

Statistics in focus

GENERAL STATISTICS

THEME 1 – 6/2001

REGIONS

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Regional population change in candidate and EU countries

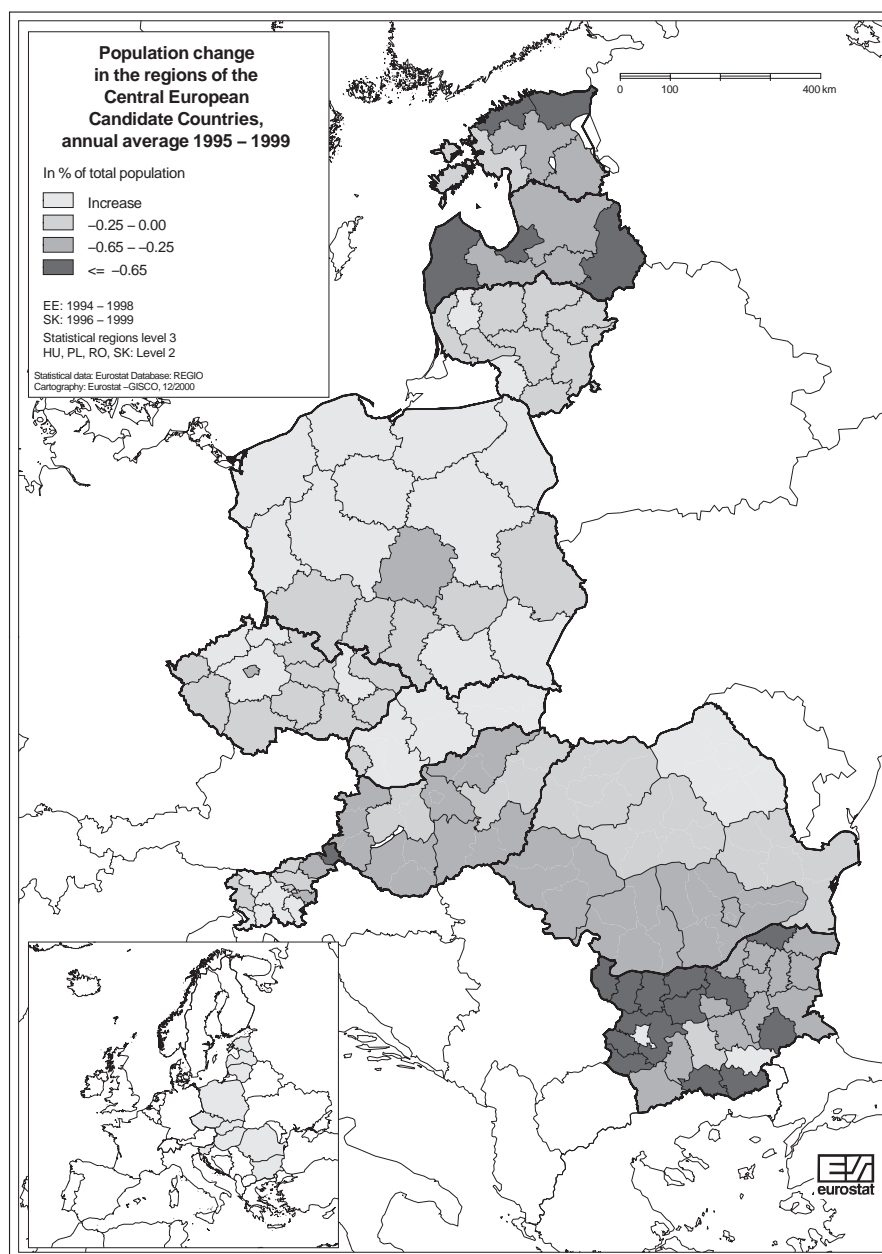


Figure 1: Population change in the regions of the Central European Candidate Countries, annual average 1995-1999



Falling population in candidate countries; slight rise in the EU

An analysis of 109 regions in the central and eastern European candidate countries ¹⁾ reveals a clear trend of decreasing population during the period 1995-1999. Migration and natural-increase data were consulted to explain trends.

