

Demographic Change in Central, Eastern and South Eastern Europe: trends, determinants and challenges

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based on work by Tomas Sobotka (WIC, VID)

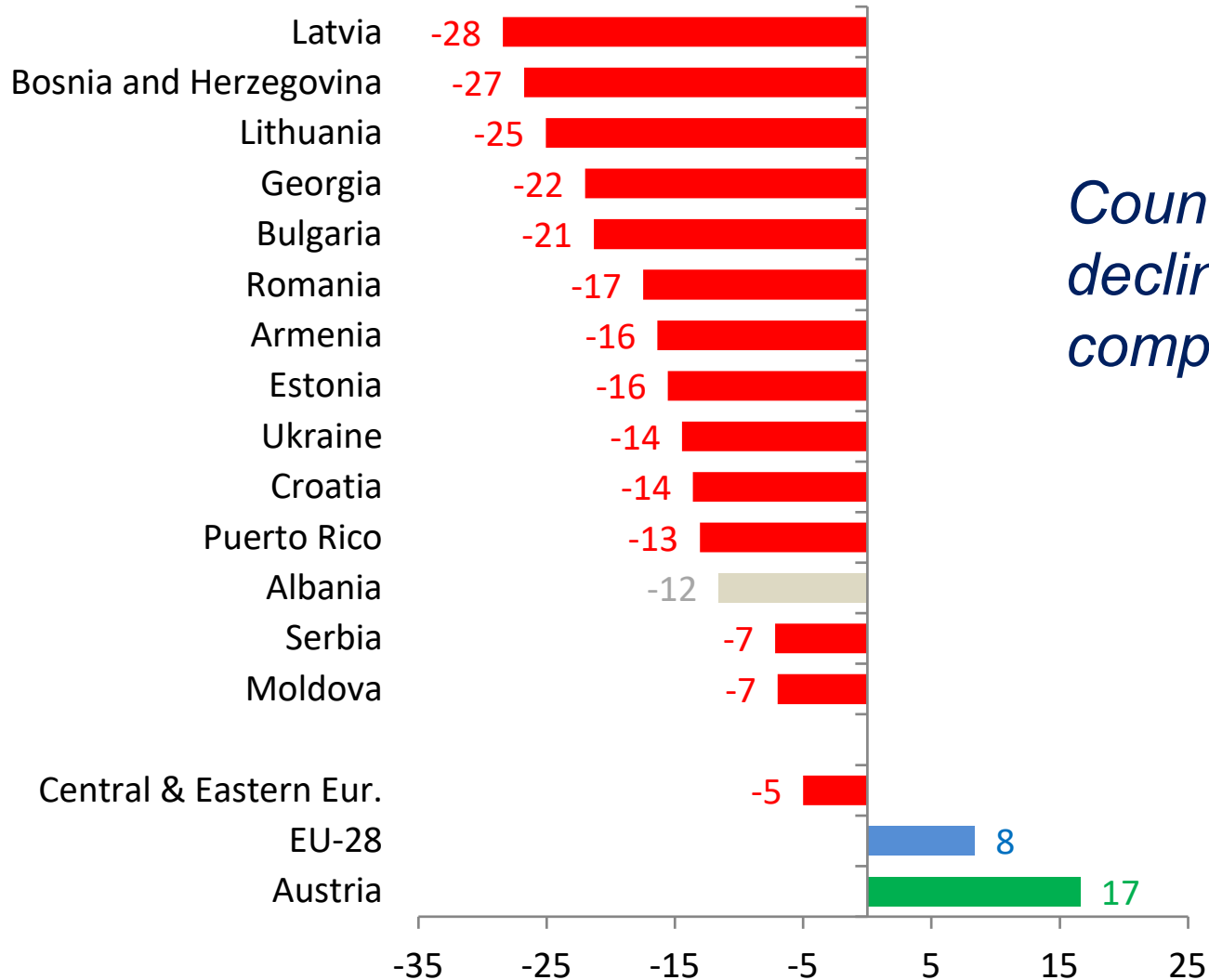


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➤ Rapid population declines in many countries

