

# A REVIEW OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS OF THE SLOVENES AND MACEDONIANS, A COMPARATIVE STUDY

## INTRODUCTION

Over the last few decades the patterns of partnership relations and reproductive behavior have changed significantly in all European countries. Everywhere official statistics record a decrease in marriages, an increase in divorces, a rise of non-marital births, postponement of parenthood and a decline in the number of births. Similar trends are observed in Slovenia and Macedonia as well.

The objective of this project is to determine the main characteristics of demographic trends of Macedonian and Slovene population and to trace the changes in this sphere. The intention of this research article is to find out and to explain factors related to the formation and enforcement of new patterns of demographic behavior in Slovenia and Macedonia.

Review of the demographic situation of two countries: Slovenia and Macedonia, with a special emphasis on fertility behavior within these two countries is presented in this paper. Both Macedonia and Slovenia existed in the same federation about 10 years ago. Both countries have an identical population structure, but they are totally different considering their economical development, tradition, culture and history.

Slovenia and Macedonia experience similar demographic development as most other European countries. This article shows that fertility is declining and that the life expectancy at birth is increasing. If we look at the data, we can see that in both countries general rates of fertility are similar with natural increase of population close to zero or negative. Total fertility rate per woman is less than 2,1 in both countries, which is not enough to provide a long run simple reproduction of the population.

## THE DEMOGRAPHIC SITUATION IN EUROPE

In the countries of Western Europe, the demographic transition finished long ago. In the countries of Central and South-East Europe, demographic processes have been connected to political, economic and social developments since 1990. Political events have directly influenced migration movements and the social conditions that influenced fertility rates. Economic developments have caused a high rate of unemployment and social insecurity. All of this has been a significant determinant of the total migration sold, and also for natality decrease.

The new role played by international migration is confirmed, in particular in the framework of the European Union. The volume of migration has shrunk recently in this region of Europe, a sign that the migration shock, of the early 1990s that followed the opening of the borders to the east has now been absorbed, but migration remains the driving force behind population growth in the EU. The growth rates may now be stabilizing, but this return to a situation of demographic calm should not mask the fact that a fundamental

change has occurred: previously governed by natural increase, population growth now depends essentially on immigration. While western Europe has grown by more than one million, a growth rate of 2.8 per 1.000, central Europe has lost more than 100.000(134.000), Eastern Europe has lost more than 700.000(-8.9 per 1.000) and Russia more than 300.000.(Catherine de Guibert -Lantoiné, Alain Monnier,1997).

Everywhere in Europe natural increase is close to zero, with total fertility rate per women lower or equal 2.1 and thus not assuring a simple reproduction of the population.

The population of the European countries is rapidly ageing, and this process has many social and economic consequences, especially on the labor market of the nations concerned. One of the ways which could be followed in order to address the consequences of the decline in numbers and the ageing of the population is to act directly on the undesired demographic conditions to try and modify them. There are many factors which could drive the attempt to reverse, or at least to restrain, this process, obviously to the extent that it is effectively possible. The demographic means to catch up with the goal of a younger age structure and a higher growth rate than zero are basically two: to increase the fertility or to increase the net migration.(Manuela Stranges 2007).

These observations confirm that there is a divide in Europe, with respect to population dynamics. The population is growing in the west and diminishing in the east( with the exception of Poland and Slovakia, where growth is continuing, but much more slowly).Nowadays, more than 70% of annual growth is due to net immigration and natural increase plays a minor role in the EU countries. This new demographic regime is not shared by all the members states. Growth still depends primarily on natural increase in France, the Netherlands and Finland, while the two components have roughly equal weight in the United Kingdom.

Now Iceland has the first position for children that were born outside marriage with 65% of all live-born. In Sweden, every second child is born outside marriage, as for 49% of births.

The latest statistics show that the percentage of couples that live together without being legally married is also increasing. This trend first appeared in the Northern European countries, but progressively spread into other European countries. As an illustration, in Great Britain every fourth unmarried woman at ages from 18 - 49 years lives with a partner without being married to him. All of these indicators point to the fact that it comes to a threatening point for the family as a basic nucleus of the society and as a basic source for reproduction of the population. And as a consequence there is fertility rate decrease.

