



PLATFORM OF  
MULTICULTURALISM



Public Policy Document

# **HOW TO DECREASE YOUTH EMIGRATION FROM THE REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA?**





The publication is supported by the Progress – Institute for Social Democracy and the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation and is the result of the Platform of Multiculturalism established within the project “Support of Democracy in Multiethnic Macedonia – Youth Activism for Multicultural Democracy”.



Authors:  
Sanja Zinzirova  
Dimitar Vančov

Graphic Design: Brigada Design, Skopje

Published: May, 2017

## FOREWORD

---

The publication is the result of the cooperation between youth civil organizations and the youth wings of political parties and is the product of two workshops on creation and composition of public policies held in 2016 for the requirements of the member organizations of the Platform of Multiculturalism within the project “Support of Democracy in Multiethnic Macedonia – Youth Activism for Multicultural Democracy” 2015-2017. The workshops and the documents were completed under the mentorship of d-r. Jasna Bačovska Nedec and d-r Aleksandar Spasov, a professor and a docent at the Iustinianus Primus Faculty of Law within the St. Cyril and Methodius University in Skopje.

The Platform of Multiculturalism was created in 2013 within the project “Support of Democracy in Multiethnic Macedonia – Dialogue and Cooperation” implemented by the Progress – Institute for Social Democracy and the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation from Finland. The Platform was established by the youth wings of political parties and civil society organizations, with the support of the Progress – Institute for Social Democracy and the Kalevi Sorsa Foundation.

The publication and recommendation of the authors, representatives of youth organizations and youth wings of political parties, are towards initiating a broad debate and discussion on key issues related to the life of young people in Macedonia and towards introducing specific policies for improving the situation.

The Platform of Multiculturalism is going to continue its work with proposals of specific public policies as well as recommendations towards making progress with the issues young people face in the country, as well as towards increasing the number of organizations and civil activists on local and national level in the Platform’s activities so as to become an active actor in the creation of public policies in Macedonia.

Project Coordinator  
**Samuli Sinisalo**  
Kalevi Sorsa Foundation

Project Coordinator  
**Toše Zafirov**  
Progress – Institute for Social Democracy



## Public Policy Document

# How to Decrease Youth Emigration from the Republic of Macedonia?

## Contents

	<b>SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>UNEMPLOYMENT DRIVES YOUNG PEOPLE AWAY.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>WHY DO YOUNG PEOPLE LEAVE?.....</b>	<b>6</b>
	2.1 Youth unemployment .....	6
	2.2 Low quality formal education.....	7
<b>3</b>	<b>LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF YOUTH EMIGRATION .....</b>	<b>8</b>
	3.1 Demographic stagnation.....	8
	3.2 Loss of Human Potential.....	9
<b>4</b>	<b>KEY POINTS, URGENT ACTION IS REQUIRED.....</b>	<b>10</b>
	4.1 Inclusion of young people in the creation of policies concerning them .....	10
	4.2 Census of the population .....	10
	4.3 Effective and efficient measures for youth employment stimulation .....	10
	4.4 A package of measures or stimulation policies to encourage young people who have stayed over three years abroad to return .....	10
<b>5</b>	<b>REFERENCES:.....</b>	<b>11</b>

## Summary

This public policy study examines the problem of youth emigration between the ages 18 to 30 during the past 10 years in Macedonia. The aim is to offer a potential solution on how to decrease youth emigration. Young people are influenced by several reasons in their decision to leave the country, while the study focuses on two crucial. One is unemployment, as high as 45% among youth, with the second being quality of education in general.

Such a problem can result with various consequences, from changes in the country's population demographics to losing human potential and state capital invested in the development of these young people. **An urgent action is needed involving active youth participation in the creation of youth policies.** Youth policy makers must stand in unison with the concerned parties.

