



RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation

Round Table: Demographic Trends and Social and Economic Challenges in SEE 28-30 October 2012

IRC- 09-RT

Background

We are living in a world of unprecedented demographic change. Today, demographic change is a global phenomenon resulting from two almost universal trends: declining fertility and increasing life expectancy. After growing very slowly for most of human history, the world's population more than doubled in the last half a century to reach 6 billion in late 1999, while in late 2011 it surpassed 7 billion. Migration is very important in determining population size and composition at the local level. The speed and scale with which population movements can take place indicate that net migration can outweigh fertility and mortality changes in some areas. Today the European Union and associated countries have over 500 million inhabitants. Of them, some 42 million are regular international migrants. Thus, demographic change has widespread economic and social implications, while social, demographic and economic factors are closely linked to environmental issues. Therefore, the information about a country's population, growth, characteristics, living conditions, spatial distribution and physical resources is vital for policy formulation, planning and implementation.

The objectives

- To give an overview of demographic trends in the EU, relevant EU policies and regulations and bodies responsible for demography in the EU;
- To depict and discuss the impact of demographic changes and social security in the SEE;
- To explain and discuss opportunities for tackling demographic changes;
- To highlight the importance of sustainable development as a response to

demographic changes and to promote EU programmes and initiatives aimed at responding to demographic changes;

- To share experiences and national points of view of the SEE countries.

Purpose

The purpose of the Round Table was to present demographic changes in the SEE countries, social and economic challenges, main trends and related policies. The event provided the opportunity to explore and discuss demographic trends that have occurred over the last decade in the SEE.

Aim

The event aimed to provide a global overview of demographic trends and changes, as well as the projected population change in the European territories and in the SEE countries.

Event Organizer

The event was planned, organized and executed by RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation.

Venue, duration and participation

The Round Table took place in RACVIAC from 29 to 30 October 2012. It was organized as a three-day event, two of which were working days, gathering a total of 33 participants: senior decision-making officials and experts from the relevant ministries/agencies dealing with the event topic and nominated by the contributing countries from the SEE region, representatives from the European Commission, UNDP Mission in Croatia, Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI), EUFOR, Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Faculties of Political Sciences and Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMIN).



Family Photo

Agenda and Opening

The Round Table comprised speeches and presentations given by the representatives of the above-mentioned institutions, as well as national presentations, exchange of views and experiences and open discussions. The Round Table started on 28 October with a welcome reception at the Barbara Club. The first working day was opened and moderated by the acting IRC Pillar Programme Manager, Mr Milan Janičijević, who announced a welcome address by RACVIAC Director Ambassador Branimir Mandić. After expressing a warm welcome to the prominent guests on behalf of RACVIAC, Ambassador Mandić said he was particularly proud of the fact that this high-level regional event represented a step forward in RACVIAC's efforts to discuss all actual and relevant themes in South East Europe, particularly those of common interest and related to security matters. The Ambassador noted that Southeast European countries had substantial experience in cooperation and they were now in the position to unselfishly share their experience and lessons learned with other countries even beyond the region. The RACVIAC Director emphasized that the purpose of this event was to present demographic changes in the SEE countries, social and economic challenges, main trends and related policies and noted that the event would provide the opportunity to explore and discuss demographic trends that had occurred over the last decade in the SEE.



Opening, Ambassador Branimir Mandić

Keynote speeches

Following the welcome addresses, the Round Table participants had the privilege to listen to the first keynote speech delivered by **Dr. Jörg Peschner**, a representative of the European Commission, DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion. Dr. Peschner referred to the Europe 2020 Strategy, which indicates that demographic ageing is accelerating and EU workforce is about to shrink. He explained that the Strategy foresees a shift in the employment rate for people aged 20-64 from 68% in 2010 up to 75% by 2020. If successful, the annual employment growth rate of just below 1% could be accomplished. If the employment rate does not shift further over the decades to follow after 2020, employment rate of the working age population will shrink in proportion by an average of 0.3 to 0.4 % each year. For the EU on average, productivity growth past 2020 would actually have to double in order to reach to economic growth rates that the EU would probably need to maintain current living standards. In any case, the reassurance will rest on productivity. Furthermore, migrant employment performance needs to be improved substantially and the fundamental right of free movement in order to work must be exploited to a much larger extent than is currently the case. Dr. Peschner highlighted that demographics was an issue relevant for the entire world and in order to maintain welfare standards, Europe must invest heavily in skills development, education, life-long learning so it could shift productivity, adopt a modern approach towards migration, cushion to the largest possible extent the impact of workforce decline by further shifting employment rates across all ages.



