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15 July 2016

Online at <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/78597/>
MPRA Paper No. 78597, posted 24 Apr 2017 13:43 UTC

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POTENTIAL AND RETURN MIGRANTS IN BULGARIA - DEMOGRAPHIC AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC ASPECTS

Abstract:

The article suggests results from a study of external migration in Bulgaria as a sending country where the so called potential migrants and returnees from abroad are explored. The purpose of the paper is to outline the profile, attitudes and labour realization (expected – concerning the potential migrants, and factual of the returnees) in both groups. The comparison between them shows whether the migration experience of returnees relates to the attitudes and expectations of potential migrants. On the other hand, the monitoring of external migration attitudes of Bulgarian population allows the estimation of the country's migration potential and description of the employment and income status of return migrants during their stay abroad. Furthermore, the attitudes of Bulgarians towards the influx of foreign population into the country are discussed on the basis of data from three consecutive sample surveys (2001, 2007, and 2011).

JEL: F22, J11, O15.

Introduction

Migration is a complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon which persistently induces the interest of various disciplines. In this respect, the focus of this study are the demographic and socio-economic factors supporting the strong attitudes to international mobility and external migration in the country. The study does not assume any differentiation between the terms “mobility” and “migration”. Of course, after the integration of Bulgaria in the EU out-migration from Bulgaria to the old EU member states is legally considered as “intra-community mobility” of EU citizens. Given the reasons that cause it – namely, differences in the standard of living, and because of the consequences for the country associated with an irreversible change in the structure of the population – here these two terms are seen as synonymous.

The study summarizes and analyzes empirical data on various categories of emigrants: potential and actual. The former are categorized as long-term and short-term migrants; the latter (i.e. the actual migrants) in this case include the category of so-called “temporary migrants”. These in turn, can be differentiated into “return” and “circular” migrants.

The factors supporting strong attitudes to cross-border mobility of Bulgarian population are interpreted through the prism of migration and re-migration potential and profiles; job

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realization – expected and actual (by activity, sector of employment and occupied positions); income, expenses and remittance behavior; “self-organization” of Bulgarians during their stay abroad.

The information basis is one of the **main issues** of migration studies. There is a variety of sources providing information on external migration. One of them is based on sample surveys – using such a source it is relatively easy to obtain information on the attitudes towards emigration and on the assessment of the profile of people who would like to emigrate, as well as their main reasons to enter any migration processes. Surveys in the so-called “countries of origin” provide such an appropriate information. At the same time, this type of surveys can be used to monitor the so-called “return migrants”. The assessment of their number, profile and their experience abroad (in terms of fulfillment and satisfaction) very often alters the notion of purely hypothetical migration attitudes persisting in the “countries of origin”. Furthermore, surveys of return migrants provide an opportunity for alternative assessments of remittances and savings from abroad, complementing the information from the national balance of payments.

Therefore, one of the objectives of this paper is to provide information, based on sample surveys conducted since 2007, on potential emigration from the country, on return migrants and their migration experience and remittance behavior.

1. Sociological survey in Bulgaria (2011)

For the purposes of analysis of potential emigration from the country and for assessing the number, profile and attitudes of returnees, we use data from a nationally representative sample survey conducted in the framework of a project entitled “*Bulgarian diaspora in Western Europe: cross-border mobility, national identity and development*”. The target population covers Bulgarian residents in the age range 15-59 at April 2011, where the available statistical information on the population as of 2009 was used in planning the sample by regions.

The sample was planned and implemented based on a two-stage cluster design where the planned volume of 1200 respondents was distributed proportionally to the population of the 28 districts of the country². The sample was planned to contain a total of 200 clusters with a fixed number of survey units of 6 respondents in each cluster. During the first stage, in each district clusters were selected randomly in the respective housing areas by implementing the technique of “sampling with probability proportional to size”. At the second stage, the sampling of respondents was implemented by random selection of a starting survey address in each cluster in the sample. Households in which a respondent was to be selected, were identified by the method of random selection by visiting every third address (see: Appendix Table 25, 26, 27).

² The fieldwork was performed in April 2011 by the Agency for Socioeconomic Analyses /A.S.A./. The survey team was coordinated by Dr. Docho Mihailov.

In order to ensure the best possible degree of match between the demographic structure of the sample and that of the target population, a subsequent quota control was performed. Quotas by gender and age (five age subgroups for each of the 28 districts) were determined in proportion to the size of the population in each age group in the respective district. On this basis, individual respondents were identified after reconciliation with the quota by gender and age (in case of more than one person in the household that qualifies into the relevant age-gender group, the selection method of the “closest birthday” was applied; see: Appendix, table 26).

The planned sampling error of the representative sample at national level amounted to 1.44 percentage points for estimating a relative share of 50%. This was expected to provide a high degree of validity of the sample estimates. Moreover, as a result of the applied control procedures the formed sample reproduces with very high accuracy the structure of the population by districts, gender and age. The resulting deviations of the sample shares of subsets differentiated by both gender and age do not exceed 1 percentage point.

Bigger differences are identified only in individual age groups within males and females - for example, in the highest age group (55-59 years) the proportion of the individuals in the sample exceeded this proportion in the population by 1.2 percentage points for females and by 1.6 percentage points for males (see: Appendix, table 27). These differences can be explained by the fact that the sampling design was implemented on the basis of data from 2009, and within the two years (2009-2011) some changes occurred in the gender and age structure of the population. These changes, together with the influence of random factors during the sampling, are the two main causes of deviations – but they can be considered as minor and cannot question the validity of the results from the conducted empirical survey.

The questionnaire includes 237 variables allocated to 80 questions. It contains two main sections – the first one (Section A – Residing Abroad) aims in gathering information from the so-called “return migrants” (in this case, these are people who resided abroad for more than 3 months in the previous 5 years). We were interested in information about:

- 1) the way of departure;
- 2) job realization (activity, sector of employment and occupied position);
- 3) education (including - information on students abroad; specialty; how do they support themselves during their studies, etc.);
- 4) income, expenses and remittances (distribution of respondents by income groups); this information is used for evaluating remittances of emigrants (as in this case no distinction is made between “remittances of emigrants” and “remuneration of the employees abroad”(see Balkanska and Mintchev, 2012);
- 5) contacts with other Bulgarians;
- 6) attitudes of the local people and authorities;
- 7) political involvement.

