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**DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE OLDER POPULATION IN
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA – REGIONAL DIFFERENCES AND
CHALLENGES OF THE SOCIAL PROTECTION**

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Abstract

A notable aspect of the ageing process in the Republic of Macedonia is the progressive demographic ageing of the older population itself. In the period 1921-2002 the number of persons aged 60 or over increased three times, and of those older than 80 it was almost doubled. In last decade this process was intensified and these indicators amounts 13.4% and 43.0%. In the period 2010-2020, according to the middle scenario of population projections, it is expected the older population (aged 60 or over) to increase for almost a quarter (24.3%), and the old age contingent (aged 80 or over), for more than two fifths (41.4%). The population projections show that after 2020 the increase of older population and old age contingent will continue with slower dynamics.

This trend implicates deeper changes in the current policy for social protection of elderly people, particularly for their institutional care. Today in the institutions for social protection of old people there are 567 beds, which mean that only 0.3 per cent of this category of population could be covered. According the European standards the institutional capacities of the country should cover 3-5 per cent of the elderly population.

Demographic ageing of the older population implicates serious challenges for the social care of the older persons during the next decades, especially in certain regions of the country. They will be very emphasized on short terms and mid terms and will manifest in many domains - capacities for institutional care for the old persons, the implementation of the norms and standards for work of the institutions for social care of old persons, skills and competencies of the personnel that work in this area, participation of the forms of non-institutional care, scientific research of the socio-economic aspects significant for the older population.

Key words: demographic ageing, population aged 60 or over, population aged 80 or over, social protection

Introduction

In the last two decades the Republic of Macedonia was faced with a very intensive process of demographic ageing with emphasized regional differences. This process was accompanied by the progressive ageing of the older population itself. The consequences and implications of the population ageing are manifested in the changes of the demographic development, the labor force supply, the economic and social development, especially in the system of social transfers and social protection of old population.

The aim of the research in this paper is to identify the regional differences of the growth and basic characteristics of the population aged 60 or over as well as the necessary changes of the social protection policy for old population, including the institutional care, on regional level. The analysis is referring to the changes of the demographic profile of older population in a longer period 1921-2055 on the regional level, according the NUTS classification.¹ For observation of the manifested changes of older population we used State Statistical Office data from the population censuses, population estimations and population projection until 2055 (middle scenario).

¹According to the NUTS classification (Nomenclature of Units of Territory for Statistics) in Republic Macedonia there are eight statistical regions.

1. Magnitude and speed of demographic ageing of older population

The available data from the population census until 2002, then population estimations in the period 2002-2008, as well as the population projections for the period 2007-2055, show that the volume and the structure of older population (aged 60 or over) in Republic of Macedonia developed with variable dynamics and that in the following decades an intensification of the process of demographic ageing can be expected.

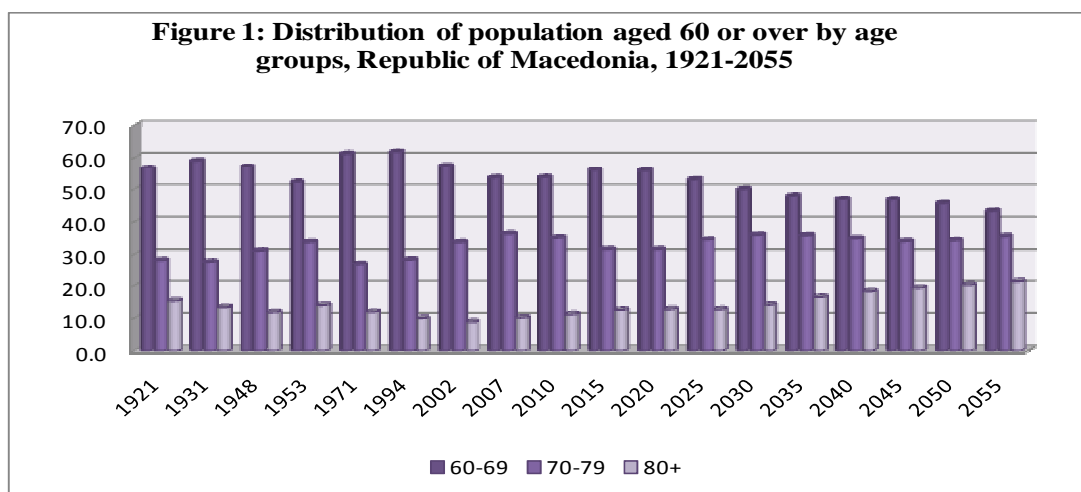
In the Republic of Macedonia, the number of person aged 60 or over, has increased for more than thrice in the period 1921-2002. According to the data from the population censuses, from around 90000 persons in 1921 and 1931, respectively 100000 after the Second World War (1948 and 1953), in 2002 it has reached 300000 person. Thereat, the population aged 60 or over has grown significantly since the 1970's (Table 1). Unlike the continuous absolute growth, the participation of the older population in the total population decreases until the 1960's, and afterwards it continuously increases and in 2002 reaches 15%.

