
FAMILY'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC SITUATION IN THE ROMANIAN ROOM AS COMPARED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

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Abstract: *The situation of family for the last 25 years begins to be increasingly of concern for social policies at national and European level, under the conditions in which, this institution is already regarded as endangered since the beginning of the third millennium. The last graphs of the 2011 Census indicate that Romania's population is on a continuing decrease trend, based on birth-rates and higher divorce numbers, while similar phenomena are also encountered in other Western countries of the EU. The challenges and reasons behind these data raise questions about the chances of the youths to set-up their family. Statistical data can highlight part of reasons and answers. The paper intends to make a comparative analysis regarding the development of some socio-economic indicators in the Romanian area against other EU countries. The topic required multidisciplinary research in the effort of understanding the reasons determining the decrease of autochthonous populations by using, mainly, statistical indicators on various areas of interest. Fertility, infant mortality, marital status, divorce rate, evolution of monoparental families, social services, education and the number of households are only part of the key-indicators proposed for determining the reasons representing vulnerabilities and triggering this decline. The approached topic is necessary for identifying and determining some efficient policies to assist family as main institution by which the stability and development of a safe and sound society is ensured for future generations.*

Keywords: *fertility, infant mortality, divorce rate, illiteracy, monoparental families, social services*

Introduction to the topic and research methodology

The rate of marriages, the evolution of divorce, birth rates, and mortality are part of the key-indicators by which the direction and development of more or less vulnerable young couples can be estimated. Unfortunately, the legislation of social services and

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protection differs even today from one country to another. At global level, the development of economic gaps leading to poverty, early school-leaving, massive migration of Muslim populations to Europe, the post-effects of the 2008 economic crisis, the emergence and outspread of terrorism triggering insecurity feelings are challenges that reach and discourage young couples in the effort of setting-up a family.

The migration of non-European populations to Europe maintains and even increases the number of the population at State's level, but with very many costs implying: the multiplication of refugee camps, lack of jobs, cheaper workforce, difficulties in identifying jobs, all in their turn leading to increased discontent among autochthonous populations, strikes, union protests, the development of intercultural conflict areas, increased unemployment, the need of spending on social assistance, etc. It is obvious that the aggregation of these processes discourages the autochthonous population and especially the young seeking a job or intending to set up a family. The socio-economic issues affect thus the confidence in family as institution on medium- and long term. Some questions could be why the traditional family is on decline? Can young couples adjust to the new challenges? Is the modern family, such as the mono-parental one a solution that could gradually replace the traditional family concept? These questions justify a careful analysis of a sensitive subject, but necessary for configuring future evolutions.

The methodology was built by interpreting and comparing statistical data gathered from the Eurostat and NIS (National Institute of Statistics) databanks. In order to gain a complex image of the topic, we resorted also to part of the empirical researches finalised during the last 5 years by IQLR (the Institute for Quality of Life Research), World Values Survey, European Values Survey, and the Public Opinion Barometer "Couple Life". As field of research, the paper is circumscribed to the theoretical and statistical analysis of the evolution and changes pertaining to the specifics of social sciences.

After referencing to the specialised literature of the last 5 years, we established and determined the following research objectives:

- a. analysis and comparison of the birth rate in Romania and the EU as evolution for the last years, depending on access to and update of the latest statistical data;
- b. analysis of households' development in Romania, as compared with the other countries within the European Union;
- c. analysis of the divorce development in the case of young couples, as well as the causes and reasons leading to this phenomenon;
- d. analysis of mono-parental families' evolution in Romania and in the other countries within the European Union;
- e. analysis of the illiteracy rate for children and couples in Romania;
- f. to catch an image regarding the demographic evolution of the autochthonous and migrant population at European Union level.

Evolution of the demographic and social context of families in Romania

One first background remark, that we emphasise upfront, is that the differentiation of social policies addressed to families is still rather high from one country to another within the EU area. The unifying vision is lacking, along with a shared legislation of social protection and assistance services at European level. The most developed system of services and social assistance was created by the Northern countries. This fact was possible because an operational progressive system of taxes and duties was created, but also because the philosophy of the Northern state took into account the importance of family irrespective of ethnic, social or cultural particularities.

The Scandinavian model could be a good practice example verified in particular by the Swedish model. The resources' distributiveness, social justice, social inclusion, the progressive system of taxes and duties are dedicated means and strategies by which the essential interests of the family are defended. The "*welfare state*" - type protectionist model inspired an important part of the programmes initiated by the Maastricht and Lisbon Treaties. Due to these treaties, in the 2009 Romania, 9.721,1 persons benefited of a certain form of social protection, representing about 45.3% from the population (evaluation of the official report of the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection [MLFSP]), and over 18.436,5 benefited either directly or indirectly of social protection (MLFSP, 2011, p. 1)".

The European legislation struggles to support traditional family in the modern understanding agreed on by all EU members. However, the economic differences justified by the fact that Romania is still not included into the Euro Area, by the purchasing power, and by the income per capita allow also for very differing taxes and duties, thus hindering the fulfilment of this aim. Unfortunately, we cannot discuss about a united and strong Europe as long as these factors lack the required standardisation for cancelling the gaps between East and West. Europeanisation means satisfying the necessary balance so that any family might nurture children starting with the same equal chances and rights regarding education, health and social security. The European decision factors play an important role in accomplishing this aim by employing some smart public policies that would provide for medium- and long-term outputs.

Family enjoys today a high rate of trust among Romanians (Căce C., Căce S., Nicolăescu V., 2011), but marriage begins to become a decreasing institution as stage in shaping young couples. In a recent research by IRES, in August 2015, for "9 out of 10 Romanians, family is very important, and 70% out of them have high trust in family". Youths, women, educated respondents and those living in Moldova value family to higher extent. The declared trust regarding family is higher among men, and for higher educated respondents, and for those in the southern part of the country, and decreases as respondents grow in age. Half of the Romanians state they are very content with the family life they have currently. Men, mature respondents and those from Moldova are among the respondents with the highest contentment level regarding family life (IRES,

2015)¹. From the same study we learn that 8 out of 10 Romanians state that they trust the marriage institution, but less than half show high levels of trust. Among elderly, marriage has the highest trust shares. Over 6 out of 10 married respondents or out of those living with a partner maintain that they are content with the life in a couple. The less content are women and respondents with ages between 51 and 65 years of age, and those with secondary education.

The statistical data of the last 5 years show that Romania is declining with regard to fertility, divorces, early school-leaving for young children, and on increase regarding monoparental families with one or more children. The same phenomenon is present also in Western Europe, where the divorce rates for the last 10 years positioned Europe in the world negative top. The East-West gap is closed only regarding negative scores and chapters. At the time, the “marriage rate in our country is among the highest at European level: 6.79 per thousand inhabitants in 2006. After the lowest value of 5.85 per thousand in 2001, the marriage rate is on a constant ascending trend for the last years. The data for 2007 indicate a spectacular increase, placing Romania on the top position within the European Union: 8.78 per thousand inhabitants (the level is identical with the one from 1990). The average age for the conclusion of the first marriage is among the lowest in Europe, of 25.2 years for women and 28.5 years for men in 2005” (Popescu, R., 2010, p.7). Employment, incomes and health of each member influence the birth-rate and the adequate development of the new generations.