In the second section (Section B - Potential Emigration) the *attitudes concerning a decision to emigrate* – forming the types of emigration – are recorded using an ordinally scaled

question in the survey (with options: “emigration for good”, “long-term /labour/migration”, “short-term” and “educational”). The focus of the analysis hereafter is put mainly on:

- 1) preferred destinations;
- 2) ways of departure;
- 3) reasons to leave Bulgaria – in the context of Ravenstein laws (Grigg, 1997), subsequently transformed into the so-called “push” and “pull” migration factors;
- 4) expected activity abroad, including sector, job, etc.;
- 5) attitudes towards potential immigration flows to Bulgaria.

The information from this survey (fundamental for the analysis in this study) matches in large extent with the results from similar studies, e.g. those conducted in 2007 (Mintchev and Boshnakov, 2007), 2012 (Mintchev et al., 2012) and 2013³.

In this paper, based on the information from the sample surveys indicated above, we will consecutively look at the following important questions:

- the migration potential and preferred destinations;
- socio-demographic profile of potential expatriates and potential short-term migrants (gender, age, education, economic status);
- expected activities, sectors of employment and jobs of the potential migrants;
- “return” and “current” migrants (i.e. individuals residing abroad at the time of the study) - estimates about their number, length of stay, remittance behavior;
- diaspora organization and political involvement in the host countries;
- countries from which they return and reasons for returning;
- activities, jobs, and sectors of employment after returning to Bulgaria.

2. Migration potential

Traditionally, migration potential from Bulgaria is evaluated by two key questions identically implemented by the above-mentioned questionnaire surveys. The first question distinguishes between the so-called “potential migrants” from “potential non-migrants”. It facilitates the categorization of “potential migrants” into short-term (intending to leave for a few months /not more than a year/), long-term (with the intention to leave the country for a period longer than 1 year), and expatriates (settlers: people who express intentions to permanently settle abroad).

³The last survey was conducted under the project “Migration and transnationalism between Switzerland and Bulgaria” within the Bulgarian-Swiss Research Program 2011-2016. The data from this study is presented in Richter, M. et al. (2017).

Table 1.

A “tool” to identify the types of potential emigrants

<i>How likely is it in the near future:</i>	Unlikely	Less likely	Somewhat likely	Very likely
1. To go abroad to work for a few months	1	2	3	4
2. To go abroad to work for more than a year	1	2	3	4
3. To move to live in another country	1	2	3	4

Answers to this question are given by the respondents on each row. The information is treated in the following manner:

- The respondents answering by “Somewhat likely” or “Very likely” (answers 3 or 4) to question 3 are classified as “potential permanent emigrants”; these cases of “potential expatriates” are removed from the sample;
- Next, from the remaining subsample “potential long-term migrants” are identified – those who answer to question 2 by answers 3 or 4;
- Next, from the remaining respondents the “potential short-term migrants” are delineated – those who answer to question 1 by answers 3 or 4.
- Finally, all other remaining cases are classified as “potential non-migrants” – these are respondents who *did not answer* to any of the suggested migration options by a strong likelihood alternative (“Somewhat likely” or “Very likely”).

In theory, the so-called “potential short-term migrants” are not treated as potential migrants – emigrant is an individual who left (or in this case – is wishing to leave) the country for more than one year and during her stay abroad have not returned to the country of origin for more than 3 months – although, this particular category of people increasingly focuses the attention of migration research community as well as the policy makers.

The above shown sequence of the delineation of the types of expatriates (e.g. settlers, long-term, and short-term potential migrants) follows a simple but clear reasoning; however, if we differentiate firstly the short-term, then the long-term, and finally the expatriates, the resulting types would be of ambiguous (mixed) character.

Table 2.

A “tool” to capture the horizon of migration intentions

<i>When do you think that you can realize your intentions?</i>	
In the coming 5-6 months	1
In the next 12 months	2
Over the next 2-3 years	3
In the more distant future	4

An important question which requires a single answer – “*When do you think that you could realize your intentions?*” – evaluates how serious are the intentions of the individuals to out-migrate. We assume that people who indicated that would leave the country in the next

5-6 months (or up to 1 year) are much more prone to act accordingly – however, those saying “over the next 2-3 years” or “in a more distant future” could be considered as having quite a hypothetical migration intentions.

The data below sorts out the attitudes expressed during the year before the country's full EU membership (Mintchev and Boshnakov, 2007) as well as during the period immediately after the start of the global crisis. A serious discrepancy in the attitudes to emigrate in 2011 compared to 2007 is observed. Only 6.7% of the respondents in 2007 were willing to emigrate in the current year and 11.8% declared that they would do it after few years or in the more distant future; in 2011, the former were already almost 10% (9.8% said they would leave in the coming 5-6 months or within 1 year) and the latter reached 13.8%.

In other words, the potential emigration from Bulgaria just before the integration of the country in the EU was below 20% (more precisely - 18.6%); only four years after that (in 2011) 22.8% of the working age population was willing to search realization abroad – i.e. it could be assumed that almost every fourth Bulgarian resident of working age was a potential emigrant.

Another important notion also came to light – in 2007 the prevailing intentions were focused on the short-term migration (i.e. rather for *mobility* /apparently within the EU/ than for emigration); on the other hand, in 2011 the desires for “emigration for good” (resettlement) clearly prevailed.

Table 3.

2007	<i>Short-term</i>	Long-term	Settlers	TOTAL
In the coming 5-6 months (%)	0.8	0.9	0.4	2.1
By the end of this year (%)	1.7	2.1	0.8	4.6
Over the next 2 - 3 years (%)	2.3	2.3	1.8	6.4
In the more distant future (%)	2.4	1.4	1.7	5.4
Total (%)	7.2	6.7	4.7	18.6
Within 1 year (Number)	121223	144398	60611	326232

Table 4.