In order to provide a comparison, EU regions were also

studied using the latest available 5-year period (1994-1998). The picture is quite different. In most regions population is still slowly increasing. Even in those regions where population has indeed decreased during recent years, rates are not so significantly high as in the candidate countries.

Population declines in over 75% of candidate-country regions

The average annual population change rate for CEC regions is -0.27% but rates vary from -1.32% in the Bulgarian region of Smolyan to +0.32% in the Slovak region of Východné Slovensko. No fewer than 82 regions noted a decrease; in 19 regions it exceeded

0.65% per year. From Figure 1, it is apparent that the regions most severely affected by population decline are to be found in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Slovenia.

Migration and fertility both key factors in Baltic and Bulgarian falls

Table 1 shows that seven of the 10 greatest population falls concerned Bulgarian regions. Indeed, no fewer than 26 of Bulgaria's 28 regions registered a decrease in population. Only in the case of the region around Bulgaria's second city, Plovdiv (-0.10 %), was the fall less than 0.25% and in almost half of all Bulgarian regions it exceeded 0.65% per year. In all but two regions, low birth rates and high death rates resulted in negative natural increase. Outward migration worsened the population decline in the majority of regions even where, as in Kurdzhali, natural increase was positive. Sofia stolitsa (the region around Bulgaria's capital city) is the only region in Bulgaria to record a significant growth in population (0.32%). Natural increase is also negative here but positive migratory flows into the region outweigh this trend.

Ranking 6th and 8th in Table 1, with annual change rates of -1.01% and -0.86% respectively, the two Estonian regions of Põhja-Eesti and Kirde-Eesti have experienced a declining population due to natural decrease throughout the 1990s, despite the fact that Põhja-Eesti is the region where Tallinn, the capital city, is located and it has both a strong economy and an extensive educational sector. Kirde-Eesti, on the other

hand, is a classical mature industrial region.

Although only one Latvian region, Rīga, features in the "top ten" of Table 1, the rankings 11-20 for population decline include three other Latvian regions, along with six Bulgarian ones. Although Latgale follows the general Latvian trends of an ageing and decreasing population, negative migratory flows have the greatest overall impact in Rīga and Kurzeme. The departure of former Soviet military personnel and their families since Latvia's independence has been a major factor.

The 18th ranking of Slovenia's Pomurska region reflects the economic disadvantage of its peripheral location on Slovenia's borders with Hungary, Austria and Croatia, compounded by a relatively high mortality rate. Similarly, although the final ten regions of the listing in Table 1 are again dominated by Bulgarian regions, they also include Spodnjeposavska in Slovenia. Negative net migration in this region reflects the fact that in the former Yugoslavia most of the region formed part of the wider metropolitan area of Zagreb, the capital of modern Croatia. Much of its population decline can accordingly be attributed to the emigration of non-Slovene people after Slovenia's independence.

Death rates exceed birth rates

Seven of the eight Level 2 regions in Romania have recorded a decrease in population, reaching rates between 0.41% and 0.25% in the four southern regions of Bucureşti, Vest, Sud, and Sud-Vest, primarily because mortality rates are higher than birth rates.

Hungary's regions show a general pattern of falling populations but in two regions (including Észak-Alföld, where a more favourable age structure boosts birth rates) there was a narrower gap between death and birth rates.

1) Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia

Of the five regions in Poland experiencing population decreases, the decline was greatest in Łódzkie region, where the proportion of the population in the post-productive age groups is very high, resulting in higher death than birth rates.

Natural increase is negative in seven of Lithuania's ten regions. In Panevėžys, Vilnius and Tauragė, negative net migration has been an additional factor contributing to the fall in population. Utena region, despite positive net migration, has the greatest rate of population decrease in the country. This region has the country's highest mortality rate, the lowest birth rate and also a very high proportion of elderly people.

Lääne-Eesti in western Estonia experienced a smaller

annual average decrease (-0.10%) in population than in other Estonian regions. Rapid restructuring of the regional economy in the 1990s is reflected in positive net internal migration and a birth rate that more nearly makes up for the death rate.

