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**CONTEMPORARY DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN CENTRAL EUROPE****Abstract:**

Nowadays, the socio-economic development of European countries is increasingly determined not only by social or economic factors, but additionally the impact of megatrends must be taken into account, among which demographic change is one of the least contested. The intensity and wide-ranging impact of demographic change in Central Europe makes demography not only a subject of consideration for academics, but also one of the main challenges for economic practitioners, especially entrepreneurs and strategists creating economic policy.

As a result, the aim of this paper is to analyse the main demographic trends in the countries located in Central Europe. Particular attention is paid to demographic processes with the greatest impact on the economy, such as changes in the age structure of the population. The increase in the proportion of people in the post-working age group at the expense of the decline in the working age population has implications not only at the macroeconomic level, but also affects the activities of individual enterprises through the ageing of the workforce and the diversity of its age structure. The response to the decline in the labour force is increasing levels of immigration, which is another important demographic trend. On the one hand, immigration poses a political challenge because of the emerging social unrest associated with it. On the other hand, in view of the demographic trend of low fertility rates, it appears that European countries are forced to accept immigrants, although the scale of this phenomenon is a product of social consensus and political decisions. As a result, it is hypothesised that the main demographic challenges in Central Europe today include an ageing population, a low fertility rate and increasing immigration pressure.

The identification and analysis of contemporary demographic trends is carried out on the basis of the literature in question as well as source data from Eurostat and statistical offices of Central Europe countries. The delimitation of Central Europe in the literature is not clear. For the purposes of the analysis, Central Europe is assumed to include Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria.

**Keywords:**

demography, demographic trends, Central Europe

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