# 1. Unemployment Drives Young People Away

In the last decade, youth emigration in Macedonia has significantly increased. The 'white plague' devastating the country is the result of socio-political and economical developments at the home front. Our country has a long history of emigration. The number of people migrating significantly increased with the EU visa liberalization.<sup>1</sup>

According to the statistics, European countries are the most appealing to Macedonian citizens, followed by the United States and Australia. The authorities' awareness regarding this problem is lacking, however, there has been an ongoing intensive public debate, particularly on the influence on the country's future development. The 2013-2020 National Strategy for Networking, Cooperation and Reduction of the Outflow of Higher Educated and Professional People was adopted as a strategic document regarding this issue, however its implementation in practice remains unknown.<sup>2</sup>

According to the statistical office of the European Union, Eurostat, from 1998 to 2011, **230,000** citizens left our country, most of whom were young people.<sup>3</sup> The World Bank Report is even more alarming: by the end of 2010, **447,000** citizens left the country, i.e. **22%** from the total population in Macedonia.

The World Bank announced that by 2013, around **600,000** people migrated from Macedonia. The country lacks current statistics on the number of expatriates from Macedonia. The last census undertaken in the country was the 2002 census.<sup>4</sup>

In only one year the number of young working age population dropped by 12,548. According to the summarized 2015 statistics, the working age population aged 15 to 24 decreased by 2,412, while those aged 25 to 49 by 10,136, i.e. in one year the labour force on the labour market dropped by 12,548 people just from the above-mentioned two age groups.

## MIGRATION FACTS:

- In the last decade of the 20th century, 5 million higher educated individuals migrated from less developed to developed countries;
- Scientists and talented individuals most often immigrate to developed countries during the second and third cycle of the tertiary education;
- In 2007, 18% of the US labour force with a college degree in the field of natural sciences and engineering were immigrants;
- Around 30% from the companies founded in the Silicon Valley started between 1995 and 1998 were founded by Chinese and Indian immigrants; and finally
- The US attracts the largest number of skilful immigrants and students or 32% from the total number of foreign students coming from the OECD countries.

(Source: 2013-2020 National Strategy for Networking, Cooperation and Reduction of the Outflow of Higher Educated and Professional People.)

**The current Macedonian Government characterizes the problem solely as a global trend, not one resulting from internal socio-economic reasons. For instance, the Czech Republic and other European countries do not report a growth in emigration, but rather on migration inside the countries, consequently the issue cannot be a matter of global trend.<sup>5</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> <http://vlada.mk/proekti/vizna-liberalizacija>

<sup>2</sup> 2013-2020 National Strategy for Networking, Cooperation and Reduction of the Outflow of Higher Educated and Professional People, Republic of Macedonia – Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje, October 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Challenges to European Welfare Systems, Klaus Schubert, Springer, Switzerland 2016, p. 501.

<sup>4</sup> <http://data.worldbank.org/country/macedonia-fyr?locale=mk>

<sup>5</sup> The Czech Republic: on its way from emigration to immigration country, Idea working paper, No 11, May 2009, page 20

## 2. Why Do Young People Leave?

### 2.1 Youth unemployment

The number one reason for migration is youth unemployment. The International Labour Organization (ILO) announced that with a rate of **53.7%** youth unemployment, Macedonia is among the top countries on the global youth unemployment list. The latest research conducted by relevant domestic institutions and civil society organizations is also concerning, according to which more than **40%** of young people would seek better future abroad.<sup>6</sup>

The unemployed are young people, mostly aged 15 to 24, the category with the highest unemployment level according to all relevant domestic statistics. In an attempt to provide for their livelihood, as well as career advancement and personal development, the young working age population is increasingly leaving the country, seeking opportunities outside the country. Unemployment at such young age is among the leading reasons why young people migrate abroad. **The motive is clear – seeking employment.** Youth employment will certainly help decrease the emigration trend but will also have positive influence on several segments of the socio-economic life in the country.

