



## POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES IN 2015

Demographic situation in Bulgaria in 2015:

- 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 whereas the number of divorces decrease;
- Life expectancy at birth remains at 2014 level.

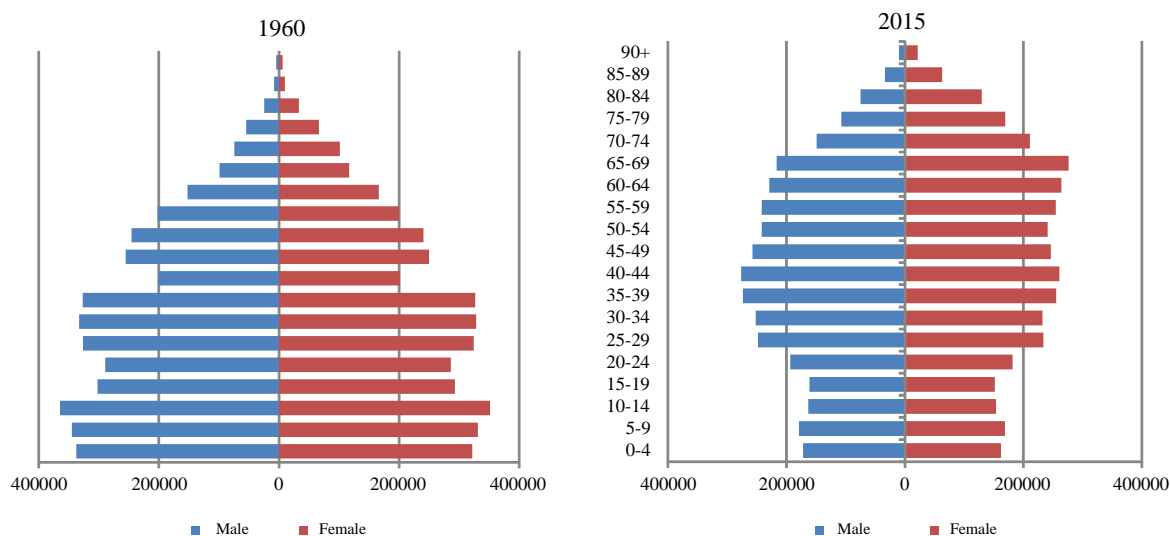
### Population number and structures

As of 31 December 2015 the population of Bulgaria was 7 153 784 persons representing 1.4% of the EU population<sup>1</sup>. Compared to 2014, the country population decreased by 48 414 persons or by 0.7%.

Male population was 3 477 177 (48.6%) and female - 3 676 607 (51.4%) or to 1 000 males correspond 1 057 females. Males prevail among the population aged up to 53 years. The number and share of females into the total population increased among the elderly.

**The process of population ageing continues.** By the end of 2015 the number of persons aged 65 and over was 1 461 786, or 20.4% of the country population. Compared to 2014, the share of population aged 65 and over increased by 0.4 percentage points and compared to 2001 - by 3.5 percentage points.

**Figure 1. Age structure of population as of 31.12.1960 and 31.12.2015**



<sup>1</sup> In the international comparisons, data on EU member states refer to 2014. Source: Eurostat - <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/>.

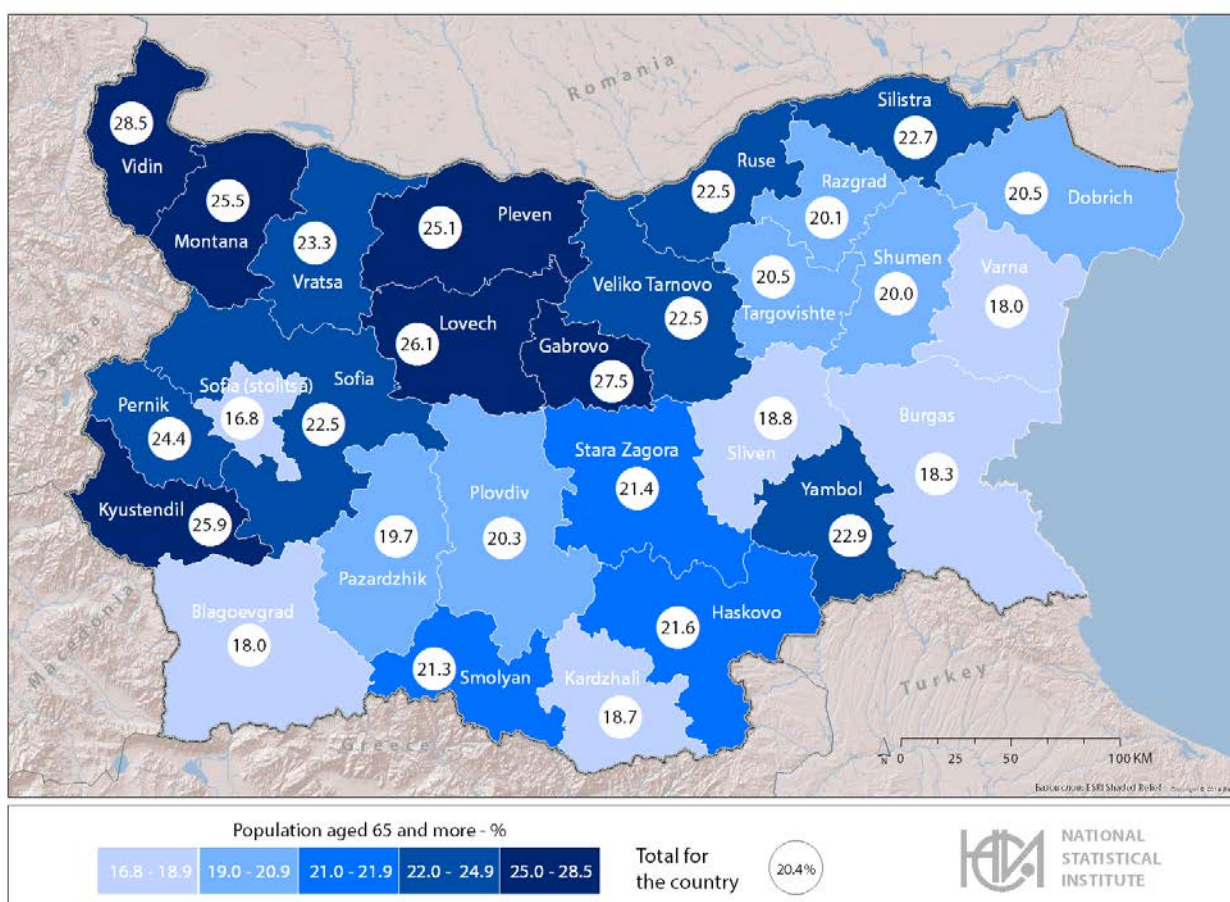


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The population aging is more intensive among female population than among male. The share of females aged 65 and over is 23.7%, compared to 17.0% - males. The difference is due to the higher mortality among male population and as a consequence - lower life expectancy.