Table 1									
Total population and share of the population aged 60 or over, Republic of Macedonia, 1921-2002 and 2007-2055									
Year	Total	60+	60-69	70-79	80+	60+	60-69	70-79	80+
	Number					Structure in % (total=100,0)			
Population censuses									
1921	808724	89835	50852	25229	13754	11,1	6,3	3,1	1,7
1931	949958	90979	53681	25198	12100	9,6	5,7	2,7	1,3
1948	1152986	100317	57320	31213	11784	8,7	5,0	2,7	1,0
1953	1304514	106733	55757	36073	14903	8,2	4,3	2,8	1,1
1961	1406003	109083			...	7,8			
1971	1647308	145788	89288	39270	17230	8,9	5,4	2,4	1,0
1981	1808214	174439			...	9,6			
1994	1945932	253626	156629	71628	25369	13,0	8,0	3,7	1,3
2002	2022547	303534	174265	102353	26916	15,0	8,6	5,1	1,3
Population projections (middle scenario)									
2007	2039377	316275	169342	114762	32171	15,5	8,3	5,6	1,6
2010	2038614	344168	184695	120989	38484	16,9	9,1	5,9	1,9
2015	2028961	385968	215934	121733	48301	19,0	10,6	6,0	2,4
2020	2007241	427677	238462	134817	54398	21,3	11,9	6,7	2,7
2025	1972240	463529	245186	159710	58633	23,5	12,4	8,1	3,0
2030	1924113	492584	246086	177036	69462	25,6	12,8	9,2	3,6
2035	1865370	513778	245764	183465	84549	27,5	13,2	9,8	4,5
2040	1799157	533437	250127	186151	97159	29,6	13,9	10,3	5,4
2045	1727812	552834	258511	188023	106300	32,0	15,0	10,9	6,2
2050	1652710	566265	258642	193738	113885	34,3	15,6	11,7	6,9
2055	1574817	569370	246272	202010	121088	36,2	15,6	12,8	7,7
Source: State Statistical Officein of the Republic of Macedonia, Censuses of Population, Households, Dwellings in 1921,1931. 1948, 1953 1961, 1971,1981 1994 2002 and Population projections 2007-									

The demographic profile of the older population shows that, basically, the changes took the same direction as in the separate age groups: 60-69; 70-79; 80 and more. However, because of the

different dynamics of its growth in the observed period (1921-2002), the number of person in the age group 60-69 has increased three times, age group 70-79 four times, and of those older than 80 it was almost doubled. The participation of these age groups in the total population in 2002 respectively amounts: 8.6%; 5.1% and 1.3%. In relation with the mentioned age groups, from the aspect of implications on social protection, we should set aside the old age contingent i.e. the person aged 80 or over, which reached the number of 27 000 persons, according the data from the last population census in 2002.

The distribution of the population aged 60 or over according the three basic age groups, shows that, even though it varies, until 2002 the age group 60-69 has dominant participation (more than 50%), with relatively big was the share of the group 70-79, and the smallest part goes to the age group 80+ which has a decreasing tendency. (Figure 2)



The available data of the population estimations and of the population projections, confirm that after 2002 in comparison with the 1990's, the process of demographic ageing of the older population has had a significant intensification. Namely, in the period between the last two censuses (1994-2002), the older population (aged 60 or over) has increased for 19.7%, and old age contingent (aged 80 or over) for 6,1%. In the period 2002-2008 these indicators respectively count 9.2% and 32.4% (population estimations), and between 2002-2010 13.4% and 43.0% (population projections). Despite the different methodological base of the data used in the calculation of these indicators, they still confirm the trend of intensified increase of the old age contingent in the last decade.