Although most people highly value children, intentions to have another child are not very high. Poles and Lithuanians are least inclined to have (more) children (32% indicate to have plans for further extending the family) while Cypriots seen to be most child-oriented (70%).About one in five Europeans doubts about having (more) children (18% among childless people, 20% among parents).Intentions of parents vary from 16%(in the former east Germany) to 55% in Cyprus.(Ingrid Esveldt and Tineke Fokkema, NIDI 2006).

Especially parents with one child have additional intentions(23-81%).Intentions drop quickly with higher family size in all countries.

In general, having a family is more popular in the CEE countries than in Western Europe. Childlessness clearly is much less preferred in most CEE countries (6-13%) than in Western Europe.(20%-32%).(Ingrid Esveltd and Tineke Fokkema, NIDI,2006).This is a major difference between the eastern and western parts of Europe, with the exception of Poland and the former East Germany, where like in the west more than one in five people wish to remain childless.

Starting with these facts, the Europeans do have a reason to be worried and careful, especially because Europe has been burdened with a significantly low fertility rate lately; only for comparison: "The annual natural growth rate of the number of the Moslems on global level is 6.4% - which is really a great amount, and the Christians have only 1.46% of the same rate." The statistical data that show that by 2020 the number of the Europeans older than 60 will be larger for 25% than the total population, are also very alarming, because this means that their number will be greater than the number of the working force and the number of the age structure of young 18-year-old people. This demographic picture surely doesn't show any prosperity signs, and if Europe doesn't leave space to the young working and intellectual forces from the "third world", mostly likable is that first impact will hit its economy, which even beside its highly developed technology, which in that case won't be able to take these changes.

## RESEARCH GOAL

The main goal of this study research is to determine to what extent these European trends of the demographic movements are involved in two European countries - Slovenia and Macedonia. These are countries that used to be parts of a same federation until not very long ago, countries that are characterized by different economic development, different cultures, traditions and history. Also, I wanted to determine and the level of their demographic development, that is - to try to reveal the differences and similarities, such as the problems that these two countries are facing concerning the same issue.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data used are collected from different national and international statistical sources and publications too. With a simple data analysis and some additional qualitative discussion here with I present main patterns in development of demographic trends that are important for Slovenian and Macedonian population. More specifically I want to answer to the following questions: What are characteristics of demographic development in Slovenia and Macedonia? What are characteristics of development in the areas of economical and social development? What kind of causalities are between demographic development and the economical, social and other tendencies?

## SOCIAL - ECONOMICAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND IN SLOVENIA AND MACEDONIA

During the last decade of the last century, all countries in south-eastern Europe except Greece are in a state of transition to the market economy. Moreover, the new states of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina have separated from former Yugoslavia. All these countries are at different levels of social and economic development, which accounts for the differences between them. In all these countries, cardinal economic and social changes are taking place, which are influencing their economic level and development. These changes are creating great difficulties but, apart from these and some political differences, the whole region is oriented towards the market economy as the only possible economic and social system.

#### SLOVENIA

Even in the communist era, Slovenia was Yugoslavia's wealthiest republic. Slovenia was not a typical socialist country; the transformation that had started at the end of the 1980s did not cause such great turbulences as in other countries in transition. However, unfavorable consequences did accompany the transition, particularly for some segments of the population. Since 1995 the country has reported unemployment rates of six to seven percent, and, excepting the three difficult reform years between 1990 and 1993, GDP has risen by an annual rate of three to five per cent — even reaching six per cent in 2007. At present Slovenia's per capita GDP is close to 90 per cent of the EU-27 average. This means that Slovenia's economic performance is far better than that of Portugal, an old EU country. According to a study released by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the Slovenian people are more content with their situation than the citizens of any other eastern European country in transformation.

Along with the rest of the industrial west Slovenia has undergone an intense transformation from rural to non agrarian society. Numerical growth, however, has not been as great as elsewhere in Europe owing to emigration and, until the 1970s, the absence of immigration. The annual population growth rate is 0.4 percent, the birthrate 10.8 per 1.000 and life expectancy 68.8 years for men and 76.7 for women. Drawing upon a long tradition of crafts, the modernization and diversification of the Slovene economy began in the late Habsburg era. Owing in part of this head start, Slovenia made great progress (at least by Communist standards) under Yugoslavia's market-oriented, "self-management" form of socialism.