2011	Short-term	Long-term	<i>Settlers</i>	TOTAL
In the coming 5-6 months (%)	1.0	1.2	2.4	4.7
By the end of this year (%)	1.0	2.1	2.0	5.1
Over the next 2 - 3 years (%)	2.2	3.6	3.2	9.1
In the more distant future (%)	1.1	1.6	1.3	4.0
Total (%)	5.3	8.5	9.0	22.8
Within 1 year (Number)	95481	159135	210854	465470

If we take into account the horizon of realization of intended move of the potential migrants – over the next 5-6 months or within 1 year – and leave aside the attitudes to go abroad in a more distant future (and if we assume also that the attitudes of the entire active population in the country are exactly these) – then we can expect that the number of potential emigrants during the period has increased significantly (by nearly 140 thousand people in absolute figures). Of course, since it is commonly accepted that only about 10% of people

intending to out-migrate would really act to do it, then the number of potential emigrants (settlers) can be estimated at much lower figures (6 thousand in 2007 and 21 thousand in 2011).

Changes occur also in the destinations preferred by Bulgarians - the attractive until recently South-European destinations Spain and Greece “surrendered the first places” among the preferences of Bulgarians to countries like the UK and Germany. Among the top 10 destinations invariably are the United States, France, Italy and Cyprus – both in 2011 and in 2007. Moreover, Turkey and Belgium that were frequently indicated in 2007 were replaced by the Netherlands and Switzerland in 2011.

The persistence of the most preferred destinations during the period is impressive. Among other things, it speaks of a stabilization of the Bulgarian migration corridors (in terms of the common attitudes to migrate to specific countries).

Table 5.

Destinations of potential emigration from Bulgaria

No	2007	2011
1	<i>Spain</i>	<i>UK</i>
2	<i>Greece</i>	<i>Germany</i>
3	<i>Germany</i>	<i>Spain</i>
4	<i>UK</i>	<i>Greece</i>
5	USA	USA
6	<i>Turkey</i>	France
7	Italy	Italy
8	France	Cyprus
9	Cyprus	<i>The Netherlands</i>
10	<i>Belgium</i>	<i>Switzerland</i>

Table 6.

Destinations of out-migration from Bulgaria
by types of potential migrants (in %, 2007)

	Short-term	Long-term	Expatriates (Settlers)	TOTAL
Spain	10.3	19.8	32.4	17.4
Greece	19.1	14.8	8.8	15.5
Germany	11.8	11.1	14.7	12.1
<i>UK</i>	8.8	9.9	11.8	9.2
USA	4.4	6.2	11.8	6.8
Turkey	11.8	2.5	2.9	6.8
Italy	4.4	7.4	-	5.8
France	2.9	3.7	-	3.4
Cyprus	2.9	3.7	-	2.9
Belgium	2.9	2.5	-	2.4

If only 17.4% of the potential emigrants in total and 32.4% (i.e. almost one in three) of potential settlers would prefer Spain in 2007, then in 2011 Germany and the UK attract

over 40% of them. Furthermore, nearly 1/3 of the expatriates would head to the UK and 16.3% to Germany.

Table 7.
Destinations of emigration from Bulgaria by types of potential emigrants (in %, 2011)

	Short-term	Long-term	Expatriates (Settlers)	TOTAL
UK	26.1	10.3	28.6	21.7
Germany	13.0	28.2	16.3	20.8
Spain	8.7	15.4	12.2	11.7
Greece	4.3	15.4	4.1	8.3
USA	8.7	5.1	6.1	5.8
France	4.3	2.6	4.1	5.0
Italy	8.7	5.1	2.0	4.2
Cyprus	4.3	2.6	4.1	3.3
The Netherlands	-	2.6	2.0	2.5
Switzerland	-	-	6.1	2.5

3. Socio-demographic profile of potential migrants

The question how and to what extent the profile of potential expatriates and potential short-term emigrants has changed in the period 2007-2011 is discussed in the next sections.

3.1. Socio-demographic profile of potential expatriates (settlers)

During the period, the structure of potential expatriates by gender has changed significantly⁴. In 2007 it was balanced. Half of potential expatriates were female (49.6%) and half male (50.4%). This is indicative for a likely relief of migration pressures from the country immediately prior to EU membership.

Things become different in 2011. Among potential expatriates, although by not so high percentage, men predominate (58.4%) which gives ground to assume that attitudes to final (permanent) emigration have become more active.

Serious and somewhat surprising changes have occurred in the age structure of potential expatriates. If in 2007 people aged up to 20 and up to 30 years dominated, then in 2011 people aged up to 30 and up to 40 years prevailed. Regarding the educational level the relatively strong desire for resettlement of people with secondary vocational education stands out in 2011.

The labor market in Bulgaria (from the aspect of “employment-unemployment” factors) does not affect considerably the desire for a definite emigration. Yet, we observe some “relaxing” of the intention for resettlement among the employed.

⁴ A more comprehensive analysis of the so-called “gender dimensions” of the new Bulgarian emigration is provided, for example, in Rangelova, R. et al. (2006).

As for the intensity of the phenomenon (potential “permanent” emigration) we observe some “revival” of the attitudes for resettlement – though forgotten after the first half of the 90s – as evidenced by the data for 2011 (table 8).

Table 8.

Profile – potential expatriates (%)				
	2007		2011	
	Intensity	Structure	Intensity	Structure
Gender				
Male	5.4	50.4	11.2	58.4
Female	4.9	49.6	7.7	41.6
Age				
Up to 20	9.8	24.8	11.6	11.5
21–30	7.2	28.4	15.9	39.8
31–40	6.4	27.7	12.2	31.9
41–50	3.4	12.8	5.4	12.4
51–60	1.3	6.4	2.0	4.4
Educational level				
Primary	5.2	24.1	6.5	12.4
Secondary general	4.9	24.8	10.4	22.1
Secondary vocational	5.2	27.7	11.9	46.9
Higher	5.5	23.4	7.0	18.6
Economic status				
Employed	4.9	58.6	7.6	47.8
Unemployed	5.8	17.9	13	27.4
Other	5.6	23.6	11.3	24.8

In general, levels of intensity have increased regarding most of the monitored socio-demographic characteristics – and especially in gender-age and educational structures of the population. The intensity has noticeably increased in the males group (one in ten is a potential expatriate) and in the group of individuals under 30 years of age (where the intensity approaches 16%, i.e. it can be assumed that almost every sixth in this age group would move abroad). Similarly, every tenth of those with secondary general and secondary vocational education could also be classified as a potential expatriate.

3.2. Socio-demographic profile of potential short-term migrants

The comparison of the profile of potential expatriates with that of potential short-term migrants (presented in table 9) led to interesting findings. With rare exceptions, the structure of short-term migrants by gender, age, education and economic status in 2011 is similar to that in 2007. Exception is the big share of people aged 41-50 among short-term migrants in 2011 and the relatively small share of people with primary education.

