

Municipal perspectives on migration and arrival
between Romania, Bulgaria and the Ruhr Area in Germany
Timișoara 23.05. – 25.05.2023

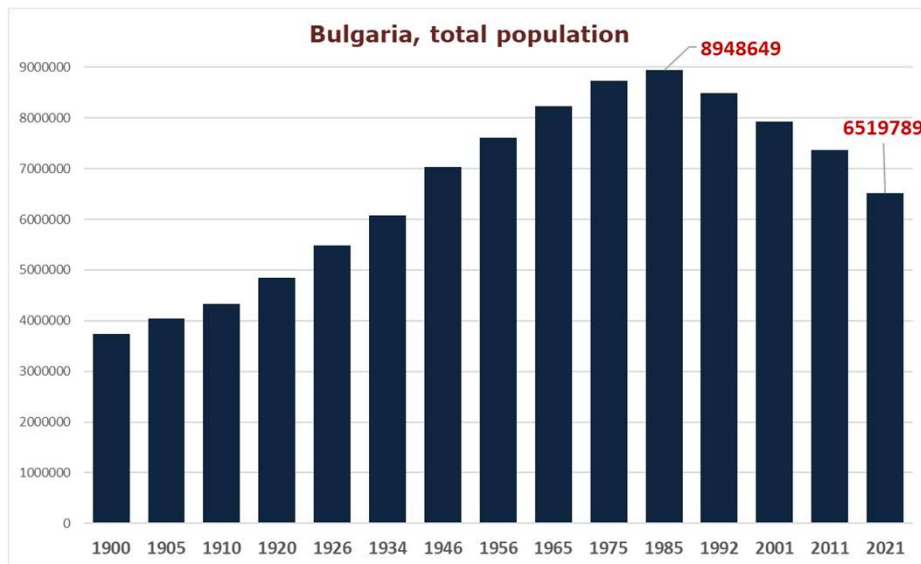
Bulgaria: Recent migration trends and effects



Alexey Pamporov, PhD

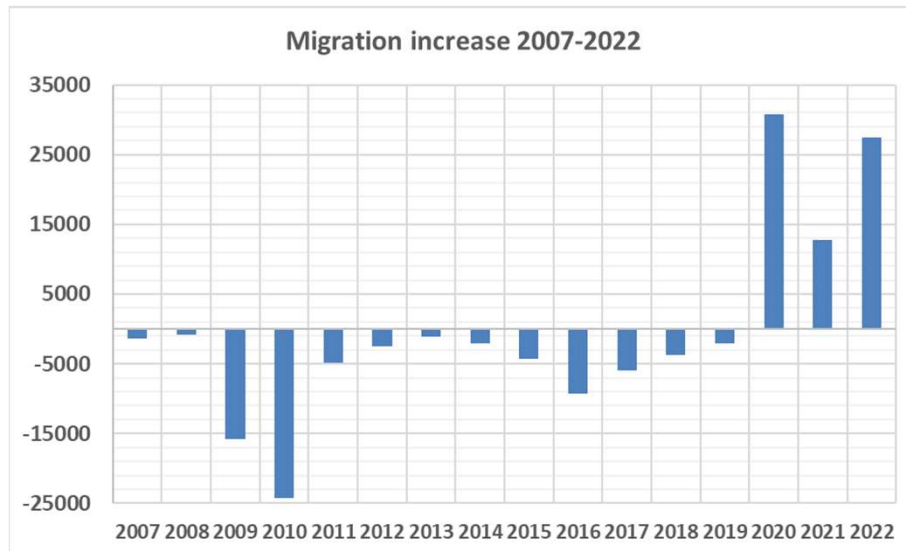
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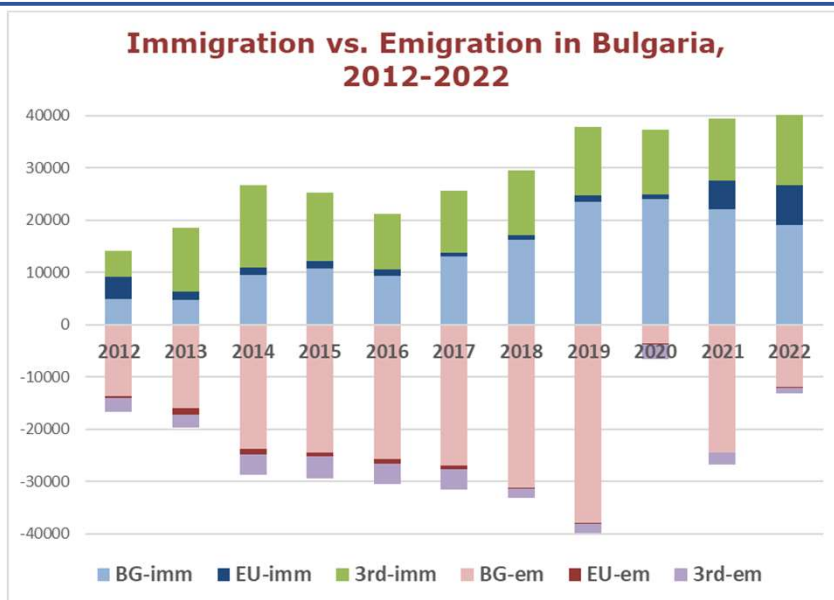
Source: NSI

