

DIMENSIONS OF POPULATION AGEING IN ROMANIA

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Abstract. This paper aims to define the concept of demographic ageing and to present the situation of demographic ageing in Romania. The complexity of this reality called "ageing" is reflected in the diversity of definitions and concepts that exist. The aim of this article was to analyse the dimensions of population ageing in Romania, concentrating on rural realities of ageing.

Keywords: demographic transition, life expectancy, population ageing.

INTRODUCTION

Population ageing is a social international phenomenon that appears when the median age of a country or community rises due to rising life expectancy, external migration and declining fertility rate. Population aging is a global phenomenon in recent decades that affects all countries. In the last century the share of elderly in total population has been growing. This trend will be maintained in the XXI century. If in 1950 the share of elderly in the world was 8%, (according to forecasts made by the U.N. - Population Division), in 2050 the share of elderly will increase to 22% of the total population of the globe. In this case, the population ageing is irreversible and the share of young population will decrease. According to U.N. data, the share of third age population will increase in the long term, even in countries where the birth rate is superior to the reproduction rate (2.1 children). According to W. Lutz, W. Sanderson and S. Scherbov the demographic statistics indicate a continuous ageing of the world's population throughout the century. The median age of the world's population increases from 26.6 years in 2000 to 37.3 years in 2050 and then to 45.6 years in 2100. (*The coming acceleration of global population ageing*, in *Nature*, February, 2008).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The document analyses were done, comparing official data from the *Statistical Yearbooks of Romania* and results of the latest Census. Documents reviewed in the process of collecting information were obtained in May-June, 2016, for the period 1990-2015.

RESULTS

The number of older persons worldwide is increasing faster than in other age groups. Thus, if at the beginning of 2015 the number of people aged 60 and over was about 810 million people worldwide, in 2050 the number of people of 60 and older will be 2 billion people. According to forecasts, in 2050 the number of older people around the world will exceed the number of children.

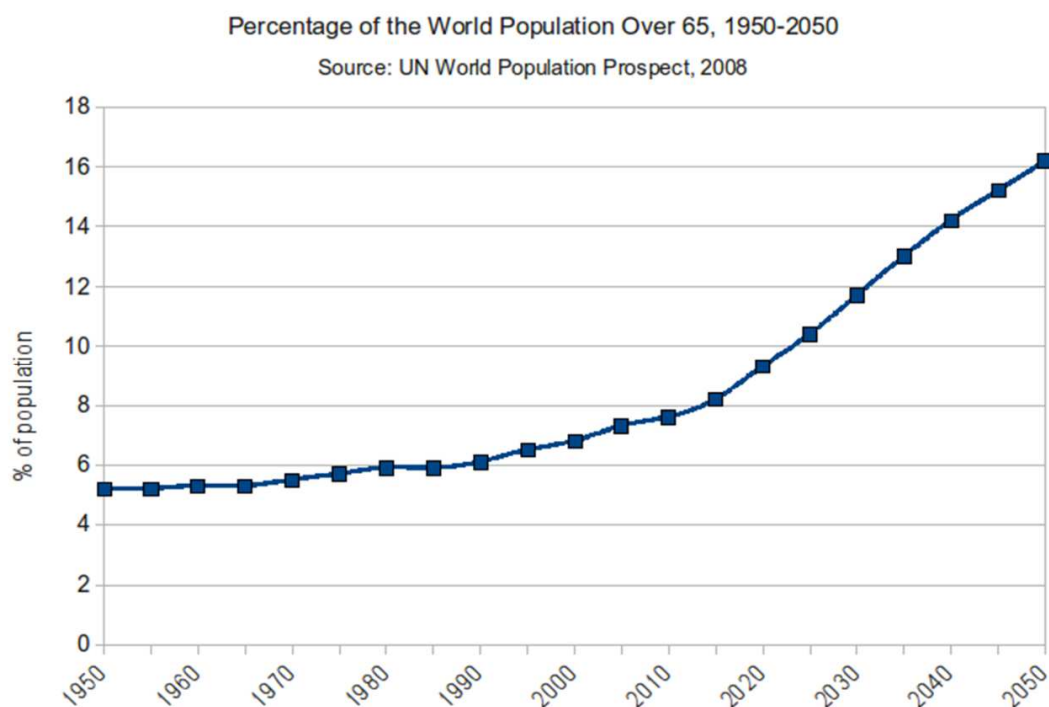


Fig. 1. Percentage of the world population over 64, 1950-2050 (Source, UN World Population Prospect, 2006).

The aging of population is an important result of social progress achieved in various fields of interest like medicine, quality of life, social protection, and reducing mortality due especially to the elderly and increasing the average duration of life. At the same time, changing population structure is determined by the significant decrease in the birth rate, especially in western European countries or Japan. The aged population is currently at its highest level in human history.

The phenomenon of ageing is affecting the Romanian society too, especially in the last decades. In Romania, life expectancy at birth in 1900 was only 36.4 years. The twentieth century has witnessed a spectacular progress. In 1975 it was 69.3 years. In 2015, the average of life expectancy in Romania was 75 years (71.4 years for men and 78.8 years for women). Until 2030 it may grow with 5.9 years for men and 4.4 years for women. Romania is ranked 67 in the world rankings of life expectancy, the first being in Monaco, with 89.7 years, Japan (83.7), Switzerland (83.4) and the lowest in Angola – 52.4 and Sierra Leone - 50.1 years. (Source, *WHO statistics*, 2016). The structure of population age has the characteristic of a process of demographic aging, mainly due to declining birth rates which has reduced the rate of young population (0-14 years old). In the same time, the increasing life expectancy determined the increase the proportion of older adults (65 and more) in the Romanian population. As well, the rural population is more affected by aging than the urban society. The external migration affects the population ageing in Romania, too. It may be noted that almost 10% of Romania's population chose the exile (sometimes temporarily) in the last years. The phenomena took a special scale especially after Romania's accession to the European Union. The main destination countries are European countries like Italy, Spain and Germany. In general, the majority of

this migrant people are capable of work, young new families with children born in the countries where their parents work. As well, the severe decline of fertility rate affects the demographic ageing. Since 1989, the number of newborns in Romania has dropped dramatically. Statistics show that in 1990 were born almost 50% fewer children than in 1989. As well, millions of abortions were made in Romania during the last 50 years.

National Statistics Institute data show that in January 2014 there were 1,360 children born less than in the same month of 2013. Worldwide, Romania ranks among the last countries regarding the birth rate, according to data published on the website of the World Bank, with 10 children per 1,000 people. Statistic data shows that Romania's population drops by 5,000 people per month, and the number of pensioners reached currently 5.5 million.

In Romania, demographic aging is more pronounced in rural areas than in urban. Thus, in early 1990, the share of the population of 65 years and more in rural areas was 13.5% of the total population, and increased in 2015 to 18.3%. An important manifestation of aging is increasing the number of women in the population of older persons. It is a process of "feminization of old age". Many of the Romanian older people live in poor, isolated rural areas having to struggle with very low incomes that are hardly enough for the daily food.

CONCLUSION

The kickback of birth rate and deterioration of overall mortality, plus a negative external migration left their mark on the situation of elderly population in total population of Romania. The effects that aging has on carrying out economic and social life, and the prospects of demographic evolution of Romanian society must be addressed in terms of making decisions that will prevent the negative consequences of this phenomena.

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