The Situation of Children and Young People at the Regional Level in Romania

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MONEE Country Analytical Report
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF STATISTICS

SITUATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE REGIONAL LEVEL

- analytic report –

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1. Introduction

Romania’s population lives in 266 urban localities (municipalities and towns) and 2689 rural communes. The status of urban locality is set up by law, depending on the number of inhabitants, the degree of utilitarian endowment and on the structure of economic activity.

The national territory is subdivided into 42 territorial administrative units: 41 counties (județe) and Bucharest Municipality (Romania’s Capital). These are grouped into 8 development regions: North-East (6 counties), South-East (6 counties), South (7 counties), South-West (5 counties), West (4 counties), North-West (6 counties), Centre (6 counties) and Bucharest (Bucharest Municipality and 1 county). The development regions are set up by grouping the neighbouring counties. The development region is not an administrative-territorial unit and has no legal status.

The fundamental objectives of regional policy, the institutional framework, the competencies of various institutions involved and the tools specific to regional development policy in Romania are stipulated by Law no.151/1998 on regional development in Romania, with its further amendments.

The main tool of the national policy on regional development is the National Development Plan, that includes the National Plan for Regional Development, where the Government defines and substantiates the national priorities for regional development, identifies the feasible measures and programmes and ensures the institutional framework for their implementation. Regional measures, programmes and projects are financed from domestic resources, concentrated in the National Fund for Regional Development and from external resources, mainly represented by the financial support granted to Romania by the European Union under the National Phare Programme – economic and social cohesion component.

At present, the co-ordination of national policy on regional development is ensured by the Ministry of European Integration, through the General Direction of Regional Development and the Direction of regional policies and programmes. At regional level, Regional Development Agencies are functioning, executive bodies of the Regional Development Councils.

2. Population

At the beginning of 2003, Romania’s population amounted to almost 21.8 million inhabitants. Counties’ population ranged between 225305 inhabitants (Covasna) and 834445 inhabitants (Prahova); in 25 counties, population number was less than 500 thousands (of which, in 6 counties less than 300 thousands), exceeding 700 thousands in 6 counties. The population of Bucharest Municipality was over 1.93 millions. The region with the highest number of inhabitants is North-East (over 3.7 million inhabitants, accounting for 17.2% of country’s population), while the one where the lowest number of inhabitants is recorded is West (less than 2 millions, 9.0% of Romania’s population).

The urban population weight (53.4% at national level) shows large variations between counties (from 30.1% in Dâmbovița to 77.0% in Hunedoara), being less than 50% in 25 counties. 30% of Romania’s population (56.8% of urban population) lives in big towns (25 municipalities, county residence, with over 100 thousand inhabitants). 8.9% of total population lives in Bucharest Municipality. The inhabitants of big towns hold a very low weight in South region, where the lowest share of urban population is registered and where 4 county residence towns are of low size. The weight of big towns in this region population is higher in South-East, which comprises three towns with more than 200 thousand inhabitants.

At the beginning of 2003, children (under 15 years of age) accounted for 17.0% of national population, while elderly people (65 years and over) for 14.2%. Generally, children’s weight is higher in preponderantly rural counties and regions (19.8% in North-East, exceeding 20% in three counties, and 13.0% in Bucharest). 20% of total number of children live in North-East, 7.7% in Bucharest and 8.6% in West. The highest share of elderly people is recorded in South, in Giurgiu and Teleorman counties (a person aged 65 years or over per five inhabitants). 17.7% of total number of elderly persons lived in this region. In all counties, children’s weight decreased as compared to 1990, while the share of elderly people increased, thus pointing out the demographic ageing phenomenon.

Women prevail in all regions and counties, their highest weight being found in Bucharest Municipality (53.4%).

As compared to 1990, population number decreased by 6.2%, as consequence of negative natural increase continuously registered beginning with 1992 (under the conditions of mortality increase and of a sharp decrease in birth-rate), as well as of large-sized external migration in the first years after the change in the political regime of 1989.