The total population in Bulgaria is decreasing since the end of the socialist regime and the beginning of the transition to market economy.

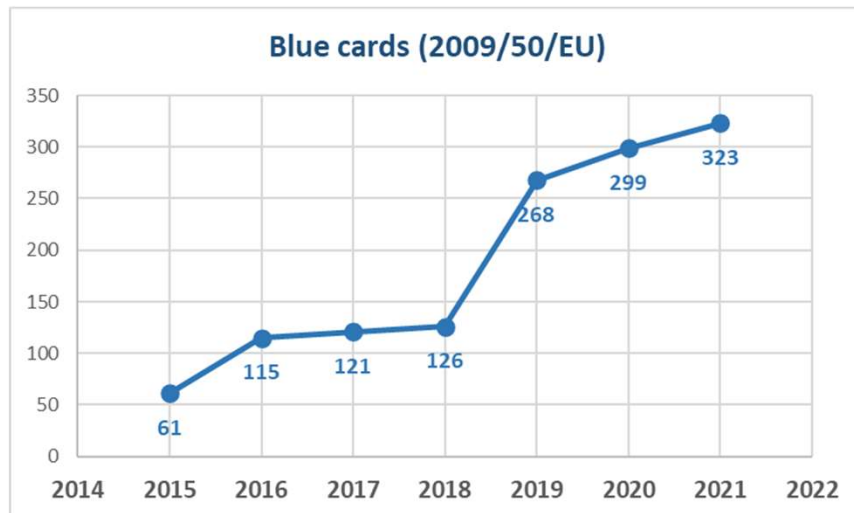


Source: NSI

Bulgaria used to have a negative migration increase since the 1990s and joining the EU, in 2007, didn't change that trend. However, the Covid-19 pandemic was the first pull trigger, and for the past 3 years, there is a significant positive increase.