In terms of economic status (in the context of “employed-unemployed”) any significant differences are not observed. In line with this, considering the intensity of the socio-demographic characteristics in question, we find lower values for almost every subgroup – except for the people aged 41 to 50 where practically every 1/3 would like to go abroad to

work for a short period of time (several months) in one of the aforementioned attractive destinations for Bulgarians.

Table 9.

Profile - potential short-term migrants (%)				
	2007		2011	
	Intensity	Structure	Intensity	Structure
Gender				
Male	8.9	51.6	6.3	52.1
Female	7.5	48.4	5.5	47.9
Age				
Up to 20	8.7	13.9	7.1	11.3
21–30	12.5	31.4	7.4	29.6
31–40	9.8	26.5	4.7	19.7
41–50	4.9	11.7	7.7	28.2
51–60	5.5	16.6	3.1	11.3
Educational level				
Primary	6.9	20.2	4.2	12.7
Secondary general	7.9	25.6	6.2	21.1
Secondary vocational	10.2	34.1	7.2	45.1
Higher	7.5	20.2	5.0	21.1
Economic status				
Employed	8.5	63.7	5.6	56.3
Unemployed	8.1	15.7	7.1	23.9
Other	7.8	20.6	5.6	19.7

4. Expected activity, sector of employment and occupied position

Using specific survey questions an attempt is made to outline the anticipated activity, sector of employment, and jobs of the potential emigrants – despite the many assumptions typically made during a survey of potential migration conducted in the home country.

An impressive fact is observed that in the period 2007-2011 people are much better oriented and aware of their intentions as compared to the situation in the 90s (when over half of the potential migrants said they were ready to leave without perceiving what exactly they would work abroad). In 2011, those wishing to emigrate are better informed than the same type of migrants in the 90s (although women and individuals up to 30 years of age do not seem to have clear plans, as compared to men and older respondents). Nonetheless, around 14% of all respondents do not know what exactly they will engage with if they succeed to go to a foreign country.

The intention of the majority of potential emigrants is to work - more than 2/3 of the potential emigrants have such plans. As expected, this percentage for males and older people is higher - over 80% of them declared such intentions, compared to about 68% of females and about 65% of those aged under 30. The percentage of people who would continue their education abroad is relatively high, especially in the age group under 30 and among females.

Table 10.

Expected activities of potential migrants from Bulgaria (in %, 2011)

What do you intend to do abroad as main activity?	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Employment / work	80.4	67.7	65.2	84.3	83.3	74.8
Education	5.9	11.8	16.9	0.8	-	8.5
To live with relatives	2.0	4.3	1.7	3.1	6.7	3.0
I don't know now, but I will decide there	11.8	16.1	16.3	11.8	10.0	13.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The employment sectors in which the potential migrants from Bulgaria think they would be able to find jobs, are mainly:

- construction (nearly one in five of the total, and almost every third of males);
- hotels and restaurants (16% of the total potential emigrants are inclined to work in this sector and such intentions were declared by over 29% of females);
- agriculture - nearly 13% of potential emigrants declared such expectations;
- activities in households (housemaids, care for children and/or elderly people) are popular mostly among women;
- financial brokerage, real estate, business services, etc. – only 2.8% of the potential emigrants (mainly people under 30) would target those sectors

Table 11.

Expected employment sector of potential migrants by gender and age (in %, 2011)

Specify the preferred economic activity	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	15.0	9.4	13.9	8.7	18.8	12.8
Manufacturing industry	6.9	1.9	2.6	5.8	8.3	4.9
Production and distribution of electric and heat energy	1.9	0.9	0.9	1.9	2.1	1.5
Construction	31.9	1.9	18.3	19.4	25.0	19.9
Trade, repair and technical services of motor vehicles	8.1	5.7	11.3	5.8	-	7.1
Hotels and restaurants	7.5	29.2	18.3	19.4	4.2	16.2
Transport, warehousing and communication	11.3	0.9	6.1	7.8	8.3	7.1
Financial brokerage	1.3	2.8	3.5	1.0	-	1.9
Real estate operations, renting and business services	1.9	1.9	3.5	1.0	-	1.9
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	1.3	-	-	1.0	2.1	0.8
Education	1.3	2.8	0.9	1.9	4.2	1.9
Healthcare and social work	-	7.5	2.6	3.9	2.1	3.0
Other activities for social and personal services	9.4	12.3	11.3	10.7	8.3	10.5
Activities in households / families (assistant, caregiver, cook)	2.5	22.6	7.0	11.7	16.7	10.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Regarding the expected occupations almost every third (31%) assesses her chances as more than modest – people expect jobs of the low-skilled segments (in this respect, women have higher self-esteem than men) as well as engagement in public services (28.2%). Here the interest of women is significantly higher than that of men – nearly half of them expect to

find jobs in this sphere. Nevertheless, a significant percentage of individuals target into jobs for highly qualified employees (12% of the total and nearly 19% of males). Other over 7% would accept jobs like operators of machines and equipment (with similar expectations are every 10 males and over 12% of people over 45); a mindset of jobs for analytical and applied specialists reveal relatively small share of respondents (only between 6 and 8%).

Table 12.

Expected position of potential migrants by gender and age (2011)

Specify the expected position	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Managerial employees	1.9	2.8	4.3	1.0	-	2.3
Analytical specialists	6.9	5.7	8.7	4.9	4.2	6.4
Applied specialists	4.4	12.3	8.7	6.8	6.3	7.5
Support staff	2.5	4.7	5.2	1.9	2.1	3.4
Staff engaged in services for the population, security and trade	15.0	48.1	29.6	29.1	22.9	28.2
Producers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, hunting	3.1	-	2.6	1.0	2.1	1.9
Skilled industrial workers	18.8	1.9	11.3	11.7	14.6	12.0
Operators of plant and vehicles	11.9	0.9	5.2	7.8	12.5	7.5
Low skilled workers	35.6	23.6	24.3	35.9	35.4	30.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Indirectly, this confirms the finding of the job awareness revealed by potential emigrants which improves as time passes. The intensive emigration over the last two decades had left its mark. People are disillusioned and ready to accept even a so-called 3-d (dirty, dangerous and difficult) job assuming a competition by other immigrant communities.