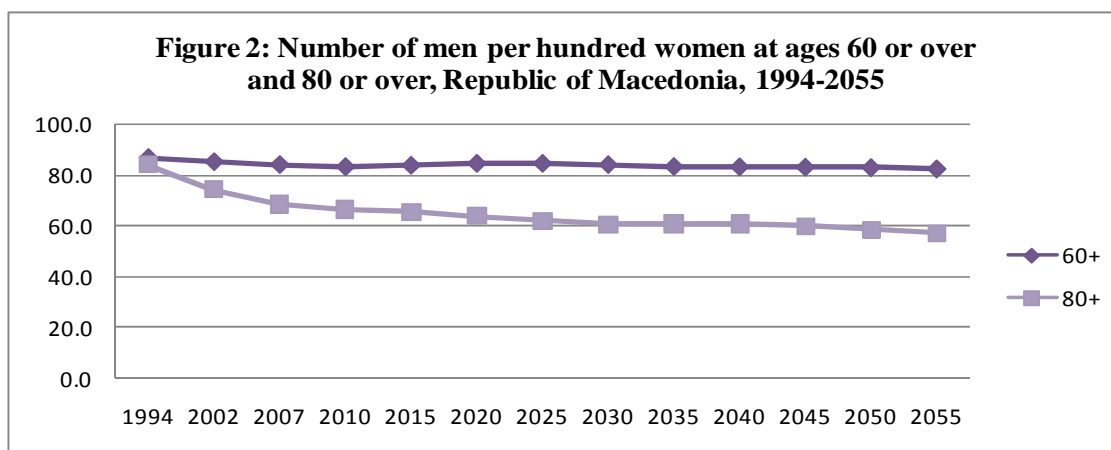
According to the population projections, this trend will continue its trend also in the next decades, which will be particularly emphasized on short and middle term. Namely, in the period 2010-2020, according to the middle scenario of population projections, it is expected the older population (aged 60 or over) to increase for almost a quarter (24.3%), and the old age contingent (aged 80 or over), for more than two fifths (41.4%). Because of these dynamics, in the first two decades of the 21 century, in the Republic of Macedonia, the population aged 80 or over will duplicate. After 2020, a continuous decline of the old age population growth is expected (15.2% from 2020-2030; 8.3% from 2030-2040; 6.7% 2040-2050). The increase of the population aged 80 or over in the same intervals will be higher 25%.

Women make up a significant majority of the older population in the Republic of Macedonia and the female share increases with age. Because their life expectancy is greater than men's, women comprise a significant majority of older population. In the 1994 and 2002 the sex ratio of population aged 60 or over was 87 and 85 males per hundred females (Figure 2). Thus there were

approximately 18000 (1994) and 24000 persons (2002) more women aged 60 years or older than there were man of the same age.

Since female mortality rates are lower than male rates at older ages, the proportion of women in the older population grows substantially with advancing age. So, in the case of the population aged 80 and over, the sex ratio declined from 84 in 1994 to 74 in 2002. That means big change of the number of males per hundred females for only eighth years.

The sex structure of the older population shows that the share of females in the total population aged 60 or over increase from 53.6% (1994) to 54.0% (2002). In the same period bigger changes are characteristic for the share of females in the total population aged 80 or over i.e. from 54.4% to 57.4%



In the period after 2002 this trend continuous with same dynamics. The data of the population projections show that in 2010 it is expected the sex ratio of population aged 60 or over to be 83 males per hundred females and 66 of population aged 80 or over. The share of females in the total population will be 54.5% (aged 60 or over) and 60.1% (aged 80 or over). According the population projections over the next half-century, the sex ratio of older population is expected to increase, particularly for the contingent of the old age population. So, after 2010 the sex ratio of population aged 60 or over is expected to be in a range of 84 to 82 males per hundred females. In the same time sex ratio of population aged 80 or over will continuously decline (64 in 2020, 60 in 2040, 57 in 2055). As for the sex structure of the older population it shows that the share of females in the total population aged 60 or over is expected to remained 54.0%, and in the total population aged 80 or over to increase continuously and to reach about 64% in 2055.

2. Regional differences of older population ageing

The regional development of the population in the Republic of Macedonia during the last two decades is characterized with emphasized differences in the growth and changes in the structural features of the total population. Thereat, regarding the different stage of demographic age of the population in individual regions in the country, they were particularly emphasized for the older population (aged 60 or over) and the old age contingent (aged 80 or over).

In the period 1994-2002 the population aged 60 or over marked significant growth in all of the regions. Thereat, it was largest in the Skopje region (30.0%), in Vardar, Eastern, South-Eastern and Polog region it amounts from 18.8% up to 23.6% and smallest was in the Pelagonia region (9.0%). As a result of such dynamics, the share of the population aged 60 or over in the total population significantly increased in all of the regions. In this period it was and remained highest in the

Pelagonia region (18.2% in 1994 and 20.2% in 2002) and smallest in the Polog region (10.2% that is, 11.3%). (Table 2)

