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Social Impact of Emigration and Rural-Urban Migration in Central and Eastern Europe

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1. Socio-Economic and Political Overview

Since 1989 onwards Bulgaria has undertaken a very difficult and painful transition from a state-planned to a market type economy. Radical reforms began like land restitution, privatization of state ownership and others. Stabilization policies were initially successful in containing budget deficit and inflation. The newly created environment for private small business fostered entry by new private firms, mainly in trade and services. Debt reduction agreements improved to a certain extent Bulgaria's external debt situation. It was however, insufficient for the economic recovery. By official data of National Statistical Institute (NSI) the cumulative decline for the first half of the 1990s was of over 30% in GDP, of nearly 50% in industrial production, and by over 60% in real wages. These trends were accompanied by a rapid increase in the unemployment level: from 1.7% in 1990 to 16.4% in 1993 (Table 1). The decline in Bulgaria's output was much more pronounced than in other Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries, as the country was more affected by the break-up of the former Council of Mutual Economic Assistance and by the price increases in energy imports from the former Soviet Union, as the main energy source of the country. Bulgaria also suffered from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia¹ and loss of markets in the former Soviet Union and some Arab countries². But political instability and very slow implementation of reforms were fundamental to the severe downturn and lack of progress. Over the period 1990-1997 seven governments changed in Bulgaria, each one supported by different political forces. These changes led to inconsistencies in economic policy, impeding the achievements of macroeconomics stabilization and causing much disputed criticism in society.

Political and economic changes in the first half of 1997 aimed to stabilize the economy and to restore confidence. The programme agreed with the IMF entailed the introduction of a currency board regime (since 1 July 1997), price liberalization, and a major acceleration of privatization. In general, the programme was with a strong emphasis on structural reforms. A high priority of the country was the process of preparation to join the EU. As a result of a prudent fiscal policy and well considered structural reforms in the context of the acting currency board, Bulgaria achieved good economic performance over the first years of the new century. The country has achieved good financial stabilization and has turned the corner towards steady and significant GDP growth over the last decade, by NSI data: from 5.4% in 2000 to 6.7 % in 2004, and 6.2% in 2008 (Table 2). The unemployment rate showed a very significant decline: from 17.9% in 2000, to 13.7% in 2002, and 6.9% in 2008 (Figure 1). The control of inflation allowed for a stabilization of consumption, incomes and investments.

Because of the current economic crisis, GDP marked a sharp drop to -5.5% in 2009, followed by a very slow recovery – with an increase to 0.4% in 2010 and 1.7% in 2011.³ The deterioration of the business climate and the drop in the index of industrial production reverse the prospective for further positive development of the economy. A deficit in the budget appears for the first time since 2002.

It is widely recognized that the positive economic real growth in Bulgaria in 2004-2008 was largely due to Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). The FDI inflows were significant for the external financing of the Bulgarian economy: the yearly average of FDI amounted to EUR 3.393 billion, and have accumulated to EUR 37.326 billion over the period 2000-2010. The

¹ Due to the imposed trade, economic and financial interdictions on the former Yugoslavia (the so-called Yugo-embargo, 1992-1998) Bulgaria suffered from huge losses because of the country's isolation: broken transport corridors, exports and imports of raw petrol. Under the given circumstances organised criminality and corruption were developed in the country, which caused the long time continued decay in the state institutions. See: Народно Събрание (1998): Концепция за националната сигурност на Република България, Член 13. (National Assembly (1998): Conception of the National Security in Republic of Bulgaria. Article 13). http://www.online.bg/Docs/national_security.htm (accessed: 26.10.2011).

² This refers to the broken economic and trade relations with a number of countries, including Arab countries, and mainly the Gulf War (1990-1991) between Iraq and the United (coalition) Forces of 34 countries led by the USA (respectively the operation Desert Shield) and, consequently the impossibility of Iraq to pay off its huge debt to Bulgaria.

³ See: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=10&a1=813&a2=814&a3=815#cont>.

economic sectors that have been the “locomotives” of this process were real estate activities, investments in business activities, financial intermediation, and manufacturing sector. However, the global financial and economic crisis caused a drastic drop of FDI inflows in the country: according to data of the Bulgarian National Bank (BNB) the pick of FDI in Bulgaria was in 2007, when they amounted to EUR 9.052 million (nearly 22% of GDP), in 2008 they decreased to EUR 6.697 million and further keep decreasing – to EUR 3.213 million in 2009 and EUR 1.639 million in 2010 (Figure 2; see BNB, 2011a). The severe drop of the FDI inflows entails big problems on the labour market and shrunk domestic consumption.

In terms of the level of the economic development, however, the country has one of the lowest per capita income among EU countries. In 2010 the GDP per capita in Bulgaria was only 44% of the average in the EU27 (NSI, 2011a). The number of persons below the at-risk-of-poverty threshold has been gradually growing despite the increasing active labour policy and social state assistances – from 1,417,000 in 2005 to 1,565,000 in 2009. By NSI data, the rate of persons at-risk-of-poverty, after the receipt of social assistance, increased from 14% of the total population in 2000, to 18.4% in 2005 and to 20.7% in 2009.⁴

The political and economic transformation impacts strongly on the demographic processes in Bulgaria, in particular reproductive behaviour and people’s mobility. Since 1990 Bulgaria’s population has aged drastically and now by UN data it ranks among the five countries in the world with the largest share of population over age 60 (UN, 2008). Before 1990 the rate of natural increase in population was positive although continuously dropping; after that and until now it is negative, around -5.0 per 1,000 population (Table 3). Throughout the last 20 years the country faced marked depopulation - from nearly 9 million inhabitants in 1989 to 7.365 million in 2011. By data of the 2011 Census the population number has decreased by 581,750 within the last 10 years (2001-2011), as the natural decrease in population causes two thirds of this reduction (68.9%) and the external migration causes nearly one third (31.1%).⁵ The latter means that 192,663 people or 2.62% of the total population have migrated out of the country.

Based on the voluntary self-identification by the interviewees in the 2011 Population Census, the distribution of population by ethnic origin is following: ethnic Bulgarians strongly predominate over other groups (84.8% of the total population); Bulgarians of Turkish origin account for 8.8%, the Roma for 4.9%, and other ethnic groups for 1.5% of the total population (NSI, 2011c).

Since 1989 onwards the Bulgaria’s transition to a market economy was accompanied by the consequences of a large-scale emigration. Bulgaria was among the most concerned countries in the region regarding the socio-economic crisis in the 1990s in terms of the so-called ‘push factor’. People in the country are strongly inclined to emigrate. The main reasons for migration from Bulgaria were the following: lifting the administrative barriers and restrictions for travelling abroad; low living standards in the country; increasing unemployment; political and economic instability; lack of legislation on business activity, pursuit a career, staying with relatives, education, etc. (Table 4).⁶ Except internal factors for

⁴ The poverty line is 60% of the average total disposable net income per equivalent unit. The most recent data sent to and validated by Eurostat refer to 2009. According to them the poverty line is EUR 148 average per month per person. Taking into account this size of the poverty line in 2009 below the poverty line lived 1, 565,000 persons, representing 20.7% of the country population. Bulgaria is among the countries with the highest at-risk-of-poverty rate in the EU. See: NSI, (2011b) (actually 21,25%).

⁵ By Population Census data while in 2001 every 100 going out working age persons have been replaced by 124 young people and in 2011 every 100 going out working age persons have been replaced only by 70 young people. See NSI, (2011c).

⁶ Surveys of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) facilitate an analysis of them from a quantitative perspective. According to the data in Table 4 for the vast majority of Bulgarians, the main reason for migration in 2001 was economic hardship in the home country (77.1%). The second reason for migration (although pointed out by only 6.8% of respondents) was disappointment with Bulgaria. Some people were disappointed in the path and speed of the transformation to a market economy. The political, social and economic changes did not correspond to their own expectations. Part of these people look at the political changes with distrust and do not see a good perspective for the country in the near future. Contrary to the achieved political and economic progress in the country at the end of the 1990s, the proportion of disappointed people in 2001 is higher than that

migration external factors also played a role, such as a favourable economic environment, demand for labour, development of new high-technology industries and market niches, better pay and career opportunities in the receiving countries.

The Bulgarian reality of the past two decades proves that out-migration is simultaneously influenced by an excessively diverse and complex set of "push" and "pull" factors, some of which are more informative for one population category and the rest - for another.

2. Main emigration and internal migration trends and patterns

2.1. Main emigration trends

An essential problem faced by experts is the lack of consistent statistics on migration from Bulgaria.⁷ Available data is not complete for various reasons, e.g. as emigrants who left the country in various informal ways are not included in statistics.⁸ It is difficult to obtain a precise estimate on total number of out-migrants from Bulgaria and only few attempts have been made until now.

Since the beginning of transition to market reform after 1989, the Bulgarian Diaspora is estimated at 1.2 million people or 15.8% of the population in 2008 (Christova-Balkanska, 2011: 69-103). Similarly the World Bank estimates the number of emigrants using data from the census, population registers and other sources in the receiving countries. The stock of emigrants from Bulgaria was estimated to be about 1,200,600 people in 2010, which represents 16% of the total population (World Bank, 2011: 1) with the most relevant population groups born in Bulgaria living in the following countries: Turkey (540,000) followed by Spain (173,000), Germany (75,000), Greece (54,000) and Italy (43,530). It should be noted that these data include also persons born in Bulgaria who have emigrated earlier than 1990. Furthermore, the National Strategy for Migration and Integration 2008–2015 provides estimates for other important destination countries (Table 7) such as the USA (max. 200,000) and the UK (over 60,000).

In the following paragraphs, we will outline the main phases of emigration that lead to the above described emigrant populations.

A massive out-migration from Bulgaria has been observed in 1989, just before the collapse of the socialist system in Central and Eastern Europe. This could be regarded in itself as the *first emigration period* (Rangelova et al., 2006: 43-66). It was connected mainly with emigration to and settlement of Bulgarians of Turkish origin in Turkey who were automatically granted there Turkish citizenship. The specificity of the migration from this period was the ethnical and political nature of migration and reestablishing family relations. According to official data over 218,000 people left the country in 1989 directed mainly to Turkey (Kalchev, 2001: 138).⁹ The situation in the country of destination did not appear to be as satisfactory as expected by some Bulgarians of Turkish origin and only some months after the fall of the communist regime parts of them began returning to Bulgaria. This was made possible with

in the very hard 1996. At the same time career development is a factor marking a significant increase in 2001 in comparison with 1996. See: IOM (2001).

⁷ The lack of reliable, long-term, and comprehensive statistical data on migration is a big challenge when formulating an effective policy, especially considering concrete and specific aspects of migration. See: OSI (2010), p. 52. As the authors of this report declare: "A major challenge faced by the study was the lack of comprehensive, reliable, and accessible statistical information, and also details on the methodology of data collection which would have facilitated its analysis."

⁸ To provide stable numbers for respective years and countries of destination is also quite difficult due to the fact that most of the studies are qualitative and not quantitative and their authors focus on particular issues such as asylum seekers in late 1980s. The NSI counts only numbers of Bulgarians who have notified the authorities in Bulgaria that they live/work abroad which is rarely the case.

⁹ This outflow of Bulgarian Turks known as "the Big Excursion" was a reaction to the Bulgarian Government decision in 1985 to force them administratively to change their Turkish names for Bulgarians.

the change of legislation which allowed them to come back. Parts of them migrated further to Germany, Austria etc. (Sultanova, 2006: 164).¹⁰

The last decade of the 20th century (1990-2001) could be defined as the *second emigration period* of out-migration from Bulgaria. The unstable economic and political situation in the country forced the economic nature of migration and out-migrants became selective in choosing a destination country because of the different possibilities for migration.

For this period, there are two official but conflicting data sets on emigration provided by the NSI: the first one is based on a comparison between data from the Population Censuses in 1992 and 2001 while the second one uses border police data combined with special inquiries among travelers at selected border points between 1991 and 1996 (Guentcheva et al., 2003: 16). Depending on the fixed period and used methods for calculation data on migration scale varies. Some sources other than the above mentioned point out 715,000 emigrated people from Bulgaria for the period 1989-2002 thus assuming much higher levels of emigration (Republic of Bulgaria, 2008: 17). The source of this number is not provided but it is similar to the estimates based on border police data combined with inquiries among Bulgarians at selected border points in the 1990s. The net migration for 1989-2000 is estimated at ranging between 640,000 and 670,000 (Kalchev, 2001: 213-214).¹¹ This figure seems to be much more likely than that based on the Census data.

The social and demographic status of migrants changed in this period to younger and well-educated migrants (Christova-Balkanska, 2010: 65-84.). Since the early 1990s a large number of people has emigrated from Bulgaria headed mainly to Germany, USA, Canada and other (mainly) European countries. In the early 1990s many Bulgarians were also seeking asylum in Western European countries and Germany became a main destination. According to NSI Population Census 2001 data, Germany ranked as the number one destination country for Bulgarian emigrants (at 23%) during this period, with the USA second with 19%. Other preferred destinations were Greece and Spain (8 %), the United Kingdom and Italy (6 %), Canada (5%) and France (4%).¹² A comparison with data collected by the receiving countries shows a similar picture. For Germany, statistics on foreign citizens recorded about 6,000 Bulgarians citizens in 1989. While in 1990 the number was about 15,000, it peaked at about 59,000 in 1992 and stabilized at 34,360 in 2000 (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2005: 22-23). There was also irregular migration to Southern European states like Greece, Italy and Spain in this period which can be seen from the presence of Bulgarian migrants in regularisation programmes of these states (Baldwin-Edwards/Kraler, 2009).

The nature of external migration began to change in the conditions of the improved social and economic and stabilized political environment in Bulgaria during the first decade of the new century. The period 2002-2006 could be called the *third migration period*. It was characterized by an increased attractiveness of the country because of the expectation of EU accession and by a shift from long-term to short-term and circulate migration. The emigrant out-flows from Bulgaria slowed down during this period but still outnumbered the in-flows to the country. The International Migration Outlook published annually by the OECD points to overall 60,000-100,000 persons who emigrated from Bulgaria from 2001 to 2004 (OECD, 2006: 170) and to 10,000-12,000 annual emigration in 2005 and 2006 (OECD, 2007: 236).

In the beginning of the *third period of migration*, migration trends were influenced by a change in the cross-national regulations within the EU. Bulgaria was removed from the so-called Schengen Black List and was placed on the so-called Schengen White List in 2001,

¹⁰ Since EU accession of Bulgaria (2007) Bulgarians of Turkish origin have activated returning their Bulgarian citizenship.

¹¹ According to J. Kalchev, Director of Population Department at the NSI. See: Kalchev (2001), pp. 213-214. Similar are the data that since 1990 to 2008 between 500,000 and 700,000 Bulgarian citizens have emigrated.

¹² According to the NSI data, delivered by the Secretary of the Central Census Committee J. Kalchev, March 2001.

i.e. since then Bulgarian citizens are allowed to travel visa-free and to stay up to three months in 15 other western European countries of the Schengen area.¹³

From 2001 onwards changes occurred in the structure of the Bulgarian migration. The share of young people aged 20-29 with low qualifications and education increased and they became the biggest group of emigrants (Mintchev/Boschnakov, 2006a: 23-47). Due to the active credit policies and investment boom in the construction sector, infrastructure projects and other activities, the labour market of these countries opened to the inflow of foreign workers. There are various arguments asserting that after 2001, a tendency towards seasonal¹⁴ rather than permanent migration took place related to temporary mobility of low-skilled labour force. According to a report (Mintchev et al., 2004: 137-162), relying on two sociological surveys, “during the two years period (2001-2003) a trend is observed, although insufficiently clear-cut, towards a decline of settlers in favour of those, who prefer a temporary stay abroad”.

Furthermore, the direction of migrants’ out-flows changed towards countries of Southern Europe (Greece, Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Cyprus). For instance, the flows of Bulgarian emigrants to Spain had increased from 6,494 in 2000 to 21,748 in 2006, which contributed to the tremendous increase of the stock of migrants living in the country from 2,685 in 2000 to 101,975 in 2006 (Eurostat database) and over 171,000 in 2011.¹⁵ However, some of these stock increases reflect regularisations of irregular migration that took place earlier – a total of about 31,000 regularisations between 2000 and 2005 (Baldwin-Edwards and Kraler, 2009: 88). Germany also remained an important destination country. The number of Bulgarian citizens in Germany has increased by almost 50% in the period 1999-2007, whereby the share of women has been exceeding the share of men since 2003 (Table 5). At the end of 2007 about 47,000 Bulgarian citizens were registered in Germany thus representing 0.6% of the foreign citizens in Germany (Statistisches Bundesamt, 2008: 25).

The next, *fourth emigration period* started in 2007 when Bulgaria joined the European Union. Similar to other new Member States such as Romania and eight of the ten accession countries in May 2004, transitional measures on the free movement of workers were introduced to Bulgaria.¹⁶ Accordingly, each Member State may restrict the access to its labour market up to seven years divided into three phases of 2+3+2 years. Currently, 17 EU Member States canceled the restrictions for Bulgarian workers and four still apply full restrictions or such with some simplifications.¹⁷

The fourth emigration period is marked by economic progress and an increase of labour demand in Bulgaria, in particular in the years 2007 and 2008. The motive for emigration “earning money” was replaced by other values – the prospects of a professional career as a long-term resource for personal prosperity and self-respect (Mintchev, 2009: 44-62). After 2008 and up to the present the country fell under the conditions of the global financial and economic crisis: increase in unemployment, rapid reduction of labour demand, and uncertain indications for the economy’s recovery.

Since 2007 the NSI annually delivers data on migration flows from and to Bulgaria by sex and age groups based on the number of processed official announcements for change of the place of residence from Bulgaria to another country and vice versa.¹⁸ Although it probably

¹³ It should be noted that until 01.01.2007 Bulgarian citizens had no right to stay longer than three months within the Schengen countries without a residence permit. At present (2011) the country is just before entering the Schengen area.

¹⁴ Seasonal migration mainly to Spain, Greece and southern European countries.

¹⁵ By official data of the address register in December 2011, there were 171,769 Bulgarians in Spain, which makes 3% of the foreign population there. See: Chaneva, (2012).

¹⁶ See: European Commission, Free Movement – EU nationals. http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/free_movement/docs/transition_en.pdf (accessed: 25.12.2011).

¹⁷ They are as follows: the United Kingdom, Ireland, Belgium and the Netherlands. Germany opened the labour market for people with higher education and seasonal workers as from 01.01.2012; a position is expected from France, Denmark, Malta and Luxembourg. See: Summary table of EU Member States policies as of 11 August 2011, <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=466&langId=en> (accessed: 24.11.2011).

¹⁸ However, access to raw data is not always easy and the data itself is often contradictory.

covers only a limited share of actual migration movements, it can be interpreted with regard to some trends (Table 6):

First, over the last several years, in particular after Bulgaria's accession into the EU there has been a growing trend of immigration in the country. Still however immigrants are much less in number than the emigrants;¹⁹

Second, the number of emigrants soared in the years of the economic crisis. The years 2007 and 2008 were ones of the best in terms of economic progress in Bulgaria during the last 20 years. Nevertheless, in 2009 the economic situation deteriorated and the number of people who left the country sharply increased from 2,112 in 2008 to 19,039 in 2009, even reaching 27,708 in 2010. As a consequence, the negative net migration balance changed respectively from -1,397 in 2007 to -24,190 in 2010. This means that in spite of the crisis affecting other (destination) countries, still more people preferred to emigrate.

Third, for the fourth observed years in succession the number of female migrants is much higher than that of male. For example in 2010 among the total number of emigrated people 12,607 (45.5%) were men and 15,101 were women (54.5%).

In the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria for Migration and Integration (2008-2015) is claimed that the outlined trends will result in a mutual compensation between the two flows in the period between 2013 and 2015. After that, along with the expected positive economic developments, Bulgaria may gradually turn from a country of prevailing emigration flows into a country of predominant immigration flows. This process will lead – even though in a limited scope – to a positive migration balance even before 2020 (Republic of Bulgaria, 2008: 12). Given the current migration trends however there are no sound grounds to confirm this perspective.

In fact the international migration of Bulgarian citizens in the fourth period is to a large extent within the framework of intra-European cross-border mobility – a phenomenon intensely revitalized in the continent during the reforms in CEE countries and especially after recent Eastern EU enlargements. According to Eurostat, 91,000 Bulgarian citizens emigrated to another EU Member State in 2008 thus ranking at third place of main EU sending countries after Romania and Poland (Eurostat, 2011: 5). By latest data confirmed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (MLSP) in Bulgaria, most Bulgarians work in Spain (over 171,000), followed by Greece (nearly 120,000 as about 70,000 are permanently staying there), the United Kingdom (70,000), Germany (60,000). Data from the receiving countries as provided by Eurostat points to much higher flows than data provided by the NSI, which can be explained by differences in the data collection process.

After the overview of the periods of Bulgarian emigration since 1990, some of the main features of Bulgarian emigration are addressed in the following:

A special study conducted by the European Migration Network (EMN) analysed the role and place of modern and wide spread forms of temporary and circular migration among other forms of labour migration in political strategies and programmes in Bulgaria. The major conclusion is that “emigration attitudes of Bulgarian citizens demonstrate clear preference of temporary migration. Bulgarians who are prepared to work for a certain period of time abroad and then return to live and work in their native country, are twice the number of those who would prefer to settle abroad. The actual average duration of stay abroad of returned Bulgarian citizens is 13 months; the desired duration, however, is longer: the majority of potential emigrants would definitely prefer to stay longer than a year” (EMN, 2011b: 3).

In Bulgaria, like in other countries, the practice is observed that first-wave migration generates second-wave migration from the same region in the country, based on family and relatives' networks. This practice is known for Bulgarians migrating to Spain, Italy, and other

¹⁹ According to World Bank (2011) stock of migrants in Bulgaria in 2010 is 107,200, which is only 1.4% of the total population (while the share of emigrants is 16%). In comparison to that, the stock of the registered foreign citizens in Bulgaria at the beginning of 2007 accounts for 55,684, and in 2010 is already 107,200 (See: Republic of Bulgaria, National Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria for Migration and Integration, 2008-2015, p. 9).

European countries. It aggravates depopulation in the (mostly backward) regions in the country of origin, and worsens their economic and social positions.²⁰ If large part of the mobile people from a depressed region leaves the country, intra-country regional differences are likely to widen and catching-up chances will be reduced.²¹

Concerning the return of emigrants, in fact one could not rely on the mass declared intention of migrants to return to their home country. Empirical evidence shows different behaviour, even if many people who have intended to do so, in fact stay in the receiving country.²² There is a lack of summarized data on returnees, but anyway there is no clear evidence for a significant inflow of returns (Mintchev/Boshnakov, 2006b).

A survey among Bulgarian students in Germany gives evidence of their intention to return in the country of origin (Christova-Balkanska/Naidenova, 2010: 9-42).²³ Nearly 60% of the interviewed Bulgarian students and graduates in Germany see their professional realization only outside Bulgaria. Further the survey reveals that 32% of the respondents believe that in the short term their professional future is in Germany and 53% are more likely to stay and work abroad. Around 11% of the respondents would prefer to return to Bulgaria and only 4% are determined to return back to their home country.

In July 2011 a survey was organized among Bulgarian emigrants in Spain.²⁴ The most striking findings are about the emigrants' reluctance to come back to their own country. Only 5% of the respondents claim that they plan to return in the near future, while 73% categorically refuse this idea, and 18% hesitate. The unemployment among Bulgarians in Spain is very high (27%), but nevertheless most of them prefer to stay there. This could be explained first of all with the low level of income in Bulgaria. At present most Bulgarians earn in Spain between EUR 400 and 800 per month, 27% earn between EUR 800 and 1,200, and almost 7% more than EUR 1,600. In comparison to that, the average monthly wage in Bulgaria for the first three months in 2010 accounted for about 313 EUR (619 BGN) which is significantly lower than the income in Spain and other EU countries.²⁵

The inflow of remittances has been increasing in recent years, in particular in 2010 (Figure 2 and Figure 3). The ongoing process of rising remittances supports the argument that despite

²⁰ See: Tzekov, N. (2011): Цекон Н. (2011) България - пуста, белокоса и бетонирана (Bulgaria: uninhabited, white-haired and concrete), Deutsche Welle On line: <http://www.infobulgaria.info/news.php?itm=15252> (accessed 28.12.2011).

²¹ However, this aspect has not yet been studied up to now.

