

TRENDS OF DEMOGRAPHIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING REGIONS IN BULGARIA

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Abstract:

The European Union seems attractive mostly with its economy prosperity. The Union however includes regions, where they differ considerably each other on a number of social and economic criteria. There are serious differences of employment, education and training, infrastructure, sex, places of residence. The European Union put his goal to reduce these differences in order to use economic and human potential more successfully and in that way to improve its competitiveness on the world economic scene. Regional planning of Republic of Bulgaria is presented in this context. The data cited after the last census of the population in Bulgaria confirm some negative trends – decreasing of the number of population, fast changes in ethnic composition of the nation and depopulation of some regions. These are part of the challenges to regional planning. We direct our attention in the present work to the trends of demographic development within the planning regions in Republic of Bulgaria.

Key words: region, NUTS classification, regional development, planning region, regional policy, demographic processes, geographic information system.

JEL: H70, H83, J10,

Regional policy of the European Union was developed on the basis of European regional economic theory. Regional economy is beginning to happen after the first enlargement of the European Union when the European Regional Development Fund was established. Because of the differences in traditions of individual countries in formulating a regional approach in the European Union they were adopted three levels of definition of areas¹: as an instrument of economic policy, as an initiator of policy approaches and as the subject of implementation of the initiatives of the Union. Accordingly, the regions in the European Union are divided as follows:

- Regions with problems at the international level – these are mostly lagging behind in development areas that involve large national regions and entire countries – Greece, Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Mezzogiorno /Italy/, the new German Länder.

- Nationally defined regions – they are part of the management structure across countries and are part of national tradition (departments, regions, communities, countries, provinces). They are important for the development of spatial planning and cross-border regional cooperation.

- Functional areas – defined according to socio-economic development. This maybe is related to regions that are included in the restructuring of depressed industrial areas, poor rural areas and others.

Regional policy objectives of the European Union are as follows:

- impact on the situation in problem areas;

¹ Рангелов, А., Европейските структури за сигурност и мирът на Балканите, София, Национален институт за международни изследвания, 1996, с. 46

- Impacts against emergence of new regional imbalances resulting from the development of integration processes in the European Union and developments of the world economy².

On 9 December³, Danuta Hübner, EU Commissioner for Regional Policy, presented the findings of a new report on the future challenges facing regions in Europe. As described in IEEP's December 2008 Policy Briefing, many Member States are beginning to look at the relationship between the CAP and cohesion policy, potentially with a view to streamlining policy.

The 'Regions 2020' report provides input into the ongoing debate on the future of EU cohesion policy which was launched by the publication of the Fourth Cohesion Report in May 2007. This review takes place in the context of the ongoing debate on the EU budget review, which DG Regional Policy, as one of the EU's largest spending departments, has been actively trying to influence.

The report provides the European Commission's first analysis of the regional impacts of four key challenges facing Europe, namely adapting to globalisation; demographic change; climate change; and the energy challenge - with a 2020 perspective. These challenges were among those identified in the EU budget review consultation paper published by the Commission in September 2007, and as noted in the report a key issue in the budget review process will be how EU policies, including cohesion policy, can best contribute to addressing these challenges.

Using a series of indicators, the report maps out a 'vulnerability index' for European regions to each of these challenges, and examines the potential differences in impacts across the EU. Regions are defined at a relatively broad

² Джилджов, А., Институционална рамка на регионалното развитие, дискуссионен форум на ФРМС и МРРБ “Регионално развитие – постижения и предизвикателства”, 12-13 декември 2000

³ <http://cap2020.ieep.eu/2008/12/16/regions-2020-report-analyses-future-challenges-for-cohesion-policy>

scale (the so-called NUTS 2 level, which generally corresponds to state or provincial administrative units) and encompass both urban and rural areas.

The extent to which the Commission reflects on the mutual roles of the CAP and cohesion policy in this report may provide an important influence on future discussions on the role and scope of European agricultural policy.

The report indicates that there will be wide variations across the EU with regards to the impacts of globalisation. Many regions in the north-west periphery of the EU, including regions in Finland, Sweden, Denmark, the UK and Ireland stand to benefit in terms of estimated productivity, employment rate, and education levels. Other regions located in the southern and eastern parts of the EU appear to be more exposed to the challenges of globalisation. In terms of demographic patterns, the report predicts that around one third of European regions will experience a population decline. These regions are located mainly in rural parts of central Europe, eastern Germany, southern Italy and northern Spain.

The report highlights the asymmetric impact of climate change in the EU, predicting that regions in the south and east of Europe will face the greatest challenges mostly due to changes in rainfall and temperatures. More limited pressures are expected in northern and western Europe, apart from the lowland coastal regions around the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. Moreover, in certain cases the impact of climate change will be more pronounced in regions with lower GDP per capita and thus with less capacity for adapting to the challenge of climate change. The report points out that energy related issues are influenced by national energy policies and energy mixes; and thus the energy challenge is largely country specific rather than differentiated at the regional level. The report however notes that peripheral regions located mainly in eastern and southern Member States appear particularly vulnerable in terms of energy security, efficiency and carbon emissions.

The Commission will report on the progress of its reflection on the future of cohesion policy in the Sixth Progress Report on Economic and Social Cohesion to be presented in spring 2009. Clearly, the CAP, and in particular, rural development policy, already play a role in responding to a number of the challenges identified by the 'Regions 2020' report. The extent to which the Commission reflects on the mutual roles of the CAP and cohesion policy in this report may provide an important influence on future discussions on the role and scope of European agricultural policy.

The realization of the objectives is done through joint action by member states and European Union Institutions. Each country, according to tradition in its definition of regions, defines the issues of regional development under the adopted goals, develops approaches for implementation and agrees them with the European Union.

For this purpose, in the early 70s of the last century “Nomenclature of Statistical Territorial Units” (NUTS) was made by the European Commission.

In recent years, the NUTS classification has gained increasing importance as the basis for a harmonized and thus comparable regional information.

According to this classification, NUTS regions are “*normative regions, they reflect the political will and their borders are fixed in terms of reduction of local authorities and population size in the region, objectives⁴*”. They are clearly defined, usually universally recognized and relatively stable. They are the place in which certain levels of government exercise their power, especially where regional policy is conducted. Therefore, in general, statutory or regulatory regions are recognized by the National statistical systems as levels of collection, processing and dissemination of data.

⁴ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

NUTS defines three levels of hierarchical classification regions. According to the classifications each member country of the European Union is divided into a number of regions of the first level of NUTS. Each region in its turn is divided into sub regions by NUTS level 2, and each sub region – NUTS level 3.

The administrative structure of the member countries is usually based on two main regional level (Länder и Kreise in Germany, Regions and departements in France, autonomas and provincial in Spain, regioni and provincie in Italy etc.) Depending on the country, these levels may be NUTS 1 and NUTS 2, NUTS 1 and NUTS 3, NUTS 2 and NUTS 3. To complement the three levels of structure in each country, “missing” level is produced by stacking of the appropriate number of units of the next lower level. Thus they are formed “non-administrative” regions for statistical purposes.

According to the same regulation on NUTS, the existing administrative units are the first criterion for determining the regions. According to the accepted definition, “Administrative means a geographical area with an administrative authority which has powers to make administrative or policy decisions for this area within the legal and institutional framework of the Member State⁵.”

In order to establish appropriate levels of NUTS, in which a category of administrative units in a Member State shall be classified, the average size of this category of administrative units in the Member State must extend to the following limits for population:

Level	Minimum	Maximum
NUTS 1	3 millions	7 millions
NUTS 2	800,000	3 millions
NUTS 3	150,000	800,000

⁵ Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of a common classification of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS)

There are six planning regions in Bulgaria established by the Regional Development Act. This Act shall govern the planning, programming, management, resource provision, monitoring, control and evaluation of the implementation of strategies, plans and programs for the implementation of state policy for regional development⁶. State policy on regional development creates conditions for balanced and sustainable integrated development of regions and municipalities and includes a system of statutory documents, resources and actions of the competent authorities aimed at:

- Reducing inter regional and intra regional differences in the degree of economic, social and territorial development;
- Ensuring the conditions for accelerated economic growth and high level of employment;
- Development of territorial cooperation.

The purpose of this Act is to create conditions for implementing the state policy for regional development based on the following principles:

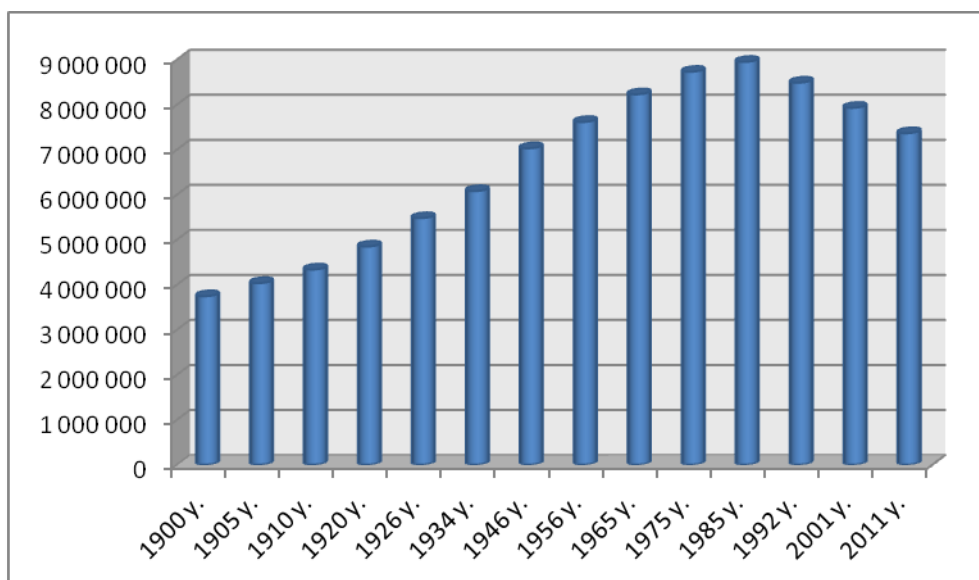
- Uniform approach to planning and programming;
- Concentration of resources;
- Complement of the financing from national public sources for co-financing with resources from private sources and from International financial institutions;
- Interagency coordination of the competent authorities in the planning, programming, resource provision, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;

⁶ Закон за регионалното развитие, ДВ бр.50, 2008 г.

