

CAN POPULATION POLICY MEASURES ADDRESS AND PROMOTE RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN SERBIA: A CASE STUDY OF VOJVODINA (NORTHERN SERBIA)?

Milena SEKULIĆ

Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences,
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

milena.sekulic@dgt.uns.ac.rs

Srđan TIMOTIJEVIĆ

Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences,
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

srdjan.timmy@gmail.com

Milica SOLAREVIĆ

Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management, Faculty of Sciences,
University of Novi Sad, Serbia

milica.solarevic@dgt.uns.ac.rs

One of the greatest social and development problems in Serbia is the rapidly decreasing rural population (depopulation of rural areas) that exceeds the level of decrease in the agricultural population and the total population of the country. One of the measures of the population policy of the Government of the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is precisely a measure that promotes the return of young people to rural settlements, while also promoting rural development in Vojvodina and Serbia. Young people are increasingly leaving rural areas to seek a better quality of life, villages demographics are empty, lagging behind in economic development, and it remains difficult for the elderly population to survive in such conditions. For five years in a row, the Vojvodina Government has been allocating funds for the purchase of houses in rural areas for young married couples. The Country House Purchase Programme is one of the most current incentive programmes implemented by the Gender Institute. The aim of the paper is to determine the relations between this population policy measure and its role in rural development and rural revitalization. One of the main tasks is related to the question – can rural development be encouraged through the arrival of families in Vojvodina rural areas, and should this measure be applied in the coming years? The methodology is based on analysis of data obtained from the Provincial Department of Social Policy, Demographics and Gender Equality referring to public invitations and activities in recent years. The analysis included data on the number of couples, the settlements where the houses were located, the funds allocated, and the conditions that couples had to meet in order to obtain a home. Regarding the demographic and developing trends, it could be significant to promote and implement this measure in other parts of Serbia, especially in southern and eastern Serbia.