Not surprisingly, some authors – analyzing the information used in this study in the context of the comparison “current / expected employment abroad” – emphasized that “the differences between the qualification acquired and expectations for realization abroad outline risks for draining highly skilled workforce from the country and its deskilling abroad” (Zareva, 2012; p.183.).

5. Return and current migrants (2007 and 2011)

5.1. Return and current migrants: estimation of the overall amount

Attempts to estimate the number of so-called “return” and “current” migrants (along with their socio-demographic profile, job realization, remittance behavior, etc.) are relatively new in Bulgarian migration literature⁵. The categorization used to summarize the information from the surveys is based on the following *definitions*:

⁵ For example, see Krasteva et al. (2011).

- return migrant is an individual who has resided abroad for a period at least 3 months during the last five years, and at the time of the survey is located in Bulgaria;
- current migrant is an individual who, at the time of the survey, resides abroad.

Of course, these definitions are too conditional but they allow, however, the implementation of a technique for estimation of the number of people classified in a particular type. Similarly to the potential migrants, these definitions facilitate the analysis of the profiles of individuals having migration experience as well as the exploration of the households having members abroad in the framework of the survey.

The method consists of extrapolation of sample estimates obtained from the surveys regarding the indicators “number of return migrants” and “number of current migrants” per one household – assuming we know the approximate number of all households in the country in a particular year (2007 and 2011). We estimate that the share of households with return migrants has increased from 10% in 2007 to 13% in 2011 (table 13) while the share of households with current migrants in 2011 remained at the level of 2007 (about 7%). Thus, in absolute figures, we calculate that in 2011 the number of returnees exceeded 450 thousand (compared to 384 thousand in 2007) and the number of current migrants is about 256 thousand (compared to 280 thousand in 2007).

Table 13

<i>As of April of the respective year</i>	2007	2011
Relative share of households with returned migrant (%)	10.1	13.1
Number of households with returned emigrants	294345	391497
Number of return migrants	384494	450814
Relative share of households with present emigrant (%)	7.5	7.1
Number of households with present emigrant	218478	201680
Number of the present emigrants	280435	256252

These figures illustrate one of the effects of the global financial and economic crisis (2008-2010) on Bulgarian external migration – either way, the number of people returned from abroad has increased. This is probably one of the reasons for the increase in migration potential of the country discussed above.

The number of returnees does not seem so impressive if one takes into account the fact that this is just a 5-years period of identification (preceding to the critical moments of surveys field work). This explains the lower number of the so-called “current” migrants (those who at the time of the survey were abroad). Therefore, it could be expected that in the period 2006-2010 about 700 thousand Bulgarian citizens of working age had a kind of commitment in a foreign country (work; education; staying with relatives or friends, etc.).

Perhaps it needs to be clearly specified that these are estimates derived and based on data from representative sample surveys conducted in the home country – i.e. we monitor such a part of Bulgarian migration community *that maintains contacts with their relatives* and faces a set of choices – to return, to circulate, or to emigrate for good. Plausibly, a fraction of them (most probably – the majority) practice the so-called circular migration which is

evidenced by the constantly estimated large shares of Bulgarian households with return and/or current migrants.

5.2. Income, length of stay, expenses and remittances

The information obtained from respondents who have migration experience (but currently reside in Bulgaria) allows us to identify a number of parameters related to the so-called “remittance behavior” of migrants and to assess the amount of savings – and respective remittances – generated by this type of migration.

The data for 2011 confirms in large extent the results obtained from the survey conducted in 2007 (table 14). The 2011 survey (referring the period 2006-2010) registers an increase in the average monthly income of returnees, compared to those who have been interviewed in 2007 (referring the period 2002-2006) – this income increased from about EUR 810 to nearly EUR 900. Moreover, the length of stay abroad of returnees in 2011 is larger by about half a year than the one estimated in 2007 (18.2 compared to 13.8 months).

Table 14

Returnees and current migrants: income, length of stay, expenses and remittances
(estimates for 2007 and 2011)

	2007	2011
Average monthly income, euro	810.3	896.6
Average length of stay (months)	13.8	18.2
Share of current expenditure abroad (%)	45.4	42.4
Share of remittances (%)	44.3	31.2
Average annual amount of savings abroad, euro	157 825 386	586 620 923
Average annual amount of remittances , euro	657 791 954	694 102 266
Savings + remittances of return and current migrants, euro (total)	815 617 340	1 280 723 189

On the other hand, the ratio of current expenses to income earned abroad in 2011 (42%) was not found as substantially different from that in 2007 (45%). Significant change is observed for the share of remittances – in 2007 respondents declare that they were sending about 44% of their income back to the home country; however, in 2011 this share dropped to 31 %.

Based on these figures, and given the estimated number of return and current migrants, the remittances originating from this type of migration (i.e. individuals maintaining regular contacts with Bulgaria) can be estimated at about EUR 690 million only for year 2011 – compared to EUR 657 million in 2007. At the same time, the “balance” of savings (i.e. income minus expenditures and remittances) should not be ignored – over EUR 580 million in 2011 compared to only EUR 157 million in 2007 (here we assumed that the savings abroad are formed from this residual amount).

In this respect, at least three findings are worth noting:

- the average length of stay abroad is increasing;

- the average monthly remuneration of Bulgarian migrants has increased, however, along with a tendency to save more abroad;
- in 2011 the estimated savings of Bulgarian migrants are comparable in amount to the sum of money transferred from abroad.

5.3. Reasons for returning and host countries of the return

In 2011 survey 40% of the respondents declared that the reason for their return to Bulgaria was that they were not able to continue their job or they did not find any job after the loss of the last one. Another over 30% indicate family reasons for their return, and for about each sixth the reason for return is associated with health problems. At the same time, almost every one in four (in this case - slightly over 18% plus nearly 6% who were on leave) declared that they returned temporarily and were arranging a new departure or were just on leave.

Table 15.