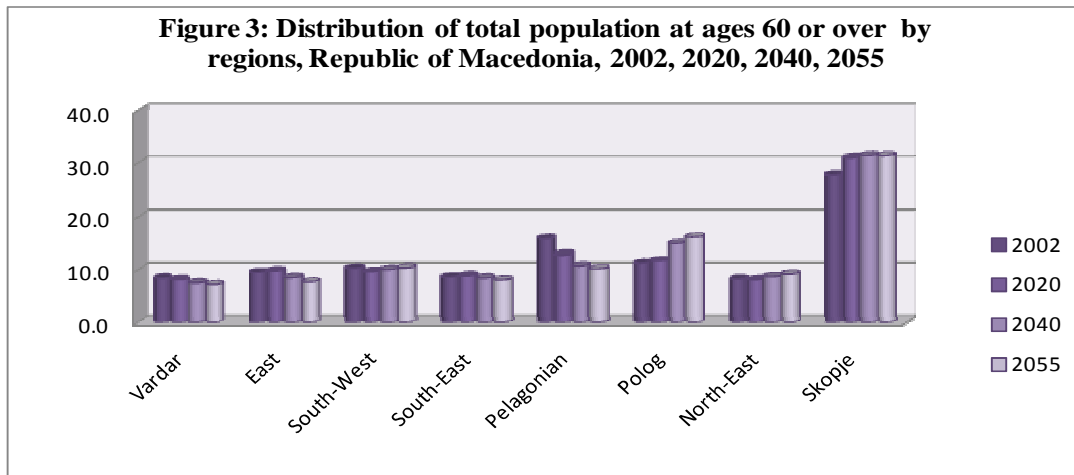
Table 2

Total population and proportion of population aged 60 or over by age groups in the Republic of Macedonia, by statistical regions, 1994, 2002 and 2007-2055

Age groups	Population censuses		Population projections										
	1994	2002	2007	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	2045	2050	2055
The Region of Vardar													
Total	152479	154535	154209	153040	150844	147653	143492	138545	132992	126967	120638	114184	1E+05
60+	13.5	16.5	16.9	18.5	20.8	23.5	25.9	27.8	29.5	31.3	33.8	36.2	37.7
60-69	8.3	9.7	9.2	10.0	11.7	13.2	13.8	13.7	13.6	14.3	15.8	16.8	16.0
70-79	3.9	5.4	6.1	6.6	6.7	7.5	9.0	10.4	11.0	11.2	11.4	12.3	13.8
80+	1.3	1.4	1.6	1.8	2.4	2.8	3.1	3.8	4.8	5.8	6.6	7.2	7.8
The Region of East													
Total	180081	181858	180910	178245	174015	168575	161854	154001	145328	136210	126968	117806	108845
60+	13.4	15.8	16.8	18.6	21.6	24.8	27.5	29.5	31.2	33.2	35.8	38.3	40.1
60-69	8.1	9.2	9.1	10.2	12.3	14.1	14.5	14.2	14.1	15.0	16.6	17.6	17.1
70-79	4.0	5.1	6.0	6.5	6.8	7.8	9.7	11.3	11.8	11.9	12.1	13.1	14.8
80+	1.3	1.5	1.7	1.9	2.5	2.9	3.3	4.1	5.2	6.3	7.1	7.6	8.1
The Region of South-West													
Total	212856	221546	222316	219883	216814	213190	208231	201550	193458	184543	175194	165512	155512
60+	13.1	14.1	14.0	14.9	16.8	19.3	22.0	24.4	26.7	29.0	31.9	35.0	37.9
60-69	7.9	7.7	7.1	7.7	9.4	11.3	12.4	12.8	13.0	13.8	15.2	16.8	17.4
70-79	3.7	5.0	5.3	5.4	5.2	5.7	7.1	8.7	9.8	10.3	10.8	11.7	13.2
80+	1.4	1.3	1.6	1.8	2.2	2.4	2.4	2.9	3.8	4.9	5.8	6.5	7.3
The Region of South-East													
Total	168481	171416	171904	171034	168979	165687	161237	155901	149776	143019	135875	128626	121486
60+	12.7	15.2	16.0	17.4	20.0	22.8	25.4	27.6	29.4	31.3	33.7	36.0	37.5
60-69	7.9	8.7	8.6	9.4	11.1	12.9	13.6	13.5	13.6	14.2	15.6	16.5	16.0
70-79	3.5	5.2	5.8	6.0	6.3	7.1	8.7	10.2	10.9	11.1	11.4	12.2	13.6
80+	1.3	1.3	1.6	2.0	2.5	2.8	3.2	3.8	4.9	6.0	6.7	7.3	7.9
The Region of Pelagonia													
Total	242614	238136	236018	232965	228400	222828	216167	208560	200236	191416	182344	173218	164112
60+	18.2	20.2	20.0	20.7	22.4	24.6	26.3	27.6	28.5	29.8	31.9	33.9	35.2
60-69	10.9	10.7	9.5	10.0	11.9	13.6	13.7	13.1	12.9	13.6	15.3	16.3	15.7
70-79	5.2	7.5	8.0	7.9	7.2	7.6	9.2	10.7	10.9	10.6	10.6	11.4	13.0
80+	2.0	2.0	2.4	2.8	3.3	3.4	3.3	3.8	4.7	5.6	6.0	6.3	6.6
The Region of Polog													
Total	280352	304125	309926	310882	311965	312145	309959	304552	296351	286303	274934	262303	248449
60+	10.2	11.3	11.5	12.3	13.8	16.1	19.1	22.3	25.0	27.6	30.4	33.6	36.9
60-69	6.4	6.6	6.3	6.7	7.9	9.6	11.5	12.9	13.3	13.7	14.8	16.3	17.6
70-79	2.8	3.7	4.1	4.3	4.3	4.7	5.7	7.1	8.7	10.1	10.6	11.2	12.4
80+	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.3	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.3	2.9	3.9	5.0	6.1	7.0
The Region of North-East													
Total	163841	172787	173872	174010	173455	171963	169569	166152	161768	156613	150873	144687	138161
60+	13.1	14.4	14.7	15.8	17.8	20.1	22.5	24.8	27.0	29.5	32.1	34.9	37.7
60-69	7.9	8.3	7.8	8.5	9.9	11.3	12.1	12.6	12.8	13.6	14.6	15.4	16.0
70-79	3.9	4.8	5.4	5.6	5.6	6.2	7.5	8.7	9.6	10.3	10.8	11.8	12.9
80+	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.7	2.3	2.6	2.9	3.5	4.5	5.6	6.7	7.8	8.8
The Region of Skopje													
Total	545228	578144	590222	598555	604489	605200	601731	594852	585461	574086	560986	546374	530507
60+	12.0	14.7	15.8	17.7	20.1	21.9	23.5	25.2	27.1	29.2	31.1	32.6	33.7
60-69	7.7	8.8	8.9	9.9	11.3	11.6	11.4	11.9	12.9	13.8	14.2	14.0	13.6
70-79	3.3	4.7	5.4	6.0	6.3	7.4	8.7	9.0	9.0	9.7	10.6	11.6	12.1
80+	1.1	1.2	1.5	1.9	2.5	3.0	3.4	4.3	5.2	5.8	6.3	7.0	8.0