- Consistency with other structural policies, instruments and actions at international, national, regional and local level;
- Partnership, openness and transparency at all levels of planning, programming, funding, monitoring and evaluation.

From 1st to 28th February 2011 the 17th census of population and housing was held in Bulgaria. It is conducted once every 10 years to collect information to plan the future better (see figure 1).

Figure 1: Population censuses in years for the period 1900 - 2011 year



Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

The census is the only source of accurate data on the number of people in the country and in different places by gender, age, education, literacy, occupation, religion, ethnicity (see Table 1).

Table 1
Population up to 31.12.2010 total for Bulgaria according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the country	7 504 868	3 629 809	3 875 059	5 375 069	2 581 084	2 793 985	2 129 799	1 048 725	1 081 074

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

For the purposes of planning, programming, management, resource provision, monitoring and evaluation of regional development areas are differentiated, which are divided into levels according to requirements of the classification of territorial units for statistics applied in the European Union. Areas that compose level 1, are not administrative territorial units and they are of territorial scope as follows (see Table 2):

1. Area "North and Southeast Bulgaria", including Northwest region, North central region, North East region and South West region and South central region;
2. Area "Southwest and South central Bulgaria", id South central region.

Table 2
Population up to 31.12.2010 for areas of first level per place of residence and sex
(Number)

Areas of 1 level	Total			In cities			In villages		
	total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
North and South East Bulgaria	3 877 803	1 882 209	1 995 594	2 622 852	1 265 544	1 357 308	1 254 951	616 665	638 286
Southwest and South central Bulgaria	3 627 065	1 747 600	1 879 465	2 752 217	1 315 540	1 436 677	874 848	432 060	442 788

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

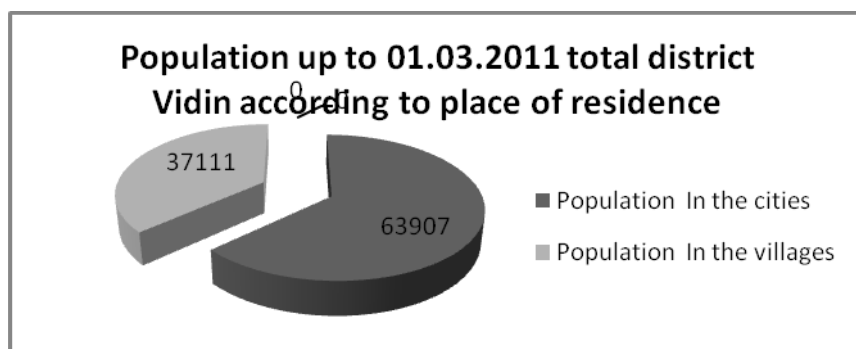
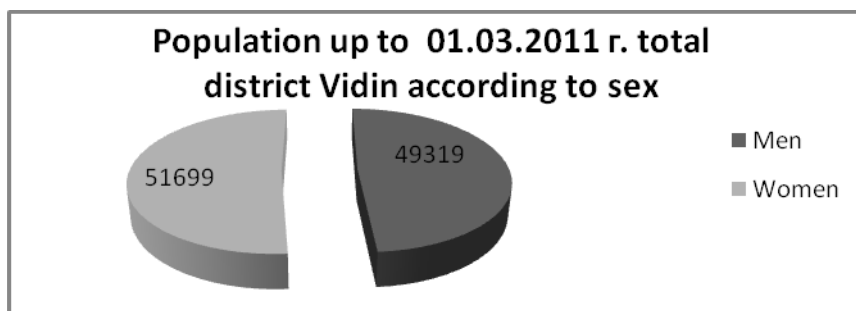
Areas of level 2 does not represent an administrative territorial units and have territorial scope as follows:

1. North-west region, including districts Vidin, Vratsa, Lovech, Montana and Pleven. Information on population by place of residence, age and sex is as follows;

District: Vidin

<i>Population up to 31.12.2010 total for district Vidin according to place of residence and sex</i>									
(Number)									
Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Vidin	101 018	49 319	51 699	63 907	31 264	32 643	37 111	18 055	19 056

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



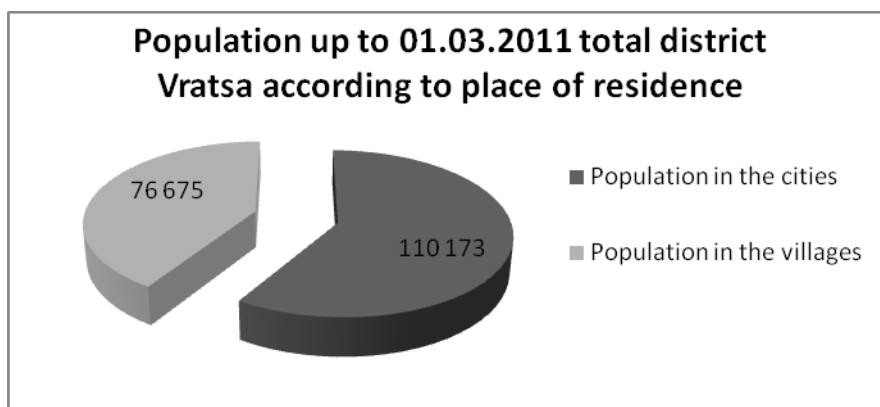
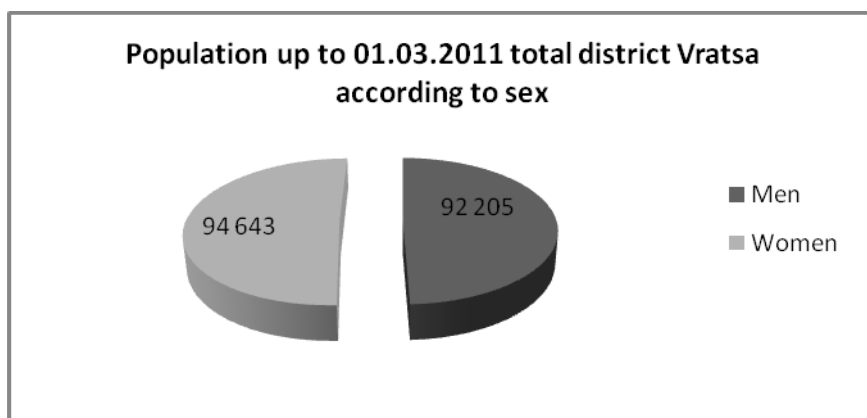
District: Vratsa

Population up to 31.12.2010 total for district Vratsa according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Vratsa	186 848	92 205	94 643	110 173	54 111	56 062	76 675	38 094	38 581

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



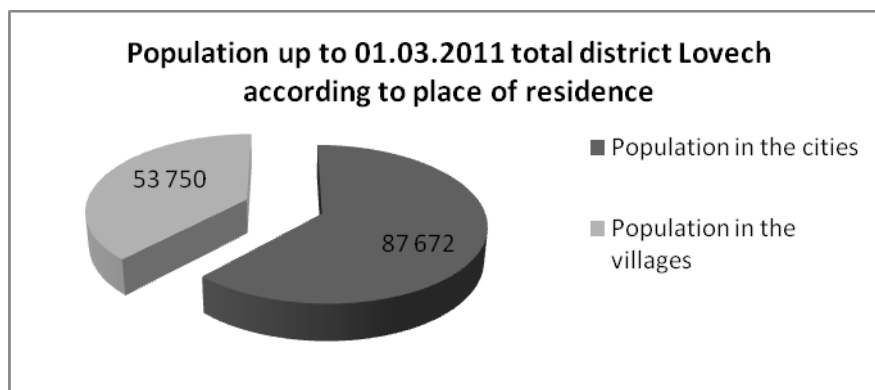
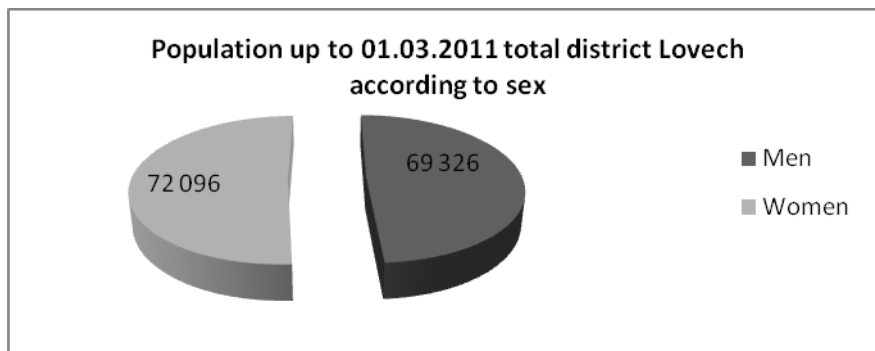
District: Lovech

Population up to 31.12.2010 total for district Lovech according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Lovech	141 422	69 326	72 096	87 672	43 014	44 658	53 750	26 312	27 438