Reasons for the return of Bulgarian emigrants	
Reasons for return	%
I am on leave	5.7
I could not stay there legally any more	4.8
I achieved the goal of my stay abroad (I made the money, made a purchase, etc.)	9.5
There was no opportunity to practice my profession any more (workplace became redundant, the project ended, the business stopped, etc.)	24.8
After I finished my last job, I did not find there any new job	15.2
I had to accept a job requiring qualification lower than mine	3.8
I found a well-paid job in Bulgaria	1.0
I will look for well-paid job here – for my profession the salaries in Bulgaria are no longer very different from abroad	2.9
Family reasons (elderly parents, spouse in Bulgaria, separating from a spouse there, etc.)	30.5
Health reasons related to me and my family	17.1
Local people there do not accept us; one feels best at home against all odds	1.9
I came back temporarily /later I will go again/, from here I will seek a new job abroad	18.1
Other reason	8.6

Therefore, return migrants can be classified into several groups according to the reasons for their return to the country:

- those who have returned for economic reasons;
- those who have returned for family and/or health reasons;
- those who have returned temporarily and are arranging a new departure.

On the other hand, only 1 to 3% of the returnees have done so because they found or expected to find well-paid workplace in Bulgaria. Alternatively, those 10 percent who

declared that they have returned because they achieved the goal of their stay abroad seem quite optimistic.

It is interesting to take a look on the information about where in particular the migrants residing during the survey in Bulgaria have returned from. We will focus on data for two of the years – 2006 and 2010 (see table 16).

In 2006, the “flow” of returnees was mainly from Greece (18%), Spain (16%), Germany (12%) and Italy (12%) /i.e. almost half (48%) of the total returnees/. And in 2010 – from the UK (23.8%), Greece (14.3%), Germany (9.5%) and Spain (9.5%) /i.e. 57% of the total number of returnees in 2010/.

It is important to note that in both years more often women have returned from Greece. The gender and age structure of returnees from Spain is balanced – in most cases, the distributions by gender and age are similar. Relatively younger people return from countries like the USA, UK and Germany – most likely due to the “educational” migration from Bulgaria to these countries. The UK became more visible to Bulgarian migrants after 2007 – the survey data indicates that since 2008 most returnees have come back namely from there.

Another question here is how to distinguish “return” from “circular” migrants; obviously a significant part of the returnees are people who travel frequently in search of a better job abroad, and did not take a decision to stay either in Bulgaria or abroad.

There are at least two options:

- 1) From within the returnees (i.e. people with migration experience) a fraction can be delineated – those who have been abroad more than once for the period of last 5 years can be considered as “circular” migrants⁶. Thus we could distinguish between return and circular migrants at the survey completion date.
- 2) Or amongst returnees we can differentiate between those who would leave again (in the near or distant future) and those remaining in the country. Thus we could distinguish between “stayers” and “movers”; moreover, the latter could also be seen as potential “circular” migrants.

⁶ Such approach is used in: Vadean, Fl. and M. Piracha, 2009, Circular Migration or Permanent Return: What Determines Different Forms of Migrations?, IZA DP No. 4287, p.1.; The number of travels is discussed also in Constant, A. and Kl. F. Zimmerman, 2007, Circular Migration: Counts of Exits and Years Away from the Host Country, IZA DP No. 2999.

Table 16.

Countries where Bulgarian migrants returned from in 2006 and 2010 by gender and age group (%).

Please specify country by years:	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
2006 г.						
Austria	-	5.0	6.7	-	-	2.0
Germany	16.7	5.0	20.0	12.0	-	12.0
Cyprus	3.3	-	-	4.0	-	2.0
Greece	6.7	35.0	-	24.0	30.0	18.0
France		5.0	-	4.0	-	2.0
USA	13.3	-	20.0		10.0	8.0
UK	10.0	-	6.7	8.0	-	6.0
Italy	10.0	15.0	13.3	8.0	20.0	12.0
Spain	16.7	15.0	13.3	12.0	30.0	16.0
Turkey	3.3	5.0	-	8.0	-	4.0
Czech Republic	3.3	-	-	4.0	-	2.0
Canada	3.3	5.0	-	4.0	10.0	4.0
Portugal	3.3	-	-	4.0	-	2.0
Russia	-	5.0	6.7	-	-	2.0
Ireland	-	5.0	6.7	-	-	2.0
Israel	6.7	-	6.7	4.0	-	4.0
Iraq	3.3	-	-	4.0	-	2.0
2010 г.						
Austria	2.4	-	4.2	-	-	1.6
Germany	7.1	14.3	20.8	4.0	-	9.5
Denmark	2.4	-	4.2	-	-	1.6
Cyprus	4.8	9.5	4.2	8.0	7.1	6.3
Greece	11.9	19.0	12.5	12.0	21.4	14.3
The Netherlands	4.8	9.5	4.2	8.0	7.1	6.3
USA	4.8	4.8	4.2	4.0	7.1	4.8
UK	26.2	19.0	20.8	20.0	35.7	23.8
Italy	4.8	9.5	4.2	12.0	-	6.3%
Spain	9.5	9.5	4.2	16.0	7.1	9.5
Turkey	2.4	-	4.2	-	-	1.6
Czech Republic	7.1	-	4.2	4.0	7.1	4.8
Canada	2.4	4.8	-	4.0	7.1	3.2
Switzerland	2.4	-	-	4.0	-	1.6
Scotland	4.8	-	8.3	-	-	3.2
Russia	2.4	-	-	4.0	-	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In all cases, however, the use of this methodology would be problematic when the survey is performed with a sample of modest size (e.g. 1,204 people in 2011, of which only 11% of cases met the criteria for return migrants).

5.4. *Activity, sector of employment and positions held by returnees during their stay abroad*

The returnees are typical labour migrants – nearly 81% of them used to work abroad – compared to 75% intending to work potential migrants. Along with this, 8.4% of returnees have either studied or simply lived with their relatives abroad. About 2/3 of the women returning from abroad have worked there and nearly 1/3 have studied or lived with relatives. The structure for men is different - almost 88% of them used to work and only about 11% have studied or lived abroad with relatives.

Table 17.

Activity of return migrants during their stay abroad (in %, 2011)

What was the predominant activity during your stay abroad ... ?	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	Over 45	
Work	87.8	65.9	71.4	94.2	73.3	80.9
Study	6.7	12.2	22.4	-	-	8.4
Living with relatives	4.4	17.1	4.1	5.8	20.0	8.4
Other	1.1	4.9	2.0	-	6.7	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The similarity of the attitudes of potential migrants and the actual activity of returnees (during their stay abroad) is impressive. Apparently, the returnees with their migration experience are the most serious information channel for potential migrants, and in this sense – a factor nourishing the relatively high migration attitudes in the country.