²² It is indicative of the reluctance of many Bulgarians nowadays to return home from Libya in spite of the political turmoil there. In the spring and summer time of 2011 the Minister of Foreign Affairs Mr. N. Mladenov officially appealed to them several times on behalf of the Bulgarian Government to come back for their safety but most of them have declared that they prefer to stay in Libya. Many Bulgarian emigrants say that to live abroad than in their country of origin is a better option even if you are unemployed. Bulgarians living in the London turmoil districts in 2011 have reacted in the same way. They shared the view that whatever would happen, there they were not going to return to Bulgaria, which "could not offer anything to them". The same situation prevails in Syria, the unstable Iraq or any other dangerous place in the world. Migrants summarized that in "peaceful" Bulgaria the situation is helpless. See: Bulgarians for Exports, <http://www.dw.de/dw/article/0,,15313650,00.html>, (accessed 21.05.2012). At the website of the State President of the Republic of Bulgaria is pointed out that within the last 10 years, nearly 5,000 Bulgarians renounced Bulgarian citizenship. The main reasons are the restrictions imposed in some receiving countries concerning dual nationality (like Germany, Russia), <http://www.blitz.bg/news/article/124879> (accessed 15.12.2011). See also Interview with V. Mintchev. Actualno.com: "Българите станали трудови номади" ("Bulgarians Have Become Labour Nomads"), http://business.actualno.com/news_359109.html (accessed 21.05.2012).

²³ The respondents are 910 Bulgarian students in Germany, mainly studying economics, informatics, sociology and mass media. The survey has been conducted in 2008 by a team of students from the University of Mannheim (Germany).

²⁴ The survey was organized and conducted by the Economic Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and covered 560 Bulgarians in 24 settlements. It is representative for two thirds of the population there. The survey is financed by the National Fund for Scientific Research to the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science. See: Деница Райкова, Ралица Пейчева: "Българските емигранти не желаят да се връщат в родината" (SEGA (newspaper), "Bulgarian emigrants do not want to return to their own country", 20 July 2011, Issue 164 (4148), Year XIV, pp. 1-2, <http://segabg.com/online/new/articlenu.asp?issueid=9712§ionid=16&id=0000101> (accessed: 31.11.2011).

²⁵ For wages in Bulgaria see: NSI, Labour market – data tables: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=51> (accessed: 10.01.2012).

the deterioration of the economic climate in the receiving countries and the job losses, the Bulgarian migrants continue to work and there is no evidence of a large-scale process of their returning back to the country of origin. The global economic crisis led to reduced employment in many labour niches in the receiving countries but few Bulgarian emigrants have come back to Bulgaria. The return of highly-educated young people is unlikely, with the exception of a few of them who are more attracted by family values. The economic crisis is expected to have an impact on the trend of emigration of Bulgaria, for instance, by impacting the intention to emigrate to countries hit severely by the crisis such as Greece and Spain which may decrease for the short-term. Given that the global economic crisis is also affecting Bulgaria's economy migrants prefer to stay in the receiving countries (wherever they are) and hope to find a new job, not in the least because there can benefit from a well-developed social policy in the receiving countries which provides better security than at home. Some of the migrants point out that even if they are forced by the circumstances to return to Bulgaria, they would quickly look for other opportunities to go abroad for a long time. They believe that the economic crisis in Bulgaria has a permanent character and is deeper than in other EU Member States (Markova, 2009; Christova-Balkanska, 2010: 65-84).

2.2. Main internal migration trends

Territorial subdivision of Bulgaria

The Republic of Bulgaria is situated in the South East part of Europe; it has a total territory of 111,000 square kilometers. According to the EU methodology (and terminology) the country is divided into 6 planning (called also statistical) regions (NUTS 2), 28 districts (NUTS 3, see Figure 5) and 264 municipalities (LAU 1). The six planning regions are North-West (regarded as the poorest region), North-Central, North-East (where the big Black Seaside town of Varna is located), South-East (where the other important Black Seaside town of Burgas is located), South-West (where Sofia, the capital city, is located) and South-Central (where the second largest town of the country, Plovdiv, is located - see Figure 4).

According to the national definition of rural areas, 231 out of total of 264 municipalities in Bulgaria are classified as rural (Figure 6).²⁶ The ratio between urban and rural inhabitants is relatively constant, although slowly increasing in favour of the urban areas. By data of the 1992 Population Census this ratio is 67.2% to 32.8%; of the 2001 Population Census – 69.0% to 31.0% and of the 2011 Population Census - 72.5% to 27.5%. By data of 2004 the population density in the rural areas is half the national average: 35.8 vs. 69.9 total inhabitants per square kilometer (Table 8).

The average number of the population in rural municipalities is 13,800, but there are significant differences among them. About 40% of the rural municipalities are of small size – with population below 10,000 people, and almost one third of the municipalities in this group have less than 5,000 people. There are only 18 rural municipalities with population above 30,000 (ibid.: 8).

Main trends and developments in internal migration

The migration within the country indicates that the ongoing transformation processes reflects the external migration as well as the economic policy efficiency. Available data (Table 9) on internal migration shows that the large-scale urbanization throughout the second half of the 20th century finished in Bulgaria at the end of the 1980s, and since 1990 onwards a comparatively stable structure of migration flows between urban and rural areas is observed. The highest share in internal migration flows was „town-to-town” migration, which is the only one which has been increasing - from 39.2% of all registered internal migration movements in the first half of the 1990s to 44.5% in 2010. Nearly two thirds (66.8%) of all internal migrants on the last a few years are coming out from the towns, and most of the (44.5%)

²⁶ The national definition of rural areas defines rural areas as municipalities (LAU 1), in which no settlement has a population over 30,000 people. This definition is applied in the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 for territorially based interventions. See: Republic of Bulgaria, (2009b): Rural Development Programme (2007-2013).

migrated again to towns. This has implied people moving from smaller towns to bigger ones and particularly to the several biggest cities in the country – mainly Sofia, followed by Varna, Burgas, and Plovdiv. Sofia in particular is only a temporary residence for a part of the migrants who have better opportunities to arrange international migration from Sofia than from other places. As a Bulgarian expert remarks (Mintchev, 2010), this can be explained by the importance of Sofia as leading university centre with a high proportion of students willing to continue their education in foreign universities. The wider scope of migration among the urban population could be explained first of all because of the bigger share of urban population in the country. The second largest migration flow was from „village-to-town” and its scope decreased slightly from 25% in the beginning of 1990s to 23.9% in 2010. The same trend applies to the people moving in the opposite direction – from the towns to the villages (the share of this migration flows decreased slightly from 23.8% in the early 1990s to 22.3% in 2010). The smallest share among internal migration flows has migration from the villages to the villages (10.2% in 1990 and 9.3% in 2010). Although migration from villages to towns and from towns to villages are comparable in scale (about 22%-24%), migration to towns in general (68.4%) outnumbers migration to villages (31.6%) which can be interpreted as a kind of urbanization. In addition, the intensity of migration from the villages is higher than that from the towns (respectively 5.9% vs 4.7%).²⁷

Available NSI data for the period 1992-2001 shows that the scale of internal migration amounts to hundreds of thousand people, as women are much more active to change their place of residence than men (Table 10). Nearly 55% of all persons who migrated within this period were female and 45% were male. This trend is probably due: firstly, to the fact that in Bulgaria the proportion of female population is higher than that of male (over 51%); secondly, when a couple marries or cohabitates in most cases the woman is who changes her address and moves to the man’s one; thirdly, young Bulgarian women are more often inclined to move from villages to towns in order to study than young men.²⁸ NSI data for a more recent period (from 2003 to 2010) also confirms this, showing a continuing trend of higher migration numbers for women migrating within the country as compared with the number of men (Table 11). The scope of internal migration has varied between 115,000 and 152,000 in the period 2003-2010 and accounts to 151,694 persons in 2010.

As already shown, the country is marked by a process of depopulation, particularly in some rural areas. At present, by NSI Census 2011 data, there are about 200 so-called “ghosts-villages”, where no people live and which are not indicated on the country’s administrative map.²⁹ There are around 500 villages numbering between 10 and 20 habitants, mostly old people. In some towns and villages depopulation reached 70-80% during the last two decades, like in Trun, Godech, Bregovo, Makresh, and others, located mainly in the North-West region. The outflow from the villages and abandonment has created a vicious circle, shaping a picture of desolated infrastructure, deserted houses, lack of health centers, schools and deteriorating elementary conditions of social existence. The depopulation of entire small municipalities is an eloquent fact of internal migration. According to Mr. B. Borissov – Chief of the Bulgarian Villages Association – within the next 10 years about 1,000 villages will be erased from the map of Bulgaria as a result of depopulation. In 2009, over 100 from 5,178 officially existing Bulgarian villages were depopulated. Over 70% of the population in the rural areas around the district Veliko Tarnovo consists of people at the retirement age and only 3% are aged from 3 to 18 years. If this trend continues, very soon many other Bulgarian villages will become deserted because of the lack of jobs and visions for the development of rural infrastructure.³⁰

The main trends in internal migration are thus closely connected with the described

²⁷ See: NSI, Table on population: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (accessed: 29.12.2011).

²⁸ As a result young men prevail over young women in the villages, which hampers creating families (due to a lack of a marital partner).

²⁹ See: <http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/pageen2.php?p2=179> (accessed: 21.05.2012).

³⁰ Interview with Mr. B. Borissov on Bulgarian National Television - Българска национална телевизия: Обезлюдени села (Bulgarian National Television: Deserted Villages), 29.03.2010, http://bnt.bg/bg/news/view/25531/obezludeni_sela (accessed: 29.03.2010).

depopulation and ageing of population in Bulgaria, whereby the situation in different regions and places varies depending on their level of economic development, people's cultural traditions, and their entrepreneurial skills (see Chapter 4).

As regards the inter-relations between internal and external migration in Bulgaria there are no data which allows to define any linkage between them. In practice, even when emigrants originate from smaller towns, move back to their country, they prefer to settle in the capital or bigger administrative centers, where they can find better environment for business development and prosperity (Katseli et al., 2006).

2.3. Main characteristics of migrants

The first expanded studies on emigration from Bulgaria in the 1990s and the early 2000s were related to the potential of migration, and were conducted by two respectable institutions (NSI and IOM).³¹ A representative sample study of 2,542 people aged from 15 to 60 was carried out by the NSI during the Population Census in March 2001 (Kaltchev, 2002).³² The second source of information on migration from Bulgaria is the national representative survey conducted by the IOM in 2001 (IOM, 2001).³³

Five basic groups of potential migrants were formed in the NSI study depending on the willingness to travel, the reason to stay abroad and the likeliness to realise migration in the next years.³⁴ Studying migration from a given country is particularly important regarding the first two groups (potential settlers and labour migrants) which form the so-called long-term potential migration. The absence of these people from the country impacts on the demographic development, human capital and labour potential status, and in general on the socio-economic development. Migrants from the two groups are important for the relevant international organisations and different state authorities in view of the ongoing processes of globalisation and European integration.³⁵ The intentions for long-term migration have decreased over time from about 25% in 1996 to nearly 15% in 2001³⁶ and most recently to 12.1% in 2007 (Mintchev, 2009: 46).³⁷ In comparison to this, the intentions for short-term migration in the near future increased from 24.3% in 2001 to over 30% in 2007 (ibid.: 47).

³¹ Both sources present the potential but not the actual migration, which means the responses represent only an approximation of the interest to migrate.

³² See Национален статистически институт: "Вътрешна и външна миграция на населението в България. (резултати от репрезентативно изучаване)" (Internal and External Population Migration in Bulgaria, 1992-2001 results from a sample study) (in Bulgarian), <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Vivmigr.htm> (accessed: 31.12.2011).

³³ The sample size consists of about 2,000 interviewed respondents from 18 to 60 years of age throughout the country. There are three Migration Potential Studies carried out in 1992, 1996 and 2001, which allow following the changes over time.

³⁴ I group – *potential settlers*. It consists of people who plan or are „likely” to resettle to live in another country. They represent 8.5% of total respondents (this is the so-called statistical category *scope* of emigration. It is measured by the percentage of the number of emigrants by different categories of potential emigrants in the total number potential emigrants/; II group – *labour migrants*. It includes people who want and are „very likely” or „to a certain extent likely” to move to other country to work/study for more than a year (6.8% of the total respondents) / III group – *short-term migrants*. It covers people who are „likely” or „to a certain extent likely” to go abroad to work/study for a shorter period – several months but not longer than a year (4.5% of total respondents) / IV group – *potential tourists*. These are people who plan to travel abroad as tourists or as guests of their relatives (10.9% of total respondents); V group – *people who do not travel abroad*. This group encompasses 69.3% of total respondents, which means nearly three out of every four Bulgarians are not willing to leave the country. It should be taken into account the relation between potential and effective (real) migration. The latter is associated with specific preparation for departure to a given country. Therefore, it is only a part of potential emigration and implies a more realistic assessment of its size. In addition, intentions to emigrate related to travel in the current or in the next two to three years are a more reliable guarantee for the stated intention than the intention to emigrate in a more distant period.

³⁵ It should be noted the decreasing share of these two groups over time. According to a similar study in 1996 the share of the first two groups was about 25%, while in 2001 was nearly 15%.

³⁶ See: NSI, 2011, <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Vivmigr.htm>.

³⁷ A more recent study conducted in 2007 also provides some useful information on changes as regards the main characteristics of potential emigrants from Bulgaria for the period after 2007 (Mintchev, 2010: 111-131; Mintchev 2009). It is based on two studies conducted in 2007 respectively by the MLSP Policy in Bulgarian and UN Population Fund. The latter two studies have an objective to help understanding the demographic processes in Bulgaria, as well as the formation of policies, which comply with the real practices and attitudes of young

Intensity of potential emigration differs by **gender**.³⁸ The male population is marked by nearly twice as higher intensity (nearly 9%) than the female population (5%) (Kaltchev, 2002; Rangelova et al., 2006). Correspondingly nearly two thirds of the potential migrants are male. The distribution of the potential migrants from Bulgaria by sex outlines the following trends for the period until 2001 (Table 12): Men prevail in the two considered groups of potential migrants whereas women constitute nearly 40% of the total number. Male migration is connected more predominantly with labour activity/long-term migration (64.6%) than female migration (35.4%), but women are more inclined to resettle. The survey from 2007 confirms that potential labour migration is dominated by men but points to much more balanced gender distribution in the groups of the settlers and short-term migrants (Mintchev, 2009: 50).

As already mentioned above however there has been a trend of increasing (effective) female migration from Bulgaria during the period of the 2000s. Almost 58% of the migrants from the country are women, and this proportion is much higher as compared with the average share in other parts of the world – below 50%. According to NSI data on effective migration in 2009,³⁹ 56% of the emigrants were women while 44% were men.

Potential migrants from Bulgaria are mainly **young people** and their percentage varies between 23.6% (group of 18 to 29 years old in IOM study) and 30.9% (group of 15 to 29 years old in NSI survey) for 2001 (Table 13). Some parallels between the figures for *potential* and *effective* migration can be made, taking into account the time distance between them. According to NSI data on effective migration in 2009,⁴⁰ half of the emigrants were aged 20-39 while 24% were in the age group 40-59. Considerably important is the group of young migrants under the age of 20 years: they account for 21%, whereas the smallest group is that of people aged 60 years and over – 3.5% (Table 13). Some parallels between the figures for potential and effective migration can be observed. Both type of sources show a high relevance of young people and a low importance of people aged 65 and over. Interestingly, the share of effectively migrated young people is higher than the share estimated by the surveys of potential migration.

When looking at the **educational level** of migrants, the IOM studies show that the vast majority of potential migrants had a secondary or higher education: 75% in 1992 and 80% in 2001 (Table 14). While the proportion of people with secondary and lower education was dominant in the 1990s, more and more migrants with higher education and students were recorded over time: The share of potential migrants with basic education decreased from 26% in 1992 to 19.3% in 2001 while the proportion of people with tertiary education increased from 17% in 1992 to 24.4% in 2001 (Table 14).⁴¹ The share of people with secondary education willing to migrate remained at a stable level in the period 1992-2001 and accounts for about 56%. The most recent survey on potential migration cited above reveals that there is still a considerably high share of people with primary or lower education as well as secondary vocational education in the group of long-term migrants, as well as of those with secondary vocational education – in the group of short-term migrants (Mintchev, 2009: 51). Census data from 2011 show that within the period 1980-2011 233,463 persons have changed their current address with an address in Bulgaria. Under those predominantly Bulgarian citizens with migration experience in the past, 46% were with secondary education and 34% with tertiary education (NSI, 2011c).

An increasing number of Bulgarian students abroad can be observed, studying in universities mainly in countries of Western and Central Europe, the USA, and Canada. Their

people. Both national studies have been based on a survey covering 3,604 respondents, and some results have concerned emigration from Bulgaria.

³⁸ *Intensity* of the potential emigrants (called also frequency of the cases) is measured by the coefficient of the potential emigrants which is the number of potential emigrants per 1,000 people - total and by category population.

³⁹ As data on effective migration include a small number of registrations, migrants' structure by age, gender and education may be different for different receiving countries. See: NSI, (2010b).

⁴⁰ See: NSI, table on External migration by age and gender, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19> (accessed: 26.10.2011).

⁴¹ Tertiary education refers to the sum of two categories: college/ bachelor and higher education from table 14.

approximate number in the period from 2004 to 2008 was about 50,000 (Republic of Bulgaria, 2008: 6). Out of all Bulgarian students going abroad almost 20% choose Germany as a destination country for their studies. In 2008 the number of Bulgarian students in Germany was about 10,500, which ranked fifth out of all foreign students in Germany.⁴² They are regarded as a specific type of Bulgarian immigrants there because a relatively more important part of them (in comparison to Bulgarian students in other receiving countries) remain in Germany after graduation (Christova-Balkanska/Naidenova, 2010: 133-165).

Bulgaria thus experiences a significant and increasing level of highly skilled out-migration. The traditionally low wages of highly-qualified personnel in the country, and considerably higher earnings in developed countries, has provided a strong motive for migration. Emigration also provides better prospects for the development of professional skills and the pursuit of a personal career. The lack of favourable conditions, infrastructure and incentives for the development of independent businesses in the country is another reason for migration of high-skilled people. The motives for migration are strengthened to a great extent by the lack of funds for the development of science, education and high technologies in Bulgaria, including equipment, adequate infrastructure, etc.

Labour market participation of migrants from Bulgaria is connected primarily with their educational level and professional skills. As a rule, the higher the level of skills is, the more likely is the successful professional realisation. There is widespread evidence however that a large number of migrants accept jobs that have nothing to do with their previous education.⁴³

The two studies (of the NSI and IOM) show comparable structures of the potential migrants by **marital status** in 2001. The IOM study shows an increasing proportion of single persons during the period of the 1990s at the expense of a declining proportion of persons from the other categories – married, widowed and separated (Table 15).

The empirical results of the NSI survey 2001 and the most recent survey 2007 enable an insight into the characteristics of potential migration by **ethnic groups**. Generally, intentions of different ethnic groups to migrate vary among the different categories of migration. Data for 2001 shows that the Turkish ethnic group prefers to settle, the Roma ethnic group mainly declares intentions to labour migration and the Bulgarian ethnic group considers mostly the short-term migration (NSI, 2001). Results of the 2007 survey however show a different picture: the highest intensity of migration is as follows: settlement (for the Bulgarian and Roma ethnic groups), temporary and long-term labour migration - for the Turkish ethnic group (Mintchev, 2009).

In the case of Bulgaria it is interesting to note that parents encourage their children to migrate. Nearly 90% of the persons surveyed by the NSI in 2001 declared that they encourage their children to study or work abroad. The percentage of people urging their children to resettle abroad is lower than the proportion of those who push them to study or work abroad, but nevertheless it remains very high (nearly 55%) (Rangelova et al., 2006). Results from a more recent survey conducted among Bulgarians in Spain showed that 64% prefer their children to be educated and to work out of Bulgaria (Mintchev/ Boshnakov, 2006a: 23-47).

Looking at the current profile of Bulgarian migration in different **receiving countries**, the following characteristics can be identified:

⁴² According to another source the number of the Bulgarian students in Germany (2009/2010) was 8,696 and the country held the sixth place, just after very large-scale countries like China – 24,414 students; Turkey – 24,170; Russian Federation – 12,652; Poland – 11,325 and Ukraine – 8,818. See: Hochschulstatistik Statistisches Bundesamt 2010. Available at: <http://www.daad.de/deutschland/hochschulen/hochschultypen/05951.de.html> (accessed: 14.05.2012).

⁴³ A survey was conducted by the MLSP in Bulgaria among the Bulgarian Migrants in Spain in 2008. The sample covered 532 persons among the officially living 153 thousands Bulgarians in this country. The survey showed the average age of the Bulgarians in Spain between 25 and 39, which is very favourable for the labour market. But 64.7% of the respondents take a job which have not respond to their qualification, and they are employed in lower qualified positions, www.dnevnik.bg (accessed: 15.11.2008).

In *Germany*, the vast majority of the Bulgarians are at an active working age, between 25 and 55 (average age is 35.4 years), and nearly 25% of them are students (school and universities). The short-term residents predominate and the average length of stay of Bulgarians in Germany is 7 years. Only 33% of the Bulgarian population in Germany is registered as married, one third of them are married to Germans (the majority of them being Bulgarian women) The majority of Bulgarians (nearly 75 %) live in economically well-off regions in the Western part of Germany (North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, Hesse and Berlin) (Christova-Balkanska/Naidenova, 2010: 9- 42).

In some countries of Southern Europe (Greece, Spain, and Italy) colonies of Bulgarian immigrants were formed, whose common feature is that most of them are engaged in activities that do not require high levels of education or skills. Micro-surveys conducted in Spain and Greece provide some useful information about Bulgarian emigrants in these countries (Markova, 2004; Markova and Reilly, 2006, Markova and Saris, 1997).⁴⁴

In *Greece*, Bulgarians constitute the second largest nationality after Albanian migrants. Female emigrants predominate and migration is most likely individual. Bulgarians occupy niches in the labour market, for example in agriculture and tourist services. Seasonal workers coming from the region of the Rhodopes Mountain in Bulgaria cross the border to work in Western Thrace in Greece.

In *Spain* the emigrants are mostly men and migration is most likely family-based. The first is the husband who arrives and afterwards the relatives join him. Even if there are no statistics or studies on this process, it is well known that in Madrid Bulgarian emigrants called playfully the area where they live “The District of Shumen”, reminding them of the Bulgarian town of Shumen from where most of them originate. The second largest concentration of Bulgarian migrants in Spain is in the city of Segovia (where their number is between 6,000 and 7,000 persons accounting for 15% of the the local population of this Spanish municipality). In Spain there are also big groups of emigrants coming from the town of Pleven located on the North-Central region of Bulgaria (Christova-Balkanska, 2010). With the visa-free traveling after modifications of the Schengen rules, there was a substantial increase in the numbers of Bulgarians in Spain who stayed for a period between half and a whole year; Spain also became a traditional destination especially for the young male population of the Western part of the Rhodopes Mountain in Bulgaria (South-Central Bulgaria) (Deneva, 2009: 26-27).

The number of Bulgarians who work and live in *Italy* is significant (Table 7). After the EU accession in 2007, a large number of Bulgarians went to Italy to work temporarily (often for years) either in the “green economic sector” or in the field of domestic services to private households. A large part of Bulgarian emigrants to Italy originate from the town of Vidin in Bulgaria. Almost whole villages have emigrated and have worked in agriculture on farms in the area of Udine. The work of Bulgarians in Italy was legalized in 2009 by the Italian Government, allowing their integration in the Italian social system and life. When they are laid off, frequently without notice, they easily find other low-skilled jobs in the receiving country (ibid).

The micro-surveys mentioned above also give insights into the labour market participation of Bulgarian emigrants in Greece and Spain. Both countries are similar in terms of labour supply for immigrants, mainly in the service sector (Markova, 2004; Markova and Reilly, 2006, Markova and Saris, 1997). According to surveys the market niches for the Bulgarian newcomers in Greece and Spain are similar: for women – employment in domestic services and as cleaning staff as well as in nursing of elderly people and children; both for men and women: employment in the hotel and gastronomy business and the agricultural sector (fruit-pickers); for men – work as day labourers and as construction workers. Advertising and delivery of brochures for nightclubs, and restaurants are often a starting activity for Bulgarians in Spain. Nearly 20% of the Bulgarians in Spain work in private firms of their country-men. The vast majority of these migrants however do not have a legal employment

⁴⁴ A survey shows the first 5 sectors of Bulgarian migrants' employment which are as follows: construction, services, agriculture, tourism and transport (Mintchev, 2008).

status (Mintchev and Boshnakov, 2006a: 23-47). Many people who have been engaged in the trade, construction, hotels and restaurants business in Bulgaria keep working the same sector in the receiving country. Most of those who have been employed in the agriculture or the industry move to the service sector. It is estimated that over 25% of the Bulgarian women work as domestic staff, although they have not practiced this profession before migration, a considerable proportion of them work illegally. Although the bulk of the Bulgarian worker community is engaged in low-skilled, temporary jobs, emigrants from Bulgaria feel satisfied with their stay abroad.

In 2010 the biggest part of the highly-qualified emigrants was directed to the two North American countries – the USA and Canada. According to data from OECD study 30.8% of tertiary educated expatriates from Bulgaria are in America, 26.4% in the EU, 5.2% in other OECD countries and 37.5% in the Asia/Pacific region. Since EU accession of Bulgaria these migration flows have redirected to European countries (Katseli et al., 2006: 23). There are no systematic data on the emigration of high-skilled workers from Bulgaria, but it can be assumed that highly skilled emigration from Bulgaria will continue growing mainly because of an increasing tendency to selective immigration policies of the countries of Western Europe (e.g. UK: The Points-based systems; Germany: 'Green cards' for IT specialists). Existing migrant networks have a leading role in obtaining information for taking the migration decision, followed by information technology.

