

Kyra Tomay: Demographic challenges of the European and Hungarian urban areas

Whereas in a global context large-scale population growth is one of the main demographic challenges of the 21th century in Europe and in the post-industrialised societies in general, ageing and increase of dependency ratio are the most important challenges. As part of the Second Demographic Transition (SDT, Van de Kaa, 2002) started in the 1960s, total fertility rate has remained under the mortality ratio, hereby falls under replacement rate. If this demographic deficit is not balanced by international immigration, the natural decrease results in total population shrinkage. Behind this general picture, there are significant territorial differences: the various positions within the settlement network can be characterised by different demographic processes. Metropolises and metropolitan regions often experience opposite or at least different demographic phenomena from those of rural regions. While European metropolises are still the dynamic centres of socio-economic growth, attract young, highly skilled and professional workers; rural regions, old industrial urban areas and peripheries are usually the emitters of this migration. Thus not only the natural decrease, but out-migration also intensifies shrinking and ageing of the local population. Hence, it is not only the transition of the social and demographic composition of the population, but also a territorial realignment both at the European and at the metropolitan levels. These demographic processes occur not only in the Western, but also in the Central and Eastern European regions, in Hungary too. We have to face the same demographic challenges at the beginning of the 21st century as the Western countries, while international immigration is lagging behind. The unfavourable demographic phenomena can lead to serious socio-economic problems and significant political conflicts.

Keywords: second demographic transition, ageing, migration, Hungarian and European cities

Whereas in a global context large-scale population growth is one of the main demographic challenges of the 21st century in Europe and in the post-industrialised societies in general, ageing and increase of dependency ratio are the most important challenges. From the '60s and '70s the fertility rate has been decreasing or stagnating in all the European countries that led to the fact that it has remained under the mortality ratio, hereby fell under replacement rate. If this demographic deficit is not balanced by international immigration, the natural decrease results in total population shrinkage. As a consequence the population in some countries has already started to decline (in Austria, Denmark, and Germany and in Hungary where it started in 1985). However, in several European countries the international migration that began in the 70s compensates this natural decrease of population. Even in the decade of 1990 when the immigration was restricted by the introduction of austerity measures in most of the Western European countries low, but positive net migration gains were typical.

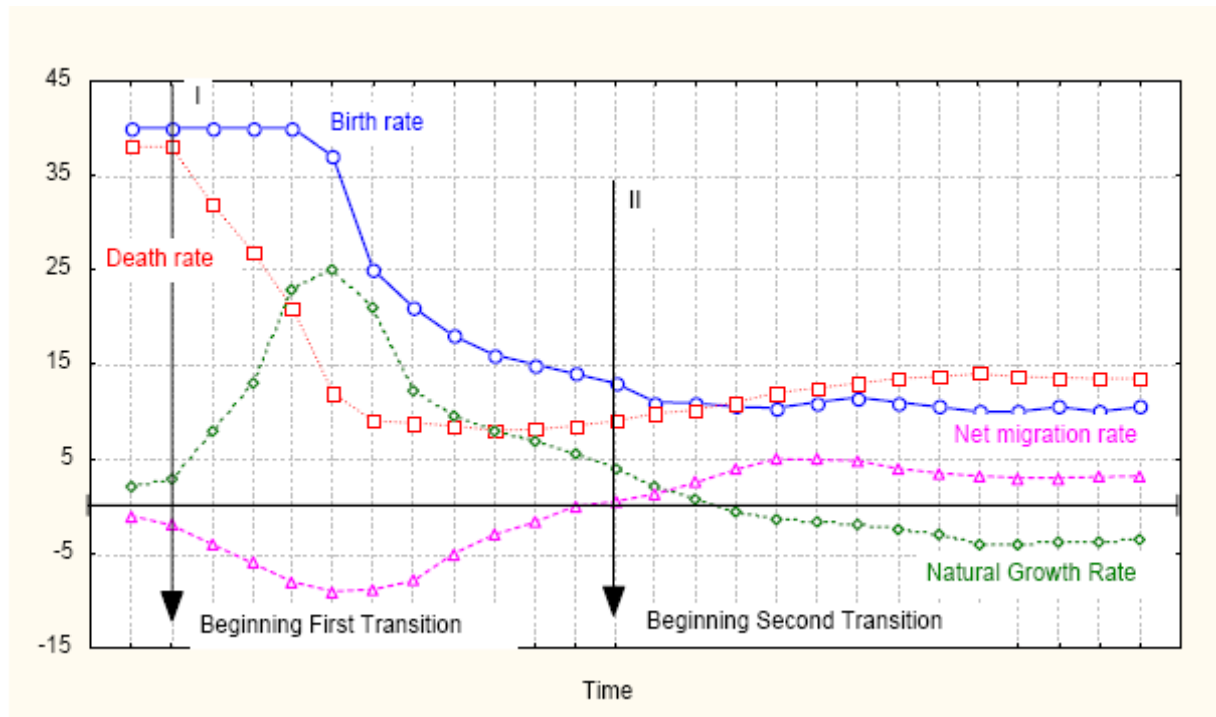
As a result of the low fertility and mortality, ageing and low scale immigration – according to the prognoses of the UN – between 1985 and 2025 the European population grows from 492 million to “only” 524 million, while the global population almost doubles (from 4.5 billion to 8.2 billion), hereby the relative demographic weight of Europe throughout the 21st century will be significantly reducing.