As expected, the situation is similar in respect of the employment sectors of returnees compared with sectors where the potential migrants think that they could find jobs. Return migrants were employed mainly in:

- construction (27.3%), where mostly men were employed;
- hotels and restaurants (15.5%), where mostly women were employed;
- agriculture (14.5%);
- work in households (13.6%), where almost only women were employed;
- real estate operations, business services and financial brokerage – less than 1%.

(see table 18)

It is noteworthy that potential migrants: first, tend to target the same sectors in which returnees (or so-called “circular” migrants) have been employed; and second, on the other hand potential migrants do not expect such high involvement in construction and household work, as this happens in practice.

Table 18.

Employment sector of return migrants during their stay abroad (in %, 2011)

Economic activity according to the applied classifiers (employment sector)	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Agriculture, hunting and forestry	16.3	10.0	20.0	9.8	16.7	14.5
Manufacturing industry	12.5	6.7	5.7	13.7	12.5	10.9%
Production and distribution of electric and heat energy	1.3	-	2.9	-	-	0.9
Construction	37.5	-	25.7	25.5	33.3	27.3
Trade, repair and technical services of motor vehicles	7.5	-	5.7	5.9	4.2	5.5
Hotels and restaurants	10.0	30.0	20.0	19.6	-	15.5
Transport, warehousing and communication	7.5	-	2.9	7.8	4.2	5.5
Real estate operations, renting and business services	1.3	-	2.9	-	-	0.9
Public administration and defense; compulsory social security	1.3	-	-	2.0	-	0.9
Healthcare and social work		3.3	-	-	4.2	0.9
Other activities for social and personal services	3.8	3.3	5.7	3.9	-	3.6
Activities in households / families (helper, caregiver, cook)	1.3	46.7	8.6	11.8	25.0	13.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Regarding the occupations held by returnees during their stay abroad – the respondents indicate mainly low-skilled jobs (36.1% of the total, 43.6% of men) or employment in services to the local population (29.6% of the total and over 76% of women; a relatively even distribution is observed for the age groups). Among returnees, nearly 20% are highly qualified workers (i.e. every fifth) and about one fourth of the men; again, in respect of the staff employed in services to the population, the distribution by age groups is relatively even. (Table 19)

Table 19.

Occupations held by returnees during their stay abroad (in %, 2011)

Positions according to the applied classifiers	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Managerial employees	2.6	-	3.0	2.0	-	1.9
Applied specialists	2.6	-	-	3.9	-	1.9
Staff engaged in services for the population, security and trade	11.5	76.7	30.3	29.4	29.2	29.6
Producers in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, hunting	2.6	3.3	3.0	2.0	4.2	2.8
Skilled industrial workers	24.4	3.3	15.2	21.6	16.7	18.5
Operators of plant and vehicles	12.8	-	6.1	11.8	8.3	9.3
Low skilled workers	43.6	16.7	42.4	29.4	41.7	36.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Potential migrants express interests in such positions as well – i.e. low- and high-skilled jobs, employment in services to the population, etc. – however, with lower expectations for jobs in both low- and high-skilled segment, as compared to the actual practice of returnees.

5.5. Self-organization of return migrants during their stay abroad.

With some of the questions aimed in outlining issues related to the “self-organization” of our compatriots when resided abroad. We are interested in whom they approached when they had difficulties; whether they were involved in activities of the Bulgarians abroad; whether they were interested in what was happening in Bulgaria, and so on. This information could be compared to the similar information about the Bulgarian community in Spain (see for example, the article about the Bulgarian community in Spain in this issue).

Firstly, almost half of the respondents said that they didn’t have any problems and there was no need to seek someone else assistance to solve them (42.7%). By the way, this is not the case in Spain where people who declared that they did not need assistance are just 1/4.

Table 20.

Search for assistance in case of problems

Usually, whom did you turn to when you experienced difficulties? (in %)	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	Total
Friends - Bulgarians	53.2	48.1	40	48.1
Friends - foreigners	19.1	24.1	10	19.1
Bulgarian clubs / associations	2.1	-	-	0.8
Bulgarian official representations	-	-	-	-
Authorities in the country	4.3	3.7	-	3.1
Civil / non-governmental organizations in the country	2.1	-	-	0.8
I never had any difficulties	38.3	38.9	56.7	42.7

Table 21.

Participation in events of / for the Bulgarian community

During your stay abroad did you attend any events organized by / for the Bulgarian community? (in %)	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	Total
Yes, I visited Bulgarian cultural events (concerts, theaters, etc.) with artists from Bulgaria	10.6	7.4	-	6.8
Yes, informal meetings in Bulgarian restaurants	12.8	14.8	9.4	12.8
Yes, courses organized by the local administration	4.3	1.9	-	2.3
Yes, religious celebrations	2.1	-	-	0.8
Yes, fora organized by official representations of Bulgaria	2.1	-	-	0.8
Yes, fora organized by local Bulgarian clubs / associations	8.5	1.9	-	3.8
No, I have not attended	78.7	79.6	90.6	82.8

In cases when they had any problems, returnees used to turn mostly to friends-Bulgarians (48% of the responses), to foreigners (i.e. the local people - 19%), and rarely to the local authorities. Practically, people used to turn for assistance to the diplomatic missions of

Bulgaria as an exception – a similar behavior is observed regarding the Bulgarian migrants in Spain. This data suggests that returnees (and to a greater extent – those who have settled in Spain), along with their preferences for informal purely Bulgarian channels for solving problems /where they occur/, used to be open to contacts with the local people.

On the other hand, return migrants participated relatively less in events of the community - meetings, cultural and other events - compared to our compatriots established in Spain (see Table 21). In more than 82% of the cases absence of any interest in such events has been declared. However, about 20% of respondents were interested in informal meetings with compatriots and in Bulgarian cultural events.

Table 22.

Interest in the events in Bulgaria (information channels)

Were you interested in the events in Bulgaria during your stay abroad? (in %)	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	Total
Yes, from the Internet editions of the Bulgarian press	61.7	48.1	15.6	45
Yes, from Bulgarian electronic media - television, radio, etc.	34	59.6	56.3	49.6
Yes, from newspapers and magazines distributed by the official Bulgarian representations	4.3	7.7	12.5	7.6
Yes, from newspapers and magazines distributed by Bulgarian clubs and associations	4.3	7.7	6.3	6.1
Yes, from Bulgarian newspapers and magazines published abroad	6.4	13.5	9.4	9.9
No, I was not interested	25.5	11.5	31.3	21.4

Table 23.

