

CROATIA

Whole country

Croatia has not yet published its own population projections, so the most recent United Nations Population Division estimates (1998) are used here. They forecast that fertility will rise from its current level of 1.54 children per woman to 1.70 in 2025. International migration is unlikely to be of major importance in the future,

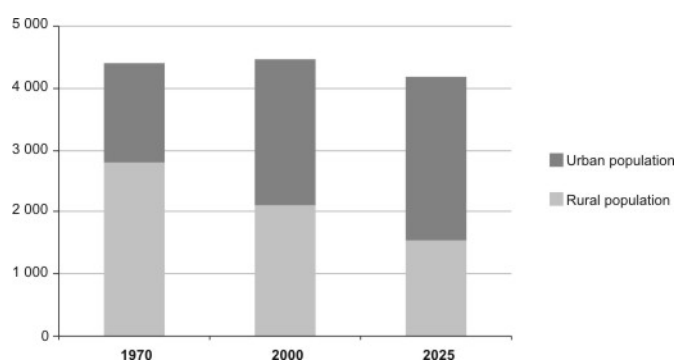


notwithstanding significant Croat immigration from neighbouring countries and Serb emigration from Croatia during the 1990s. Estimated immigration of 226 000 and emigration of 54 000 between 1992 and 1996 - i.e., 172 000 net entries and a net immigration rate of 9.6 per thousand - is a material growth factor in a country whose natural rate of increase has dwindled.

Very low fertility and a zero net migration count will cause a major population drop in Croatia, from 4.473 million in 2000 to 4.193 million in 2025, i.e., -6.6%. The minus CRNI (crude rate of natural increase) produced by a crude death rate higher than the crude birth rate will tend to worsen by the end of the projection period.

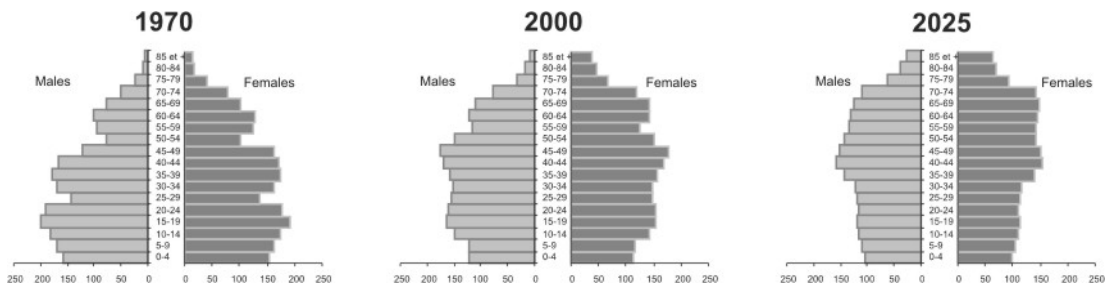
Only 2.37 million people - 53% of the population - live in urban areas of over 10 000 people in 2000. Urban growth, although at fairly low rates slipping from 5 per thousand now to 3 per thousand in 2025, will increase the population of urban areas of over 10 000 people to 2.659 million by the end of the projection period, when the urbanization rate will stand at 63.4%.

Figure 35. Rural population and urban population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



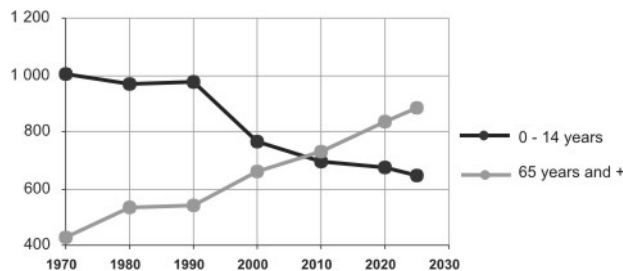
Low population growth will further reduce the under-15s' share of Croatia's total population from 17.1 to 15.4%, while that of older people will rise rapidly both in population size - from 661 000 to 885 000 (34%) - and relative share - from 14.8% of the total population in 2000 to 21.1% in 2025.