Second demographic transition

The theory of the second demographic transition was introduced in 1986 (Van de Kaa, 2002.) based on the examination of the demographic processes in the developed industrialised countries – according to the justification of the experts – the demographic processes of the Western countries had significantly differed in quality from the one described by the (first) demographic transition. The

main characteristic of the second demographic transition is the constant decrease of the fertility – falling even under the replacement rate – that leads to demographic off-balance. The effect of the two other parameters describing the number of the population – the mortality ratio and the migration – stayed relatively insignificant although the demographic deficit can be compensated by the international immigration.

Figure 1. Scheme of the first and second demographic transition



source: Van de Kaa (1999)

On the image above (Fig. 1) we can see the model of the first and second demographic transition completed with the international immigration balance. Although the model is partly a forecast of the recent trends, it is expected that the fertility will durably stay under the mortality ratio because less women give birth. This situation changes radically the age-structure and leads to the ageing of the population. According to the prognoses every fifth European citizen will be 65 year old or older (pensioner) in 2025 and will be dependent on a declining active population. The international immigration can compensate it, if mainly active aged (15-64) immigrants arrive.

Analysing the causes of the second demographic transition, above all the change in the values and family-structure patterns are highlighted by the researchers. While in the background of the first demographic transition the “bourgeois” family model stood, the second demographic transition is characterised by “individual” family models. In the developed (primarily in European) countries the weakening of the family as an institution can be recognised by the delay or default of marriage or child-bearing. Living together without getting married – that lasts then shorter – is getting also more accepted and common, and the number of divorces increases too. The change of the family model and the family as an institution goes hand in hand with the transformation of the values. The change of the social norms strongly influences the development of the fertility: in the ‘60s, ‘70s the Western societies moved towards post-material values in parallel with getting more open for the pluralisation of the alternative lifestyles, household structures and family models. Among the factors influencing the process, the emancipation of women, their increasingly higher share in employment and the extension of their years spent in higher education (just as the young adulthood) are to be mentioned. (Van de Kaa, 1999., 2002., Champion 1992.)

The mentioned processes affect not just Western Europe but the Central Eastern European area has to face the same demographic and internal migration processes, challenges also (permanently low birth rate, ageing, growing elder age and dependent proportion) around the turn of millennium and in the forthcoming decades as their Western partners, while the international immigration lags significantly behind the Western one, more over, one part of the employees with an active age is wandering rather towards Western Europe from the Central Eastern European countries.

Demographic challenges in the European metropolises

While the general European demographic trend could be characterised with the stagnation or decrease of the population and above all with ageing, we may not forget that this general picture hides considerable regional differences behind itself: the cities, urban regions and the provincial and rural areas may be the sites of often just contrary or at least significantly different demographic processes. While the European metropolises are the dynamic centres of the socio-economic increase, attracting young, highly educated and active population; the provincial areas, the former industrial towns and peripheries are the emitters of this migration, hereby here it is not just the natural decrease but the migration also accelerates the decrease and ageing of population. Thus it is not just the composition of the population gets transformed due to the ageing and concerning the household structures, but a realignment in space can be also observed, first of all as a result of the immigration considering the whole European space likewise than considering the mobility samples of the certain cities and their surrounding.