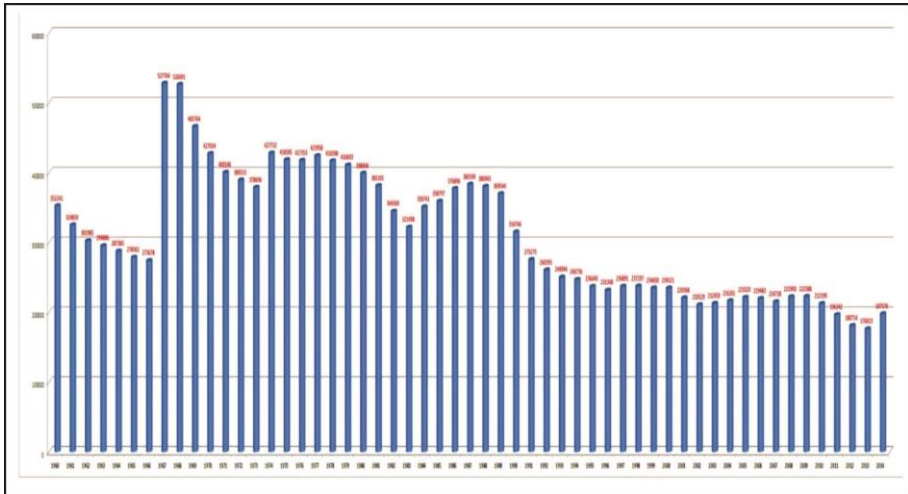
The decrease in population in the last 25 years represents another issue of concern demanding an adequately developed mitigation with respect to the traditional Romanian family. A historical explanation could be given based on the sudden and violent shift from the communist regime to the democratic one which generated changes inclusively in the birth and mortality rate. The transition of political regimes was followed by a demographic transition which occurred because of several economic, social, legal, cultural and health factors, etc. Warren Thompson (1929) and Frank Nolestein (1954) are the first authors formulating a theory regarding the *demographic transition* process which applies also for Romania. It is obvious that the change of political regimes leads, according to the revolutions’ theory, to an irreversible institutional, legal, economic and social change. The circumstances of the nineties and the first effects of transition were harsh, triggering deep social changes with demographic impact. In the theories about demographic evolution emerged specific concepts, which are concerned with the numerical evolution of the population, such as the fertility transition.

If in the post-war period, 1947-1955, in Romania was recorded a high birth-rate, more specifically 23.4 live-births per thousand inhabitants in 1947 and 25.6 live-births in 1955 this is just an reflection of returning to normality after the World War. After 1957 (in

¹ The data are part of the study “Familie și viață de cuplu în România – percepții și reprezentări” (Family and Couple Life in Romania – Perceptions and Representations), realised by the Romanian Institute for Evaluation and Strategy – IRES in the period 20-24 August 2015 on a total sample of 1.032 respondents with ages over 18 years, representative for the Romanian adult population, margin of error $\pm 2.6\%$. The CATI (Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing) method was used for the study

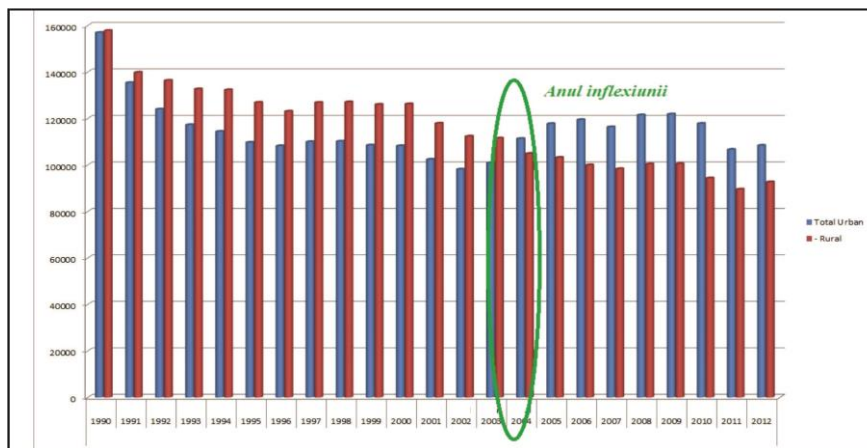
full process of forced collectivization) these birth-rates decreased to 24.2‰ and in 1966 (after Ceausescu came to power) to 14.3‰ per thousand inhabitants. However, the demographic policies of 1966 increased yet again this percentage, so that in 1967 the birth rate was of 27.4‰, followed by a slight decrease to 26.7‰ in 1968. Nevertheless, this pro-birth policy adopted in 1966 brought with it a certain amount of risks and among its effects could be mentioned the increased number of abandoned children, and the birth of more malformed children (Cozma, 2012, p. 120). In the period 1980-1989, in full process of food rationalising, the birth-rate varied between 14 and 18‰ (NIS, 2012, p. 11). In Figure 1 we present the evolution of the birth-rates in Romania from 1960 up to the year 2014.

Figure 1: Number of live-births in the period 1960-2014



Source: NIS

This figure reveals that the birth-rate development as of the 1990s is on continuing decrease, phenomenon that might be partially explained by the theory of social and political changes which resulted in a long transition process. In 2008 a slight increase is noticeable, but immediately after the outbreak of the crisis in the same year this rate begins to decrease anew. A fact worth mentioning is that the increased birth-rate of the years 1967 and 1968 was never exceeded in the 20th century, save for the period 1910-1914. After the year 2000, respectively in 2004, another remarkable change occurs: the urban area surpasses with its birth-rate increase the rural area. The next figure illustrates this differentiation of the birth-rate depending on the urban-rural area distinction for the period 1990-2012.

Figure 2: Number of live-births in the period 1990-2012

Source: NIS

The birth-rate decrease after the nineties up to 2012 indicates that Romania entered into a transition based on uncertainty and insecurity. The stable couples begin to decrease in numbers, and the migration phenomenon begins to gain considerable weight. Based on the linear analysis of these data indicating the drastic decrease of the birth-rate, the job migration and the effects of the successive economic crises, it might be said that Romania will be in less than 50 years among the European countries with the considerable ageing populations.

Evolution of Romanian households as compared with other countries within the European Union

The next step of the analysis is the identification of households. According to the final report regarding the Census, it was established that the stable population of Romania is of 20121641 million inhabitants, from among which 10333064 women (51.4%) (NIS, CPH 2011, p.1). At the same time, were recorded about 7.1 million households and 8.4 million houses (NIS, CPH, 2011). Over half from total households and houses are in the urban area. The CHP data from 2011 show that the average number of people in households is smaller in the urban area, about 2.53 individuals per household, against the number of individuals in rural households which is about 2.83 individuals per household. "The territorial distribution shows that the average size of a household is higher in the counties Ilfov – 3.10 individuals/household – as in Dâmbovița, Giurgiu, Bistrița-Năsăud, Maramureș and Suceava – between 2.93 – 2.82 individuals/ household. The smallest average number of individuals per household is in the Bucharest Municipality with 2.39 individuals per household, and in the counties Neamț and Hunedoara – 2.50 individuals per household. Save for county Sălaj, the average size of households is smaller in municipalities and towns than in villages "(NIS, CPH 2011).