Census data on the profile of internal migrants between 2001 and 2011 show the following picture: 54% of all 379,181 people who migrated in this period were women.⁴⁵ The vast majority migrated from one district to another (65%) while the rest of 35% - within the same district. 79% were people in working age (15-59), 8% children (0-14) and 12% older than 60.

The only known study on internal versus international potential migration in Bulgaria enables to outline some basic characteristics (Mintchev, 2008).⁴⁶ Main findings about the social demographic profile of the mobile population within the country are the following: (a) the mobile population in 2007 was 27.6% of the total population; 23.8% of the people migrated before 2001 and 3.8% after this year; (b) inside the country women are more mobile than men; (c) the highest internal migration after 2001 is among the young people aged 21 to 30: their migration intensity is 6.8% of the total population from this age group⁴⁷ and the scope of the mobile people of this age among internal migrants is 36.5%;⁴⁸ (d) the highest migration intensity is typical of the people without any education – 9.4%; (e) the highest is the share for the people with secondary vocational and secondary general education; (f) the presence of children in the family is a constraining factor for national mobility; (g) the Roma population is the most mobile within the country. Basic conclusions from this study are as follows:

- Settlers' attitudes prevail in internal migration whereas temporary willingness to go abroad prevails in international migration;
- There is no ground for conclusion that cross-border mobility is an alternative for internal migration.

⁴⁵ NSI, table on Migration in the period 2001-2011 by gender and age, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19> (accessed: 21.05.2012).

⁴⁶ It is based on a sample of 2,725 respondents at age 15-60, including 300 Roma, April-May 2007.

⁴⁷ Intensity of the potential emigrants is measured by the coefficient of the potential emigrants (CPE), which is the number of potential emigrants per 1,000 people - total and by category population.

⁴⁸ Scope of emigration is measured by the percentage of the number of emigrants by different category potential emigrants in total number potential emigrants.

3. Nation-wide labour market and social development trends under the influence of emigration

3.1 Economic and labour market developments

Emigration has a strong negative impact on the demographic composition and ageing of the population, because of the “export” of mainly young people at reproductive age, including women in fertile age (Republic of Bulgaria, 2005: 8). This hampers the present and the future economic and labour market developments. According to all known projections of international organisations (UN, World Bank, ILO, Eurostat, etc.), the NSI, or individual authors, depopulation will continue and even deepen in Bulgaria (UN, 1997 and 2008). The depopulation process will be accompanied by continuing ageing of population. In 2050 nearly one third of the total population will be aged 60 years and over.⁴⁹ While the old-age dependency ratio is predicted to more than double until 2060⁵⁰, the total dependency ratio,⁵¹ which at present is two to (nearly) one, is expected to reverse in one to two until 2050 (Rangelova/Sariiski, 2007).

Over the 1990s, which was a period of significant migration, the average age of the Bulgarian population changed faster than in previous decades, and after 2000 it exceeded 40 years, as it was already 41.4 years in 2006: 39.7 years in towns and much higher in villages - 45.3 years (Table 3). The proportion of the elderly aged 65 and over in villages was nearly 26%, while in towns its was only close to 15% in 2010. The share of old women in villages is nearly twice as high as that of old women in towns (Table 16). The worsened age structure reflects the size and quality of the labour force in Bulgaria. This implies that the rural areas are much more vulnerable in terms of labour market development and the situation will aggravate in the future.

Large-scale emigration of mainly young and active people (Table 13) led to a declining number of the labour force in Bulgaria. In the 1990s, migration from the country mitigated the severe social problems of high unemployment rates (which soared in the beginning of the nineties – see Table 1 and Figure 1) and the pressure on the national labour market. In this case the budgetary impacts were positive because less unemployment benefits had to be paid. As a result of the economic stability and achieved growth in the 2000s until 2008 flows of Bulgarian migration started to decrease and at the same time the registered unemployment rate showed a very significant decline (Figure 1). Afterwards, in the condition of the current economic crisis unemployment started increasing again and in 2011 it amounted to over 10% (Table 2). It should be noted however that there is no proved direct correlation between levels of unemployment and the size of out-migration in the country during the last two decades. For example, the level of unemployment in 2009 and 2010 remained stable (respectively 9.1% and 9.2%), but the number of registered emigrants increased sharply from 19,039 to 27,708 (Table 2 and Table 6) in the same period. At least for the last years it cannot be claimed that low (or stable) unemployment does motivate potential emigrants to stay in Bulgaria.

By official NSI data unemployment levels in towns are much lower than in villages (respectively 10% and 15.8% in 2010). Unemployment among men is higher than among women since 209 (respectively 12.5% and 10% in 2011). The unemployment level among people with higher education is only 5%, among those with secondary education – twice as

⁴⁹ Quotation by “Capital Careers” (weekly): “In 2050 30% of Bulgarians will be aged 60 and over” (“През 2050 г. 30% от българите ще са над 60-годишни”), 4 August 2011, http://www.karieri.bg/karieri/novini/1133773_prez_2050_g_30_ot_bulgarite_shte_sa_nad_60-godishni/ (accessed: 27.12.2011).

⁵⁰ See: Population estimations and projections of the UN Population Division for Bulgaria (http://esa.un.org/unpd/wpp/country-profiles/country-profiles_1.htm (accessed 18.04.2012)).

⁵¹ Total dependency ratio is the ratio between persons of working age, on the one hand, and under-working age (children) plus adults (over 65 years and over), on the other hand.

high (10.4%), among those with basic education – 4 times higher (23.5%), and the most suffering are people with elementary or lower education – 49.7 %.⁵²

The emigration of young and well-educated people (see chapter 2) has significant economic and social effects on the future development of the country.⁵³ Migration is likely to affect individual sectors of the economy differently, which could generate imbalances. Before the current economic crisis in Bulgaria, there was insufficiency of labour force in construction works and the hotel business. In the near future particularly strained situations will emerge in such sectors as agriculture, construction industry, health care, university education and selected high-tech sectors, each one of them demanding labour force with very different skills and educational levels. Shortages in the labour force in rural areas of Bulgaria as a result of the ageing population, internal and external migration pose a problem for the cultivation of land and the development of modern farming and as a whole for the establishment of sustainable development of the agriculture sector in the country.

High hopes are usually connected to technology transfer inspired by migrants. Concerning Bulgaria however, technology-related *brain drain* is much more sizeable than *brain gain*. The country is increasingly facing labour shortages in high-tech sectors such as Information and Communication Technologies with negative implications on FDI in general and technology transfer in particular.⁵⁴

Another impact of (highly skilled) migration can be felt when Bulgarian students who have been educated abroad return to Bulgaria and look for a job. In many cases they meet significant difficulties and spend much time to legalize the certificates obtained there because of clumsy and time-consuming procedures at the Bulgarian administration. This hampers realization of their plans to either continue education in their own country or to find a relevant job (Gaechter, 2002).

The emigration of **health professionals** from Bulgaria deserves a special attention. The enrollment of students in medical universities in the country has been more or less stable over time, but due to emigration the total number of some categories of health professionals effectively practicing in the health sector has constantly declined.

By official statistics the number of *medical doctors* (physicians) has been increasing over the period 1991-2007 (Table 17) and an increase was also marked for dentists. In general, it should be noted that over the past decades (in particular in the 1970s and 1980s) the ratio of physicians per 100,000 inhabitants in Bulgaria (and other former socialist countries) was rather high, at the same level than in many developed countries; it is still high today, higher than the EU average. However, it seems that an increasing trend in out-migration of medical doctors can be observed in the last years, illustrated by the following data: In 2008 nearly 350 medical doctors-specialists requested certificates of good standing to work abroad, in 2009 their number increased to 450, and only in the beginning of 2010 it already amounted to 200.⁵⁵

⁵² See NSI Data Table on Labour Market <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=51> (accessed 02.01.2012).

⁵³ Looking at the future, the Government undertakes measures to encourage migrants to return in Bulgaria. There is a special project named “Coming home”. The main target sub-group in this project includes the youngest Bulgarian migrants on West. It has formed in the last 12 years and is concentrated mostly in West Europe and North America. According different statistics this subgroup runs to between 300,000 and 900,000 people. See: Ministry of Economy, (2003).

⁵⁴ Throughout the 1980s Bulgaria has been a well developed IT country among the other former socialist countries because of the international cooperation within the framework of the Council of Mutual Assistance existing at that time, where it specialised in IT technologies. After the collapse of the previous political and economic system and the specificity of the transition to a market type economy (see Chapter 1) much of this activity was destroyed. Unluckily there are no statistics on migration of IT specialists from Bulgaria. It is known, however, that in the early 1990s many IT-specialists migrated to world-known centers like Silicone Valley in the USA and others.

⁵⁵ See: Online Article from the news agency Vesti.bg (2010b): “Лекарите ни бягат в чужбина лавинообразно” (“*Bulgarian medicals doctors flee the country like an avalanche*”). Vesti.bg (28.05.2010), <http://www.vesti.bg/index.phtml?tid=40&oid=3012951> (accessed: 21.05.2012).

The situation of health specialists other than the medical doctors is more alarming: the number of other health specialists with secondary and college medical education, including nurses, has almost halved within the same period (1991-2007).⁵⁶ Whereas 82,106 of these health specialists were working in the health sector 20 years ago this number dropped to 43,957 in 2007 (Table 17).⁵⁷ This means that on average daily leave the country at least two specialists (nurses, maternity nurses, etc.). Every one year nearly 1,200 health care specialists leave the country. Only a small part of them work according to their qualification and this happens after at least 5 years working in a given foreign country. Especially the *nursing profession* is particularly affected by these trends: The ratio of medical doctors (physicians) to nurses in Bulgaria is 1:1, while the internationally required minimum is 1:2 which means there are less nurses in Bulgaria than the necessary number (Ministry of Health Care, 2008: 15).⁵⁸ Statistical data show that the number of nurses and the ratio per 100,000 of population, which steadily increased until the middle of the 1990s reaching a peak of 614.21 nurses per 100,000 inhabitants in 1993 (Georgieva et al., 2007: 90),⁵⁹ started to sharply decrease and dropped to a level of 362.29 nurses in 2002. In 2010 there were 750 nurses per 100,000 inhabitants on average in the EU; in Bulgaria this ratio was nearly twice as low (only 425) being at a low level by European standards.⁶⁰

In 2007 about 28,000 nurses were employed in health care in Bulgaria (Table 17).⁶¹ Their number was twice as low than that at the beginning of the 1990s. Most of them were seeking better jobs abroad mainly because of the higher remuneration, better work conditions and higher profile of the profession in other countries. The average monthly salary for a nurse in Bulgaria amounts to only about EUR 250-300 while monthly payment⁶² in first preferred destination countries like the UK (followed by Italy, Spain, Greece, Cyprus and other countries) is 4-5 times higher. By annual data of the Bulgarian Association of Health Care Professionals in 2007 about 900 nurses left the country, but only in the first months of 2008 their number reached already 1,200.⁶³ Many of them begin to work as nurses for old and/or ill people and children and hospices; some of them try to obtain recognition of their diplomas in order to start working at clinics and hospitals. In 2011 the number of nurses left the health care sector amounted to 1,500, as it is regarded that nearly two thirds of them left the country and the rest took a job in Bulgaria which is not too demanded as that of the nurses and the earning is higher. At the same time Bulgaria badly needs a number of nurses twice as high than the current one and in the future the demand is expected to increase dramatically.⁶⁴ This is why it is currently possible to attract nurses from other countries in Bulgaria.⁶⁵

⁵⁶ According to Mrs. Milka Vassileva, President of the Association of the Health Care Professionals a reason for rising concern, however, is the situation of the nurses. See: "Половината ни медсестри заминали в чужбина" ("Half of the nurses have gone abroad"). Available online: <http://www.blitz.bg/news/article/107825> (accessed 22.05.2012)

⁵⁷ The latter category includes other health professions, such as nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, etc.

⁵⁸ See also: Пакет спешни мерки за спасяване на сестринството в република България Приет на Национален съвет на БАПЗГ (Package of Urgent Measures for Nurses' Retrieving in the Republic of Bulgaria). Bulgarian Association of Health Care Professionals, 27.09.2008, Pomorie <http://www.nursing-bg.com/ms.html> (accessed: 02.01.2012).

⁵⁹ Based on data of the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

⁶⁰ See: "We badly need 35 thousands nurses". Vesti.bg (2010) <http://www.vesti.bg/index.phtml?tid=40&oid=3075071> (accessed: 2.01.2012).

⁶¹ Whereas the number of practising nurses varies according to different sources and methodologies (i.e. Eurostat indicates 35,645 nurses for 2007), all data sources register the same declining trend.

⁶² This is the amount of gross wages. Net wages are lower, in Vidin for example they reach EUR 125 to 150. See: Ushateva, D. (ed), (2011b)

⁶³ See: Bulgarian Association of Health Care Professionals, <http://www.nursing-bg.com/ms.html> (accessed: 22.05.2012). There are agencies organizing application of medical staff, for example of medical specialists such as nurses, midwives, laboratory technicians, physiotherapists and especially physicians. See: "Work for trained in Europe nurses and midwives" <http://beymo.bg/en/work-trained-europe-nurses-and-midwives> (accessed: 02.01.2012).

⁶⁴ See: Online Article from the news agency Vesti.bg (2010a): "Не ни достигат 35 хил. медицински сестри" ("We badly need 35 thousands nurses"). Vesti.bg (22.06.2010), <http://www.vesti.bg/index.phtml?tid=40&oid=3075071> (accessed: 2.01.2012).

⁶⁵ Interview with Dr M. Vassileva, Deputy President of the Bulgarian Association of the Health Care Professionals, "Standard" (newspaper), 28 September 2008.

Concerning nurses there are two basic problems in Bulgaria: (a) a lack of motivation to start studies and obtain graduation for this profession and (b) a lack of motivation to exercise this profession in the country. Under these circumstances it is no wonder that students sometimes refuse stipends or the use of free hostels granted by hospitals in view of avoiding the obligation to work there after the graduation.⁶⁶

Because of administrative barriers (e.g. to legitimate the diplomas) or other circumstances (no free jobs) the health professionals (both medical doctors and other medical specialists) often take jobs which do not match their qualification.⁶⁷ In many cases they work as hospital attendants and in homes for retired elderly. Only a small part of them succeed in finding a job matching their qualification and this happens usually after at least 5 years of work abroad. Recently hospitals in the UK, Ireland, Sweden, Norway and Spain have announced vacancies for 2,000 jobs for Bulgarians medical doctors, nurses and dentists with attractive working conditions as compared to Bulgarian standards.⁶⁸

The distribution of health professionals across the country is uneven, varying by regions, which is to the detriment of the depopulated and backward regions. Available NSI data provides an idea about the distribution of the medical personnel by planning regions and districts in 2010 (Table 18). The number of inhabitants per medical personnel, including physicians, dentists and other medical specialists, actually indicates the dispersion of the different territorial units with medical personnel. Related to the national average, it is evident that the capital Sofia is better staffed than the other regions and districts. Concerning the supply with physicians, surprisingly the North-West region is rather well off (being the second best after the South-West region). Contrary to this situation is the worst dentists' supply in the former region. At district level differences are more striking: in terms of physicians some districts (e.g. Varna and Pleven in the North-East region and Gabrovo in the North-Central region) are better off than the capital Sofia. The worst is the situation in the districts of Razgrad (North-Central), Yambol (South-East) and Silistra (North-East). Some of the districts are in a very bad situation as regards the supply with dentists (Targovishte, Sofia district, Razgrad, etc.).

Given the wrong and unfinished reforms undertaken in the health care system in Bulgaria, as from 2000, which have left the health sector with persisting low levels of remuneration, a stock of still obsolete equipment and technologies in many hospitals, a lack of opportunities for young medical doctors to obtain a specialization, the lower quality of university education than in other countries etc., young people have a low motivation to engage in medical studies in their own country. This can explain the stagnated number of physicians in the health establishments – their total number in 2006 is 28,111, in 2007 – 27,480 and 2010 – 27,997. It is likely that in the near future the country will feel a shortage of medical doctors (physicians), in particular of young medical doctors and doctors specialised in anaesthesiology, surgery and others medical branches. The number of physicians specialised in surgery was 1,720 in 2006, dropped to 1,300 in 2008 and 1,243 in 2009.⁶⁹ In addition because of the very dynamic

⁶⁶ Quoted Dr. Stanka Markova, President of the Bulgarian Association of the Health Care Professionals. See: Маркова С. Пакет спешни мерки за спасяване на сестринството в република България Приет на Национален съвет на БАПЗГ 27 септември 2008 г. Поморие (Package of urgent measures for Nurses' Retrieving in the Republic of Bulgaria), 27 September 2008 – Pomorie (footnote 52).

⁶⁷ Over the first 8 months of 2008 1,230 nurses left the country. Nearly 830 of them have legalized their educational certificates and 400 have not, which meant that the latter did not intend at all to practice their profession. See: Interview with Dr M. Vassileva, Deputy President of the Bulgarian Association of the Health Care Professionals, "Standard" (newspaper), 28 September 2008.

⁶⁸ In Sweden, Bulgarian medical doctors would receive a monthly remuneration between EUR 3,000 and 3,700 during their specialization as promised by the hospitals. At the beginning they should learn Swedish language while the cost for the language course are covered by the employers; further, they receive an amount of EUR 700 monthly during the language course. The cost for learning Swedish language of the medical specialist's family would also be covered by the employers. See: Ushateva, D. (ed), (2011a

⁶⁹ For the referred figures see NSI: Table 2.2.4 Physicians in Health Establishments by medical speciality, statistical region and district as of 31.12. (2001-2010). <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=43> (accessed: 22.05.2012).

ageing population in Bulgaria,⁷⁰ including of the current medical personnel the situation will worsen within the next a few years.

There are also some positive examples of migration beneficial to the country's economic development. In the last ten years or so most of the young financial brokers from Bulgaria who have emigrated have organized themselves in special structures aiming at attracting the business interest to the country. The "City Club" in London and the "Wall's Street" in New York are the most successful among them. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the London 'City Club' members in fact introduced the Bulgarian real estate market to the British one and played a significant role in bringing British people (nearly 33,000) to invest in real estate and live in Bulgaria (Markova, 2007).

The lack of skilled workforce may have adverse effects on the restructuring of the Bulgarian economy and make it impossible to overcome the gap in labour productivity between Bulgaria and the other EU countries. New comparative advantages are needed in order to enhance economic development and living standards in Bulgaria. One main target is the retention of highly skilled workers (Markova, 2007).

Emigration impact on human capital development

Regarding the impact of emigration on the human capital development in Bulgaria, there are two directions of speculation. On the one hand, there are a lot of Bulgarians moving to study in other EU states, thus profiting from the education system there, which is positive from the point of view of their own human capital development. But this is not a commonly seen situation. It goes without saying that the receiving country draws great benefits by capitalizing on these foreign talents. If they do not return to their home countries, such countries like Bulgaria lose a potential of added value that could help their economic development (Christova-Balkanska/Naidenova, 2010: 133-165). In addition out-migrants from Bulgaria are often willing to accept a job which does not match with their education or professional qualification. In many cases they are young post-university migrants. Thus, *firstly*, the investment on their education and training in Bulgaria is left and to a great extent lost (or at least unused); *secondly*, their effective skills are not used also in the receiving country either; *thirdly*, even if they return home, many of them need retraining; *fourthly*, as far as the migrants are mainly young, educated and ambitious people the demographic crisis has deepened and this has led to negative effects on the quantity and quality of the human capital in Bulgaria.

Data about the mobility of Bulgarian students outline a risk for the future availability of sufficient human resources in science and technology, and thus for future human capital development. Indeed, Eurostat data show that for the period 2000-2007 the number of Bulgarian students who have gone to study abroad increased by about 270%, which is more than 2 times higher than the EU average (Zareva, 2011): 161-172). Whether these young people will return to Bulgaria is an open question. The results of the already discussed inquiry (Christova-Balkanska/Naidenova, 2010: 133-165) among Bulgarian students show that about 20% of the interviewed students declared that they will go abroad to continue their study or to look for a job. They declare a probable return to Bulgaria if the socio-economic conditions in the country and their possibilities to find an appropriate job become better, when their work would be valued in a proper way and their families will have better ("normal") conditions of life (that means higher living standards). A significant part of them foresees that they probably will be engaged in scientific and research work in the host country.⁷¹

⁷⁰ See: "2050: 30% of Bulgarians will be aged 60 and over" (2050 г.: 30% от българите ще бъдат на възраст 60 и повече години), Capital Careers (weekly) of 4 August 2011, Available at: http://www.karieri.bg/karieri/novini/1133773_prez_2050_g_30_ot_bulgarite_shte_sa_nad_60-godishni/ (accessed: 27.12.2011).

⁷¹ At the same time there are many attractive opportunities for application for studying. For example, useful and necessary information for those who are going to study in Germany could be found at: "Следване в Германия" („Studying in Germany"). <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/0,,11675,00.html> (accessed: 10.01.2012).

An interesting study of the migration potential of students in Bulgaria which was carried out in the period April-July 2008.⁷² gives useful information about the relation between migration and human capital. Overall, 57% of the respondents want to live and work in Bulgaria, which means that less than half (43%) of them indicate some general propensity to emigrate. About 34% want to work/study abroad for some time, but to remain living in Bulgaria, which represents the percentage of those with intentions for temporary emigration. One out of ten (10%) of the respondents manifested an intention to live and work abroad, which places them into the group of those willing to be absent from the country for a long period of time. Potential emigrants are very willing to remigrate because the majority of students wish and expect to find professional opportunities on the Bulgarian labour market. Moreover, one of the main reasons for their international mobility is dictated by the accumulation of international experience for a subsequent career development in Bulgaria.

Attention should be paid to the fact that the majority of the surveyed students (70%) were willing to disregard their qualifications in the name of highly compensated, but low-prestige work within Bulgaria, and one in three definitely would accept such a job. Only 3% would refuse absolutely. Consequently, about two thirds of respondents have a propensity for *internal brain waste*, if offered the opportunity to receive higher earnings. This shows that high qualifications rank significantly lower among the priorities of students, as opposed to high income. These results confirm the already expressed hypothesis that not a small percentage of the highly skilled workforce in Bulgaria is affected by both external and internal *brain waste*.

If young specialists were to return to their home country, they could catalyze its future economic development. But the chance for this happening is very slim. Young people usually named the following reasons for not returning: there isn't an appropriate job in their home country with adequate work ethics, techniques and know-how, good remuneration and clear prospects for career development. The unstable socio-economic and political situation in the home country adds additional doubts and hesitations about going back (Christova-Balkanska/Naidenova, 2010: 133-165). One more point could be added: the parents' encouragement to their children to study and live abroad. As a consequence, to rely that most of the students will return to Bulgaria is rather unrealistic.

Volume and nature of remittances, impact on the economic and labor market developments

Remittances appear in Bulgaria's balance of payments after 2000. The Bulgarian National Bank started releasing regularly data for remittances back in 2004. Bulgarians living abroad have transferred to their home country increasing amounts of money, which doubled from 2004 to 2010, and have reached the total sum of nearly EUR 3,740.6 billion for the whole period (Table 19).⁷³ The amount of money sent by emigrants from Bulgaria has been increasing from year to year, in the case of proportion of GDP from 1.77% in 2004 to 4.3% in 2010. The net sum of the remittances from Bulgarians permanently working abroad totaled EUR 335.7 million since the beginning of 2011, up by 1.85% in comparison with the same period last year. Bulgarian emigrants sent home EUR 77.4 million in May 2011, which is a record-high level of monthly transfers since the beginning of the collection of data.⁷⁴

Given the existence of two informal ways of transfers - transfers in cash and in-kind from returning Bulgarians from abroad, official bank recording system cannot measure adequately its level, and it is very likely the actual scale of such transfers to be under-reported.⁷⁵ Studies

⁷² The survey was conducted in the form of an anonymous survey about attitudes towards emigration among full-time students in their third, fourth and fifth year or at the Master's level at six universities in Bulgaria, studying economics, engineering, medicine, and also those studying diverse social sciences. Within the total number of 16,478 students, the representative sample size of the study is 851 respondents. See: Makni, (2011).

⁷³ See: Bulgarian National Bank. www.bnbank.bg (accessed: 24.12.2011).

⁷⁴ See: Online article of 21.07.2011 on Remittances Gateways.org, (2011): „Migrant Remittances to Bulgaria Hit New Record High“. Available at: <http://www.remittancesgateway.org/index.php/press-clippings/flows-information/1002-migrant-emittances-to-bulgaria-hit-new-record-high>, (accessed: 27.12.2011).

⁷⁵ Two Bulgarian experts estimate that the official figures register just some 45-50% of the actual migrant

show that the actual money sent home are about 30-40% higher than the official figures (ibid). According to the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad since 2003 at least 300,000 emigrants have been transferring to their families small amounts ranging from EUR 70 to 220 EUR a regular monthly basis (Makni, 2010).