Although all Czech regions are characterised by declining or stagnating populations, Praha region, around the capital, forms an interesting contrast to the migration-related growth of Bulgaria's capital. Its 0.35% population decrease per year was the highest level in the country. While deaths exceeded births, migration out of the region also contributed to the decline of the population.

« Growth regions » of the candidate countries

While Telšiai and Marijampolė were the only Lithuanian regions to record an increase in population (0.04 and 0.02%) but the scant difference between birth and death rates meant this was insignificant. In Poland, by contrast, no fewer than 10 of the 16 voivodships recorded population increases of between 0.01% and 0.25%. These regions form an uninterrupted belt across the northern half of the country. Beyond a strip of regions with declining populations, there is again growth in the two southeastern regions of Małopolskie and Podkarpackie. These border on Slovakia, which forms a striking exception among the candidate countries.

Of the four Slovak regions, only Bratislavský kraj has noted a population decrease (only -0.03%). Throughout Slovakia, the birth rate is higher than the death rate and this gap is steadily widening.

In five of Slovenia's twelve regions, there has also been an increase in total population of between 0.04% and 0.28%. Perhaps reflecting the reorientation of the country's economic and political centre of gravity since independence, these five regions form a belt centred on the capital, Ljubljana, but also including Slovenia's port at Koper in Obalno-kraška region.

Only a quarter of EU regions record falling population

Although the EU-wide average annual population change rate was positive at +0.23%, population change rates varied from -0.77% in the German region of Halle to +3.24% in the Flevoland region of the Netherlands. Only 56 regions (24% of those studied) noted a

decrease in the population - a quite different picture from that observed in the CEC states. Migration has become the decisive factor in this still positive, but slow, population increase at regional level in the European Union. Fertility levels are very low in general.

Sharpest falls reflect outward migration and low fertility

Regions with very high annual decreases in population (ranging from -0.77% to -0.25%) were found in eastern Germany (Halle, Dessau, Chemnitz and Magdeburg), in Portugal (Alentejo region), in central and northern Sweden (Norra Mellansverige, Mellersta Norrland and Övre Norrland), the Greek region of Voreio Aigaio, in Spain (Principado de Asturias, Pais Vasco) and in Finland and Italy (Itä-Suomi and Liguria regions

respectively).

For almost all those regions, including all fourteen regions in Germany where population has declined, this can be attributed to both negative natural increase and to migration out of the regions. The exceptions are Liguria (I) and Voreio Aigaio (EL), where negative natural increase is by no means offset by a slight positive net migration.

