Country Report Bulgaria

by Anne Herm

February 2010
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Acknowledgements

A large part of this report is based on information collected in the framework of other research projects on data collection on international migration, notably the FP6 research project THESIM (Towards Harmonised European Statistics on International Migration), the Eurostat funded project MIMOSA (Migration Modelling for Statistical Analyses) and ILMAS (Implementation of the Legislation on Migration and Asylum Statistics), which was also
funded by Eurostat and whose main objective was to support Member States in implementing Regulation No 862/2007 on Community Statistics on Migration and International Protection.
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A. Key data sources and responsible institutions

According to the Law on Statistics the National Statistical Institute (NSI), the Bulgarian National Bank and other institutions providing statistics are the source of official statistics in the Republic of Bulgaria" (Law on Statistics as amended SG 98/14 Nov 2008, Art.3, para. 8). The other institutions providing statistics are state institutions or their structural units, which develop, produce and disseminate statistical information (Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008).

The main national institutions involved in data collection on foreigners and/or immigrants in Bulgaria are:

- National Statistical Institute of Bulgaria (NSI);
- Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works;
- Ministry of Interior.

In addition, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, the State Agency for the Foreigners and the Ministry of Justice are also involved in data collection and hold relevant datasets.

Four main sources of statistical information on the resident population and the demographic events occurring in the country can be distinguished (Kohler et al, 2002):

- The Unified System for Population Registration and Administrative Service to the Population—ESGRAON (in Bulgarian: ‘Edinna Systema za Grashdanska Registracija i Administrativno Oblushmane na Naselenieto’);
- The vital statistics system—TDS (in Bulgarian: ‘Tekusta Demographska Statistika’);
- Population censuses;
- Specialized studies focusing and investigating specific demographic processes/events in the Bulgarian population such as family and fertility surveys, health surveys, migration and labour market studies.

Some ad hoc administrative datasets exist on particular categories of foreigners and are operated by ministries and government agencies. These can supply valuable information on foreigners but are difficult to access and poorly used for statistical and research purposes.

The NSI is the central agency responsible for the production of official statistics. Statistical Institute is in charge of the regular implementation of censuses in the country, the development of methodology and the compiling and processing of demographic statistics. In addition to population censuses, the statistical surveys such as Labour Force Survey and household surveys, as well as available administrative databases are used as sources for demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population. All these datasets consist from individual records of persons concerned, including their personal identification number (EGN). Under certain conditions fixed by the Data Protection Law and the Law on Statistics, the
personal identification number can be used for linking different datasets for statistical and research purposes.

The last Bulgarian census on population, housing and agricultural farms was conducted on March 1, 2001, and incorporated the recommendations of EUROSTAT, UN and other international research organizations. The organisation and the implementation were carried out by the NSI.

The Ministry of Regional Development and Public Works is responsible on centralised and computerised system of population registration ESGRAON (in English Unified System for Population Registration and Administrative Service to the Population) introduced in 1978\(^1\). According to the Law on Civil Population Registration, the following persons are registered in the ESGRAON:

- All Bulgarian citizens
- Foreigners
  - Having obtained a permanent residence permit
  - Stateless persons who have settled down permanently in Bulgaria
  - Refugees or persons having received the humanitarian status or the asylum status.

The recorded information includes the country of birth and country of citizenship.

Every person registered in this system has a unique personal identification number ‘edinen grashdanski nomer’ (EGN) that is used as an identifier in almost all administrative affairs and allows the linking of individual-level information from various data sources’ (Kohler et al 2002). In addition, the ESGRAON system supplies information on the full names of those individuals who are subject to registration, civil status and address registration (permanent and present address). It includes also data about the number, place, date and office issuing the respective official document certifying the civil status of the person as well as other bureaucratic information. On the basis of notification documents, the local administrations regularly update the local population registers. The data are updated by the ‘Civil Registration Office’ of each of 264 municipalities (the municipal population registers) on the basis of declarations of births, deaths, immigrations and emigrations. Registration is done on the settlement level and computerised at the corresponding district\(^2\) office for civil registration named ‘GRAO’ (Grashdanska I Administrativno Obslushvane).