The research “Subsidized Employment for Young People Up to 29 years with Exemption from Payment of Contributions,” referencing data gathered with the Law on Free Access to Public Information, revealed that the number of unemployed young people up to 29 years on 14.1.2016 was 28,080 people, with 13,007 women, and 15,073 men.<sup>7</sup>

#### 2.1.1 Irrationalities: the number of employees remains the same while the number of unemployed drops

A significant qualitative step forward regarding the number of new employments in the past five years, for instance, in the Pelagonia region, is lacking. Nonetheless, the number of unemployed has decreased by almost three times.

More specifically, in 2009, the three employment centres in Bitola, Prilep and Kruševo registered 45,723 unemployed, while only five years later the number decreased by 30,691 people. In other words, according to the Employment Agency, on 31.3.2014, in the three municipalities in the Pelagonia region, counting around 200,000 citizens in total, the number of unemployed people amounted only to slightly above 15,000.

Unemployment according to age groups for 2011-2014

Age group	Year (unemployment in %)			
	2011	2012	2013	2014
Unemployment rate at the age group 15-24	55.3%	53.9%	51.9%	53.1%
Unemployment rate at the age group 25-29	47.0%	47.0%	45.5%	45.1%
Unemployment rate at the age group 30-64	28.7%	26.0%	24.0%	22.9%

Source: Finacethink research, 2016-2020 Youth Employment Action Plan

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm>

<sup>7</sup> <http://faktor.mk/analiza-mladite-na-udar-na-nevrabotenosta/>



The competent institutions failed to offer specific explanation and clarify what had happened to more than 30,000 people in those 5 years, in other words, where did they find employment. The data reveals that such numbers are due to young people increasingly leaving the country, as well as the fake data deletion of unemployed individuals from the employment centres.

## 2.2 Low quality formal education

The quality of education has changed in the past years. Primary schools introduced new teaching program also known as the “Cambridge” program. Secondary school became mandatory, and the state provides free textbooks for all students. Tuitions in higher education dropped, in addition to new private and state universities being established. However, the key question here is whether the abovementioned reforms led to increased quality in education, a crucial argument and explanation for the justification of the implemented reforms?

In 22.8% of the primary and secondary schools, the teaching staff has not graduated from a higher education institution. The new textbooks are of dubious quality. Most translations of textbooks for pupils studying in another language are of extremely poor quality.<sup>8</sup> They contain inaccurate information, for instance, history or geography textbooks, which consequently influences the quality of education.<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, there is the external assessment, i.e. students learning by heart the answers to the questions from a data base, a completely improper methodology of acquiring new knowledge and skills. The technical problems teachers experience during the examination, particularly in rural areas where there is electricity shortage or no internet access on the computers students use, also significantly influences the education process.<sup>10</sup>

Textbooks also contain instances where stereotyping on the ground of ethnicity is being disguisedly promoted. For example, the civil education textbook offers an example formulated in the following manner: “Tomče is the best student in the class... while Agim’s parents don’t let him go to school because he has to take care of the cows.” Teachers often hesitate when grading students fearing being placed in the group of teachers with the highest percentage of tolerance, which implies discipline measures for being partial.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mkd.mk/makedonija/pubertet-doag-ja-so-tortata-na-mama-grcija-izleguva-na-jadran-sko-more-baci-raka-za-pochit#1>

<sup>9</sup> <http://novatv.mk/skandaloznite-uchebnici-kje-se-popravaat-vo-kembridj/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://novatv.mk/eksternoto-testiranje-gi-obe-lodeni-site-negativnosti-na-obrazovniot-proces/>

### 3. Long-term Consequences of Youth Emigration

#### 3.1 Demographic stagnation

**Changes in the population structure are always the result of direct influence in the natural (birth and death rate) and mechanical (migration) movement of the population.**

The demographics of the population is changing. Macedonia is facing an aging population and economic migration with potential long-term consequences. The fertility rate, i.e. the potential natality at present is at its lowest level of simple reproduction. For the Balkan countries the continuing growth of this trend implies accelerated population aging and problems with the labour force.<sup>11</sup>

The position on family and marriage is changing as well, leading to postponed marriage unions, which on the other hand contributes towards lower fertility.