The second demographic transition and the change of values and lifestyle standing behind them – like most of the new social phenomena – appear firstly in the cities, mainly in metropolises. In significant French cities it has appeared from the middle of the '70s that the transformation of the household structures, of their number and the effects resulted from the demographic change in the social- structure realignment in the inner metropolitan areas could be observed (*Odgen, Ray, 2000*). While the population of the cities decreased, there was an important increase of the small and one-person households (mainly the elderly people living alone, but also the youngsters living alone or in pairs – not yet in families – as a result of stretched young adulthood multiplied the number of households). As a consequence housing demands transformed, and the housing market got rearranged. The increasing number of small households and the gentrification (i.e. the revival and reappraisal of the inner districts) are processes going hand in hand, which rearranged the society structure of the cities fundamentally. While the small and one-person households are concentrated characteristically in the inner neighbourhoods, the families prefer still the suburbs as a residence. Examining the society structure of the French cities, by the '90s the elevation of the status of downtowns becomes evident: the single, professional or intellectual, typically white and originally French people are over- represented in the inner historical centres of the cities.

According to the second Urban Audit, a survey expanded on 258 cities of the 27 EU member states, ordered by the European Commission, conducted by Eurostat and the national statistical offices; between 1996 and 2001 the population in one third of the examined cities increased (typically in the Spanish, Greek, Finn and Irish cities), in one third stagnated and in one third reduced (here belongs the most part of the East-Central-European cities). Considering the realignment in the urban regions practically in all cities decreased the population in the city centres while in the suburbs it raised. Although in general in the cities characterised with dynamic economic development the population is typically growing too (see the Finnish economic centres), in Eastern-Europe in such cities the population decreased between 1996 and 2001 as the joint result of the ageing, natural decrease and the suburbanisation.

The development of the urban population and its composition is influenced primarily by the immigration: the attractiveness of the metropolises is more significant, while smaller towns attract inhabitants typically from the surrounding countries. The international immigration coming from outside of Europe gets concentrated in some (Spanish, Italian and Dutch) big cities while in the German, Irish and British cities the immigration coming from other European countries is more relevant. (*State of European Cities Report, 2007.*)

The second demographic transition has considerable consequences on the space usage and above all on the housing market demands also: the increase of the smaller households and the spread of non-family characterised (typically concerning young persons living together or undergraduates) households generate new claims in connection with the urban space and housing structure also.

As a result of the immigration from outside Europe and the growing population of southern cities caused by a dynamic increase of the natural fertility (mainly in Barcelona and Madrid) a serious housing shortage developed in the 2000s, and the real-estate prices increased significantly due to the demographic trends. (*State of European Cities Report, 2007.*)

However, the second demographic transition does not only affect Western Europe but also the Central and Eastern European cities. According to the East-German experience, but also to Polish and Czech data analysis (*Steinführer, A. and Haase, A., 2007*) the primary cause of the experienced population decline (shrinkage) in the Eastern-European cities is the transformation of the marital status and life cycle, the decrease of the number and stability of households and the gaining ground of post-material and individual values standing in the background of these.

As a consequence of all these partially independent and sometimes contradictory processes the quantitative and qualitative signs of the demographic changes appeared in the Eastern European cities are:

- Ageing;
- Extended youth-period and time spent in education;
- Transformation of the value;
- Starting a family, date of childbirth is postponed, reduced number of children;
- A decrease in the proportion of married people, high divorce and low re-marriage rates;
- As a result, despite the rapid urbanisation of the metropolitan areas (metropolitan region) the urban population in the '90s drastically decreased, especially because of the natural decrease (births decreased) and the massive migration as the consequence of the suburbanisation;
- Despite this, the number of households has increased (or at least in the case of the Czech Republic and Poland) (*Odgen and Hall, 2004*) while their size continues to decrease;
- The population decrease is not compensated by a small - although growing - international migration.