The TDS is the traditional statistical data collection related to demographic events such as birth, death, marriage, divorce, and migration within the country. Information about the socio-demographic characteristics of all individuals who have ‘participated’ in the corresponding demographic event is supplied: personal identification number, sex, age, marital status, degree of education, place of residence, etc. (Kohler 2002) Socio-demographic indicators in the vital statistics refer to birth notification document (citizenship, citizenship of parents), death notification document (citizenship), marriage/divorce notification document (citizenship for both husband and wife); address registration card (statute of the person, reason and duration for the stay).

\(^1\) http://www.grao.bg/esgraon.html
\(^2\) There are 28 districts in Bulgaria
The NSI also operates a *Statistical Population Register*. This register is based on the usual resident population as enumerated at the last census in 2001. The individual records in the register are updated by introducing the vital events and migrations having occurred since 2001 obtained from the ESGRAON. Nevertheless ESGRAON does not consider foreigners with temporary residence permit and their events are not introduced in the Statistical Population Register. Except for births, all events corresponding to persons not included in the Statistical Population Register are not considered by NSI. Also international migrations of both nationals and foreigners are under covered as these events are usually not declared and therefore not recorded in the ESGRAON. There are no appropriate documents reflecting concretely the presence or absence of the persons inside/outside the territory of the country. The *Statistical Population Register* is centralised at national level and contains data on population stocks, demographic events and changes of citizenship. It is updated monthly and only used for statistical purposes.

The institutions responsible on collection of data on foreigners including those temporary living in country are the following:
- Ministry of Interior (border statistics, residence permits and administrative actions regarding illegal resident foreigners);
- State Agency for Refugees (asylum seekers and different protection status granted to aliens);
- Ministry of Justice (acquisition and loss of citizenship).

The Ministry of the Interior collects data on entry and residence of foreigners, enforcement measures, irregular migration and asylum. The Migration Directorate at the Ministry of Interior is a specialized unit responsible for observing the order and conditions of residence of foreigners in the country, as well as for the issuance, rejection/denial and deprivation of long term residence permits. The Directorate deals with various types of databases related to visa and border control of foreign citizens; foreigners seeking or having received special protection on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria; address registration of short-term staying foreigners; imposed administrative penalties and measures for administrative compulsion regarding foreigners; acquisition, losing and restoration of Bulgarian citizenship (*Law on Foreign Nationals, Article 54, para. 2*).

In order to fulfil the functions of the administrative control of the foreigners data related to the following subjects are processed by the Ministry of Interior:
- Visa control of foreign citizens
- Border control of foreign citizens crossing the border
- Foreigners seeking or having received special protection on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Address registration of short-term staying foreigners
- Imposed administrative penalties and measures for administrative compulsion regarding foreigners
- Acquisition, loss and restoration of Bulgarian citizenship

The above-mentioned databases are not linked. For example, the information collected at border crossing is not transmitted to other departments within the Ministry of Interior or outside the Ministry of Interior (for instance, to ESGRAON, to department in charge of residence permits etc). However a limited access to each
database is possible for specific individual requests at the different stages of procedures of registration. The existing information may be linked using two different identification numbers: a **Personal Identification Number for Foreigner** that is specific for every foreigner and, an **EGN** for those who are registered in the ESGRAON (A foreigner will be registered in the ESGRAON when receiving a permanent resident permit. As a consequence, he or she will have two personal identification numbers: the **EGN** used in ESGRAON and the **Personal Identification Number for Foreigners** issued by the Ministry of Interior).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs maintains a **Single Register for foreigners** containing data for long-term staying foreigners (*Law on Foreign Nationals; SG 37/03; Art. 54*).

The State Agency for Refugees at the Council of Ministers (**Durjavna agencija za bejanci pri Ministerski Suvet**) runs its own database, containing all documents and data related to the identity of asylum seekers which have become known during the procedure. Publicly available data includes applications submitted, refugee status granted, refugee status refusals, humanitarian status granted, prolonged humanitarian status, terminated procedures, terminated refugee status, humanitarian status and total number of decisions.

