Regional differences in the natural population growth movement of Montenegro since the beginning of the 21st century

In the past 50 years, the population of Montenegro has undergone all phases of natural population movement, which is characteristic of accelerated demographic transition. In the early 1960s, birth rates were high, but after the 1970s, they shifted to moderate levels. At the beginning of this century, birth rates in Montenegro were at the upper limit of low levels. In contrast, mortality rates increased due to the aging of the population, transitioning from low to moderate levels. The moderate increase in mortality rates is also a normal consequence of population aging. The beginning of the 21st century was marked by inherited declining fertility rates from the end of the 20th century, with a tendency to decrease birth rates throughout Montenegro, but with pronounced regional differences. Essentially, behind the regional differences lie predominantly unequal regional development, influenced by factors such as tradition and religion. This has led to migration flows towards the capital and the Southern region. With the departure of young people, these areas are left without a demographic base for population reproduction, while, at the same time, the population potential of immigration municipalities increases. As a result of these movements, almost all municipalities in the Northern region have experienced low and negative natural population growth rates in the last 20 years, as have municipalities in the Central region, except for Podgorica. The situation in municipalities in the Southern region is somewhat different. The natural population movement in Montenegro has entered a phase where there is a need to focus on biodynamic rejuvenation, i.e., increasing birth rates if we want to avoid a situation similar to that faced by many European countries and our immediate surroundings, where negative natural population growth rates result in population decline. Adding to this fact is the emigration of a certain portion of the population beyond the state borders. It is clear that measures must be taken to increase natural population renewal.

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