Keynote speaker Dr Jörg Peschner

The second keynote speaker **Ms Ana Trišić Babić**, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina delivered the speech that combined the experience and data collected. Ms Trišić emphasized that demography was one of the key problems that affected our countries and the entire region, alongside the problems such as poverty, unemployment, social rights, all of which accentuate the necessity for an adequate strategy. Ms Trišić outlined the main factors in considering demography, such as migration, displaced people, education as a key of progress and pointed to a strong connection of demography with democracy and security. Ms Trišić concluded that RACVIAC was a relevant institution and organization though which demographic issues could be actualized at the regional level.

The participants expressed their satisfaction with the fact that the representatives of academia and politics attended this event.



Keynote speaker Ms Ana Trišić Babić

After the keynote speeches, **Mr Vladimir Hulik**, analyst at the Department of Strategies and Analysis, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Prague, Czech Republic, who delivered a presentation on the “Current Demographic Trends and projected Population change in Europe and Neighbouring Regions”, addressed the event participants. In the context of history and current developments and demographic trends in Europe, Mr Hulik described the population development through the development of three processes –

fertility, mortality and migration and presented some projections and future challenges. As regards future developments, the following factors were elaborated: significant uncertainty, migration, and significant differences among the European countries. In terms of challenges, Mr Hulik pointed to ageing, education and mobility, particularly noting as follows:

- Combination of low fertility and decreasing mortality will probably cause natural decrease of population;
- Decreasing population will probably attract migration from poorer countries or more populated countries;
- The current situation could be also taken as a challenge for population or family policies.



Mr Vladimir Hulik

The next presentation was entitled “Migration Profile of the Republic of Serbia: Overview of Main Categories of Migrants and Migration Challenges”. It was delivered by **Ms Olga Mitrović**, CBMM project, International Organization for Migration/Commissariat for Refugees of the Republic of Serbia. The presentation outlined the reasons behind the adoption of the migration profile, process of drafting the migration profile and its contents. Ms Mitrović pointed out that the Republic of Serbia was ranked first in Europe according to the size of displaced population (UNHCR data – 600 000 refugees in 1996 and 74.000 refugees in 2011). During 2011, a total of 5,150 citizens returned to the Republic of Serbia under the Readmission Agreement. In most cases these persons returned from Germany, Hungary, Sweden, Austria, Switzerland, Norway and France. Among the returnees, 14.6% accounted for minors and 64.4% for men. Furthermore, Ms Mitrović explained the causes and effects of migrations: demographic and development trends, economic factors, the labour market situation and trends, development and availability of the social services. Demographic trends of the Republic of Serbia are

characterized by population decline, depopulation of rural areas, population ageing, unfavourable ratio between dependent population categories and the working age category. Economic trends include unstable economic growth, insufficiently dynamic economic processes, lack of economic competitiveness, lack of jobs and generally unfavourable labour market trends. Development trends and migration were examined through three applied methodologies that allow for the comparison between development trends in the Republic of Serbia and those in other countries: Millennium Development Goals, the UN human development concept, and the EU Development Strategy for 2011-2020 (EU 2020 Strategy).



Ms Olga Mitrović

Ms Rebeka Mesarić Žabčić, PhD, representative of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMIN), (HR), started her presentation “Promoting Sustainable Development as a Response to Demographic Changes” by stating that the demographic change had influenced all countries, impacting sustainable development. She stressed that the demographic change was one of the key challenges today for sustainable development, together with poverty, globalization, knowledge/technological shift, climate change, development of green economy and inclusiveness. Demographic trends and factors and sustainable development have a synergistic relationship. The growth of population and production, coupled with unsustainable patterns, place severe burden on the life-supporting capacities of the majority of countries. These interactive processes affect the use of land, water, air, energy and other resources and a set of relationships should be adequately taken into consideration in comprehensive policies for sustainable development. Such policies should address the links of demographic trends and factors, resource use, appropriate technology dissemination, and development. Fertility rates are falling, population is ageing, youth unemployment is a challenge and the complexity of urban-rural shrinkage poses numerous challenges for the industrial development, job creation and

sustainable development agendas. Strategic solutions cannot be based on addressing one of these factors alone but need to take into account the interplay of these elements within a particular local area of development (urban or rural).

Col Dominik Horn, Political Advisor, EUFOR, delivered a presentation on the topic of “International Cooperation as Accelerator for Sustainable Development among EU and Candidate/Potential Candidate Countries”. Col Horn gave an overview of EUFOR mission and outcomes of EUFOR efforts in the context of contributing to the regional stability. Subsequently, Col Horn explained the way EUFOR operates in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The first working day was closed with the presentation given by **Mr Nenad Kocmur**, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), who acquainted the participants with the UNDP mission in Croatia and its activities, presenting “UNDP's Approach to Building Sustainable Livelihoods in Return Areas in Croatia” and putting a special emphasis on the activities in the Country Programme Action Plan in 5 areas of intervention: social inclusion, sustainable local development and regional disparities, environmental governance and climate change, justice and human security and development cooperation and knowledge sharing on the European integration.