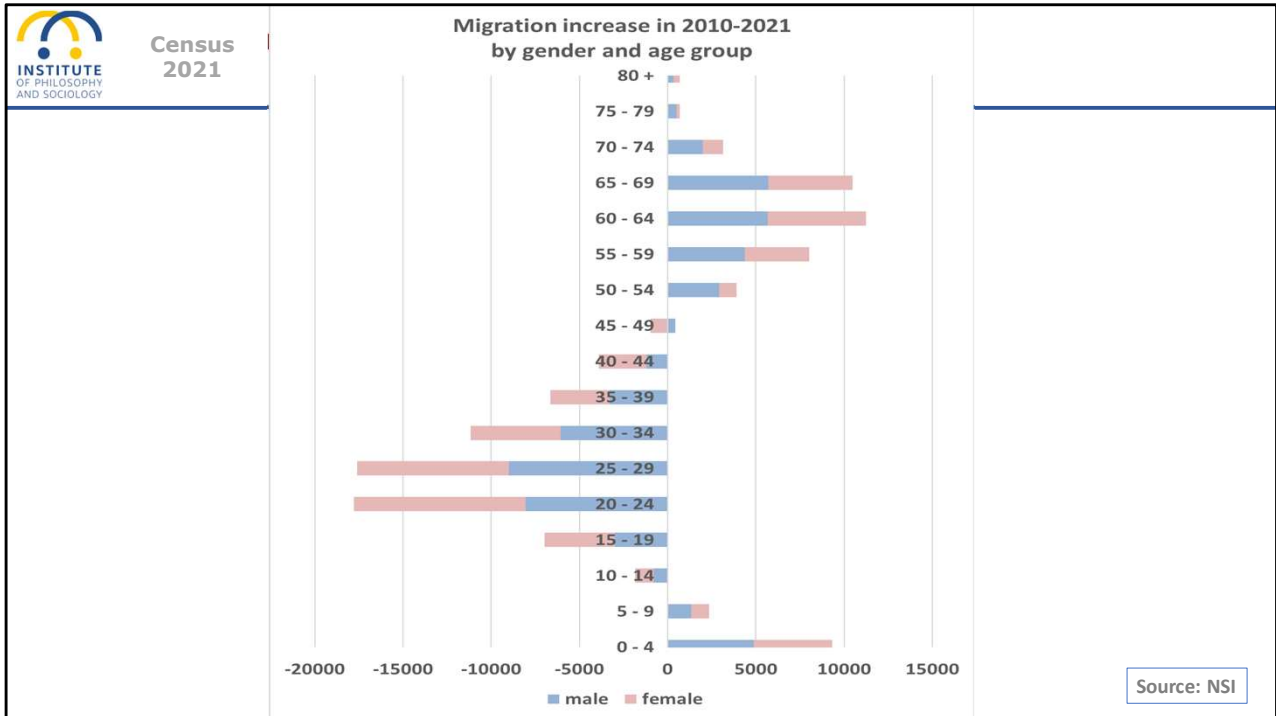


Looking at the structure of migration by origin of the migrants, it shows that both some Bulgarian ex-pats are returning and some other EU nationals have chosen Bulgaria. Otherwise, the third country nationals are almost constant annual number since 2013.



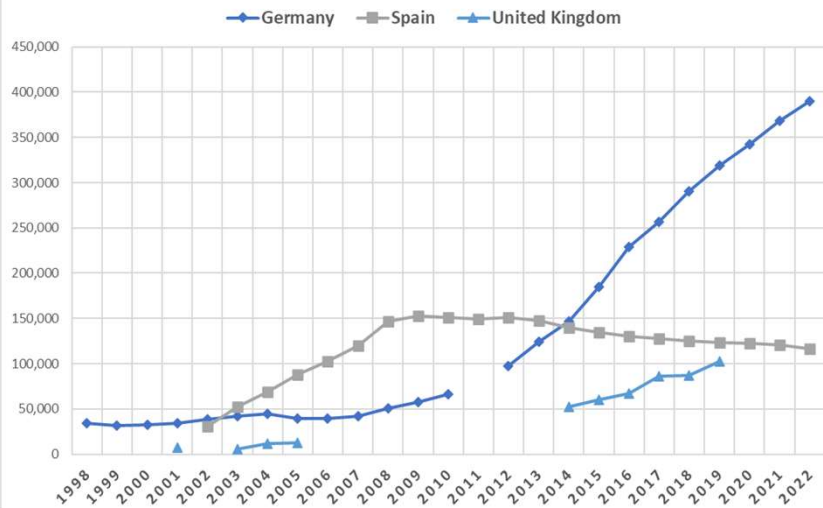
Source: NSI

Unfortunately, speaking for the third country nationals, those are not the Blue card holders. However, there is a significant increase in that respect, too. Although the numbers are still small.



Looking at the structure of migration by age and gender of the migrants in a long run, the trend is not so positive. The emigrants are young labor force and women fertile age, the immigrants are people in the third age (50 and over), as well as some babies and toddlers.