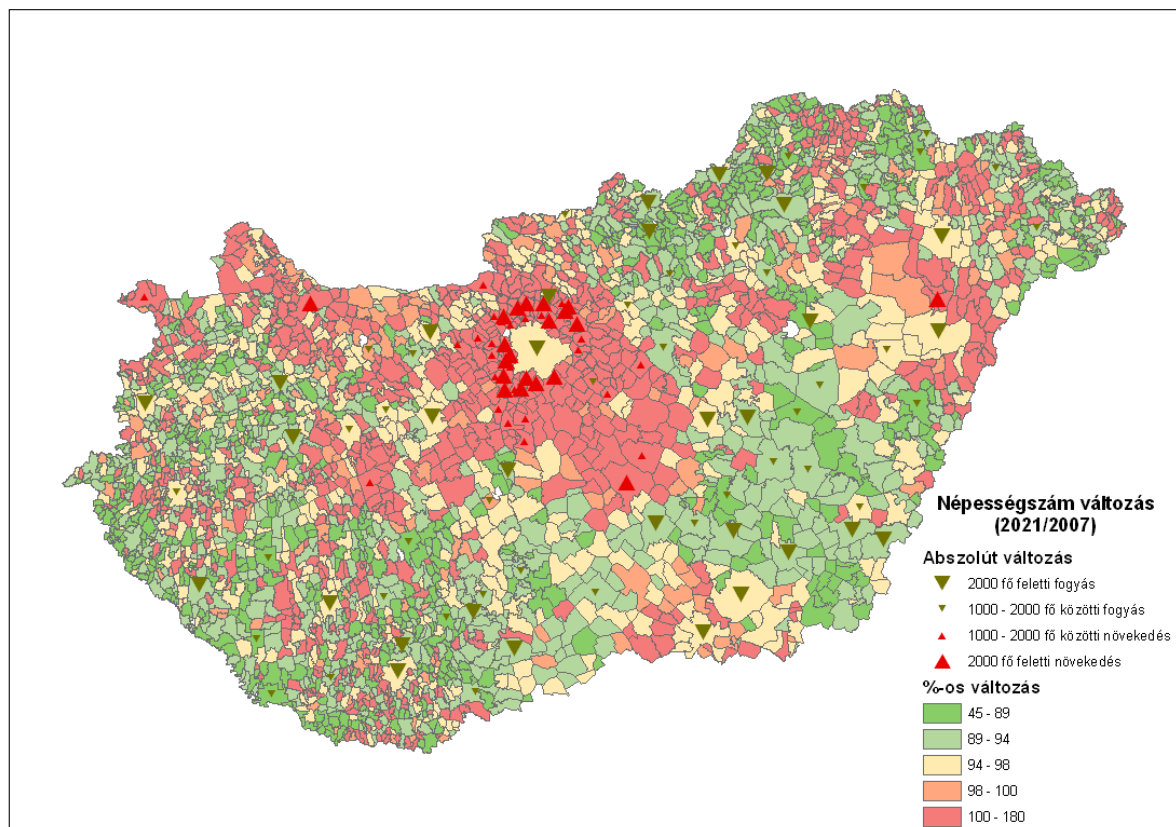
The demographic situation developed over decades in Hungary reflects in many respects the demographic phenomena observed in the developed European countries, however, some of its features are especially East-Central European or Hungarian. The unfavourable demographic conditions cause serious socio-economic problems, and may be a source of political tension.

Demographic trends and perspectives of the Hungarian cities

In Hungary population decline affected mainly the capital and the regional cities in the '90s. In 2001 the population of Budapest was only 88% of the 1990 data, while in the regional centres population decreased slightly to 97% from the data of 10 years earlier. In spite of this the population of the smaller towns of 1000-10.000 inhabitants – above all in the suburban rings of metropolises – even increased. After 2001 the population of the capital continued to decline, although its slowed down, while in the suburban areas around major cities (Budapest, Debrecen, Pécs, Szeged), at the Lake Balaton resort area, and especially on the prospering Győr-Budapest axis in several settlements a population increase could be observed. Between 2001 and 2007 the population continued to increase in the agglomeration around the capital as well as in the surrounding of the regional centres, in the settlements located on the Budapest-Győr, Budapest-Székesfehérvár-Keszthely axes while the population of the small villages and farmsteads decreased.