Source: State Statistical Office in the Republic of Macedonia, Censuses of Population, Households, Dwellings in 1921,1931. 1948, 1953 1961, 1971,1981 1994 2002 and Population projections 2007-2055.

The distribution of the total population aged 60 or over, less or more corresponds to the spatial distribution of the total population in all of the regions with exception of the Pelagonia and Polog region (Figure 3). As for example, in 2002 the share of the Pelagonia region in the total population in the country amounts 11.8% and in the total population of aged 60 or more 15.8%, and for the Polog region these indicators respectively amounts 15.0% and 11.3%.²



The data of the population estimations and population projections confirm that the trend of growth of the older population (aged 60 or over) kept and in the period 2002-2010. Its growth remained the largest in the Skopje region, and from the other regions with relatively high growth (more than 10%) separates the Vardar, Eastern, South-Eastern, Polog and North-Eastern region. These changes implicate intensification of the process of demographic aging in most of the country. Thereat, in the structure of the total population the share of the population aged 60 or more increased in all of the regions without exception. In relation of the spatial distribution of the older population with largest share, separates the Skopje region (28.0% in 2002 and 30.9% in 2010), the Pelagonia region (15.8% and 14.0%) and the Polog region (11.3% and 11.1%). It means that in these three regions is concentrated more than half of the total older population in the country.

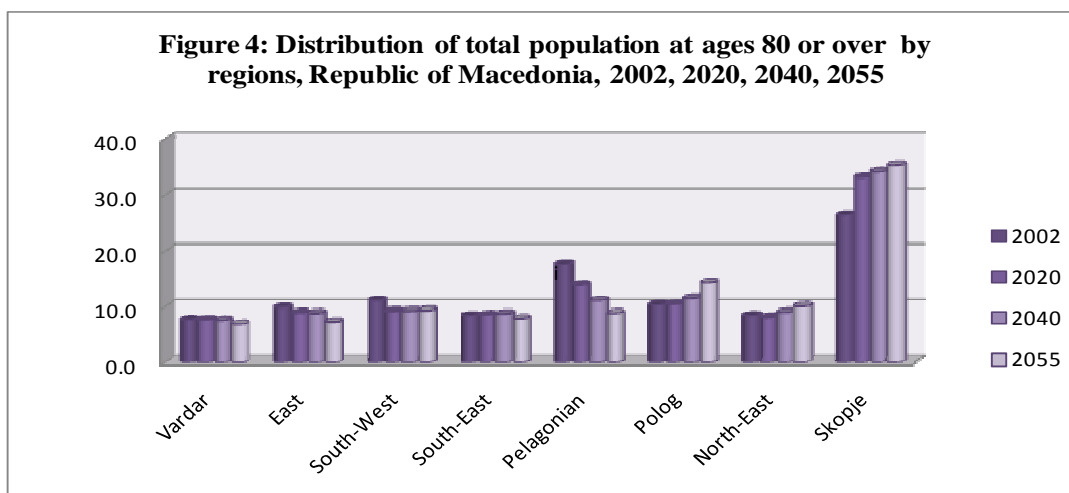
In relation to the demographic profile of the population aged 60 or over, the available data show that significant changes happened for the three age groups (60-69; 70-79;80+) in all of the regions. Yet, they are particularly emphasized for the old age contingent (aged 80 or over). In the period 1994-2002 the number of aged 80 or over increased in all of the regions except South-Western, Pelagonia and Polog region while the growth is largest in Skopje region (22.3%). From 2002 until 2010 this contingent marks significantly large growth in all of the regions. It is especially emphasized in Skopje region (59.0%), South-Eastern (49.6%) and the Polog region (45.2%) and in the others is in the interval from 26.0% to 37.7%. Because of that, the share of the population aged 80 or over in the total population in the period after 2002 significantly increased in all of the regions.