Voters in Bulgarian elections and in local elections in the host country by gender and age (%)

Have you voted in the Bulgarian elections for parliament or president during your stay abroad?	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Yes	5.6	2.3	4.3	5.6	3.1	4.5
No	74.4	76.7	70.2	79.6	75.0	75.2
There were no elections for parliament or president	20.0	20.9	25.5	14.8	21.9	20.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Have you voted for local authorities of the place where you lived abroad / For example, for mayor of a city in Spain/?	Gender		Age groups			Total
	Male	Female	Up to 30	31-45	over 45	
Yes	1.1	2.4	-	1.9	3.1	1.5
No	88.6	85.7	82.6	94.2	84.4	87.7
While I was abroad there were no elections for local authorities	10.2	11.9	17.4	3.8	12.5	10.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

During their stay abroad, return migrants used to follow closely what was happening in Bulgaria – mainly from internet editions of the press and the electronic media. However,

the responses showing indifference are not negligible – over 20%, or twice more than similar responses of Bulgarians in Spain. Somewhat surprisingly, in most cases these respondents were people under 30 and over 45 years old (Table 22).

Alternatively, the rare political involvement of returnees during their stay abroad is not particularly surprising. Only 5% of them voted in Bulgarian elections when abroad and over 75% did not; about 20% of the respondents have not exercised their voting right simply because there were no such elections during their stay abroad. In this regard, men and those aged 31-45 were more active. At the same time, only 1.5% of returnees have voted in local elections in the respective countries (Table 23).

Finally, we provide results about the attitudes toward migration (see Table 24) - all respondents were asked to answer the same question during the three different sample surveys conducted respectively in 2001 (abolishment of visas for Bulgarian nationals for EU Member States), 2007 (Bulgaria joined the EU), and 2011.

Table 24.

Attitude of Bulgarian nationals to migration (2001, 2007 and 2011)

Many foreigners come to work and live in our country. What is your opinion about this?	2001		2007		2011	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
They will help the country's development	1773	6.9	298	10.9	112	9.3
Everybody has the right to live/work where s/he wishes	13208	51.7	1486	54.5	723	60.0
The presence of foreign nationals in the country should be restricted	4421	17.3	383	14.1	162	13.5
I cannot say	5486	21.5	536	19.7	178	14.8
Non responding	654	2.6	22	0.8	29	2.4
Total	25542	100	2725	100	1204	100

No substantial changes are observed regarding the attitude of Bulgarian public to migration processes in the first decade of the XXIst century (in any case, this was true before the outbreak of the refugee crisis in Europe). However, between 51% (in 2001) and 60% (2011) of the respondents considered as acceptable the statement that “*everybody has the right to live / work where s/he wishes*”. In the same time, the people who believe that “*the presence of foreign nationals in the country should be restricted*” are clearly more than those who accept that immigrants “*will help the country's development*”. Apparently, the experience of return migrants has not convinced sufficiently enough Bulgarians that by working abroad they contribute to the development of respective host countries.

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Appendix

Table 25.

Distribution of the sample by gender and districts

District	Gender				Total	
	Males		Females		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
Sofia-city	102	17.3	108	17.6	210	17.4
Sofia - region	15	2.5	21	3.4	36	3.0
Shumen	15	2.5	15	2.4	30	2.5
Yambol	9	1.5	9	1.5	18	1.5
Kardzhali	15	2.5	15	2.4	30	2.5
Pleven	21	3.6	21	3.4	42	3.5
Vidin	8	1.4	10	1.6	18	1.5
Lovech	9	1.5	9	1.5	18	1.5
Pernik	8	1.4	10	1.6	18	1.5
Haskovo	22	3.7	21	3.4	43	3.6
Stara Zagora	27	4.6	27	4.4	54	4.5
Kyustendil	9	1.5	9	1.5	18	1.5
Smolyan	9	1.5	9	1.5	18	1.5
Vratsa	15	2.5	15	2.4	30	2.5
Montana	12	2.0	12	2.0	24	2.0
Gabrovo	12	2.0	12	2.0	24	2.0
Targovishte	11	1.9	13	2.1	24	2.0
Pazardzhik	24	4.1	24	3.9	48	4.0
Varna	35	5.9	37	6.0	72	6.0
Silistra	12	2.0	12	2.0	24	2.0
Veliko Tarnovo	20	3.4	22	3.6	42	3.5
Plovdiv	56	9.5	55	9.0	111	9.2
Burgas	35	5.9	37	6.0	72	6.0
Sliven	14	2.4	16	2.6	30	2.5
Blagoevgrad	26	4.4	28	4.6	54	4.5
Razgrad	13	2.2	11	1.8	24	2.0
Rousse	22	3.7	20	3.3	42	3.5
Dobrich	15	2.5	15	2.4	30	2.5
Total	591	100.0	613	100.0	1204	100.0

Table 26.

Distribution of the sample by gender and age

Age groups	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		Number	%
	Number	%	Number	%		
15-24 г.	116	19.6	111	18.1	227	18.9
25-34 г.	136	23.0	152	24.8	288	23.8
35-44 г.	131	22.2	153	25.0	284	23.6
45-54 г.	133	22.5	128	20.9	261	21.7
55-60 г.	75	12.7	69	11.2	144	12.0
Total	591	100.0	613	100.0	1204	100.0

Table 27.

Comparison of the distribution of respondents in the sample by gender and age with the structure of the population according to the Census of 2011 (in %).

Age groups	Gender				Total	
	Male		Female		Census	Sample
	Census	Sample	Census	Sample		
15-24 г.	19.5	19.6	19.1	18.1	19.3	18.9
25-34 г.	23.3	23.0	22.3	24.8	22.8	23.8
35-44 г.	23.9	22.2	23.3	25.0	23.6	23.6
45-54 г.	22.2	22.5	22.9	20.9	22.6	21.7
55-59 г.	11.1	12.7	12.4	11.2	11.7	12.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: NSI (<http://censusresults.nsi.bg/Reports/2/2/R1.aspx>)