Based on the prognosis of the period 2007 to 2021 (*Hablicsek, 2007*) besides the further but less significant population decline in the capital the decrease of population may appear in the smaller settlements: between 2014 and 2021 the population of the settlements of less than 1000 inhabitants will decrease to 96-97%. At the same time, the general population decline will occur territorially differentiated, the Budapest metropolitan area will present a stagnant or a slightly rising number of inhabitants: in the suburban ring further population growth is expected (not only of migration but also as a result of the increasing natural fertility of young people who moved there earlier), while the centre will be characterised by further ageing and declining population. Moving away from the central region of the country on the inner and outer peripheries (Plain, North-Eastern and South-Western borderland) especially in small villages and farmsteads shrinkage can be expected between 2014 and 2021.

Figure 2. Population change between 2007-2021, forecast



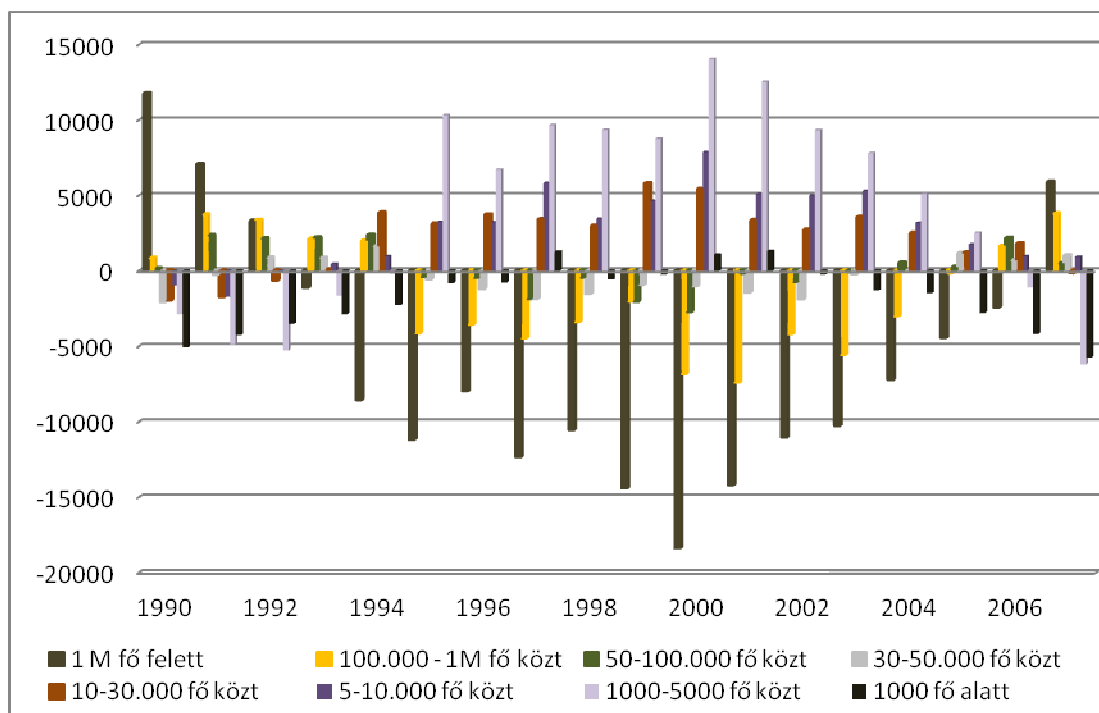
source: VÁTI, 2009.

One of the specialities of the Hungarian demographic situation is that the permanently high mortality joins low fertility rate even nowadays. A general European phenomenon is that women get birth to their first child in an elder age and an increasing proportion of children are born out of marriage. Further factors – similar to the developed Western countries –causing the decline in the birth rate are the decline in the proportion of married people, partly the decrease in the number of marriages (which decreased by 43% in the decade of 1990), the delay of getting married and of having children, partly the decline in the remarriage rates and paralleled to all that the increase in the proportion of union relations. In Hungary the time of the family starting and the age of the first child's birth have changed surprisingly fast: in 1990 the average age of women giving birth to their first child was 23 years, in 2006 it was 27 years.