Population diminished in all regions, however with different shares. In North-East population was by 0.9% lower in 2003 as against 1990, while in West and Centre it decreased by 11.2%, respectively 10.9%. In Suceava county, in 2003 population was by 0.4% higher as compared to 1990, while in Iași and Vrancea counties it was only by 0.1% and 0.2% lower; at the same time, in Sibiu and Caraș-Severin counties it diminished by 16.7%, respectively 18.0%. The discrepancies are mainly engendered by different natural increase, as well as by the resultant of various inter-regional and external migratory flows. Thus, the counties belonging to North-East

\[2\] The very low share of urban population in Ilfov county (10.8%) derives from the fact that it mainly comprises the communes surrounding the Capital.

\[3\] During 1990-2003, a relatively high number of persons emigrated abroad, while internal migration recorded several flows, in various directions and with different propensity. The main component of internal migration was from rural area and from small towns towards big towns that offer more employment opportunities. The same with external migration, it had a higher propensity in 1990 and during next few years, due to liberalising the entry to big towns, being further maintained by massive losses of jobs in mono-industrial towns affected by restructuring. Another major flow is from urban to rural localities. During recent years, it exceeded the migratory flow from rural to urban, being determined, to a certain extent, by returns to natal localities (and regions) of dismissed persons from
region, preponderantly rural and with a less aged population, were affected by the population natural decrease only during recent years, two of them further recording a positive natural increase. The natural increase that took place in this region in the ‘90s was not reflected by a population increase due to the relatively important migration. In Giurgiu and Teleorman, counties belonging to South region, preponderantly rural and with aged population, the sharp natural decrease manifested during the whole period, was amplified by the migration of labour force dismissed as consequence of diminishing the activity of certain large industrial units located on these counties territory. In South-West, population decrease was mainly determined by the relatively high natural decrease in Dolj, Mehedinți and Olt counties, characterised by a sharper ageing degree, while in West, the relatively numerous leaves from Hunedoara and Caraș-Severin counties, affected by restructuring of industrial production were adding to the natural decrease.

Fertility rates, continuously decreasing in all counties, exceed the average mainly in preponderantly rural counties. Women’s life expectancy increased in all counties; however, for men, life expectancy decreased in ten counties (most of them located in North-East and South-East regions). The highest life expectancy is recorded in Bucharest, while the lowest in North-West region (particularly in Satu-Mare).

According to the last Census data, in 2002 in Romania lived almost 4.3 million families with children, by 1.6% less than in 1992. One out of five families with children (20.1%) was mono-parental, their share being higher than one decade ago (16.0%). The weight of mono-parental families is higher in Bucharest (22.5%) and in West (22.0%), ranging between 19.1% and 20.2% in the other regions.

The average number of children per 100 families is 165, higher in North-East (183), 148 in Bucharest, between 159 and 168 in the other regions. Families with one child prevail, exceeding 50% in all regions (except North-East). Families with three and more children are more numerous in North-East and hold the lowest weight in Bucharest.

As against 1992, the number of children per 100 families decreased with 20. In all regions the share of families with three and more children decreased and, excepting North-East, the same was valid for families with two children, important increases in the weight of families with one child being recorded.

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**Fig. 1.**

*Distribution of families according to the number of children*

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towns affected by diminishing or ceasing the activity of large industrial units, as well as of some pensioners, for whom the life in rural area is cheaper than that in big towns.
Population Census data point out that national minorities hold a weight of 10.5% in Romania’s population, of whom 6.6% are Hungarians, 2.5% roma and 0.3% Germans. As against 1992, Hungarians and Germans weight decreased, while roma’s weight increased. Hungarians hold high weights in Centre and North-West regions, as well as in West. They represent the majority population in Harghita and Covasna counties (73.8%, 84.6% respectively), more than a third of Mureș and Satu-Mare (39.3%, respectively 35.2%) and a quarter of population living in Bihor and Sălaj counties (26.0%, 23.0% respectively). Roma share in total population is higher in Centre and North-West, as well as in South, South-West and West, exceeding 5% in Mureș, Bihor, Sălaj and Călărași counties.

