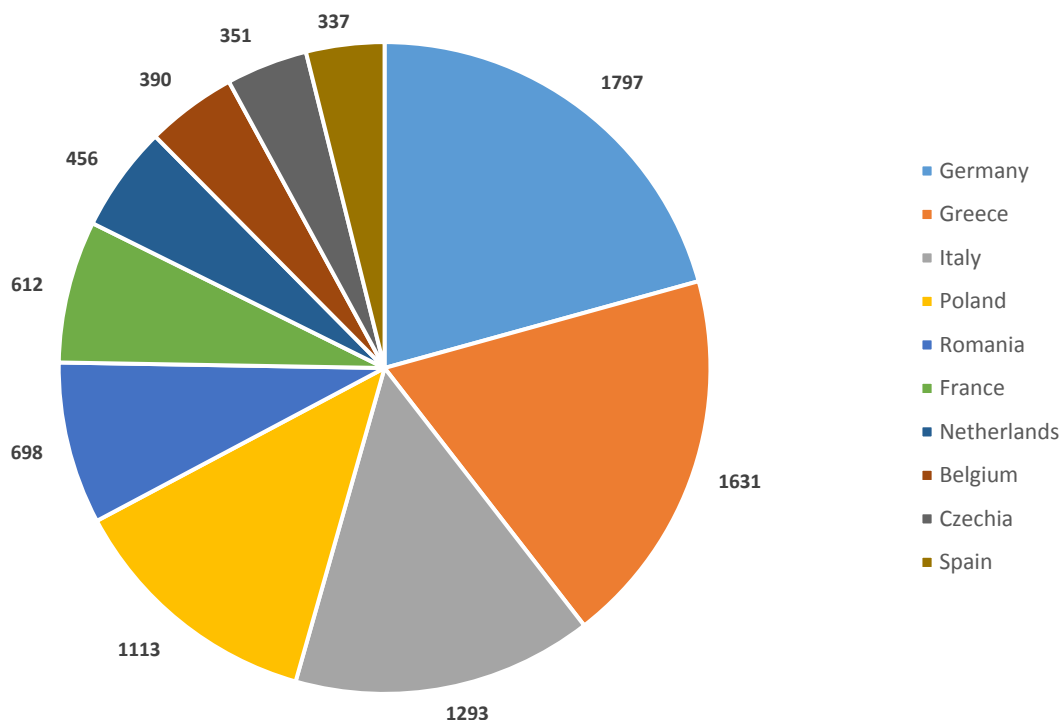
Citizenship

Citizenship is determined as a specific legal relation between a person and their country, acquired by birth or naturalization, regardless of whether it occurred by means of a declaration, by choice, marriage or other means, in compliance with the national legislation.

As of September 7, 2021, 99.1% of the country's population has Bulgarian citizenship. Of them, 0.5% have dual citizenship - Bulgarian and other.

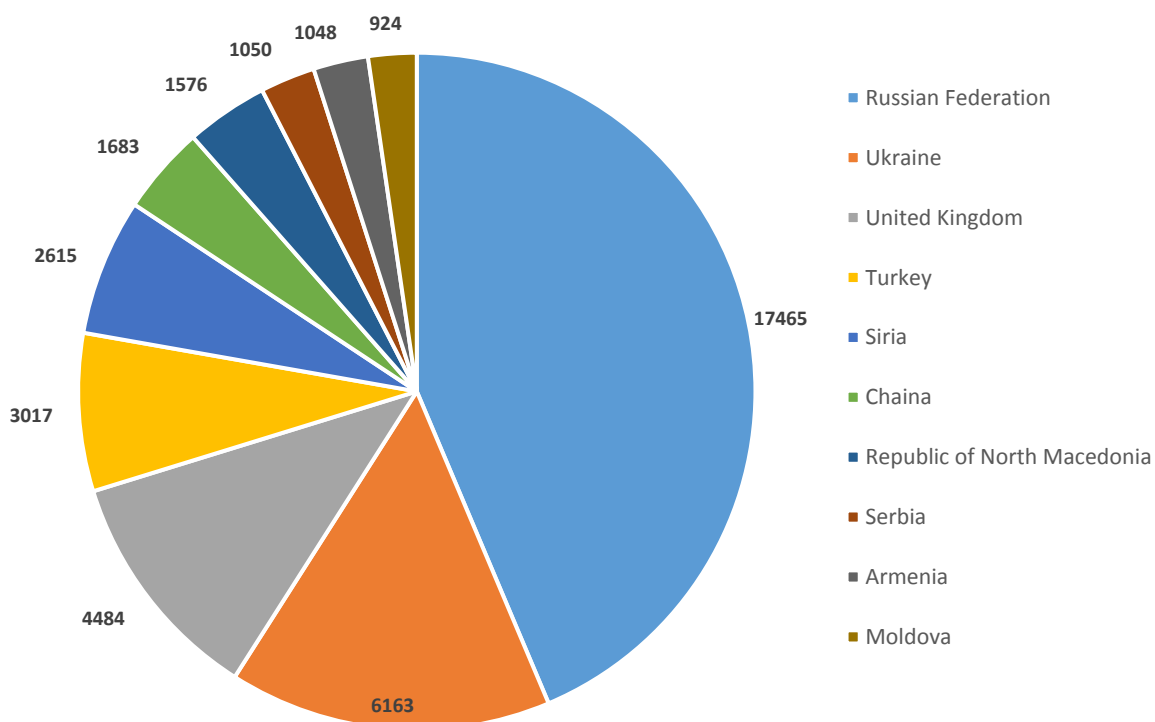
The citizens of the European Union who reside permanently in the country are 10 549, or 0.2% of the population. The majority of them are citizens of Germany, Greece, Italy, Poland and Romania.