In table 1 we can notice the evolution of households with children from Romania, as compared with other countries of the European Union for the period 2005-2014 (scale of 1/1000).

Table 1: Situation of households (per total) including at least one child at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	63,577.9	64,028.3	64,130.7	63,854.0	65,575.6	65,830.9	65,671.1	65,551.8	65,273.9	65,422.8
Belgium	1,472.8	1,474.5	1,485.9	1,485.7	1,517.8	1,533.6	1,548.9	1,542.2	1,529.2	1,543.7
Bulgaria	1,022.2	966.9	913.3	861.6	846.9	811.3	745.7	701.4	743.1	793.9
Czech Republic	1,501.4	1,479.8	1,497.2	1,510.0	1,516.3	1,511.1	1,490.2	1,509.8	1,515.7	1,478.1
Denmark	:	:	:	:	:	668.9	723.5	726.0	720.3	707.4
Germany	9,667.5	9,562.1	9,379.6	9,258.6	9,370.7	9,225.0	9,057.9	8,879.2	8,802.2	8,787.5
Estonia	203.7	201.5	196.5	195.8	201.1	196.1	189.2	188.5	186.7	187.6
Ireland	:	607.1	630.7	649.8	685.7	708.7	722.6	732.4	718.7	708.9
Greece	1,325.8	1,298.4	1,289.1	1,257.4	1,281.6	1,291.2	1,259.4	1,235.5	1,225.9	1,201.9
Spain	5,569.3	5,596.4	5,752.3	5,846.5	5,971.6	6,117.1	6,188.7	6,226.0	6,271.5	6,251.3
France	8,470.1	8,531.0	8,574.3	8,575.7	8,664.5	8,632.6	8,609.9	8,638.9	8,709.7	8,842.0
Croatia	509.0	513.0	524.7	525.0	527.4	542.6	545.9	546.8	534.9	539.6
Italy	7,465.1	7,550.7	7,610.2	7,648.7	7,724.7	7,744.8	7,765.5	7,756.6	7,822.2	7,819.2
Cyprus	111.0	111.0	111.3	116.0	112.3	111.8	115.0	116.8	118.3	114.2
Latvia	331.0	319.7	320.6	319.2	311.3	300.5	299.4	275.3	270.8	264.4
Lithuania	531.3	506.5	500.6	490.2	485.0	473.1	447.3	434.6	420.3	409.5
Luxembourg	65.7	65.6	67.5	68.8	76.5	75.4	77.4	77.9	81.2	82.4
Hungary	1,367.3	1,365.9	1,355.4	1,348.2	1,336.4	1,321.1	1,296.2	1,272.0	1,244.4	1,226.3
Malta	56.9	56.7	56.7	56.5	56.2	53.9	54.1	56.3	56.3	55.3
Netherlands	2,181.6	2,183.1	2,199.3	2,183.4	2,183.2	2,192.7	2,177.5	2,201.3	2,200.4	2,197.6
Austria	1,028.4	1,021.1	1,008.3	997.5	990.3	988.1	984.5	976.1	971.0	978.8
Poland	5,907.1	5,860.6	5,826.1	5,754.0	5,666.4	5,494.1	5,471.7	5,486.3	5,432.2	5,418.5
Portugal	1,561.2	1,547.2	1,528.4	1,529.9	1,534.9	1,521.8	1,500.9	1,489.8	1,478.1	1,487.3
Romania	3,291.6	3,277.6	3,217.5	3,191.6	3,157.7	2,919.6	2,871.3	2,825.1	2,754.7	2,712.4
Slovenia	286.6	281.9	282.8	281.6	283.2	281.8	283.5	277.5	272.2	271.8
Slovakia	764.5	753.4	722.0	722.1	712.9	707.5	702.7	692.9	674.5	688.2
Finland	604.8	616.1	604.3	599.1	594.5	591.7	592.7	591.1	583.6	586.7
Sweden	:	:	:	:	1,199.0	1,204.1	1,195.7	1,159.4	1,179.2	1,260.9
United Kingdom	8,282.3	8,280.5	8,476.1	8,381.0	8,567.4	8,610.8	8,753.8	8,936.1	8,756.5	8,807.3

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

The Netherlands is closest to Romania in terms of number of inhabitants (16856620 inhabitants) has maintained the same constant rate for the last ten years. In the period 2005-2014 it is noticed that Romania is on a continuing decreasing trend regarding households including at least one child, irrespective if couples or mono-parental families are considered. The European countries registering a decreasing trend regarding households with children are: Bulgaria, Czech R., Germany, Estonia, Greece, Latvia, Hungary, Malta, Austria, Poland (on a slight decreasing trend), Portugal (country leading currently the top regarding the number of divorces), Romania (on significant

decrease, corresponding to the drastic fall in the number of births), Slovenia (a slight oscillating decrease), Slovakia and Finland. The countries registering a relative significant ascending trend are: Belgium, Ireland, Spain, Italy, England, Croatia, France (with significant increases), Luxemburg, and Sweden. At European Union level (28 member-states) was registered a significant increase, from 63.577,9 in 2005 to 65.422,8 in 2014 (in the case of the European Union, for the year 2014 were included into calculation also immigrant households and families).

Evolution of mono-parental families in Romania and in the other countries of the European Union

In Table 2, is presented the situation of mono-parental families from Romania, against the other countries of the European Union, for the period 2005-2014 (scale 1/1000).

