

## **Demographic characteristics of the population in Macedonia**

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### **Abstract**

As anywhere in the world, including Macedonia, the population as a social category represents a complex population system. It is divided in two types of natural movement of the population. At the end of the second millennium and on the verge of the third one in Macedonia's geographic area, significant changes have taken place in the socioeconomic plan and especially in the demographic one of its population. The changes have happened due to two segments: the natural movement and the mechanic one which is known as migration.

Initially the paper gives a general overview of natural movement of the population, developing further towards some data of 1900s and on. Moreover, it discusses the natural movement of the population based on nationality.

Special emphasis is given to the natural movement of the population, which affects the movement of the total population in the Republic of Macedonia.

The paper treats the natural increase of the population in the Republic of Macedonia for the period from 1994 to the present day, namely its ratio by nationality.

Finally, personal opinions based on the current situation are given, which might highly affect the changes in the overall number of the population in Macedonia.

*Keywords:* population, natality, mortality, nationality, demographic.

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### **1. Introduction**

At the end of the second millennium and on the eve of the third one in the geographic area of today's Macedonia, intensive changes have taken place in the socioeconomic plan, especially in the demographic one of its population. Within this demographic, special emphasis should be placed on the natural movement of the population, which has a strong influence on the numerical population movement in this country. In this paper, the following will be about the natural increase of the general population of Macedonia, the differences according to national affiliation, as well as in the last decades of the twentieth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century, with particular emphasis on differences in the natural movement of the population in Macedonia between the municipalities.

Population as a social category anywhere in the world including here, the territory of Macedonia, represents a complex system that is closely and uninterruptedly linked to the two basic demographic components of the population, such as the natural movement of the population (the consequence of fertility and mortality of the population) and the mechanical movement of the population (migrations).

These two above-mentioned demographic segments are in continuous interdependence, which also results from the population trends of a municipality or country as a whole. In the second half of the twentieth century and the first decade of the nineteenth century, there was a tendency of decrease in the natural movement of the population, but with differences between municipalities, decrease in fertility rates and mortality due to heterogeneous national, economic and other composition. Although there are many ethnicities in this country, the facts speak differently, as Slavic Albanians and Macedonians dominate, then minorities of Turks, Roma, Serbs follow. In the methodological point of view, the natural movement of the population according to nationality obtained from official statistical data for liveborn infants and deceased persons, always in relation to the first component, so that such a

comparison was made because of providing and analyzing this demographic segment by different municipalities and nationalities at country level.

## **2. General characteristics of the population**

The study of demographic problems is of great importance for the recognition and overall social development of every country and nation. Therefore, in all countries, demography as a science of complex population development is increasingly gaining ground in social sciences and there is a growing need for an interdisciplinary approach to population study.

When it comes to the numerical dynamics of the population either in a municipality, settlement, rural or urban environment, it can only be transmitted through natural / biological population movement, as well as through mechanical movement / migration of the population. Also, changes in the overall population and its natural movement are quite complex problems, especially in the Albanian population, as its demographic flow lags behind the various factors, primarily the historical one.

## **3. General movement of the population**

The first data on the total population of Macedonia are of 1900s, while the latter are of 1913. They are not the result of official records, but the population records collected by different teachers and clerics, as well as by the registrants appointed by the local government. The first official censuses of the Macedonian population were made in 1921 and 1931.

Despite the accuracy of the post-World War II registration, the number of population in Macedonia has undergone significant changes. However, in the last decade of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century, there is a transitional period of different socio-economic flows in the Republic of Macedonia. These socio-economic segments of the period in question are of a social, economic, historical, political, transformational and similar nature. This is also related to the fact that Macedonia in the 1990s was seceded from Yugoslavia. All of these phenomena had strong impacts first and foremost in the demographic trends of the population of this country, especially in the natural movement of the general population, which is very sensitive at the time of such economic-political, historical transformations. So, we will best present such a phenomenon through a table overview below.

