

THE NECESSITY OF REFORMING THE TERRITORIAL  
ORGANISATION OF THE LOCAL PUBLIC POWER IN THE  
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA: DEMOGRAPHIC ARGUMENTS

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**Abstract**

*A plausible argument in favour of reforming the territorial organisation of the public power is the demographic situation in Moldova. Currently, the Republic of Moldova is faced with a series of demographic issues that leave their mark on many processes that take place. Here, I refer to the natural movement of the population, the migration phenomenon, aging and pauperization of the population. Closely related to these processes, there are also other phenomena: depopulation, de-urbanisation, and ruralization of urban settlements in Moldova.*

*These tendencies and phenomena that take place in the Republic of Moldova require a new principled approach for the territorial organization of public power. Under the newly created circumstances, the population of local communities that are constantly shrinking does not have sufficient means to finance the activity of local public authorities and therefore, not having sufficient means due to the limited tax base, cannot provide quality public services.*

**Keywords:** reform, depopulation, migration, population aging, de-urbanisation.

**1. Demographic situation in the Republic of Moldova**

The situation in the demographic sphere of the Republic of Moldova is influenced by two major factors: demographic modernisation, which is characterized by the modification of the demographic behaviour of the population (decreased fertility, delaying childbirth to more mature ages, diversification of family patterns, etc.); and the long-lasting socio-economic crisis, which results in mass migration of the working age population, and the maintenance of the high level of mortality in adulthood (Paladi, Penina, Dondiuc, 2015). In the coming years the demographic situation will be influenced by: a) a reduction in the birth rate because the population of active reproductive age will be made up of the smaller generation born in the 90s; and b) the larger generation, born in the late 50s - early 60s, is entering retirement age (Gagauz, 2016). Thus, as O. Gagauz mentioned: "the demographic future of the Republic of Moldova is very unfavourable and causes concern, and the major cause is the falling birth-rate and massive emigration. A population that is in the process of natural decline and in an accelerated demographic ageing decline is not practically able to

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find internal resources of recovery and stabilization of the situation” (Gagauz 2015).

Although according to the National Bureau of Statistics, as of January 1, 2016 the population of the Republic of Moldova was 3,553,100 people<sup>1</sup>, the preliminary census data from May 12-14, 2014 indicated 2,913,281 people making up the total population of Moldova, of which 329,108 were abroad<sup>2</sup>. It would appear, thus, that the resident population is 2,584,173 people. In terms of the demographic decline, NBS attests an increase of 639,819 people. It is obvious that Moldova’s population is overestimated. This, in the opinion of O. Gagauz and Ir. Pahomi, happens because the labour migrants that have been missing from the country more than a year are also included in the resident population while according to international standards, demographic and socio-economic indicators should be calculated in relation to the present population. As a result of these discrepancies, some indicators that are calculated in relation to the population are distorted. An eloquent example of this is the indicator calculating the share of the population that is of working age, which is quite high for many districts despite the fact that because of labour migration a significant part of this contingent has established permanent residence abroad (Gagauz, Pahomii, 2016).

Thus, we can find that the statistical data provided by specialized state institutions do not offer comparable and reliable information about the population of the Republic of Moldova. This situation distorts analyses, forecasts, and strategies based on the size and structure of the population. Instead, taking into account only the size of the resident population would align the demographic data more closely to the real situation existing in the Republic of Moldova.

A useful tool for the monitoring of the socio-economic and demographic situation in territorial and administrative districts is the *Demographic Security Integrated Territorial Index (DSITI)*. DSITI is built upon four components: 1) demographic development (total fertility rate, rate of demographic ageing, rate of natural increase, migration balance), 2) population health (life expectancy at birth, number of family doctors per 10 000 inhabitants, infant mortality rate, prevalence of circulatory system diseases, prevalence of tumours, people aged 18+ years with a primary disability per 100 000 inhabitants), 3) social security (the average retirement income for the age limit in relation to the national average, the share of

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<sup>1</sup>Populația și procesele demografice. <http://www.statistica.md/category.php?l=ro&idc=103&>

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_informativa\\_Preliminare\\_Recensamint\\_2014.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_informativa_Preliminare_Recensamint_2014.pdf)

pensioners that are receiving the minimum pension amount, the average salary in relation to the national average, the percentage of pupils who study in the first half of the day) and 4) labour market conditions (the percentage of new jobs created compared to the national average, the percentage of unemployed persons employed from the total number of unemployed people, the percentage of working age people as part of the total population, the percentage of employed pensioners).