Table 2: Situation of mono-parental families with at least one child at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	7,660.5	7,999.3	8,131.9	8,054.0	8,572.9	9,114.7	9,342.9	9,380.5	9,487.0	9,692.0
Belgium	255.3	264.7	258.4	264.5	277.7	275.3	267.7	267.1	260.4	264.7
Bulgaria	85.5	81.6	81.4	76.4	80.6	60.6	60.4	70.9	76.5	78.2
Czech Republic	189.2	192.5	199.6	210.5	216.4	216.3	201.9	208.9	219.5	216.2
Denmark	:	:	:	:	:	181.8	234.7	236.4	204.5	196.2
Germany	1,477.3	1,595.0	1,515.2	1,450.8	1,523.9	1,559.2	1,577.5	1,514.3	1,510.1	1,519.9
Estonia	43.4	39.3	37.0	38.2	39.2	35.8	32.9	34.4	37.1	38.1
Ireland	:	82.1	90.3	89.7	107.9	114.7	122.6	124.9	116.8	106.9
Greece	70.0	73.4	77.0	67.7	72.0	78.8	77.3	81.1	83.1	80.2
Spain	257.1	271.6	310.9	303.0	346.8	427.3	466.0	502.3	583.9	641.8
France	1,259.2	1,331.7	1,338.9	1,390.7	1,422.6	1,483.5	1,492.8	1,471.1	1,621.7	1,705.7
Croatia	24.5	26.4	25.6	28.1	31.0	24.2	25.4	25.8	25.0	30.6
Italy	466.0	489.3	513.1	556.4	571.4	589.4	606.1	657.7	707.3	728.3
Cyprus	6.0	8.3	7.9	7.2	8.2	8.7	9.4	10.0	10.1	10.8
Latvia	47.0	42.0	52.1	49.9	44.9	50.0	53.5	47.0	45.1	47.1
Lithuania	59.9	62.7	67.1	90.8	89.9	94.1	90.1	92.7	92.9	86.4
Luxembourg	6.0	6.4	6.5	7.2	10.4	9.4	10.6	9.9	10.1	10.1
Hungary	141.9	140.2	153.2	160.6	167.5	180.8	177.8	175.7	170.0	170.1
Malta	2.6	2.6	3.1	2.8	3.3	3.5	3.4	3.5	4.4	4.8
Netherlands	274.1	301.9	320.4	321.2	326.4	300.8	298.2	299.5	321.8	324.7
Austria	123.5	121.4	121.3	116.8	118.4	118.8	113.2	118.1	117.4	113.3
Poland	514.2	547.8	559.3	522.0	486.1	454.4	465.9	490.1	499.3	521.9
Portugal	107.3	108.5	106.7	120.7	140.4	145.0	156.6	165.6	167.9	174.9
Romania	173.3	167.5	153.9	143.5	146.8	209.3	202.3	195.5	186.7	183.2
Slovenia	22.4	22.7	23.5	27.1	26.7	23.9	26.3	23.6	21.8	23.1
Slovakia	47.3	49.1	51.9	51.1	50.5	58.4	55.5	52.1	55.9	63.1
Finland	52.1	46.2	40.4	38.8	42.2	38.2	43.6	36.3	35.0	42.4
Sweden	:	:	:	:	240.0	273.9	278.5	242.6	264.4	290.1
United Kingdom	1,955.5	1,924.4	2,017.4	1,918.2	1,981.6	2,098.7	2,192.7	2,223.0	2,038.1	2,019.4

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

The presence of mono-parental families in Romania has known a continuing increase from 2005 up to 2014 in Romania. The rather high difference is explained mainly by the job migration phenomenon, as economic factor, and by the insufficient incomes or wages that cannot provide for the accepted threshold of subsistence. To these factors might be added other reasons such as the increase of early school-leaving in the case of youths, domestic violence, the increase in drug and alcohol consumption, etc. Regarding the other European countries, as can be deduced from the Table, Sweden (one of the welfare states' models) seems to record an increase in the number of mono-parental families with at least one child, while Finland also registers positive outcomes. A negative increase is recorded also in Slovakia and Portugal (where this increase is alarming), the Netherlands, Hungary, Lithuania, Italy, France and Spain (both with an alarming increase), Germany, the Czech R., and Belgium. The image of this phenomenon is reflected at European Union level by a worrying increase from 7.660,5 in 2005 to 9692 in 2014.

Evolution of families with both parents and at least one child in Romania and in the other countries of the European Union

In the following, is presented the evolution of families with both parents and at least one child for Romania, against the other countries of the European Union for the period 2005-2014 (scale 1/1000).

Table 3: Situation of couples with at least one child at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	42,165.8	42,400.1	42,559.0	42,560.3	43,998.1	43,914.2	43,803.4	43,849.0	43,599.9	43,722.8
Belgium	929.5	907.8	900.5	883.0	892.0	888.4	880.0	1,052.0	1,049.8	1,038.7
Bulgaria	595.9	569.0	551.8	523.3	506.4	490.3	450.9	415.5	443.2	481.4
Czech Republic	1,039.8	1,030.9	1,040.4	1,052.3	1,053.6	1,063.6	1,042.5	1,064.3	1,062.1	1,051.4
Denmark	:	:	:	:	:	435.5	433.5	427.9	461.8	468.9
Germany	6,754.9	6,545.5	6,498.5	6,457.7	6,560.9	6,381.4	6,269.9	6,105.6	6,063.6	6,038.8
Estonia	123.4	120.5	118.5	121.8	126.3	124.0	120.6	123.2	122.2	120.9
Ireland	:	401.5	411.8	435.9	458.3	479.1	488.6	495.5	495.0	494.1
Greece	1,005.0	985.1	994.1	984.0	995.6	1,006.1	973.0	949.3	935.4	918.8
Spain	3,561.1	3,622.4	3,704.1	3,848.0	4,023.3	4,142.3	4,250.9	4,294.1	4,311.9	4,274.6
France	6,249.2	6,203.0	6,287.8	6,220.5	6,284.6	6,157.7	6,143.7	6,231.4	6,125.2	6,138.3
Croatia	290.3	295.9	293.6	289.1	280.2	244.0	249.7	259.4	255.8	295.7
Italy	5,392.6	5,501.6	5,565.5	5,581.8	5,637.4	5,634.2	5,654.8	5,563.7	5,560.0	5,546.4
Cyprus	81.4	81.6	81.3	85.7	80.9	79.5	81.0	79.2	80.4	77.9
Latvia	158.0	161.8	152.3	155.0	154.9	140.5	146.5	140.1	139.6	134.5
Lithuania	265.8	254.9	258.4	275.2	264.1	257.2	251.4	241.1	231.5	230.3
Luxembourg	50.7	49.8	51.4	52.9	58.2	56.7	58.3	58.0	60.4	61.6
Hungary	851.5	861.2	855.1	847.6	829.7	813.5	811.7	786.5	772.0	773.1
Malta	38.9	38.0	38.5	36.9	36.2	35.6	35.2	36.9	36.9	35.7
Netherlands	1,681.4	1,683.0	1,677.2	1,654.7	1,654.9	1,686.2	1,672.5	1,683.2	1,666.3	1,653.2
Austria	658.2	661.3	645.2	642.7	638.6	642.7	649.5	640.6	632.7	649.2
Poland	3,308.3	3,294.3	3,295.9	3,277.8	3,339.6	3,226.8	3,222.6	3,233.0	3,216.9	3,249.7
Portugal	1,032.8	1,035.4	1,005.9	998.5	992.7	986.9	977.2	957.2	946.6	969.5

GEO/TIME	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Romania	1,922.0	1,902.9	1,879.6	1,861.5	1,854.9	1,731.8	1,667.3	1,616.2	1,565.0	1,540.6
Slovenia	185.3	184.6	177.1	178.9	186.9	190.1	196.1	195.7	194.5	191.6
Slovakia	432.4	438.8	415.4	421.8	427.6	421.5	424.2	409.8	412.2	418.7
Finland	500.0	513.3	509.4	507.9	500.3	496.9	498.3	499.8	492.4	491.9
Sweden	:	:	:	:	869.6	844.7	837.1	817.0	795.6	894.6
United Kingdom	5,057.2	5,055.7	5,149.7	5,165.7	5,290.5	5,256.8	5,316.3	5,472.9	5,470.7	5,482.8