**Table 1. Total Population Movement, 1994-2016**

No.	Year	Total	Basic index	Ordinal index	Natural Growth in%
1.	1994	1 945 932	100	/	9,10
2.	2002	2 020 157	103,8	103,8	4,85
3.	2016	2 072 490	106,5	102,6	1,24

Sources: State Statistical Office of RM

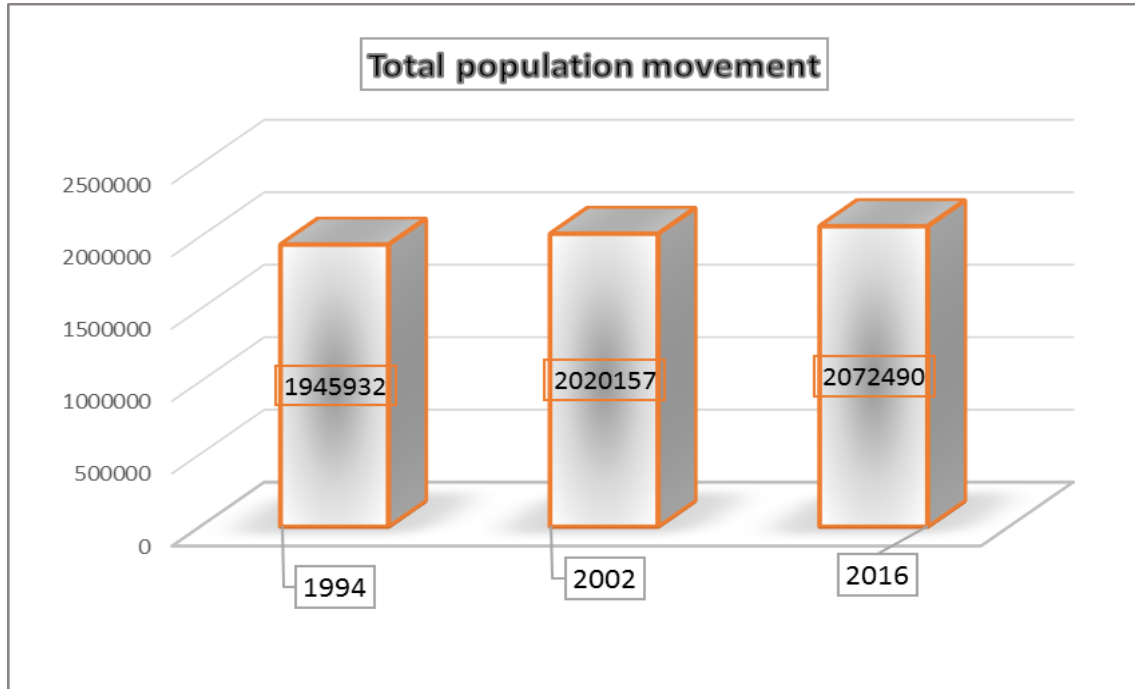


Fig. 1. Total population movement, 1994-2016

Based on the statistical data of the table above, we note that the natural movement of the Macedonian population in the last decade of the last century (XX) and the first decade of this century (XXI) has decreased. Considering that in 1994 there was a high increase of 9.10‰, compared to 2016 this value decreased significantly to 1.24‰, which means that within a period of twenty years, Macedonia at the country level has dropped to 7.86‰. Meanwhile, the annual natural increase of the Macedonian population over the period 1994-2016 has been for 126,558 inhabitants.