DSITI certifies a territorially significant gap in socio-economic and demographic development (a relatively high DSITI for the Chişinău municipality and a pronounced gap between districts), this being one of the main issues of demographic security. The accumulated score according to DSITI depends on the approaching/distancing of the districts' development from that of the Chişinău and Balti municipalities or on the area's socio-economic pole of development (for example: Cahul, Soroca) (Gagauz, Pahomii , 2016). (See Annex I)

## **2. The size of the population by districts compared to the total population**

Grouped by population size as reviewed in the census from May 12 - 25, 2014, 7 districts registered less than 50,000 inhabitants accounting for 9,0% of the country's population; 21 districts had a population between 50,000 and 100,000 inhabitants, accounting for 51.1%; and only 4 districts and ATU Găgăuzia exceeded 100,000 inhabitants, representing 19.4%. Of the total of 2,913,000 people, 20.5% are in the Chişinău and Balti municipalities, with 493,000 and 105,000 persons, respectively.<sup>3</sup>

The Basarabeasca and Dubasari districts, by population, represent less than one percent of Moldova's population.<sup>4</sup> Twelve districts have a population representing between 1% and 2% of the total population, and fourteen districts have a population representing between 2% and 3% of the total population. Only the districts of Cahul (3.51%), Hancesti (3.38%), Orhei (3.52%), Ungheni (3.30%), and ATU Găgăuzia (4.56%) have a population that represents over 3% of the country's population.<sup>5</sup> (See Annex II)

To better understand the situation in the Republic of Moldova, it is useful to compare it with that of the neighbouring countries. In order to understand the phenomenon, I consider the presentation of some data related to the population of the North-East and South-East development

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<sup>3</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_informativa\\_Preliminare\\_Recensamint\\_2014.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_informativa_Preliminare_Recensamint_2014.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> This is without counting the population from the left side of the Dnister and from the Bender municipality.

<sup>5</sup> Populația stabilă la 1 ianuarie 2016. <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/sq/1b3169ca-9da0-48c8-a472-b880ac8097db>

regions of Romania bordering the Republic of Moldova relevant. The North-East region, which includes the counties of Bacău, Botoșani, Iași, Neamț, Suceava and Vaslui, has a population of 3,922,407 people, and the South-East region, which comprises the counties Brăila, Buzău, Constanța, Galați, Tulcea and Vrancea, has 2,871,862 inhabitants.

It is easy to note that the population of a development region of Romania, as can be seen from the data presented in Table 1, is comparable to Moldova's entire population.

Table 1

The population of North-East and South-East development regions  
(Romania) on January 1, 2016

Region/county	Population	Region/county	Population
North-East	3,922,407	South-East	2,871,862
Bacau	746,566	Braila	356,196
Botosani	455,973	Buzau	478,811
Iasi	919,049	Constanta	769,768
Neamt	577,359	Galati	631,669
Suceava	743,645	Tulcea	244,249
Vaslui	479,815	Vrancea	391,169

Source: Romanian population by localities on January 1, 2016 (by usual residence). Bucharest: INS, 2016, p.25.

According to data from the National Bureau of Statistics on January 1, 2015, the population of the Republic of Moldova ordered by development regions was the following: Chișinău municipality - 809,563, the North Development Region - 91,246, Center Development Region - 1,058,669, South Development Region - 533,921, ATU Găgăuzia - 161,760 inhabitants.<sup>6</sup> Next, preliminary data of the 2014 Census shows that the distribution of the population by development regions is as follows: North - 31.5%, Center - 30.5%, Chișinău municipality - 16.9%, South - 16.3%, ATU Găgăuzia - 4.8%. It is easy to see a concentration of the population in central and northern areas - the northern and central development regions and Chișinău municipality include 78,9% of the country's population.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Statistica teritorială, 2015. Chișinău: BNS, 2015, p.22.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_)