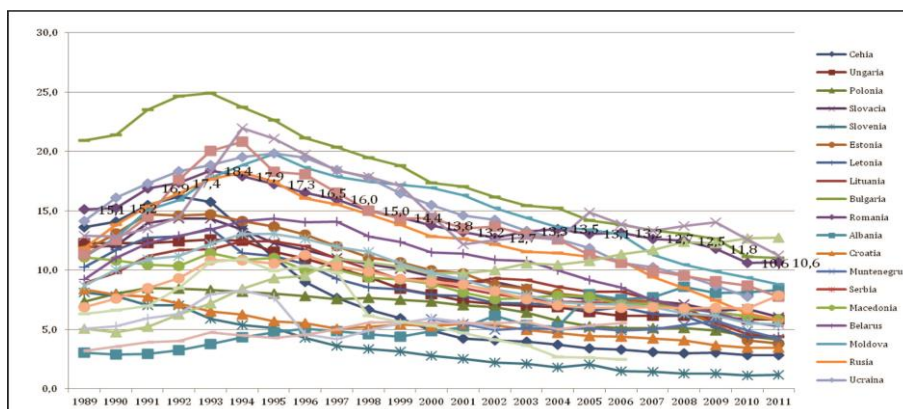
Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

Corresponding to the increase in the numbers of mono-parental families, couples in Romania are, unfortunately, on a decreasing trend. All three statistics are very clear in explaining the reasons why Romania is faced with the population ageing phenomenon. Save for some European countries recording increases with respect to births and population growth, EU is faced, by and large, by the same process of population ageing and, implicitly, with a continuing decrease with respect to labour force, where the only exception is migration as key-indicator in changing the final data. Due to these considerations, it is necessary to approach two major phenomena at EU-level:

1. The autochthonous or host-population is on continuing decrease and ageing.
2. Immigrant population which contributes, as phenomenon, to the increase of the EU population which, otherwise, would decrease.

The birth-rate policies notice an increase in the age of women at the first birth, and a decrease of fertility, this phenomenon being explained partly by the effort of families to adjust to the new economic conditions, while job migration is indicative for the fact that many families could not plan their financial efforts correspondingly at the time of their first child birth. As can be deduced from Figure 3, one child out of ten was born by a young mother, under 20 years of age.

Figure 3: Weight of children born by mothers under 20 years of age in Central and Eastern Europe



Source: TransMonEE data base

Also in the case of very young mothers, as can be noticed from the above figure, Romania records a significant decrease for the period 1989 – 2011.

I literacy, early school-leaving and divorce – a triangle of social issues in Romania today

In Romania, early school-leaving is more frequent in the case of mono-parental families than in traditional families where children are nurtured by both parents. From the perspective of social assistance nowadays, children are the main beneficiaries of some State and European strategies so as to increase the safety, education, and health degree and to improve their quality of life in the spirit of social justice and of the equality of chances (Fitzek, 2015, p.564). In the post-December Romanian context, social assistance is visible in research, but less present in the family protection policies due to the poor resources' support by the State. The material scarcity in rural Romania was an important factor contributing to the increase in the number of divorces and in the early-school leaving growing trend.

In the case of under-aged children, parents play an important role in motivating them for obtaining an education. Behind the indifference or lacking ability to motivate children, chain effects emerge that may lead to social collapse. Alcoholism, drugs, arguments in family, or domestic violence and gambling are all difficulties with repercussions on children. Children from such environments tend to copy parental behaviour as models in the socialisation process and as they shape their own mature personality. For many parents, education no longer is a priority and sometimes they even detest or deny education completely. To this is added the severe poverty because of which parents cannot ensure the minimum necessary living means for their children. The lack of adequate clothing for school, of the necessary stationery, of food and hygiene lead to delicate attitudes and situations when faced with the other children. In the Romanian rural environment, child exploitation for labour in order to ensure food often leads to parents' refuse to allow their children going to school, and this list could be continued.

In the case of Rroma children, most of them are included in a well-defined vulnerable group. Not all parents allow their children going to school, and part of those attending school abandon it as soon as they learn reading and writing. Social marginalisation begins already in the first years of life. For many of the Rroma communities, the economic conditions, the lack of motivation, of hygiene, health and of many other essentials, encourage early school-leaving, and if we add also the lack of efficient policies for social integration on the job, then the situation becomes even more critical.

Another important reason which determines and maintains poverty is the educational level. The complete illiteracy phenomenon simply has worrying shares in the rural area and begins to increase just as much in the urban area. Romania recorded in 2011 a population of 20121641 individuals, and currently we count about 2 million illiterate individuals; a number explained also by the increase in mono-parental families, and within these the phenomenon of early school-leaving develops more frequently. The economic situation of mothers who have to nurture their children alone is increasingly

harder (Stăiculescu A.R.& Jitcov D., 2006, p. 11). In the negative top of the counties registering the highest numbers of illiterates are counted: Calarasi, Giurgiu, Ialomita, Tulcea and Teleorman. In Bucharest was registered the smallest number of illiterates, 1%. However, there are some positive developments in 2011 according to the Census from the respective year, against the data gathered by the 2002 Census when the number of illiterates was at least twice as high at the level of the entire country. Nevertheless, it is still worrying that living in the era of information today, 10% of the population is considered as illiterate according to the comparative census at the beginning of 2000 which mentioned only 4% of population as illiterate (data extracted from the report of the Romanian authorities to UNESCO for the Conference "Education for All in Europe and North America"). If, next to these data we add also functional illiteracy, of about 40 to 45%, then we can state, sadly, that in Romania there are almost 10 million illiterates and half-illiterates. In the following table, we present the situation of early school-leaving in primary and secondary education.

Table 5: Rate of early school-leaving in primary and secondary education (%)

		2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2011/ 2012
Primary education	Total	1,5	1,7	1,7	1,4	1,4	1,6	1,6
Secondary education	Total	2,0	2,1	2,3	2,2	1,9	1,7	2,0

Source: UNICEF 2013, (based on the calculations of experts from the Institute for Education Sciences)

Even though is acknowledged how important is to support education already from early ages, especially in disfavoured areas, Romania is in an alarming situation regarding the increases for this indicator. We mention, in this context, that the aim of the Europe 2020 Strategy is for Romania to reach 95% in the process of integrating children in primary and secondary education.

In the following table we show the situation of early school-leaving at higher education level for the age group between 18 and 24 years of age in Romania and in the other European countries for the period 2008-2014.