The share of persons aged 65 and over is highest in districts Vidin (28.5%), Gabrovo (27.5%) and Lovech (26.1%). In 18 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) - 16.8%, Blagoevgrad and Varna - 18.0%.

**Figure 2. Share of population aged 65 and over as of 31.12.2015 by districts**



Ageing of population is observed in the bigger part of EU member states. At the beginning of 2015, the share of population aged 65 and over for EU-28 was 18.9% or 0.4 percentage points higher than the previous year. Highest is the share of elderly population in Italy (21.7%), followed by Germany (21.0%) and Greece (20.9%) and lowest in Ireland - 13.0%.

As of 31.12.2015, **children up to 15 years of age were 998 206 or 14.0% of the total population number**. The share of children up to 15 years increased by 0.1 percentage points compared to 2014.

The share of population under 15 years of age is highest in districts Sliven - 18.1% and Burgas - 15.3% 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 district Gabrovo - 11.3%, followed by district Smolyan - 11.4%, and districts Pernik and Kyustendil - 11.8% and 11.9% respectively.



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Share of the youngest EU-28 population in the beginning of 2015 is 15.6%. Lowest shares are observed in Germany (13.2%) and Italy (13.8%), and highest - in Ireland (22.1%) and France (18.6%).

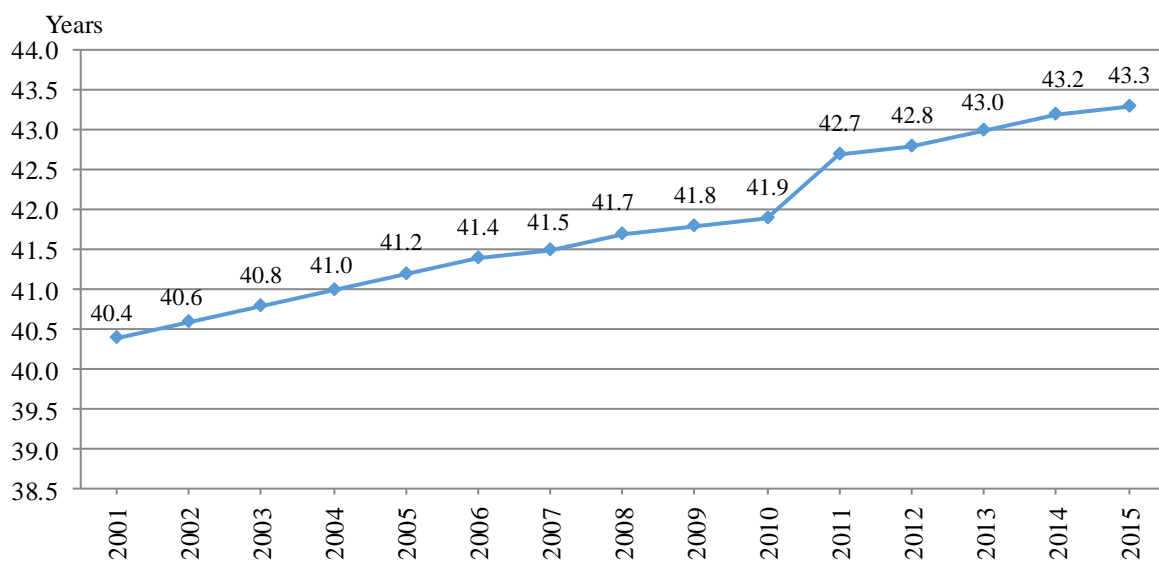
As of 31.12.2015 **the age dependency ratio<sup>1</sup>** was **52.4%**, or to each person in ‘dependent’ ages (under 15 and over 65 years) correspond less than two persons in ‘independent’ ages. In 2005 and 2014 the ratio is 44.5% and 51.2% respectively.

The ratio is more favourable in urban areas - 47.8% than in rural - 66.4%. As a total in 23 country districts the age dependency ratio is over 50.0%. Most unfavourable is the ratio in districts Vidin (68.1%), Lovech (64.9%) and Montana (63.5%). The districts with most favourable values are Sofia (stolitsa) - 44.3%, Blagoevgrad - 47.8% and Kardzhali - 48.5%.

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 **43.3 years at the end of 2015**.

Ageing of population is observed both in urban and rural areas. In urban areas the mean age of population is 42.3 years, compared to 46.1 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<sup>2</sup> concerning the retirement age. The last remained the same in 2015 and namely, at working age are women up to completion of 60 years and 8 months and men up to completion of 63 years and 8 months.

**The number of population at working age as of 31.12.2015 was 4 349 thousand persons or 60.8%** of the total population, of which men are 2 284 thousand and female - 2 065 thousand persons. The population at working age decreased by over 54 thousand or by 1.2% compared to the previous year.

<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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 2015, the number of population over working age was 1 741 thousand persons or 24.3% and under working age were 1 064 thousand persons or 14.9% of the country population.

### 1. Population under, at and over working age

Year	Age		
	Under working age	At 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

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 31.12.2015 the ratio was 64. For comparison, in 2001 each 100 persons exiting working age have been replaced by 124 young persons.

Most favourable is the ratio in districts Sliven - 80, Shumen - 71 and Pazardzhik - 70. Lowest is the ratio in districts Smolyan - 47 and Gabrovo and Kyustendil, where 100 persons exiting working age are replaced by 48 persons entering it.

### Territorial distribution of population

**As of 31.12.2015, 5 227 182 or 73.1% of the total country population resided in urban areas and 1 926 602 or 26.9% - in rural ones.**

There were 5 258 settlements in Bulgaria by the end of 2015, of which 257 - towns and 5 001 - villages. The distribution of urban and rural population by the end of year is a result not only of the natural increase and migration, but also of changes in the country's administrative structure. Based on the Council of Ministers decisions, 10 settlements are closed in 2015, of which 5 are annexed to other settlements.