Figure 36. Population age structure (by 5-year age groups) 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



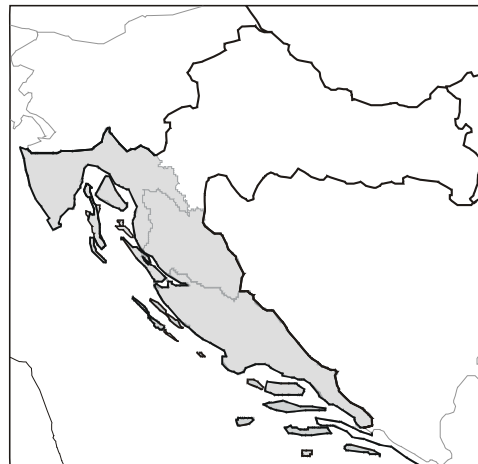
Fertility decline will also produce a massive drop in annual labour force entries from 63 000 to 46 000, while the net balance of entries-to-exits will become negative from 2015.

Figure 37. Populations aged 15-and-under and 65-and-over, 1970-2025 (in thousands)



Mediterranean coastal regions

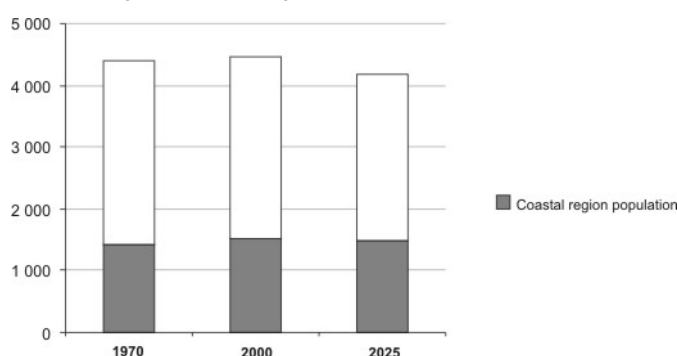
Because of its particular geographical coastline, Croatia's Mediterranean population is large in both total size (1.529 million) and share (34.2%) in 2000. Population growth in its three local authority associations (NUTS 3 coastal region equivalents) has been low but above the all-country rate - 0.5% and 0.3% a year respectively from 1970 to 1990.



Croatia is projected to lose population in the next 25 years, but less so in the Mediterranean regions, where it will fall from 1.529 to 1.480 million - a loss of 49 000 people between 2000 and 2025 at a mean annual rate of -0.13%. The decline will be

more rapid in the non-Mediterranean regions at -0.33% a year. The Mediterranean share of total population will thus rise from 34.2% in 2000 to 35.3% in 2025.

Figure 38. Mediterranean coastal regions population as a share of total population 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)



Croatia's 9 Mediterranean coastal urban areas of over 10 000 people had a total population of 794 000 in 2000. They have experienced fairly rapid population growth in the past, with a mean annual growth rate of 2% between 1970 and 1990. Split, the most populated city (255 000 people in 1990), experienced fairly low growth (1.0%) over these 20 years compared to Zadar's (75 000) growth rate of 3.1%, Dubrovnik's (49 000) rate of 2.3% and Sinj's (15 000), rate of 2.0%. Rijeka (200 000), Pula (62 000), Karlovac (60 000) and Sibenik grew less rapidly at between 1.2 and 1.5% a year.

The population of these Mediterranean urban areas of over 10 000 people is projected to increase significantly at the mean annual rate of 0.63% to 929 000 people - a gain of 135 000 people - by 2025. Coastal urban growth will continue to outstrip the inland rate of just 0.37% a year, propelling the all-coastal urbanization rate sharply upwards between 2000 and 2025, from 51.9 to 62.8%, possibly boosted by tourism growth.

Figure 39. Rural and urban population of the Mediterranean coastal regions 1970-2000-2025 (in thousands)