Other state institutions responsible for registers used in migration related research include the Ministry of Justice and the Bulgarian Police. The Ministry of Justice holds data on applications and proposals for acquiring Bulgarian citizenship, on revoking naturalisation, restoring, release and deprivation of Bulgarian citizenship; a register of the persons who have acquired Bulgarian citizenship by naturalisation; a register of the persons who have lost their Bulgarian citizenship and a register of the persons with restored Bulgarian citizenship (*Law for the Bulgarian citizenship, Article 38*). The publicly available data refer to the number of applications and positive decisions of persons of Bulgarian and non-Bulgarian origin applying for Bulgarian citizenship. The Bulgarian Police, as a part of the Ministry of the Interior, it is responsible for the collection and maintenance of data on illegal migration.

### B. Historical evolution of the national data collection system/ data collection practices and policies on data collection

The NSI was established on the base of Law on Statistics and placed under the National Assembly in 1991 according to Law on Statistics. The experts from national institutions, members of the Supreme Statistical Council, discuss the methodology of statistical surveys and the process of harmonization of statistical standards and nomenclatures with Eurostat requirements.

In 1999 new Law on Statistics aimed at full compliance of the statistical activity with the principles of independence, impartiality, reliability, efficiency, adequacy, confidentiality and publicity. It also regulates the rules for carrying out statistical activity. The amendment of the law in 2002 makes provision for the registration, usage, processing and storage of statistical data, being classified information, to be in compliance with the requirements of the legislative instruments on protection of classified information (*Art. 27, para. 2*).
In 2008 a *Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008 - 2012* was elaborated, setting out priority tasks in the different fields of statistics. For example, the tasks in relation to **demographic statistics** focus on the application of new methodological approaches and innovation technologies in the preparing and carrying out of the *Population and Housing Fund Census in 2011*. That refers to a) combination of traditional methods of data registration at the census with the information from registers, available in the country and other administrative sources; b) development of measures for quality management of census data; c) provision of the necessary technological potential and infrastructure of the bodies that conduct the census (National Strategy 2008). Another priority task is the development of a system of international migration statistics and of granting asylum in compliance with Regulation (EC) No 862/2007. That relates to a) development of a module on statistics of international migration in demography, based on administrative data sources; b) conducting specialized surveys on evaluation of the structure of international migration flows; c) production and dissemination of statistical information about the socio-economic integration of migrated population, via implementation of ad hoc LFS module on the labour market situation of migrants and their descendants; and d) development of a methodological framework for ensuring migrants data in the EU Member States Population Censuses Programme in 2011 (National Strategy 2008).

Regarding **labour market statistics**, a priority task was the introduction of new thematic modules such as the 2008 "Ad hoc Module on the Labour Market Situation of Migrants and Their Descendants" (National Strategy 2008). In the field of **statistics of employment and earnings** measures focus on the extending of the contents of the statistical survey on labour demand through information about the state of immigrants on the labour market (National Strategy 2008). As of December 2009 some of the priority tasks have been already achieved:

- Arrangements for compiling data on external migration have been made on the basis of data collected by the demographic information system, police administrative sources and administrative sources of the State Agency for Refugees. In 2008, for the first time the National Statistical Institute conducted a specialised study dealing with Bulgarian and foreign nationals who enter and leave the country at certain border control points.

### C. Coordination and linking

The Ministry of Interior is the main responsible body on registration and processing data on foreigners in the areas like visa control of foreign citizens, border control of foreign citizens crossing the border, foreigners seeking or having received special protection on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, address registration of short-term staying foreigners, imposed administrative penalties and measures for
administrative compulsion regarding foreigners and acquisition, loss and restoration of Bulgarian citizenship. In order to fulfil these tasks the Ministry of Interior exchanges information with other relevant authorities:

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) – in connection with data for issuance/refusal of visas to foreigners.
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - in connection with the issuance of work permits and of permits for free-lance activity to foreigners (Law on Foreign Nationals, new, SG 37/03; Art. 57).
- State Agency for the Foreigners in connection with the issuance of identification documents to foreigners seeking or having obtained protection, and for carrying out proceedings for granting special protection (Law for the asylum and refugees amended SG. 31/8 Apr 2005)
- Bodies of the judicial authority in connection with foreigners who have released from the places of detention and persons applying for acquiring, restoring of or release from Bulgarian citizenship (Law on Foreign Nationals, new, SG 37/03; Article 59)

The NSI receives only few data from the above mentioned Ministries. Seems, the hard co-ordination between the different national institutions at the highest level and the confidentiality problems linked to the transfer of the individual data for statistics and research purposes is the most important problem concerning the cooperation between institutions handling the migration related information. As said in the The Strategy for Development of the National Statistical System of the Republic of Bulgaria, 2008 - 2012 “A small part of approximately 400 administrative registers, created and maintained by the state administration on the basis of a legal or administrative act, are used by NSI as a source of statistical data” Among reasons of such situation has been considered unsettled institutional interrelations concerning the mode and forms of access to the administrative registers data, necessary for production of statistical information.