3. Economic structure

The region with the most developed economy is Bucharest, which comprises country’s Capital. Its Gross Regional Product (GRP) exceeds a fifth of Romania’s Gross Domestic Product, being by 74% higher than the Gross Regional Product of Centre and 2.4 times higher than the gross product of South-West region. Gross Regional Product per capita of Bucharest is twice as high as the one of West (the second region according to the level of this indicator) and almost three times higher that the one achieved in North-East (region with the lowest GRP per capita).

Bucharest region also shows the most dynamic economy: the growth rate, in real terms, of GRP in this region, in 2001 as compared to 1993, was 5-6 times higher than the one registered in South-West, West and Centre; in North-East and North-West, GRP of 2001 was almost equal with the one recorded in 1993, while in South and South-East it decreased. Thus, the contribution of Bucharest region to Gross Domestic Product formation rose from 14.0% in 1993 to 21.5% in 2001.

The difference between the GRP of Bucharest and that of the other regions is mainly entailed by services volume (2.6-4.0 times higher in Bucharest). Services contribute to the formation of GRP of Bucharest region with a share exceeding two thirds (69.1% in 2001); in the other regions, the weight of gross value added from services in GRP ranges between 41.0% and 48.9%.
The highest volume of gross value added in industry was achieved in Centre (closely followed by the one of Bucharest), while the highest volume of gross value added in agriculture – in South (followed by North-East).

### 4. Living standard

In accordance with the information collected through Household Labour Force Survey, the size of inter-regional variation of **unemployment rate** is not high: in 2003, the highest rate amounted to 8.6% (in Bucharest) and the lowest – 5.9% (in West), exceeding the average of 7.0% in South-East, South and Centre. In 1996, the difference between the minimum and the maximum level of unemployment rate was higher: from simple to double, the highest being registered in North-East region.

The results of Family Budgets Survey of 2003 point out high discrepancies between rural and urban areas related to **income** level and structure. Average total gross income per capita are by 29% higher in urban than in rural area, money income are 2.1 times higher, while earnings are almost 4 times higher. On the contrary, the value of in kind income (mainly represented by agro-food products consumption from own production) is over three times higher in rural area. Thus, money income account for 54.6% of rural households’ income (of which, 20.4% salaries and 19.3% - social benefits), while the in kind income account for 45.4%, under the conditions where the highest share of households’ agricultural output is devoted to self-consumption. In kind income hold a share of 11.2% of urban households’ income, salaries - 61.4% and social benefits – 19.2%.

**Fig. 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income in kind</th>
<th>Other money income</th>
<th>Social benefits</th>
<th>Salaries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4000</td>
<td>4500</td>
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</table>

At regional level, Bucharest region stands out due to significantly higher income as compared to all the other regions, mainly consisting of earnings and transfers, much higher as against the other regions. Estimated as average per capita, total gross income in Bucharest are by 44% higher than those achieved in North-East, by 33-36% higher than those of South-East, South and South-West and by 21-24% higher as compared to West, North-West and Centre. The average earning per capita in Bucharest is over 2.5 times higher than in North-East, over twice as high as that recorded in South and South-West and 1.6-1.8 times higher than in the other regions. Earnings account for two thirds of households’ income in Bucharest and for only a third of households income in North-East; salaries weight ranges between 39.3% and 46.8% of income achieved in the other regions.

The differentiated contribution of salaries in income formation and, finally, the discrepancies between total income mainly derive from the different weight of employees in employment,
generally from the different share of employees in regions’ population, as well as from inter-regional differences between achieved earnings.

Income from transfers are also higher in Bucharest than in all the other regions (by 28-64%). The gaps between money income achieved in Bucharest and those of other regions are partly covered by the relatively high level of in kind income, their weight ranging between 21.6% in West and 33.7% in South-West (as compared to 7.1% in Bucharest).

In urban area, disposable income per capita are by more than 50% higher as against those of rural area, because households’ agricultural production supposes relatively high expenses. These are affecting at a higher extent the budgets of rural households. Under these conditions, the gaps between disposable income of North-East, South-East, South and South-West regions and those of Bucharest are also higher than those recorded for total gross income.