Ukraine is in a situation similar to the Republic of Moldova. The population average of the districts in the Odessa region is 53,055 inhabitants.<sup>8</sup> For example, the districts of Southern Bessarabia are small by population: Reni - 37,288, Izmail - 51,513, Kiliya - 52,277, Bolhrad - 69,010, Artsyz - 45,198, Tatarbunary - 38,781, Tarutyne - 41,535, Sarata - 44,984, Bilhorod-Dnistrovskiy - 60,755.<sup>9</sup> But, in Ukraine the normative framework has been elaborated and the process of voluntary consolidation of local communities has been initiated.<sup>10</sup>

### 3. The effects of depopulation

One of the biggest problems that leaves its mark on local democratic affirmation and implicitly on public participation is depopulation.<sup>11</sup> According to BBC statistics, the population of the Republic of Moldova decreases by 106 people every day, making Moldova the country with the highest rate of population decline in the world.<sup>12</sup> In an on-line survey conducted by *jurnal.md*, from the 12,474 people surveyed on October 21, 2016, only 19,26% saw their future in the Republic of Moldova, and 65,05% didn't. 13,68% of people were determined to leave in the near future and 2,01% of the respondents had already left.<sup>13</sup>

According to preliminary results of the Population and Housing Census undertaken in May 2014, out of 1,259,207 existing housing facilities in the Republic of Moldova, 215,112 were unoccupied. Territorially, the largest share of unoccupied dwellings was recorded in the North Development Region, especially in the districts of Donduseni and Soroca, where the share of unoccupied dwellings is over 25%. Meanwhile, the lowest rate of unoccupied dwellings was recorded in the districts of Telenesti and Straseni in the Center Development Region and in the districts of Cahul, Causeni and Leova in the South Development Region,

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informativa\_Preliminare\_Recensamint\_2014.pdf

<sup>8</sup> Calculations were performed as follows: from the region's total population, 2,390,289, I have subtracted Odessa's population, 1,010,848, and I have divided the sum by the number of districts - 26.

<sup>9</sup> Чисельність наявного населення України на 1 січня 2016 року. Київ: Державна служба статистики України, 2016, с.57-60.

<sup>10</sup> Закон України „Про добровільне об'єднання територіальних громад” від 05.02.2015, № 157-VIII. <http://zakon3.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/157-19/print1476166308174374>

<sup>11</sup> In this context, I mention that the problem of depopulation is current not only for the Republic of Moldova but also for some EU countries, such as Bulgaria. For example, during 2013 by the decision of the Council of Ministers, 10 localities were abolished and 6 of them were amalgamated with other localities. However, at the end of 2013, in Bulgaria there were 169 depopulated localities. [http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population2013\\_AUIT2RS.pdf](http://www.nsi.bg/sites/default/files/files/pressreleases/Population2013_AUIT2RS.pdf)

<sup>12</sup><http://ziarulnational.md/alarman-bbc-r-moldova-statul-cu-cea-mai-mare-rata-de-scadere-a-populatiei-patru-cetateni-parasesc-tara-in-fiecare-ora/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://jurnal.md/ro/polls/>

where it was below 14%.<sup>14</sup>

Depopulation has grown especially in rural areas. In the Republic of Moldova, there are dozens of villages with a population of less than 40 inhabitants,<sup>15</sup> and in the 2014 Population Census, in 8 localities from 7 districts there was not a single person registered.<sup>16</sup>

Depopulation of the villages is also due to the massive exodus of the rural population. The decreased employment opportunities in rural areas in the Republic of Moldova have generated a process of migration inside and outside the country that includes young and educated people. Every fifth citizen of the Republic of Moldova works abroad and every fourth migrant comes from a rural area.