The monthly variations of remittances for the period January 2004-March 2010, demonstrate a net upward trend, even in 2010, when most of the EU developed countries and the USA experienced a fall in economic activity and employment (Figure 3). Despite the economic crisis 2008-2009 and the squeeze in jobs offered abroad, Bulgarian migrants did not stop sending money back home; Figure 2 shows there is no sensible decline in remittances' volume. Bulgarians who work abroad and continue to send remittances to their home country and relatives is an exception from the global trend of decline in numbers of people who do both – go abroad to work and send money home.⁷⁶ The money transfers come mainly from labour migrants and less from settlers, who have been investing in houses, cars or education of their children in the receiving country.⁷⁷

Data on remittances to and from Bulgaria provided by another source – the World Bank – is a good basis for some conclusions (Table 20):⁷⁸

- (a) Both inwards and outward flows are increasing over time;
- (b) The inwards flows are incomparable higher by amount than the outward remittances, which means much more money are transferred to Bulgaria than from Bulgaria;
- (c) Since 2009 the two flows have decreased, which is due to the economic crisis. It turns out that it is more difficult for people in Bulgaria to transfer money within the crisis in comparison with those who are out of Bulgaria, because the relative decrease of the outwards flows is much higher than that of the inward flows.

No doubt, remittances have a positive impact on the Bulgarian economy and expand people's spending. This kind of money transfer ensures living and additional income for the family and relatives in the country of origin. In a national context, this is a way to increase the volume of foreign currency coming into Bulgaria and such money helps the state balance of payments. The remittances inflow covers a substantial share of the trade deficit and compares to FDI regarding its positive impact on recent economic development (Christova-Balkanska, 2011: 69-103).

There is scarcity of empirical evidence on how exactly the remittances are used in Bulgaria. But a well-known fact is that they are used primarily to cover basic needs and purchase of durable goods. They could be treated as social assistance coming from remittances instead of from the state budget. Thus remittances received have a significant impact on household's wellbeing mainly through supporting adequate current expenditures level and providing funds for real estate and motor vehicles acquisition (Mintchev, 2009; Markova and Reilly, 2006; Makni, 2010: 127-139).

According to the findings of the latest survey on Bulgarians migrants in Spain, 70% of the respondents declare supporting their families and relatives in Bulgaria in amount within one quarter of their wage. Thus annually EUR 162 million are transferred to the country of

remittances. See: Mintchev and Boshnakov (2006a), There are also suggestions that undocumented Bulgarians and those on seasonal work in the neighbouring countries remit on average 250 EUR per month. See: Markova and Reilly (2006).

⁷⁶ Bulgarian National Bank, <http://www.bnb.bg/Statistics/StExternalSector/StDirectInvestments/StDIBulgaria/index.htm> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

⁷⁷ Bulgarians in the United States and Canada trail at the bottom of the ranking because of the high living standards and high prices there (see note 82).

⁷⁸ Data are in USD currency and converted in EUR the figures are higher than provided by the Bulgarian National Bank for the same years. This discrepancy in figures is due mainly to the different used methodologies by the two institutions. See: World Bank (2011).

origin⁷⁹. The money received in Bulgaria is used mainly for consumption: one quarter for health care, 10% for refund of loans and education, and only 0.6% flows into the business. As usual the long-term and settled out-migrants prefer to invest there than to transfer money to their country of origin (ibid.). Some studies refer to the practice in some villages located in the Rhodope Mountains (South-East region), from which many adults have migrated to Spain and send money regularly to their children in Bulgaria. The latter are known as 'remittance people'. Because of the large-scale out-migration some of these people feel demotivated and do not look for jobs or organise a business, and thus refrain from participating actively to the labour market relying only on the money sent by their parents or other relatives (Rangelova, 2006: 50-73). In many cases they are tempted by the successful examples of fellow country-people showing that the only right way of personal success is migration.

Some experts pay attention to the wide spread allocation of migrants' money to houses and apartments which has boosted the real estate market, significantly pushing prices up. This trend was identified in the whole country. The authors argue that remittances in Bulgaria have become an important element in improving living standards and reviving the local economies through increased consumption and investment. These macroeconomic effects, they claim, can also have the effect of delaying government reforms for restructuring economic and other policies to tackle underlying causes (Stanchev et al., 2005).

3.2 Social security

The regulations on the coordination of social security schemes have been applying to Bulgarian migrants in other EU countries since Bulgaria's accession to the EU. Bulgaria has also concluded bilateral social security agreements with a number of countries outside the EU⁸⁰ which are based either on the pro-rata principle or the territoriality principle. The focus of the developments below will be on two main destination countries (Turkey and Spain)⁸¹ but will also include some specific aspects of the migration situation between Bulgaria and Greece.

According to Bulgarian legislation insurance periods accomplished in other EU Member States or a country which is part of a bilateral social security agreement with Bulgaria are taken into account for fulfilling qualifying conditions to benefits. The recognition of foreign insurance/employment periods is based on the production of specific documents proving the length of service.

Bulgaria has concluded a mutual social security agreement with Turkey (which entered into force in March 1999) which does not cover social insurance relations between the two countries but only the payment of pensions for persons entitled to a pension from Bulgaria who actually live in Turkey. The agreement is applicable to people who migrated to Turkey after May 1989, who were entitled to pension or have obtained a right to pension after the date mentioned according to Bulgarian legislation. Not covered by this agreement remained the temporary stay of young Bulgarians of Turkish origin who migrated to Turkey in order to work at the beginning of the 1990s. These were predominantly young females trying to find employment as babysitters and housekeepers (Parla, 2009). They did not necessarily obtain Turkish citizenship as this was the case for the migrants of the emigration wave in 1989. Still, during the period 2001-2007, these migrants were entitled to stay in Turkey within 3 months without a visa but they did not profit from the benefits of having proper citizenship in terms of

⁷⁹ See Article from the Bulgarian Newspaper SEGA, (2011): *Bulgarian emigrants do not want to return to their own country*. (Българските емигранти не искат да се върнат в родината си), 20 July 2011, Issue 164 (4148), Year XIV, pp. 1-2.

⁸⁰ Albania, Moldova, Ukraine and Israel as well as with Croatia and FYR of Macedonia. In relation to the other countries of former Yugoslavia (Serbia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina) the old agreement signed with the ex-SFRY in 1957 still applies. Other specific agreements (not based on the above mentioned principles) have also been concluded with Lybia and Turkey.

⁸¹ Parts of the Bulgarians of Turkish origin who migrated to Turkey in the late 1980s worked in Bulgaria for a long time and are actually entitled to a pension. Spain has been a main country of destination of Bulgarians during the period shortly before and after EU and remains the EU country with the highest stock of emigrants from Bulgaria.

employment, meaning that having no possibility of legal employment they remained socially vulnerable (ibid.). Their main motivation to work being the possibility to transfer small amounts to their children and relatives in Bulgaria, located mainly in Central South Bulgaria.

As described earlier Spain, has become a traditional destination for Bulgarian migrants, parts of them having no legal status of employment before unlimited free movement was granted to them in 2009. This means that these migrants did not contribute to the social insurance system for the years (or months) served in Spain and thus could not benefit from the EU coordination rules which applied to Bulgaria as from 2007 onwards, a situation which will generate problems when trying to get retired.

According to the Bulgarian Health Insurance Act, following citizen groups are compulsorily insured with the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF): all Bulgarian citizens who are not citizen of another country, as well as Bulgarian citizen who are citizen of another country and permanently reside on the territory of Bulgarian Republic (Republic of Bulgaria, 2009a, Art.33). Compulsory health insurance also covers foreign citizens or people with no citizenship who are allowed to reside long-term in Bulgaria. Bulgarian citizens, including people with dual citizenship, staying abroad more than 183 days a year are exempted from paying contributions to health insurance provided they made an application with the NHIF before departure. When returning to Bulgaria health insurance rights of such persons are restored after payment of contributions during 6 consecutive months, or after payment of a lump-sum of 12 health insurance fees. Until restoration of the insurance rights these citizen shall pay the price for health care received out of their own pocket.⁸² This however does not concern Bulgarian citizens who have been insured in an EU Member State and return to Bulgaria; their own obligation is to notify the respective authorities.

Some conclusions emerge from the Turkish and Spanish examples presented above. *Firstly*, social protection rights are granted to Bulgarian migrants in the destination country presuming they have a work permit or legal employment which is not often the case. *Secondly*, rights granted upon return to Bulgaria (i.e. health insurance coverage) imply that the respective migrant (outside the EU) pays his/her health insurance contribution upon return. Unfortunately, often migrants do not benefit from social security at either location. *Thirdly*, there is no exact or official data on how many pensions are paid by foreign social security institutions of the main destination countries to migrants who have returned to Bulgaria, which impedes further analysis of the issues. *Fourthly*, the main gaps arising from the implementation of social protection regulations and agreements remains the fact that returning migrants often cannot bring a certified proof of years served in both countries of origin and of destination. *Fifthly*, their family members left behind are not subject of any special social protection schemes in Bulgaria.

3.3 Poverty and Social Exclusion

In the past 17 years most Bulgarian households have seen their standard of living shrinking. In 1998, the economy began to recover and inflation was controlled. Since the 1997 crisis, when poverty escalated to 36% of the population, poverty rates have declined with the recovery of consumption levels. But despite the decline in overall poverty rates in Bulgaria, pockets of extreme destitution persist in the country.

Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU with an annual income per capita of USD 12,600 in 2009 (Eurostat, 2009). Bulgaria adopted the Eurostat official poverty line for the first time in 2007. At the end of 2009, a new poverty line was set at BGN 211 per month (about EUR 108 as at 8 February 2010). The Bulgarian economy was moderately affected by the global economic crisis in 2009, experiencing a 5% decline in GDP (compared to growth of 6% in previous years). The impact of the crisis tended to be felt by households after the peak of the macroeconomic contraction.

⁸² Art. 40a of the Health insurance Act, Last amendment: 2009.

The risk of poverty has clear age dimensions in Bulgaria where most vulnerable groups are the children and the eldest people. In 2008, 26.6% of the children below 18 years of age and 17.7% of the people over 65 years of age lived in poverty (Republic of Bulgaria, 2010a).⁸³

Undoubtedly, poverty and social exclusion lead first of all to intensified internal migration. Migration flows directed from the villages to the towns are oriented mainly to big cities where it is most possible to find a job. The population density in the rural areas is two times lower than the average for the country (35.8 vs. 69.9 inhabitants per sq. km, respectively). The mean age of the population in 2006 was 45.3 years in villages and 39.7 years in cities. The share of people living in poverty is significantly higher in rural areas and GDP per capita in rural areas is 2.2 times lower than that of urban regions. This is related to lower wages, higher unemployment and underemployment rates, a high share of population living on pensions and social security benefits as well as to the high costs of social services (Abajieva, 2008). Furthermore, inequalities are to be seen more often in the different age groups of the population, but also in regard to the different regions in the country. According to Eurostat data, Bulgaria's North-West region is the poorest in Europe. With 28% of the EU average GDP, it was ranked bottom of the ranking. The South-West region, which includes capital Sofia, ranked much higher with 73% of the EU average.⁸⁴

The share of poverty in small villages is a way higher as compared to the average share of poor households in Bulgaria.⁸⁵ The fact shows that families with children are subject of non-proportionally high risk of poverty. Given that EU-SILC data is collected through households, it should be noted that information is still missing on the most vulnerable groups, namely on children in alternative care, street children, separated children and migrant children. It is crucial that research is undertaken and data on these groups collected in order to be able to address correctly their specific needs.⁸⁶

The high risk of poverty, especially among the large Roma families, causes migration towards cities and establishment of ghettos in the big suburb areas. Housing conditions, difficult access to education and health services remain a serious problem and, to a large extent, these people become socially excluded. Payments of children and family social benefits are extremely limited and non accessible for parts of the population. The latter is either due to the fact that social service offices are far away from the village of residence or that people have no money to travel to the offices when required (Bradshaw and Holmes, 2010). This leads to a practical lack of access to existing benefits and aggravates the problem with the statistics of such persons as they are actually inaccessible to count. This also implicates an unrealistic description of the situation, the problems and their solving. The situation leads to the fear among large families of ending up in great poverty; it also encourages large part of Bulgarian citizens to emigrate in looking for better living conditions.

Pensions have the main share in regard to social transfers, and they have a substantial significance in reducing poverty in Bulgaria never mind their low nominal size. This is due to the relatively high share of pensions in the total household income. All other social transfers have significantly less influence over poverty reduction. According to the Confederation of the Independent Syndicates (CITUB, 2010) this share of pensions in the household income was 22.1% as compared to 47.7% for wages. Quoting data for 2008 (Economic and Social Council, 2009), the poverty level before social transfers set at 43.5% dropped dramatically to 18.3% when pensions were paid and after other social transfers it even dropped to 14.4%. This reveals that social benefits other than pensions (like social assistance and social compensations and family allowances) do not provide substantial financial help and are inefficient in relieving the poor strata of population from poverty (UNICEF, 2009). The trade unions, many NGOs, and economic agencies have insisted on the necessity to conduct a

⁸³ Impact of the Global Economic Crisis to Social Exclusion in Bulgaria, Plamenka Markova.

⁸⁴ The Sofia Echo, http://sofiaecho.com/2011/02/25/1050021_eurostat-bulgarias-northwestern-region-poorest-in-europe.

⁸⁵ Evidence from the Multipurpose Observation of the Households in Bulgaria in 2003 showed that in the capital the poverty is set at 4.3%, while in small towns and villages it is at about 17%. See: NSI, (2005).

⁸⁶ Child poverty in Bulgaria, Dani Koleva, National Network for Children, www.nmd.bg.

reform within the social assistance system which does not actually drive poor people out of poverty and effectively include vulnerable groups into the labour market and social life.

The social assistance system in Bulgaria continues to be inadequate in size and poorly coordinated with social services at local level, and there is no integrated action in favour of people who live in poverty. It faces increasing difficulties to cope with growing requirements and needs of local communities; its centralized management also hampers adequate responses to specific local needs. Social service units allocate benefits based more on documents issued by different agencies, rather than on an assessment of every person in need.

4. Labour market and social development trends in net migration loss/gain regions

4.1. Identification of net migration loss/gain regions

The NSI data gives a good picture of the Bulgarian population distribution among the 28 districts (NUTS 3 level) and at population developments over the past 10 years. The district of the capital Sofia counts a bit less than one fifth of the population (17.5% as of 01.02.2011). The second largest city, Plovdiv, has a share in the total population of 9.3% in 2011, followed by Varna – 6.5% and Burgas – 5.6% (NSI, 2011c). Only two districts marked an increase in population between the Censuses 2001 and 2011: the capital Sofia by 10.3% and Varna – by 2.8% (ibid.). This reflects a process of concentration of population in a limited number of residential areas entailing a depopulation in all other remaining districts of Bulgaria (ibid.). Some towns had large gains of population in the last decade; many of them are Black Seaside resort towns like Nessebar (by 29.6%), Kiten (by 13.2%), Sveti Vlas (by 53.4%), Obzor (by 16.2%). The rising population trend there has been caused mainly by a booming tourism industry and the development of real estate in the region.

Over the last 8 years (2004-2011) the number of the population in Bulgaria decreased by 5.6% (Table 22).⁸⁷ Only two districts marked increase in population. They are Sofia Capital – by 6.5% and the third largest district Varna – by 3.5%. The rest 26 districts marked depopulation, as in 13 of them it is very sharp – by over 10%. Districts particularly affected by depopulation are concentrated in the Northern regions (see map in Figure 4): Vidin (-17.3%), Montana (-14.4%), Pleven (-14.2%), Vratsa and Lovetch (-13.4%).⁸⁸ The lowest is the decrease in Burgas district, which is the fourth largest in the country – only by – 0.9%.⁸⁹

Depopulation is caused by two basic factors: a negative natural growth of the population (mainly a low birth rate) accounting for two-thirds of the population decrease in Bulgaria between the last two censuses and (international) out-migration, particularly due to the lack of employment opportunities in general and high unemployment in villages and small towns, which makes up one third of the population loss (NSI, 2011c). It is indicative that depopulating areas are located either on a border (Silistra, Vidin, Montana, Vratsa, Smolyan, Kyustendil) or they are distant from big cities (Lovech, Razgrad, and others like Targovishte, Sliven, etc.). The trend of depopulation has devastated villages with a depopulation reaching up to 80% within the last two decades in the North-West region. The socio-economic analysis of regions in Bulgaria shows that not only disparities between the regions in terms of socio-economic development are very important, but that the areas mostly affected by depopulation are also the most disadvantaged ones and have turned to be excluded places for living in Bulgaria. Regional economic differences in Bulgaria have been increasing despite

⁸⁷ Calculated on the basis of NSI data, Table Pop_6.1.5_Pop_DR.xls See: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19> (accessed: 22.05.2012).

⁸⁸ Other districts displaying important population losses are also to be found in other regions of Bulgaria: e.g. the district of Kyustendil nearby the border to the FYR of Macedonia in the South-West region, Smolyan on the border to Greece in the South-Central region. However, the Northern regions of Bulgaria, especially the North-West and North-Central regions concentrate the highest number of districts most affected by population losses.

⁸⁹ See developments under Section 2.2.

European funds which are originally aimed at shrinking them⁹⁰. The poorest regions (North-Western and North-Central) keep lagging behind. A look at the most relevant indicators show that the North-West region in particular can be considered as the most deprived net migration loss regions:

The North-West region has the lowest share of population in Bulgaria making up 11.4% of the total Bulgarian population at the end of 2011;⁹¹ a large part of its territory is situated on the borders to Romania in the north, alongside the Danube river, and to Serbia in the east. The North-West region is a region characterized as predominantly rural according to the urban-rural typology of the EU⁹². Ethnically speaking, its population is rather mixed with an important share of the Bulgarian Roma population living in the Montana district⁹³.

In terms of demographic development, depopulation and migration have contributed to an above average ageing of the population in the North-West region. According to results of the 2011 census, the region counts the largest share of population aged 65 years and over in Bulgaria. In all five districts the proportion of elderly exceeds the country level by large, ranging from 22.4% (Pleven) to a top rate of 25.5% in Vidin (NSI, 2011c). Accordingly the old-age dependency ratio is also highest in this region (36.3% - country average is 29.6%) with three out of the five districts featuring above average and the highest dependency rates in Bulgaria⁹⁴.

The average level of economic development for the six planning regions (NUTS 2 level) in Bulgaria, measured by income (GDP) per capita, increased nearly four times within the period from 1995 to 2008 (Figure 7, left scale), but at the same time the discrepancies among the regions also increased over three times (Figure 7, right scale). In other words, the gap between the Bulgarian regions has been increasing over the years.⁹⁵ While in 2000 GDP per capita in the North-Western region was 90% of the country average and the difference with the GDP of the wealthiest region was 47%, in 2009 these differences already attained 62% and 180% respectively. By NSI data the average level of GDP per capita in the country for 2009 was EUR 4,605, as the most favourable position was held by the South-West region while, , the North-Central and North-West regions ranked at the bottom of the scale with an average GDP per capita well under national average of respectively EUR 3,038 and EUR 2,851.⁹⁶ According to Eurostat, the North-West region is the poorest region not only in Bulgaria but also among all 271 regions on the EU territory.⁹⁷ A recent study which has measured the level of district development and analysed their development potential (Table 21)⁹⁸ has ranked two of the five districts of the North-West region (Vidin and Montana) as the least developed areas of Bulgaria with the lowest development potential.⁹⁹

⁹⁰ At the same time much less European funds are attracted in the worst-off regions than in Sofia (3 times less for the North-Western region).

⁹¹ See: NSI, Population Data, Table 6.1.2 Population by statistical regions, age place of residence and sex as of 31.12.2011. Available at: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (Accessed 18.04.2012).

⁹² See urban/rural typology of NUTS3 regions of the EU (http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/Urban-rural_typology). According to it all 5 districts of the North-West region are predominantly rural.

⁹³ The Montana district concentrates the highest share of Roma population in Bulgaria according to the 2011 census. See developments under Section 5.5 below.

⁹⁴ See: NSI, Population – Table Data. Table 6.1.9 on residence structure, sex ratio and age dependency rates. Available at: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (accessed 18.04.2012).

⁹⁵ Regional economic differences in Bulgaria increase despite the Eurofunds which should reduce them. At present the North-West region attracts three times less European money than Sofia city. See: Petrova, 2012.

⁹⁶ See: NSI, Data table 1.1.4 Gross domestic Product, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=42&a1=2191&a2=2192&a3=2196#cont> (accessed: 13.01.2012). The Bulgarian average is EUR 4,666 (9007).

⁹⁷ Quoted Eurostat GDP per capita in the North-West region in Bulgaria is only 28% of the average for the EU-27. Also see: Online article on the News Platform E-Vidin.com: “The North-West again the poorest in EU” (Северозападът пак най-беден в ЕС) of 23.11.2011. News portal E-Vidin. Available at: <http://portal.e-vidin.com/?p=34264> (accessed: 12.01.2012).

⁹⁸ The empirical study is based on a number of socio and economic indicators. In the first group are included a number of indicators for the level of economic and social development in an individual region like: number of population, income of population, economic activity of firms and population, cultivated agricultural land, average

At the same time much less European funds are attracted in these regions than in Sofia (3 times less for the North-Western region).¹⁰⁰

Another recent study shows the relations between different economic and social indicators by regions, including towns and villages in Bulgaria (Totev, 2010: 34-77). The correlation between the GDP per capita and the share of rural population is negative and relatively strong (-0.66), while the correlation between GDP per capita and level of unemployment although negative is weak and insignificant (-0.30). The strongest is the relationship between the population density and GDP per capita (0.92). As a whole, the results of this study show again that the most developed region of Bulgaria remains the South-West region which counts only 17.8% of the rural population whereas the least developed one – the North-West region has also the highest proportion of rural population in Bulgaria – 37.9%.¹⁰¹

It is known that the income gap between the Bulgarian regions has led to active, both internal and external, migration to wealthier regions and countries, but these relations are not “linear” and they are not yet studied well, not only in Bulgaria. Migration from the poorer regions to the wealthy ones entails a further deepening of unfavourable processes there leading to a vicious cycle of population ageing, depopulation, lack of economic activity, unemployment, drop in income, poor infrastructure, etc. In general, the main social and economic problems in rural areas are more or less valid for all of them and can be identified as follows (Abadjieva, 2008):

- Demographic: low birth rate, higher mortality, negative natural increase, depopulation, out-migration by the young people caused by lack of employment, low population density;
- In the labour market: low educational status, higher unemployment and long-term unemployment;
- Spatial dimension of poverty is exacerbated by a poor and deteriorating infrastructure;
- Significant fragmentation of land’s ownership.
- Rural welfare has been constrained by the low level of income, driven by low wages in rural areas, high unemployment, and the low level of agricultural productivity.

That territorial redistribution of the population results in deepening differences in the living conditions in cities and villages. The lack of active investment policy will likely increase these differences. The depopulation process in villages, will create serious problem for Bulgaria’s economic development.

4.2. Labour market developments in net migration loss / gain regions

The North-Western region remains in a very unfavourable position among all other regions of Bulgaria as regards most important labour market indicators. Judging by Eurostat data comparing the European regions,¹⁰² the Bulgarian ones show the most unfavourable indices on total, long-term, female and youth unemployment.¹⁰³ In this context it is worth mentioning

revenue in municipal budgets per resident, etc. The group of indicators for the potential of an individual region includes among others: territory, density of population, percentage of agricultural land in total land; percentage of woodland territory in total land; age structure of the population, etc. The so-called taxonomic method is used for producing the summarizing estimates for the individual districts in Bulgaria. See: Yankova, (2011: 140-146).

⁹⁹ Interestingly, among the districts ranked among the eight ones with the worst development potential, seven are located on the edge of the Bulgarian territory, in areas bordering other countries in the North-West, North-Central but also South-West regions.

¹⁰⁰ See: Най-бедните райони у нас затъват въпреки еврофондовете (The poorest regions go down despite the Euro funds). SEGA (newspaper), 3 January 2012 <http://www.segabg.com/article.php?id=583605> (accessed: 3.01.2012).

¹⁰¹ Similarly, NSI data indicates a proportion of rural population of 36.8% for 2011. See Table 6.1.9 in footnote 104.

¹⁰² See: GDP at regional level

http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/statistics_explained/index.php/GDP_at_regional_level

(accessed: 23.05.2012).

¹⁰³ The only exception is the South-West region where the capital of Bulgaria is situated.

that the regional differences in the country have increased during the last years. The indicator measuring the regional differences in employment within the country confirms that differences in employment increased over time, as from 6.6% in 2003 reached 8.7% in 2010.¹⁰⁴

The employment rate of the population aged 15 to 64 years old in the region ranked the lowest in Bulgaria in 2010 (53.8% as compared to 59.7% for Bulgaria) according to Eurostat data¹⁰⁵

According to data of the Bulgarian Employment Agency while the average unemployment rate for the country was 9.4% in December 2011, it is much higher in some districts of the North-West region: Montana – 18.3%, Vidin – 16.6%, Vratsa – 16.1%. Over 50% of the unemployed are long-term unemployed, i.e. more than an year. In some small communities (Dimovo, Borovan, Yakimovo) it is nearly 50%. Unemployed are mainly uneducated people or people with basic education.