D. Concepts and definitions

The annual population figures in Bulgaria are based on the last census results. The census enumeration included the following population groups:

- All Bulgarian citizens who live permanently in Bulgaria regardless of whether they were in the place of their permanent residence or in a different place on the reference day March 1, 2001
- All Bulgarian citizens who left Bulgaria after February 28th, 2000, as well as family members who accompanied them
- All Bulgarian citizens with a permanent residence in Bulgaria, who were officially representing Bulgaria, national institutions and other national organizations abroad on the reference day, as well as their family members;
- Foreign citizens who have received a permanent residence in Bulgaria before March 1, 2000;
- Foreign citizens and their family members who were granted political asylum and have received an official status as refugees in Bulgaria before March 1, 2000;
- Bulgarian citizens and those with a dual citizenship who lived permanently abroad but were in Bulgaria on the reference day;
- **Foreign citizens who received an official residence permission after February 28, 2000;**
- **Foreign citizens and their family members who had an open legal procedure for granting political asylum and status as a refugee according to the national and international law after February 28, 2000.**

According to Kohler (2002) the data on internal and out-migration of the Bulgarian population was collected by defining *migration* as the *change of the settlement of the permanent residence of a person*. Also, annual population figures produced up to 2007, represented permanent population. Permanent address is the address, where the person is registered in the population registers. According to the Foreigners in the Republic of Bulgaria Act, a foreigner is granted permanent residence for an indefinite period of stay. Long-term residence includes both permanent residence and continuous residence (for up to one year). Short-term residence is granted for up to three months.

Annual population numbers are prepared using the component method, based on initial figure from the Census and annual data on vital and internal migration statistics. International migration is not taken into account due to the limited availability and accessibility of data on emigrations and immigrations. Annual statistics are produced by age and sex, but not by citizenship and country of birth. Data on usual resident population are currently not available as the census was based on permanent population concept.

Starting from 2007 ‘present residence’ concept is used for statistics. Present address is the address where the person lives at the moment, when the event occurs. This information is base on registered. A present (current) address is defined as the place of residence when it lasts 30 days or more (there is no maximum authorised duration of stay in the present place of residence). All statistics are based on the present address (in particular, internal migration is a change of present address).

In the population registration system ESGRAON only permanent residents of Bulgaria are registered and have their permanent address. Persons leaving the country are considered as emigrants only if they report that they are leaving the country for more than one year or permanently. Since there is no reason, incentive or legal obligation for declaring emigration, the deregistration of persons residing effectively abroad is not recorded. As a consequence, the number of registered Bulgarian citizens obviously overestimates the size of the population and particularly Bulgarian citizens living in Bulgaria.

**E.1. Core demographic data on immigrants and migration control**

**E.1.a Population stocks and general demographic characteristics**

For the census year, population statistics are produced using census results. Last population census was held in 2001 (01.03.2001). Data were collected on ethnic group, mother tongue and religion and these data are published on NSI website in
three separate tables distributed by districts for 2001. Census questionnaire included also several migration related questions but no data are available in public databases or free publications.

On NSI website the number of foreign citizens permanently living in the country distributed by country of citizenship is published starting from 31.12.2004. These data are based on information provided by the Ministry of Interior. Compared to the census results these figures are two times higher, indicating to the big difference in these two data sources.

**Data on usual resident population by citizenship, age, sex and country of birth** are not still available for the years between censuses.

According to the questionnaires of sample surveys like household and labour force survey the information on population groups related to migration are collected. Several of these surveys have a special part or sections devoted to migration, and include some of the following questions:

- if person (household member) is currently abroad,
- reason and for how long (including for one year and more);
- if the previous residence of person was abroad, reason for the latest move;
- if person has plan for moving to abroad and reason;
- if person has been abroad for (over 3 months) during the last 5 years;
- how much time he/she spent abroad during the last 12 months, and main reason to stay abroad etc.