Table 6: Early school-leaving for youths between 18 and 24 years of age at European Union level

GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
European Union (28 countries)	14.6	14.2	13.9	13.4	12.7	11.9	11.2
Belgium	12.0	11.1	11.9	12.3	12.0	11.0	9.8
Bulgaria	14.8	14.7	13.9	11.8	12.5	12.5	12.9
Czech Republic	5.6	5.4	4.9	4.9	5.5	5.4	5.5
Denmark	12.5	11.3	11.0	9.6	9.1	8.0	7.8
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	11.8	11.1	11.9	11.6	10.5	9.8	9.5
Estonia	14.0	13.5	11.0	10.6	10.3	9.7	11.4
Ireland	11.4	11.7	11.5	10.8	9.7	8.4	6.9
Greece	14.4	14.2	13.5	12.9	11.3	10.1	9.0

GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
Spain	31.7	30.9	28.2	26.3	24.7	23.6	21.9
France	11.8	12.4	12.7	12.3	11.8	9.7	9.0
Croatia	4.4	5.2	5.2	5.0	5.1	4.5	2.7
Italy	19.6	19.1	18.6	17.8	17.3	16.8	15.0
Cyprus	13.7	11.7	12.7	11.3	11.4	9.1	6.8
Latvia	15.5	14.3	12.9	11.6	10.6	9.8	8.5
Lithuania	7.5	8.7	7.9	7.4	6.5	6.3	5.9
Luxembourg	13.4	7.7	7.1	6.2	8.1	6.1	6.1
Hungary	11.7	11.5	10.8	11.4	11.8	11.9	11.4
Malta	27.2	25.7	23.8	22.7	21.1	20.5	20.3
Netherlands	11.4	10.9	10.0	9.2	8.9	9.3	8.7
Austria	10.2	8.8	8.3	8.5	7.8	7.5	7.0
Poland	5.0	5.3	5.4	5.6	5.7	5.6	5.4
Portugal	34.9	30.9	28.3	23.0	20.5	18.9	17.4
Romania	15.9	16.6	19.3	18.1	17.8	17.3	18.1
Slovenia	5.1	5.3	5.0	4.2	4.4	3.9	4.4
Slovakia	6.0	4.9	4.7	5.1	5.3	6.4	6.7
Finland	9.8	9.9	10.3	9.8	8.9	9.3	9.5
Sweden	7.9	7.0	6.5	6.6	7.5	7.1	6.7
United Kingdom	16.9	15.7	14.8	14.9	13.4	12.3	11.8

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

In this table is highlighted that regarding the indicator of early-school leaving at higher-education level, Romania takes a rather satisfying position, as the top negative performers are Portugal and Spain. However, in the 2008-2009 interval, Romania registered a slight increase (by over 2 percentages), a phenomenon that might be explained based on the interest of youths of not enlisting for higher education in order to leave for working abroad. On the other hand, the percentage of youths planning to pursue higher education abroad increased as well. At the other end, the smallest percentage was recorded by Croatia, a country recently entered into the European family, and that maintains, probably, a rather robust strategy of social and educational policies in order to determine youths to remain in the country.

The absence of a coherent strategy for the last 25 years is noticeable in the lacking vision of social policies from Romania, especially with respect to those dedicated to child education and development. The sustainability of a plan with long-term funds and investments that do not change depending on the minister or government was the main issue of the governmental strategy. The monetary resources allotted to health and education had only insignificant increases for the last 10 years, and in the area of social assistance and protection the policies intended for supporting families as vulnerable groups had an inexplicable decrease.

Table 7: Public expenditures for health, education and social protection as percentage of the gross domestic product

Total public expenditures							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	46.7	46.2	45.5	47.0	51.0	50.6	49.0
Romania	33.6	35.5	38.2	39.3	41.1	40.1	39.4
Health expenditures							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	6.7	6.8	6.7	6.9	7.6	7.4	7.3
Romania	2.7	2.7	3.1	3.2	3.8	3.6	3.4
Education expenditures							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	5.2	5.1	5.1	5.1	5.5	5.5	5.3
Romania	3.6	4.1	3.9	4.5	4.1	3.3	4.1
Social protection expenditures							
	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
EU27	18.2	17.9	17.5	18.0	20.0	19.9	19.6
Romania	11.1	11.0	11.2	12.4	14.6	14.9	14.1

Source: Eurostat statistics, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

Table 8: Expenditures for family and child protection as percentage of total public expenditures on social protection

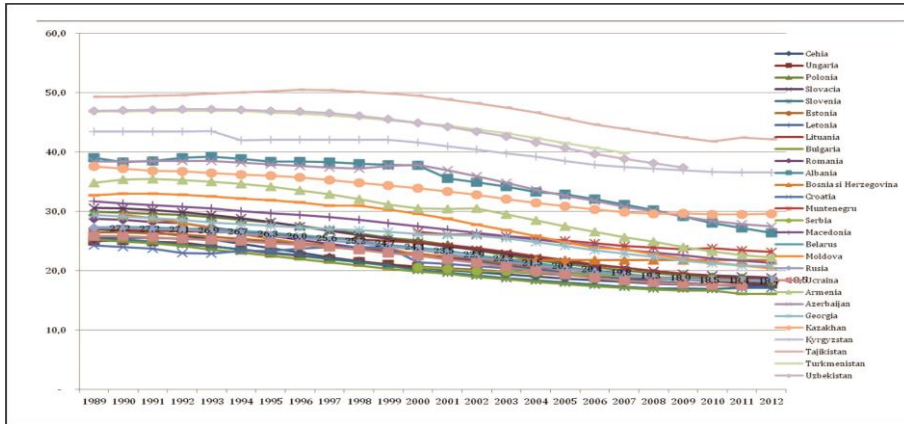
2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
11.3	12.5	13.9	14.1	12.7	10.6	10.0	9.6

Source: Eurostat statistics, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

As can be seen from the above tables, Romania against the European Union is on a continuing decreasing trend regarding the number of children and the weight of expenditures on social protection. It is inexplicable why, while expenditures for child nurturing increased, the aggregate of public expenditures as social assistance decreased. Currently, the weight of children in the urban area is of 16.5%, and the one of children in the rural area of 20.2%, against the nineties, when the data indicated a ratio of 28% and, respectively 29% (NIS: TEMPO-online databank). The two positions show, yet again, why Romania is swiftly entering into a population ageing process, fact which will be felt strongly in the next 20 years.

The next figure shows the weight of children in total population in countries from the central and eastern European region.

Figure 4: Weight of children in total population in the region of Central and Eastern Europe



Source: TransMonEE, data base

From this figure we notice the critical decrease in the weight of children in total population for the area of Central and Eastern Europe. The migration for the last 10 years of Romanian youths as labour force seeking jobs to other countries is an explanation for why Romania is heading slowly but surely towards an irreversible process of population ageing. It should be mentioned that, in this instance we include only the autochthonous population and not the immigrant population from outside the EU.

With respect to health, Romania registered another negative record about the high rate of infant mortality, a fact which shows the acute lack of an emergency redress strategy for these adverse trends.

The next table highlights the situation of infant mortality, which in 2012 was three times lower than in the years 1989-1990. In this respect, Romania registers again a negative record against the other EU countries.