The focus of international migration within the EU is primarily towards the developed areas while from Hungary also more and more people are moving to the EU's wealthier countries. The spatial arrangement of migrants to our country is quite unequal; most of them are concentrated in the capital: Budapest the metropolitan region. Between 2002 and 2007 the number of foreigners primarily increased the population of the capital and its surroundings but the regional cities get a stable, annually 3000 to 4000 gain as a result of the international migration.

Concerning the migration that remained within the borders of the country, the most important process of the 90s was the massive suburbanisation that affected primarily Budapest but on a smaller scale all the regional centres as well. The dynamic of this process in the 2000s gradually decreased so causing a loss of permanent migration to the capital and the cities. In 2005, because of the temporary migrations the balance of large cities got positive, but we still can not speak about reurbanisation (Fig. 3).

Figure 3. Internal migration, 1990-2006, by population size of the settlements

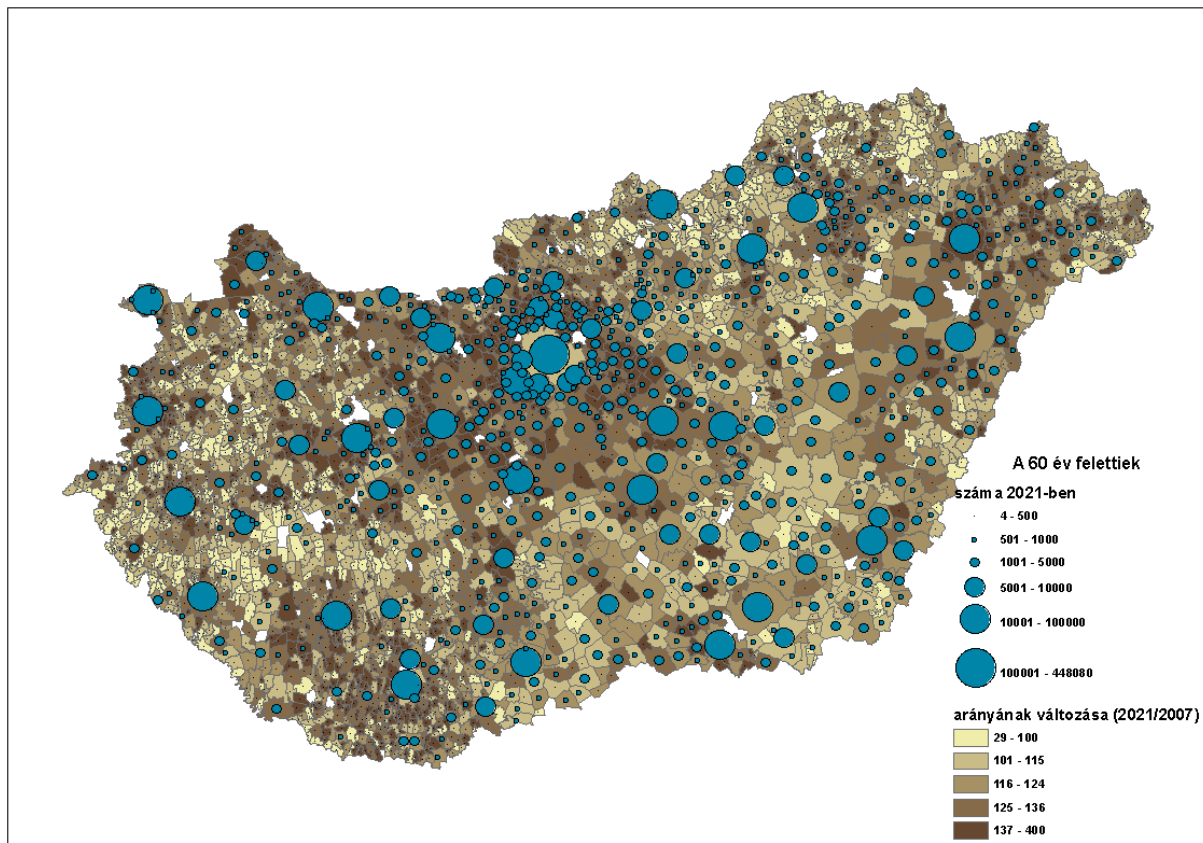


source: VÁTI, 2009.