However, no such data are available on public databases of National Statistical institute.

**E.1.b Migration flows and characteristics of migrants at the time of migration**

The main source for population statistics including those of migration flows of both nationals and foreigners is the Statistical Population Register. Until recently, the information in this register was based only on the declaration of permanent place of residence in the local municipality. Thus, data on international migration included only persons who have declared the change of their permanent address to the administrative authorities. Total number of immigration and emigration by age and sex are published on NSI website. Other characteristics of international migrants like citizenship, country of previous and next residence are not available. Considering the coverage and the used definitions, the published data are not in accordance with international recommendations.

From the beginning of 2007, the migration of population includes people who have changed their current address within or outside the country. National Statistical Institute counted 2 960 persons who declared at the civil registration offices that have changed their current address in Bulgaria with a new address abroad in 2007, and 1 560 persons who declared a change of their current address abroad with a new one in Bulgaria. However, these numbers are considered as not reliable. In order to cover better and to estimate the international migration, the National Statistical Institute has started a specialized statistical survey.
According to 2001 census questionnaire, every enumerated person was asked some questions related to past migrations and the current situation concerning migration. Thus the information was collected on citizenship and country of birth but also the year and the last country from which person immigrated to Bulgaria if persons have migrated during the period after 1992. If a person has migrated more than once during the period of observation, then the census records only the year and the destination of the last migration. In addition, mothers were asked if some of their children were living abroad, and the month and year of birth of the child (but not sex). Actually the information was collected on the total number of migrated people and not on the total number of migrations within the period of observation³. Nevertheless, these data cannot be found among census results on the NSI website.

Statistics on granting of permanent residence permit are the only currently produced and published statistics referring to long-term migration. Other residence permits data including long-term residence permits for the period of one year are not available for statistics. The main reason is that it is impossible to distinguish first permits and consequent renewals.

Data from border statistics can be used only for estimating the flows of third-country foreigners. When crossing the borders of Bulgaria (to enter or to leave Bulgaria), travel documents are checked. Non-EU citizens must declare the purpose of the visit (at entry or exit) and the data is registered in a specific border crossing database named AIS “Border control” that can be accessed at each border control checkpoint. The registered data include, in addition to the declared purpose of stay: country of birth, citizenship and sex. This centralised database is operational since 1997. It is currently used to produce certain statistics (example: by aim/purpose of entry or exit). Until 2006, EU and Bulgarian citizens were also registered at entry and exit, but this registration was abolished after the entry of Bulgaria in the EU (01/01/2007).

A special section 'Migration' in household surveys (1997 and 2001) allows to identify those who were born abroad, if and when the person moved last time from abroad, and the reason of this movement.

**E.1.c Residence permits**

The authority responsible for statistical data on residence permits is the Ministry of Interior. The database on residence permits records all the relevant events. Using the residence permit database, it should be possible to calculate the number of non-EU immigrants who received continued stay permit during the year. However, there was still no attempt to produce such data, because due to technical problems the distinction between first, second and subsequent permits was not possible. Currently, only data on the number of permanent residence permits by citizenship are produced.

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³ Short stays (less than a year) of persons abroad or in other settlements due to business, vacation; visits, holidays, etc. are not considered migrations. Persons who are on a regular military service, in prisons, or in specialized boarding-schools or boarding-houses are also not considered migrants. In addition, changes of permanent residence due to administrative reasons because of merging or splitting, or creating new settlements, as well as ‘moving’ settlements from one to another municipality, are also not registered as migration (Kohler 2002: 339-346)
The Ministry of Interior processes the following individual data on foreign nationals:

- Names in Cyrillic and Roman alphabet, date and place of birth, sex, citizenship;
- United citizen's number and/or personal number of a foreigner;
- Permanent and present address in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Document for travelling abroad (type, series, number, date, place of issuance and validity term);
- Purpose of stay in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Visa (type, number, date and place of issuance, validity and term of stay);
- Grounds of permitting the stay in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Applications for permitting long-term stay (number, date, decision);
- Permits for acquiring special protection on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria (date and number);
- Term of stay in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- Marital status; spouse; children under 18 years of age;
- Permanent address in the country whose citizen the person is; Edict of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria for change of the citizenship;
- Entries and exits to and from the Republic of Bulgaria
- Host information; tourist vouchers;
- Profession and place of employment;
- Imposed compulsory administrative measures and official data (Law on Foreign Nationals, Art.54, para. 4)

Residence permits cover only non-EU citizens. Information on all delivered residence permits are recorded at district level in a specific database - the Automatics Register of Foreigners. This is a national database managed by the Main computer and communication centre of Ministry of Interior.