Two new settlements were created - village Sveti Spas, municipality Dolna Banya and village Popovi livadi, municipality Gotse Delchev, as well as new municipality in district Pazardzhik - municipality Sarnitsa.

At the end of 2015 there are 159 settlements without population. Highest is the number of settlements without population in districts Gabrovo, Veliko Tarnovo and Kardzhali - 61, 54 and 10 respectively.

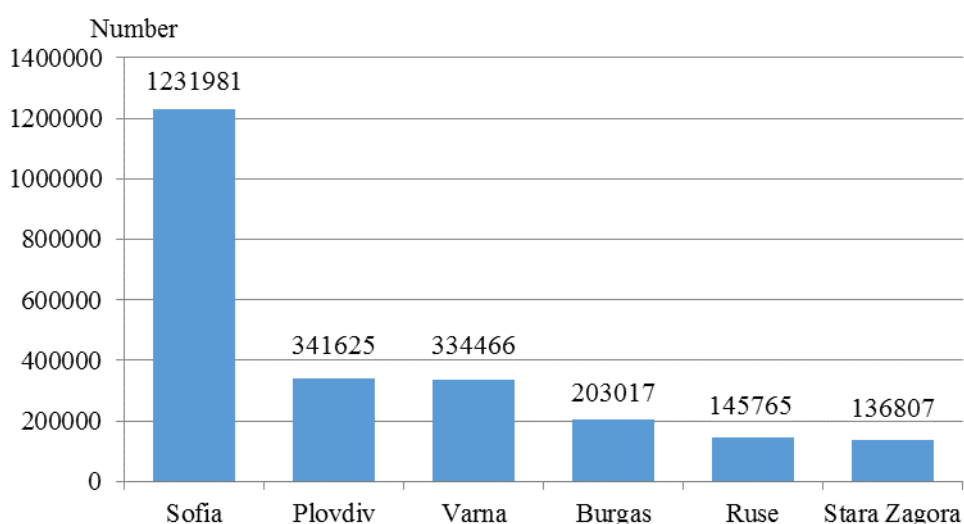


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The population number is between 1 and 49 persons incl. in 1 133 or 21.5% of the settlements.

There are six towns with a population above 100 thousand persons and 33.5% of the country population lives there.

**Figure 4. Towns with more than 100 000 inhabitants as of 31.12.2015**



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

#### *Statistical regions*

Nearly half of the country population (49.8%) lives in Yugozapaden and Yuzhen tsentralen regions. Smallest according to the population number is Severozapaden region - 784 thousand persons or 11.0% of the country population.

The population number decreased compared to 2014 in all statistical regions; highest is the decrease in Severozapaden region - 1.7% and lowest - in Yugozapaden region - 0.2%.

## **2. Population as of 31.12.2015 by statistical regions**

Statistical region	Population as of 31.12.2015 - in numbers	Population as of 31.12.2015 - %	Population growth - in numbers	Population growth - %
Severozapaden	783909	11.0	-13233	-1.7
Severen tsentralen	815441	11.4	-10095	-1.2
Severoiztochen	944458	13.2	-5499	-0.6
Yugoiztochen	1052575	14.7	-5940	-0.6
Yugozapaden	2121185	29.7	-4027	-0.2
Yuzhen tsentralen	1436216	20.1	-9620	-0.7





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### Districts

Lowest is the number of population in district Vidin - 91 235 persons or 1.3% of the country population and highest in district Sofia (stolitsa) - 1 319 804 persons (18.4%). In 16 districts the population number is under 200 thousand and the population living in them represents 30.4% of the country population. There are 6 districts with a population between 200 and 300 thousand persons and 20.4% 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 (34.5%).

### 3. Population as of 31.12.2015 by district

Districts	Population as of 31.12.2015 - in numbers	Population as of 31.12.2015 - %	Population growth - in numbers	Population growth - %
<b>Total</b>	<b>7153784</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>-48414</b>	<b>-0.7</b>
Blagoevgrad	312831	4.4	-2746	-0.9
Burgas	413884	5.8	-300	-0.1
Varna	472926	6.6	-878	-0.2
Veliko Tarnovo	245006	3.4	-2776	-1.1
Vidin	91235	1.3	-2126	-2.3
Vratsa	172007	2.4	-3162	-1.8
Gabrovo	114272	1.6	-2079	-1.8
Dobrich	180601	2.5	-2207	-1.2
Kardzhali	151319	2.1	-734	-0.5
Kyustendil	126014	1.8	-1955	-1.5
Lovech	131493	1.8	-2020	-1.5
Montana	137188	1.9	-2162	-1.6
Pazardzhik	263630	3.7	-2919	-1.1
Pernik	125456	1.8	-1592	-1.3
Pleven	251986	3.5	-3763	-1.5
Plovdiv	673283	9.4	-2303	-0.3
Razgrad	117241	1.6	-1807	-1.5
Ruse	225674	3.2	-2011	-0.9
Silistra	113248	1.6	-1422	-1.2
Sliven	191185	2.7	-1459	-0.8
Smolyan	111601	1.6	-2383	-2.1
Sofia	237080	3.3	-981	-0.4
Sofia (stolitsa)	1319804	18.4	3247	0.2
Stara Zagora	323685	4.5	-2278	-0.7
Targovishte	115211	1.6	-1209	-1.0
Haskovo	236383	3.3	-1281	-0.5
Shumen	175720	2.5	-1205	-0.7
Yambol	123821	1.7	-1903	-1.5

Compared to 2014, the population increased in district Sofia (stolitsa) only by 0.2%. In all the rest, a decrease is observed, highest one in districts Vidin - 2.3% and Smolyan - 2.1%.



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### Municipalities

The distribution of population by municipalities is not uniform. There are 69 municipalities with population below 6 000 and 3.8% of the country population lives there. At the same time, there are 9 municipalities with population over 100 thousand people and 40.4% of the country population lives there. Highest is the number of population of municipality Stolichna (1 319 804)), followed by Varna (343 301) and Plovdiv (341 625). Lowest is the number of population of municipality Treklyano - 889 persons.