The spatial distribution of the total population aged 80 or over is very none uniformly (Figure 4). Namely, in 2002 and 2010 less than half of this population lives in two regions: Skopje (26.4%, that is, 29.3%) and the Polog region (17.6%, that is 17.0%).

The projections of the population confirm that during the next four and half decades will continue the growth of the older population (aged 60 or over) and the old age contingent (aged 80 or over),

² Those are the two regions that are characterized with extreme differences in relation to the population development and intensity of demographic aging. The Polog region had the largest growth of the population and the Pelagonia is the only region that faced decrease of the population.

but it will develop with different dynamics. For the older population it will be largest until 2020 and in the next decades gradually will decrease almost in all of the regions. During the entire period the growth of the older population will be largest in the Polog region and smallest in the Pelagonia region. Consequently, the share of the population of aged 60 or over in the total population until 2055 will increase twice in all of the regions except in the Polog and Pelagonia regions, where it will increase three times, that is, for less than twice (Table 2).



The spatial distribution of the older population will remain unequal also in the next decades. With largest share again will separate the Skopje, Pelagonia and Polog region. The participation of Polog region will increase, and will decrease the participation of Pelagonia region (Graph 3). In these three regions will live more than 55% of the total population of the country of aged 60 or over.

As for the old age contingent (aged 80 or over) more intensive changes are expected. Pursuant the data from the population projections, the growth of the number of persons aged 80 or over will be significantly larger during the next three decades and then will decrease. Thereat, it will be largest in the Polog, North-Eastern and Skopje region. In the structure of the total population, the participation of the population aged 80 or over until 2055 will increase five times in the Polog and North-Eastern region, for four times in the Skopje, South-Eastern, Eastern and Vardar regions, for three times in the South-Western, and for about twice in the Pelagonia region.

In 2020 in the Republic of Macedonia is expected the population aged 80 or over to be more than 54 thousand. From that, one third (33.0%) will live in the Skopje region, about one fourth in the Pelagonia (13.9%) and in the Polog region (10.4%). According the middle scenario of the population projections in 2055 this number will reach more than 120 thousand and 35% will live in Skopje region, less then one fourth in the Pelagonia (8.9%) and Polog region (14.3%). In the other regions of the country the changes of the mentioned indicators will be relatively smaller.

3. Social protection of the old population in the Republic of Macedonia

3.1. Current features of social protection for older persons

The basic principles for decent life of the citizens, including older person, and the principles of social state in the Republic of Macedonia are guaranteed with the constitution from September 8 1991. According to the constitutional regulations, the state is the basic bearer of the social protection of its own citizens. Main additional laws accompanying this regulation, which are

important for the social protection of the older population, are: “The Law of social protection” 1997 and “The Family Law” 1992. After their agreement, these laws have suffered various changes and additions in the direction of providing more complex and more comprehensive social protection for the citizens of all age groups. In these laws the main regulations and recommendations of the international legislation and relevant documents are implemented.³

The protection of older person in Republic of Macedonia is framed by the Law of social protection. It is organized with institutional and non-institutional form of protection, as well as with possibility for ensuring financial compensation (financial help for persons who are unable to work and are socially unsecured; financial compensation for help and care; single financial compensation and compensation in goods). Besides that, older person are in titled to health protection.

Institutional protection is performed by accommodating older persons, who don't have suitable conditions for life with their families, in the institutions for social protection. These institutions are called Homes for elderly people in which can be accommodated person with disabilities in the physical or intellectual development, person who can't take care for themselves, and due to family situation are not able to provide care for themselves. Today, in the Republic of Macedonia there are 4 state and some private homes for elderly people. These homes need to ensure accommodation, food, help and care, health care, working activities and recreation, social work and other services, depending on the specific need of the residents. The homes for elderly people can be also organized in non-institutional forms of protection, like day care for retired and older person

The Non-institutional care for older person in Republic of Macedonia ensures:

- The right of home care and help for older and overwrought people, as well as for people with physical disability, to comply their every day needs.
- The right to day care of older and overwrought people, giving the services like food, day care, cultural and working activities, taking care of the hygiene;
- The rights of accommodation in foster families for older person with physical and intellectual disability who are not able to take care of themselves, and due to family situation are not in a position to provide care for their own needs.