Figure 15. The ten most common citizenships of the European Union as of September 7, 2021



Third-country nationals number 49 453, or 0.7%, with 35.3% of them being citizens of the Russian Federation, followed by citizens of Ukraine, the United Kingdom, Turkey and the Syrian Arab Republic. There are 539 stateless persons.

Figure 16. The ten most common foreign nationalities as of September 7, 2021



The age structure of foreign citizens, including citizens of the European Union, largely differs from the age structure of Bulgarian citizens. Persons aged 15 - 64 years of age predominate - 75.2%. Children (0 - 14) are 5.3%, and the oldest (65+) - 19.4% of all foreigners residing on the territory of the country.

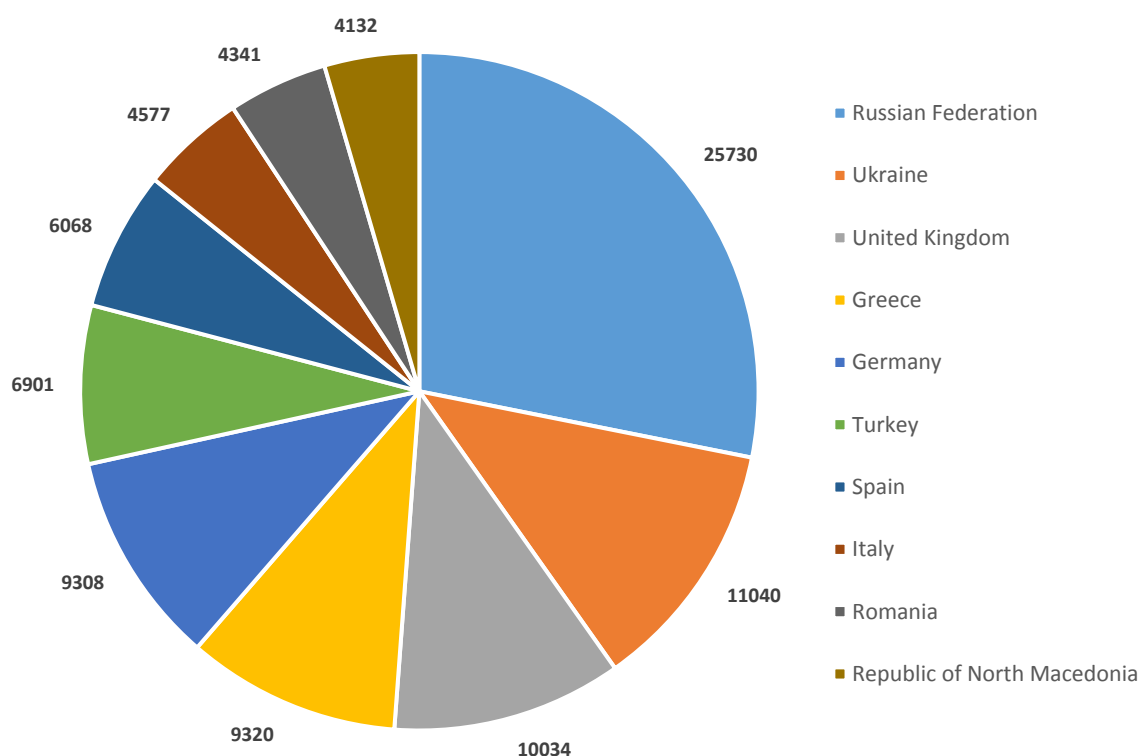
Almost every third person with foreign citizenship, including the citizens of the European Union, lives in the territory of Sofia (stolitsa) region (32.0%), followed by the regions of Varna (12.2%), Burgas (11.6%) and Plovdiv (7.9%). The least number of foreign citizens resides in the territory of the Smolyan region (0.4%).

Country of birth

The country of birth is defined as the place where the mother is habitually resident at the time of birth or, if unknown, the place where the birth took place.

As of September 7, 2021, 97.9% of individuals were born on the territory of Bulgaria. 0.9% of the country's population were born in a European Union country, and 1.2% in a third country.

