

REGIONAL CONVERGENCE

Spatial disparities in socio-economic development can manifest in the demographic situation and living conditions of the population, and in the provision of social services and public utility infrastructures.

Demography

At the end of 2007, the **population** of Hungary was 10 045 401, this was 20 457 less than a year before. The decrease was the most significant in North-eastern Hungary (-1.18%). Central Hungary was still the only region with a growing population, by 0.86% in 2007, benefiting from internal migration.

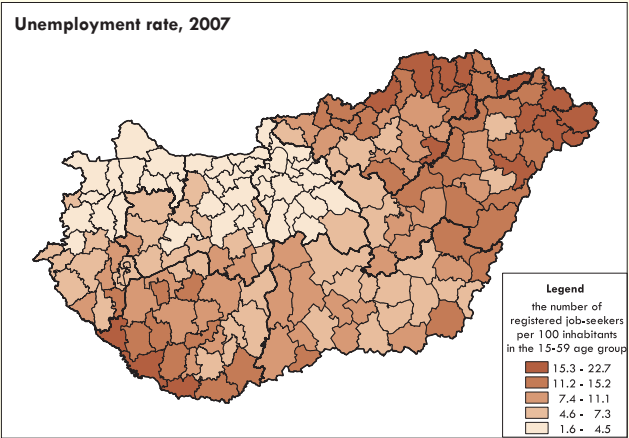
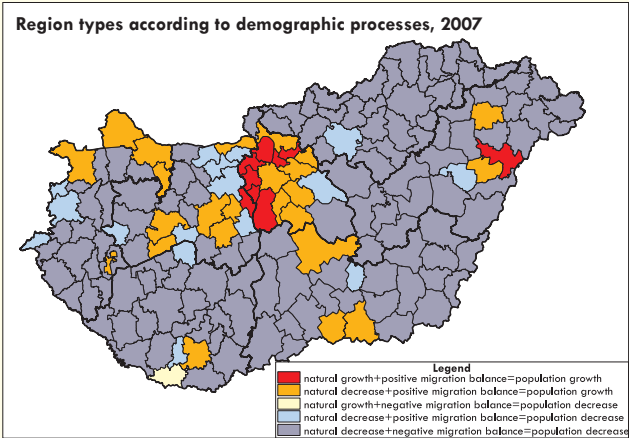
In 2007, the rate of **natural decrease** slowed down to some extent, and was around 3.5‰ nationally. The most significant natural decrease occurred in Békés county, where it was the double of the national rate, while it was the least in Pest and Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg counties. Like in the years before, the loss of

35 thousand people due to the negative balance of births and deaths could be partly compensated for by international migration, hence the actual population decrease was by 20 000 people.

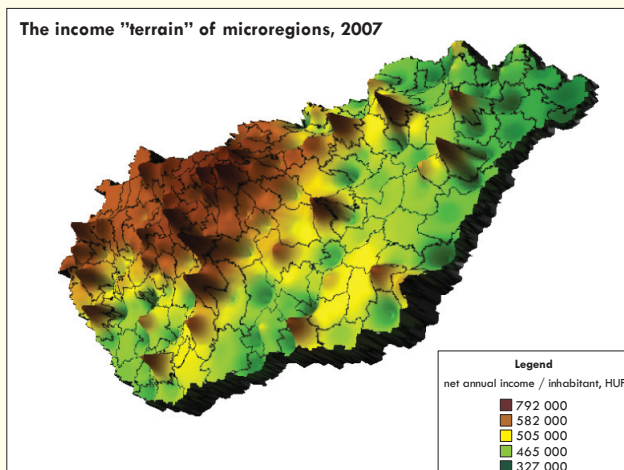
The balance of **internal migration processes** is still the most favourable in Pest county, where it was +14.4‰ in 2007. Out-migration from the capital city had slow down by 2007, and actually, a positive balance of migration occurred. The population pull of Budapest is still felt mostly in its adjacent areas, as well as the more distant, disadvantaged counties, while it is much less manifest in Transdanubia.

Living conditions

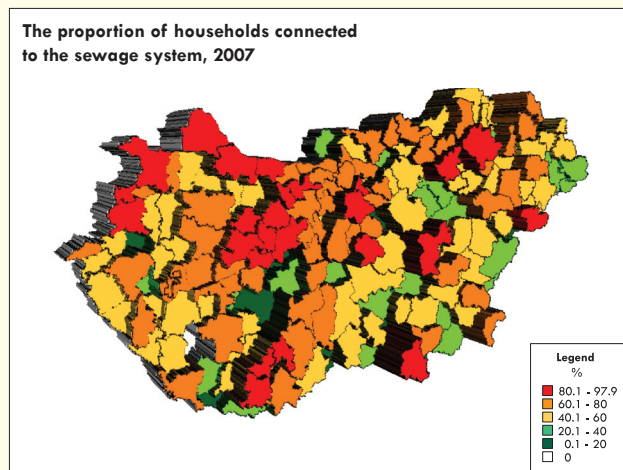
The proportion of registered job-seekers had reached 6.5% by 2007. In 2007, the **unemployment rate** in the 15-59 age group was above 20% in the microregions of Abaúj-Hegyköz, Bodroghöz and Encs, while in Budapest it was about the tenth of this (2.1%). The microregions in the worst position were found almost



The income "terrain" of microregions, 2007



The proportion of households connected to the sewage system, 2007



exclusively along the Croatian and Ukrainian borders as well as along the eastern section of the Slovakian border.