These forms of non-institutional care of older people can be organized also in day care centers and clubs for older people. The law gives the opportunity for establishment of service providers who can also give the service needed in the comfort of their own home. With the process of decentralization in Republic of Macedonia, there was created a possibility that other institutions like NGO's, the units of local government take place as organizers of social care, besides the Ministry of Labor and Social Care.

The forms of non-institutional protection of older person in our country have not been used very frequently. Namely, in the last decade in Republic of Macedonia there was only one club for day care of older person. Today there is couple of day care centers only for Roma people aged 60 or over, that are being financed by IOM and operate in the frames of the RHAP (Roma Health Assistance Program).⁴

³ International legislation for protection of older person is based on the basic principles of the UN for basic human rights, Resolution 46/91 established on December 16 1991, than the Madrid International plan of action on Ageing – 2002, as well as the last UNECE conference on ageing held in Lion November 6-8 2007. The regulations and the recommendations of these documents concern the improvement of life in old days and facing the basic human dignity in the final phases of human life. In that sense, every country should guard towards creating better conditions for realization of basic human rights, as well as rights to decent life in older days.

⁴ The users of these service are persons born before May 8 1945.

As far as the service utilities in the home are concerned, just until recently they existed just like pilot projects. As a successful example we can choose: “Alternative ways of social protection for older person and adult handicapped people” (a project of the Center for social protection in Gevgelija, realizes in 2003 and 2004, financed by PHARE), “HOPE –Mobile home care” a project of the home for elderly people in Prilep in cooperation with the Red Cross, 2003-2004, financed by PHARE). These projects were quit because of lack of financial means.

The official reports of the institutions in charge in this area point the undisputed need for greater presence of service utilities in the homes for elderly people. As main obstacles, for their greater presence, are identified the lack of financial means and the process of decentralization, that isn't still in a phase in which local government provides it with individual planning, organizing and financing of projects for service utilities which will comply to the needs of the citizens.

Based on the actual Law of social protection, in Republic of Macedonia in 2005, the Book of statutes for regulation of the normatives and standards for founding institutions for social care of elderly person was submitted. It determinates the standards concerning the space, the personnel, equipment, all the necessary components for their work.

Today, Republic of Macedonia insists on improving the quality of life of older persons, to secure them with decent life, better conditions for life in their own environment. For that purpose, according to the present legal system and the international recommendations, Macedonia as a candidate for membership in the EU plans on bringing strategic documents for protection of older person.

3.2. Challenges of the social protection of the old population in next decades

The data from the population projections in the Republic of Macedonia undoubtedly confirm that on short terms and mid terms significantly will increase the number of persons aged 60 or over, especially the old age contingent (aged 80 or over). It implicates serious challenges for the social care of the older persons during the next decades, especially in certain regions of the country. They will be very emphasized on short terms and mid terms and will manifest in many domains- capacities for institutional care for the old persons, the implementation of the norms and standards for work of the institutions for social care of old persons, skills and competencies of the personnel that work in this area, participation of the forms of non-institutional care, scientific research of the socio-economic aspects significant for the older population.

Pursuant the analysis of the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy the total capacities for institutional care of the old persons in the Republic of Macedonia in 2009 present 567 beds. In relation to the total number of older persons, it means that in them can be cared only 0.3% of the older persons aged 65 or over. Presupposing there is same number of beds in the private homes, the closure of older persons in these institutions remains very small. According the European standards with the institutional capacities of one country should be covered 3-5% of the older population. Therefore, one of the main challenges of the future policy for the older persons should be increase of the capacities for their institutional care. In that sense, the capacities should be increased in the existing homes for older persons and to construct new national capacities, as well as, to stimulate the private sector for opening of new private homes licensed by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy.

In 2009 more than 40% of the persons settled in the homes for elder persons were social cases and did not pay any compensation for the services. With respect of the unfavorable conditions on the labor market (long term unemployment, as well as, the growing number of unemployed persons older than 50) and the low wages of large part of the employed, it can be expected during the next

decades significant part of the elder population to be with minimum pensions or without any incomes. For them the state will have to secure free of charge settlement or suitable financial compensation. In relation of the expanding of the capacities should be taken to consideration the spatial distribution of the elder population, especially the old age contingent, that is, their huge concentration in the Skopje, Pelagonia and Polog region.

The existing conditions for settlement of the elder persons in the disposed national capacities in large part decline from the existing norms and standards. For that purpose during the preparation of the strategic documents for the elder population should be determined also the action plans for complete implementation of the Rulebook of norms and standards for founding and start of work of the institutions for social protection of elder persons. During its adoption was envisaged to be rounded up until 2015.