Slovenia was not a typical socialist country as far as concerns the political regime, economy regulation, economic development and cooperation, the standard of living, etc.. Consequently, the political, economic, and social transformation that had started at the end of the 1980s did not cause such great turbulences as in other countries in transition. This does not mean that the transition was smooth and without unfavorable consequences, particularly for some segments of the population. Individuals who lost their jobs and those employed but on low wages experienced a decrease in their living standard and even poverty. This is because, compared to 1989, real wages fell dramatically in 1990 and 1991. One-person households (particularly of elderly persons), households with unemployed members, families with three or more children, and single-parent families were identified as being at the highest risk of poverty in the 1990s (Stropnik and Stanovnik 2002). The situation of the

unemployed, in particular, worsened during the 1990s. This was closely related to the low educational attainment and the resulting low employability of about half of the unemployed.

The economic recession and decline had already begun in the second half of the 1980s and continued until 1992. The former internal Yugoslav market (about 20 million people) – where Slovenian products were in high demand – was lost overnight due to the disintegration of the country in 1991 and a war in the region that started the same year. The economy had to be restructured and privatization began. Slovenia also experienced hyperinflation at the beginning of the transition: Annual inflation rates were 550% in 1990, 118% in 1991, and 201% in 1992. The situation greatly improved, achieving a drop in the inflation rate to 32.3% in 1993. Since 1996, inflation has been one-digit (2.5% in 2005). (Stropnik and Šircelj, 2008). The unemployment rate (according to the Labor Force Survey) stood at 9.1% in 1993, 7-8% in the second half of the 1990s, and around 6% in the 2000s.

#### MACEDONIA

Historically, the Balkans experienced high rates of natural increase that declined remarkably in the 20<sup>th</sup> century in response to industrialization and urbanization. In Macedonia these processes have involved the Slavic Christian population to a much greater extent than to Moslems. These differentials have been a source of political tensions, although to a lesser extent than in , for example, Serbia's Kosovo province. Nevertheless, the collapse of Yugoslav federation in 1991 brought severe economic and political strains that made ethnicity and religion subjects of growing anxiety in Macedonia.

After the breakup of Yugoslavia in 1991, Macedonia, the former Yugoslavia's poorest republic, faced formidable economic challenges posed by both the transition to a market economy and a difficult regional situation.

Coincident to these problems, the country pursued an ambitious stabilization and reform program after independence. Despite external factors, the program yielded positive results through 1998 and won praise from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.

Five years of continuous economic expansion in Macedonia was interrupted by the 2001 conflict, which led to a contraction of 4.5% in 2001, despite the government being able to hold inflation at a stable average 5.3%.

In 2002, the economy struggled to recover, posting only 0.7% growth. Growth started to pick up in 2003, with real GDP reaching 3.1%. The external debt-to-GDP ratio in 2003 was 38.4%. The economy still has not been able to fully recover to its pre-2001 crisis level. In 2004, real growth is projected to reach 4% with inflation of up to 2.8%.

Currently, Macedonia is undertaking substantial reforms in its economic and political systems, with the goal of boosting economic growth and attracting increased levels of foreign investment.

Republic of Macedonia has experienced a substantial decline in fertility since onset of socioeconomic transition. During the one decade total fertility rate decline from 2.2 in 1994 to 1.8 in 2002, and show 1.5 children per women in 2006. With regard to the retrospective reproductive performance of the country, fertility levels and natural increase of population, among particular population subgroups (by region and ethnicity) are far beyond the level of

fertility in the country. Beside low level of fertility, patterns of family formation and dissolution have changed notably in the recent years. People married latter, marriages become less stable, and women have changed the timing of childbearing over their lives. Average age of mother of the first birth increased from 23.5 in 1994 to 25.3 in 2006. Additional average age of birth is increasing from 25.8 in 1994 to 26.8 in 2006. The fact that 87.5 percent of live births in 2006 are born among married women, suggest that declining fertility is due to delaying entering in marriage.

At the time of the Census (1994) in the Republic of Macedonia, fertility had reached the level of 2.2 births per woman and an annual rate of population increase 1.01%. After that, TFR had been declining, and showed 1.9 children per woman in 1998. This number indicates Macedonian position in the group of countries where fertility is below the level of replacement.