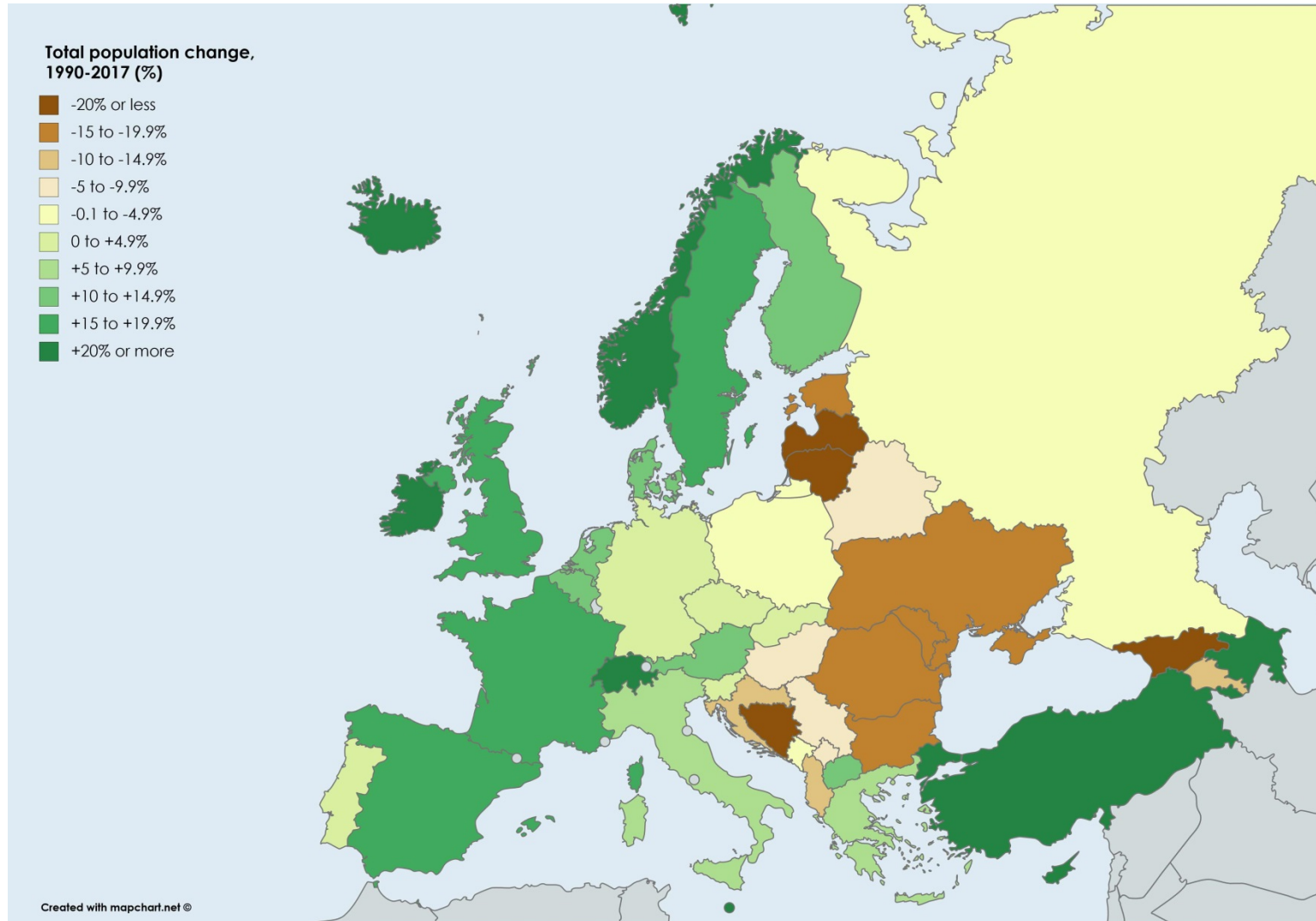


Countries with fastest population decline globally (%), 1989-2019; comparison with EU-28 and Austria

Note: Only countries with population > 1 million in 2019 ranked

Sources: UN World Population Prospects 2019: Estimated population size 1950-2020. Data for Georgia: NSO Georgia (2018) and own estimates for 1989. Data for EU-28 and Austria: Eurostat 2019

➤ East-West division in relative population change, 1990-2017, in %



Source: *European Demographic Data Sheet 2018*; map created with mapchart.net

AGENDA

- **Fertility** before and after 1989
- **Mortality**
- **Migration** and population decline since 1990s
- Future outlook: **population aging** and **shrinking**

Note: in many countries, quality of demographic data affected by large-scale outmigration: uncertain estimates of population structure by age and sex