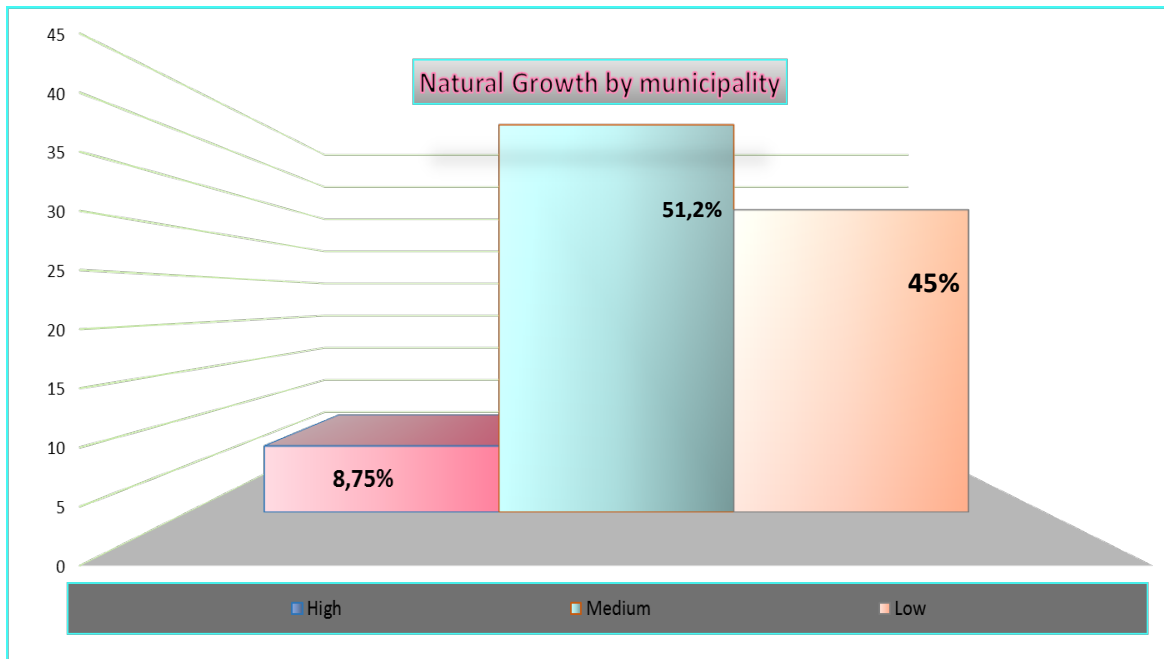
The trends of the decline of the natural increase of the Macedonian population have been influenced by a number of factors such as: the independence of the country from Yugoslavia, the wars in Slovenia, Croatia and the most tragic in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo; the 2001 conflict, switching from the planned economy to that of the market. In other words, a psychosis of insecurity was caused because in this eco-political transition many enterprises were closed and many workers were left without jobs, all of which had an impact on the existential insecurity of the population with that of the declining fertility rate. In addition, other important factors that have contributed to lowering fertility are: emancipation of the society, female education, family planning, growth of living standard, etc.

This demographic segment of the Macedonian population shows large spatial changes due to heterogeneity of the population here. All these obstacles are determined by many causes of different ethnic, socio-economic, socio-psychological and similar nature. Below is a table of contents reflecting the natural population growth rate, categorized by municipalities, with high, medium and low increase.

Table 2. Natural movement of population by municipality

Year	Number of municipality	Natural movement of population		
		High Natural Growth	Medium Natural Growth	Low Natural Growth
2016	80	7	41	32

Sources: State Statistical Office of RM



**Fig. 2. Natural Growth by municipality**

In these municipalities, according to data from 2016, there were 2 072 490 inhabitants, who provided a natural increase of the total population for 1.24%. Out of a total of 80 municipalities, 41 of them have a low increase, which make up 51.2% of the country's territory: Old Nagoričani (-12.6‰); Debora (-11.5‰); Novaci (-11.2‰); Makedonski Brod (-9.5‰); Demir Hisar (-9.1‰); Pehcheva (-8.3‰); Kratova (-7.6‰); Berovo (-7.1‰); Novosella (-6.1‰); Cesinova (-5.5‰); Resen (-5.2‰); Sveti Nikolla (-5.0‰); Probistip (-4.6‰); Zrnoci (-4.3‰); Krivogashtani (-4.3‰); Delcevo (-4.2‰); Mogilla (-3.7‰); Rosomani (-3.4‰); Bosilova (-3.1‰); City (-2.8‰); Rankoci (-2.7‰); Prilep (-2.6‰); Vinica (-2.2‰); Vevchani, Mavrovo and Rostusha and Makedonska Kamenica (-2.0‰); Krusheva (-1,8‰); Gevgelija (-1.6‰); Kriva Pallanka, Jegunovca and Dojran (-1.5‰); then Kicevo (-1.4‰); Bogdanci (-1.3‰); Kocani (-1.2‰); Demir Kapia, Negotino and Veles (-1.1‰); and with the addition of negative and very close to zero are the municipalities: Ohrid (-0.9‰); Lozova (-0.8‰) and Kavadarci (-0.5‰).