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



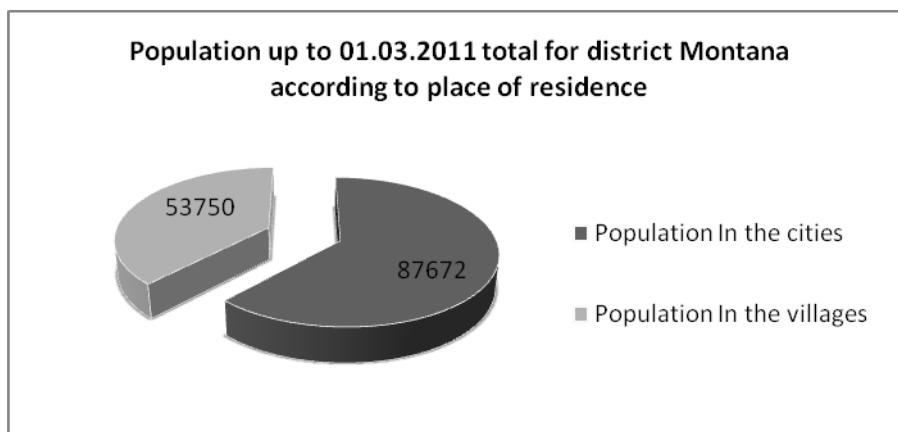
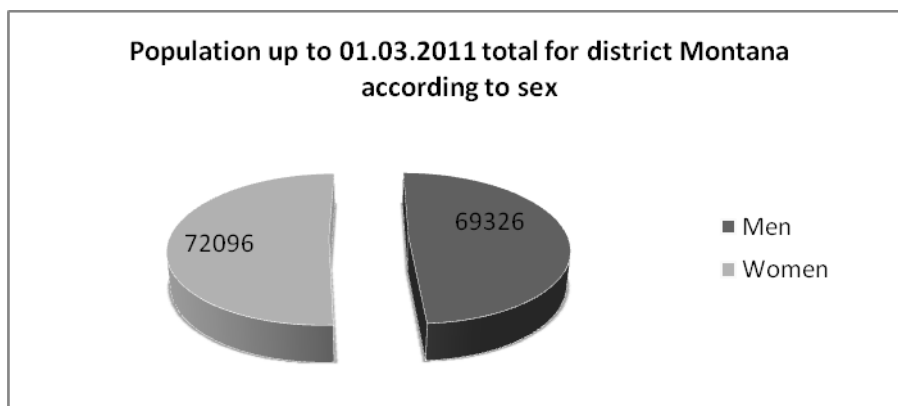
District: Montana

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Montana according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Montana	141 422	69 326	72 096	87 672	43 014	44 658	53 750	26 312	27 438

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

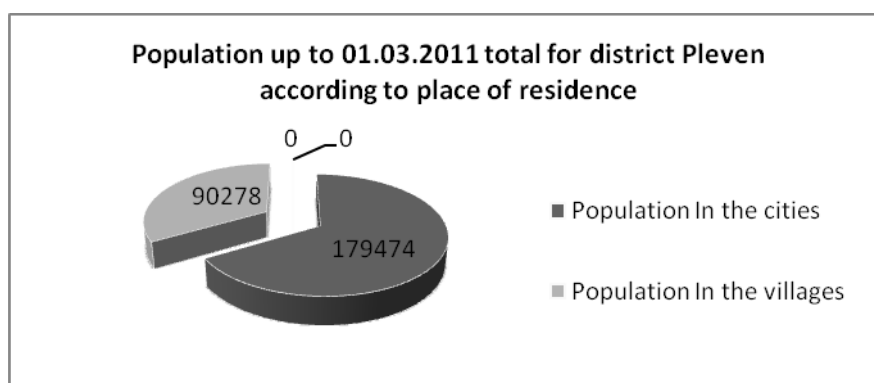
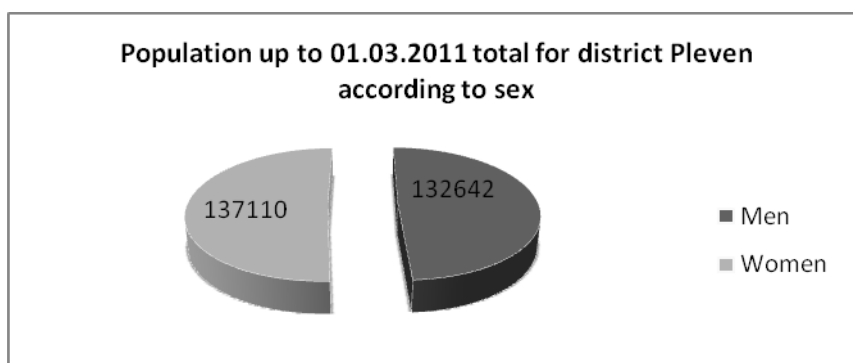


District: Pleven

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Pleven according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Pleven	269 752	132 642	137 110	179 474	88 018	91 456	90 278	44 624	45 654

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



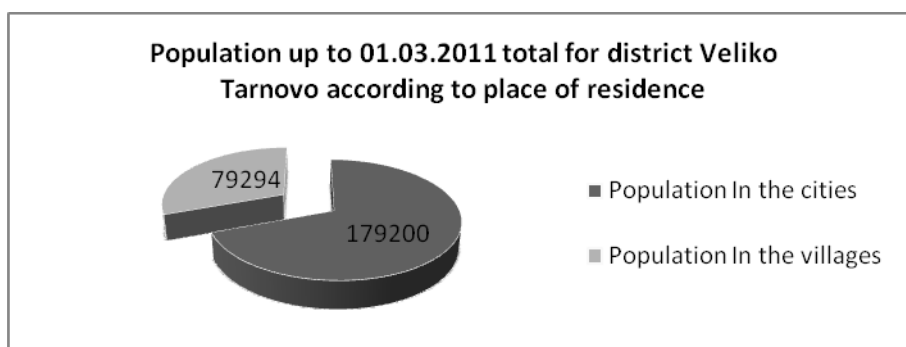
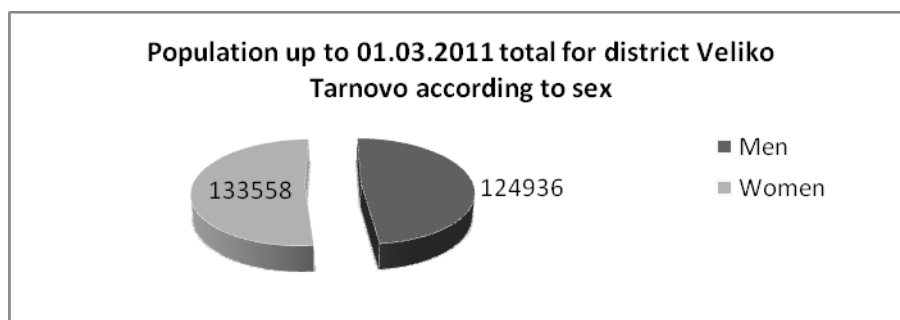
2. North-central region, including districts Veliko Tarnovo, Gabrovo, Razgrad, Rousse and Silistra. Information on population by place of residence, age and sex is as follows:

District: Veliko Tarnovo

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Veliko Tarnovo according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Veliko Tarnovo	258 494	124 936	133 558	179 200	86 069	93 131	79 294	38 867	40 427

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

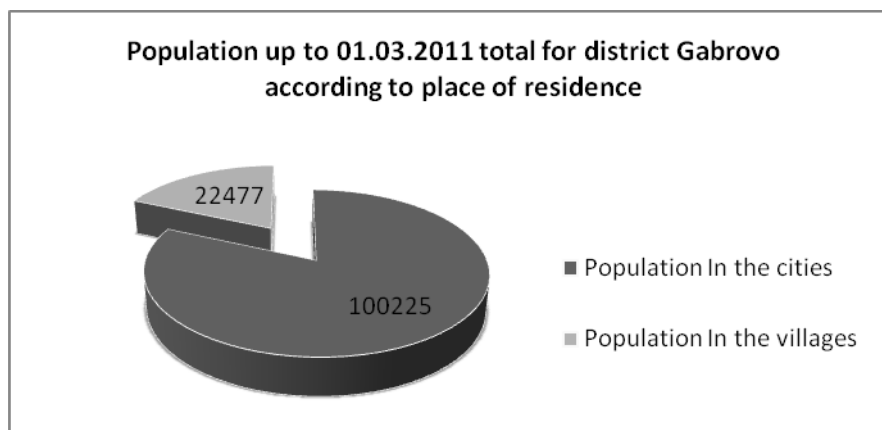
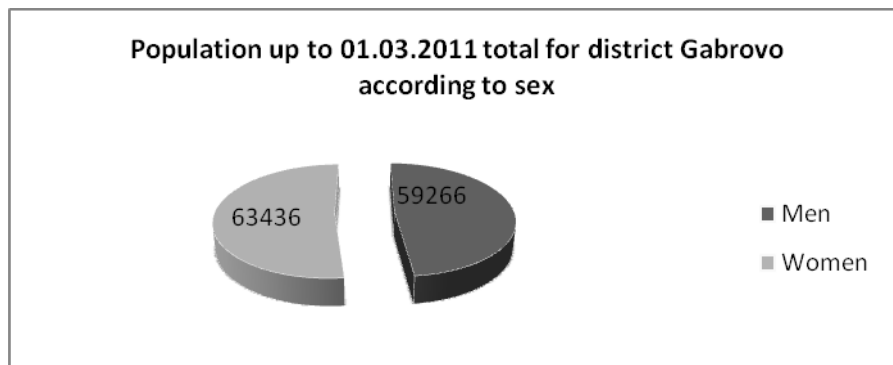


District: Gabrovo

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Gabrovo according to place of residence and sex

Regions	(Number)								
	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Gabrovo	122 702	59 266	63 436	100 225	48 399	51 826	22 477	10 867	11 610