Correspondingly to the developed societies – adjusting to the second demographic transition – the decrease in population of Hungary is connected to the ageing age structure. In Hungary, however it is caused by not only the low-fertility, but also by the high mortality rate; in which the unfavourable proportion in male mortality has a crucial role. The ageing of the population – its socio-economic impacts, as well as the ones on the health and pension system – are of the most serious demographic problems.

The proportion of elderly (over 60) was steadily rising since 1990, and further rise of this age group is expected in the next decade(s) as well. In 2014 24%, in 2021 more than ¼ of the population will belong to this age group of elderly above 60 years. The decline in the number of children first affects the cities, especially big ones, but based on the forecasts in 2021 it will be equally low everywhere without regard to the type or character of the settlement: 15% of child population ratio will be reported. The proportion of elderly will be still the highest in Budapest and the big cities, but there is an equalisation of all the three age groups along the settlement hierarchy. As a result of this the dependency rate is steadily deteriorating meaning that fewer and fewer active age people have to support more and more inactive people. While in 2001 and in 2007 1.7 active had to support one inactive, in 2014 this ratio will debase to 1.6 and in 2021 to 1.4.

Figure 4. Change in the proportion of elderly (above 60) 2007-2021, forecast



source: VÁTI, 2009.

The aging population anticipates an increase in the number of elderly, single households. As a consequence of the extension of the life expectancy the increase of the oldest old (over 75 years) will pose new challenges for health and social services, especially in the regional city centers and in the underdeveloped, small settlements of the peripheral areas.

Conclusion

The new demographic trends that started in the past 30-40 years will have significant influence not only on the cities, but on the whole settlement and urban-network. The large cities, metropolises are the main destination of migration, growing ethnic and lifestyle diversity and smaller households characterise them, while the rural and peripheral areas are often ageing, depleted, and as a consequence of this the spatial and social polarisation is increasing. The European territory and urban policy emphasises the need of coordination of sectoral and regional policies and the assurance of the equal opportunities regardless to the location and type of the settlement concerning the public services, education, health care, housing and employment. However, the demographic challenges go beyond this and raise also structural problems: What can be done against Europe's general population decline and ageing, and is there a special task to do concerning cities against the – partly negative – demographic processes, primarily the ageing and declining population of the city centres?

One plausible answer may be the international migration, in course of which typically a young, active population is willing to come to work in Europe, mostly in the cities; however it can pose new, not demographic but rather social challenges related to the integration. According to the calculations, even if a less severe than at present and more inclusive migration policy would be applied in Europe, the population decline could not be compensated but maximum mitigated by this immigration flow while increasing social tensions would appear (*ESPON, 1.1.4, 2005*).

Another opportunity can be the motivation of starting a family or child bearing. Based on the well-known relation, in proportion with the increase of the level of income, education and urbanisation the child bearing decreases and delays. Although recent results show that over a certain level of socio-economic development the fertility can rise again – as it has happened in Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany in the recent years – this shift can only partially improve the demographic results, the development of the highly developed countries can not be increased by as much more as their fertility is below the replacement rate. (*Tuljapurkar, 2009*).

The third option is the extension of retirement and active age, above all by reducing the mortality, particularly in the case of Hungary where it could be primarily provided by the assurance of more favourable environmental conditions and healthier lifestyle.

In order to keep the level of the European economic development and standard of living the immigration and the improvement of the economic productivity is needed aggregately besides a motivating and supporting of family- and child-bearing friendly socio-economic policy. In favour of a sustainable, balanced development it is not sufficient to keep the level of the quantitative parameters of the population or to prevent a drastic decline, but there is a need to reduce differences in income and living standards; to improve the opportunities for employment and education; to strengthen territorial cohesion on the macro- and meso-regional level as well as insight cities and urban regions.

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