The statistics from the State Statistical Office included below reveal the following data:

**T-01: Витални настани во Република Македонија**

**T-01: Vital events in the Republic of Macedonia**

Година Year	Родени во земјата Births in the country		Умрени во земјата Deaths in the country		Природен прираст Natural increase	Склучени бракови Marriages	Разведени бракови Divorces
	вкупно total	живороден и live births	вкупно total	умрени доенчиња infant deaths			
1994	31 751	31 421	15 649	751	15 772	15 736	612
1995	30 172	29 886	16 169	727	13 717	15 823	710
1996	29 255	28 946	15 882	515	13 064	14 089	705
1997	27 129	26 830	16 373	458	10 457	14 072	1 021
1998	26 942	26 639	16 628	474	10 011	13 993	1 027
1999	25 242	24 964	16 622	404	8 342	14 172	1 045
2000	26 434	26 168	17 085	345	9 083	14 255	1 325
2001	24 467	24 183	16 790	320	7 393	13 267	1 448
2002	24 445	24 154	17 866	282	6 288	14 522	1 310
2003	23 828	23 596	17 813	303	5 783	14 402	1 405
2004	23 619	23 361	17 944	308	5 417	14 073	1 645
2005	22 697	22 482	18 406	287	4 076	14 500	1 552
2006	22 786	22 585	18 630	260	3 955	14 908	1 475
2007	22 903	22 688	19 594	234	3 094	15 490	1 417
2008	23 167	22 945	18 982	223	3 963	14 695	1 209
2009	23 910	23 684	19 060	278	4 624	14 923	1 287
2010	24 507	24 296	19 113	185	5 183	14 155	1 720
2011	22 972	22 770	19 465	172	3 305	14 736	1 753
2012	23 752	23 568	20 134	230	3 434	13 991	1 926
2013	23 334	23 138	19 208	237	3 930	13 982	2 045
2014	23 767	23 596	19 718	233	3 878	13 813	2 210
2015	23 260	23 075	20 461	198	2 614	14 186	2 200

<sup>11</sup> Општественото влијание на емиграцијата и рурално-урбаната миграција в Централна и Источна Европа, Сузана Борнарова и Верица Јанеска, април, 2012 (Social impact on emigration and rural-urban migration in Central and Eastern Europe, Suzana Bornarova and Verica Janeska, April, 2012).

T-02: Витални настани во Република Македонија - индекс (1994= 100)

T-02: Vital events in the Republic of Macedonia - index (1994= 100)

Година Year	Родени во земјата Births in the country		Умрени во земјата Deaths in the country		Природен прираст Natural increase	Склучени бракови Marriages	Разведени бракови Divorces
	вкупно total	живороден и live births	вкупно total	умрени доенчиња infant deaths			
1994	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
2003	75.0	75.1	113.8	40.3	36.7	91.5	229.6
2004	74.4	74.3	114.7	41.0	34.3	89.4	268.8
2005	71.5	71.6	117.6	38.2	25.8	92.1	253.6
2006	71.8	71.9	119.0	34.6	25.1	94.7	241.0
2007	72.1	72.2	125.2	31.2	19.6	98.4	231.5
2008	73.0	73.0	121.3	29.7	25.1	93.4	197.5
2009	75.3	75.4	121.8	37.0	29.3	94.8	210.3
2010	77.2	77.3	122.1	24.6	32.9	90.0	281.0
2011	72.4	72.5	124.4	22.9	21.0	93.6	286.4
2012	74.8	75.0	128.7	30.6	21.8	88.9	314.7
2013	73.5	73.6	122.7	31.6	24.9	88.9	334.2
2014	74.9	75.1	126.0	31.0	24.6	87.8	361.1
2015	73.3	73.4	130.7	26.4	16.6	90.1	359.5

### 3.2 Loss of Human Potential

Another **consequence** of youth emigration is the loss of human potential and labour force essential for the future development of the country. Young people leave the country at the expense of the state, in other words it implies loss of the public money invested in youth development.

