

## ***MIGRATION***

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### **POTENTIAL EMIGRATION IN BULGARIA AND SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF FOREIGN IMMIGRANTS IN THE COUNTRY**

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**Abstract:** *During the last three decades, international migration is a key factor in the demographic development of Bulgaria. Even though its impact decreases in the last few years, it still continues to reduce the Bulgarian population, and, through its selective functions, to introduce significant negative changes in important structures of the population, which are vital for its reproduction and labour power. It is crucial for the implementation of a certain migration policy not only to determine the scales of the migration flows in and out of the country, but also to study the people's attitude to emigrate; the conditions and drivers that cause the migration processes, and the associated effects and changes in their scale and composition; people's attitude toward Bulgarian and foreign migrants; other elements in the general migration behaviour. These and other issues are the subject of this paper. The current analysis is based on empirical data from the "Migration and national identity" survey, which was conducted in May 2018.*

**Keywords:** emigrant; immigrant; potential migration; reasons for emigration; social acceptance; alienation.

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## SCOPE OF POTENTIAL EMIGRATION AMONG BULGARIA'S POPULATION

The migratory behaviour of the population is a complex demographic, social and economic process, which is shaped by a wide range of causes and circumstances of a personal and social nature. Sociological explanations of migration accept the notion that it is the result of structural tensions, the reduction of which (and this is the goal of individuals) is carried out through certain actions, including decision-making and migration within or outside the country. From the awareness of the need for migration, through the decision-making and its implementation, the person is under the influence of a set of stimulating and restraining conditions and factors that shape their behaviour. Consequently, one cannot rule out situations in which the mismatch between needs and the degree of their satisfaction always leads to a decision to migrate or that people's actions are not always fully justified, with clearly defined needs and motives.

In order to ensure the necessary reliability and validity of data and their analysis in the study of expected but unrealised behavioural events, such as potential migration, the selection of criteria and their reasonable application to cover these events in the form of statistical aggregates is of paramount importance. In the process of developing the methodology of the study entitled *Migration and National Identity*<sup>1</sup>, to determine the scope of potential emigration of the population from the country, the following criteria were used: purpose of going abroad, length of stay abroad (respectively absence from the country) and the probability of making trips abroad.

The survey data show that at the time of the survey, 18.8% of the population aged 18–65 were “likely” or “very likely” to go to work, study or relocate to another country for more than one year, in subsequent years. The adjustment of the estimates obtained from the survey to the population of the country in the specified age interval<sup>2</sup> shows that the total population from which the external emigration is expected to be recruited amounts to 836 thousand. What should be taken into consideration is that the sociological survey provides information about the attitudes towards migration of the studied population rather than about the actual dimensions of external migration that would certainly occur or that has already occurred. What is known is that the stated intentions to emigrate from Bulgaria are not fulfilled in their entirety by all potential migrants. The decision-making on migration and its implementation as a concrete act is influenced by a wide range of causes and conditions of the environment (both in Bulgaria and abroad), which are perceived and evaluated according to personal values and shape the real behaviour of people. Some research works show (Kalchev 2002)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Migration and National Identity* – a national survey conducted by the Institute of Population and Human Studies at BAS, 2018. The survey covers 1278 people aged 18–65. The number of potential migrants among them according to the criteria was 240.

<sup>2</sup> The population of the Republic of Bulgaria by 31/12/2017 aged 18–65 is equal to 4,472 thousand.

<sup>3</sup> See Kalchev, Y. [in Bulgarian] *Vanshnata migracija ja naselenieto v Bulgaria*, Izd. Dunav pres, 2001; Kalchev, Y., *Teritorialna mobilnost na naselenieto, Izvadkovi izsledvanija*, t. 6, kn. 3, NSI, Izd. Dunav pres, 2002 [in Bulgarian] (*External Migration of Population in Bulgaria*, Dunav Pres Publishers, 2001; Kalchev, Y., *Territorial Mobility of Population, Sample Studies*, vol. 6, No. 3, NSI, Dunav Pres Publishers, 2002

that 10 to 15% of any human beings either directly follow or respond to people's attitudes. This discrepancy between the desire for migration and its implementation is due to objective delays (unappreciated factors) or new incentives in determining migration behaviour. Regardless of the probabilistic nature of the researched process, based on the obtained data, variants of expert assessment can be made for the expected development of the emigration processes in the country in the next few years.

Based on the calculated scope of the potential attitude for emigration from the country in the amount of 836 thousand people and with the assumptions of different probabilities for the realisation of migration, estimates have been made for the scale of emigration of the population in the next few years.

Based on the different variants of the estimates for the amount of potential emigration, it can be summarised that the average annual number of emigrants from the country is expected to be between 20 and 25 thousand people among the population aged 18–65 (Table. 1).

**Table 1**  
Forecasts of the scale of the expected migration out of the country

<b>Estimates on the number of emigrants by periods of emigration</b>	<b>In the case of 10% of realisation</b>	<b>In the case of 12% of realisation</b>	<b>In the case of 15% of realisation</b>
Total	83600	100350	125400
This year	20230	24300	30350
Over the next 2–3 years	42130	50600	63200
In a more remote future	21240	25500	31850

Returning Bulgarian and foreign immigrants arriving in the country will naturally compensate the emigration flow. According to State statistics, the average annual flow of immigrants over the last 3 to 4 years was about 18 thousand. This would mean that in the next few years the country would continue to form a negative migration growth of the population with a weak tendency to reduce its absolute numbers.

The potential mobility of the population outside the country is manifested in the intentions and opportunities of 15.8% of the population to reside abroad for more than three months, but less than one year. Basically, this short-term migration is related to fixed-term employment or education and expertise upgrading. Over 75% of these migrants also state their intention to be absent from the country for a long period (over one year) and join the list of potential emigrants.

The estimates made should be accepted with their conditionality, as they are based on the behavioural estimates of the population of the studied age group in the current economic and social conditions in Bulgaria. Any significant change in the environment (at home and abroad) and the entry of new generations into this population's category will bring changes into the structure of population's migratory behaviour.