High unemployment rates in the North-West region are directly related to low educational attainments in this region. At national level, the share of people with low education in all unemployed persons grows continuously and in 2010 it was about 44%, i.e. nearly 10 times higher than that of the people with higher education. Their highest share is to be found in the North-West region – 61.6% (Republic of Bulgaria, 2010a).

The lack of infrastructure, as well as limited access to health and education services put the North-Western region in a very negative situation (Table 23). The steady high level of long-term unemployment rates in the region turns this part of Bulgaria into one of the most unfavorable and excluded places for living. Having in mind the situation of employment and growth in this area, it can consider that it needs intervention at the most to achieve sustainable long-term development (OSI, 2010).

4.3. Poverty and social exclusion in net migration loss / gain regions

Inequalities between different regions in Bulgaria as regards poverty and social exclusion are extremely large scaled. Already in 2002 the World Bank study on poverty in Bulgaria revealed that poverty rates were four times higher in rural areas, and that the households that lived in them comprised 66% of the poor population.

Educational, healthcare and social services are missing in the migration loss regions mentioned and the demographic results support this. A report by the NSI makes a multi-dimensional analysis of poverty and social exclusion in Bulgaria and also shows that access to basic services (water, sanitary, health and so on) is very limited in rural areas in Bulgaria (NSI, 2005).

The EU-SILC data shows that in Bulgaria the at-risk-of-poverty rate of non-EU migrants is approximately 25% and the at-risk-of-poverty rate of non-EU migrants compared to the local population is also higher. The risk of poverty increases with the number of migrants within the household. The increase is more pronounced in the case of non-EU migrants, where those households with three or more migrant members tend to have a poverty rate twice as high as those where there is none or only one migrant. The relative poverty rates are 33% for the former groups, compared to 17% for the latter. It should be noted that households with only one migrant member have no higher risk of poverty than the average. Overall, the highest risk of poverty is for those living in households with 3 or more non-EU migrants (with

¹⁰⁴ The dispersion is expressed by the coefficient of variation of employment rates of the age group 15-64 at NUTS-2. It is zero when the employment rates in all regions are identical, and it will rise if there is an increase in the differences between employment rates among regions. Employment rate of the age group 15-64 represents employed persons aged 15-64 as a percentage of the population of the same age group. See: NSI, Labour Force Survey, 2010.

¹⁰⁵ By NSI data for the third quarter of 2011, the employment rate in the North-West region for people aged from 20 to 64 was only 59.3%; this region is followed by North-Central, where the employment rate is 60.5% and South-Central region – 63.4%. The only region which reaches the EU criterion of an employment rate of 70% is the South-Western region (71.6%).

a poverty rate of 33%), followed by households with 3 or more mixed (both EU and non-EU) migrants (27%) and households with 2 non-EU migrants (26%).

In contrast, countries with the highest severe material deprivation rates of migrants include a number of ex-Communist countries (Czech Republic, Lithuania and Poland in the case of EU migrants and Lithuania, Latvia, Bulgaria, and Poland in the case of non-EU migrants). Material deprivation tends to be the most widespread among non-EU migrants, both compared to EU migrants and people born in the country.

However, it should be noted that the measurement of migrants is somewhat limited on the basis of the EU-SILC survey for various reasons. Conceptually, the current EU-SILC question only explores the stock of migrants, with no information on how long they have been in the country. Also, there is no information on ethnic status of respondents. In addition, the categorization of the migrant groups into “EU” and “non-EU” is rather broad and the groups distinguished are too large and heterogeneous, though sample sizes would need to be much larger for any more detailed breakdown. Future research based on the new wave of the EU-SILC dataset could explore the issue of integration as such, since the dataset is then expected to include information on the year of arrival in the country.¹⁰⁶

The intensity of domestic migration for the period 1997-2003 is approximately 22.5% (418 thousand people), however a diminishing trend has been observed (19.5% in 2003). About 2/3 of the migrants are in the age range of 10 to 39 years. As a whole, in the majority of regions the negative values of domestic migration increase or remain steady. Only in the South-West region the net migration rate is positive and demonstrates constant increase in intensity (from 2.4% in 1997 to 7.6% in 2003). This region attracts the domestic migration flows mainly because of the higher opportunities for diverse employment in the capital and the dense network of educational infrastructure (particularly in the field of higher education).

The trends in development of migration are as follows: persisting concentration of the population in the developed urban centers because of the better (or still reckoned to be better) employment opportunities, the increase of the relative share of urban migration in “urban-urban” or “urban-rural” direction, the redistribution of the population among the various cities and the ongoing concentration in the large cities for the account of the small and medium-size cities/towns.

With respect to the population density the least populated are the Northwestern Region (49.8 persons/km²) and the Southeastern Region (53.4 persons/km²). Close to the latter are the values for the North Central Region (63.6 persons/km²) and the Northeastern Region (64.5 persons/km²), as well as those of the South Central Region (70.7 persons/km²). The highest population density is characteristic for the Southwestern Region (103.9 persons/km²). Vast areas with low population density (mainly mountainous and rural areas) exist in each of the planning regions, while the large cities and district centers stand out with high population density.

In terms of the Population Density Indicator the disparities in Bulgaria are quite moderate (the correlation between the highest and the lowest levels in 2003 was 2.1) and rank as the lowest in comparison with those in the European regions.

The gender structure of the population is characterized by predominance of women over men. There are 106 women (105 in the EU) to every 100 men and that level has been steady for several decades now. The ratios at the regional level are identical.

The analysis of the demographic development of the planning regions in Bulgaria reveals the below-detailed characteristics:

¹⁰⁶ Poverty and social exclusion of migrants in the European Union, by Orsolya Lelkes and Eszter Zólyomi, European Centre, Policy Brief March 2011.

- The population in all regions is diminishing and along with it there is also a drop in the contingents in reproductive age and of the active population.
- The demographic situation is the most unfavourable in the North-West Region, marked by great losses of human resources, gravely deteriorated age structure and reproduction rate featuring high negative natural growth. Similar poor characteristics of the demographic situation are observed in the North-Central Region as well.
- Specific demographic development is noted in the South-West Region, in which the capital Sofia is located with its high reproductive and labour potential.

Despite the systematic growth of the GDP in the country, Bulgarian regions are economically the least developed as compared to the EU¹⁰⁷. In 2002 the value of the per capita GDP in the most developed region of Bulgaria – the South-West region – amounted to respectively 36.3% of the average for EU15 and 40% for EU 25. The rest of the planning regions feature values between 23.7% (North-West region) and 21.7% (South-Central Region) as compared to the average for EU15 and respectively 26% and 24.3% in the case of EU25. Compared to the regions of New Associated States their level ranges between 57% and 65% and in relation to the least developed among them – between 62% and 71%.

There are, however, no fundamental differences among the regions in Bulgaria themselves in terms of the per capita GDP – with the exception of the South-Western region (40% of that of EU25), the level in the five other regions is about 25% of the average for EU25. No other country demonstrates such closeness to the NUTS 2 level, which is definitely an advantage in terms of the regional development of Bulgaria in terms of higher development rate.

The regional disparities in employment and unemployment have a lasting negative effect not only with respect to the reproduction of the labour force, but also in terms of preconditioning the processes of depopulation, poor utilization of resources, migration, overpopulation of a certain limited number of cities. The large number of disillusioned people would require specific measures, especially under the conditions of low economic activity and ageing of the population.

Comparisons with the European regions define Bulgarian regions, with the exception of the South-West region, as regions with the most unfavourable indicators as regards general, long-term, female and youth unemployment.

The regional disparities in the provision and access to educational, health and social services follow a similar pattern. The provision rates are higher in the South-West Region and the South-Central Region and lower in the South-East and North-West regions.

5. Impact of migration on vulnerable groups

5.1. Women

As described earlier, as regards female migration, Bulgaria follows the common trend for Eastern Europe where the number of women migrants abroad has been on the rise. In Bulgaria this number now exceeding the number of emigrating men (57.2% as compared with shares under 50% in other parts of the world). In the long-run this increasing migration of (mostly) young women has the potential too.

The role of the women grows exceptionally in the context of the migration processes. It is related to the issue when the wife stays at home and the man is an economic migrant (money earner), it is the woman who takes the primarily function of raising the children, taking care of adult relatives, as well as the care for the local farm. In the community of Mohammedan Bulgarians for example the role of the woman who stays within the family is a key one. Usually the Mohammedan Bulgarian males are employed in construction works

¹⁰⁷ New partnership for cohesion, convergence, competitive capacity and co-operation, EC 2004, p. 11.

abroad or mainly in Bulgaria. This attributes the main responsibility for the household to the woman.

In rural areas with stagnating economies, men work on seasonal jobs outside the rural municipalities, while women have to care for the family and the subsistence farms. Additionally women have a low paid job in industries to make a living. The share of women, working in low paid jobs in the apparel and leather industry enterprises has also increased. In all rural areas women have the primary responsibility for cultivating household plots, in addition to their employment in the formal economy.

5.2. Children

There is no system neither at national level, nor at municipal level to track the number of children who live without a parent or without both of them, thus no precise data on the number of cases of children left by their migrating parents exist. However, a phenomenon is apparent where parents emigrating from Bulgaria leave their children in the care of relatives in the country. Social services experts report the practice to leave children whose parents are abroad in the care of grand-parents in Bulgaria.

Real problems prove to appear in schools where there is some (unofficial) information available. According to information provided by the specialists of the educational system,¹⁰⁸ there are some locations like villages in the Eastern Rhodopes Mountains, the North-Central region and the North-West region where the percentage of children who do not live with parents but with other relatives exceeds 60%. In the majority of the cases this sharply influences the behaviour of the children and their achievements in school: their school performance usually becomes worse, cases of challenging behaviour grow. The biggest challenges arise when children are left to be cared for by older relatives like grand-parents. Kids are left with no parental model that should encourage their socialization in the immediate and distant environment. Older people are sometimes not able to meet the needs for support and attention demanded during the different age stages of child growth, for example because of illnesses, very old age, etc.¹⁰⁹ They are not always able to track full preparation for school or to come along with the expectations and needs of the young generation in a modern society. In almost 100% of the cases, raising children by relatives is not embedded into a legal framework; in other words there is no legal transfer of guardianship rights from the parents to the caring family members. At the end of the day many legal requirements are infringed as regards the consent of the parents/guardians in order not to deprive the child from access to education or medical services.

Data of Open Society Institute and the World Bank from the 2010 Early Warning System study confirm that poverty is much more common among the households with children (over 76%) than among households without children (20%). Especially vulnerable to poverty are families with two or more children, and 3 out of 4 families with 3 and more children are poor.¹¹⁰

There is a certain evidence¹¹¹ that drop-out of schools is more often met among children of migrant parents left behind in Bulgaria. In many cases children are left behind in the care of grandmothers or aunts. In these cases the school children cared for dispose of more cash than their classmates because of the money sent home by their parents. In many cases it was observed that the children became easily spoiled and undisciplined as they would not obey their elderly grandparents or other relatives caring for them; they would start smoking, drinking and eventually leave the school altogether. A positive side of this pattern of family

¹⁰⁸ Interview with Mariana Bantcheva, Coordinator for education and healthcare at the National Network for Children. See table of interviews in the annex.

¹⁰⁹ There is unfortunately a lack of empirical evidence to support this statement.

¹¹⁰ Open Society Institute, (2010a): The Vulnerable Groups and the Crisis. Politiki.bg, Issues 07/10. http://politiki.bg/?cy=183&lang=2&a0i=223581&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=726 (accessed: 22.05.2012).

¹¹¹ Interview with the director of the school in the Tarnava vilige, located in the North-West Region conducted on 7th of December 2011.

life however is that migrant parents usually can invest their savings into securing better education for their children.

The biggest challenge for the children are situations where after a while the parents take the kids to live with them for a certain period of time (usually several months) in another country or another location within the country. During their stay with the parents the children often do not visit schools. After they return back it often happens that they have lost time between a half and a complete school year. This makes their return to the class where they have studied before leaving very difficult. As a result, repetition of the school year becomes necessary or the school performance is extremely poor. The frequency of this effect can appear every year for one and the same child. At the end this leads to a loss of motivation to learn, a loss of positive attitudes towards learning and school incl. and learning skills and to a drop-out of school even before obtaining an elementary educational degree. This practice is predominantly seen among children in Roma communities because of a high percentage of numerous breaks from the educational system at home without getting any educational background in the destination country.¹¹²

A specific phenomenon affects children of the Turkish and the Mohammedan Bulgarian communities where there is a large percentage of cases of internal labour migration of the father. In these cases, boys in the concerned families leave school usually after the 8th grade (when they are 15 years old) and start to help their fathers. This restricts the possibility for the boys to graduate from vocational or secondary education level.

Finally, high levels of both internal and external migration lead to situations, where large numbers of schools do not have enough children to pursue their normal education process. The number of schools of general education, as well as special and professional schools have decreased by over 12% in the period 2007-2009 the most visible change is the one within the schools of general education – their number dropped by 350, in other words by over 14% in this period (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007).

5.3. Elderly

Data from the 2011 Population census in Bulgaria shows that the relative share of the elderly (aged 65 and over) is high and as been growing over the last decade (Table 16). In 2011 the share of the population above working age under the Bulgarian labour legislation was nearly one fourth (23.7%) of the total population in the country, and it is higher in rural areas (31.3%) as compared to urban areas (20.9%). The share of males and females above working age in rural areas (respectively 24.5% and 38.%) indicates a much worse position as compared to urban areas (respectively 15.6% and 25.8%). This also means that the group of elderly women dominates in rural areas.

As a rule elderly are considered as a vulnerable group in Bulgaria as Bulgarian elderly and pensioners are poor, also as compared to other European countries. Indeed, according to Eurostat data, the at-risk-of-poverty rate for persons aged 65 years and over in Bulgaria has steadily increased in the past decade and rose more than twice only within 4 years (from 19.9% in 2005 to 39.3% 2009).¹¹³ It remains one of the highest in the EU. This trend also holds true for poverty among pensioners with an at-risk-of-poverty rate for pensioners which

¹¹² Quoted by the broadcasting company Deutsche Welle from a country ranking undertaken by the European Association for Improving the Quality of Life which places Bulgaria as a country with the highest share of young people between 15 and 24 years of age (21.8%) who neither have any degree of education (and make any efforts to obtain qualification), nor any work. See: online article from the news platform Actualno.com (2012): "Дойче веле": Затъпяващите деца на България" (*The Growing Stupid Bulgarian Children*) of 14.01.2012, available at: http://society.actualno.com/news_374532.html (accessed: 15.01.2012).

¹¹³ The indicator presents the percentage of persons aged 65 and over (from the total population) who have an equivalised disposable income below the officially defined poverty line. The poverty line is defined as 60% of the median equivalised disposable income. See: Eurostat database, At-risk-of poverty rate by sex an selected age groups. Available at: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_pnp1&lang=en (accessed 24.04.2012). For persons aged 75 and older the increase is even more significant as the at-risk-of-poverty rate has nearly doubled in only three years (from 24.3% in 2006 to 47.1% in 2009).

has soared to 36.5% in 2009.¹¹⁴ In particular, elderly over 75 years old, living in rural areas, have poverty rates over the national level (at 16%) and elderly women are more strongly affected than their male counterparts. It can be strongly assumed that the difficult situation of elderly persons in Bulgaria has been largely exacerbated by the migration phenomenon as well as by the global crisis in the last years. Many elderly are left alone in rural isolated areas, encounter many health problems, have a low income and difficult access to health and social services.

According to the opinion shared by the mayor of the village of Gomotartsi (Vidin district), Lyuben Stoyanov, over 90 families from this village have emigrated abroad and settled permanently, in a documented fashion.¹¹⁵ They have no intention to come back. According to Mr Stoyanov the emigrants usually were mainly young people who raise their children in different countries; in their village of birth the only ones who kept leaving there were their old parents. His observations show that the migrant children send money to their parents, and in doing so they provide support to them as the pensions are too low. "In every house out of 2 or 3, lives some old person. And only a decade ago our village had more than 1,000 inhabitants; now it is only half of the size, and only old people are left behind". Stoyanov pointed out that no people from the village migrated within Bulgaria (to Vidin, Sofia or Plovdiv). Only some families who stayed for a while in Sofia came back to the village later on. An interview with experts from the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC) revealed that migration challenges older people in Bulgaria very much because being in a situation where they cannot rely anymore on the support of their family, the network of social and health services in the country fails to address their specific needs as it remains poor and not well developed.¹¹⁶

5.4. Roma

According to latest official statistics of the NSI from the 2011 population census, the Roma community constitutes the third largest ethnic group in Bulgaria (approx. 325,340 persons or 4.9% of the total population).¹¹⁷ The Roma population is spread over all towns and many villages of Bulgaria, but the largest share of Roma is in Montana district – 12.7% (North-West region) and Sliven – 11.8%, (South-East region), followed by Dobrich – 8.8%, Yambol – 8.5%.¹¹⁸ From official sources it seems that the spatial concentration of the Roma population in isolated neighbourhoods both in urban and rural areas has risen over the last 15 years thus aggravating isolation and exclusion.¹¹⁹ The latest 2011 census reveals that the Roma population is less urbanized than the Bulgarian ethnic group with a share of 55.4% of Roma living in urban areas (NSI, 2011c).

Poverty is a both a prevailing feature as well as a main factor for migration among the Roma community in Bulgaria. As a whole it can be said that the Roma are one of the most vulnerable groups that determine migration processes in Bulgaria (Bogdanov, 2010); differences in the depth of poverty across ethnic minorities are remarkable in Bulgaria and

¹¹⁴ Starting from 18.3% in 2006 according to Eurostat. See Eurostat database, At-risk-of poverty rate for pensioners. Available at: http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?dataset=ilc_pns6&lang=en.

¹¹⁵ Interview with the mayor of Gomotartsi, Mr. Lyuben Stoyanov, conducted by G. Bogdanov on 23.03.2011. See list of interviews in the Annex. Gomotartsi village is located in the North-West region known by the highest degree of emigration and is the most underdeveloped in the country.

¹¹⁶ Interview with experts from the BRC, conducted by G. Bogdanov in Sofia, on 11.02.2011. See table of interviews in the Annex.

¹¹⁷ This official estimation might underestimate the effective Roma population since Roma might be reluctant to declare themselves as Roma and are difficult to reach because of a lack of registered residence. Official data diverge from other various estimates which count a Roma population between 700,000 and 800,000 persons in Bulgaria.

¹¹⁸ See: 2011 Population Census in the Republic of Bulgaria, Final Data. Available at: http://www.nsi.bg/census2011/PDOCS2/Census2011final_en.pdf (accessed: 26.12.2011).

¹¹⁹ See: National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria quoting data from the latest 2011 census (Republic of Bulgaria, 2011b).

particularly affect the Roma population. Roma are ten times more likely to be poor than ethnic Bulgarians.¹²⁰

Evidence for poverty among the Roma population is provided by data from and research undertaken by the World Bank and the Open Society Institute in Sofia conducted in 2007. This shows that some 49.3% of the Roma population aged over 15 had a job in the last year (OSI and World Bank, 2007). Hired under a working contract are 81.6%, self-employed are 10.8%, and family workers make up 7.6%. What stands out as a major problem for Roma employment is the fact that 48.7% of the employed persons were not offered any kind of contract. In other words, they are forced to work within the grey economy or to migrate without having their social security guaranteed.¹²¹ In comparison, the share of employed ethnic Bulgarians who work without a contract is 26.4%. The 2002 World Bank study on poverty in Bulgaria revealed higher poverty rates among ethnic minorities, the poverty rate among Roma people being at 62%.¹²² All existing studies registered that ethnic minority groups, mainly Roma, were at a higher risk of social exclusion than any other ethnic groups in Bulgaria. The higher poverty rate among ethnic minorities, especially the Roma is determined by a significantly higher unemployment rate. These high rates are related to low education levels among Roma and their overrepresentation among low-skilled jobs (World Bank, 2002). Latest results for the 2011 census seem to confirm existing study results, indicating above average sub-standard housing conditions for Roma, poor access to health services, a disadvantaged position on the labour market and in terms of educational attainments. While (slight) improvements can be observed over a 10 year period between the last two censuses as regards enrollment and educational attainments of Roma in secondary and higher education, the proportion of Roma achieving primary and basic education seems to have stagnated or even worsened.¹²³ The share of illiterate persons among the Roma population is estimated at 11.8% and the proportion of Roma children who do not visit a school at 23.2% (NSI, 2011c).

Speaking about internal migration of the Roma, two main trends can be drawn out: *the first one* is migration of people with no property, who are not very literate and have low qualifications. Often they build non-regulated housings in overpopulated areas in the suburbs of big cities. The work they perform remains in principle undocumented – as a consequence they cannot prove these are years served; and the work performed does not contribute to the social and economic stability of the families, usually covering only basic needs of food and shelter. These groups of Roma migrants do not live a settled life, they do not have their address registered and live in an environment with high social, health, educational and professional risks. The lack of registered address makes the effective use of educational, health and social services very difficult. Basically, these groups of Roma travel with their children who neither visit kindergartens nor schools on a regular basis. Achievements of the children in school are very low because kids often miss classes due to frequent illnesses, their involvement in activities to earn the daily bread for the family or in raising younger children.¹²⁴

The second trend is labour migration of one or both of the parents of Roma families. In cases where the children stay where they lived before, the parents lose connection to them for long periods of time. Sometimes, due to the specific character of their job, these families form small groups. These groups though cannot establish real communities at the places where they work, and at the same time they lose the connection to the community of origin. In these cases, the jobs are usually documented, but social protection coverage against sickness and other risks still remains problematic due to the fact that the work performed is usually self-employed the activity remains temporary.

¹²⁰ By NSI data the ethnic minorities comprise over 60% of the poor population in Bulgaria.

¹²¹ Employment Agency data, quoted by the study of OSI and World Bank 2007.

¹²² For Bulgarians of Turkish ethnic origin it was at 21% and at 6% among ethnic Bulgarians.

¹²³ See NRIS, pp.7-8 (see footnote 129).

¹²⁴ Interview with Yanko Krivonozov, Chairman of Future Foundation Rakitovo (Grassroot Roma NGOs), conducted by George Bogdanov on 11.10.2011. See Annex.

The effects of Roma migration abroad on healthcare are very concerning. The number of Roma who “drop out” from the healthcare system has been growing, especially as it seems that the introduction of a health insurance system in the country in 1998 has left disproportionately many Roma without health care entitlement.¹²⁵ These are Roma people who have lost their healthcare rights because they have not paid the necessary health insurance fees.¹²⁶ A demoscope survey conducted by the Open Society Institute and the World Bank called „Early Warning System”, reports that only in the period between February 2009 and 2010 the share of people without health insurance has increased from 6.7% to 8%, and among the Roma the increase is from 25% to 29%, i.e. it is over 3 times higher.¹²⁷ This general rising trend particularly hits the Roma population who more often than other population groups lacks social insurance coverage.¹²⁸ In the last years migration of the Roma has also lead to the following trend: numerous people, sometimes dozens of persons, are registered at one and the same address, without the necessary space needed to cohabitate normally. These registrations are done in order to ensure minimum requirements to start working or to use social or health services.

5.5. Other ethnic and religious vulnerable communities

As regards **ethnic Turks**, who form the second largest ethnic group in Bulgaria¹²⁹ (there is a common understanding among experts in migration that the main emigration direction for ethnic Turks abroad is Turkey; however, ethnic Turks also migrate within the country mostly to towns where an important part of the ethnic Turkish population is located, such as Kardzhali (South-Central region), Razgrad (North-Central region), Shumen (North-East region) and further in the north-eastern part of Bulgaria (in the so-called Ludogorie area stretching over the Razgrad and Ruse county). The latest population census indicates that the Turkish minority by large lives in rural areas (only 37.7% are in urban areas). Unlike the Roma, the Turkish minority is well integrated politically, but not socially and economically. Regional disparities also affect negatively large portions of the Turkish population in Bulgaria as the areas inhabited by the Turkish population (and the Bulgarian Muslims) are amongst the less developed.

One of the results of a project on ethnic minorities, migration and discrimination (IMIR, 2005) was the finding that in Bulgaria the Turkish and the Roma ethnic groups could not exert a large scaled pressure on the labour market, which could be implicitly understood first of all by their share in the population structure by ethnic groups (Table 24). The problem, in the opinion of experts who participated in the project, was that unemployment in these communities was based on unfavourable patterns of the labour force, mainly on low educational attainment, low or absent qualifications, long-term unemployment, lack of working discipline and low motivation to work. As for the Roma population, the rate of illiteracy and the share of children who do not visit a school among the Turkish minority is higher than for ethnic Bulgarians and likewise areas with large concentration of ethnic Turks display an unfavourable picture as regards tertiary education (NSI, 2011c, p. 32-33). Persons belonging to these ethnic groups form the main part of the vulnerable population groups on the labour market – young persons, women, persons with no education, inactive unemployed persons, discouraged people. The distribution of unemployed persons is not even on the territory of the country as mentioned earlier in the report; in some of the regions such as the

¹²⁵ See: Boika et al., 2009, p. 6.