It is noteworthy that negative demographic values are recorded in these municipalities, which means that the number of deceased people in these municipalities is greater than of newborns. The ethnic communities in question are more composed of Macedonians. While the consequences of this deportable process are known, the decline in the number of students, that is, the closure of schools in the first place, the breakdown of the age structure of the population, leads to the depopulation of the respective space. The cause of this negative population phenomenon is explained to some parameters, especially because of the emigration of the population of this area to the capital Skopje. However, such a "shadow" is conveyed by almost all municipalities in this area, where the Macedonian population lives. Skenderi (2000) claims "On the other hand, if we use the comparative method in some large parts of the country, in that case it will be clearly established that the Lower Pollog is obviously populated, and some of its settlements are even too overcrowded. If we compare the Tikvesh Valley to the Vardar Central Valley (Bardha), then the Stip-Ovce Poles area in the central part of the Bregallnica River and Kriva Reka River with the municipalities of Kriva Palanka, Kratovo and Rankovce, all of these areas have 4426 km<sup>2</sup>, with 249 settlements and 6 cities, have as many populations as Lower Pollog". These consequences come as a result of the wrong ethnic politics of the Macedonian state because of the emigrant orientation of the Macedonian population from the central and eastern parts of the country to Skopje.

It is also worth noting that in areas where Albanians do not live (the eastern and central part) in the period 1994-2016, not only the scope of involvement of the deportable process is expanded, but also the rate of negative demographic values. But let's not forget that this lack of population in this area lives in Skopje, which we have more or less explained above, as the Macedonians have turned it into a huge economic, political, cultural, administrative, educational center but not for Albanians. In 2016, in the group of municipalities with a low population share are: Demir Hisari, which

had -9.1%, while Veles municipality had -1.1%. These negative demographic trends in the given period occur mainly in areas inhabited by Macedonians. In the period 1994–2016 with the increase of the population of the population were recorded 22 municipalities: Dolneni 0.1%, Karbinci and Shtipi 0.3%, Konçe 0.6%, Ilinden and Vrapchisht 1.0%, Gostivar 1.3%, Kumanovo and Strumica 1.5%, Radovis 2,1%, Tearca 2,4%, Zhupa Center 3,5%, Dibra and Struga 3,9%, Tetovo 4,6%.

In this group of municipalities the lowest increase is Nagoričani municipality with -12.6%, while the municipality of Studenicani is with the highest increase of 17.2%. At the same time, in the group of municipalities with high natural population growth are: Studenicani with 17,2%, Zelenikova 14,2%, Saracina 11,8%, Caska 10,1%, Çučer Sandeva 7,1%, Zhelina 7,0% and Likova 6,6%, which have an impact on the increase of the natural growth rate at the country level.



**4. General movement of the population according to nationality**

Apart from the general follow-up of the natural movement of the population in general, in the period after World War II, the census was made according to the nationality of the Macedonian population. According to official statistics of 1994 in Macedonia there are 1,945,932 inhabitants, of which 1,295,964 Macedonians, or 66.6‰; followed by Albanians with 441.104 inhabitants or 22.9‰, then Turks 78,019 or 4.0‰, Roma 43 707 or 2,2‰, Serbs 4 028 inhabitants or 2,1‰, Vlachs 8 601 or 0.44‰, Bosniacs 6 829 inhabitants or 0.3‰, Bulgarians 1 682 inhabitants or 0.1‰, Greeks 368 inhabitants or 0.02‰, Montenegrins 2 318 inhabitants or 0.1‰ and others 27 112 residents or 1.4‰.

According to the official statistics on the last census of population, conducted in 2002 in Macedonia there are 2 022 547 inhabitants, of which Macedonians were majority; 1297981 or 64,2‰, in second place there are Albanians with 509083 inhabitants or 25.2‰, then Turks 77959 inhabitants or 3.9‰, Roma 53879 inhabitants or 2.7‰, and Serbs 35938 inhabitants or 1.8‰, Vlachs 9695 inhabitants or 0.48‰, Bosniaks 17018 inhabitants or 0,8‰, Bulgaria 1487 inhabitants or 0.1‰, Greeks 422 inhabitants or 0.02‰, Montenegrins 2 003 inhabitants or 0.1‰ and others 27 112 inhabitants or 1.4‰.