The National Statistics Institute receives the data on permanent resident foreigners with granted status in the referent year. These data are disaggregated by citizenship and by districts without connection between them while data by sex and age is not available. According to NSI these data are not adequate for the estimation of immigration flows and stocks of foreigners. Long-term residence permits for the period of one year are not processed because there is not distinction between first, second and subsequent permits.

E.1.d Change of citizenship

The Ministry of Justice is in charge of handling all matters linked with acquisition or renouncement of the Bulgarian citizenship. The Bulgarian citizenship may be acquired by naturalisation after 5 years of continued residence in country, as a consequence of marriage with a Bulgarian citizen, due to special service to the country, being Bulgarian by origin.

The Ministry of Justice produces statistics on acquisition of citizenship by previous citizenship. It doesn't seem currently possible to get data by age and sex. Until
recently, data on acquisition and loss of citizenship were not available in the NSI. No statistics on acquisition of citizenship have been still delivered to Eurostat as a part of the Joint Migration Questionnaires. In future, new information system “Demography”, supported by the Ministry of Justice, is expected to supply better information citizenship matters in combination with the other data sources on the migration.

**E.1.e Asylum seeking and refugees**

The State Agency for Refugee (SAR) is responsible for producing statistics on international protection. The Law on the Right to Asylum and Refugees (LAR) was adopted in May 2002 and has been in force since December 2002. It implements the provisions of the Geneva Convention and its 1967 Protocol and provides for the creation of the SAR. In 2005, the Law on the Right to Asylum and Refugees was amended. These amendments introduced a clear distinction between refusal, discontinuation of the procedure, and withdrawal, in line with the Geneva Convention. The SAR collects and produces data on the asylum seekers applied for international protection and the different types of temporary, humanitarian or refugee status granted. The Agency database of asylum seekers is the only database on the information on asylum.

**E.1.f Irregular migration**

Ministry of Interior is responsible on border control of foreign citizens crossing the border and administrative penalties and measures for administrative compulsion regarding foreigners. The Ministry is responsible for providing data on refusals, apprehensions and returns of illegal migrants. According to responsible ministry all data requested in the EU Regulation and by CIREFI data collection are produced. Generally these data are not disseminated to public users.

**E.2. Measuring integration, discrimination and diversity**

The census and sample surveys have collected relatively detailed information on socio-economic characteristics of Bulgarian residents, like household composition, employment, unemployment and sources of income of the population, the type of dwellings, etc. Also characteristics indicating foreign or ethnic origin of person are included in the survey questionnaires. However, the data and publications are not easily available for an international reader. Therefore, it not possible to confirm if in practice the information is sufficient for studying topics as integration, discrimination and diversity.

**E.2.a Employment**

Data on employment have been collected recently by the labour force survey as well by the last population census and household sample surveys.
The Labour Force Survey started in 1993. In 2003 the survey was redesigned as a continuous Labour Force Survey, providing quarterly results. The survey covers the whole country but only private households are included. Persons, living in student hostels or in workers' hostels are treated as private households. Participation in the survey is voluntary. The resident population includes all persons usually residing in Bulgaria, including persons temporarily abroad (less than one year). The survey covers all the members of the selected households including conscripts and people absent from home due to: business trip, seasonal or temporal work, tourism, temporary (less than 6 months) stay in hospitals or other health institutions for medical cure and other.

A household is defined as a group of two or more people living together in a house or a part of a house and having common budget.

The base for the LFS sample is provided by 2001 Population Census. The sample unit is the household. In total 18 000 households are sampled each quarter, corresponding to an overall sampling rate of 0.6%. The current population estimates as of 31 December of the preceding year are used for weighting the results. All persons in the household aged 15 years and over are interviewed. According to NSI, in 2007 a big proportion (more than 40%) of the interviews of persons aged 15-74 years were by proxy and the average response rate was 81.1%.