The reasons for such a situation are complex - cultural, demographic, economic and health-related factors. At the same time it is not possible to ignore current transitional position of the Republic of Macedonia: transit to the market economy and pluralistic political system. The reasons have not been completely clarified yet, but we can mention several reasons for the decreasing number of live births. We could point out the ageing of the fertile contingent, the insufficient financial security, the small homes etc. Essential factors are the rate of unemployment of women and their position in the family and society. (Dragovic Anica, 2003).

Macedonia faces negative demographic trend, lowered birthrate, aging population, serious regional counterbalance regarding population growth and obvious differences between the urban and rural environments.

## COMPARING FERTILITY TRENDS IN BOTH COUNTRIES

*Table 1: Basic demographic indicators for Slovenia, 1985 - 2008*

Year	1985	1990	1995	1997	2000	2003	2006	2008
Population growth rate	1,36	0,18	0,04	-0,08	0,1	0,1	-0,05	-0,08
Natural population increase	3,1	1,9	0,00	-0,4	0,00	-0,1	/	-0,15
Rate of net migration	1,8	-0,01	1,3	0,21	1,2	2,34	0,88	0,64
Total fertility rate (TFR)	1,88	1,46	1,36	1,17	1,26	1,20	1,31	1,27
Life expectancy at birth -males	/	68,5	69,7	71,48	71,8	/	74,5	/
Life expectancy at birth -females	/	76,5	77,4	79,02	79,3	/	82,0	/

Source: Statistical Institute of Republic of Slovenia, Council of Europe, IIASA

*Table 2: Basic demographic indicators for Macedonia, 1985 - 2008*

Year	1985	1990	1995	1997	2000	2003	2006	2008
Population growth rate	1,21	0,94	0,89	0,68	0,47	0,4	0,26	0,26
Natural population increase	/	10,00	/	6,5	0,6	0,4	/	/
Rate of net migration	/	0,01	-0,16	-0,88	-5,66	-1,46	-0,65	-0,57
Total fertility rate (TFR)	2,33	2,06	1,92	2,06	1,88	1,54	1,46	1,58
Life expectancy at birth -males	/	68,9	69,4	70,67	70,5	72,23	71,7	/
Life expectancy at birth -females	/	72,8	74,0	75,03	74,8	76,94	76,2	/

Source: Statistical Institute of R. Macedonia, Council of Europe, INED

*Table 3 Basic demographic trends for Slovenia and Macedonia:*

	Total population			Annual population growth		Urban population		
	1975	2001	2005	1975	2001-15	1975	2001	2015
Slovenia	1.7	2.0	1.9	0.5	-0.2	42.4	49.2	51.6
Macedonia	1.7	2.0	2.2	0.7	0.4	50.6	59.2	62.0

*Table 4 Basic demographic trends for Slovenia and Macedonia:*

	Population under 15		Population above 65		TFR	
	2001	2015	2001	2015	1970-75	2001-05
Slovenia	15.4	12.1	14.2	18.5	2.2	1.1
Macedonia	22.3	20.0	10.2	12.2	3.0	1.9

Source: Human Development Indicators, UN 2003

Fertility trends in Slovenia, as seen in the total fertility rate, have not surpassed the replacement level since the end of the 1970s. The lowest level of 1.21 was reached during the 1999-2003 period. Since then, the total fertility rate has been increasing slightly. Postponement in childbearing began with cohorts born after 1960. In today's Slovenian society, on average young women achieve higher education than men, and they perceive (potential) motherhood as a drawback in the labor market. Almost all parents in Slovenia are employed full-time, even those with small children. (Sircelj and Stropnik 2008)

Over the past few years, Slovenia has seen demographic trends similar to those in the aging of the population, ever since 1990, Slovenia has been facing a downward trend in the population aged 15. A decline in the number of births has become a challenge in all developed countries. Nevertheless, Slovenia saw an increase in the number of newborns in 2000 over the year before. Slovenia's birth rate is comparable to those recorded in some EU countries, such as Spain, Italy and Greece.

