

# Factors That Influence Aging In Romania

Loredana Monica Anton  
Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies  
[loredanamon1987@yahoo.ro](mailto:loredanamon1987@yahoo.ro)  
Gabriela Iuliana Munteanu  
Andrei Saguna University  
[gabrielamunteanu@andreisaguna.ro](mailto:gabrielamunteanu@andreisaguna.ro)

## Abstract

*The concern about aging in Romania is generated by recording its aging trend, reflected by the continuous increase in numbers compared to other segments of the population and the impact this has on their vulnerable category. The last few decades are marked by a continuous and significant population decline due alarming deterioration of population dynamics of three components: births, deaths and migration. The current demographic picture of the country reveals that the number of pensioners tends to exceed half of the population, the number of adults and children decreased statistically and significantly narrows its pyramid base. These are essential elements that require effective social policies including demographic ones.*

**Key words:** population, natality, mortality, external migration

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## 1. Introduction

By particularly complex impact, population issue is an important topic, both for statistics and for various institutions, because today, more than population trends, through factors and impact, represents a major national risk.

Population aging is a global phenomenon. European Commission Projections and other specialized organizations report a low fertility rate, with alarmingly decreasing trend, especially in Eastern Europe, as a result of economic and political change. Romania is no exception to this decline, the last few decades marked by a continuous and significant population decline caused by the alarming deterioration of the three components of population dynamics: birth rate, mortality and external migration.

Factors such as increasing life expectancy, decreasing long-term birth and significant external migration prompted changes in the mean age of the population and led to the emergence of new complex issues that must be addressed in a broader context, such as an aging population and development of medical services for the very old, a new approach to the social security system, employment and better jobs for parents, solutions to encourage temporary migration and not the final, are just some of the measures authorities can take to adapt and overcome the state of risk (Cruceru *et al.*, 2013).

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## 2. Factors influencing the number and structure of population

Currently the factors influencing changes in the number and population structure are separated by the type of manifestation in two categories: factors that act globally, especially in all EU

countries and factors specific to certain countries, in this case, specifically Romania. Both cover the same structural components of factors: birth rate, mortality and migration.

Regarding the first category of factors which are relevant nationally we remember the conclusion of various studies, and even specific reports of the European Commission, FNNAP, etc., which states: "*The EU no longer has a demographic motor*", one survey is showing us that the difference between the number of wanted children and that existing in reality fell from 3.3 to 1.5. The main directions that need to be addressed with priority are: returning to demographic growth, through the firm implementation of the Lisbon agenda (modernization and older works), innovative measures to stimulate the birth rate increase and corresponding benefits of immigration; ensuring a fair balance between generations through involvement in social life of the society members throughout life and the distribution of benefits and financing needs arising from pension and health expenditures; also finding new bridges between the various stages of life, given that an increasing number of "*young retirees*" want to participate in social and economic life, while young people want to spend more time with their children. On the other hand, training requires a longer period of study, and these changes affect the boundaries and links between work and inactivity (Cruceru *et al.*, 2013).

Regarding specificity factors acting in Romania, we refer briefly to the changing age structure and the causes of aging.

### ***Changing in age structure***

Analyzing towards the phenomenon, including the official statistical data, there is, unequivocally, that the age structure of the population of Romania reflects a process acutely, by continuously aging population, mainly driven by declining birth rates, which has reduced absolutely and relatively the young population (0-14 years), and the increase of the elderly population of 65 years and over. Furthermore, we identify not only the decrease in the number of population, which is worrying, but also, especially, the fact that the development is associated with the continuous decline of the age structure, the following is a brief explanation:

- data clearly demonstrates the continued and significant reduction of the young population (22.7%, 15.2% and so on), growth as continuous of the elderly population (65 years and over: 11% (1992) 14.9% (2008), etc. (I.N.S., 2015, p.205).
- in a structural approach, the elderly should not be regarded as a homogenous entity. It includes the subgroup of elderly "*younger*" (65-77 years) and elderly subgroup "*older*" (75 and over). The trend in the comparative evolution of the two subgroups mentioned reflect numeric that the first is faster to second. Substantial increase in the elderly population, 60% is group 65-77 years and "*long-lived*" 80 years and over, representing over 3% of the population (Popa, 2012, p.2);
- the aging population differs by gender, while in rural areas is more pronounced than in the urban;
- aging pyramid, allowing radiography at different times, of the 18 five-year age classes of the population, highlights the warning signs of demographic trends, including the aging process - thickening the tip and narrowing the pyramid base (www.insse.ro).