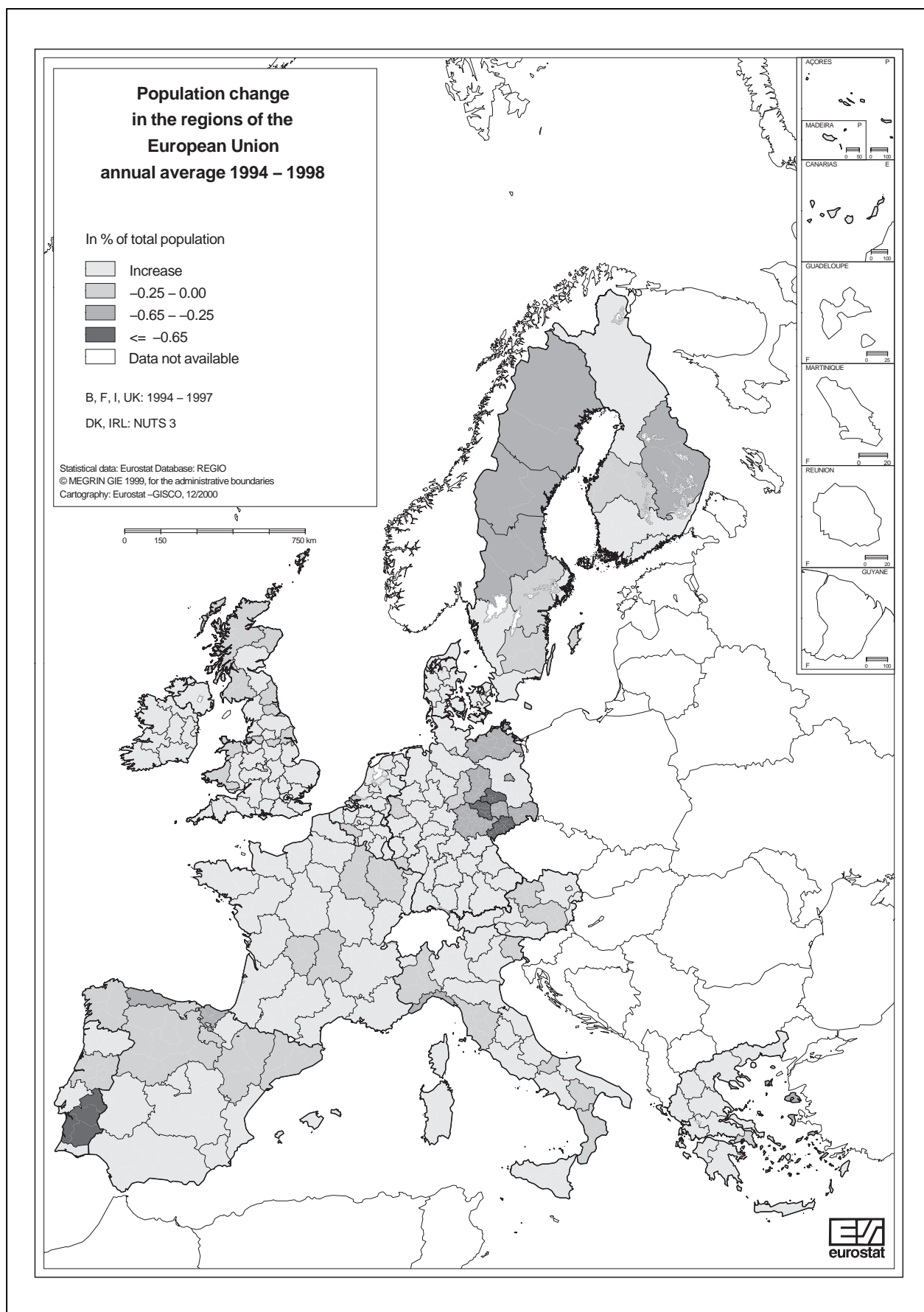


Figure 2: Population change in the regions of the European Union, annual average 1994-1998

Peripheral regions in decline

No fewer than five of Sweden's eight regions, especially in the northern and central parts of the country, are experiencing declining populations. Finland's eastern region of Itä-Suomi also suffered a notable fall in population. In France, population decline has affected only four regions in the thinly populated centre and the north-east. In the United Kingdom, the population growth experienced in Northern Ireland and throughout most of England, contrasts with significant average annual declines in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear region, in North Eastern Scotland and in South Western Scotland (-0.19%, -0.18% and -0.16% respectively). There is a similar pattern in the Highlands and Islands

region of Scotland, in Tees Valley and Durham and in West Wales and the Valleys, though in these instances the fall is only a third as severe. At the western end of a belt of regions with very slight falls in population, Merseyside has suffered a dramatic -0.36% fall annually, making it the 15th most severely affected EU region in terms of population loss. In Italy, declines were registered in peripheral north-eastern, north-western and southern regions, whereas in Spain the north-west was particularly affected. In a break with this pattern, in Ireland all NUTS 3 regions noted a rising population (between +0.06% and + 1.67% on average per year).

Regional impact of contrasting natural increase and migration

Although some of the Spanish regions losing population had positive migratory flows, these were outweighed by negative natural increase. For the seven Italian regions with declining populations, it is characteristic that only one factor is negative, either natural increase or migration out of the region, but in each case to such an extent that it still leads to a population decrease. With the exception of Oberösterreich (which has positive natural increase but higher negative net migration), all Austrian regions feature still rising populations. In Salzburg region, where population growth was the highest in the country, this was the consequence of positive natural increase and migration into the region. Otherwise, all regions have either negative migratory

flows and positive natural increase or natural decrease and positive net migration, in each case in proportions that still lead to population growth.