In the following ten years, the size, age-gender structure and regional distribution of the European and Slovenian population depend upon fertility, mortality and mobility. These factors, which influence the size and structure of a population and are co-dependent and at the same time under a powerful impact of social and economic factors in the environment, have in the recent years, due to low fertility and prolongation of life expectancy, increasingly contributed to the accelerated ageing of population. Population ageing means an increase in the share of population over a certain age (usually over 65 years) while at the same time the number of children under 15 decreases and life expectancy is prolonged

In Slovenia life expectancy at birth for both sexes was 75.93 years in 2004. During the last 13 years it has increased for 2.64 years of life (Source: U.S. Census Bureau, International Data Base: <http://www.census.gov/cgi-bin/ipc/idbsprd>).

Another discernible trend is that parents are putting off the decision to have children. This is a result of several factors related to job security, housing problems, economic conditions, continuing education, priorities and the division of work within the family.

It can be ascertained that the demographic development of the Slovenian population in its basic steps, follows the development of the developed European countries. It is very interesting that Slovenia is ranked among the countries with the lowest fertility rates in Europe, which today is 1.29.

The decreasing of the total natality in Slovenia has been an issue even one century ago, of course differently in different social groups and different regions of the country. In the beginning was only about the decreasing natality rate among the aliens of the higher social classes and better educated and employed women, and after that it started to spread among all classes.

Cohort fertility has been decreasing continuously, starting with cohorts born in the second half of the 19th century. Periodic oscillations in the total fertility rate were mostly due to changes in the timing of childbearing, which kept period fertility (TFR) above 2.1 children per woman in the 1960s and 1970s. Although it was evident that the constant decrease in cohort fertility would sooner or later cause the TFR to decline below the replacement level, the fertility issue was raised in public only when the number of new-born children had begun to decrease rapidly in 1980. Thus, the first fertility survey was conducted in 1989.(Sircelj and Stropnik 2008).

The TFR started to decrease drastically since 1960, so in 1980 it has a value of 2.4. In the year of 1995 the value of that indicator decreased to 1.29, which ranked Slovenia among the countries with lowest natality rate in Europe. "After the World War II and since the year of 1980 we are facing with a great decrease of the absolute number of births in Slovenia."(Kozuh- Novak Mateja,1998). If for the period since 1980 until 1988, the number of the born children was decreasing in average for 2% annually, in the period since 1989 until 1992 its decreasing valued 5.8%, and in the last four years it has stabilized at 2.(Kozuh-Novak Mateja,1998).

The leading method for fertility regulation was induced abortion until 1950. The law of Slovenia(1955) punished women who had illegal abortions. In the year of 1977 the right to freely decide about the birth of children became a constitutional right for the citizens of Slovenia.(Kozuh-Novak Mateja,1998).

Modern contraception was present in Slovenia by the beginning of the sixties. The decentralized political system that developed in Slovenia differently than in the other socialist countries, made it possible to build a well-developed network for primary medical protection. The use of modern means of contraception has increased in the last 20 years, the abortion rate since 1983 is comparative to those of developed European countries. The ratio between births and abortions in Slovenia for 1995 was 10 : 6. (same source as above).

Slovenia was under Austro-Hungarian authority, and this may be related to the lower fertility. The borders of the compact area with high fertility during the time of the Kingdom of SCS and the second post-war Yugoslavia, match the territory historically part of the Ottoman Empire.



The border between these empires follows borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sandzak, Kosova and Metohija, South Serbia, and Macedonia. The entire region consisted of an extremely high-fertility population..

By following the natality rate in Macedonia for a longer period of time, we can conclude that it has been decreasing continuously.. This decreasing is tightly connected to the mortality of the population (especially the mortality of the infants\*,more than15 promiles). It is important to stress that the decreasing natality rate in Macedonia the decrease of the TFR in Macedonia, as in Slovenia started in different periods for different regions, and differs in its intensity. Development of the regions correlates with the greatest differences in fertility decline. But most recent declines tightly connected to the demographic and social differences with the population. According to the newest data in Macedonia there are also regions with higher and lower natality rates, that differ also by the natural growth of the population.

Fertility regulation in Macedonia is also one of the factors that directly affect the decrease of the birth rate through contraception or abortions. The cease of pregnancy as a mean of fertility regulation is widespread through out Macedonia. The average number of abortions in the period from 1983 - 1990 has been 28. 411 abortions, from which about 95% have been voluntary , that is about 0.74 abortions per one alive-born child, and the abortions are most popular among the married women on the age of 20 - 39 years.(Amalija Jovanovic,1998). Considering the fact that this is the age range of highest fertility, we can conclude that induced abortion is the main means of fertility regulation for those women.(the same source as above).