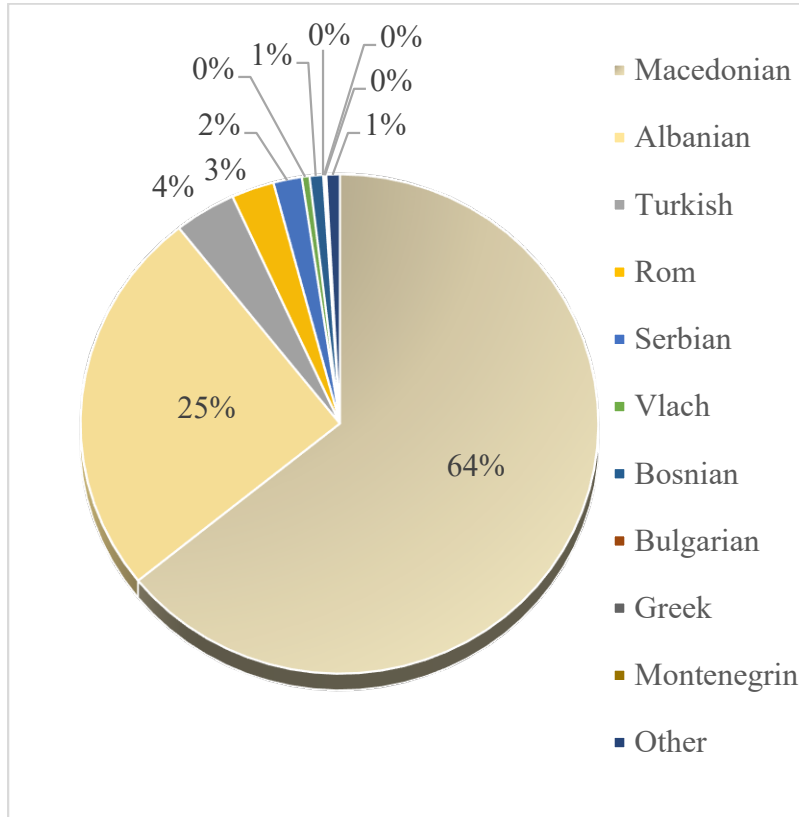
It is worth noting that the multinational composition of Macedonia is in correlation with many other factors that influence the formation of the components of the natural movement of the population here such as the gender composition of the population, age, educational, socio-economic, etc. All of the factors involved have an impact on the fertility rate, mortality with that of natural increase, with obvious differences between nationalities.

The table below shows the natural movement of the Macedonian population according to the national composition.

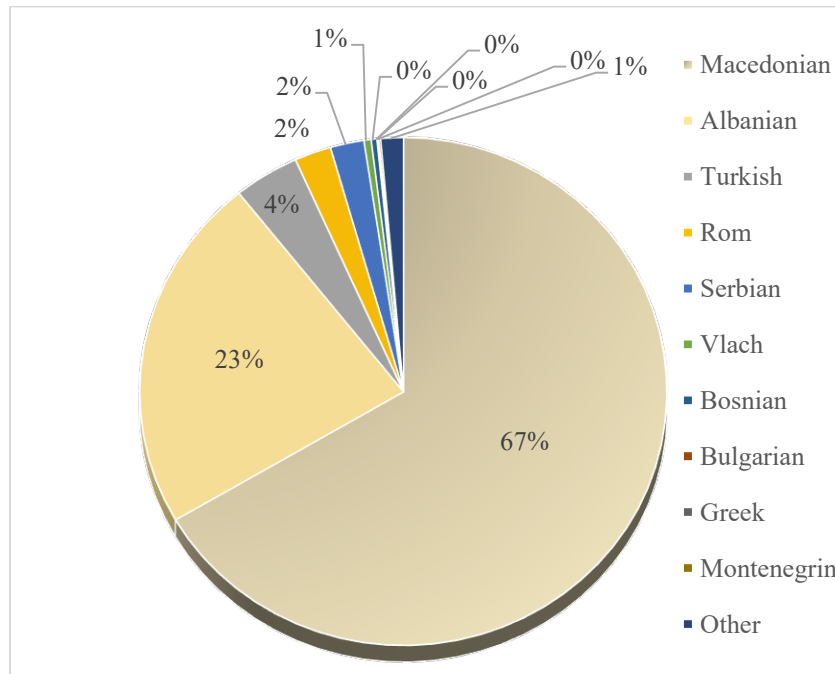
**Table 3. Total movement by ethnicity (1994-2002)**