Figure 17. Distribution of persons born outside the territory of the country by country of birth as of September 7, 2021 (the ten most common countries)



The National Statistical Institute will publish the results of the 2021 Population and Housing Census in stages. The schedule for publishing the data can be found at [Calendar for publishing the data of 2021 Census | National Statistical Institute \(nsi.bg\)](https://www.nsi.bg/en/calendar-for-publishing-the-data-of-2021-census). Basic data from the census will be published in the INFOSTAT Information System, as well as provided upon user requests in accordance with the [List of standard statistical indicators | National Statistical Institute \(nsi.bg\)](https://www.nsi.bg/en/list-of-standard-statistical-indicators) and [Regulations for dissemination of statistical products and services | National Statistical Institute \(nsi.bg\)](https://www.nsi.bg/en/regulations-for-dissemination-of-statistical-products-and-services).

Annex

Table 1

Population growth by regions during the period 2011 - 2021

Region	Population as of February 1, 2011 (number)	Population as of September 7, 2021 (number)	Growth (number)	Growth (%)
Total	7364570	6519789	-844781	-11.5
Blagoevgrad	323552	292227	-31325	-9.7
Burgas	415817	380286	-35531	-8.5
Varna	475074	432198	-42876	-9.0
Veliko Tarnovo	258494	207371	-51123	-19.8
Vidin	101018	75408	-25610	-25.4
Vratsa	186848	152813	-34035	-18.2
Gabrovo	122702	98387	-24315	-19.8
Dobrich	189677	150146	-39531	-20.8
Kardzhali	152808	141177	-11631	-7.6
Kyustendil	136686	111736	-24950	-18.3
Lovech	141422	116394	-25028	-17.7
Montana	148098	119950	-28148	-19.0
Pazardzhik	275548	229814	-45734	-16.6
Pernik	133530	114162	-19368	-14.5
Pleven	269752	226120	-43632	-16.2
Plovdiv	683027	634497	-48530	-7.1
Razgrad	125190	103223	-21967	-17.5
Ruse	235252	193483	-41769	-17.8
Silistra	119474	97770	-21704	-18.2
Sliven	197473	172690	-24783	-12.6
Smolyan	121752	96284	-25468	-20.9
Sofia	247489	231989	-15500	-6.3
Sofia (stolitsa)	1291591	1274290	-17301	-1.3
Stara Zagora	333265	296507	-36758	-11.0
Targovishte	120818	98144	-22674	-18.8
Haskovo	246238	211565	-34673	-14.1
Shumen	180528	151465	-29063	-16.1
Yambol	131447	109693	-21754	-16.5

Table 2

Population age rates as of September 7, 2021

Region	Age in completed years (number)				Age in completed years (%)			Age dependency ratio	Demographic replacement rate
	Total	0 - 14	15 - 64	65+	0 - 14	15 - 64	65+		
Bulgaria	6519789	917722	4069400	1532667	14.1	62.4	23.5	60	61
Blagoevgrad	292227	42594	187711	61922	14.6	64.2	21.2	56	63
Burgas	380286	58247	239731	82308	15.3	63.0	21.6	59	67
Varna	432198	63972	275693	92533	14.8	63.8	21.4	57	71
Veliko Tarnovo	207371	25857	125194	56320	12.5	60.4	27.2	66	53
Vidin	75408	8668	42984	23756	11.5	57.0	31.5	75	59
Vratsa	152813	21393	93879	37541	14.0	61.4	24.6	63	64
Gabrovo	98387	11519	57155	29713	11.7	58.1	30.2	72	56
Dobrich	150146	19443	91376	39327	12.9	60.9	26.2	64	54
Kardzhali	141177	17622	87436	36119	12.5	61.9	25.6	61	46
Kyustendil	111736	13607	67128	31001	12.2	60.1	27.7	66	54
Lovech	116394	15618	68604	32172	13.4	58.9	27.6	70	62
Montana	119950	15276	70894	33780	12.7	59.1	28.2	69	55
Pazardzhik	229814	32245	143603	53966	14.0	62.5	23.5	60	53
Pernik	114162	14974	69970	29218	13.1	61.3	25.6	63	50
Pleven	226120	29388	133990	62742	13.0	59.3	27.7	69	56
Plovdiv	634497	92543	399794	142160	14.6	63.0	22.4	59	61
Razgrad	103223	13393	64695	25135	13.0	62.7	24.4	60	56
Ruse	193483	23823	117929	51731	12.3	61.0	26.7	64	54
Silistra	97770	12497	58627	26646	12.8	60.0	27.3	67	52
Sliven	172690	32338	102151	38201	18.7	59.2	22.1	69	79
Smolyan	96284	10637	60116	25531	11.0	62.4	26.5	60	41
Sofia	231989	32714	144277	54998	14.1	62.2	23.7	61	61
Sofia (stolitsa)	1274290	186295	838390	249605	14.6	65.8	19.6	52	70
Stara Zagora	296507	43390	180951	72166	14.6	61.0	24.3	64	63
Targovishte	98144	13021	60491	24632	13.3	61.6	25.1	62	58
Haskovo	211565	29973	128309	53283	14.2	60.6	25.2	65	58
Shumen	151465	20191	94026	37248	13.3	62.1	24.6	61	59
Yambol	109693	16484	64296	28913	15.0	58.6	26.4	71	60