Fertility before 1989

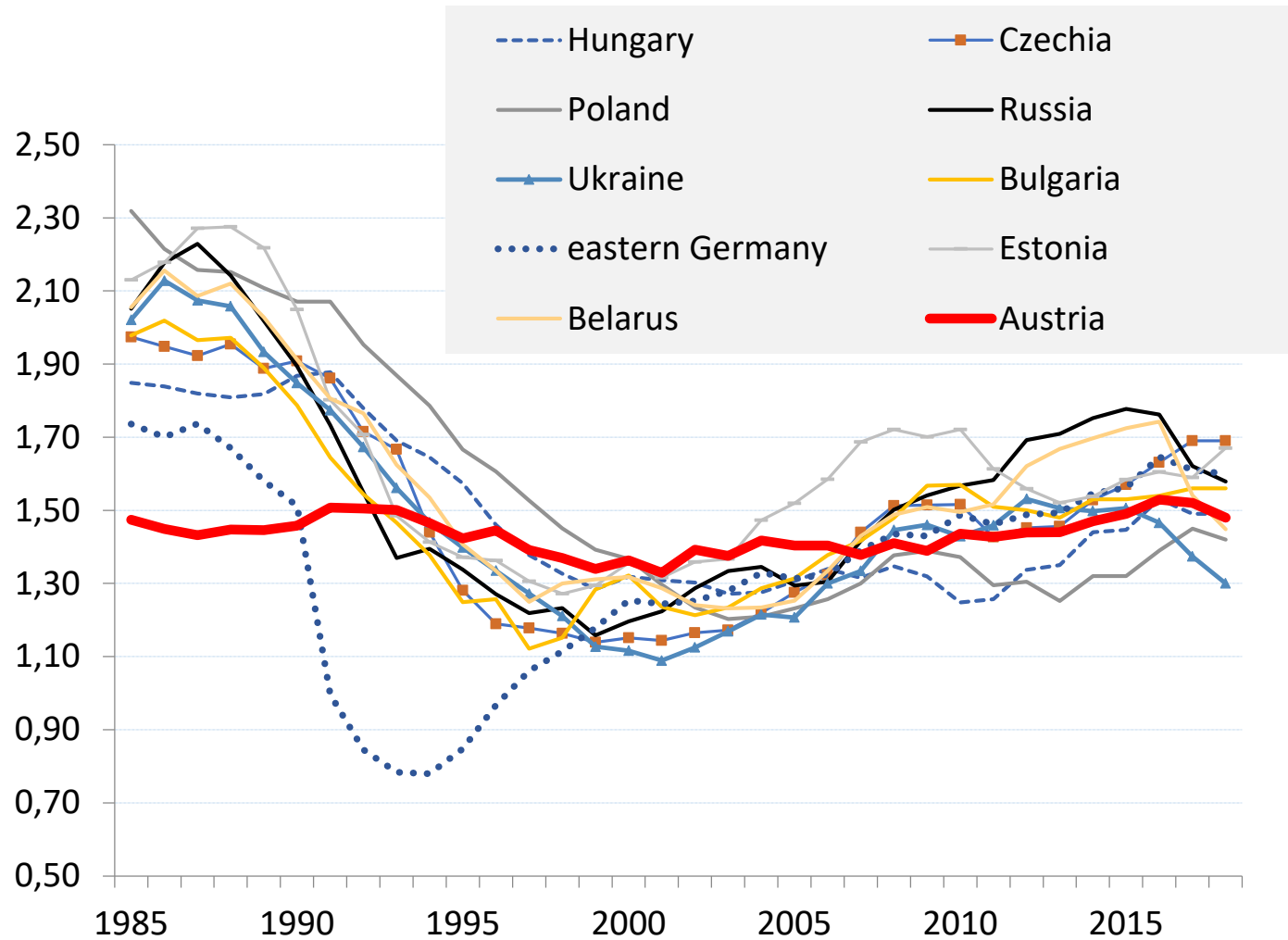
Under state-socialist system:

- Remarkable **convergence of reproduction & family patterns** given huge cultural, economic and social differences before 1950
- Emergence of **two-child family**
- **Earlier pregnancies** than in Western Europe
- **Widespread abortions**, high shares of unwanted pregnancies
- **Marriage** remained of key importance; **low childlessness**