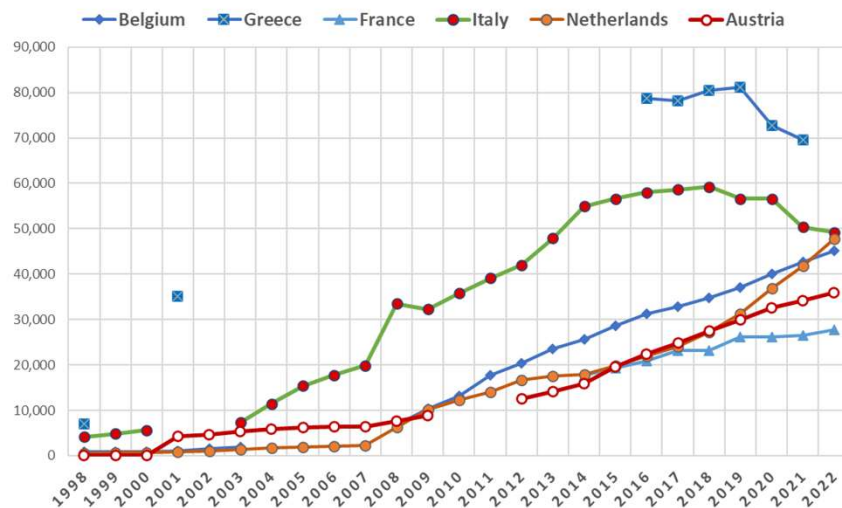
BULGARIAN CITIZENS WITH USUAL RESIDENCE IN GERMANY, SPAIN AND UK



Source: Eurostat

The top 3 countries for the Bulgarian emigrants are Germany, Spain and UK. Spain was the number one country from 2003 till 2013, but since the 2014 Germany is No.1 beyond comparison. However, we need to keep in mind that those figures are about people who spend the past 12 months abroad and do not reflect the seasonal workers. Then figures about Spain will definitely change.

BULGARIAN CITIZENS WITH USUAL RESIDENCE IN SIX EU COUNTRIES



Source: Eurostat

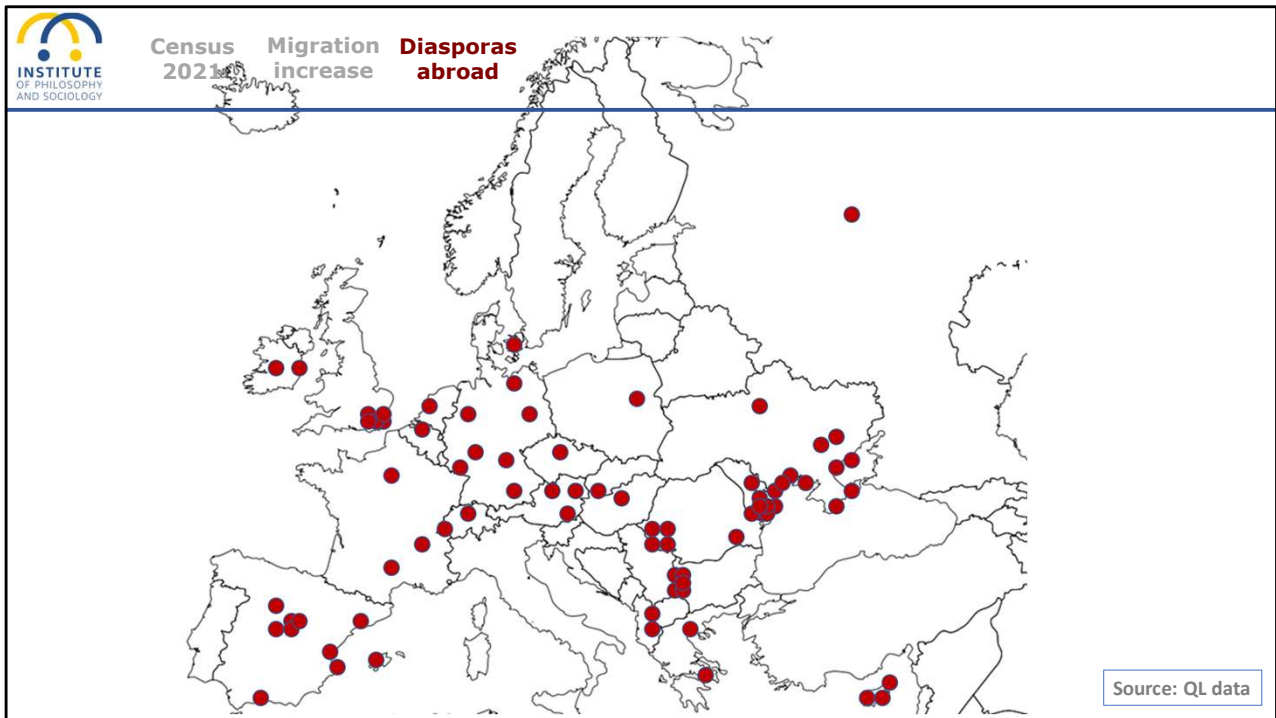
The next 6 country show to different tendencies. The interest towards some usual destinations like Greece and Italy was strongly affected by the Covid-19 and emigration to these two countries is decreasing. At the same time, since 2012, when the labor market in all EU countries was open for Bulgarian citizens, a permanently increasing trend of emigration towards Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands is observed. The emigration towards France is increasing but stays at relatively low levels, if compared with the total country population. However, similarly to Spain, the figures about Greece, Italy and France are not very accurate due to the