The structure of population consumption is characterised by the high weight of food consumption (52.1% in 2003). The weight of food products and beverages in the consumption budget is higher in rural area: 63.2% as compared to 45.5% in urban area. The level of this indicator, decreasing during recent years in all regions, was kept to over 50%, except Bucharest and North-West regions; However, food share is also high in Bucharest (42.6%). Naturally, the explanation resides in the relatively low level of disposable income for the largest share of population in all regions, as well as the prices of food products, which are high in relation with income.

Meat and fish consumption of Romania’s population is low (3.7 kg/person monthly, 44.6 kg annually) and is different at territorial level.

Poverty prevails in rural area and in the regions where the weight of rural population is higher. In 2003, poverty rate was estimated to 24.7% in rural area and to 7.0% in urban area (15.3% as average), while poverty rate among children was estimated to 28.3%, respectively 8.2% (18.8% as average). Over three quarters of poor population and about 80% of poor children are living in urban area.

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4 Disposable income are estimated by subtracting from total gross income households’ expenses for paying taxes and social insurance contributions, as well as the expenses made for households’ agricultural output.

5 Poverty rate was estimated in relation with a threshold equal to 60% of the medium distribution of population according to the consumption expenses per adult equivalent. Consumption expenses were adjusted by using an equivalence scale set out based on the formula \( AE = (A + 0.5C)^{0.9} \).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total persons</th>
<th>Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>24.7</td>
<td>28.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-East</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>24.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>22.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>19.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-West</td>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>24.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North-West</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>19.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bucharest</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1**

**Poverty rate (%) 2003**

*Living conditions* presents high discrepancies between the two areas of residence, being better in urban area. The differences concern at a lower extent the dwellings size: in 2003, the average living floor per person was estimated to 15.9 m² in urban area and to 14.8 m² in rural area. However, the comfort level varies a lot. In urban area, the largest share of dwellings have running water facilities, from public network or in own system (90.5% in 2003), are heated through district heating system or have their own heating device (65.5%), being endowed with bathroom and toilet (86.9%, respectively 86.6%). In rural area, the dwellings equipped with such utilities hold a low weight: access to public networks or having an own system for running water supply – 14.9%; district heating or own heating device – 2.0%; bathroom – 12.4%; toilet inside – 8.1%.

The discrepancies between regions are firstly related to the different urbanisation level. The average living floor per person ranged in 2003 between 15.7 m² in West and Centre and 12.7 m² in North-East. The highest level of endowment with utilities is registered in Bucharest, being significantly lower in the other regions. The households owning dwellings with access to the public network of heating or with their own heating device account for three quarters of households in Bucharest, about a third in the preponderantly urban regions and 27-29% in the regions with a highest share of rural population. As for the running water supply, the highest share of households with water supplying facility from public network or through their own system (as well as that of households endowed with bathroom and toilet inside the dwelling) is recorded in Bucharest, significantly exceeding the average in West, North-West and Centre and lower in the other regions.

5. **Education**

The Romanian educational system was marked by the decrease in the number of children enrolled in pre-university education and by the increasing number of students. The diminution of pupils cohorts, consequence of continuous decrease in the number of population at school age, took place in all regions.

However, enrolment rates rose in all regions. The gross rates of enrolment in compulsory education (primary and lower secondary), differing from one region to another and from one county to another one located in the same region, indicates that in almost all counties there are children at the age corresponding to compulsory education who are not enrolled. Thus, in the 2001/2002 school year, the enrolment rate was 100.3% in Bucharest region, ranging between 94.6% (Centre) and 98.4% (North-East) in the other regions. The share of children belonging to the age group 7-14 years who are not enrolled was higher in rural area (4.8% as against 1.4% in
urban area), being higher in the counties comprising isolated mountainous localities or in the Danube Delta (with less children and without lower secondary educational units), as well as in those where the roma weight is higher; in Tulcea, Hunedoara, Bihor, Bistrița-Năsăud, Brașov, Covasna, Harghita and Mureș it exceeded 5%.