**E.2.b Incomes, transfers and social benefits**

Integrated Household Surveys in 1997 and 2001 includes a part 'Remittances'. Questions were asked whether household received money from or sent to household members including remittances received from abroad (but also sent abroad). It was possible to identify some countries from where remittances were received or where were sent. A short list of countries included Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, USA, Canada, Germany, Libya and Greece.

**E.2.c Housing and residential patterns**

Housing and residential patterns of population are observed through all household surveys and these data were collected in the population census.

**E.2.d Health and access to Healthcare**

According to NSI the Health Interview Survey was done in 2008 according to EU standards.

Health interview survey took also place in March 2001, probably linked to the population census (?). According to National Statistical Institute the main results from 2001 survey are published in publication 'Health status of population', Sofia 2002 (http://www.nsi.bg/SocialActivities_e/Health.htm). The publication neither the questionnaire can be found on website, and the coverage of population groups related to migration is not known.
**E.2.e Education**

Similarly to other social-economic characteristics the education level is among questions of household surveys. Also LFS 2008 included part ‘Education and training’. Both 1992 and 2001 census questionnaires included questions on level education. However, the classifications are different and cannot be easily compared. In 2001 the question was asked also on year of the completed education.

**E.2.f Family and household**

Household surveys and labour force survey include questions on socio-economic characteristics to be asked from every household member, including some questions indicating to the recent migration or foreign origin. In Integrated Household Surveys (1997 and 2001) household was defined as all persons who have been living together for more than 9 months during last 12 months while household member was a person who has living more than 3 months out of last 12 months in the household.

In Labour Force Survey a household is defined as a group of two or more people living together in a house or a part of a house and having common budget.

**E.2.g Crime and justice**

According to 1999 Law on statistics National Statistical Institute was responsible on organizing and coordinating the Unified Information System for Reaction Against Crime. Based on the amendment of the law in 2002, these functions are under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice, in pursuance of the Law on Judicial Authorities.

**E.2.h Other**

Bulgarian statistical data collection seems to have tradition to include ethnic group (or ethnicity origin) as personal characteristics in their data collection programmes. Also household sample surveys like, Integrated Household Surveys in 1997 and 2001, and Multitopic Household Survey (2003) included question about ethnic group. The main population groups to be distinguished are Bulgarians, Bulgarian Romas, Bulgarian Turks and other. The category ‘other’ has to be specified. In addition questions were asked about language - main language spoken at home when person was child, mother tongue, or the language spoken in household. Last census collected also data on ethnic affiliation, asking questions about ethnic group, mother tongue and religion.
F. Accessibility of data

F.1. National Statistical Institute

The most reliable source for population stocks data in Bulgaria is population census. The figures published for year 2001 seems to be census results. These data are presented by citizenship and by country of birth, both disaggregated by age and sex.

On the website of the National Statistical Institute [http://www.nsi.bg/ZActual_e/New-Pop2008.htm](http://www.nsi.bg/ZActual_e/New-Pop2008.htm) information on publication is given, among these are annual publications of population statistics.

At the end of 2009 the National Statistical Institute issued the annual publication Population and Demographic Processes 2008. The issue could be ordered the National Statistical Institute. The issue is bilingual (Bulgarian/English) and contains detailed statistical information about the demographic state in the Republic of Bulgaria during the year of 2008. According to the information on NSI website, the number and the structure of the population, and its natural movement and internal migration are published in the issue. Since 2007 the migration includes all persons changed their present address in the country and abroad. Tables with data on residence of foreign citizens on the territory of Bulgaria, as well the movement and residence of Bulgarian citizens in some European countries are included in the issue. For more detailed information the publication has to be purchased.

For earlier publications NSI received from the Ministry of Interior the aggregated figures and only on foreigners who were granted permanent resident status during a calendar year. These data were disaggregated by citizenship without sex and age distribution. For example a selection of migration-related has been published in the Demographic Yearbook 2005:
- Data on nationals is border statistics referring to departures and arrivals, irrespective of the duration of stay abroad (e.g. Table VII.11 and VII.12 (Regional review)). These data exclude border crossings with Greece and Romania since 2007);
- Data on foreigners (by citizenship) refer to the total number of permanent residence permits granted during the year (Table VII.13 (Regional review)).