Precisely the same situation can be found in Italian regions with growing populations. Only in Trentino-Alto Adige have positive natural increase and positive migration both influenced population increase. For Italy's southern regions, it is characteristic that natural increase is higher than negative net migration: for central regions it is just the opposite; natural increase is negative but lower than positive net migration. In Germany's Hannover region, natural increase is negative but net migration is positive; whereas the opposite is true in Tübingen.

Inward migration key element in population growth

In Sweden, the population growth recorded in Stockholm region is due to both positive natural increase and migration to the capital. In almost all regions with major increases in population, positive net migration is more important than natural increase. The exception in this group is the Dutch region of Flevoland, which of all EU regions has recorded the highest increase in population over recent years because of a very high birth rate and a low death rate, as well as significant positive net migration.

In Belgium, there was only one region with a population decrease, due to a combination of natural decrease and negative net migration. Otherwise, population growth was the consequence of a net migration exceeding any natural decrease. Similar situations were recorded in Denmark and Finland. There were two regions in Greece with falling populations but elsewhere positive

net migration results in population increase. In southern, western and central France (Languedoc-Roussillon, Bretagne, Centre) it is mainly migration flows into the regions that have resulted in population growth. In other parts of the country, a higher level of natural increase is still more important.

For those Spanish regions where population is growing, the most important factor is positive net migration. Only in southern Spain (Murcia and Andalucia) do higher birth than death rates prove more important than migratory flows into the regions.

In Portugal's Norte and Açores regions, which feature the highest annual average growth in the country, natural increase is more important than positive migratory flows, otherwise positive net migration is of greater importance for all regions with positive population change.

Name of the region	Total population ^{1) 2)} 1995	Total population ¹⁾ 1999	Annual average population change rate 1999/1995
Smolyan (BG)	156258	145940	-1.32
Kurdzhali (BG)	213761	201162	-1.18
Montana (BG)	203020	191129	-1.17
Sofia (BG)	278173	262151	-1.15
Vidin (BG)	147200	138794	-1.14
Põhja-Eesti (EE)	566853	538149	-1.01
Veliko Turnovo (BG)	315682	301284	-0.91
Kirde-Eesti (EE)	285926	273674	-0.86
Silistra (BG)	158992	152392	-0.83
Riga (LV)	1044416	1001718	-0.82
Pleven (BG)	332824	319356	-0.81
Lovech (BG)	183753	176389	-0.80
Kyustendil (BG)	177647	170559	-0.80
Latgale (LV)	405780	389759	-0.79
Kurzeme (LV)	344600	331689	-0.75
Pernik (BG)	159274	153321	-0.75
Vratsa (BG)	265409	255589	-0.74
Pomurska (SI)	129867	125257	-0.71
Yambol (BG)	173524	167649	-0.68
Zemgale (LV)	363268	352305	-0.60
Spodnjeposavska (SI)	72008	69839	-0.60
Targovishte (BG)	148969	144601	-0.59
Pazardzhik (BG)	324683	315225	-0.58
Gabrovo (BG)	158048	153485	-0.58
Lõuna-Eesti (EE)	277516	269626	-0.57
Burgas (BG)	439002	427152	-0.54
Ruse (BG)	282792	275538	-0.51
Razgrad (BG)	169276	164971	-0.51
Varna (BG)	451577	440563	-0.49
Shumen (BG)	220149	214877	-0.48

1) Source: database Regio

2) Data for Estonia refer to the year 1994

Data for Slovakia refer to the year 1996

Table 1: Candidate-country regions with severe falls in population

IMPORTANT INFORMATION – METHODOLOGICAL NOTES

Regional level

Candidate-country regions were studied at the level equivalent to NUTS 3, except for Hungary, Poland, Romania and Slovakia, where the availability of data required a presentation at Level 2. EU Member states were studied at the NUTS 2 level, except for Denmark and Ireland where NUTS 3 regions are presented. Luxembourg data are national data.