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

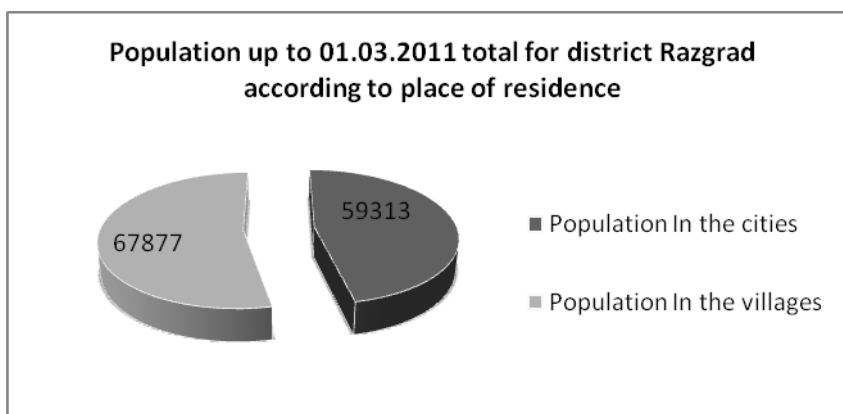
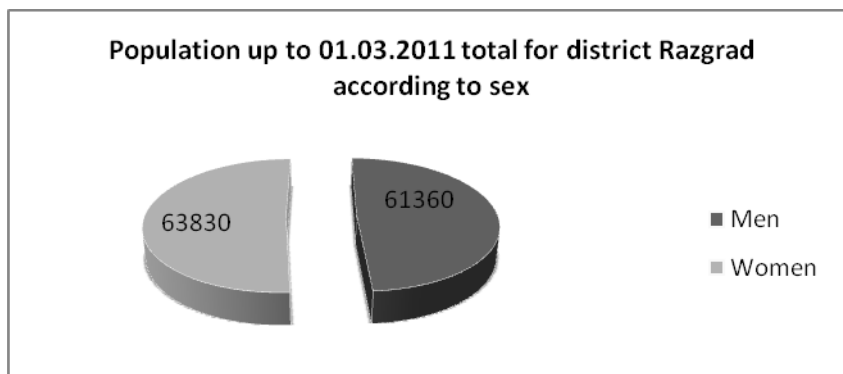


District: Razgrad

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Razgrad according to place of residence and sex

Regions	(Number)								
	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Razgrad	125 190	61 360	63 830	59 313	28 531	30 782	65 877	32 829	33 048

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

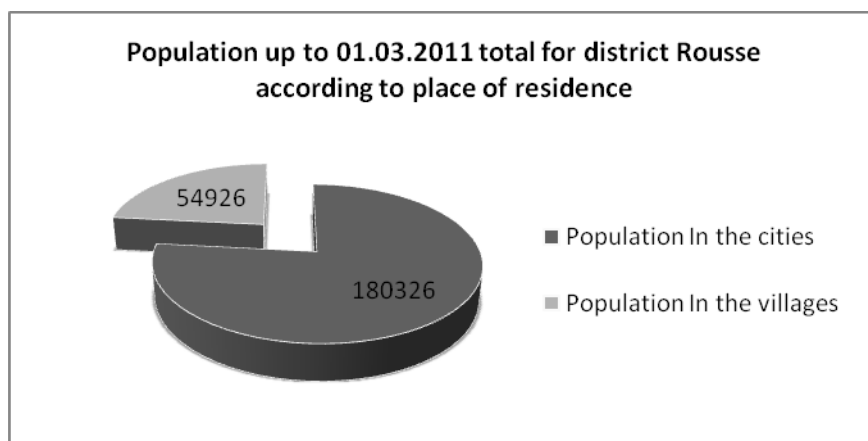
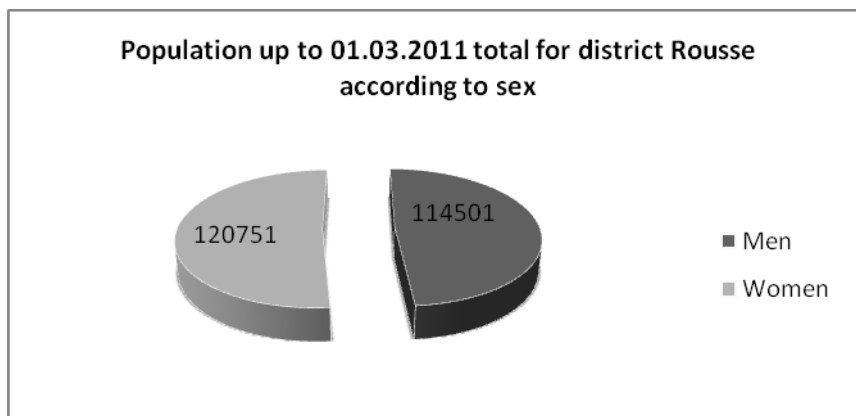


Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Rousse according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Rousse	235 252	114 501	120 751	180 326	87 495	92 831	54 926	27 006	27 920

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

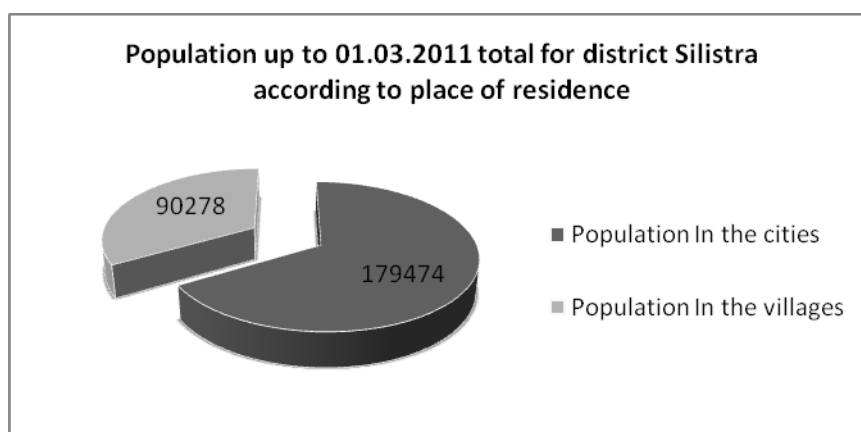
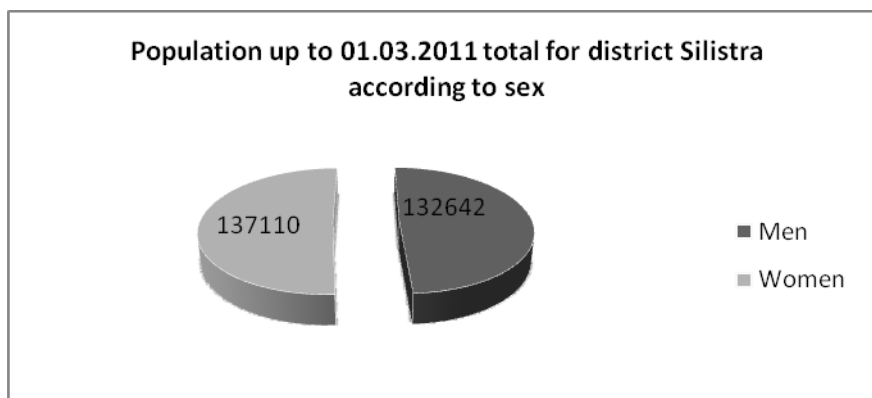


Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Silistra according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Silistra	269 752	132 642	137 110	179 474	88 018	91 456	90 278	44 624	45 654

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



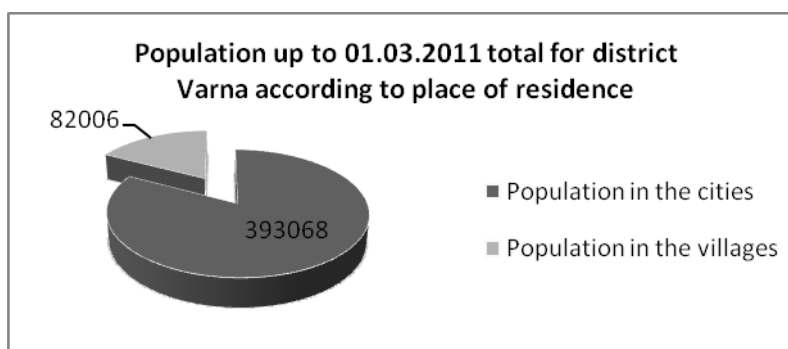
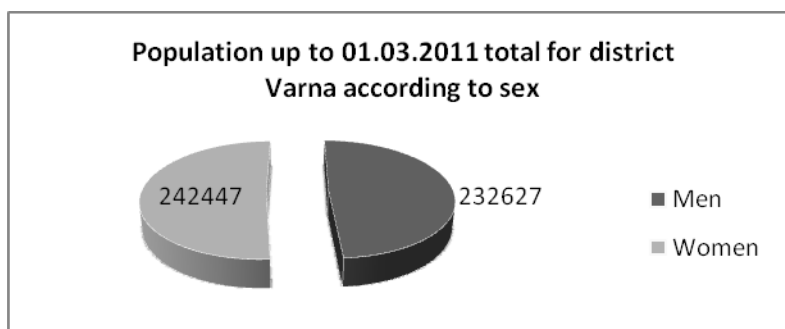
3. North-east region, including districts Varna, Dobrich, Targovishte and Shumen. Information on population by place of residence, age and sex is as follows:

District: Varna

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Varna according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Varna	475 074	232 627	242 447	393 068	191 539	201 529	82 006	41 088	40 918

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

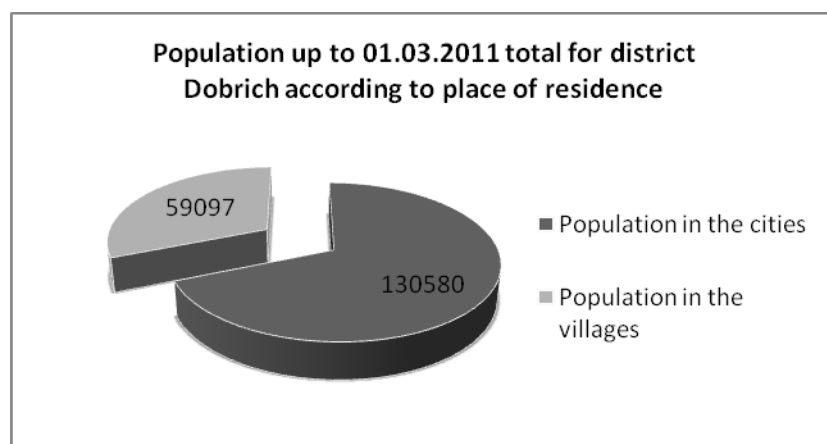
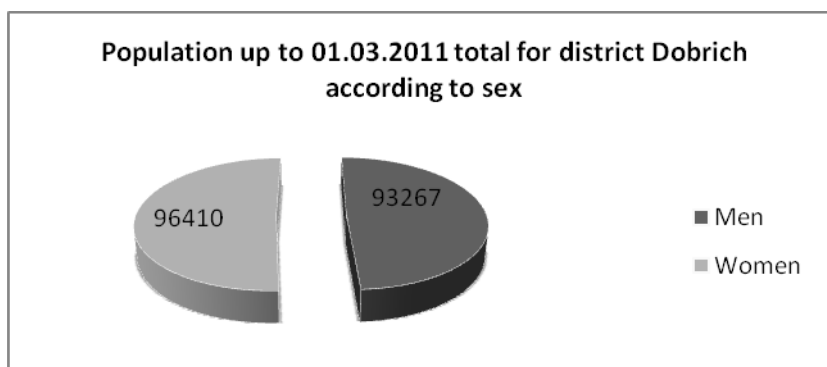


Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Dobrich according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Dobrich	189 677	93 267	96 410	130 580	63 605	66 975	59 097	29 662	29 435

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



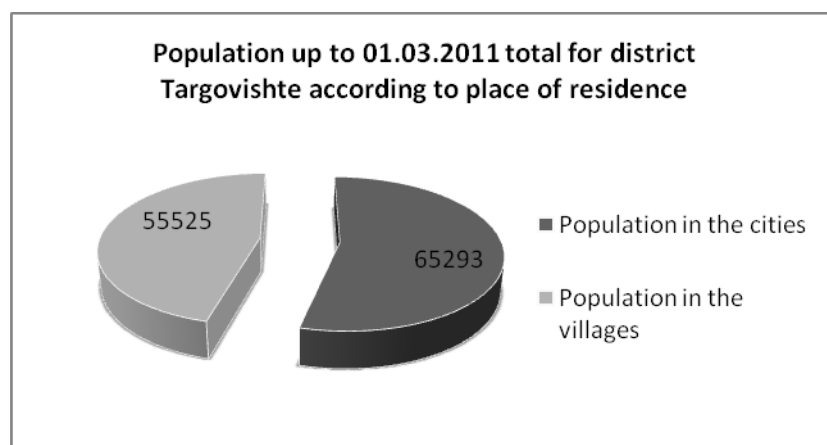
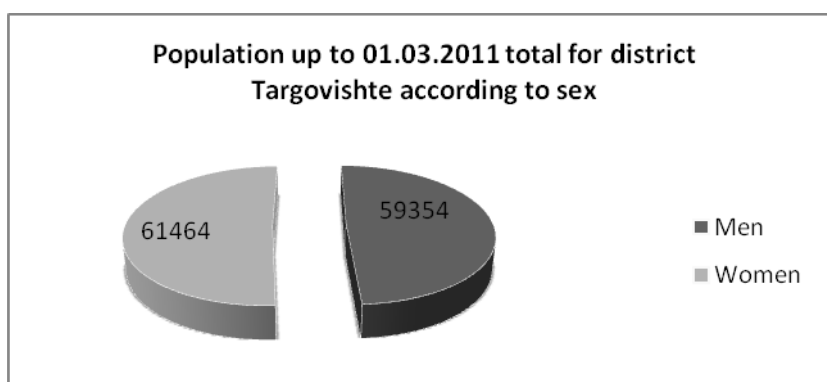
District: Targovishte

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Targovishte according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages			
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	
Total for the district										
Targovishte	120 818	59 354	61 464	65 293	31 525	33 768	55 525	27 829	27 696	

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

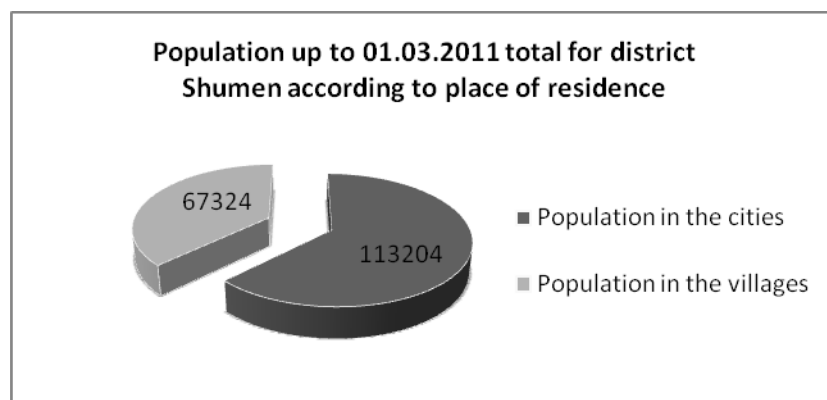
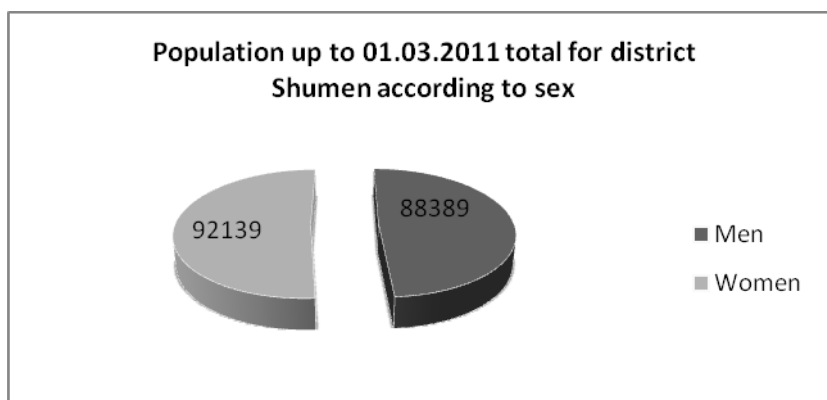


District: Shumen

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Shumen according to place of residence and sex

Regions	(Number)								
	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Shumen	180 528	88 389	92 139	113 204	54 541	58 663	67 324	33 848	33 476

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



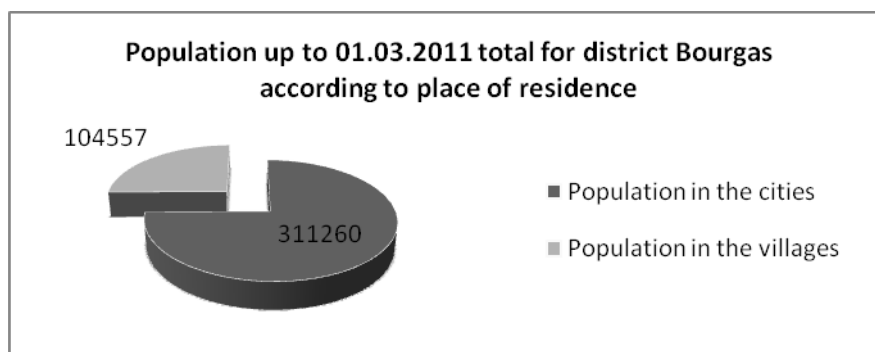
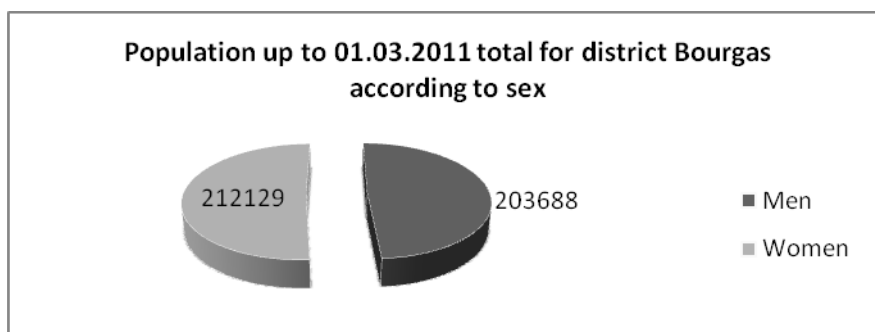
4. South-east region including districts Bourgas, Sliven, Stara Zagora and Yambol. Information on population by place of residence, age and sex is as follows:

District: Bourgas

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Bourgas according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Bourgas	415 817	203 688	212 129	311 260	151 528	159 732	104 557	52 160	52 397

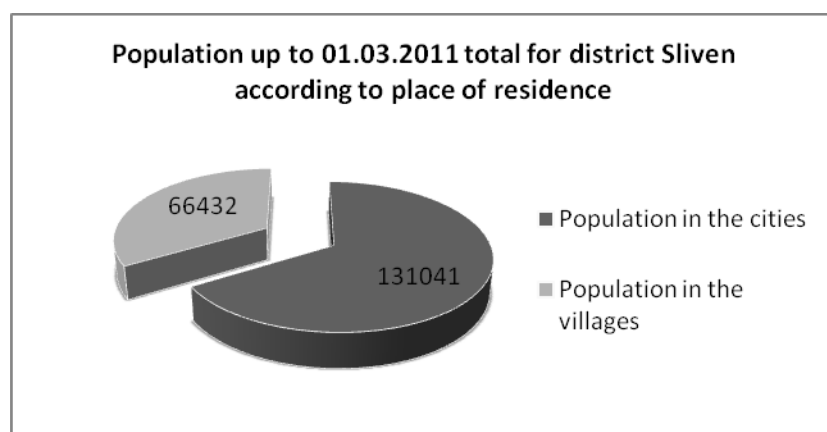
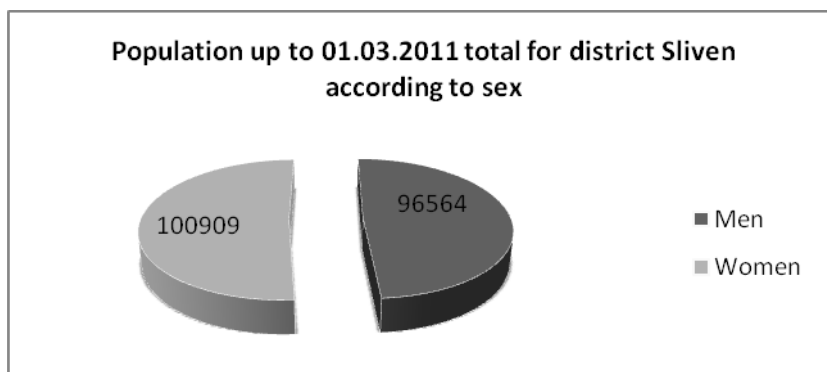
Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Sliven according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Sliven	197 473	96 564	100 909	131 041	63 603	67 438	66 432	32 961	33 471