**Table 4. Municipalities according to the population number as of 31.12.2015**

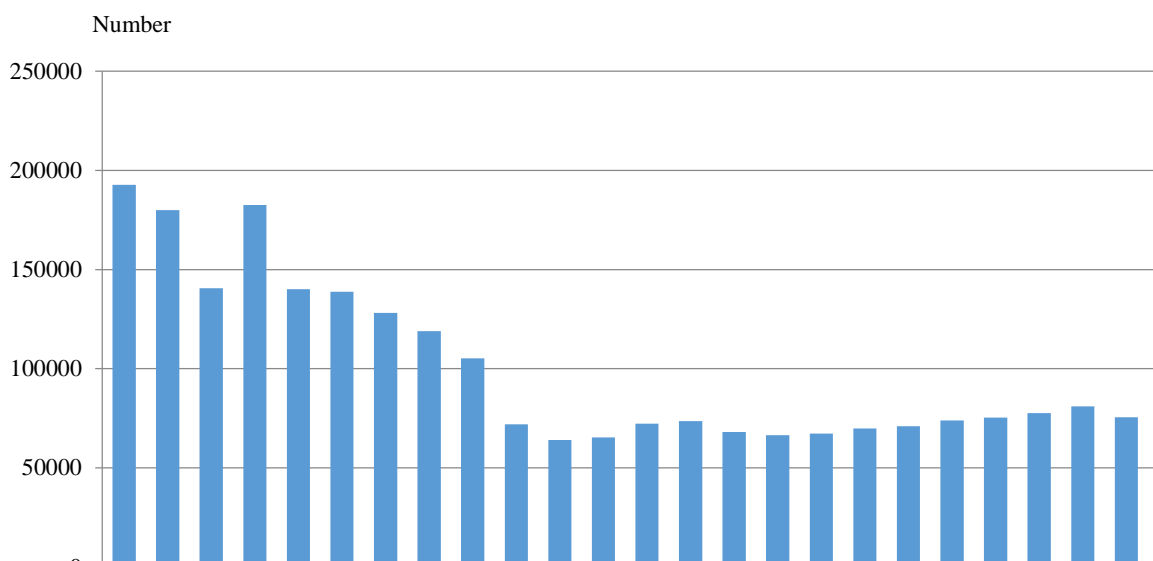
Size of municipality	Municipalities		Population	
	In numbers	%	In numbers	%
<b>Total</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7153784</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Up to 5999	69	26.0	270934	3.8
6000 - 19999	122	46.0	1378616	19.3
20000 - 49999	48	18.1	1426483	19.9
50000 - 99999	17	6.4	1186596	16.6
100000 and more	9	3.4	2891155	40.4

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

### Fertility

There are 66 370 children born in 2015, of which **65 950 (99.4%) - live born**. The number of live births decreased by 1 635 children or 2.4% compared to the previous year.

**Figure 5. Live born children within the period 1920 - 2015**





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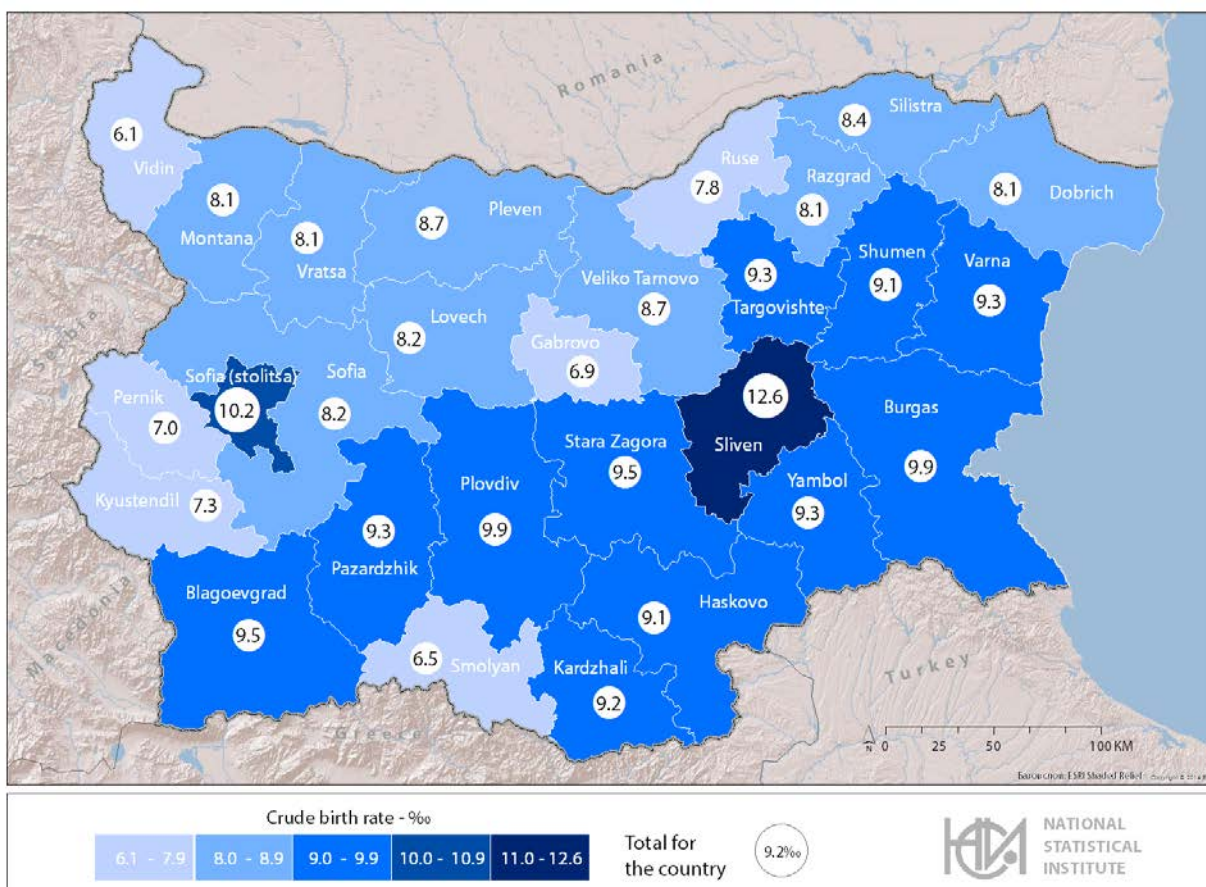
The crude birth rate<sup>1</sup> in 2015 is 9.2‰, compared to 9.4‰ in 2014.

The number of live born males (34 069) is by 2 188 higher compared to the live born females (31 881), or 936 females correspond to 1 000 born males.

The number of live born children in urban areas is 49 486 and in rural - 16 464. Crude birth rate in urban areas is 9.4‰ and in rural - 8.5‰.

In Bulgaria, highest is the crude birth rate in districts Sliven - 12.6‰, Sofia (stolitsa) - 10.2‰ and Burgas - 9.9‰. The crude birth rate is lower than the country average in 17 districts and lowest in districts Smolyan (6.5‰), and Vidin (6.1‰).