When people leave the country, we lose not only our population rather we become deprived of everything the country has invested in their development. Young competent and qualified people get to live up to their potential in another country because they are not provided the opportunity to do so that here.

Consequently, emigration has destructive influence on a country's economy and industry. A drop in the working age population has direct negative influence on the economic growth and welfare because a group of working age individuals is fundamental in setting in motion the basic economic trends and generating essential development.<sup>12</sup>

In addition, trained professionals leaving the country might leave a negative impression on potential investors. In other words, foreign investors might suspect that a country facing an outflow of young labour force would be a good location for investment and whether this might signify an uncertain economic and political future of the country.

Finally, the emigration of young working age population implies not only a short-term loss for the country, rather the loss of future generations of human capital, since it is very likely that young people leave the country with their families, or in other cases emigration challenges the possibility for forming a family in their home country. Along with the families leave the children, the future potential educated and qualified professionals. This future group of professionals, i.e. working age population also presents a loss for the country's economy.

<sup>12</sup> Emigration and its Economic impact on Eastern Europe, Ruben Atoyan, International Monetary Fund, July 2016.

## 4. Key Points, Urgent Action Is Required

### 4.1. Inclusion of young people in the creation of policies concerning them

Such a measure implies inclusion of young people, whereupon the principles of non-discrimination and freedom of speech shall be observed, in the creation of policies concerning them. In this context, educational policies must not be adopted behind closed doors and under coercion. All groups must be included to offer their opinion regarding a specific issue. Regardless of the law or policy to be adopted, whether it is the Law on Secondary Education, the Law on Higher Education, the Law on Youth etc., all concerned parties must be included since it is the only way to prevent discontent among the concerned parties, open the possibility for an inflow of new ideas and aim towards promotion of democracy in our society.

### 4.2. Census of the population

There is an urgent need for a census. The lack of an exact indicator on the number of people emigrating, the birth rate and the death rate of the population prevents the country from planning efficient demographic policies.

### 4.3. Effective and efficient measures for youth employment stimulation

As we mentioned, youth unemployment is dropping, however the employment level remains the same. Unemployment is decreasing due to emigration or enrolment in higher educational institutions. All active government employment measures implemented through the Macedonian Employment Agency, unfortunately, have failed.

### 4.4 A package of measures or stimulation policies to encourage young people who have stayed over three years abroad to return

Young working age population, qualified population staying for a longer period abroad hesitate to return to the country at their own initiative. Offering a package of measures to attract people to return to the country is a step forward in the efforts to restore almost all young people living abroad.

## References:

### Books and publications:

1. Национална стратегија за вмрежување, соработка и намалување на одливот на високо образовани и стручни кадри 2013 – 2020, Република Македонија – Министерство за образование и наука, Скопје, октомври, 2013 (2013-2020 National Strategy for Networking, Cooperation and Reduction of the Outflow of Higher Educated and Professional People, Republic of Macedonia – Ministry of Education and Science, Skopje, October, 2013);
2. Општественото влијание на емиграцијата и рурално-урбаната миграција во Централна и Источна Европа, Сузана Борнарова и Верица Јанеска, април, 2012 (Social impact on emigration and rural-urban migration in Central and Eastern Europe, Suzana Bornarova and Verica Janeska, April, 2012);
3. Challenges to European Welfare Systems, Klaus Schubert, Springer, Switzerland, 2016;
4. Emigration and its Economic impact on Eastern Europe, Ruben Atoyan, International Monetary Fund, July 2016;
5. The Czech Republic: on its way from emigration to immigration country, Idea working paper, No 11, may 2009.

### Statistic data:

1. <http://data.worldbank.org>
2. <http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/data/database>
3. <http://www.ilo.org/global/lang--en/index.htm>
4. <http://www.stat.gov.mk/>
5. <http://stats.oecd.org/>

### Websites:

1. <http://www.financethink.mk/mk/>
2. <http://faktor.mk/>
3. <http://novatv.mk/>
4. <http://www.mkd.mk/>