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

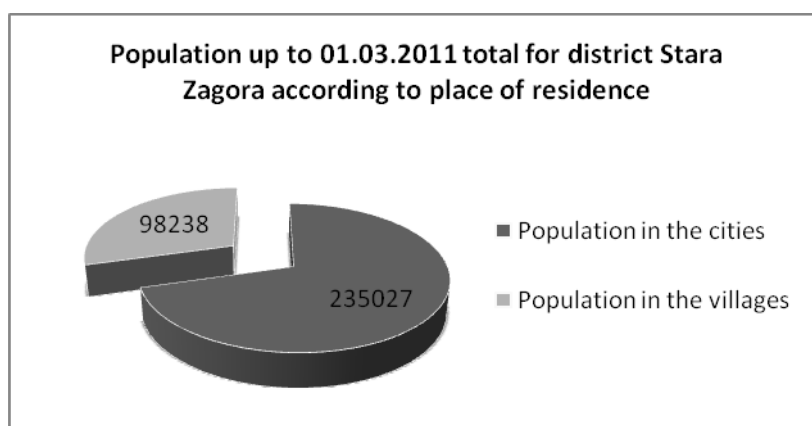
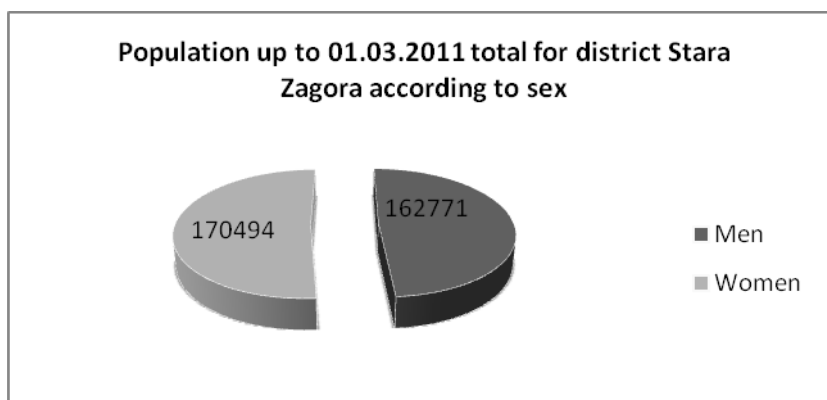


District: Stara Zagora

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Stara Zagora according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Stara Zagora	333 265	162 771	170 494	235 027	114 386	120 641	98 238	48 385	49 853

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

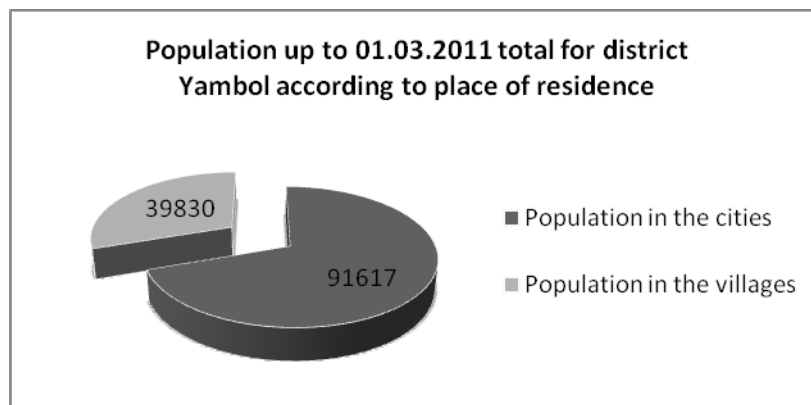
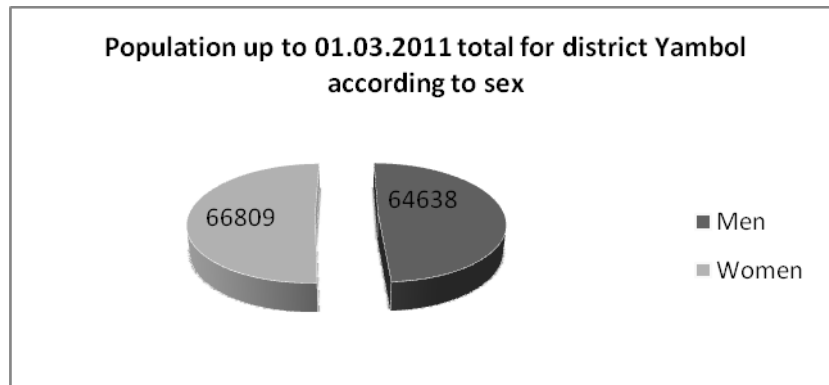


District: Yambol

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Yambol according to place of residence and sex

Regions	(Number)								
	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Yambol	131 447	64 638	66 809	91 617	44 785	46 832	39 830	19 853	19 977

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



5. South-west region including districts Blagoevgrad, Kyustendil, Pernik, Sofiiska and Sofia. Information on population by place of residence, age and sex is as follows:

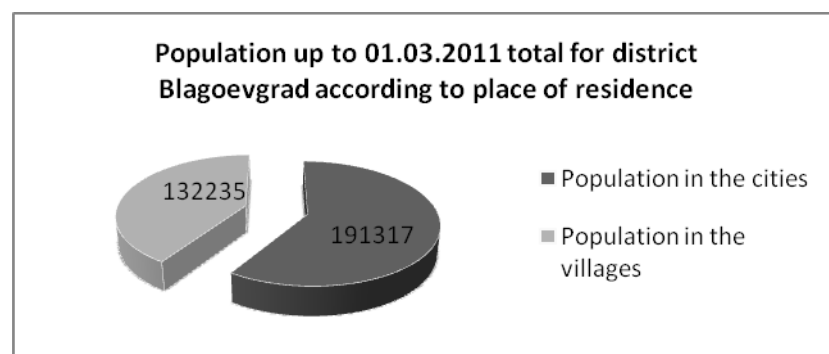
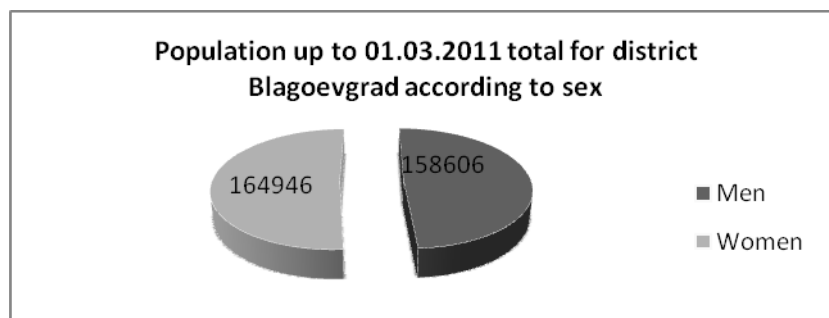
District: Blagoevgrad

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Blagoevgrad according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Blagoevgrad	323 552	158 606	164 946	191 317	92 558	98 759	132 235	66 048	66 187

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



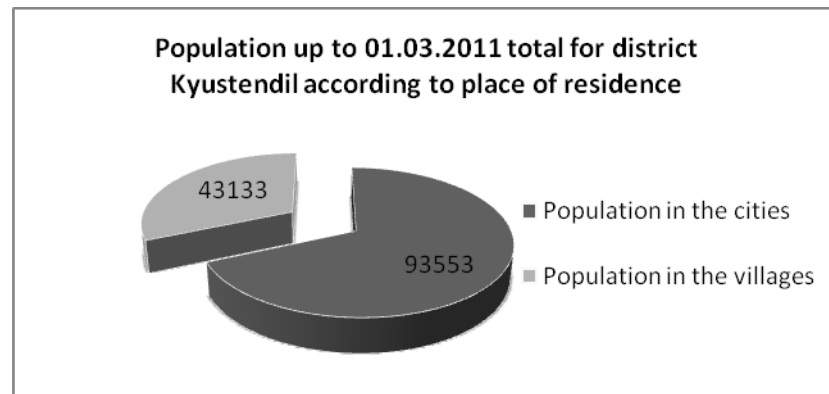
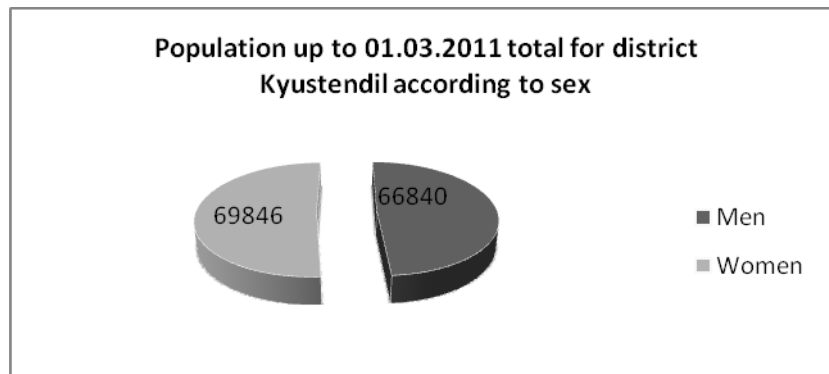
District: Kyustendil

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Kyustendil according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Kyustendil	136 686	66 840	69 846	93 553	45 489	48 064	43 133	21 351	21 782