<b>Republic of Macedonia</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>2002</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Total</b>	1945932	100	2022547	100
<b>Macedonian</b>	1295964	66,6	1297981	64,2
<b>Albanian</b>	441104	22,7	509083	25,2
<b>Turkish</b>	78019	4,0	77959	3,9
<b>Roma</b>	43707	2,2	53879	2,7
<b>Serbian</b>	40228	2,1	35938	1,8
<b>Vlach</b>	8601	0,44	9695	0,48
<b>Bosnian</b>	6829	0,3	17018	0,8
<b>Bulgarian</b>	1682	0,1	1487	0,1
<b>Greek</b>	368	0,02	422	0,02
<b>Montenegrin</b>	2318	0,1	2003	0,1
<b>Other</b>	27112	1,4	17082	0,84

Sources: State Statistical Office of RM



**Fig. 4. Total movement by ethnicity, 1994**



**Fig. 5. Total movement by ethnicity, 2002**

From the table above, we notice significant changes in the natural population growth movement in Macedonia according to the nationalities given in the table. In general, the movement of the natural population increase in this period of time (1994-2002) is constantly decreasing at country level, but there is growth in some nations such as: Albanians for 2.5‰, Roma 0.5‰, Vlachs for 0.04‰, Bosniaks by 0.5‰, Greeks and Montenegrins have the same percentage, while natural increase decreases: Macedonians a drastic decrease of 2.4‰, Turks to 0.1‰, Serbs to 0,3‰, while other nationalities have a reduction of 0.5‰.

In this period of natural population growth, the population growth is dominated by the Albanian population by 9000 inhabitants annually at the country level or 52‰, which means that in 1990 it was 43‰, while in 1996 it increased to 58‰ or 15‰, more between the 1994-2002 recording years.

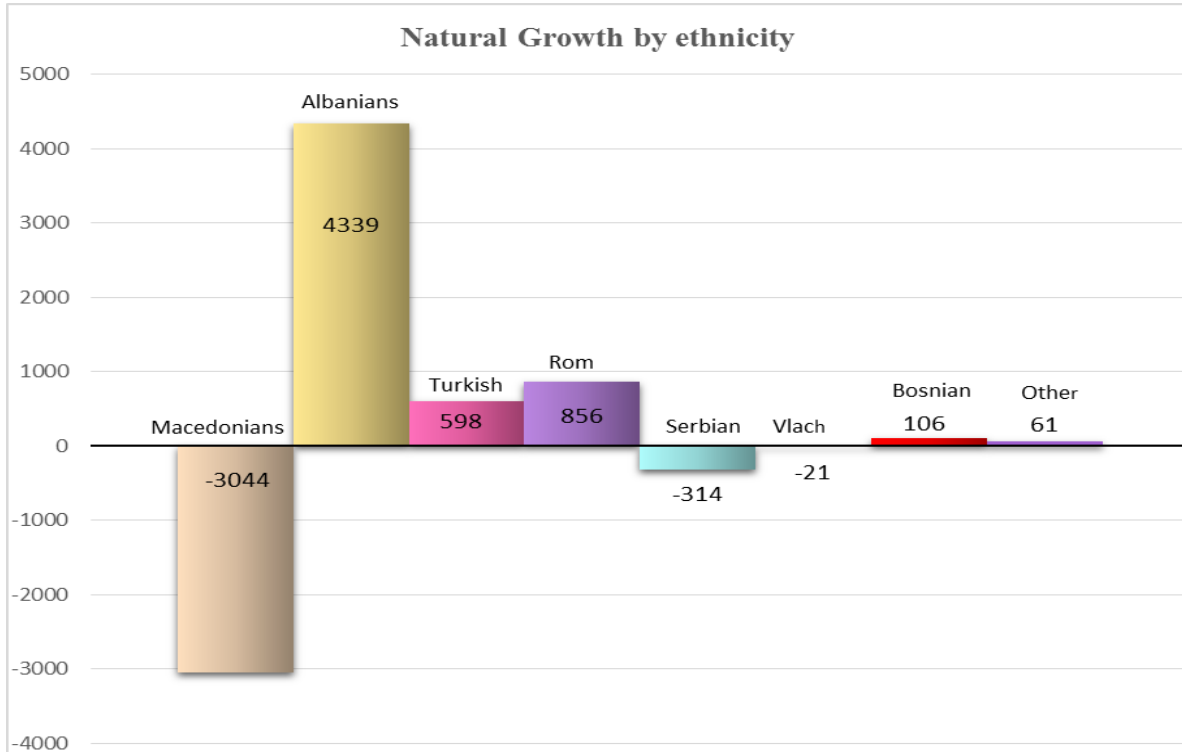
The table below relates to the natural increase of the Macedonian population by nationality, based on official data for 2016.