**Figure 6. Crude birth rate in 2015 by districts**



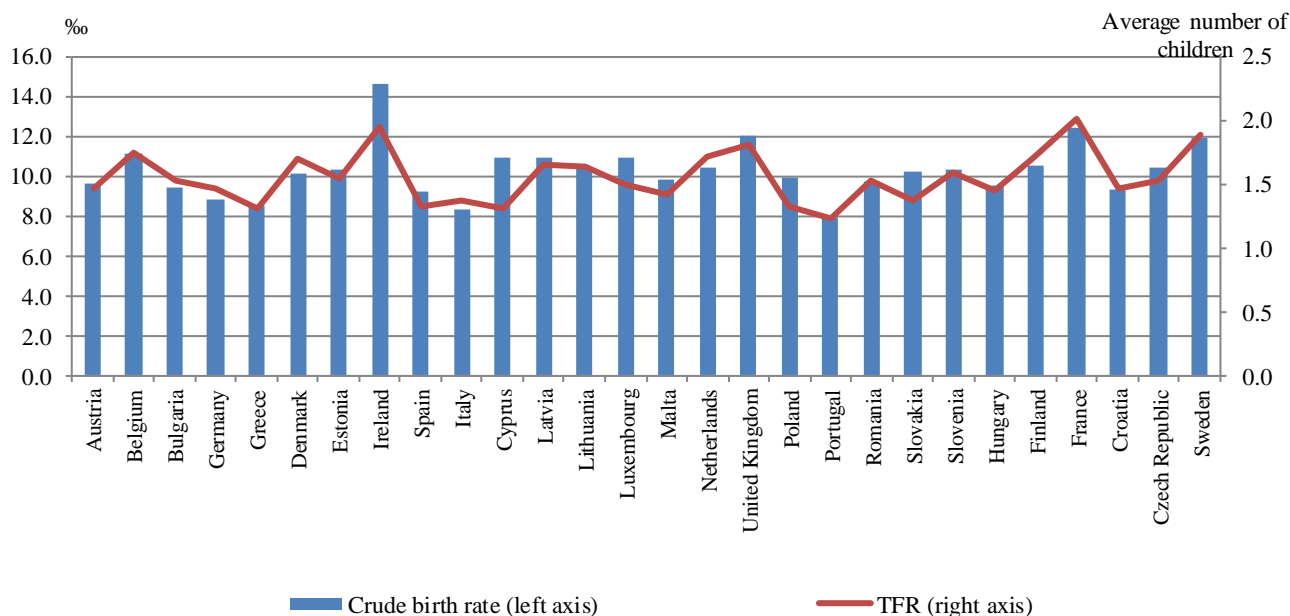
The crude birth rate in 2014 for EU-28 is 10.1‰ according to Eurostat data. Highest crude birth rate is observed in Ireland (14.6‰), followed by France (12.4‰) and United Kingdom (12.0‰). Lowest crude birth rate is registered in Portugal - 7.9‰.

<sup>1</sup> Number of live born children per 1 000 persons of the average annual population during the year.





Figure 7. Crude birth rate and TFR in EU member states in 2014



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

The number of women in fertile age as of 31.12.2015 was 1 561 thousand. It has decreased by nearly 19 thousand compared to the previous year and by 346 thousand compared to 2001.

Changes in the age structure of fertile contingent contribute considerably to the decrease of crude birth rate. It has to be taken into consideration that nearly 90% of births are realised by women aged 15 to 34 years whose number in 2015 is 799 thousand or 2.3% less than in 2014 and 26.8% less compared to 2001. The number of women in the mentioned age group decreases mainly due to the lower number of females, entering fertile age and the emigration processes.

The number of children born by mothers aged below 18 years in 2015 is 3 061 or 69 less than in 2014. Tendency of increase the number of children born by mothers aged 40 and more continue - 1 517 in 2014 compared to 1 687 in 2015.

Total fertility rate (TFR)<sup>1</sup> is one of the basic indicators characterising the fertility. **The average number of live born children per women in 2015 is 1.53.** TFR in 2001 has been 1.24 children and in 2013 - 1.48 children.

The mean age of women at first birth increased from 26.7 in 2014 to **26.9 years in 2015**. The mean age of women at first marriage also increased from 27.5 years in 2014 to 27.8 in 2015. Comparing both indicators, a tendency is observed the birth of first child to precede the marriage.

There are 1 109 multi-foetal births registered in 2015 or 91 less than in 2014. In 1 104 of the cases, two children are born and in 5 - three children.

<sup>1</sup> 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.



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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 59.1% in 2013.

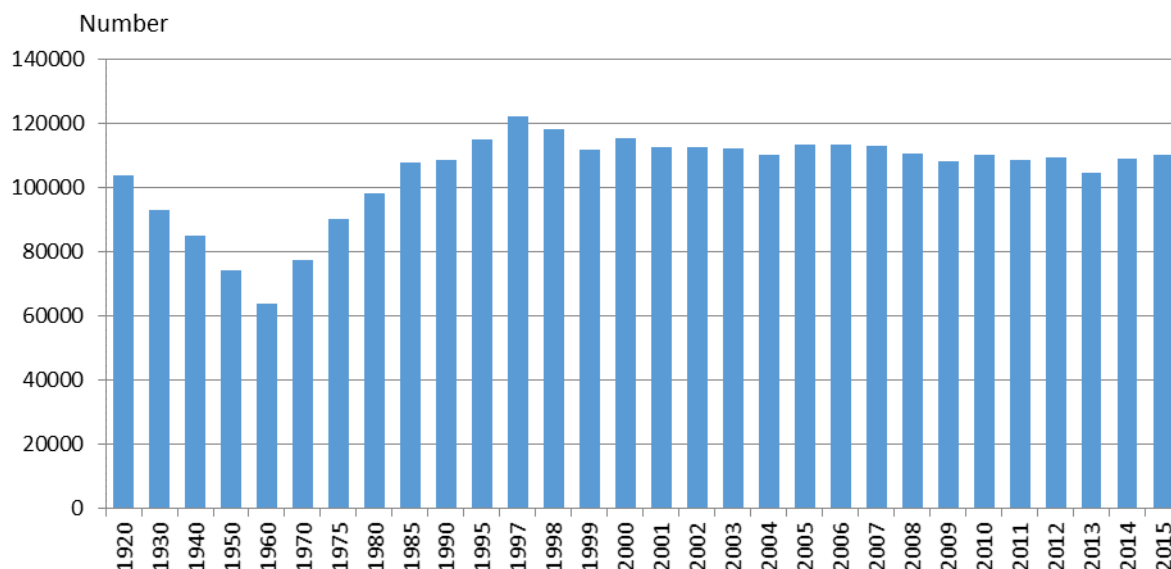
**The number of children born outside marriage in 2015 is 38 947 or 58.7%** of the total number of births. The share of extramarital births in rural areas (66.1%) is higher than in urban (56.2%). For 75.2% of the extramarital births data on the fathers exists, i.e. most probably the children are grown up in families, by parents cohabiting without marriage.