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

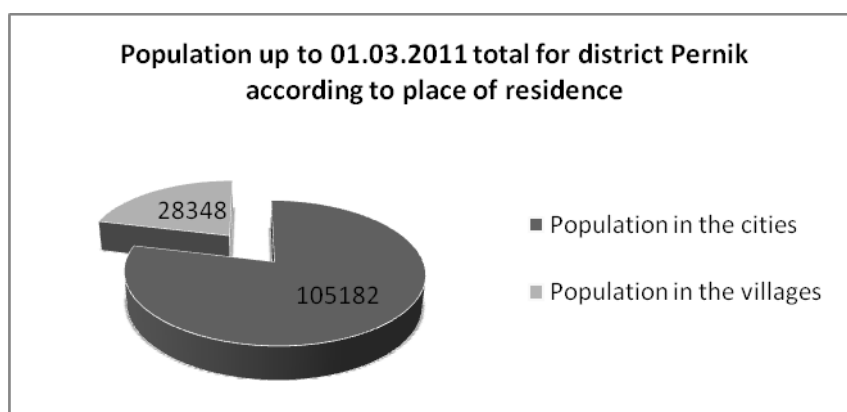
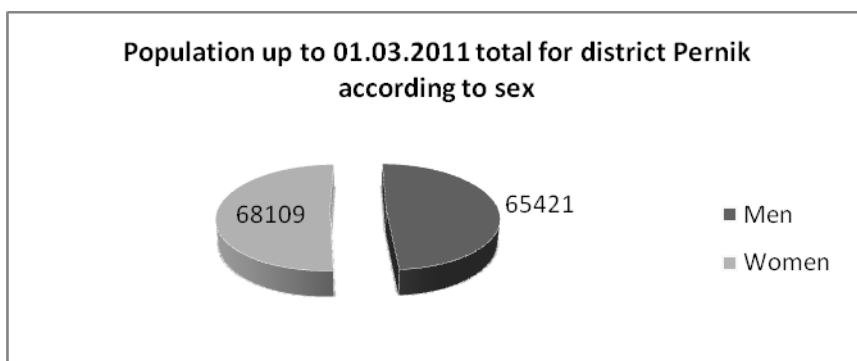


Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Pernik according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Pernik	133 530	65 421	68 109	105 182	51 202	53 980	28 348	14 219	14 129

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

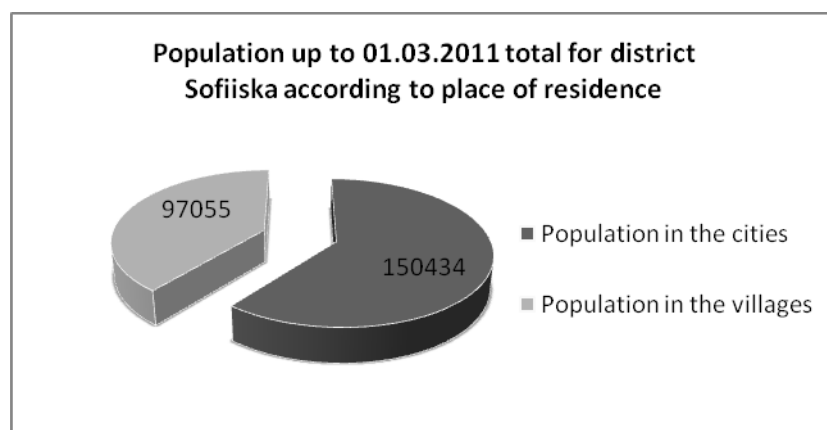
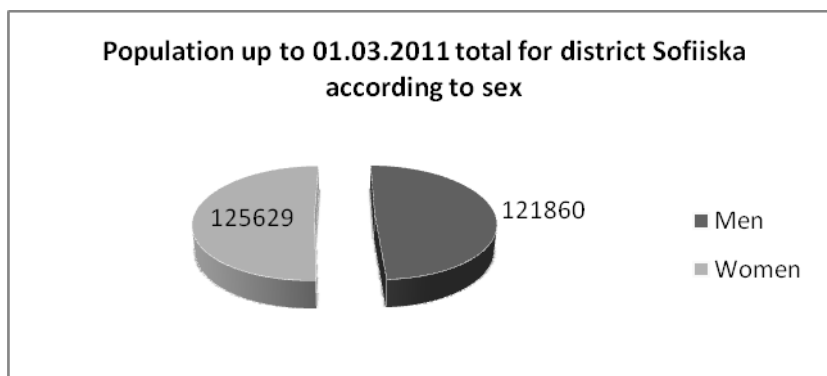


District: Sofiiska

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Sofiiska according to place of residence and sex

Regions	(Number)								
	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Sofiiska	247 489	121 860	125 629	150 434	73 838	76 596	97 055	48 022	49 033

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

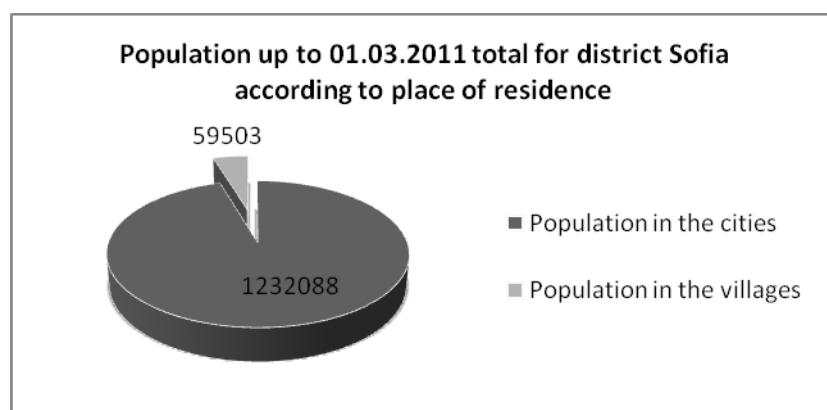
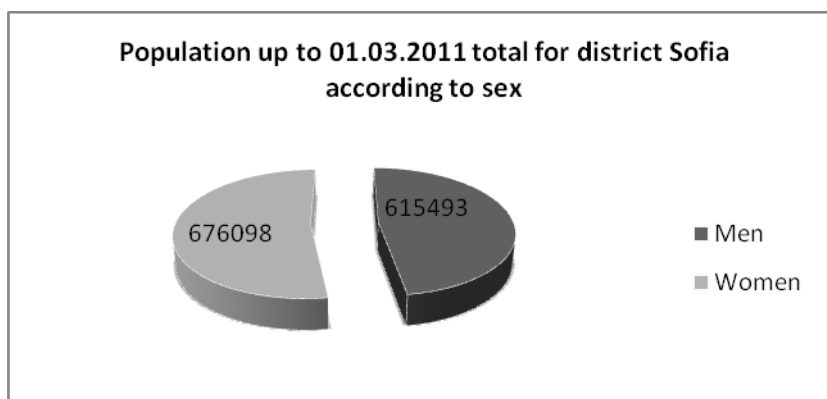


Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Sofia according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Sofia	1 291 591	615 493	676 098	1 232 088	586 044	646 044	59 503	29 449	30 054

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



6. South central region including districts Kardzhali, Pazardzhik, Plovdiv, Smolyan and Haskovo. Information on population by place of residence, age and sex is as follows:

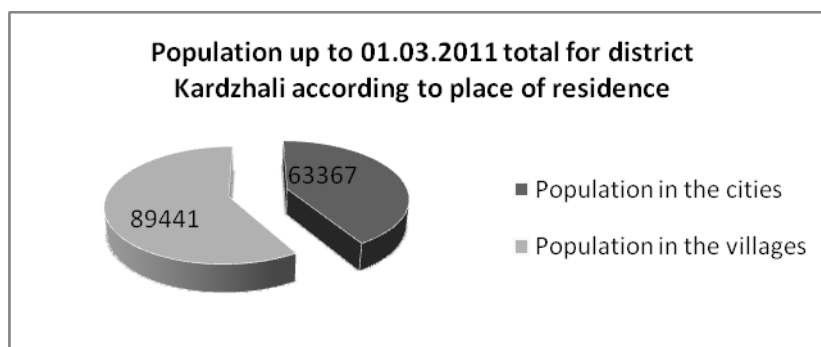
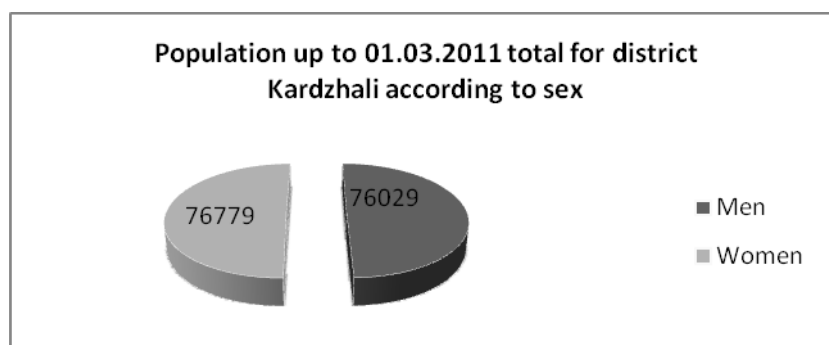
District: Kardzhali

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Kardzhali according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Kardzhali	152 808	76 029	76 779	63 367	30 789	32 578	89 441	45 240	44 201

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



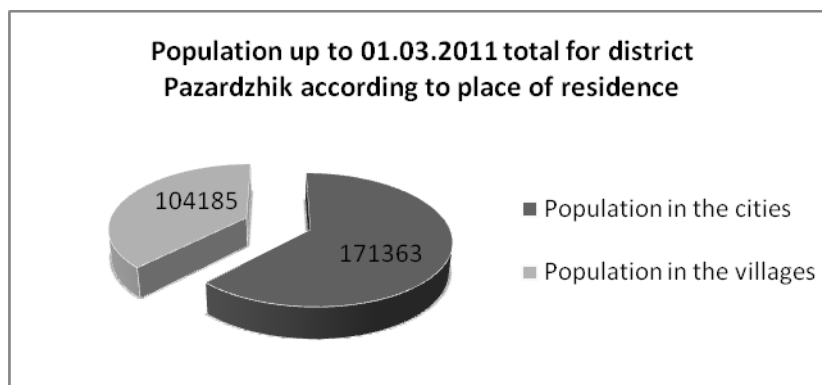
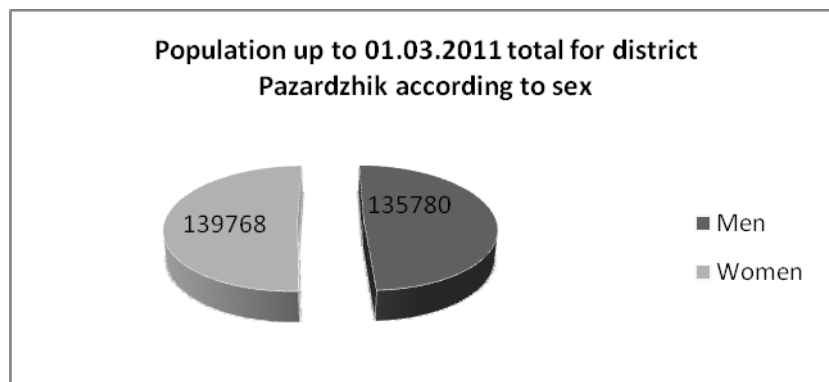
District: Pazardzhik