A consequence of depopulation is de-urbanisation and ruralisation of urban settlements. According to some estimates, by 2025, about two-thirds of the world population will be living in urban areas.<sup>17</sup> Nevertheless, while in the world and especially in the EU states, there is a broad process of urbanisation taking place,<sup>18</sup> in the Republic of Moldova the process is exactly the opposite, a fact that shows a process of de-urbanisation and ruralisation of the urban settlements. The share of the urban population decreased from 50% in 1989 to almost 40% in 2004. During 1992-2007, the populations of the cities of Orhei and Soroca decreased by one-third, the cities of Ungheni and Cahul by one quarter, and the city of Balti by 20%.<sup>19</sup>

On January 1, 2016, according to NBS data, more than half of the country's population was composed of rural inhabitants - 2,042,000 people or 57.5%. 1,511,100 people or 42.5%<sup>20</sup> were living in urban areas. After preliminary results of the 2014 Census, the share of the rural population in

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<sup>14</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_informativa\\_Preliminare\\_Recensamint\\_2014.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_informativa_Preliminare_Recensamint_2014.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> <http://localitati.casata.md/index.php?l=ro&action=viewtopdownpoplocalitati>

<sup>16</sup> These are localities: s.Pelinia (Stație de Cale Ferată, rn.Drochia), s. Cuconești Vechi (rn. Edineț), s. Chetrișul Nou (rn. Fălești), s. Frumușica Nouă și Țîra (Stație de Cale Ferată) din rn. Florești, s. Stălinești (rn. Ocnița), s. Dărcăuții Noi (rn. Soroca), s. Dudulești (U.T.A. Găgăuzia). [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_informativa\\_Preliminare\\_Recensamint\\_2014.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_informativa_Preliminare_Recensamint_2014.pdf)

<sup>17</sup> Comunicarea Comisiei către Parlamentul European, Consiliu, Comitetul Economic și Social European și Comitetul Regiunilor „Sporirea autonomiei autorităților locale din țările partenere în vederea consolidării guvernancei și a îmbunătățirii rezultatelor în materie de dezvoltare” (15.5.2013). <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/RO/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52013DC0280&from=RO>

<sup>18</sup> For example, in 2012 the rural population average of the new EU Member States was 35%, and of all the EU countries-15 was 21%. See: Strategia națională de dezvoltare agricolă și rurală pentru anii 2014 - 2020 (Aprobată prin Hotărârea Guvernului nr. 409 din 4 iunie 2014). În: Monitorul Oficial nr.152/451 din 10.06.2014.

<sup>19</sup> Republica Moldova - cea mai rurală țară din Europa. <http://www.interlic.md/2007-06-27/1493-1493.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5210>

the total population of the Republic of Moldova was 65.8% compared to 34,2% in urban areas.<sup>21</sup>

The predominance of the population in rural localities was registered in the districts of Cantemir, Criuleni, and Telenesti, with a share of the rural population above 90%. At the development region level, the degree of urbanisation is more accentuated in the Chişinău municipality and ATU Găgăuzia, but at the district/municipality level are the Chişinău and Bălţi municipalities.<sup>22</sup>

It is important to note that the de-urbanisation phenomenon occurred in parallel with the elevation to city status of the former “urban-type settlements” of the Soviet period, a process which took place in the last quarter century. Thus, while in 1988 in MSSR there were 21 cities and 49 “urban-type settlements”,<sup>23</sup> in 2015 were 61 cities.<sup>24</sup> Thus, as was mentioned in a report by the UN Population Fund, all urban-type settlements, namely larger villages with an agglomeration of buildings in the central part of the village, and some possessing enterprises, were elevated to city status.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, the average population of the central districts of the Republic of Moldova was 14,700 inhabitants in 2015.

#### **4. The extent of the migration phenomenon**

Migration has the effect of reducing the size of the economically active population. In the opinion of the researchers Paladi and Dondiuc, beyond the boundaries of the Republic of Moldova are about 840,000 citizens, of whom a significant proportion is represented by women of reproductive age (Paladi, Dondiuc, 2015).