¹²⁶ The payment of health insurance fees are obligatory in order to enjoy free medical treatment in hospitals in case of illness in Bulgaria. In case the person is employed, these fees are paid by the employer; in case the person is unemployed there are two options – for a certain amount of time these are paid by the State (in case the person is listed on Employment Office registries) or by the person himself in other cases.

¹²⁷ Open Society Institute, (2010a): The Vulnerable Groups and the Crisis. Politiki.bg, Issues 07/10. http://politiki.bg/?cy=183&lang=2&a0i=223581&a0m=readInternal&a0p_id=726 (accessed: 22.05.2012).

¹²⁸ This concern is also expressed in the NRIS (see (2011b): *National Roma Integration Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria 2012-2020*. Draft Available at:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/files/roma_bulgaria_strategy_en.pdf (accessed on 27.04.2012).

¹²⁹ 8.8% of the population according to data from the last 2011 census. See: NSI, 2011c.

South-Eastern and North-Eastern regions, the unemployment rate of these minority ethnic groups reaches 18% (ibid.).

Apart from the Roma and Turkish population groups who are part of the ethnic and immigrant environment, another large minority group in Bulgaria consists of the **Mohammedan Bulgarians**, whose ethnic origin is Bulgarian and whose faith is Islam. They usually populate specific mountain relief areas in the South of Bulgaria.

As regards the Mohammedan Bulgarians, it is worth mentioning that their migration attitudes is more characterized by labour migration. In the majority of cases men work abroad or within the country while women take care for the household in Bulgaria. The expert Nikolay Tsekov, from the Man and Society Research Institute at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, stated that Mohammedan Bulgarians migrate on a seasonal basis but they come home between the migration phases so there is no evidence of a depopulation of traditional Mohammedan Bulgarian' villages.¹³⁰

6. Policy responses

6.1. and 6.2. Encouragement of circular migration and return migration and support of integration of returnees

Bulgarian policy regarding **temporary and circular migration** has two major characteristics which, at first glance, might seem to be opposing each other. Until the beginning of the 2000s there was a lack of any specific interest in it. At the same time the attitude towards it among academics is very positive and in various academic papers these attitudes are being promoted and encouraged. Gradually, both public opinion and Government policy began to develop a positive attitude toward emigrants from Bulgaria, and, in particular, as concerns circular and return migration. This priority is still included in the Law on Bulgarians Living out of Republic of Bulgaria 2000¹³¹ even however, if practical attempts at concretising policies in this direction have remained scarce to date.

Encouragement of **return migration and support of integration of returnees** has been set as the first priority in the National Strategy of the Republic of Bulgaria on Migration and Integration (2008-2015).¹³² The document underlines that Bulgaria could become more effective for migrants who, if coming back and having enough financial means, could easily start own successful business. It acknowledges that this depends mainly on the economic and socio-political environment in the country and that for the time being, the business environment in Bulgaria should change in order to become more transparent and predictable. The strategy mentions that in order to balance the process of "brain drain", in the first place, the factors which "push" emigration should be reduced, contrary to the factors which "pull back" human capital. It also indicates that a possible mechanism for such a policy on the part of businesses and the state would be to create the conditions for internal competition and motivation for graduating specialists, providing a promising career in the country for the best among them. For this purpose and to avoid possible corrupt practices, the quality of human capital should however be assessed outside of universities.

One of the key priorities of Bulgarian migration policy stated in this Strategy is to attract back to this country part of the Bulgarian emigration of the last twenty years, especially the

¹³⁰ See the online article of the newspaper Trud, (2011): "Селата може да изчезнат в близките 50 години" ("Villages may disappear in the next 50 years"). In: Trud newspaper, 12.02.2011 <http://www.trud.bg/Article.asp?ArticleId=788969> (accessed 30.01.2012).

¹³¹ Law on Bulgarians Living out of Republic of Bulgaria 2000. (Закон за българите, живеещи извън Република България). Обн. ДВ. бр.30 от 11 Април 2000 г. <http://www.lex.bg/bg/laws/ldoc/2134916612> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

¹³² The main instrument for implementation of this priority is a complex of long-term and integrated policy for Bulgarians around the world. For this purpose a "Programme for Permanent Return to the Country of Persons with Bulgarian Citizenship on the Territory of Other Countries" has been worked out. The programme aims at the creation of the optimum opportunities for the return of Bulgarian citizens to Bulgaria. It is oriented mainly towards Bulgarian citizens settled in foreign countries with a focus on the skilled young Bulgarian emigrants.

qualified and the young people among the migrants. The main instrument for implementation of this priority is a complex of long-term and integrated policy for Bulgarians around the world. For this purpose a “Programme for Permanent Return to the Country of Persons with Bulgarian Citizenship on the Territory of other Countries” has been worked out. The programme aims at the creation of the optimum opportunities for the return of Bulgarian citizens to Bulgaria. It is oriented mainly towards Bulgarian citizens settled in foreign countries with a focus on the skilled young Bulgarian emigrants. Without being stated explicitly, the idea of temporary migration is being promoted in the document with the aim of avoiding or decreasing the risk that the best students (or young professionals who graduated recently) who migrate to Western higher education institutions would not return to their home country.¹³³ In this context the Bulgarian Government makes efforts (a) to facilitate students’ access to foreign higher education institutes and (b) to focus on such students, who have obtained their higher degree in receiving countries, after their return, but these efforts should become more effective:

In order to respond properly, to address the challenges and to design appropriate and effective policies on cross-border mobility of Bulgarians, including high-qualified specialists, first of all the State is supposed to closely monitor migration processes in the country. A good availability of data and information should be in place which by common understanding is missing at this stage. Otherwise, any measures for implementing an adequate migration policy would serve other unexpected purposes (Triandafyllidou et al., 2011).

The policy to remigration is particularly topical for Bulgaria taking into account the significant share of the highly-skilled emigrants. There is a common belief among many experts in the country that the key point is to attract and to motivate persons of Bulgarian origin who either have Bulgarian citizenship, or are currently citizen of another country (mainly Ukraine, Moldova, Macedonia) to return.¹³⁴ These two sub-groups fall into the common term “Diaspora” used in the National Strategy. Encouraging the return of migrants could be realized and financed by different state (national) programmes, or programmes under the responsibility of the European Commission or with support of international organizations such as IOM and the UN. However, it is also known that policies of remigration demand high costs, but often are not successful. Experience shows that the best factor for considerable return of migrants is the improvement of living standards in the country of origin and this is why this is also one of the goals set in the National Strategy.

The National Strategy on Migration and Integration 2008-2015 was developed and adopted at times of economic upsurge and decreasing unemployment. Hence its focus was placed on policies for legal migration and integration of immigrants. A few years later a new strategy, named National Strategy on Migration, Asylum and Integration 2011-2020 was adopted. It is aimed at developing a policy framework providing a comprehensive and sustainable regulatory and institutional basis for ensuring successful management of legal migration and integration while preventing and counteracting illegal migration. The main objectives are the prevention and effective counteraction of illegal migration, more efficient management of economic migration and integration, making migration and mobility positive factors of economic and demographic development. It is considered that the previous National Strategy 2008-2015 has been revised by this new strategy but this one has nevertheless remained into force as if focuses on the implementation of legal migration, integration and development

¹³³ The German Foundation Mummert is looking for young and ambitious Bulgarian with managerial potential. It offers study grants of up to 1,000 EUR monthly for up to 2.5 years to young people with Bachelor degree originating, among others, from, Bulgaria to obtain a Master degree in Germany (at the University of Cologne, the Technical University – RWTH - in Aachen or the National Sport Academy of Cologne). One of the main conditions for the allocation of the stipend is that the foreign students return to their own country and work there for at least 3 years directly after graduation in Germany. This is a measure of the Mummert Foundation to prevent brain-drain. However the applicants from Bulgaria are not many. See the online article on the home page of Deutsche Welle, (2011): “Пълна издръжка, ако се върнете в България “ (Full financial support to come back to Bulgaria). In: Deutsche Welle Online, 19.10.2011, Available at: <http://www.dw-world.de/dw/article/0,,15472967,00.html> and www.mummertstiftung.de (accessed: 14.01.2012).

¹³⁴ This is indicated also in the two National Strategies on Migration and Integration 2008-2015 and on Migration, Asylum and Integration 2011-2020.

policies and measures laid down therein. Unfortunately, there has been no evaluation of the National Strategy on Migration and Integration 2008-2015 to date.

In spite of the efforts undertaken by the national authorities within the above mentioned strategies, no specific services have been put in place for people who return from migration to their homes (Social Assistance Agency, 2009) in Bulgaria.

6.4. Development of net migration loss/gain regions (incl. Assessment of SF use)

A common feature of Bulgarian migration policy is the substantial number of strategies, action plans, programmes, etc. often criticized by the academic world because of their pure declarative character and the lack of goals set out in them with indicators for the achievement of actual results. Particularly controversial in this regard seems to be the above mentioned National Strategy on Migration and Integration (2008-2015) aimed at “permanent return and settlement of migrants. The strategy is oriented mainly towards persons of Bulgarian origin who are citizens of other countries and to Bulgarian citizens currently residing abroad. The main question about making (living) conditions in less developed and depopulated areas affected by out-migration attractive for these future returnees and comers has not been properly addressed at up to now.

Another weakness of the main strategic document that sets out Bulgarian migration policy is the fact that it is not focussed on circular migration. However, having in mind the flexibility and mobility of migrants, this is a crucial point especially when designing policies trying to support net migration loss regions. These are at risk of becoming even further depopulated when the labour markets of all EU member states will be opened for Bulgarians at the beginning of 2014 if the conditions for employment, business and living still remain not attractive and if incentives of circular migration from/to these regions remain absent.

The State has also designed a National Strategy Plan for Rural Development (2007-2013) (Republic of Bulgaria, 2006) addressed at disadvantaged rural areas, and in many cases first of all at North-West region which is in line with ideas and strategic goals of EU policy concerning rural development and social cohesion. Migration is not directly addressed at within this document , but it could influence issues at stake indirectly.¹³⁵

The SAPARD and LEADER programmes have contributed to the strengthening of rural economies as a whole. One of their priorities is to develop and strengthen the economies in rural areas and to restraint further depopulation. The programmes operate based on projects, developed by local farms, legal entities etc., which are co-financed, if approved, by the EU (at 75%) and 25% by the national budget. SAPARD as a pre-accession tool has been replaced by the Programme for Development of Rural Regions 2007-2013.¹³⁶ that supports projects aimed at the improvement of infrastructure, road recovery, water supply systems, start of small businesses, eco and rural tourism, etc. At this stage, it is not possible to estimate in how far the measures described and implemented have actually motivated people to migrate back to small disadvantaged villages and what was their outcome in terms of decreasing migration and regional inequalities. The reason for this is that statistics and numbers emerging from reports of the respective programmes on how many projects were financed and how much funds were allocated, if available at all, do not provide any further and sufficient information on their added value.

¹³⁵ For example, because of the Government's efforts to achieve higher effectiveness of different activities reducing the state expenditure, at present many small and depopulated villages are threaten to have closed post offices, and/or hospitals, shops, and others, which deliver the most vital services there.

¹³⁶ The total funds available under this programme amount to EUR 3.242 bill, of which EUR 2.609 bill from the EU, in particular European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development contribution and EUR 0.632 bill from the Bulgarian national budget. See: Bulgaria's Rural Development Programme 2007-2013. Europe Press Release RAPID, Beussels, 20 December 2007. Available at: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/595&format=HTML&aged=1&language=EN&guiLanguage=en> (accessed: 14.05.2012).

6.5. Support to vulnerable groups related to migration (incl. Assessment of SF use)

The development of community-based social services in Bulgaria is a relatively new practice – only since 2005 an intensive development of social services in the community has begun. The only services known until that time were services provided within specialized institutions for both adults and children.¹³⁷ In many municipalities and even towns there is a lack of main social services directed to children and families but also to adults and disabled people. The social assistance in the country is oriented towards benefit payments and assistance in kind but not towards working with particular cases of people, families or communities using the methods of social work.

There are no specialized programmes and projects of the European Social Fund (ESF) incorporating the dimension of migration without and within the country, and this gap could be corrected by the development of issues related to the specificities of internal migration. A substantial part of ESF funds is directed to programmes delivered by state agencies such as the State Agency for Refugees, as well as other executive state agencies; but they are no funded projects for the development of measures and tasks tackling the impacts of migration for vulnerable groups.

The system of social services in Bulgaria should be more evenly developed and monitoring procedures of the quality of services delivered should be oriented not only towards processes but also towards the achievement of quality, outcomes and effects. The allocation of services should be improved in order to favour people living in remote places.

In relation to **elderly persons left behind** by migrants, being aware of the challenges imposed by migration and lacking social and health services in Bulgaria for elderly people (see Chapter 5) left behind.¹³⁸ The Bulgarian Red Cross organisation (BRC) has special projects in place aiming at the establishment of daily centers in areas with a predominantly elderly population, which aim is to support elderly people and provide vital services to them.¹³⁹ The most considerable support for elderly people however remain the so-called 'social patronages', established by municipal authorities. These are centers that support elderly people in their nutrition. There are some other programmes such as „Help with the household and personal assistant” which is funded by the European Social Fund and directed towards older people left behind in remote regions.¹⁴⁰ Despite the existence of these different programmes and projects, available services are not sufficient and their coverage is not large enough to cover all elderly people in need.

As to the policies towards the **Roma population**, these should be directed at their active commitment to the economic and social life in Bulgaria and their integration as equal and responsible members of the society. At present the education of the Roma population is widely recognized in the country as a priority for solving the poverty problems of the majority of the Roma.¹⁴¹ At the same time the traditional policy until now is has been based mainly on positive discrimination towards the Roma population (like free access to electricity power, water, toleration of their illegal houses, etc.) but it is widely recognized also that the pursued policy until now is not satisfactory.

The Bulgarian Council of Ministers adopted National Strategy for Roma Integration (NRIS) and Action Plan (AP).¹⁴² It demonstrates political will for putting Roma integration higher in

¹³⁷ According to the afore mentioned Social Assistance Agency report, there were a total of 448 social services in the community launched and in operation as delegated activities by the State for both children and adults on the territory of the country up to 31.12.2009; their capacity represent 11,789 placements. See: Bogdanov, (2010).

¹³⁸ Interview with experts from the BRC organised by G. Bogdanov, conducted in Sofia, on 11.02.2011.

¹³⁹ The Bulgarian Red Cross is licensed at the Bulgarian Social Assistance Agency as a provider of 13 types of social services, 9 of which directed towards older people (Source: website if the BRC, <http://en.redcross.bg/activities/activities5.html>).

¹⁴⁰ Responsible for implementing this project is the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy.

¹⁴¹ It should be noted that one of the main problems with Roma children is the big share of drop-outs of school.

¹⁴² National Strategy of Republic of Bulgaria for Roma Integration (NRIS), 2012-2020 and Action Plan (AP) (Национална стратегия на Република България за интегриране на ромите (2012-2020). The Decision of

the agenda of Bulgarian government and defines proper strategic approach and directions for action. The NRIS continues and further develops the strengths of the previous Roma integration documents adopted by three Bulgarian governments. The Strategy however does not propose change in the Roma integration institutional infrastructure as well as in the monitoring and evaluation mechanisms that proved their inefficiency during the previous years. Important chances in these directions seemed omitted and should be advanced. Overall, in all major fields of intervention the Strategy makes a brief but highly relevant analysis. When it comes to mentioning what needs to be done the Strategy is quite strong on general principles and when referring to the international and domestic context of existing charts, strategies and programmes. The real promise of the strategy, however, is for very small actions.

In terms of clarity, the AP identifies clear and concrete measures in the 4 priority areas. The timelines envisaged are too often, too vague and lacking in specifics. For example, prevention of school dropouts, an activity that is to be implemented in the two-year period 2012-2014 is lacking in concrete indicators. The indicators provided for this particular activity are 'the development of a monitoring system and approved methodology.'

The AP could be used as good summary of the different institutions' activities regarding the Roma integration. It is also step forward having in mind the previous absence of action plans that transform at operational level the existing strategic documents. At the same time the value added of the AP is sharply decreased by the lack of financial back up for most of the activities and the absence of new activities, different from the ones performed at present. The Plan is not coherent: some of its parts are relatively rich of activities unlike others that are modest and formal.¹⁴³

6.6. Best practice examples of policy responses

The selective immigration policy of the receiving countries has been an important migration factor for Bulgarians (ILO, 2006). The conclusion and implementation of labour agreements with certain EU countries could be seen as a useful subsidiary tool in time of on-going transition periods for realizing the employment of Bulgarian workers in other EU countries.¹⁴⁴ The EU countries began negotiating labour agreements on a bilateral basis with Bulgaria, mainly allowing for temporary contract agreements, depending on the specific needs of the individual receiving country. Spain and Germany have the leading role concerning the number of Bulgarian citizens recruited abroad under international agreements for the period 2004-2009, particularly after 2007. Such agreements could be treated as an additional good practice in order to overcome the limitations of the free movement, and because they contain specific arrangements in compliance with the harmonised economic development of the EU states.

The Programme "**Diaspora**" conducted by the State Agency of Bulgarians Abroad¹⁴⁵ is aimed at motivating Bulgarian young specialists abroad for professional realization in the country of origin.¹⁴⁶ The target groups of high-skilled specialists are mainly two: people

Council of Ministers was published at the beginning of January: 1/05.01.2012. Available at: <http://www.nccedi.government.bg/page.php?category=125&id=1633> (Accessed: 23.05.2012).

¹⁴³ These issues will be concerned further again.

¹⁴⁴ See: Article from the online archive of the Bulgarian Newspaper Capital, (2006): "Как ще работим в ЕС? Има ограничения, но и начини за заобикалянето им" (How are we going to work within the EU? There are some limitations, but also ways to avoid them"). In: Capital newspaper, 10.11.2006. Available online: <http://www.capital.bg/show.php?storyid=293222> (accessed on 30.01.2012).

¹⁴⁵ An Agency of Bulgarians Abroad was founded in 1992 and transformed into the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad in 2000. It maintains constant contact with communities and organisations of Bulgarians abroad. The development of lobbies representing Bulgarian interests and the preservation of Bulgarian cultural and historical heritage are among its main priorities.

¹⁴⁶ Ivanov, R., (2011): "B. "Az Buki": България все повече ще съществува в света чрез диаспората си" ("Bulgaria will exist in the world more and more through its Diaspora"). Interview of the President of the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad for newspaper "AzBuki", 31.03.2011. Available on the website of the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad: <http://www.aba.government.bg/?show=22&nid=1003> (accessed:12.01.2012).

obtaining a doctoral scientific degree (PhD) abroad and entrepreneurs. In 2007 however only 13 Bulgarian doctoral students took part in the programme (even some of them were already teaching in Bulgaria) (Republic of Bulgaria, 2007). The very limited number of participants either shows the weak interest of the qualified and educated part of the Diaspora towards any options to come back to the country or the insufficiency of return incentives. Nevertheless, this programme can be regarded as an example which demonstrates the strong political will of the Government to attract high-skilled people of Bulgarian origin. If better designed and promoted, this type of programmes have the potential of becoming more efficient.

Another good practice of the State Agency of Bulgarians Abroad is its cooperation with “Job Tiger”, a web site specialized in the announcement of job positions, on the **project “Return Home”**. This project aims at analysing the disposition of Bulgarian students abroad to return home and to have their professional realization in the country of origin. Studying the attitudes of young people who obtained their degrees abroad as regards job search and their expectations for future career development in Bulgaria (and/or abroad) is important for the Government since the results of this research will promote the design and implementation of good and adequate return policies based on actual needs.

There are numerous associations and fellowships established by Bulgarian migrants abroad (like “Rodina” in Perth, Western Australia, “Khan Krum” in Segovia, Spain and many others). They have developed patriotic and enlightening activity. There is also a political party called “The other Bulgaria”. The activities of the Bulgarian and American Association in Chicago can also be pointed as a good practice example. In 2011 the 11th session of the Festival “Bulgarian Days in Chicago” was organised by the association. One of the aims of this event is to create a Bulgarian elite abroad, who is competent to also establish Bulgarian interest lobbies abroad. A good mediator among the Bulgarians there is the weekly newspaper “Bulgaria”, issued in Chicago.¹⁴⁷

7. Key challenges and policy suggestions

7.1. Key challenges of the social impact of emigration and internal migration

Generally speaking, up-to-date and reliable data and information about (e)migration of Bulgarians is missing in Bulgaria. There are problems with the collection and analysis of **statistical information** about the migration situation provided by different competent institutions, in particular there is a lack of systematic and detailed reliable information about migration processes. Such a lack of data does not provide a sufficient basis and opportunities for qualitative and quantitative studies needed for the elaboration of analysis and forecasts of high quality. Considering information support, there is a need to enhance the information exchange and cooperation between different institutions at national level, and to take further action to provide migration policy-makers with comparable statistical data, analyses, studies, public opinion surveys, etc.

Maybe partly due to the absence of systematic and reliable data, **an adequate national policy** towards Bulgarians abroad has been missing in Bulgaria until recently. At present Bulgarian national policy is trying to shift from a policy of neglecting the migration processes to regarding and effectively regulating them, and this is described in the two consequent National Strategies (until 2015 and until 2020). Such complex strategies should have been elaborated as a result of joint work and successful coordination between different relevant institutions - state and public institutions, agencies, NGOs and the society, but unfortunately this has not been the case in Bulgaria. Thus, there is a need to initiate and develop large

¹⁴⁷ See: “We did the first step. It is time for the second...” (“Направихме нашата първа крачка в Чикаго. Време а за втората...”). Interview with the founder and President of the Bulgarian-American Association in Chicago Dinko Dinev, Вестник “България”, седмичник в Чикаго, Newspaper Bulgaria, weekly, Chicago. Available at: <http://www.bulgaria-weekly.com/the-week/persons/2704--napravihme-nashata-purva-krachka-v-chicago.html> (accessed: 4.01.2012).

public discussions on national migration policy and legislative amendments thereof, e.g. via, public forums and to envisage forms of citizen control on the implementation of measures set out in corresponding action plans. In this frame cooperation of public authorities with NGOs and international organizations shall be sought, as well as possibilities to make effective use of the European Fund for the Integration in this respect.

Basically, Bulgaria is deeply in need of creating a socio-economic environment which has the potential of retaining potential migrants and attract them back to the country in case they choose to emigrate. For this it is necessary to achieve further **significant economic progress and higher living standards**. This does not only imply the necessity for higher wages and for an efficient system of universal services, but also the development of a stable and predictable business environment and efficient action of the Judiciary. Reforms of the public sector of health-care, education and social services should be implemented faster and lead to raising the living standards of people both in urban and rural areas. Only under these conditions people who take the decision to migrate based on their personal financial situation would prefer to stay in the country. Reforms in healthcare should appreciate and valorize the work of the medical staff (including remunerations), and facilitate the procedure for specialisation for young medical doctors’.

Targeting of all **social protection and social inclusion policies** towards the **vulnerable groups** needs improvement. The focus of such policies should be removed from the one-size-fits-it-all methodology (i.e. methodology designed for a large group of population), which provides for little flexibility to the level where actual service providers interact with beneficiaries. Better targeting is closely linked to the policy for decentralisation transferring more competences and discretion to local authorities for the design and implementation of programmes. A necessary precondition for this is the improvement of the capacities of local administrative authorities and of the skills of the professions interacting with the vulnerable groups – social workers, GPs, teachers etc. This is why training courses, professional forums, exchange of experience on municipal level should be activated and intensified in order to transfer social policy from the level of good intentions to its implementation.

With regard to the **Roma** population, Government measures and programmes implemented so far were aimed at mitigating the social problems and contributing to the improvement of the situation of **the Roma community**, and respectively to discourage them to migrate. These policies however, did not have a sustainable positive effect.

The EU framework for national Roma integration strategies, adopted by the European Council is the most recent document, stressing the need for using EU funds, in particular making the Structural Funds and the EAFRD more accessible for Roma inclusion.¹⁴⁸ In this document is marked that the National Roma Integration Strategy (NRIS) has very limited information on using EU funds for Roma inclusion in Bulgaria, which makes it difficult to formulate country-specific comments. The NRIS does not provide an adequate description of the current situation of Roma in Bulgaria - the geographical distribution (regions, cities, localities); description of the socio-economic challenges of Roma with particular attention to **the four key priority areas**: education, employment, housing, healthcare, and any other specific issues deemed important within the given national context. This situation is due to several reasons: (i) systemic factors for social exclusion of Roma such as segregated education are not identified; (ii) there is no analysis of the good and bad practice in Roma inclusion programs from previous years, and others. The inadequate identification of the problems has affected the formulation of strategic goals and concrete measures. In general the national goals follow closely the goals set by the EU Framework. They however are not articulated in terms of concrete indicators for the four priority areas. Those indicators mentioned in the action plan in the different areas are inadequate. The Bulgarian government has added other goals that are relevant to the national context – media outreach, the preservation of Roma culture, the rule of law and antidiscrimination. These additional goals

¹⁴⁸ (2012): Review of EU Framework National Roma Integration Strategies (NRIS). Open Society Foundations review of NRIS submitted by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia. Compiled by Bernard Rorke, Director of International Advocacy and Research, Open Society Roma Initiatives.

however are only vaguely elaborated. It is unclear what mechanisms for implementation will be applied, or how these goals will be monitored.