## SOME FINDINGS AND REASONS ACCEPTED

When we discuss reasons that lead to the decreasing fertility rate, even in this, Slovenia follows the same trends as most others European countries. Strongest reasons for this situation include the economic recession and crisis that is connected to the period of transition, both of which, lead towards unemployment.(Milivoja Sircelj,1996).

In the last 15 years, the average age of mother at birth first child in Slovenia increased from 23 to 25 years. The average age of marriage increased by the middle of 1980,to 1995,when the bride was 27 years old, and the groom - 30 years old.(Kozuh-Novak Mateja,1998).

For example in Macedonia average age of bride in 1994 was 23.5 and in 2004 was 25.2.(Statistical Institute of R. Macedonia).There are indications that delaying of entering in the marriage unions in Macedonia due to the hard economic and political situation in the country, and maybe that priority is given to the education and carrier.

The increasing number of non marital births in Slovenia is also considered one of the most important reasons for the decreasing TFR. Namely, in the year 1975 there were 10% of these children, and in 1994 it has reached the value of 29% for the first born children, and 40% totally.(Kozuh-Novak Mateja 1998). These new situations greatly determine the fertility rate, and this is very significant for the reproductive behavior of the Slovenes.

In Slovenia the greater part of the fertility decline is determined by demographic factors - age structures, entry into marriages, delaying of the

birth of the first child. For Macedonia it can be said that its natality rate is mostly determined by economic and social factors. What are the reasons that lead to general decrease of the natality in Macedonia? Generally, the decrease of the natality rate, above all dues to the tranquilizing of the natality rates after the World War II, and also to the emigrating of the Turkish population from Republic of Macedonia in the period between 1953 and 1961 when this process was most intensive. This population had higher natality than the Macedonian population, though a little lower than for Albanians.(Amalija Jovanovic,1998).

Among the general influences on the decreasing natality rate is also surely migration, because the emigrants are mostly the working-age population, which at the same time is fertile. Among all of these general influences, one of the most important is the changed attitude of the population towards their own reproduction, that is to changing of the value of the number of the children in the family, which is again a consequence of the total economic and social development of Republic of Macedonia, what is, from the other side, most directly connected to the processes of industrialization, urbanization and the modernizing of the family.

Since the beginning we have stressed that the territory of the Republic of Macedonia differs after different varieties from the aspect of the natality rates. It can be easily noticed that the difference in the height of the natality rates in Macedonia dues to the development level of certain municipalities, to national heterogeneity, to the educational structure of the female population and to the popularity of the traditional norms for the role and position of the woman in the family and the society.

The higher is the educational level and of the woman and social status, the lower is her fertility. In most less developed municipalities, the fertility rates are higher. This problem, needs more complete analysis. It seems that greater importance every day receives the differentiation of the fertility according the ethnical affiliation of the population. Low natality is present in almost at all ethnical groups, excluding those ethnic groups whose members belong to the Islamic religion. That led us to deeper thinking about this finding on a global level. Populations from the Islamic religion systematically exhibit higher fertility rates.

By analyzing the differences in the fertility rates on a global level in Slovenia are noticed some regional differences, that is, for Slovenia is very typical the connection between the fertility rate and the place of living. The results of some researches show that the place of living (village or a city) is a very important component for a lower fertility rate in the Slovene society.

The low fertility rate in the urban areas is a result of the different structure of the population that lives in the urban areas, that is, the woman in those areas has some socio-economic status and also here exist a specific way of living - "the urban way of living" for which a big family isn't typical.(Sircelj Milivoja,1993).

Namely, the areas that are characterized with a lower fertility rate are the Slovene coast, Ljubljana, Celje, with some centers by the river-course of the Sava River, and Maribor; here the percentage of the agricultural population is

very low, and also, very significant is that the two greatest Slovene cities, and according to this there's no doubt about the urban character of these areas.