The economically active population rate in Moldova in 2012 was only 38% of the total population, while most other countries in the region had a rate of 50%. The share of the active population employed in agriculture has decreased over the last 20 years from 14% in 1992 to 5% in 2012.<sup>26</sup> The economically active population in 2014 compared to 2000 has decreased by 25.5%, the evolution being more pronounced in rural areas where the decrease was 31.3%, compared to urban areas, which saw a decrease of

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<sup>21</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_informativa\\_Preliminare\\_Recensamint\\_2014.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_informativa_Preliminare_Recensamint_2014.pdf)

<sup>22</sup> [http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint\\_pop\\_2014/Nota\\_informativa\\_Preliminare\\_Recensamint\\_2014.pdf](http://www.statistica.md/public/files/Recensamint/Recensamint_pop_2014/Nota_informativa_Preliminare_Recensamint_2014.pdf)

<sup>23</sup> RSS Moldovenească. Orânduire administrativ-teritorială la data de 1 aprilie 1988. Chişinău: Cartea Moldovenească, 1988, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Anuarul statistic al Republicii Moldova 2015. Chişinău: BNS, 2015, p.13.

<sup>25</sup> Republica Moldova - cea mai rurală țară din Europa. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/news/story/2007/06/070627\\_moldova\\_rural.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/romanian/news/story/2007/06/070627_moldova_rural.shtml)

<sup>26</sup> Strategia națională de dezvoltare agricolă și rurală pentru anii 2014 - 2020. In: Monitorul Oficial nr.152/451 din 10.06.2014.

17.3% (Stratan 2015).

The biggest increase in migration is observed among middle-aged persons (45-54 years) and young people (25-34 years) with higher education. The number of people gone for employment purposes or who are looking for a job abroad, according to official statistics presented in Table 2, has increased in the period 2000-2013 by 1.5 times in urban areas and 3 times in rural areas.

A sociological survey conducted in the summer of 2015 found that 62% of respondents didn't intend to go abroad in the next two years, and 33% were thinking about a possible departure abroad. It is alarming that in the category of the 62% of respondents that didn't intend to go abroad in the next two years, a larger portion were individuals aged over 50 years and people that had a monthly income that did not exceed 2,000 lei. Among those who intended to go abroad were predominantly individuals with a salary of more than 5,000 lei per month.<sup>27</sup>

Table 2

Population working or looking for a job abroad							
Years/ persons (thousand)	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Total	138,3	172,0	231,3	291,0	345,3	394,5	310,1
Urban	56,2	68,0	78,7	89,7	106,6	112,1	92,7
Rural	82,1	104,0	152,5	201,3	238,7	282,4	217,4
Years/ persons (thousand)	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Total	335,6	309,7	294,9	311,0	316,9	328,3	332,5
Urban	103,0	97,1	89,5	90,6	92,7	90,2	94,4
Rural	232,6	212,6	205,4	220,5	224,2	238,1	238,0

Source: <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/Dialog/Saveshow.asp>

The gaps between the development levels of the economies in the regional countries and the economy of the Republic of Moldova will further influence the increase in the labour force exodus abroad. The Republic of Moldova needs qualitative economic growth accompanied by increased investments, development of exporting industries, job creation and increased labour productivity.<sup>28</sup>

### 5. Population ageing phenomenon

The growth rate of the elderly population is accelerating, their share

<sup>27</sup> <http://infomoldova.net/studiu-citi-dintre-moldoveni-au-de-gind-sa-emigreze-din-tara/>

<sup>28</sup> Raport privind sărăcia în Republica Moldova. 2012, p.19. [http://www.mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/raport\\_privind\\_saracia\\_2012.pdf](http://www.mec.gov.md/sites/default/files/document/raport_privind_saracia_2012.pdf)



at the global level constituting 12.3% in 2015 (compared to 9.2% in 1990). This process is also characteristic for Moldova, where at the beginning of 2016 there were 592,600 persons aged 60 years and over living in the country, which is 16.7% of the total resident population (See Annex III). About 60% of the total number of elderly individuals are women, and 58% live in rural areas. In this category, every third person is aged 60-64 years, and 13.3% are people that are over 80 years old.<sup>29</sup>

The average age of the population of the Republic of Moldova,<sup>30</sup> by statistical region, is: North - 39.4 years, Center - 36.4 years, South - 36.9 years. In some districts (all from the Northern Region), the average age of the population exceeds 40 years: Briceni - 40.5, Donduseni - 41.5, Drochia - 41.0, Edinet - 40.7, Ocnita - 41.2, Rașcani - 40.2.<sup>31</sup>

In 2014, compared with 1959, the share of people aged 60 years and over has increased from 7.7% to 17.4%, and the proportion of young people aged 0-14 years has significantly decreased from 33.4% to 18.2%. During the same period, the adult population aged 15-59 years has grown from 58.9% to 64.4% of the total population. Currently, the size of the young population is practically equal to the size of the elderly population. Numerically, the elderly population has grown by 2.3 times: from 222,500 people in 1959 to 507,400 people in 2014 (according to alternative estimates of the population for 2014) (Paladi, Penina, Dondiuc, 2015).