“pulsing diasporas” of seasonal workers.



Source: QL data

Since Eurostat is not everywhere and not showing everything, there are some indirect, qualitative approaches for location of the diasporas: the Bulgarian schools and churches abroad



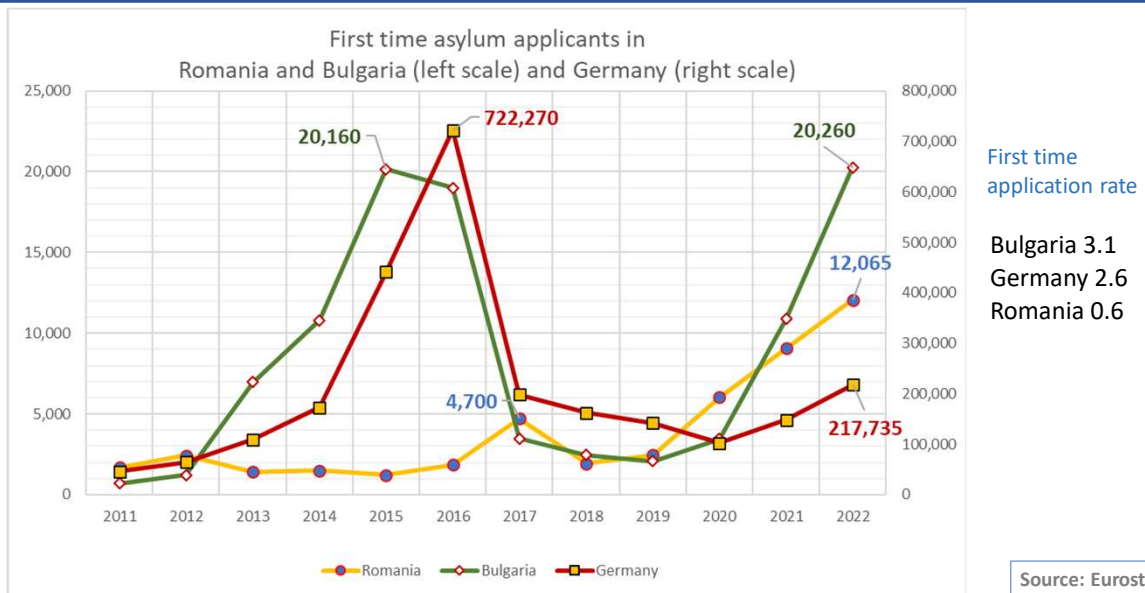
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The migration process includes also the asylum seekers. The trends in Germany and Bulgaria are absolutely similar, just the numbers differ significantly and Germany accepts 10 times more applications. However, if we compare 220 thousand to 83 million with 20 thousand to 6 ½ million, it seems that currently Bulgaria has even higher first application rates. Both the numbers and the rate in Romania are relatively low, but the trend show significant increase already.