**Table 4. Natality, Mortality and Natural Growth of population of RM by ethnicity, 2016**

<b>Republic of Macedonia</b>	<b>Natality</b>	<b>‰</b>	<b>Mortality</b>	<b>‰</b>	<b>Natural Growth</b>	<b>‰</b>
<b>Total</b>	23 002	11,09	20 421	9,85	2581	1,24
<b>Macedonians</b>	12 047	5,81	15 091	7,28	-3 044	-1,46
<b>Albanians</b>	7774	3,75	3435	1,65	4339	2,09
<b>Turkish</b>	1031	0,49	433	0,21	598	0,28
<b>Roma</b>	1334	0,64	478	0,23	856	0,41
<b>Serbian</b>	131	0,06	445	0,21	-314	-0,15
<b>Vlach</b>	23	0,01	44	0,02	-21	-0,01
<b>Bosnian</b>	233	0,11	127	0,06	106	0,05
<b>Other</b>	429	0,20	368	0,17	61	0,02

*Sources:* State Statistical Office of RM





**Fig. 6. Natural growth of population of RM by nationality, 2016**

According to the official data of 2016, the natural increase of the population at the country level is 1.24%, while in terms of nationality, very low natural and negative values are presented in Macedonians and the natural increase of -1.4‰, Serbs - 0.15‰ and Vlachs 0.01‰, while the greatest impact on the natural increase is achieved by the nationalities, which participate with positive natural increase, Albanians with an average 2.09‰, Turks with 0.28‰, Roma with 0.41‰, Bosniaks with 0.05‰ and others with 0.02‰.

Although the Macedonian population here is counted as a majority population, it still negatively affects the natural increase of the Macedonian population, while on the other hand the Albanian population, although treated as a national minority population, still has a higher natural increase of the population compared to other nations. There is an intensive drop in the fertility rate of Macedonians, whereby the rate of natural increase of this population decreases. On the other hand, Albanians have a solid degree of fertility with that of natural growth. For example, only a few Albanian municipalities such as Tetovo, Gostivar, Kicevo, Dibra, Struga annually provide over 5,000 new residents, while all Macedonians annually increase by almost two times less than the mentioned Albanian municipalities in Macedonia.

## 5. Summary

Although many ethnicities are considered to live in the Republic of Macedonia, the facts speak differently, as Albanians and Slavic Macedonians prevail in the Republic of Macedonia, then classic minorities are Turks, Roma, Serbs, etc. Considering that in 1994 there was a high increase of 9,10‰, compared to 2016 this value decreased significantly to 1,24‰, which means that for a period of twenty years, Macedonia at the country level has a decrease of 7.86‰, although the increase of the total population in the period 1994-2016 was for 126 558 inhabitants.

This is also evidenced by the fact that in Macedonia, out of 80 municipalities, only 7 municipalities have a high natural increase and those municipalities are inhabited with Albanian population. The municipality which holds the primacy for the highest increase in the country is the Municipality of Studeničani with 17,2‰, mostly inhabited by Albanian population, while the number of municipalities with a low increase is 36 municipalities, nearly half of the municipalities of the country, while the other half 41 have an average increase even with a tendency of continuous decrease.

The multinational composition of Macedonia is in correlation with many other factors that influence the formation of the components of the natural movement of the local population, i.e the gender, age, educational, socio-economic and other components of the population. All of these factors have an impact on the fertility rate, mortality and even natural increase, with distinct differences between ethnicities / nationalities.

There is an intensive drop in fertility rate for Macedonians, whereby the rate of natural increase of this population decreases, on the other hand Albanians have a solid degree of fertility with that of a natural increase.

Analyzing these demographic parameters we conclude that these trends of natural decline and fertility for a very short period lead the country to negative values of natural increase, with that also in demographic aging of the population.

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