Highest share of extramarital births is registered in districts, Vidin (77.4%) and Vratsa (73.5%). The share of extramarital births in all country regions is higher than 50.0% except in districts Razgrad (45.2%), Blagoevgrad (42.3%) and Kardzhali - 40.7% respectively.

## Mortality

**The number of deaths in 2015 is 110 117 and the crude mortality rate<sup>1</sup> - 15.3‰.** Compared to the previous year the number of deaths increased by 1 165 or 1.1%. The crude mortality rate remains too high.

**Figure 8. Deaths within the period 1920 - 2015**



Mortality among males (16.3‰) continues to be higher than among females (14.4‰). In 2015 there are 1 075 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 (21.9‰) is higher than in urban ones (12.9‰).

**The mortality rate for EU-28 in 2014 is 9.7‰.** Mortality rate in Bulgaria is highest among the European countries. Lowest is the mortality in Cyprus - 6.2‰, Ireland - 6.3‰ and Luxembourg - 6.9‰. Malta, Netherlands, France, Spain and United Kingdom it is below 9.0‰. Except in Bulgaria, rather higher compared to the average EU value is the mortality in Latvia - 14.3‰ and Lithuania - 13.7‰.

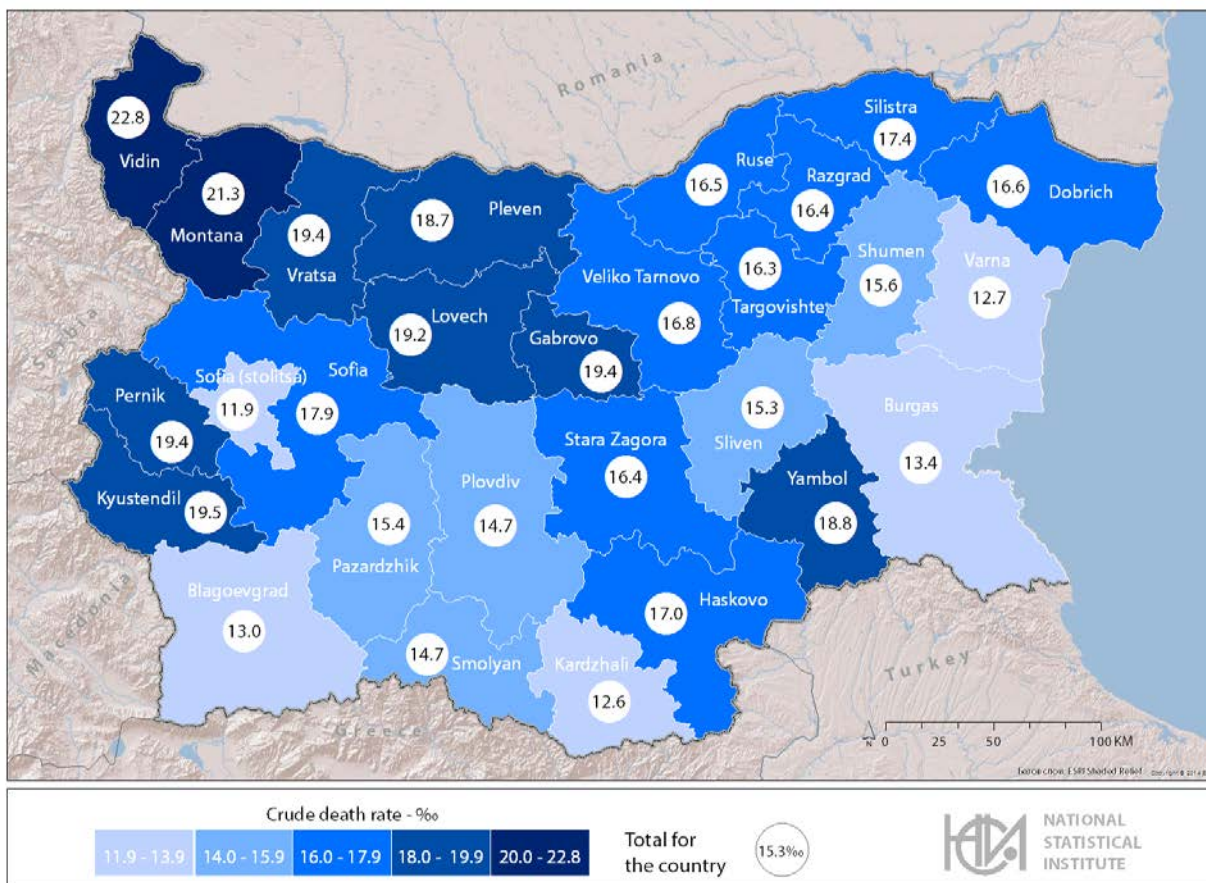
<sup>1</sup> Number of dead persons per 1 000 persons of the average annual population during the year.



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Highest is the mortality in districts Vidin - 22.8‰ and Montana - 21.3‰, followed by Kyustendil (19.5‰), Vratsa, Gabrovo and Pernik (19.4‰ in each of them). There are seven districts where the mortality rate is lower than the country average and in one, district Sliven - it is equal to the country one. Lowest is the mortality rate in districts Sofia (stolitsa) - 11.9‰, Kardzhali - 12.6‰ and Varna - 12.7‰.

**Figure 9. Mortality rate in 2015 by districts**



**The premature mortality<sup>1</sup> in 2015 (21.4%) decreased compared to 2014 (22.4%).** There are considerable differences in the premature mortality indicator for male and female population, but the last also decreased. The dead females aged up to 64 represent 13.9% of all dead females, while among the males it is 28.3%. In 2014 the difference between the two sexes was 14.8% and in 2015 it decreased to 14.5%.