On a national scale, the nominal increase in the **net income per inhabitant** was 16.1%, which meant an actual growth of 8.1% after adjusting for inflation. Among the counties, Békés, Nógrád and Tolna had higher-than-average rates of net income per capita increase in 2007, while in Zala county, it was only 13.7%. While in the capital city, in the microregions of Dunaújváros and Budaörs net income per capita was HUF 800 thousand, in the microregions of Bodrogköz, Csenger, Baktalórántháza, it was below HUF 350 thousand, so the difference is more than twofold.

The expansion of the **housing stock** is closely related to the affluence of the population and the prosperity of the region. In 2007, 36.2 thousand new homes were built in the country; the total housing stock therefore could slightly exceed 4.27 million. The greater part

of the new homes was built in microregions which include major cities as well as in the Budapest agglomeration. The number of newly built homes exceeded 1000 in the microregions of Dunakeszi, Ráckeve, Győr and Nyíregyháza, while it was fewer than 10 in the microregions of Törökszentmiklós, Bácsalmás, Mezőcsát, Sellye and Mezőkovácsháza.

94.7% of the households were connected to the **potable water pipe network** in 2007. Concerning this, the regions of Transdanubia and Central Hungary were in the most favourable position (96-97%); however, in the microregions of Kistelek and Kiskunfélegyháza, which have a number of farmsteads, this proportion was lower than 80%, and in the microregion of Mórahalom, it was only 55.9%.

The **proportion of homes connected to the sewage system** was 69.8% in 2007. Besides the capital city, a few microregions in Transdanubia had higher connectedness than 90%, while in 7 microregions this ratio remained below 10%, and the microregion

of Kadarkút still had no sewage network in 2007. In 2007, about half of all municipalities in Hungary did not have a sewage network at all.

76.3% of the housing stock was connected to a **gas supply network**. Nearly all homes were connected to a gas supply network in the microregions of Gárdony, Balatonföldvár, Veresegyháza, Szeged and Balatonalmádi, whereas in the microregions of Szigetvár and Sellye, this was below 20%. In 2007, 291 municipalities had no access to a gas supply network in Hungary.

Social services

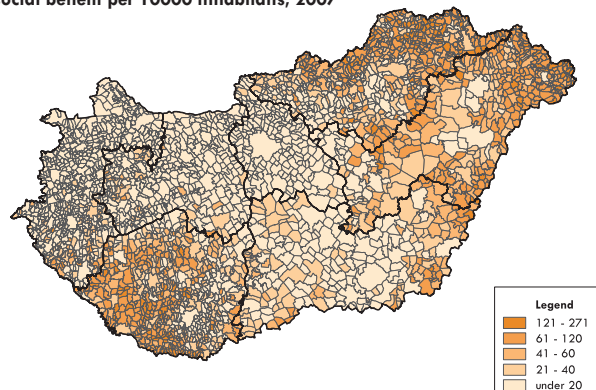
Regarding basic healthcare services, there were 36 fewer **general practitioners and family paediatricians** in Hungary than in the year before, which decline is insignificant considering the total number of practitioners (6500); the decrease affected mostly Central Hungary and the regions in the Great Plain. In 2007, the number of inhabitants per a doctor was 1538 nationally, but it exceeded 2000 in the microregions of Baktalórántháza, Vásárosnamény, Hajdúhadháza, Veresegyháza and Gödöllő, the reason for which is either untaken jobs (in the case of less developed microregions) or a sudden increase in the population (in the case of the microregions in the Budapest agglomeration).

As a consequence mainly of the increased administrative burdens related to basic health care services (visit fee), there was a drastic, 14.9% decrease in the number of visits to practitioners in 2007 compared to the year before. Due to the restructuring of health care in 2007, the **number of hospital beds per 10 thousand inhabitants** dropped by 9.75%, to 71.3 nationally. This decrease was greater than the

national average in Central Transdanubia, (13.6%) and the Southern Great Plain region (11.8%).

The annual average of those receiving **regular social benefit** from the local government was 194 thousand in 2006, which was 3.3% of the 18-59 age group. In 12 microregions, the number of those receiving regular benefit per 1000 inhabitants was more than 70, and with the exception of the microregion of Sellye, these microregions were all in Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén or Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county. In the microregion of Bodroghöz, the number of supported people per 1000 inhabitants exceeded 100 (103). By contrast, this ratio was lower than 2‰ in 7 microregions,

The number of people receiving regular social benefit per 10000 inhabitants, 2007



which were all situated in Pest and Győr-Moson-Sopron counties (Sopron-Fertőd and Kapuvár-Beledi microregions). In Hungary, there were 13 municipalities where more than 200 people per 1000 inhabitants were receiving regular social benefit.