Important changes have taken place in Moldova's age distribution, so that the number of "young" elderly people (60-65) has significantly increased in the last five years. In 2010 the total number of "young" elderly people was 160,500 while in 2015 it increased to 243,600, an increase of 83,000 people. The changes that occur in the structure of higher age groups have a strong impact at the economic, social and political levels. As the population is ageing, benefits such as pensions, medical assistance or material support for the elderly should be given for longer periods. The rapid growth of the elderly population has a special importance in terms of public policy because this age group requires special long-term care (Cușnir, 2015).

The main source of income for elderly households is social benefits that constitute 47.6% of the monthly incomes of such households. Also, an average salary payment constitutes 24.7% of this category's household income, and individual agricultural activity makes up 10.1%. Transfers from abroad also contribute 10.3% of an elderly household's income. The

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<sup>29</sup> Vârșnicii în Republica Moldova în anul 2015. <http://www.statistica.md/print.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5358>

<sup>30</sup> Without population from the left bank of Nistru river and Bender municipality.

<sup>31</sup> [http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/60%20Statistica%20regionala/60%20Statistica%20regionala\\_\\_02%20POP/POP021100reg.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=2345d98a-890b-4459-bb1f-9b565f99b3b9](http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/60%20Statistica%20regionala/60%20Statistica%20regionala__02%20POP/POP021100reg.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=2345d98a-890b-4459-bb1f-9b565f99b3b9)

average pension for retirement as of 01.01.2016 amounts to 1,191.8 lei. The average pension for men is 1,362.5 lei compared to 1,120.3 lei for women. About 15% of the total pensioners receive the minimum pension amount.<sup>32</sup>

The average pension for retirement covers the subsistence minimum for this category of the population at a rate of 83% in 2015 compared to 69% in 2011. On average, the men's pension covers the subsistence minimum for pensioners at a rate of 95%, while for women that rate is 78%.

The subsistence minimum for pensioners varies based on their type of residence. For pensioners from big cities, it is 1,612.8 lei compared to 1368,8 lei for those from villages and 1,442.6 lei for those from other cities.<sup>33</sup>

Representing only 83% of the subsistence minimum for a pensioner (1343,7 lei), an average pension amount doesn't meet the minimum needs of the elderly.

The persons who receive a minimum pension for retirement are in a more difficult situation: agricultural workers receive 710.7 lei or 52.9% of the subsistence minimum, and other beneficiaries receive 798.3 lei or 59.4% of the subsistence minimum (Rojco, Gagauz, 2016).

Mostly, elderly household expenses are for necessary food consumption (45.7%), followed by home maintenance expenses —(19.5%), and medical care and health – (8.9%).<sup>34</sup> The elderly have to spend considerable financial resources on medical services, 172,94 lei per month per person or 1,7 times more than the national average. About 86% of these expenses are spent on medicine (Rojco, Gagauz, 2016).

The standard of living of pensioners remains below the living standard of the average population. For pensioners, in 2013 living expenses averaged 1,326.9 lei, which represented 82.3% of the average value for the total population (1612,3 lei on average per month per person, and 1549,4 lei in rural areas). The average monthly pension set on January 1, 2014 was 1020,6 lei, which covers only 76.9% of living subsistence for this category of the population.<sup>35</sup> At the same time, 12% of pensioners receive only the minimum pension amount.<sup>36</sup> If we also consider the fact that the absolute poverty line in 2013 was 1196 lei,<sup>37</sup> given all this data, I find that pensioners from the Republic of Moldova are on the edge of survival.

