

Discussion Overview

Knežević Aleksandar* 

University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography, Belgrade,
Serbia

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: knezevicaaleksandar@yahoo.com (K. Aleksandar).

Address: Knežević Aleksandar, University of Belgrade – Faculty of Geography, Studentski 3/III, Belgrade, Serbia

After the panelists' presentations, a discussion followed that lasted for about an hour, involving demographers, researchers from related scientific fields, representatives of decision-makers, and UN agency experts. Special attention was dedicated to exchanging ideas and critically examining possible solutions to the challenges of the demographic crisis. The discussion was chaired by Daniela Arsenović, Vice President of the Society of Demographers of Serbia and a member of the Committee for Population Studies at the SASA.

The discussion was opened by Vladimir Petronijević on behalf of the "People Make the City" Program, jointly implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Ministry for Family Care and Demography. Building on the panelists' thesis concerning the opportunity cost of pronatalist policy in Serbia, he wanted to know how the current method of implementing population measures in the context of financial support for parenthood would be changed during the development of a new strategy on demography and family. Reflecting on the migration flows in Serbia, Petronijević particularly highlighted the importance of internal migration, which he believed could significantly influence the country's future demographic picture.

The Head of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Office in Serbia, Borka Jeremić, called for cooperation within the new five-year UNFPA program and raised questions about promoting healthy lifestyle habits, as well as how the rising trend of young people going abroad for education was affecting human capital in Serbia.

In discussing the consistent adherence to the principles of population policy in Serbia and an objective evaluation of the effects of the measures in the context of rapid social changes in all areas of life, Ana Gavrilović, one of the editors of the study "Evolution of Population Policy in Serbia 1945–2004", suggested that favorable birth rates in Serbia could not be achieved through one-time measures, but only through complex systemic solutions that would address the newly emerged needs of parenthood.

Zorica Mršević, in her critical overview of the current population policy measures in Serbia, raised the issue of the acute shortage of new workforce and suggested promoting an immigration policy in Serbia as one of the possible solutions, already implemented for some time, mainly in Italy, Spain, and Germany.

Referring to data from the 2022 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in Serbia, Vesna Lukić of the Institute for Social Sciences, stated that further growth in emigration was an inevitable future for Serbia, as the last intercensal period showed an increase in both the number and proportion of people born abroad. In addition, Lukić pointed out in her discussion to a mismatch between immigration policy (visa policies and the granting of Serbian citizenship) and the immigrant integration policy, involving additional costs.

Katarina Sedlecki from the Institute for Maternal and Child Health Protection of Serbia referred to the importance of developing awareness about reproductive health in Serbia, but also to the need to affirm projects aimed at healthier environments and the promotion of healthy lifestyle habits.

Petar Vasić from the Department of Demography of the Faculty of Geography, University of Belgrade underlined that, for several decades, the population policy in Serbia has not produced

effective results, because there has been a long-lasting and pronounced time gap between demographic action and the social consequences which currently involve a high economic cost.

The remaining participants mostly stuck to the direction already established by the presented questions and comments, which further enriched the panel's content. The panelists addressed all the questions and comments from the participants, successfully bringing the panel on Effective Responses to the Demographic Crisis to a close, and hinting at new directions for the topic that would surely remain relevant in the time ahead.

How to cite

Knežević, A. (2026). Discussion Overview. *Stanovništvo*, e823. <https://doi.org/10.59954/stnv.823>