Special challenge for the social care of the elder persons in the Republic of Macedonia is the personnel that work in this area. Significant part of the engaged skilled personnel in the institutions are not complying with the norms. So, most of the homes for elder persons did not employ social workers or other skilled persons (sociologists, psychologists and others), and the employed nurses and medical sisters can not be named geronto-housekeepers because they do not have suitable education. Beside that, need is evident for continuous training for technical personnel, social workers or other skilled persons for upgrading of the communication among the employees and receivers of the services.

The growing number of elder persons in the Republic of Macedonia implicates large participation of different forms of non-institutional protection. For that purpose it is necessary to develop strategy for affirmation of this form of social care of the elder persons, especially through the units of the local self-government. Thereat, special attention should be paid to the development of the services, opening of more daily centers and clubs for the elder persons, as well as, affirmation of the caring family (form that today is used very little).

In the strategic documents for the elder persons it is necessary to undertake initiatives for improvement of the life in the old age through stimulation of cooperation among the institutions that settle elder persons, the private sector, NGOs and the units of the local self-government. At the same time, the different forms of public-private partnerships in large extent can assist for upgrading of the social care for the elder persons in the future.

Simultaneously with the large growth of the number of elder persons, specially of those aged 80 or over, more implied becomes the need for profound studies for the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of these segments of the population, thereat, all relevant socio-economic aspects significant for the quality of the life of the elder population, as well as, the possibilities for continuance of the professional engagement and/or practice of certain professional activities. These researches should refer as to the country as a whole, also on the level of regions and municipalities. In such manner can be identified the specific needs of the elder persons in certain areas.

Conclusion

The analyses of the demographic profile of the older population in the Republic of Macedonia is showing that significant changes have happened in the last decade which will continue with different dynamics in next 45 years. In the period 1921-2002 the number of persons aged 60 or over increased three times. After 2002 the process of aging of older population was intensified and until 2010 the population over 60 years increases for 13.4%. According to the middle scenario of

population projections, it is expected this segment of the population to increase for almost a quarter (24.3%) in the period 2010-2020. Its growth after 2020 will continually decrease.

The distribution of the population aged 60 or over according the three basic age groups (60-69; 70-79; 80+), shows that in the observed period significantly different are the changes of old age contingent (population over 80 years). In the period 1921-2002 it was almost doubled. After 2002 it increases with great intensity, and it is expected that until 2020 it will be doubled. It means great changes for less than two decades. After 2020 the growth of old age contingent will continue with slower dynamics. In 2055 Republic of Macedonia will have more than 120 thousand persons aged 80 or more, and their share in the total population will reach 7.7%.

As for the regional differences of the growth of population over 60 years one could conclude that the changes will be particularly emphasized in tri regions - Skopje, Pelagonian and Polog. Observed trough spatial distribution they show that in these three regions is concentrated more than half of the total older population in the country. Their share in the total population aged 60 or over will continuously increases in the Skopje region (28.0% in 2002 it will reach 31.0% in 2020 and 31.4% in 2055). In the same time it will decreases in the Pelagonia region (15.8%; 12.8% and 10.2%) and increases in the Polog region (11.3%; 11.7%; 16.1%). In other regions of the country the changes of the mentioned indicators will be relatively smaller. The changes in the spatial distribution of the total population aged 80 or over are even more emphasized.

Current and expected demographic profile of the older population implicates serious challenges for the social care of the older persons particularly in certain regions of the country. They are manifest in many domains. With the capacities for institutional care of the old persons in the Republic of Macedonia can be cared only 0.3% of the older persons aged 65 or over, which is significantly lower than the European standards. So, one of the main challenges of the future policy for the older persons should be increase of the capacities for institutional care by enlarging the capacities in the existing homes for older persons, construction of new national capacities and stimulation the private sector for opening of new private homes. In relation of the expanding of the capacities should be taken to consideration the spatial distribution of the elder population, especially the old age contingent, that is, their huge concentration in the Skopje, Pelagonia and Polog region.

The existing conditions for settlement of the elder persons in the disposed national capacities in large part decline from the existing norms and standards. Because of that another important challenge is as soon as possible to complete the implementation of the Rulebook of norms and standards for the work of the institutions for social protection of elder persons.

Special challenge for the social care of the elder persons in the Republic of Macedonia is the personnel that work in this area. Today there is lack of the employed social workers or other skilled persons, as well as geronto-housekeepers with suitable education, in most of the homes for elder persons. Also, evident is the need continuous training for technical personnel, social workers or other skilled persons for upgrading of the communication among the employees and receivers.

In the Republic of Macedonia different forms of non-institutional protection of older population are used very little. Thereat, special attention should be paid to the development of the services, opening of more daily centers and clubs for the elder persons, as well as, affirmation of the caring family. Other, no less important challenges are the improvement of cooperation among the institutions that settle elder persons, the private sector, NGOs and the units of the local self-government and profound studies for all aspects relevant for the improvement of the quality of life of the older population, particularly on a regional level.

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