According to global research on the quality of life of elderly people

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<sup>32</sup> Vârșnicii în Republica Moldova în anul 2015. <http://www.statistica.md/print.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5358> (accesat la 01.10.2016).

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>34</sup> Vârșnicii în Republica Moldova în anul 2015. <http://www.statistica.md/print.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=5358>

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=4356>

<sup>36</sup> <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=4529&parent=0>

<sup>37</sup> Sărăcia în Republica Moldova 2013. Notă informativă a Ministerului Economiei. Chișinău, iulie 2014. <http://www.mec.gov.md/ro/content/impactul-saraciei>

for the year 2015 (Global Age Watch Index), the main indicators (material insurance, health, education, employment and living conditions) place Moldova on one of the last places in the ranking of European countries (77), after Belarus and Russia (64 and 65), Ukraine (73) and Romania (41).

Most older people in the Republic of Moldova do not have sufficient financial resources for a decent life, which undermines the quality of life of this population category, and the progressive and uncontrolled growth of home maintenance, service and basic food costs contributes to the increase in poverty among the elderly, who are already exposed to additional specific risks of old age (Rojco, Gagauz, 2016).

## 6. Conclusions

Given that the Republic of Moldova is facing the demographic problems mentioned above, it is obvious that the current territorial organisation of public power is outdated and doesn't correspond to new political, social and demographic realities. Local communities at both levels with a relatively small number of inhabitants and that are in decline, affected by migration and the ageing population phenomenon, will find themselves unable to generate the revenues needed to provide for the vital needs of their population and will not be able to bear the expenses for the effective functioning of local authorities. Population ageing increases the share of the population with low potential for participation in public life. Financial difficulties, poor education, poor health, reduced opportunities in the country's localities (especially in rural areas), and lack of community centres are the main barriers to the development of volunteering and political participation among the elderly (Buciuceanu-Vrabie, 2016).

These negative effects of the Republic of Moldova's demographic developments can be solved through the consolidation of local communities, which will have the effect of reducing expenses for the maintenance of local and district authorities, the resulting savings will be allocated to solve other vital issues.

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**Annex I**

**Demographic Security Integrated Territorial Index**

District	Demographic index	Health index	Social index	Occupational index	DSITI	Rating
Chişinău	67.5	67.5	88.4	57.2	70.2	1
Balti	61.2	60.2	79.0	42.0	60.6	2
Dubasari	66.7	59.2	77.2	31.5	58.7	3
Ialoveni	66.4	62.3	59.5	38.4	56.6	4
Cahul	55.5	69.8	63.1	37.5	56.5	5
Anenii Noi	59.4	58.2	64.8	37.6	55.0	6
Ungheni	62.1	58.8	62.6	36.4	54.9	7
Orhei	57.4	65.2	61.8	35.1	54.9	8
Criuleni	61.5	56.3	60.1	39.7	54.4	9
Soroca	55.0	57.0	63.9	37.1	53.3	10
ATU G	58.1	57.1	61.3	36.1	53.1	11
Straseni	62.9	52.5	61.7	35.3	53.1	12
Nisporeni	52.1	72.6	53.3	32.6	52.6	13
Rezina	54.0	57.1	64.1	33.4	52.1	14
Falesti	57.3	55.6	62.8	32.5	52.1	15
Cimisia	42.4	66.7	57.5	40.4	51.8	16
Leova	54.2	61.1	55.0	35.3	51.4	17
Drochia	42.6	62.5	69.3	30.6	51.2	18
Basarabasca	51.0	53.1	61.9	36.6	50.6	19
Glodeni	44.3	62.1	63.0	32.0	50.4	20
Stefan-Voda	51.3	57.3	56.5	35.7	50.2	21
Causeni	46.7	59.2	58.4	34.6	49.7	22
Sangerei	57.7	49.8	58.4	32.7	49.6	23
Briceni	37.4	64.2	62.0	34.4	49.5	24
Hanceşti	49.9	64.7	53.7	29.5	49.4	25
Edinet	43.3	55.9	64.9	32.5	49.1	26
Rascani	44.8	53.5	63.9	32.8	48.8	27
Telenesti	55.1	53.8	50.2	34.7	48.4	28
Taraclia	40.2	59.1	58.9	35.3	48.4	29
Calarasi	47.2	54.3	56.2	34.4	48.0	30
Floresti	44.5	48.1	65.2	30.4	47.0	31
Ocnita	30.5	63.1	64.4	28.2	46.5	32
Cantemir	54.6	46.1	52.3	32.6	46.4	33
Donduseni	32.7	55.0	65.3	29.1	45.5	34
Soldanesti	46.8	45.4	49.5	36.6	44.6	35