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Pazardzhik according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Pazardzhik	275 548	135 780	139 768	171 363	83 839	87 524	104 185	51 941	52 244

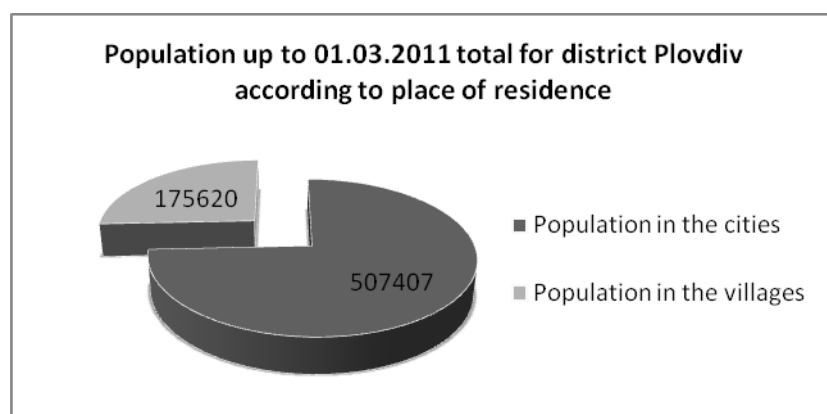
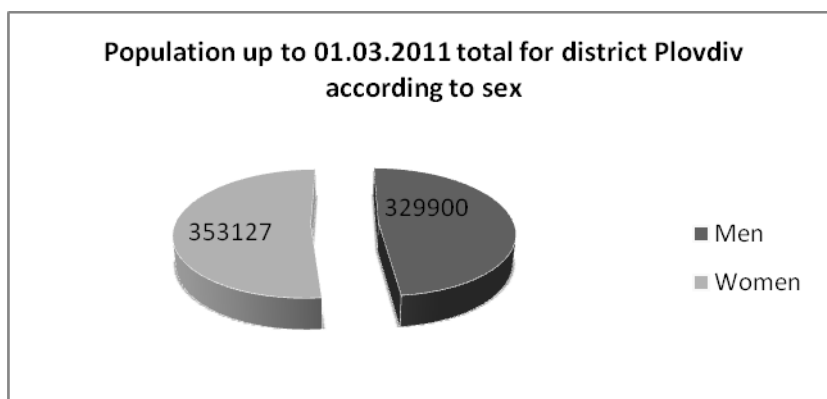
Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Plovdiv according to place of residence and sex
(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Plovdiv	683 027	329 900	353 127	507 407	243 457	263 950	175 620	86 443	89 177

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



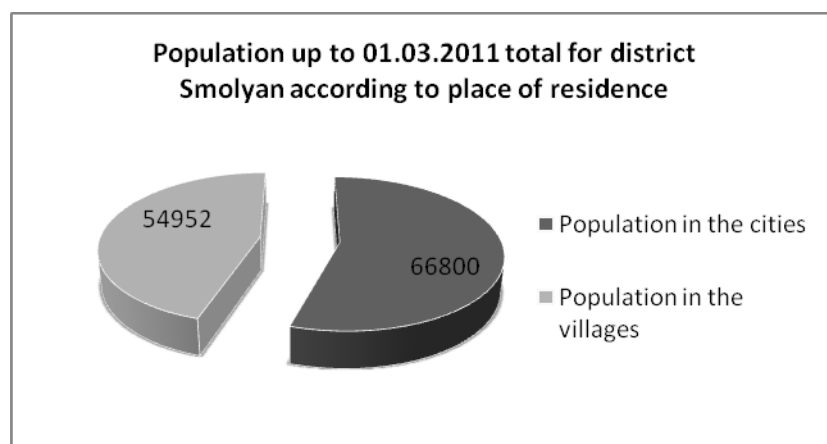
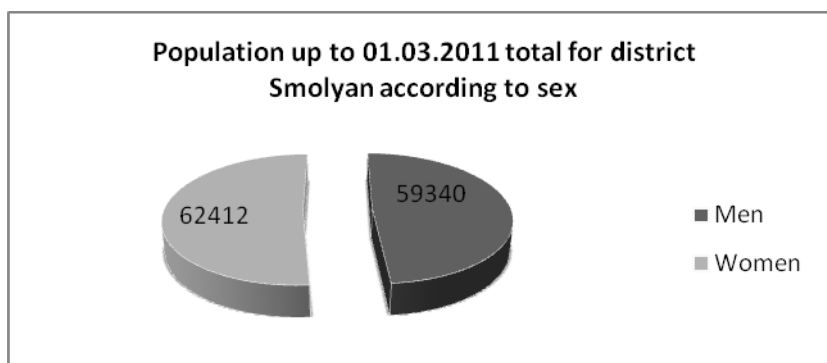
District: Smolyan

Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Smolyan according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Smolyan	121 752	59 340	62 412	66 800	32 346	34 454	54 952	26 994	27 958

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>

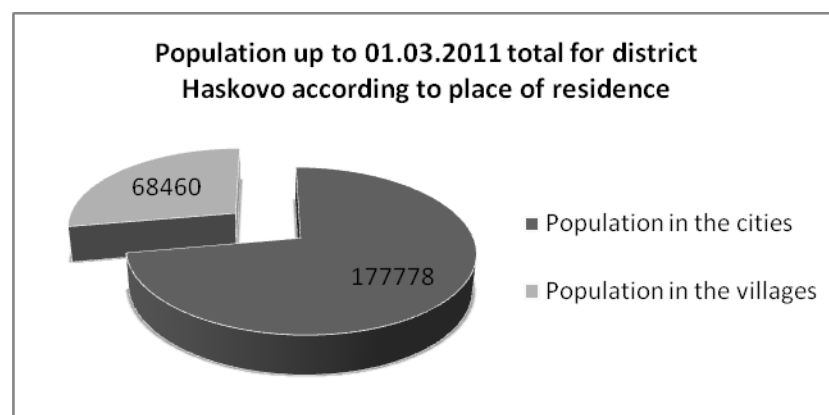
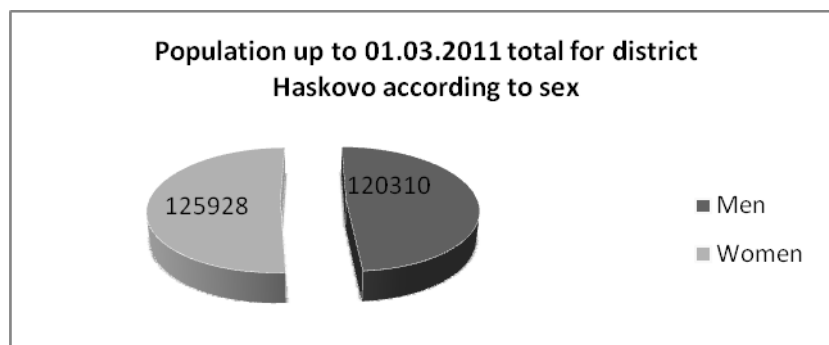


Population up to 01.03.2011 total for district Haskovo according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions	Total			In the cities			In the villages		
	TOTAL	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Total for the district Haskovo	246 238	120 310	125 928	177 778	86 438	91 340	68 460	33 872	34 588

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011., <http://www.nsi.bg/>



Information about the population according to place of residence, sex and age is given in Table 3.

Table 3

Population up to 31.12.2010. by regions which form level 2, according to place of residence and sex

(Number)

Regions of level 2	Total			In cities			In villages		
	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	women
North-west	886 911	429 894	457 017	554 376	268 328	286 048	332 535	161 566	170 969
North central	901 885	436 150	465 735	592 652	284 311	308 341	309 233	151 839	157 394
North-east	982 559	478 206	504 353	699 421	337 700	361 721	283 138	140 506	142 632
South-east	1 106 448	537 959	568 489	776 403	375 205	401 198	330 045	162 754	167 291
South-west	2 113 555	1 014 532	1 099 023	1 744 234	831 871	912 363	369 321	182 661	186 660
South central	1 513 510	733 068	780 442	1 007 983	483 669	524 314	505 527	249 399	256 128

Source: National statistical Institute, 2011, <http://www.nsi.bg/>

Regions which form level 3, are administrative-territorial units and they include territory of the separate areas.

Regions of respective levels are territorial background to conduct state policy for regional development.

Regions for targeted support from the state could be individuated on the territory of the regions of level 3. They include the territory of one or more neighbouring municipalities.

Strategic planning of the regional development is developed on that background. It comprises developing and actualization of system of documents for achieving of sustainable integrated regional and local development including development of trans- border, trans- national and inter- regional cooperation.

Programming of the regional development includes development and actualization of program documents for regional development on the basis of system of documents for strategic planning of regional development.

The system of documents for strategic planning and programming of the regional development includes:

- National development plan;
- National strategic referent frame;
- Operative programs co funded by the European Union funds;
- National strategy for regional development;
- Regional plans for development;
- District strategies for development;
- Municipality plans for development.

These plans unify strategies and plans of national level of all sectors of development whereas small planning regions are presented as districts and municipalities. That means they will consider opportunities for development related to the specific territorial units – regions of planning, districts and municipalities.

The quality of the regional plans is of exceptional importance, as a basis for allocation of financial support of European Union for regional development. Consequently that is a solution where the stakeholders are actively engaged in the planning process, which since its turn will give a result on the regional planning.