Population data

For candidate countries, total population data at the end of the reference year for the period from 1995 to 1999 (except for Estonia: 1994-1998 and Slovakia: 1996-1999) were used to calculate the average annual population change rate for each region. The averages were calculated as follows:

$$\frac{(\text{population 1999} - \text{population 1995})}{(\text{population 1995} \times 100) / \text{number of years}}$$
The average annual population change rate for EU regions was calculated using annual average population data (from the REGIO table D3POP) for the period 1994 to 1998 (except for Belgium, France, Italy and United Kingdom: 1994-1997). The above averaging technique was applied.

Name of the region	Total population ¹⁾ 1994	Total population ^{1) 2)} 1998	Annual average population change rate 1998/1994
Halle (D)	921300	885661	-0.77
Dessau (D)	579200	558911	-0.70
Alentejo (P)	530800	512560	-0.69
Chemnitz (D)	1711000	1654765	-0.66
Magdeburg (D)	1268200	1229918	-0.60
Thüringen (D)	2524600	2462836	-0.49
Norra Mellansverige (S)	866355	846746	-0.45
Berlin (D)	3473700	3398822	-0.43
Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (D)	1837900	1798689	-0.43
Voreio Aigaio (EL)	187300	183499	-0.41
Bremen (D)	681600	667965	-0.40
Principado de Asturias (E)	1081880	1060363	-0.40
Itä-Suomi (FIN)	708100	694129	-0.39
Leipzig (D)	1118700	1098658	-0.36
Merseyside (UK)	1439894	1419375	-0.36
Dresden (D)	1766400	1735992	-0.34
Mellersta Norrland (S)	396596	390559	-0.30
Pais Vasco (E)	2083770	2053763	-0.29
Övre Norrland (S)	527423	519882	-0.29
Liguria (I)	1663180	1646279	-0.25
Småland med öarna (S)	812447	803469	-0.22
Attiki (EL)	3486200	3449490	-0.21
Castilla y León (E)	2522013	2496082	-0.21
Saarland (D)	1084400	1074223	-0.19
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear (UK)	1445664	1434884	-0.19
North Eastern Scotland (UK)	511831	508129	-0.18
South Western Scotland (UK)	2368548	2353736	-0.16
Östra Mellansverige (S)	1500619	1488900	-0.16
Aragón (E)	1184412	1175343	-0.15
Bornholms amt (DK)	45000	44658	-0.15
Friuli-Venezia Giulia (I)	1192230	1185449	-0.14
La Rioja (E)	261304	259479	-0.14
Molise (I)	332073	330295	-0.13
Oberösterreich (A)	1383620	1375436	-0.12
Limousin (F)	719222	716447	-0.10
Galicia (E)	2729707	2716586	-0.10
Braunschweig (D)	1676700	1669708	-0.08
Basilicata (I)	610927	609094	-0.07
Düsseldorf (D)	5288200	5269171	-0.07
Calabria (I)	2077860	2072574	-0.06
Hainaut (B)	1286600	1283565	-0.06
West Wales and The Valleys (UK)	1877501	1873075	-0.06
Väli-Suomi (FIN)	706555	704538	-0.06
Piemonte (I)	4302280	4292784	-0.06
Hamburg (D)	1704400	1700089	-0.05
Tees Valley and Durham (UK)	1169288	1167001	-0.05
Highlands and Islands (UK)	372281	371571	-0.05
Greater Manchester (UK)	2582471	2578106	-0.04
Centro (P)	1713800	1710360	-0.04
Cataluna (E)	6069553	6058661	-0.04
East Riding and North Lincolnshire (UK)	888335	887243	-0.03
South Yorkshire (UK)	1307856	1306874	-0.02
Auvergne (F)	1315853	1315003	-0.02
Champagne-Ardenne (F)	1351848	1351248	-0.01
Toscana (I)	3527130	3525986	-0.01
Cantabria (E)	526570	526398	-0.01
1) Source: database Regio			
2) Data for Belgium, France, Italy and the United Kingdom refer to the year 1997			

Table 2: The 40 EU-regions with most steeply falling population

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For information on methodology
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