In the other areas in Slovenia the fertility rate is higher, especially in the East part of Slovenia, excluding Murska Subota and Brezice besides the fact that they have a great rate of rural population (35% and 22%)(same source as above). Based on all of this, we can summarize that the place of living has effect (influence) over the fertility rate, and it shows that the urban areas have lower fertility rate. Even though, this isn't firmly based and determined as such; that is, there are some explanations about the diffusion of the situation in the urban and the rural areas, and with this are diminished the differences in the fertility rate between the villages and towns. The new relations and conditions, such as: the birth control, planning of the family and preferring smaller families, which come out from the urban areas and are more and more implemented in the villages. As an illustration: the relation of the areas with lower and those with higher fertility rate was 1:2 in 1990.

#### EMERGING SOLUTIONS:

Comparisons and findings of the demographic situation in both countries, Slovenia and Macedonia, with special emphasis on the fertility behavior of the Macedonians and Slovenes show that these two countries are in two polar-opposite positions. From one side, Slovenia is facing with a long-term decrease of the TFR and in perspective, the aging crisis of its population, of course because of the decreasing natality rate, with which the number of population older than 60 years of age shall be greater than the number of the working force, a tendency by which this population shall have to bare the social expenses as the support of those old persons, and a tendency that situates Slovenia closer to the countries from Western Europe.

From the other side we have Macedonia, in which its citizens are asking themselves every day: "When will we be 50 : 50 in Macedonia?" as a result of the still increasing fertility rate at the Albanian minority in Macedonia which is almost 25% of the total population that inhabits the territory of Republic of Macedonia. These demographic conditions and processes in both countries in near future can not get through without sociological, cultural, ideological and political and economical changes.

Slovenia has a relatively well-developed family policy, particularly on parental leave and pre-school childcare. Notwithstanding, almost no impact of family policy on fertility has ever been observed.

"If we want to survive as a nation, we must define the family as a value", said Slovenian minister Drobnic, minister for Labor, Family and Social affairs, as he outlined the priorities of his ministry for 2005. Drobnic said many things would have to be changed, such as taxes, housing policy, child care.

His ministry will formulate a national program that would encourage people to have children. Several other measures are planned, Drobnic said, quoting incentives to employers to give sobs to young people, enabling young parents

to also work towards more flexible labor market. The minister hopes this will result in more jobs, more companies, but also fewer social benefits and thus less of a burden on the budget. Drobic also announced that the ministry would try to achieve better adjustment of pensions to growth in salaries. Furthermore, measures in employment and stipend policy will encourage reconciliation between demand and supply. Drobic also promised financial assistance to the poor so that they can study too.

Several ministries are developing incentive models and demographic development policies in Macedonia, which will be incorporated into the Government strategy for a demographic development for 2008-2015, adopted in March 2008. The birth of a child will be encouraged by several measures, as well as funding the birth of second or third child, introducing special tax rate for children's clothes, supplies, food and hygiene products, measures for mother's protection etc.

The Government has already implemented two measures linked to the demographic strategy - in vitro fertilization and free HPV vaccine for young women.

The strategy identifies pivotal areas and tasks in setting up a demographic policy aiming at stabilizing population's natural growth, increasing the birthrate, reducing mortality by enabling better living standards.

Thus, the main government targets in Macedonia should be development of necessary measures to prevent discrimination in employment and occupation with special attention to young workers. We must foster economic and social conditions that allow people of all ages to remain fully integrated into the economy and society to enjoy freedom in deciding how to relate and contribute to society, and to find fulfillment in doing so.

Previous research abroad and also in Slovenia and Macedonia as well shows that fertility behavior is a very dynamic process which requires permanent observation through surveys that are repeated every few years. This is the only way which enables proper action as regard to the changes in population structure and to form strategies to protect the reproductive health.

World trends and our previous research results show that further continuous research of fertility behavior is needed. Over the last few years fast and radical social changes which will influence or already influence fertility behavior of our population are taking place. Fast and timely reactions to these changes require good knowledge and understanding of this field. Efficient measures can only be based on results of longitudinal research. Participation in the internationally comparable project FFS (Fertility and family survey, coordinated by Economic Commission for Europe, United Nations, in which twenty European countries are included (a number of collaborating countries is increasing every year)) enables us an insight into the demographic position of Slovenia and Macedonia respectively, perceived from European context, and to implement promptly health, family and population measures as the rest of Europe does.

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