The index of demographic aging and age-dependency ratio were and are strongly and directly influenced, primarily, by the decrease in the number of children and the increasing elderly population: aging index has increased from about 48 elderly people per 100 young people from nearly 98 today; dropping demographic dependency ratio over the same period from about 51 to about 42 (www.recensamantromania.ro). Moreover, like most European countries, Romania is facing economic and social consequences, aggravated by the slow but continuous, demographic aging, which in less than two decades, to the extent that under present conditions, will lead every 5th inhabitant of Romania into the category of the elderly.

### **3. The causes of aging population in Romania**

Demographic aging is a complex statistical phenomenon which consists of changing the population structure on large age groups, on account of the young population reduction. The increase in the absolute number of elderly people, however large it may be, it is a component,

accompanied also by similar increases among the young and adult, and so, it may not affect changing in the age structure, and therefore should not be considered as approved an aging process. Ageing is not a disease - a truth universally acknowledged, is a biological process, which individually is irreversible, but in society we can talk about a process that can be slowed down, never stopped by transparent policies and specific measures based on statistical data.

Lately, the birth rate recorded a very slight improvement compared with mortality and migration, and the current economic and social realities demonstrate that they have contributed to the downturn in birthrate by: lower living standards, unemployment, uncertainty of employment, stress, changes in attitudes and behavior on marriage, cohabitation, divorce, children out of wedlock, children increase at girls under 15 years old (www.insse.ro).

Damaging age structure, in the detriment of young people, with impact on reducing fertility helps to reduce the birth rate and raises the issue of the demographic future of the country. The quality and the cost of health care (prenatal and postnatal), access to health services, growing conditions and education of children are other factors that influence the evolution of decreasing birth rates.

It is known that when the standard of living, quality of care and access to health services know sensitive improvements, reducing mortality by age, increased life expectancy also have different developments. The evolution of the average lifespan is conditional upon a number of factors, of particular importance to the life, health, nutrition, sanitation and education levels, but also the economic and social conditions from the society (Phillipe, et. al., 2009, p.37).

Also, programs for raising awareness for practicing healthy lives - with affordable access to information on ensuring good nutrition, should contribute to increasing life expectancy, the largest contribution to the increase in life expectancy at birth with a reduction in mortality at younger ages.

External migration (the concept of international mobility is a third factor contributing to the changing age structure of the population of Romania, even the aging population phenomenon. At first glance it is normal to one point, to consider that international mobility predominantly depends on the economic and social force of the "attraction - rejection" mechanism of the ratio donor – "recipient" of the population.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Romania's population presents an alarming trend of aging – the third age population, continuously increasing numerically is a vulnerable, with an impact to other segments of the population. Lonely elderly people are most dependent on public aid, the family's role should not be overlooked - and again the desire to live separately, the marked reduction of elderly care potential.

Some "argue" that the rate of decrease dependency among children, caused by the alarming decline in fertility will free resources to cover the needs of the population aging. Mechanical reallocation of sources from children to the elderly is not a solution, the active solution in the short term is the development and especially the implementation of rigorous tests that include components of financial, health and social assistance, education, employment, cultural life after retirement, etc., and do not forget that Nicolae Iorga said: "the happiest people are those who were able to retain as much of their elders", thus emphasizing the importance of the elderly in the solidity of a nation.

The demographic aging that Romania, and not only, faces, is an objective phenomenon, held independent of one's will. . If this process cannot be stopped but it is not mitigated by circumstances, requires active measures, timely, economic, social, health, educational, including legislative.

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