Asylum applications in 2021

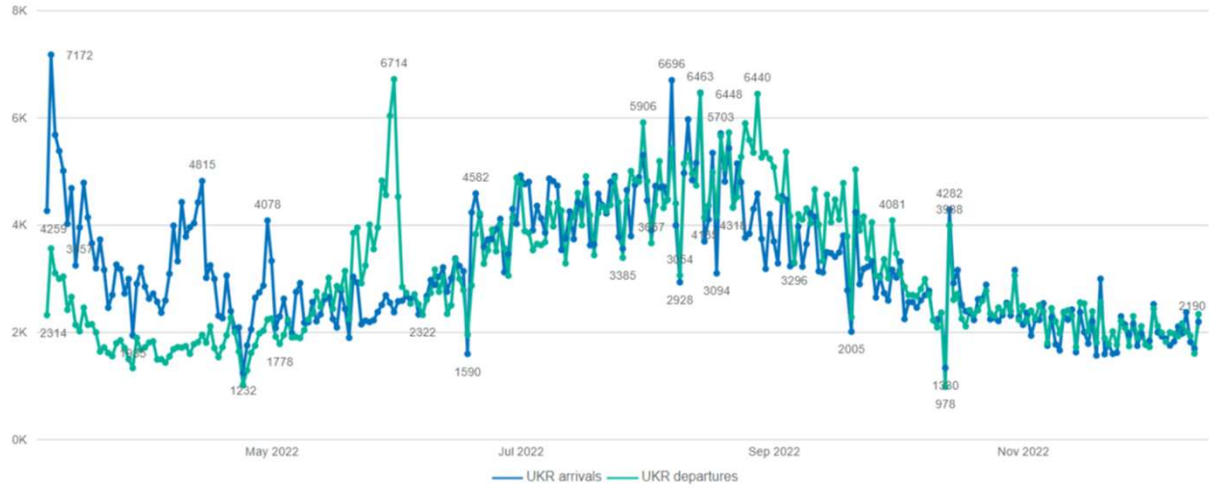
	Total	Pending at end 2021	Refugee status	Subsidiary protection	Rejection	Refugee rate	Sub. Prot. rate	Rejection rate
	10,999	7,556	143	1,876	1,256	4%	57%	39%
Breakdown by countries of origin of the total numbers								
Afghanistan	6,025	4,545	50	33	767	6%	4%	90%
Syria	3,758	2,368	59	1,792	21	3%	96%	1%
Iraq	479	200	13	8	146	8%	5%	87%
Morocco	206	129	0	0	88	0%	0%	100%
Pakistan	173	56	0	0	101	0%	0%	100%
Stateless	60	35	4	19	14	15%	70%	15%
Iran	53	44	3	8	17	11%	28%	61%
Algeria	44	27	0	0	17	0%	0%	100%
Bangladesh	32	24	0	0	9	0%	0%	100%
Tunisia	32	19	0	0	14	0%	0%	100%

Source: SAR

Bulgaria definitely treats different applicants in different manners, with regard of their country of origin. The rejection rate of the Syrian refugees is just 1%, about the stateless refugees (mainly Palestinians and ex-USSR born persons) is 15%. At the same time, all the applicants from other countries are rejected.