Table 9: Infant mortality in Romania and in other European Union countries

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
UE27	4,9	4,6	4,5	4,3	4,2	4	3,9	:
Bulgaria	10,4	9,7	9,2	8,6	9	9,4	8,5	7,8
Czech R.	3,4	3,3	3,1	2,8	2,9	2,7	2,7	2,6
Germany	3,9	3,8	3,9	3,5	3,5	3,4	3,6	3,4
France	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,8	3,9	3,6	3,5	3,5
Hungary	6,2	5,7	5,9	5,6	5,1	5,3	4,9	4,9
Poland	6,4	6	6	5,6	5,6	5	4,7	4,6
Portugal	3,5	3,3	3,4	3,3	3,6	2,5	3,1	3,4
Romania	15	13,9	12	11	10,1	9,8	9,4	9

Source: Eurostat statistics, <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat>

As noticeable, in the post-crisis period there is a slight decrease against the year 2005, respectively 2006, that is the years with maximum infant mortality rates.

Another poverty reason is of psychological-social nature, and is shown in the conjugal misunderstandings reflected by the divorce rates, especially in the case of families with children. The following table shows the marital status of Romania's population.

In this table can be seen that in 2011, even though for the single status are recorded more men than women, in the case of widow(er) are 5 times more women than men. Same as in the case of divorce, we find more women than men. The number of divorces in Romania did not register any significant variations. According to the NIS data from 2013, the number of divorced couples was of 28507, respectively a decrease by 3000 against the year 2012. The number of those divorced with at least one child in care reached in 2013 the share of 44.2% from total.

Table 10: Marital status in Romania 2011

ROMANIA	STABLE POPULATION TOTAL	LEGAL MARITAL STATUS					Persons living in a consensual union
		Single	Married	Widow(er)	Divorced	Unavailable information	
A	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Both genders	20121641	7676974	9687183	1901912	845882	9690	745534
Male	9788577	4268428	4818357	348869	349223	3700	372767
Female	10333064	3408546	4868826	1553043	496659	5990	372767

Source: Census 2011, <http://www.recensamantromania.ro/rezultate-2/>

As result of the marriage dissolution, over 17000 under-aged children remained with only one parent. From among these divorces, 48.1% were because of the guilt of both partners, 13.2% because of the guilt of the husband, 4.3% because of the wife, and 34.4% were justified by other reasons. As other reasons are counted the migration phenomenon, in this case the couples separating because of the distance imposed by their jobs.

Table 11: Divorces by number of under-aged children remained through marriage dissolution

Years	Total	Without children	With 1 child	With 2 children	With 3 children	With 4 children	With 5 children and over
							With 5 children and over
2006	32672	16558	11878	3544	481	146	65
2007	36308	18929	12825	3851	524	122	57
2008	35685	18910	12166	3881	539	124	65
2009	32341	17410	10616	3653	473	120	69
2010	32632	16922	11299	3727	496	123	65
2011	35780	19626	11591	3865	500	129	69

Source: NIS, <http://www.insse.ro/cms/ro/content/anuarul-statistic-2013>, Statistical Yearbook, 2013.

As can be seen from this table, as well, the highest rate of marriage dissolutions as total number was recorded in 2007, one year before the outbreak of the economic-financial crisis in 2008, and the lowest rate is registered in 2009. The 2008 crisis did not represent an immediate factor in increasing the number of marriage dissolutions. Same situation is noticed also in the case of families with one or more children. However, between 2010 and 2011 a slight increase is registered which could be explained based on the effects of the crisis on the financial situation.

Hereunder we present the situation of marriage dissolutions at EU-level, as well (calculated per total, without the criterion regarding the number of children, for the period 2008-2013).

Table 12: Marriage dissolutions at EU-level in families with at least one child

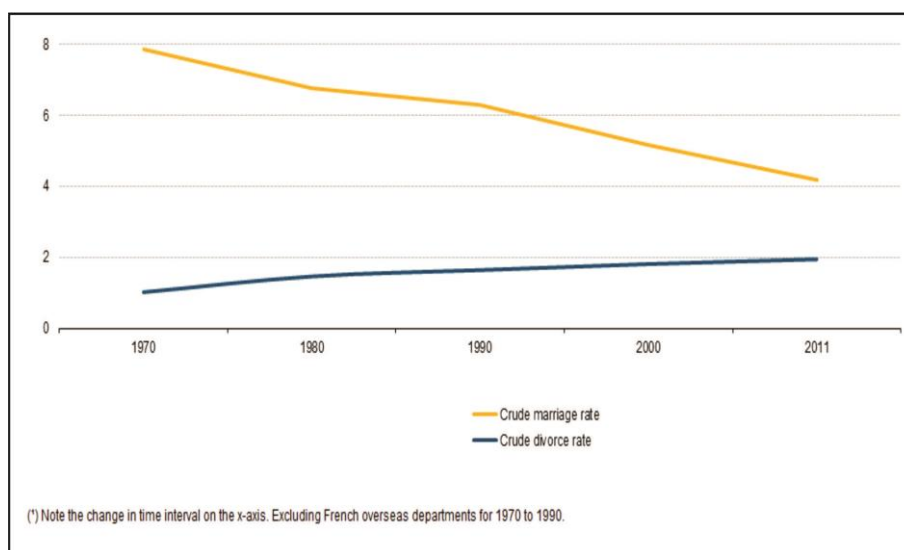
GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	1,019,104	974,575	986,247	986,066	:	:
Belgium	35,366	32,606	28,903	27,522	26,145	:
Bulgaria	14,104	11,662	11,012	10,581	11,947	10,908
Czech Republic	31,300	29,133	30,783	28,113	26,402	27,895
Denmark	14,695	14,940	14,460	14,484	15,709	18,875
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	191,948	185,817	187,027	187,640	179,147	:
Germany (including former GDR)	191,948	185,817	187,027	187,640	179,147	169,833
Estonia	3,501	3,189	2,989	3,099	3,142	3,343
Ireland	3,630	3,341	3,113	2,819	2,892	:
Greece	13,163	13,607	13,275	12,705	14,880	:
Spain	109,922	98,207	102,690	103,290	104,262	95,427
France	132,594	130,601	133,909	132,977	:	:
France (metropolitan)	129,379	:	130,810	129,802	:	:
Croatia	5,025	5,076	5,058	5,662	5,659	5,992
Italy	54,351	54,456	54,160	53,806	51,319	:
Cyprus	1,639	1,738	1,929	1,934	2,036	:
Latvia	6,214	5,099	4,930	8,302	7,311	7,031
Lithuania	10,317	9,270	10,006	10,341	10,399	9,974
Luxembourg	977	1,052	1,083	1,218	1,074	1,163
Hungary	25,155	23,820	23,873	23,335	21,830	20,209
Malta	:	:	:	42	441	338
Netherlands	32,236	30,779	33,723	33,755	34,721	33,636
Austria	19,701	18,806	17,474	17,295	17,006	:
Poland	65,475	65,345	61,300	64,594	64,432	66,132
Portugal	26,394	26,464	27,903	26,750	25,380	22,525
Romania	35,685	32,341	32,632	35,780	31,324	28,507
Slovenia	2,246	2,297	2,430	2,298	2,509	2,351
Slovakia	12,675	12,671	12,015	11,102	10,948	10,946
Finland	13,471	13,527	13,619	13,469	13,040	13,766
Sweden	21,377	22,211	23,593	23,389	23,422	26,933
United Kingdom	135,943	126,520	132,358	129,764	130,469	:

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

As observable in the above table, the negative top of marriage dissolution is led by Germany (related to a population of 82.5 million inhabitants) and Great Britain (with a

population of over 63 million). Romania recorded in the year 2014 a number of 35685 thousand marriage dissolutions in total, and the trend is slightly increasing, save for the year 2011. In order to understand and make clearer these data regarding the evolution of marriage dissolutions in relation to the decrease in the number of marriages, we consider the following Eurostat figure as relevant:

Figure 5: *The relationship between the number of marriages against the number of marriage dissolutions at European Union level for the period 1970 – 2011*



Source: Eurostat, http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/statistics-explained/images/a/ae/Crude_marriage_and_divorce_rates%2C_EU-28%2C_1970%E2%80%932011_%28%2B%29_%28per_1_000_inhabitants%29_YB15.png

The figure above shows that the number of marriage dissolutions increases, but the number of marriages decreases in the interval 1970-2011. Europe, as reflected by the statistics on topic, is in a certain demographic decline. With respect to children born to unmarried couples, the data show that the young families from Romania, just like the ones from other EU countries, have registered an increase against the traditional type of family. In the 28 member-states, in 2012, over 40% of the children were born outside the wedlock. Extra-marital births increased gradually in almost all EU-28 countries. If we compare 2012 with 2011, about this evolution, save for Estonia, an increase was registered in all other countries, including Romania. A worrying fact is that in 7 of the member-states, the majority of children were born outside wedlock, as follows: Bulgaria (59.1% in 2013), Estonia (58.4% in 2012), Slovenia (58.0% in 2013), France (56.7% in 2012), Sweden (54.4% in 2013), and Belgium (52.3% in 2012), as well as Denmark (51.5% in 2013). In Iceland, in 2012, was registered the highest number of

births before marriage, respectively 66.9%. On the other hand, the Mediterranean countries – Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy and Malta – to which are added the central and eastern European countries Poland and Lithuania, are at the opposite pole with over 70% of the couples having children inside marriage. An extra-EU-28 associated country, Turkey, has the absolute record of over 97% of children born to married couples (Eurostat Report, 2013).

Table 13: Share of births outside marriage in EU-28 countries

GEO/TIME	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
European Union (28 countries)	36.7	37.6	38.6	39.3	40.0	:
Belgium	44.6	45.5	45.7	50.0	52.3	:
Bulgaria	51.1	53.4	54.1	56.1	57.4	59.1
Czech Republic	36.3	38.8	40.3	41.8	43.4	45.0
Denmark	46.2	46.8	47.3	49.0	50.6	51.5
Germany (until 1990 former territory of the FRG)	32.1	32.7	33.3	33.9	34.5	34.8
Germany (including former GDR)	32.1	32.7	33.3	33.9	34.5	34.8
Estonia	59.0	59.2	59.1	59.7	58.4	:
Ireland	33.4	33.4	33.8	33.9	35.1	:
Greece	5.9	6.6	7.3	7.4	7.6	7.0
Spain	33.2	34.5	35.5	37.4	39.0	40.9
France	52.6	53.7	55.0	55.8	56.7	:
France (metropolitan)	51.6	52.9	54.1	55.0	55.8	:
Croatia	12.0	12.9	13.3	14.0	15.4	16.1
Italy	18.9	19.8	21.5	23.4	24.5	26.9
Cyprus	8.9	11.7	15.2	16.9	18.6	:
Latvia	43.2	43.5	44.4	44.6	45.0	44.6
Lithuania	26.6	25.4	25.7	27.7	28.8	29.5
Luxembourg	30.2	32.1	34.0	34.1	37.1	37.8
Hungary	39.5	40.8	40.8	42.3	44.5	45.6
Malta	25.4	27.4	25.3	23.0	25.7	25.9
Netherlands	41.2	43.3	44.3	45.3	46.6	47.4
Austria	38.8	39.3	40.1	40.4	41.5	:
Poland	19.9	20.2	20.6	21.2	22.3	23.4
Portugal	36.2	38.1	41.3	42.8	45.6	47.6
Romania	27.4	28.0	27.7	30.0	31.0	30.5
Slovenia	52.8	53.6	55.7	56.8	57.6	58.0
Slovakia	30.1	31.6	33.0	34.0	35.4	37.0
Finland	40.7	40.9	41.1	40.9	41.5	42.1
Sweden	54.7	54.4	54.2	54.3	54.5	54.4
United Kingdom	45.4	46.3	46.9	47.3	47.6	:

Source: Eurostat statistics (<http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>)

Romania registers a slight increase in 2008, up to and including the year 2013 from 27.4% to 30.5%. Nevertheless, against other EU countries, the increase is not significant, as opposed to Cyprus and Portugal, where the increases are about 10 pp. Correlating the evolution of births inside marriage with the indicator of divorces, we notice an interesting similarity: in 2008, in Romania were recorded 35685 divorces, according to Eurostat, while in the same year 27.4% of the children were born outside

the wedlock. In 2013 the number of marriage dissolutions in Romania was of 28507, according to Eurostat data, and the percentage of children born outside the marriage was of 30.5%. The two rows of statistical data show that, even though in 2008 were recorded more marriage dissolutions than in 2013, the number of children born outside the marriage is higher in 2013.

Conclusions

Family is the micro-social centre in which is reflected the demographic stability of a society. Its particularities depend on the economic and social status of the individuals, who depend on a system which is required to ensure a minimum of vital needs and necessities (Arpinte D., Cace S., Theotokatos H., Koumalatsou E.; 2010). The right to health, education and work indicate the self-esteem as categorical imperative for the times we are living in. “Even though after 1997 was opened the path for social assistance community services centred on child and family that were thereafter developed and expanded based on governmental policies after 2001, for the last 8 years the decision factors left this central component of social assistance only in the responsibility of the social funds which were developed based on European programmes” (Zamfir, 2015, p. 45).

A first general conclusion shows that in Romania increased the number of mono-parental families to the detriment of families with both parents. The last data indicate that Romania heads gradually towards an irreversible process of population ageing. Save for few European countries which register increases, most of the EU-28 countries are faced today with major demographic issues. Due to these considerations it is necessary to mention two categories of population at the level of the European Union:

1. Autochthonous or host-population which is on continuing decrease and ageing.
2. Immigrant population which due to the exponential increase of the last 5 years determines an increase in the overall EU-28 population.

These data show that traditional family is on continuing decline for reasons exceeding economic and social indicators. Its complex form implies, as well, other criteria determinant for population decrease, such as the increasing number of marriage dissolutions in favour of a growing number of mono-parental families. To the question: ‘Romania and the European Union where to?’ and to the one about medium- and long-term mitigation solutions, the answers depend on the positive or negative evolution of families with both parents, an aspect poorly represented and supported by the current social protection policies from Romania. Currently, the development and support policies for families as vulnerable group did not find any answers for the showcased issue.

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