**There are 434 children who die up to 1 year of age in 2015 and the infant mortality rate<sup>2</sup> is 6.6‰.** The last is the lowest one registered in the country. The infant mortality has been 14.4‰ in 2001, 10.4‰ in 2005 and 7.6‰ in 2014.

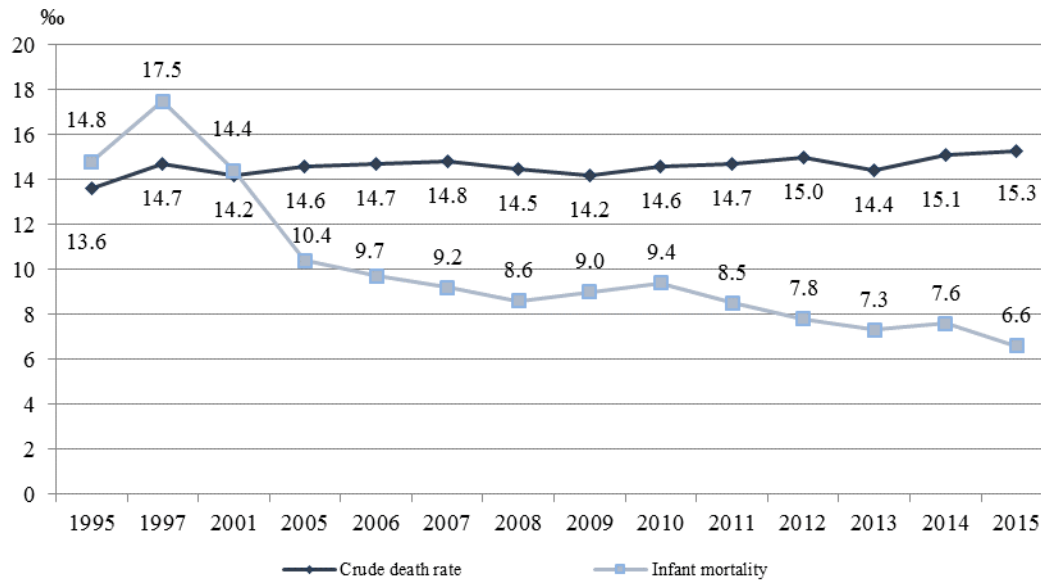
The infant mortality rate for 2015 is lower than the country average in 13 districts. Lowest values are registered in districts Sofia (stolitsa) - 2.5‰, Kyustendil - 3.2‰ and Gabrovo - 3.8‰. Highest infant mortality rate is registered in district Lovech (12.9‰) and Sliven (12.8‰).

<sup>1</sup> Share of deaths of persons below 65 years of age of the total number of deaths.

<sup>2</sup> Number of children who die up to 1 year of age per 1 000 live born.



**Figure 10. Crude death rate and infant mortality rate**

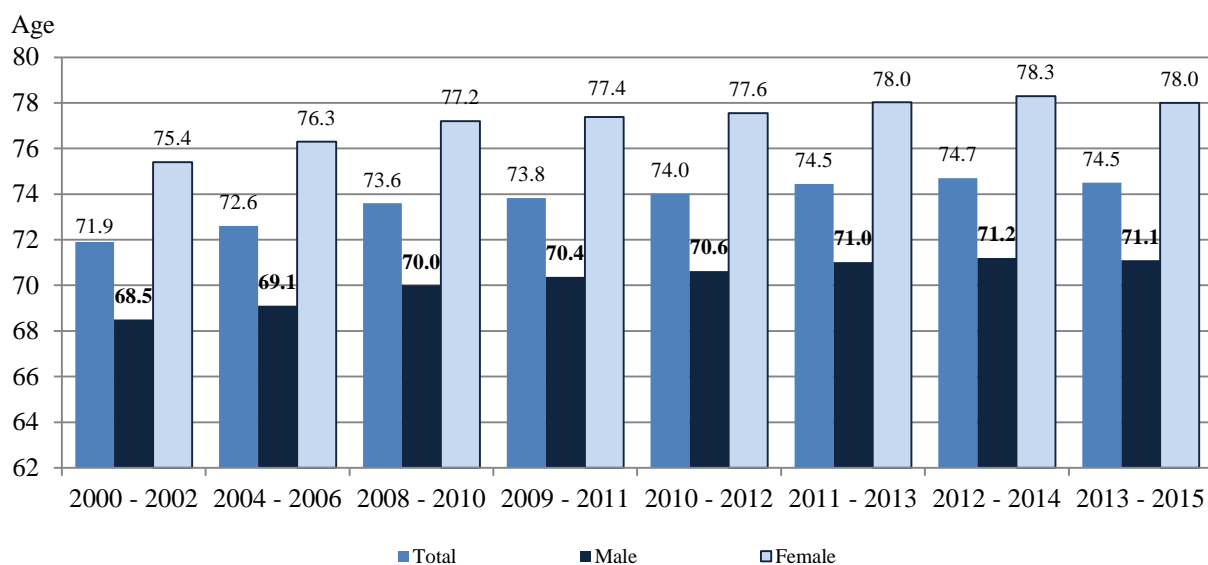


The different mortality rates among male and female population, as well as among the urban and rural population determine the difference in the life expectancy for separate population groups.

**Life expectancy for the country<sup>1</sup>, calculated for the period 2013 - 2015 is 74.5 years.** Compared to the previous period it decreases by 0.2 years.

The life expectancy of male population is 71.1 years, whereas of female - 6.9 years higher or 78.0 years. The life expectancy of urban population (75.3 years) is 2.7 years higher than of rural one (72.6 years).

**Figure 11. Life expectancy by sex and periods**



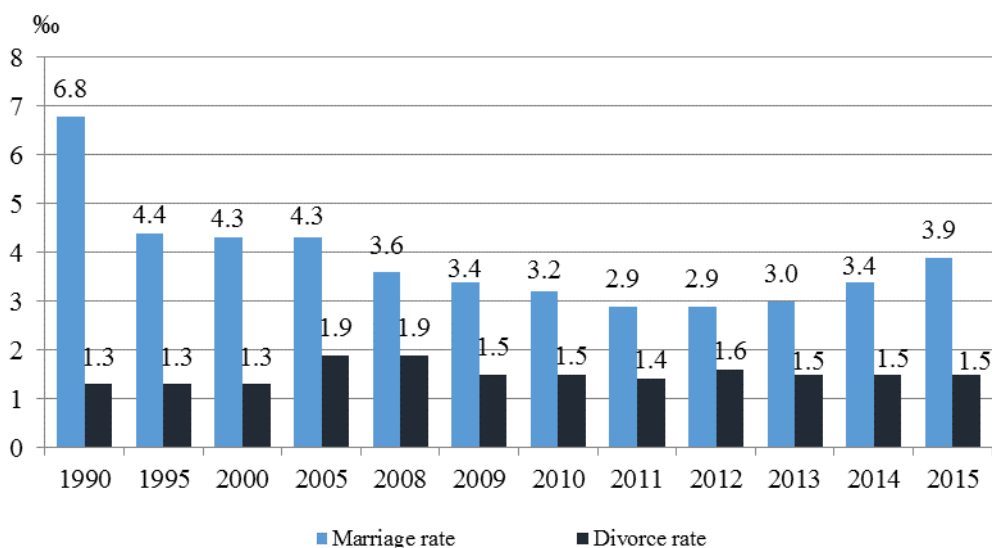
<sup>1</sup> Preliminary data.