Source: Gagauz O., Pahomii Ir. Indicele Integral Teritorial de Securitate

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**Annex II**

**Resident population on January 1, 2016 at territorial level**

No.	Districts	Population (thousand persons)	% of total number
1	Total of the Republic of Moldova	3 553,1	100
2	Chişinău municipality	814,1	22.91
3	Balti municipality	150,7	4.24
4	Anenii Noi	83,4	2.35
5	Basarabeasca	28,5	0.80
6	Briceni	72,9	2.05
7	Cahul	124,6	3.51
8	Cantemir	62,0	1.74
9	Calarasi	77,8	2.19
10	Causeni	90,5	2.55
11	Cimislia	60,1	1.69
12	Criuleni	73,6	2.07
13	Donduseni	42,9	1.21
14	Drochia	87,4	2.46
15	Dubasari	35,3	0.99
16	Edinet	80,7	2.27
17	Falesti	91,5	2.58
18	Floresti	87,6	2.47
19	Glodeni	59,6	1.68
20	Hancesti	120,2	3.38
21	Ialoveni	101,3	2.85
22	Leova	52,8	1.49
23	Nisporeni	65,6	1.85
24	Ocnita	54,0	1.52
25	Orhei	125,0	3.52
26	Rezina	50,8	1.43
27	Rascani	67,9	1.91
28	Sangerei	92,2	2.59
29	Soroca	100,1	2.82
30	Straseni	92,3	2.60

31	Soldanesti	41,9	1.18
32	Stefan Voda	70,4	1.98
33	Taraclia	43,6	1.23
34	Telenesti	72,6	2.04
35	Ungheni	117,3	3.30
36	ATU Găgăuzia	161,9	4.56

Source: <http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/sq/1b3169ca-9da0-48c8-a472-b880ac8097db>  
 (accessed at 29.09.2016)

### Annex III

#### Population ageing coefficient at the beginning of 2016

(without population from the left side of the Nistru and Bender municipality)

No.	Districts	Ageing coefficient
1	<b>Total per country</b>	<b>16.7</b>
2	Chişinău municipality	15.3
3	Balti municipality	17.2
4	Briceni	21.7
5	Donduşeni	24.3
6	Drochia	23.0
7	Edinet	22.5
8	Falesti	18.0
9	Floresti	19.3
10	Glodeni	19.7
11	Ocnita	21.3
12	Rascani	21.5
13	Sangerei	16.7
14	Soroca	18.6
15	Anenii Noi	15.9
16	Calarasi	16.8
17	Criuleni	14.2
18	Dubasari	16.5
19	Hancesti	15.4
20	Ialoveni	13.2
21	Nisporeni	14.9
22	Orhei	15.6
23	Rezina	16.3
24	Straseni	15.0
25	Soldanesti	16.9
26	Telenesti	15.2
27	Ungheni	15.1
28	Basarabasca	16.0

29	Cahul	15.3
30	Cantemir	13.9
31	Causeni	16.4
32	Cimislia	16.9
33	Leova	14.7
34	Stefan Voda	16.6
35	Taraclia	18.2
36	ATU Găgăuzia	16.1

Source: [http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/20%20Populatia%20si%20procesele%20demografice/20%20Populatia%20si%20procesele%20demografice\\_\\_POP010/POP011700reg.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=2345d98a-890b-4459-bb1f-9b565f99b3b9](http://statbank.statistica.md/pxweb/pxweb/ro/20%20Populatia%20si%20procesele%20demografice/20%20Populatia%20si%20procesele%20demografice__POP010/POP011700reg.px/table/tableViewLayout1/?rxid=2345d98a-890b-4459-bb1f-9b565f99b3b9)  
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