Total number of reported deregistration in the ESGRAON for transferring the permanent residence abroad and total number of reported registration in the ESGRAON arriving from abroad in 2007 have been sent to Eurostat. However, these data suffer from an obvious under coverage of all types of migrants. No other annual international migration statistics have been published.

F.2. The Ministry of Interior

The Ministry of interior possesses all information related to legal residence of foreigners in the country. Nevertheless, only few of these data are available for statistical purpose and it is not known if and under which conditions data can be obtained for research.
Theoretically, these data could cover areas as arrivals and departures on borders, residence permits and administrative actions towards illegal resident aliens. The latter data are sent directly to Eurostat by Ministry in connection with CIREFI data request.

**F.3. The State Agency for Refugees (SAR)**

SAR collects and produces data on the asylum seekers applied for international protection and the different types of temporary, humanitarian or refugee status granted to aliens.

**F.4. Ministry of Justice**

It is expected that in future data on acquisition and loss of Bulgarian citizenship will be available from the Ministry of Justice.

**G. Quality and scope of data collection**

In Bulgaria only people having a permanent address on the territory of Bulgaria are registered in the population registration system (ESGRAON). Since there is no reason, incentive or legal obligation for declaring this emigration, the deregistration of Bulgarians citizens for residing effectively abroad is not recorded. As a consequence, the number of registered Bulgarian citizens overestimates the number of Bulgarian citizens living de facto in Bulgaria. Nevertheless it is possible to register a present address abroad, but this possibility is not used by emigrants. Foreigners holding a permanent residence permit and leaving the country have to follow the same rules as Bulgarians. They will be considered as emigrants only if they report that they are leaving the country for more than one year or permanently. Since there is no reason, incentive or legal obligation for declaring emigration, these are usually not reporting their emigration.

Concerning foreigners, the rules are stricter and accordingly the collected information is deemed to be more accurate. For example, when crossing the borders of Bulgaria (to enter or to leave Bulgaria), travel documents are checked. When a foreigner leaves the country after the end of validity of the residence permit, a penalty has to be paid before leaving the country. Also, the regional directorates of the Ministry of Interior are responsible for the control of the situation of foreigners living in Bulgaria. However, there is no systematic control of the effective emigration of foreigners not having renewed their permits of stay.

For all foreigners (except EU citizens) leaving Bulgaria the border control officers register the date of leaving the country in the border crossing database, but there is no transfer of information to other databases like residence permit database or
ESGRAON. Therefore, the international definitions on migrant and migrations cannot be ensured in the latter data sources, as well.

National Statistical Institute is only limited access to the administrative sources and has no possibility influence on their contents and quality.

The Statistical Population Register developed by the NSI is based on the usual resident population from the last census in 2001 but updated by individual records from the population registration system. Thus the different concepts used in census and ESGRAON are mixed in the annual statistical data. Moreover, the annual population counts consider only part of the events changing the population (excludes foreigners with temporary residence permit, except births).

Compared to the Statistical Population Register there are one 9 millions persons in more in the ESGRAON. The ESGRAON is assumed to include a large number of Bulgarian citizens living abroad since long time while from the SPR these persons are excluded. As both these data sources consider only a small part of migrations, particularly emigrations, the total population figures from both are not fully reliable. The revised population figure after 2001 census resulted in the suppression of about 240,000 persons and the population figures were recalculated retrospectively in accordance up to the 1991 census time.

**H. Conclusions - Recommendations**

In Bulgaria, only few data are directly available from NSI or the Ministry of Interior as far as characteristics of the foreign population and international migrations are concerned. Only foreigners with permanent residence permit are considered in stock figures. Emigrations of nationals are largely underestimated as well as return (immigrations, and consequently the number of nationals living usually in the country is slightly over estimated. Accordingly any analysis based on these official statistics should be carried out with extreme caution.


Bibliography


MIMOSA, Modelling of statistical data on migration and migrant populations (2009), Report of the technical consultancy in Bulgaria presented to Eurostat by Michel POULAIN (Deliverable 10.2 C 10 December 2009)


### Annex: Datasets on migration/integration in Bulgaria

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<th>Responsible Institution</th>
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