## Marriages and divorces

There are 27 720 juridical marriages registered in 2015, or 3 124 more than the previous year.  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the total marriages number (20 795) are registered among urban population and 6 925 - among rural. The marriage rate<sup>1</sup> is 3.9‰, compared to 3.4‰ in 2014 and 4.0‰ in 2001.

**Figure 12. Marriage and divorce rates (per 1 000 population)**



The mean age at first marriage in 2015 is 30.9 years for males and 27.8 - for females. Compared to the previous year, the mean age at first marriage has increased by 0.3 years both for males and females.

Highest is the marriage rate in districts Dobrich and Kardzhali - 5.1‰ and 5.0‰ respectively. Lowest is the marriage rate in districts Smolyan - 2.3‰ and Vratsa - 2.1‰.

**The number of divorces in 2015 is 10 483** or 101 less than in 2014. Out of the total number of divorces, 82.3% refers to the urban population.

Highest is the number of divorces by 'mutual agreement' (64.1%), followed by divorces due to 'incompatibility of temperament' (27.3%) and 'virtual parting' (6.3%).

The average duration of a marriage before the divorce in 2015 is 15.3 years.

## Internal and international migration

**119 202 persons changed their residence within the country in 2015.** Among the migrants within the country, 47.7% are male and 52.3% - female.

Highest is the share of internal migrants aged 20 - 39 years (35.3%), followed by persons aged 40 - 59 years (22.6%) and persons below 20 years of age (21.5%).

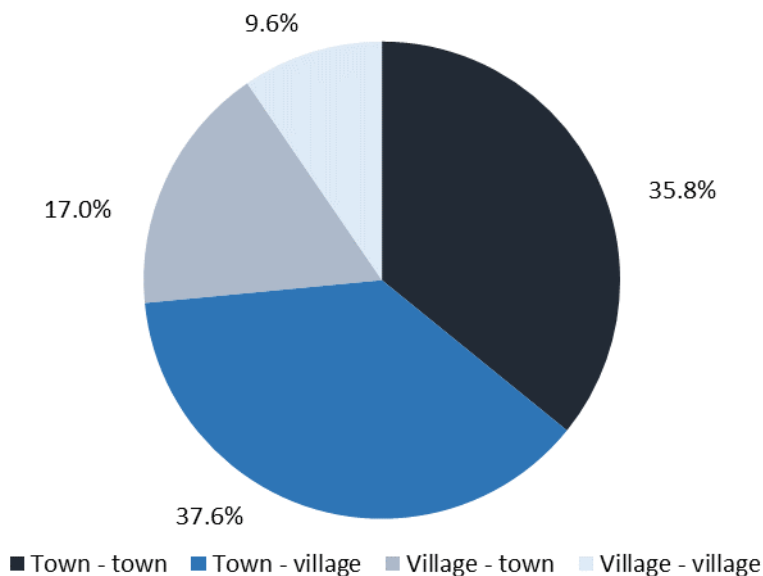
The share of flow 'town - village' is highest one (37.6%), followed by the flow 'town-town' - 35.8%. Considerably lower are the number and share of the flows 'village - town' (17.0%) and 'village - village' (9.6%).

<sup>1</sup> Number of marriages per 1 000 population.





**Figure 13. Directions of the internal migration in 2015**



Out of the internal migrants, highest is the number of people who migrated to Sofia (stolitsa) - 17 800. Districts with highest shares of migrants to Sofia (stolitsa) are Sofia - 8.9%, Blagoevgrad - 7.5%, Plovdiv - 6.1% and Vratsa - 4.7%.

Lowest are the shares of migrants to Sofia (stolitsa) from districts Razgrad and Silistra - 0.8% and 0.9% respectively.

**29 470 persons changed their current address in Bulgaria with an address abroad in 2015** - 52.1% male. 43.6% of the emigrants are aged 20 to 39 years. Emigrants aged 40 - 59 years represent 25.3%. The youngest emigrants (under 20 years) are 17.5% of the total number and the emigrants over 60 years of age - 13.5%.

Most preferred destination countries are Germany (23.0%), the United Kingdom (14.3%) and Spain (11.5%).

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 25 223 persons who have changed their address abroad with an address in Bulgaria in 2015.** Male represent 53.5% of the total number of immigrants and female - 45.5%.

Among the immigrants to Bulgaria, 35.4% are aged 20 - 39 years and 29.9% - 40 to 59 years. The youngest immigrants (under 20 years) are 17.2% and the oldest, over 60 years of age - 17.5%.

Highest is the share of immigrants from Turkey (24.3%), Syria (15.9%) and the Russian Federation (14.0%).





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**The natural increase rate for EU-28 in 2014 is 0.4‰.**

In 17 EU member states the natural increase is positive and highest is the rate in Ireland (8.3‰), Cyprus (4.7‰) and Luxembourg (4.0‰). Except in Bulgaria, rather high negative natural increase is registered in Latvia and Lithuania (-3.4‰) and in Hungary (-3.3‰).

Net migration (growth due to international migration) influences considerably the population number and structures. The net migration growth in 2015 is also negative - minus 4 247 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 0.1‰<sup>1</sup>.

There are six districts with a positive migration growth in 2015: Sofia (5.5‰), Sofia (stolitsa) - (4.2‰), Burgas (2.7‰), Haskovo (2.5‰), Varna (1.6‰) and Plovdiv (1.4‰).

Highest population decrease due to the negative migration growth is registered in districts Smolyan (-12.9‰), Razgrad (-7.0‰) and Vratsa (-6.9‰).

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<sup>1</sup> 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 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.