In *education*, proposed measures do not address segregated education. The Strategy does not identify segregated education as a major obstacle for equal education opportunity and does not envisage measures to eliminate segregated education. Some measures are aimed at reducing the number of children in segregated kindergartens, but there are no measures to desegregate primary and secondary schools which are the most important obstacle for Roma to access equal education opportunities. These omissions are hard to explain given that ALL strategic documents adopted by Bulgarian governments since 1999, including documents adopted by the current government in 2010, highlight the problem of segregated education and include measures to address it.

There are no measures for support of Roma to pursue *higher education* careers. Despite the fact that the EC Framework does not require governments to act in this field, in Bulgaria, previous strategic documents have identified promotion of higher education among Roma as a necessary measure contributing to the overall development of the communities. The present Strategy lacks continuity in this respect.

In *health care*, exclusion from health insurance is not addressed in the AP; creating healthy living conditions in Roma neighbourhoods is not addressed either. These two issues are missing from the Strategy, despite the fact that in 2008 the European Committee for Social Rights found Bulgarian state in violation of the European Social Charter precisely due to “failure of the authorities to take appropriate measures to address the health problems faced by Roma communities stemming from their often unhealthy living conditions” and due to “difficult access to health services - the medical services available for poor or socially vulnerable persons who have lost entitlement to social assistance”.¹⁴⁹

In *housing*, the AP fails to provide measures to tackle a key structural problem such as the prevalence of housing which is not legalised by the authorised national authorities. Unlike previous strategic documents, the Strategy does not envisage measures for legalisation of Roma housing, despite the fact that in 2006 Bulgaria was found in violation of the European Social Charter due to, among others “the lack of security of tenure” for Roma housing.

In *employment*, the measures in the Action Plan do not match the strategic goals. For example, goal 6 “Development of legal and economic mechanisms to stimulate employers to employ Roma” is not matched by any concrete measures. In general, the measures do not envisage provision of employment opportunities for unemployed Roma, other than the public works programs. Most of the measures deal with professional qualification, counselling, motivation.

Even if the AP to the strategy is fully implemented it will not bring about a visible change of the situation of the Roma at national level. The explicitly mentioned figures in the action plan are negligible from a macroeconomic perspective. The action plan uses two other formulas: ‘no additional funding is necessary’ and ‘funding will be provided within the framework of the approved state budget’. The second formula is practically meaningless, saying that funding for the integration of the Roma will be limited to whatever funding the relevant ministries can spare from their early budgets.

¹⁴⁹ See Resolution by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, Resolution CM/ResChS(2010)1, Collective complaint No. 46/2007 by the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) against Bulgaria. (Adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 31 March 2010 at the 1081st meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies). Available at: <https://wcd.coe.int/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1607385&Site=CM&BackColorInternet=C3C3C3&BackColorIntranet=EDB021&BackColorLogged=F5D383> (accessed: 23.05.2012).

7.2. Policies to be taken by different actors (national, regional, local governments, Diaspora, EU, host countries' institutions)

Some experts share the opinion that the success in effective utilisation of EU cohesion funds regarding the provision of adequate employment opportunities in the country is of decisive importance for Bulgarian migration policy. Due to heavy administrative procedures and bureaucracy, the orientation of the Bulgarian administration towards a centralized management of such resources has the potential to induce an increase of the emigration potential rather than a decline. The promotion of a **decentralised policy for EU funds** allocation would substantially support local authorities in tackling infrastructural and economic development accompanied by a set of labour market policy measures which would restrain the willingness to move (Mintchev and Boshnakov, 2006b).

Further **improvement of the administrative and legal infrastructure for economic activity** in Bulgaria could facilitate additional investments and boost the demand for high-skilled personnel (including medical staff). For the moment there are still substantial possibilities to utilise the benefits of (potential) return migration, but the country is still not making adequate use of the advantages of having large number of migrants in developed countries. This challenging task, which the Bulgarian Government shall tackle, would in turn induce the return of such migrants if they are offered adequate remuneration and career opportunities by foreign investors and multinational companies operating in Bulgaria.

Policies that facilitate **temporary migration movement**, if effectively implemented and monitored, could be extremely useful in Bulgaria given the seasonal character of employment in rural areas of the host countries. Effective (working) regulations for temporary and seasonal migration would decrease incentives for permanent settlement. Incentives and flexible schemes for **circular migration** specific to Bulgaria should be considered by destination countries (by the Government, think tanks, NGOs and the business) Currently existing agreements (see Chapter 2) could be improved much. More importantly, these special agreements would preserve the necessary flexibility in the working conditions of Bulgarian workers abroad, by maintaining the cost-advantages in contracts and by securing employment. State policies to facilitate temporary and circular migration movements should also be supplemented by social and educational policies that would underpin integration in the receiving countries and be consistent with migrant workers' needs. Educational exchanges, training programmes, bilateral or multilateral agreements for the transfer of social security rights and benefits for temporary and circular migrants are some of the policy measures that would facilitate temporary and circular migration flows and promote regional integration and development. At the same time deeper harmonization of the social policies concerning migrants within the EU should be developed at the level of the EU.

Workable ideas what needs to be done in the sphere of employment of **vulnerable groups**, in particular of the **Roma** population in Bulgaria should be elaborated and implemented by all stakeholders involved, thus discouraging them to migrate. Firstly, targeted policies for elderly people and children of migrants should be put in place; more favourable economic opportunities to both women and men, especially in remote rural areas, must be created. Secondly, it is necessary to raise the level of working skills of the unemployed people, and the level of education; Thirdly, it is necessary to raise entrepreneurial skills for starting own businesses, for social adaptation and integration for those people.

The Bulgaria authorities shall keep and intensify communication and active relations with out-migrants (**Diaspora**). This will create a more favourable environment for those out-migrants who think over the option to come back. However, even in the case they are not willing to come back, relations with the country of origin will be useful for the two sides – for out-migrants and the country Bulgaria since it can initiate ideas and opportunities for investment in the country.

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Interview with experts from the Bulgarian Red Cross organisation organised by G. Bogdanov, conducted in Sofia, on 11.02.2011.

Interview with the director of the school in the Tarnava vilige, located in the North-West Region conducted on 7th of December 2011.

Interview with the mayor of Gomotartsi, Mr. Lyuben Stoyanov, conducted by G. Bogdanov on 23.03.2011.

ANNEX:

Notes on statistics on migration in Bulgaria

Since 1990 the National Statistical Institute (NSI) in Bulgaria uses the UNs recommendations for classification of migration as a change of place of permanent residence, "emigrant" as a person who leaves his/her country permanently or for a long time (more than 1 year) and "immigrant" as a person who arrives in a given country for a long residing (more than 1 year) as well as short-term emigrant who is absent from the country within no longer than 3 months in one year. Official data on the profile of potential migrants one can get from two sources in Bulgaria: NSI's population census, when a representative sample study is carried out (1992, 2001, 2003 and 2011) and International Organisation for Migration (IOM) sample surveys in 1992, 1996 and 2001.

International organizations could not produce? but regard and use the national statistics. In practice the different studies are based on data taken first of all from the official statistics provided by the NSI but also from official national and international reports and documents, including national strategies on migration, on statistics provided by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy in Bulgaria, as well as on information taken from public opinion polls and academic research. Except NSI several other institutions gather information on migration: Ministry of Internal Affairs, State Agency for the Bulgarians Abroad (ABA) which is a state institution tasked with collecting data about expatriate Bulgarians, and others. The latter also co-ordinates and supports the activities of state institutions towards expatriate Bulgarians. Employment Agency at the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy gather useful but limited information on labour migration. For the purpose of the individual studies however data is collected in line with different methodologies and cover different years or periods of time which makes it hard to compare (see: EMN), 2011b).

The question for the total number of Bulgarians abroad is ambiguous. Data is very unstable due both to the differences in the assessments of various sources and to the lack of continuous official statistics on this matter. In general, the persons of Bulgarian origin living in other countries are persons without Bulgarian citizenship, persons with Bulgarian citizenship, and persons with dual citizenship. Nevertheless, there exist several sources which can provide a reference point in this field. First comes the information from the Bulgarian diplomatic and consulate agencies abroad; the database collected, updated, and stored in the State Agency for Bulgarians Abroad (SABA), and the self-evaluation of the Bulgarian communities in particular countries. These sources are followed by scientific sources – historical, statistical, and demographic studies and data (Bulgarian and foreign), documents, memoirs. Building on such sources and taking their deficiencies into account, it is estimated that there are about one million people living abroad have Bulgarian citizenship (Republic of Bulgaria, 2008, p. 13).

There are several ways to categorize the types of migrants (see Chapter 7) as well as the potential migrants. For example NSI summarize five basic groups of potential migrants according to the willingness to travel, the reason to stay abroad and the likeliness to realise migration in the (near) future: I group – *potential settlers*. It consists of people who plan or are „likely” to resettle to live in another country. They represent 8.5% of total respondents (this is the so-called statistical category *scope* of emigration. It is measured by the percentage of the number of emigrants by different categories of potential emigrants in the total number potential emigrants/; II group – *labour migrants*. It includes people who want and are „very likely” or „to a certain extent likely” to move to other country to work/study for more than a year (6.8% of the total respondents) / III group – *short-term migrants*. It covers people who are „likely” or „to a certain extent likely” to go abroad to work/study for a shorter period – several months but not longer than a year (4.5% of total respondents) / IV group – *potential tourists*. These are people who plan to travel abroad as tourists or as guests of their relatives (10.9% of total respondents); V group – *people who do not travel abroad*. This

group encompasses 69.3% of total respondents, which means nearly three out of every four Bulgarians are not willing to leave the country. It should be taken into account the relation between potential and effective (real) migration. The latter is associated with specific preparation for departure to a given country. Therefore, it is only a part of potential emigration and implies a more realistic assessment of its size. In addition, intentions to emigrate related to travel in the current or in the next two to three years are a more reliable guarantee for the stated intention than the intention to emigrate in a more distant period (NSI, 2001).

Note on definitions of rural areas:

Bulgaria is divided into 6 planning regions (NUTS 2), 28 administrative regions (NUTS 3) and 264 municipalities (LAU 1). According to the OECD definition, in Bulgaria there are 20 predominantly rural regions (NUTS 3), 7 intermediary rural regions and only 1 predominantly urban region – the capital Sofia. Thus, predominantly and intermediary rural regions cover 98.8% of the territory and account for 84.3% of the population of Bulgaria.

The national definition of rural areas, defines rural areas as municipalities (LAU 1), in which no settlement has a population over 30,000 people. This definition has been used under SAPARD and will also be applied in the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 for territorially based interventions.

According to the national definition, utilized for the aims of the policy for rural regions' development and under SAPARD plan, rural municipalities are those whose largest town's population is under 30,000 persons. On the grounds of that definition 231 of the municipalities in Bulgaria are categorized as rural regions. These municipalities encompass 81% of the country territory and 42% of the population. Rural municipalities are identified as well-defined systems of settlements/villages clustered around a municipality centre, which may be a bigger village or a small town. The number of villages in one municipality may vary between 134 and 1.

Villages in Bulgaria are classified as very small, small, medium, large, and very large. There is a notable difference between Bulgarian villages and villages across Europe. A typical Bulgarian village is a compact settlement entity where dwellings are grouped in neighbourhoods, sharing a common water and electricity, sewage, road and telephone network. There are back yards in almost every village house where people grow fruit, berries and vegetables and/or keep animals for their own use. Rural population live in communities based on age-old strong family bonds. There are about 37 thousand monuments of local cultural heritage.

Source: Rural Development Programme (2007-2013), The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas. Republic of Bulgaria, July 2009, pp. 7-8.

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Table 1. Bulgaria: main macroeconomic indicators, 1990-1995, %

Indicators	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Real GDP (growth rates)	-9.1	-11.7	-7.3	-2.4	1.8	2.5
Real wages (growth rates)	5.3	-39.1	14.9	1.4	-20.5	-7.5
Consumer price index (growth rates)	23.8	338.5	79.4	56.1	87.1	62.2
Unemployment rate*	1.7	11.1	15.3	16.4	12.8	11.1
Real industrial output (growth rates)	-16.8	-22.2	-15.9	-10.9	8.5	4.9
Real personal consumption (growth rates)	-3.3	-15.7	1.0	-0.7	-2.6	-
Budget deficit (share of GDP)	-4.9	-3.8	-5.7	-11.5	-6.6	6.7
Employment (growth rates)	-6.1	-13.0	-8.1	-1.6	-2.0	-2.4
Real money (M1) (growth rates)	5.8	-48.4	-21.6	-18.2	-4.6	5.5

Source: National Statistical Institute. Main Macroeconomic Indicators 2007, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal-publikaciaen.php?n=156&otr=42>, date of access 19.01.2012.

Table 2. Bulgaria: main macroeconomic indicators, 2004-2011, %

	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Growth of real GDP *	6.7	6.4	6.5	6.4	6.2	-5.5	0.2	1.7
Inflation**	6.1	5.0	7.3	8.4	12.3	2.8	2.4	4.2
Unemployment ***	12.2	10.1	9.0	6.9	5.6	6.8	10.2	11.2
Cash deficit/surplus, % of GDP	1.7	3.1	3.4	3.3	2.9	0.9	-4.0	-2.1

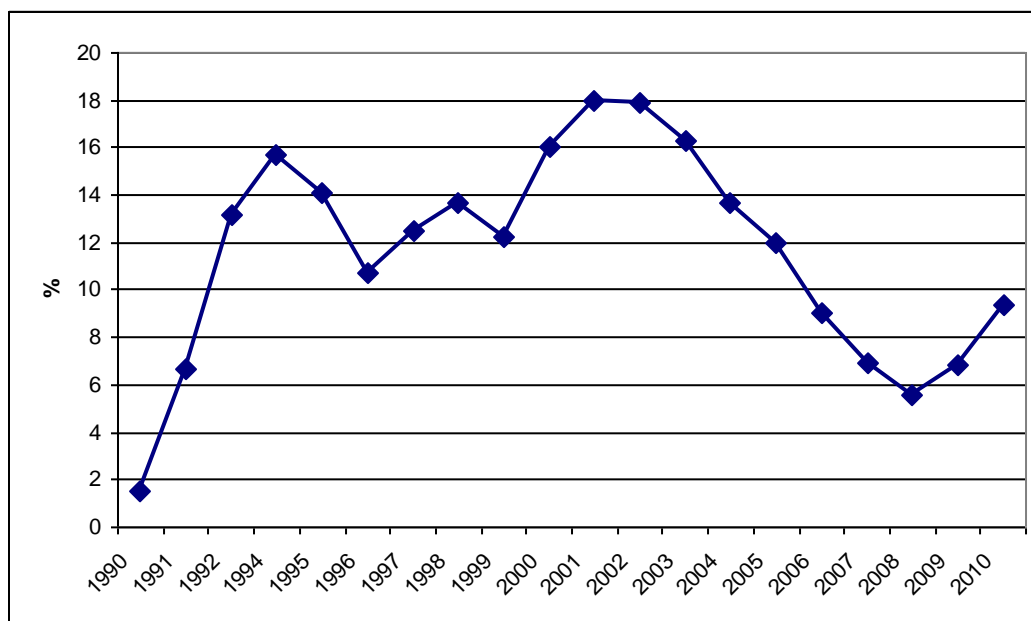
* previous year=100, %

** annual average CPI, previous year=100

*** unemployment rates of population aged 15 years and over

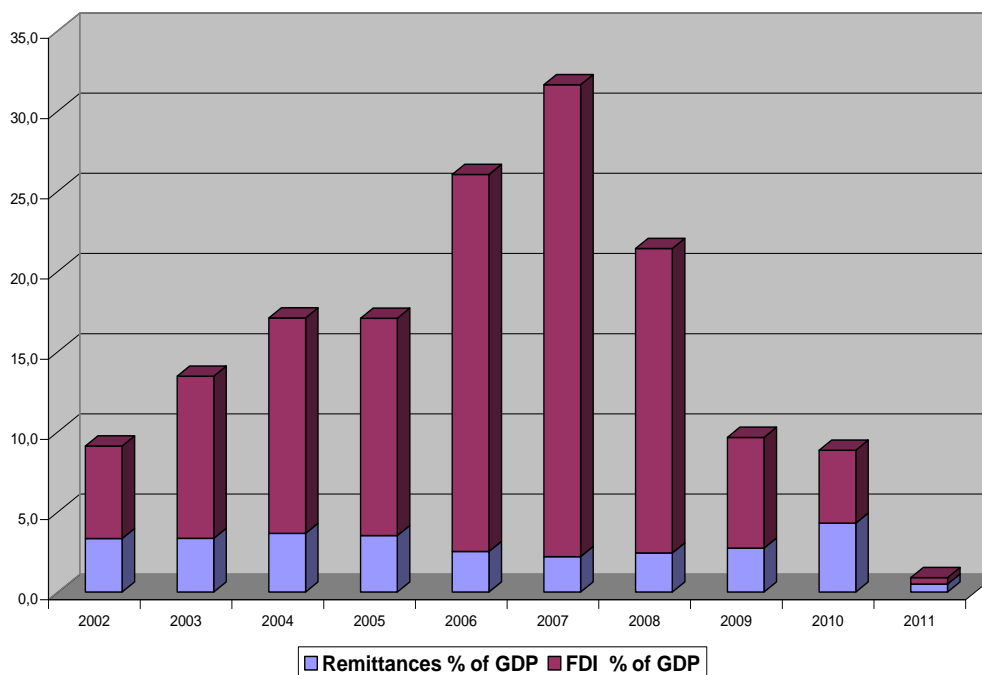
Source: National Statistics Institute. Statistics. <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=42> (accessed 26.12.2011) and Bulgarian National Bank. Macroeconomic Indicators. <http://www.bnb.bg/Statistics/StMacroeconomicIndicators/index.htm> (accessed 22.05.2012).

Figure 1. Level of unemployment in Bulgaria, 1990-2010, %



Source: National Statistical Institute, Labour market –data, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=51> (accessed 26.12.2011).

Figure 2. Remittances (Current Transfers net) % of GDP and FDI % of GDP (2002-2011)



Source: Bulgarian National Bank. Macroeconomic Indicators.
<http://www.bnb.bg/Statistics/StMacroeconomicIndicators/index.htm> (accessed 26.12.2011).

Table 3. Bulgaria: Bio-demographic statistics, 1989-2009, per 1,000 population (unless otherwise indicated)

Indicator	1989	1995	2002	2010
Population – to 31.12 (thousands)	8,993.4	8,384.7	7,845.5	7,504.9
Share of urban population (%)	67.3	67.8	69.7	71.8
Birth rate	12.6	8.6	8.5	8.4
Mortality rate	11.8	13.6	14.3	14.6
Infant mortality rate*	14.4	14.8	13.2	9.4
In towns	..	14.0	11.9	8.3
In villages	..	16.7	16.6	13.7
Rate of natural increase	0.8	-5.0	-5.8	-6.2
Life expectancy at birth (years)	71.2 (1989-91)	70.6	71.8 (1990-01)	74.4
Men	68.0	67.1	68.5	70.8
Women	74.7	74.9	75.2	78.2
Average age (years)	37.3	38.9	40.6	41.4 (2006)
In towns	..	36.8	38.8	39.7
In villages	..	43.3	44.7	45.3
Total fertility rate	1.81 (1990)	1.23	1.23	1.49

* Infant mortality rate, within the first year of life per 1000 live births.

Source: Republic of Bulgaria (2010): Yearbook of National Statistics. NSI and NSI, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (accessed 26.12.2011)

Table 4. Reasons for which Bulgarians decide to leave Bulgaria, 1996 and 2001, %, Total=100

Reason for migration	1996	2001
Economic reasons	77	77.1
Disappointment with Bulgaria	6	6.8
Adventure/change	4	4.2
Career development	1	2.8
Curiosity	3	1.8
Relatives abroad	1	1.3
False perceptions about the West	2	1.1
Political reasons	1	0.8
Ignorance and confusion	1	0.6
Ethnic reasons	1	0.3
To enjoy human rights	0	0.3
Cultural reasons	1	0.2
Religious reasons	0	0.1
Do not know	1	1.4
No response	1	1.3

Source: IOM 2001 study on potential migrants from Bulgaria.

Table 5. Bulgarian nationals in Germany, 1999-2007

Year	Bulgarian Nationals (total)	Women (% of total)	Foreign citizens in Germany (total)	Population of Germany (total)
1999	32,290	44.9	7,336,000	82,163,475
2000	34,359	45.6	7,268,000	82,259,540
2001	38,143	47.1	7,318,300	82,440,309
2002	42,419	48.9	7,348,000	82,536,680
2003	44,300	50.8	7,342,000	82,531,671
2004	39,167	54.6	7,288,000	82,500,849
2005	39,153	56.6	7,289,100	82,437,995
2006	39,053	57.2	7,255,900	82,314,906
2007	46,818	57.0	7,257,000	82,217,830

Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (Federal Statistical Office of Germany) (2008), <http://www.destatis.de> (accessed 26.10.2011).

Table 6. Migration from and to Bulgaria, total and by sex, 2007-2010*

	Inflows of migrants	Outflows of migrants	Net migration
2007			
Total	1,561	2,958	-1,397
Male	877	1,119	-242
Female	684	1,839	-1,155
2008			
Total	1,236	2,112	-876
Male	674	766	-92
Female	562	1,346	-784
2009			
Total	3,310	19,039	-15,729
Male	1,921	8,353	-6,432
Female	1,389	10,686	-9,297
2010			
Total	3,518	27,708	-24,190
Male	1,910	12,607	-10,697
Female	1,608	15,101	-13,493

* Data: Include persons who have informed the administrative authorities about a change of their current address to a foreign country, NSI.

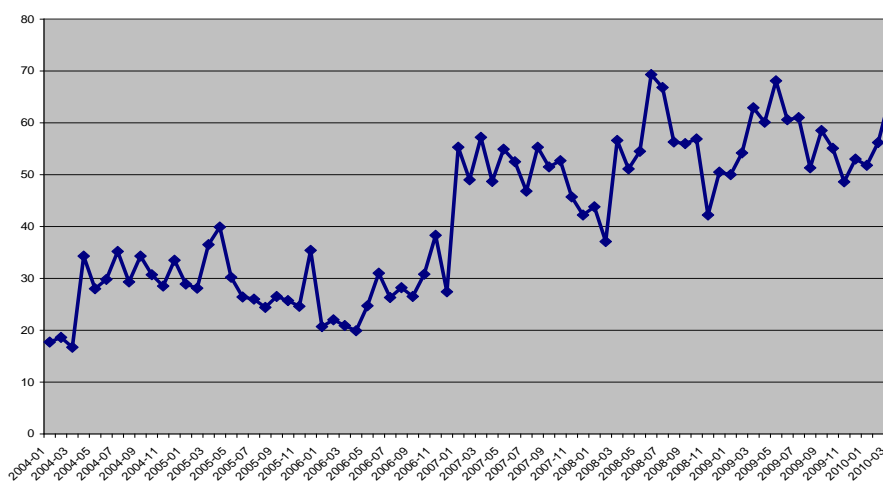
Source: National Statistical Institute. <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19>, date of access 26.10.2011

Table 7. Government's estimates on the number of Bulgarian immigrants by country, 2008

Destination country	Number of immigrants from Bulgaria
USA	Around 200,000)
Spain	Over 120,000
Greece	Around 110,000 (non-official 200,000)
United Kingdom	Over 60,000
Germany	Over 50,000
Italy	Around 50,000
Canada	Around 45,000
Austria	Around 25,000
South Africa	Around 15-20,000
Australia	Around 15-20,000
France	Over 15,000
Czech Republic	Around 10,000
Portugal	Around 10,000
Hungary	Around 5,000
Belgium	Around 4,000
Slovakia	Around 3,000
Sweden	Around 2,000

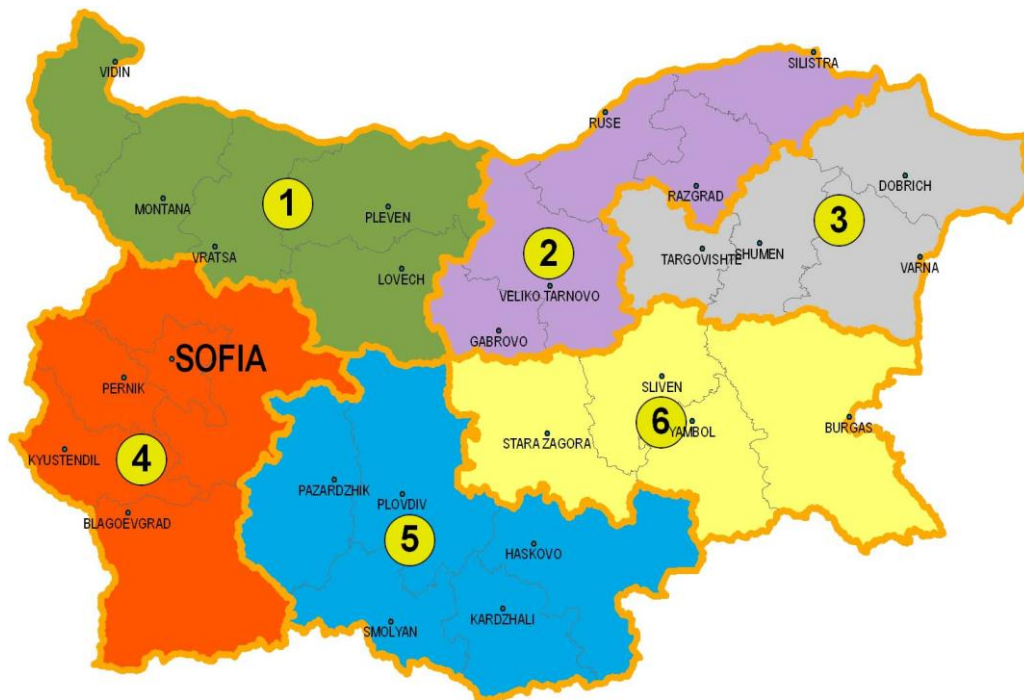
Source: National Strategy of R. of Bulgaria on Migration and Integration, 2008-2015, p.5.