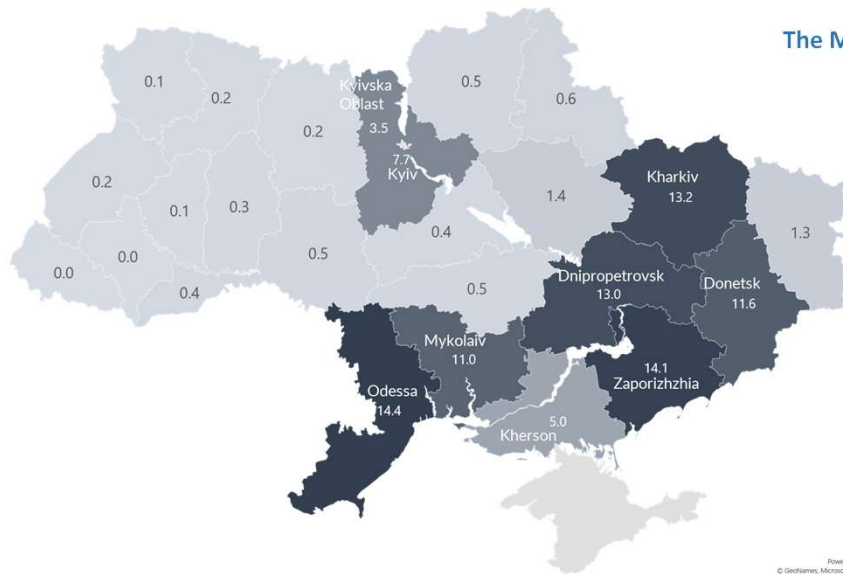
Arrivals / Departures

Border police data



Source: UNHCR

The Ukrainian crisis and significantly changed the migration picture both in Europe and Bulgaria. The Border police data shows the waves of in and out migration with regard of Bulgaria.



The Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment
2022 preliminary data

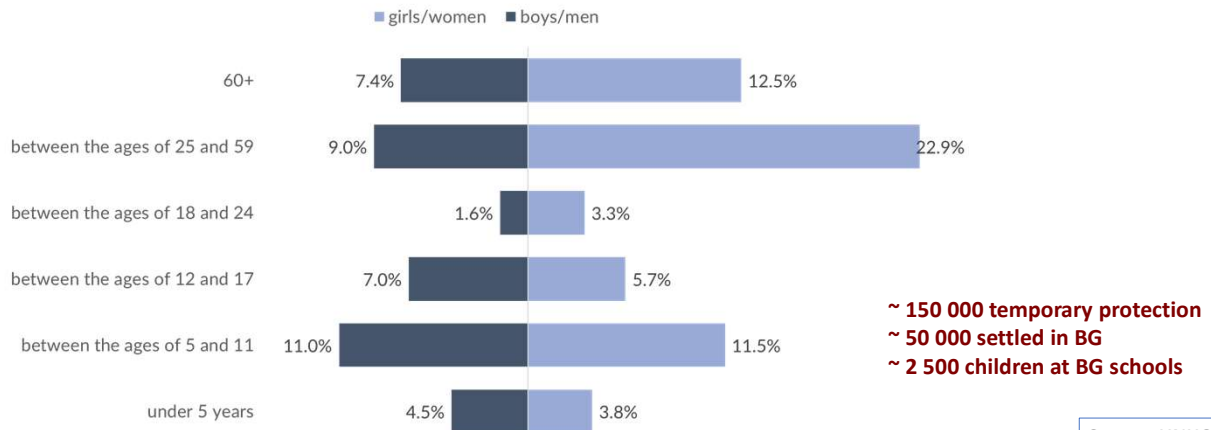
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Source: UNHCR

The UNHCR randomized survey shows the regions of origins, which coincide with the regions of the frontline.

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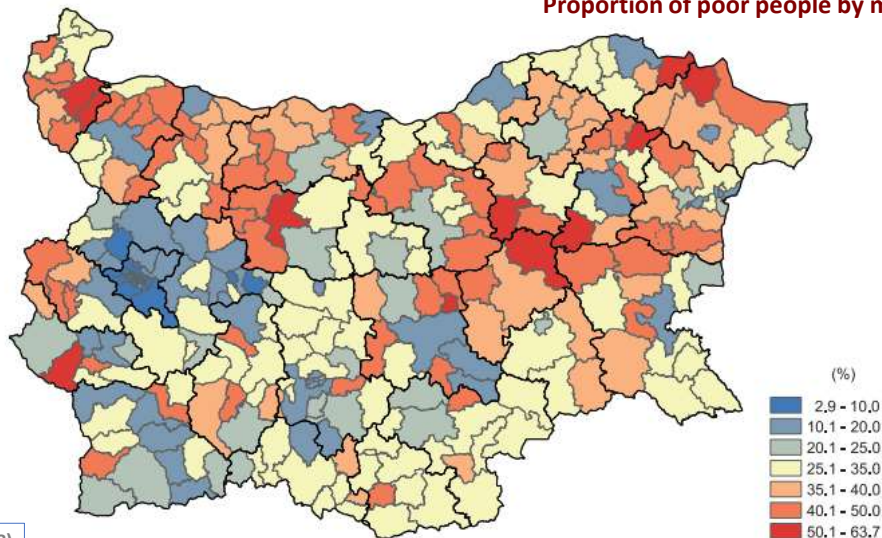
Structure of population of Ukrainian refugees living in Bulgaria (percent of total population)



