

Macedonia: additional resources

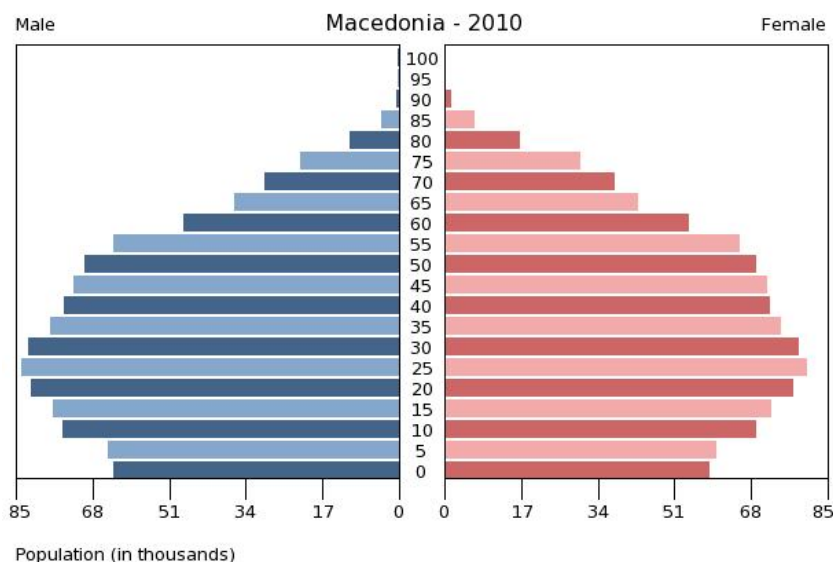
The history and geography of Macedonia:



¹Macedonia is located in southeastern Europe; it is situated to the north of Greece and is landlocked by Albania, Kosovo, Serbia and Bulgaria. The country is situated in a fault zone; a fault line is a fracture in the earth's crust caused by the movement of tectonic plates. A fault zone is an area surrounded by fault lines making it prone to natural disasters such as earthquakes. There have been several earthquakes recorded in the Macedonia area throughout history, the most recent and powerful occurred in 1963 in Skopje. The earthquake measured 6.9 on the Richter scale, it was so powerful it destroyed about 25 percent of the housing in the capital, and left most of the remaining buildings unfit for habitation. As a result most of the buildings had to be

demolished and almost the entire city had to be reconstructed. The earthquake caused the death of over 1000 people and left more than 100,000 people homeless. The international response to the earthquake was astounding with many countries sending aid almost immediately after the quake had occurred. The entire city was re-designed and reconstructed within about 3 years. After the earthquake many new communities developed around the edges of the city such as the Roma community of Shuto Orizari where residents began to build their own homes.

Population:



² Macedonia's has a population of 2,072,086 (CIA world fact book 2010). The population is currently in decline, as pictured in the population pyramid. From the 25 year old age group down the pyramid decreases in width, demonstrating a consistent fall in birth rate. The current birth rate in Macedonia is 1.58 children born per woman. A stable population would have a birth rate of 2.0 births per

¹ The map is from the CIA world fact book: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/mk.html> (accessed 02/11/2010)

² Population pyramid is from U.S. census bureau: <http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/idb/country.php> (accessed 02/11/2010)

woman as there would be enough children per couple to replace the population, a rate lower than 2.0 as seen in Macedonia means that the current population are not being replace, resulting in a declining population.

The population pyramid also shows that the life expectancy rate is fairly high; the total life expectancy is estimated at 74.92 years, 77.64 for women and 72.48 for men. This may cause future problems in Macedonia as there is an increasing life expectancy and a falling birth rate, this may lead to an ageing population – too many elderly people to be supported by a smaller work force. The main problems that stem from this situation include not having enough taxes to support the number of pensions required for the number of elderly people, also not being able to support the health care system or elderly care programs.

As a result of the political history of Macedonia (changing boundaries and political disputes in neighboring countries) there are many different nationalities or ethnic groups in the country. The main group are Macedonian's making up 64.2 percent of the population. The other groups are Albanian 25.2%, Turkish 3.9%, Roma 2.7%, Serb 1.8% and other 2.2%. This has an impact of the languages that are spoken throughout the country, for instance, there are now two official languages in the country. Macedonia was the first official language with 66.5% of the population speaking it as their first language, Albanian is the second official language spoken by 25.17% of the country. The other spoken languages include Turkish 3.5%, Roma 1.9%, Serbian 1.2% and other spoken languages 1.8%. (All statistics are from the CIA world fact book and are from a census in 2002).

Macedonia is a country that is still establishing itself as an independent country; it has had a turbulent political history which has resulted in a diverse and cosmopolitan population. However, it is still trying to create a strong infrastructure, the development of which is being made more difficult by the economic crisis and an ageing population. Furthermore there are still many problems with housing in the country with thousands of people living in substandard conditions, lacking access to clean water and sanitation facilities.

Additional resources:

Internet:

<http://vulnerability.undp.sk/DOCUMENTS/macedonia.pdf> A document written about vulnerable communities in Macedonia, good for more detailed information about the problem.

<http://www.habitat.org.mk/index.html> The website for Habitat for Humanity Macedonia, for an overview of the specific projects in operation in the country and information on how to get involved.

<http://www.habitat.org/youthprograms/default.aspx> Games and activities for children and students. They are designed by Habitat for Humanity and help to promote some of the important ideas behind Habitat's work.