Figure 3. Net Transfers from Bulgarians living abroad, January 2004-March 2010, million EUR



Source: Bulgarian National Bank, <http://www.bnb.bg/Statistics/StExternalSector/StDirectInvestments/StDIBulgaria/index.htm> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

Figure 4. Map of Bulgaria divided into the six planning regions



Legend: 1 – North-West region; 2 – North Central region; 3 – North-East region;
4 – South-West region; 5 – South-Central region; 6 - South-East region.

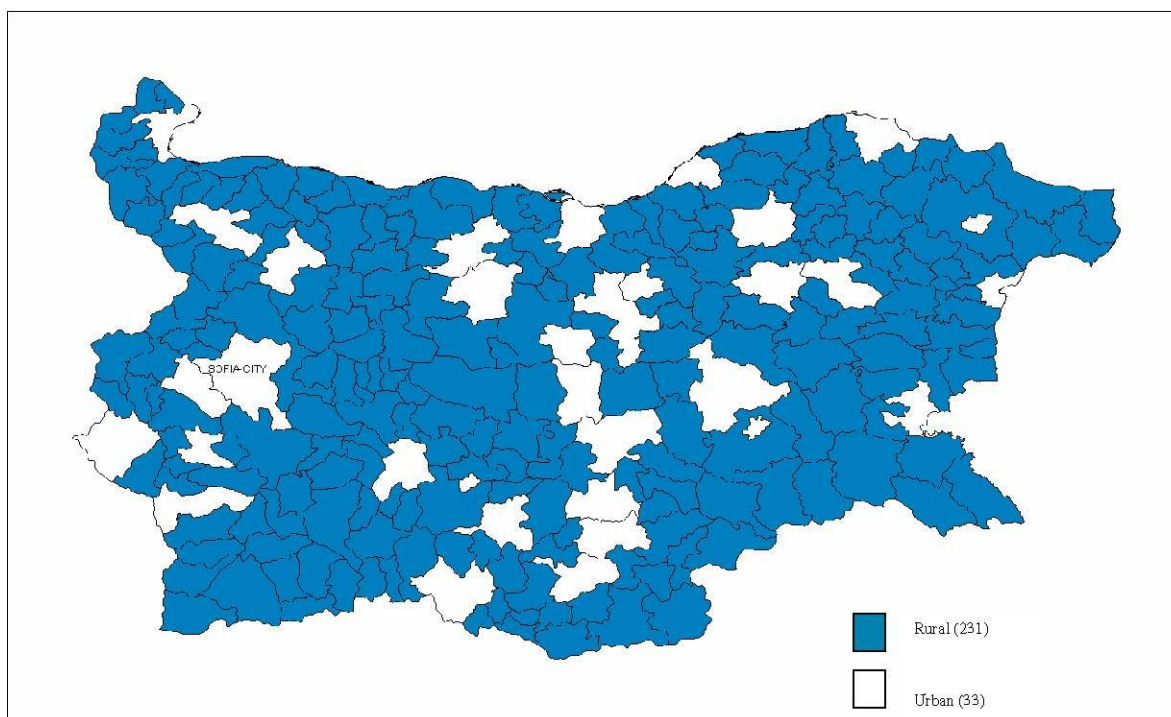
Source: http://www.novinite.com/view_news.php?id=126309 (accessed: 5.01.2012).

Figure 5. Map of Bulgaria divided into the 28 districts (NUTS 3)



Source: <http://bulgaria.assetz.co.uk/popup.htm?images/RegionsofBulgaria-Map.jpg> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

Figure 6. Designation of Rural Areas at LAU 1 Level Using the National Definition



Legend: Rural (231) means the number of the rural municipalities, Urban (33) means the number of the urban municipalities.

Source: Republic of Bulgaria. Rural Development Programme (2007-2013), The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas. July 2009, p. 8.

Table 8. Population and territory of rural areas, 2004

Type of region	Population (31.12.2004)		Territory		Population density
	Number	% of Total	km ²	% of Total	Inhabitants / km ²
National definition					
Rural	3,232,167	41.6	90,277	81.3	35.8
Urban	4,528,882	58.4	20,725	18.7	218.5
Total	7,761,049	100.0	111,002	100.0	69.9

Source: Rural Development Programme (2007-2013), Republic of Bulgaria. The European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development: Europe Investing in Rural Areas. July 2009, p. 8.

Table 9. Distribution of the internal migration in Bulgaria, 1961-2010, %

Period	From the villages to		From the towns to	
	the towns	the villages	the towns	the villages
1961-1965	51.4	30.3	14.0	4.3
1966-1970	53.6	15.3	22.8	8.3
1971-1975	50.1	11.9	29.2	8.8
1976-1980	46.4	10.1	34.3	9.2
1981-1985	41.7	9.8	36.6	11.8
1986-1990	34.9	10.2	39.9	15.0
1991-1995	25.0	12.0	39.2	23.8
1996-2000	22.8	11.5	41.7	24.0
2001-2005	22.2	10.7	42.6	24.5
2006-2009	24.6	10.8	42.4	22.2
2010	23.9	9.3	44.5	22.3

Source: NSI, Table on population: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (accessed: 29.12.2011).

Table 10. Number of people migrated within the country in the period 1992-2001

Direction of migration	Total	From town to town	From town to village	From village to town	From village to village
Total	398,813	184,171	111,196	62,390	41,056
Men	180,712	83,208	54,065	28,062	15,377
Women	218,101	100,963	57,131	34,328	25,679
Town	246,561	184,171		62,390	
Men	111,270	83,208		28,062	
Women	135,291	100,963		34,328	
Village	152,252		111,196		41,056
Men	69,442		54,065		15,377
Women	82,810		57,131		25,679

Source: National Statistical Institute, <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Vivmigr.htm> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

Table 11. Internal migration of the population between towns and villages by sex, 2003 and 2010, number

	2003			2010		
	Outflow		Inflow	Outflow		Inflow
	from the towns	from the villages	total	from the towns	from the villages	total
Total						
To the towns	62,917	27,525	90,442	67,441	36,294	103,735
To the villages	46,860	14,967	61,827	33,881	14,078	47,959
Total	109,777	42,492	152,269	101,322	50,372	151,694
Migration balance	-19,335	19,335	0	2,413	-2,413	0
Including:						
Male						
To the towns	28,931	12,256	41,187	31,441	17,500	48,941
To the villages	23,984	6,150	30,134	17,062	6,185	23,247
Total	52,915	18,406	71,321	48,503	23,685	72,188
Migration balance	-11,728	11,728	0	438	-438	0
Female						
To the towns	33,986	15,269	49,255	36,000	18,794	54,794
To the villages	22,876	8,817	31,693	16,819	7,893	24,712
Total	56,862	24,086	80,948	52,819	26,687	79,506
Migration balance	-7,607	7,607	0	1,975	-1,975	0

Source: NSI, Table on population: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (accessed : 29.12.2011).

Table 12. Number and distribution of the potential migrants from Bulgaria by sex, 2001

Group	Number			%				
	Sex		Total	Sex		Sex		Total
	Male	Female		Male	Female	Male	Female	
I <i>potential settlers</i>	1,243	926	2,169	52.6	60.0	57.3	42.7	100.0
II <i>labour migrants</i>	1,122	615	1,737	47.4	39.9	64.6	35.4	100.0
Total	2,365	1,541	3,906	100.0	100.0	60.5	39.5	100.0

Source: National Statistical Institute, Population Census 2001, Sofia, <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Census.htm>.

Вътрешна и външна миграция на населението в България, 1992-2001 (резултати от репрезентативно изследване). Национален статистически институт, София (Internal and External Population Migration in Bulgaria, 1992-2001: results from a sample study) <http://www.nsi.bg/Census/Vivmigr.htm> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

Table 13. Structure of the migrants by age, 1992-2009, Total=100

Age	Potential migration (IOM and NSI data for 2001)			Effective migration (NSI data)
	1992	1996	2001 ^a	2009 ^d
Under 20	20.9%
18-29	24%	24%	23.6% (30.9%) ^b	24.3% ^e
30-39	29%	24%	22.7% (22.2%)	27.3%
40-49	21%	26%	25.6% (23.9%)	15.1%
50-59	13%	23%	24.7% (22.9%) ^c	8.9%
60 and over	13%	3%	3.4%	3.5%

a The percentages in parentheses are according to the sample study of the NSI during the population census 2001. See book 3 "Territorial Mobility of Population", vol. 6 "Sample Studies", p. 102.

b According to the NSI study from 15 to 29 years of age

c According to the NSI study from 50 to 60 years of age

d This includes an age group of under 20 years and its share is 20.9%

e The group includes persons from 20 to 29 years of age

Source: Data on potential migration (IOM 2001: 43); Data on effective migration (NSI, Table on External migration by age and gender, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19> (accessed: 26.10.2011).

Table 14. Structure of the potential migrants by educational attainment, 1992-2001, Total=100

	1992	1996	2001*
Basic	26%	18%	19.3% (24.3%)
Secondary/high school	26%	19%	18.6% (11.9%)
Secondary/vocational	31%	39%	37.7% (37.5%)
College/bachelor	5%	8%	6.4% (7.7%)
Higher	12%	16%	18.0% (17.8%)

* The percentages in parentheses are according to the sample study of the NSI during the population census 2001. See book 3 "Territorial Mobility of Population", vol. 6 "Sample Studies", pp. 102-103. The total sum is not equal to 100, because in this study additional groups of people with lower than basic education are included.

Source: Profile and Motives of Potential Migrants from Bulgaria. IOM study 2001, p. 43.

Table 15. Structure of the potential migrants respondents by marital status, 1992-2001, Total =100

	1992	1996	2001*
Single	16%	18%	21.8% (28.4%)
Married	72%	72%	70.7% (63.0%)
Widowed	6%	4%	3.2% (3.2%)
Divorced (separated)	6%	6%	4.3% (5.4%)

* The percentages in parentheses are according to the sample study of the NSI during the population census 2001. See book 3 "Territorial Mobility of Population", vol. 6 "Sample Studies", p. 102.

Source: Profile and Motives of Potential Migrants from Bulgaria. IOM study 2001, p. 43.

Table 16. Age structure of population in Bulgaria by sex and place of residence, 2011, Total=100, %

Age group	Total			In the towns			In the villages		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Under working age*	14.1	14.9	13.4	14.2	15.0	13.3	14.1	14.6	13.5
At working age**	62.2	67.0	57.5	65.0	69.4	60.9	54.7	60.9	48.5
Over working age***	23.7	18.1	29.1	20.9	15.6	25.8	31.3	24.5	38.0

* Under 15 years of age

** For male - from 16 to 62; for female - from 16 to 59

*** For male - 63 and over; for female - 60 and over.

Source: Calculations based on data of National Statistical Institute, Sofia. Population - Table data. <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=53> (accessed 26.12.2011).

Table 17. Medical personnel engaged in the health network of Bulgaria, number

	1991	1995	2000	2007
Medical doctors	26,760	29,069	27,526	28,394
Dentists	5,899	5,481	6,778	6,452
Pharmaceutists	3,234	1,882		
Specialists with secondary and college medical education*	82,106	81,763	49,840	43,957
Including:				
Doctor's assistants	7,119	6,885		
Midwives	7,252	6,652		
Nurses	50,480	51,035	31,479	28,052

* This category includes other health professions (such as nurses, midwives, physiotherapists, etc.).

Source: National Statistical Institute, Data on Health: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=43> (accessed 2.01.2012).

Table 18. Number of population per medical personnel by regions and districts, 31.12.2010

Statistical regions/ Districts	Physicians	Dentists	Medical specialists on 'Health cares'
Total¹	268	1181	158
North-West region	256	1501	153
Vidin	281	1027	179
Vratsa	280	1760	146
Lovech	246	1223	165
Montana	326	1682	179
Pleven	217	1726	134
North Central region	336	1498	175
Veliko Tarnovo	330	1364	176
Gabrovo	271	1205	147
Razgrad	403	2067	199
Ruse	328	1495	167
Silistra	398	1824	202
North-East region	267	1424	166
Varna	212	1118	154
Dobrich	368	1717	200
Targovishte	350	2096	171
Shumen	328	1961	166
South-East region	311	1475	176
Burgas	382	1633	210
Sliven	343	1578	193
Stara Zagora	228	1287	141
Yambol	399	1445	177
South-West region	254	991	159
Blagoevgrad	370	1283	197
Kyustendil	293	1266	178
Pernik	362	1020	253
Sofia	262	2070	157
Sofia capital	224	832	145
South Central region	290	974	166
Kardzhali	381	1396	165
Pazardzhik	348	1321	209
Plovdiv	237	761	148
Smolyan	340	1048	153
Haskovo	359	1305	194

¹ Medical specialists from health establishments attached to other ministries are excluded from the distribution by districts.

Source: Calculated on the base of NSI data on population and medical personnel. See:
<http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=43&a1=1806&a2=1823&a3=1825#cont>
<http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19> (accessed: 22.05.2012)

Table 19. Money transfers from Bulgarians living permanently abroad, % of GDP

Year	Remittances	
	million EUR	% of GDP
2004	351.2	1.77
2005	369.5	1.69
2006	333.0	1.32
2007	634.7	2.21
2008	663.8	1.97
2009	693.4	2.07
2010	695.0	4.30

Source: BNB Current account (2011), www.bnbank.bg, date of access 26.10.2011.

Table 20. Bulgaria: Remittances, UDS millions, 2003-2010

	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010e
<i>Inwards flows</i>	1.718	1.723	1.613	1.716	1.694	1.874	1.558	1.602
of which								
Workers' remittances	681	436	462	420	905	981	965	—
Compensation of employees	1.037	1.286	1.151	1.297	788	894	593	—
Migrants' transfers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
<i>Outward remittance flows</i>	13	29	35	50	103	162	101	—
of which								
Workers' remittances	—	18	22	21	33	33	14	—
Compensation of employees	113	11	14	29	69	128	88	—
Migrants' transfers	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

a. For comparison: net FDI inflows US\$9.2 bn, total international reserves US\$17.9 bn, exports of goods and services US\$30.2 bn in 2008.

e – estimate

Source: World Bank. Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011.

<http://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/Bulgaria.pdf> (accessed: 26.10.2011).

Figure 7. GDP per capita and coefficient of variation for the six planning regions in Bulgaria, 1995-2008

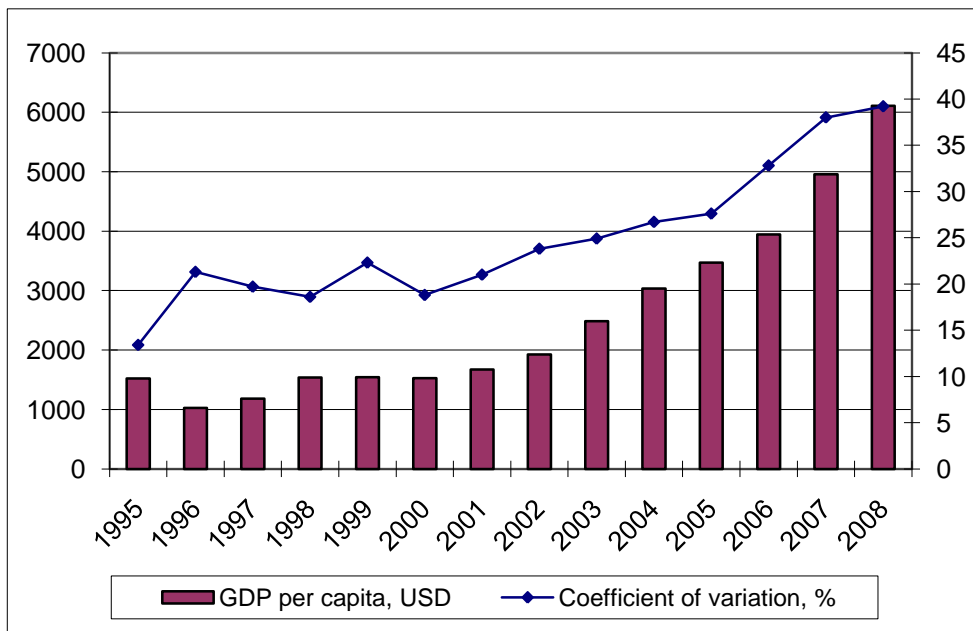


Table 21. Ranking districts in Bulgaria by integral estimates and individual aspects in the development, 2008

Planning region	District	Integ. est.	including						Potential estimate
			X1	X2	X3	X4	X5	X6	
North-West	Vidin	25	27	16	12	23	22	26	28
	Montana	26	25	23	20	25	26	25	24
	Vratsa	14	9	14	5	21	18	22	18
	Pleven	19	24	28	10	17	13	16	21
	Lovech	12	8	15	8	18	17	14	19
North Central	V. Tarnovo	17	23	22	13	12	15	10	16
	Gabrovo	7	7	25	9	2	5	17	27
	Ruse	16	10	13	15	8	25	13	23
	Razgrad	24	22	17	26	24	10	27	14
	Silistra	27	26	24	28	22	23	23	17
North-East	Varna	2	4	5	1	4	11	2	3
	Dobrich	10	12	7	16	14	14	19	13
	Shumen	21	11	19	17	27	20	24	9
	Targovishte	23	20	26	21	28	6	11	15
South-East	Burgas	3	3	1	7	3	9	3	1
	Sliven	15	21	10	23	16	12	8	7
	Yambol	22	14	27	27	15	24	21	20
	St. Zagora	6	5	21	2	6	8	9	8
South-West	Sofia (capital)	1	1	2	3	1	1	1	2
	Sofia district	4	2	4	4	12	1	7	12
	Blagoevgrad	11	18	8	25	12	21	4	5
	Pernik	13	6	18	19	7	19	15	26
	Kystendil	8	15	9	11	9	7	12	25
South Central	Plovdiv	5	13	12	6	6	3	5	4
	Haskovo	9	19	3	22	13	4	20	10
	Pazardjik	20	17	20	14	20	27	6	6
	Smolyan	18	16	6	18	27	16	18	22
	Kardzhali	28	28	11	24	19	28	28	11

Legend:

(a) The **integral estimate** is determined on the basis of the following summarizing estimates and individual indicators for the individual districts:

X1 – *economic condition*, based on the following indicators: GDP per capita; production of enterprises and branches of industry per resident in working age; coefficient of economic activity of the population; cultivated agricultural land per resident of working age;

X2 – condition of local finances, formed on the basis of the following indicators: average revenue in municipal budgets per resident; average expenditures in municipal budgets per resident; average relative share of own municipal revenues;

X3 – social status of the population in the district, formed on the basis of the following indicators: average salary; number of retired pays per pensioner; doctors and dentists per 1,000 people;

X4 – unemployment level (%);

X5 – transport infrastructure, formed on the basis of the following indicators: density of the Republican road network; density of municipal road network taking into account the number of the places of residence;

X6 – population dynamics 2008/1990.

(b) The **potential estimate** is determined on the basis of the following summarizing estimates and individual indicators for the individual districts:

Y1 – territory – total;

Y2 – percentage of agricultural land in total land;

Y3 – percentage of woodland territory in total land;

Y4 – density of population;

Y5 – percentage of population under working age in total population;

Y6 – percentage of active population in total population.

Source: Yankova, N. (2011), Level of Socio-economic Development and Potential of Districts. Economics21 (journal), Interuniversity Issue, No 1, pp. 140-146.

Table 22. Change in number of population by district towns in Bulgaria, 2004-2011, (NUTS 3)

Districts towns	Number and share of population				Change 2004-2011, in %
	2004		2011		
	Number	Share	Number	Share	
Total number	7,781,161	100.00 %	7,348,448	100.00%	-5.6
including					
Blagoevgrad (14)	335,273	4.30	322,878	4.40	-3.7
Burgas (13)	419,425	5.39	415,458	5.66	-0.9
Varna (12)	458,527	5.89	474,574	6.47	3.5
Veliko Tarnovo (10)	286,344	3.68	257,560	3.50	-10.1
Vidin* (11)	121,400	1.56	100,344	1.36	-17.3
Vratsa* (10)	214,522	2.76	185,877	2.53	-13.4
Gabrovo* (4)	138,288	1.78	122,117	1.66	-11.7
Dobrich* (8)	207,681	2.67	188,974	2.57	-9.0
Kardzhali*(7)	160,440	2.06	152,474	2.07	-5.0
Kyustendil* (9)	155,422	2.00	135,945	1.85	-12.5
Lovech* (8)	162,266	2.08	140,597	1.91	-13.4
Montana* (11)	171,906	2.21	147,133	2.00	-14.4
Pazardzhik* (11)	301,670	3.88	274,801	3.74	-8.9
Pernik* (6)	143,177	1.84	132,833	1.81	-7.2
Pleven* (11)	312,839	4.02	268,493	3.65	-14.2
Plovdiv (18)	710,410	9.13	682,127	9.30	-4.0
Razgrad* (7)	141,566	1.82	124,471	1.69	-12.1
Ruse*(8)	260,140	3.34	234,631	3.19	-9.8
Silistra* (7)	136,563	1.76	119,006	1.62	-12.9
Sliven*(4)	212,099	2.72	197,177	2.68	-7.0
Smolyan* (10)	134,022	1.72	121,157	1.60	-9.6
Sofia Capital	1,215,043	15.62	1,294,194	17.64	6.5
Sofia district (22)	263,510	3.39	246,641	3.36	-6.4
Stara Zagora(11)	363,071	4.67	332,340	4.53	-8.5
Targovishte* (5)	137,483	1.77	120,420	1.64	-12.4
Haskovo* (11)	269,215	3.46	245,232	3.34	-8.9
Shumen* (10)	200,139	2.57	180,188	2.45	-10.0
Yambol* (5)	148,720	1.91	130,806	1.78	-12.0

Note: The star (*) means that all towns in this district register a decrease in population. The figure in bracket refers to the number of the municipalities within the given district.

Source: Calculated on the base of NSI data on average annual Bulgarian population. Available at: <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=19> (accessed: 22.05.2012).

Table 23. Unemployed and unemployment rates of population aged 15 years and over in 2010

Statistical regions	Total	Male	Female
Total number - thousand	348.0	196.3	151.7
Unemployment rates, %			
Total	10.2	10.9	9.5
North and South-East Bulgaria			
North-West	11.0	12.1	9.7
North Central	11.5	12.6	10.3
North-East	14.5	15.0	13.8
South-East	10.6	10.8	10.4
South-West and South Central Bulgaria			
South-West	6.8	7.1	6.4
South Central	11.4	12.1	10.6

Source: National Statistical Institute, Sofia. Data on Labour Market, <http://www.nsi.bg/otrasalen.php?otr=51> (accessed: 5.01.2012).

Table 24. Population structure in Bulgaria by ethnic groups, 2011, Total=100%, *

Ethnic group	Total			In the towns			In the villages		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Bulgarians	84.8	84.4	85.2	90.3	90.1	90.5	70.0	69.5	70.6
Turkish	8.8	9.1	8.5	4.6	4.7	4.4	20.2	20.6	19.8
Roma	4.9	5.0	4.7	3.7	3.8	3.6	8.0	8.1	7.8
Other	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.7	0.6	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9
Not identified	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.7	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.0

* The data are based on voluntary identification of the ethnicity.

Source: NSI (2011), <http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Reports/2/2/R3.aspx?OBL=VID>, date of access 26.10.2011.