Source: UNHCR

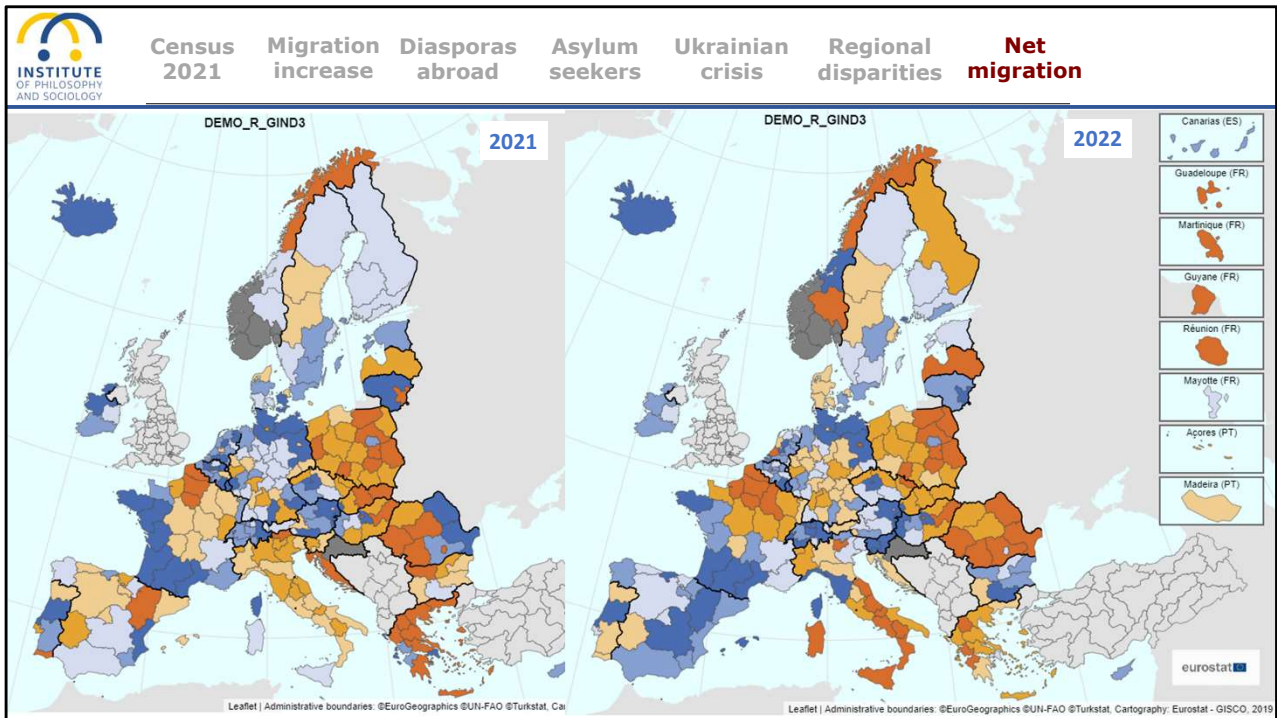
The age-gender pyramid shows that the displaced persons from Ukraine with temporary protection status are mainly women and children. A very different figure in comparison with all other immigrants in Bulgaria.

Proportion of poor people by municipality, 2011



Source: NSI (2018)

I know I am expected to give some explanations on the trends. My favorite explanation is the existence of regional disparities, regarded as inequality in income and quality of life. In the internal migration usually, the blue zones are attracting in and the red are pushing out the population. (Btw, Ukrainians also settle in the Blue zones, since there is better access to employment, education, healthcare and social services). So, people want to live better and nobody blames them about. **Ubi bene ibi patria** said the Romans. “The Home country is where one is treated well”.



However, we need to be careful, when using the data and also in our messages. The net migration rate in two consecutive years show absolutely different picture in Bulgaria, Romania and Germany. Which one to present? What the audience will take and put forward in the public policies? We just need to be aware of use and misuse of data. Of interpretation and misinterpretation of the social facts.



**THANK YOU FOR YOUR
ATTENTION!**

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Thank you for your attention