The second working day, moderated by **Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop**, started with the presentation “Managing Migration in Response to Demographic Changes”, given by **Mr Toni Jakimovski**, a representative of Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative (MARRI). Mr Jakimovski gave some general information about Migration, Asylum, Refugees Regional Initiative and described the 2012 Survey report “Overview of Migration Management in MARRI Countries”. He drew particular attention to a short assessment of migration flows and the impact of demographic, social, economic development and research study findings which aim to contribute towards a better understanding, supporting and monitoring of migration processes, as well as to optimize policy and economic action in the problem field of development, migration and integration.



Mr Toni Jakimovski

The presentation by **Professor Alma Pabrić**, PhD, from the University of Sarajevo provided the participants with academic views on the main characteristics of demographic trends in the SEE countries with a focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ms Pabrić outlined the diversity of demographic characteristics and challenges in the SEE countries pointing out that the SEE countries were faced with population ageing which led to the reduction in global workforce (it will cause a higher cost of workforce) and to a serious economic consequences as ageing in the SEE was most advanced in Europe, where the total number of elderly outnumbered the number of the young. Furthermore, Ms Pabrić described the impact of migration on the SEE countries and presented the main demographic characteristics of the population in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Professor Pabrić concluded her presentation by outlining recommendations by the UN and other international organizations in order to mitigate the adverse consequences of population ageing: restructuring of social security system, changes in labour, changes in immigration policies, changes in family policies and increased cooperation between governments in resolving socio-economic and political problems.



Professor Alma Pabrić, PhD

Mr Dario Malnar, Ph.D., from the Office of the National Security Council (HR) delivered the next presentation entitled “Demographic Changes – Element of Modern Concept of National Security”.

Mr Malnar informed the participants about the objectives and main factors of national security. Subsequently, he explained the demographic characteristics of Croatia and made comparison between demography and economy and uneven population density. He outlined that society was faced with an alarming loss of population, while demographic issues were strategic issues for the country. It is an important and lasting precondition of development and the most important topic for our society. There is a need for a long-term population policy, based on the consensus of all political options, as well as for a comprehensive and well-planned immigration policy. Mr Malnar concluded that demography was certainly an issue that comprehensively determined and defined national security and must be considered as such in modern national security concepts.



Mr Dario Malnar, PhD

Session: Demographic Changes, National Points of View of SEE Countries

The second working day was closed with the session “Demographic Changes: National Points of view of SEE Countries”. National and regional plans, programmes and studies on demographic trends and changes in the SEE countries, which were outlined in the presentations given by the representatives of the State Statistics Agencies in the SEE countries (AL, BA, HR, MK, ME, RS), set out demographic trends, census results, spatial distribution of population, population structure and statistics, population indicators, net of migration, policy responses to demographic developments, national strategies and priorities for the demographic development. The presentations highlighted the main strategic goals, such as: preventing population decrease and creating conditions for a sustainable demographic development of a country and population by improving the quality of human capital, reducing

differences on various basis and increasing social cohesion.

Round Table Closure

Dr. Jörg Peschner, a representative of the European Commission was first to give closing remarks. He stated that this was an impressive event that proved there was a high-level interest in the topic in the SEE region. Dr Peschner highlighted several points: functioning of relevant institutions in terms of passing the strategies, the difficulty of co-electing of valid data about migration, necessity of rising political awareness of the socioeconomic factors of demography and the need for prompt measures, particularly those aimed at sojourn workers' integration.



Closing remarks

At the end of the official part of the Round Table, the RACVIAC Deputy Director **Brigadier General Zdravko Jakop** addressed the participants. He thanked once again everybody for their active participation in the event and indicated that during this event demographic trends in the SEE were covered from different angles, particularly thanks to the representatives from such eminent institutions and agencies.

Summary

The Round Table was an opportunity to present an overview of demographic trends in the EU and SEE and discuss the impact of demographic changes and social security in the SEE. Furthermore, it allowed the participants to explore and discuss the manners of tackling demographic changes and to share experiences and national points of view of the SEE countries. Especially useful aspect of the event includes presentations delivered by the experts and professors in the field and the representatives of national statistics agencies from the SEE, which were truly valuable. The event also

provided the opportunity to discuss demographic trends that have occurred over the last decade in the SEE, while the objectives set out before the event were successfully met. The participants recommended that the events on this subject matter should be continued in the following year.

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