

COVID-19: WHERE ASSISTANCE TO THE OLDER POPULATION IS THE TOP PRIORITY

- An Overview of Demographic Characteristics of the Population in Serbian Municipalities -

A week after the World Health Organization declared the Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic, over 205,000 patients and over 8,000 dead were registered worldwide (Source: The World Health Organization, March 18 2020). Governments around the world are introducing measures to protect the health of the population and reduce the number of lives lost.

Bearing in mind the movement restriction regulation for people over 65 years of age in urban areas and over 70 in rural areas, it is very important to analyze the age structure of the population in local governments in Serbia and **identify in which municipalities it is necessary to enhance capacities to assist our older people**, in order to make rational and targeted use of limited capacities, especially in local governments, which are by nature closest to the population and from whom a lot is expected.

For decades, fertility rates in Serbia are not enough to ensure reproduction at the replacement level, and the population is aging as a consequence. **With 21% of the population over the age of 65, Serbia is among the oldest populations in Europe.**

Most of the population over 65 years of age is located in the City of Belgrade (over 330,000), Novi Sad (over 60,000) and Niš (over 50,000).



Age pyramid in Serbia, 2018, Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia

Particular attention should be paid to New Belgrade with over 45,000 older persons, but also Vozdovac, Zemun, Zvezdara, Palilula and Cukarica with over 30,000 older persons.

| LG | Population over 65 years of age | Population aged 10-25 | 65+ to 10-25 ratio |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| The City of Belgrade | 331.991 | 136.999 | 1,4 |
| The City of Novi Sad | 61.133 | 52.337 | 1,17 |
| The City of Nis | 51.715 | 37.876 | 1,37 |

Data source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, NALED's calculations

In these cities, it is necessary to set up the largest number of volunteer centers to help older persons, but other solutions should also be considered - for example, how businesses (local retail chains primarily) could assist in distribution.

Another possible solution is to extend the Law on Simplified Seasonal Employment of Seasonal Agricultural Workers to the delivery of groceries, medicines and other supplies, whereby building administrators in coordination with the competent institutions would be responsible for hiring delivery assistants.

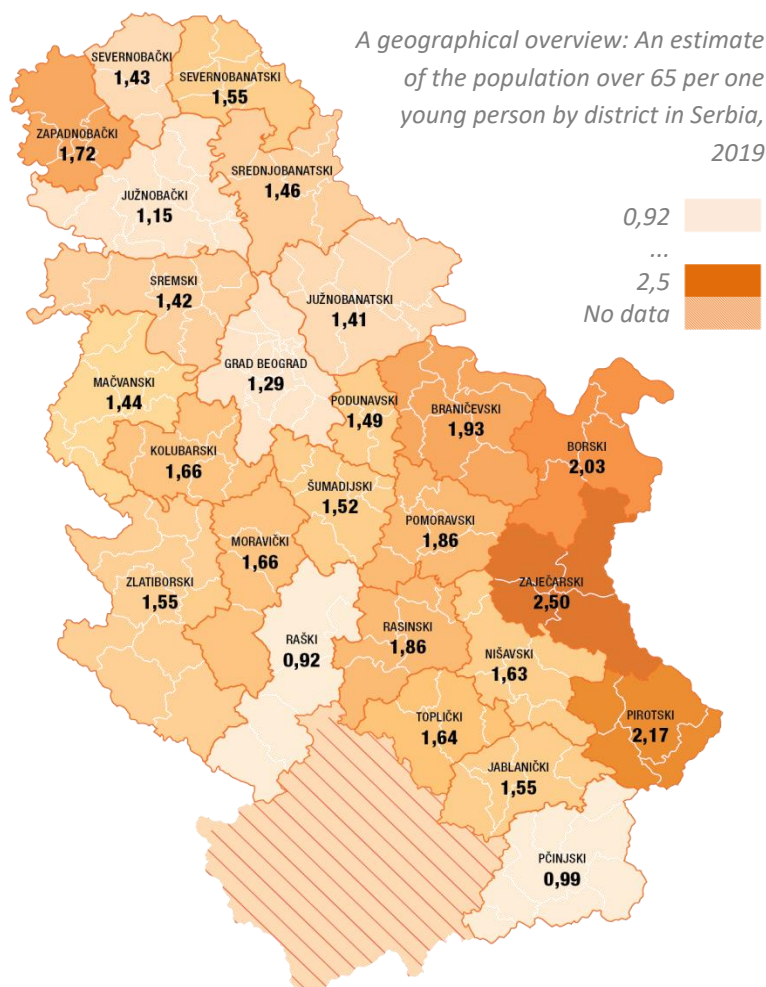
In addition, it is important to pay attention to local governments **in the Zajecar, Pirot and Bor district, where there are 2.5, 2.17 and 2.03 residents over 65 years of age respectively to each member of the population under the age of 15** (as shown on the map).

Therefore, in these districts, it is also necessary to consider inter-municipal or inter-district youth cooperation to assist the oldest population, given the smaller share of the younger population.

As an important indicator it is necessary to observe in which local governments the share of single or older people's households is highest. In addition to **Belgrade, Novi Sad and Nis**, the following local governments stand out: **Subotica, Kragujevac and Zrenjanin** with over 10,000 one-person households.

Also, although they do not stand out by the absolute population, Crna Trava and Gadzin Han stand out both in terms of the number of persons older than 65 and under 25, and by the share of single-member households in the total number of households.

Therefore, it is necessary to devise a way of delivering staples in these LGs (weekly mobile shops, young people from nearby cities - Leskovac or Nis, etc.).



Data source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, NALED's calculations

| LG | 65+ population | 10-25 population | 65+ to 10-25 ratio | Share of single-member households | Number of single-member households |
|------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Crna Trava | 435 | 85 | 5,11 | 41% | 325 |
| Gadzin Han | 2.585 | 775 | 3,33 | 33% | 1.212 |

Data source: Statistical Office of the Republic of Serbia, NALED's calculations