Obviously, the rates of enrolment in upper secondary education are lower than those recorded for compulsory education, in all counties, ranging between 42.6% in Giurgiu and 86.1% in Argeș and Cluj (except Bucharest Minicipality – 101.5%). Children enrolment in upper secondary education is lower (under 70%) in the counties belonging to North-East region (except Neamț county), in Vrancea and Tulcea counties (South-East), in Călărași, Giurgiu and Ialomița counties (South), in Arad and Caraș-Severin counties (West), in Bistrița-Năsăud and Satu-Mare (North-West), in Covasna in Centre, as well as in Ilfov (Bucharest). These are, generally, counties characterised by a higher share of rural population and a lower living standard, one of the reasons for the lower rates of enrolment in high school and vocational education being that part of families living in rural localities (especially in those far away of towns) do not have the necessary resources for covering the living expenses in towns where such educational units exist. Another reason is related to the lack of interest in high school education, under the conditions where it does not offer the opportunity to get a job, if not followed by tertiary or post high school education.

The diminution of enrolment and the restructuring of educational units network entailed the decrease in the number of educational units and in the number of teaching staff working in pre-university education, in all regions. The number of kindergartens sharply decreased in South-West, North-West and North-East regions, under the conditions of a relatively high increase in the number of children reverting, as average, to a kindergarten. In Bucharest, South-West and North-West, in 2003, their number amounted to 155, respectively 140 and 135, while in West and Centre it was 59, respectively 58.

The number of primary schools sharply decreased (especially in South-West and West regions), by merging them with secondary schools whose number also fell in all regions. During 1997-2003, the total number of primary and secondary educational units diminished to 63%, the sharpest decrease being registered in West (44%) and the lowest in South-East (82%). Many educational units that were independent were transformed into sections of other educational units of the same level or in sections within school groups where several educational levels are functioning. The number of pupils reverting as average to a school increased in all regions. The highest level of this indicator was recorded in Bucharest, 2.0-3.2 times higher than in other regions, where rural localities with less school aged children are found.
The number of **teaching staff** in primary education fell during the same period to 66% in Bucharest and to 77-84% in the other regions, while that of secondary education – to 79%, respectively 87-95%. The average number of pupils per teacher in primary education decreased in all regions, while that of secondary education increased in five regions, being kept unchanged in the other. The highest charging level of teaching staff is recorded in Bucharest and the lowest one in North-West and Centre (regions where the education in national minorities language has a higher weight, thus increasing the necessary number of teaching staff in the localities where, for a low number of children, education is performed both in Romanian language and in minorities language).

In 2003, the population with secondary **level of education** (graduated high school, the first high school cycle, vocational or apprenticeship education, post high school or foremen education) accounted for almost half of the population aged 15 years and over, increasing by 1.6 percentage points as against 1996, while graduates of tertiary education – 7.3% (by 1.1 percentage points more than in 1993). The weight of persons with secondary education exceeded 50% in Bucharest, Centre and South-West regions and recorded the lowest level in North-East (46.9%). People with tertiary education accounted for 18.4% of the population aged 15 years and over in Bucharest, with a share of only 5.1-7.5% in the other regions.

### 6. Health

The specific mortality indicators used for assessing the evolution of children and mothers health point out an improved situation in 2003 as compared to 1990, in all counties. Infant mortality rate decreased in six regions with more than 10 deceases to one thousand live births (the decrease was lower only in North-East and Centre regions), maternal mortality rate diminished at least twice in all regions, while the number of children deceased till reaching five years of age fell 2-3 times.

Infant mortality rate in North-East is twice as high as in Bucharest, also recording high average values in South-East and South. The rate exceeds 20‰ in Bacău, Botoșani, Vaslui, Constanța, Călărași, Ialomița and Prahova counties and is under 10‰ in Cluj county and in Bucharest Municipality. Infant mortality prevails in rural area (19.8‰ as against 14.5‰ in urban area, in 2002), implicitly in preponderantly rural counties.

The mortality of children under 5 years of age is also higher in rural area: in 2002 it recorded 24.1 children deceased before reaching five years of age per 1000 live births, as against 17.4 in urban area. The weight of deceases for children under 5 years is higher in North-East, South-East and South, with over half of deceases occurred in 2003 and is low in Bucharest, where the number deceased under 5 years accounts for a fifth of that recorded in North-East.

### Fig. 7

**Infant mortality rate (%)**, by regions