

Demography

While sustained high in-migration rates in the past decades cause a dynamic growth in the population of the northern parts of the area, in the southern regions the population declined or stagnated mainly due to the heavy migration from rural communities.

The entire border region is characterised by the tendency of an ageing population. The share of under-15-year-olds is around 15% in all regions, while the share of the over-60-year-olds is above 20%. Due to the higher life expectancy of women the share of over-60-year-old females is considerably higher than the total.

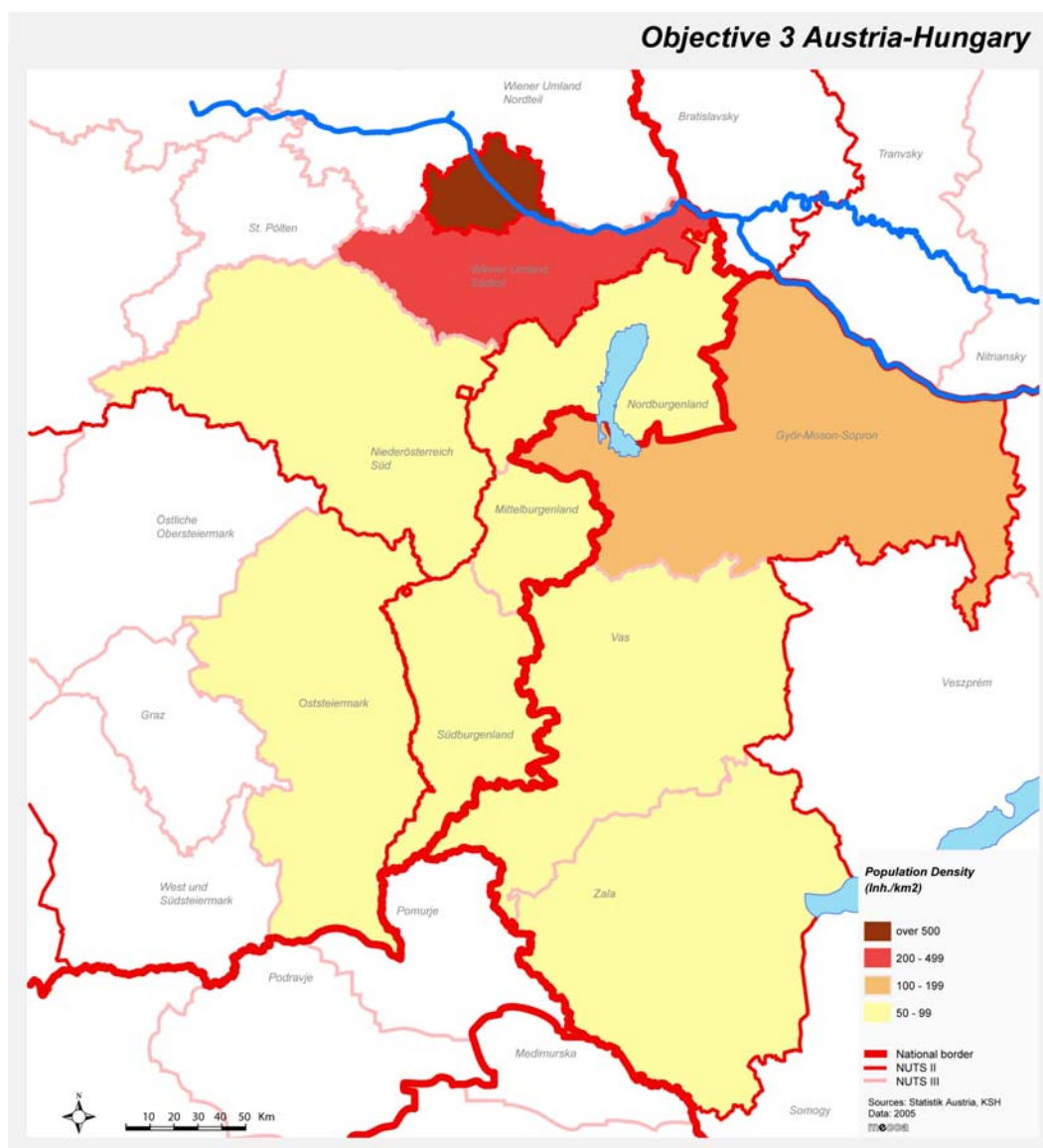
These figures in both age groups show slightly less favourable trends than the European average. The trend is the most critical in Mittel- and Südburgenland where the difference between the two relevant age groups is over 10%. This is resulted by the process of negative net migration and the negative natural growth of the population. The reason behind that are the peripheral location, the disperse settlement structure and the agricultural characteristics of that region which offers little job opportunities and unattractive living conditions for young people.

Table 2: Population trends 1991-2005 and age structure 2005

Regional Unit NUTS III region	Population trend (Change in %)			Age structure (%)			
	1991-2001	2002-2005		Share of under-15-year-olds, 2005		Share of over-60-year-olds, 2005	
	Total	Total	Women	Total	Women	Total	Women
Wien	0,7	4,1	3,4	14,7	13,6	22,2	25,5
Wiener Umland Südteil	7,7	3,2	3,2	16,0	15,2	23,1	25,3
Niederösterreich-Süd	3,9	1,3	1,0	16,1	15,3	23,6	26,4
Nordburgenland	6,3	1,4	1,4	14,9	14,3	23,8	26,8
Mittelburgenland	-1,0	-0,6	-1,2	14,0	13,6	26,2	29,7
Südburgenland	-1,3	-0,5	-0,7	14,0	13,4	24,9	28,2
Oststeiermark	2,0	0,0	-0,1	16,6	15,9	21,5	24,7
Total AT Border Region	1,8	2,9	2,5	15,1	14,2	22,6	25,7
Győr-Moson-Sopron	1,6	1,1	0,4	15,0	14,2	20,5	25,2
Vas	-2,5	-1,3	-0,7	14,9	14,1	21,3	25,0
Zala	-1,9	-1,3	-0,9	14,2	13,1	22,0	26,2
Total HU Border Region	-0,6	-0,3	-0,3	14,8	13,8	21,2	25,5
Total AT-HU Border Region	1,2	2,05	1,74	15,0	13,9	22,2	25,2

Source: Statistics Austria (2005), KSH (2005)

Map 2: Population density



Development tendencies

There are positive demographic trends in the north part of the region: growing population and migration into the area. This trend increases the size of labour market, generates demand for higher level of services (like higher education, health and wellness spa) and for quality products (like organic food products). At the same time, the south is characterised by negative demographic trends: decreasing population and out-migration. These trends are partially based on the distance from the main development axis remaining a lagging behind region with rural character and a slower economic growth. A danger is the acceleration of these trends because of ageing population.

Future activities should focus on balancing the demographic disparity between the north and the south of the region. This means improvements especially for the Mittel- and Südburgenland and the countries of Vas and Zala, where people partly suffer from the disadvantages of harder accessibility (see Map 5: Transport infrastructure (roads, airports) and Map 6: Transport infrastructure (railways)). It will be important to improve services for special target groups (e.g. elderly people – health and domestic services, young generation – educational and job options).

If the quality of life (including the services mentioned above) can be enhanced in the small cities and the rural parts of the region, it can soften the loss of population and job opportunities. As a backbone for the quality of life the social infrastructure and public services need to be secured and improved. Therefore the polycentric structure of the region should be strengthened.