Fertility after 1989

- Fertility **collapse & slow recovery**
- Childbearing **postponement**
- Rise in **one child families**
- Expansion **of higher education**
- Increasing **irrelevance of marriage for reproduction**
- **Childlessness remained low**

➤ Period Total Fertility after 1989



Data sources: Human Fertility Database (2019), Eurostat (2019), national statistical offices

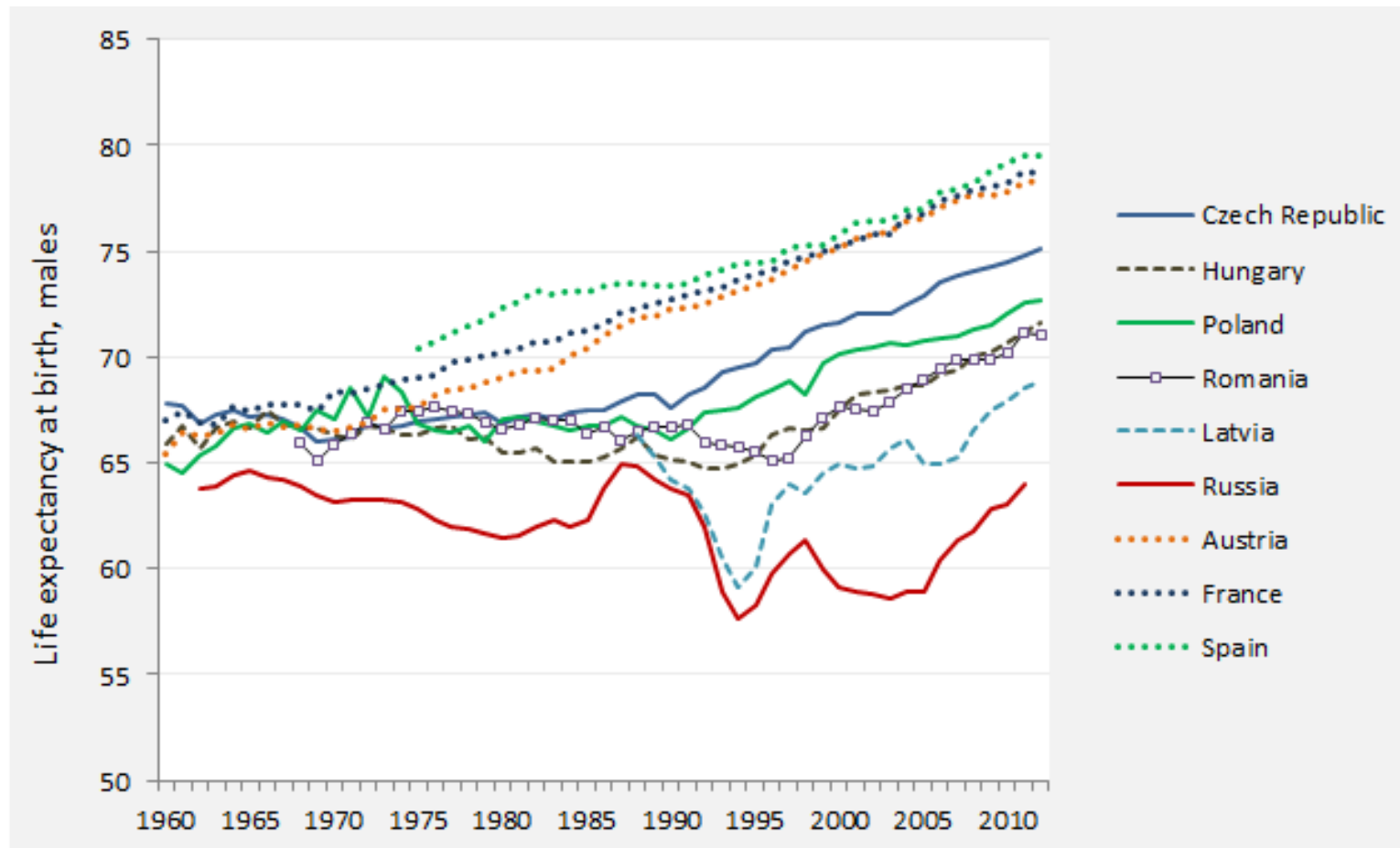
Fertility recovery in the 2000s

- Good **economic conditions**
- New **family policies** to combat fertility collapse & encourage childbearing (mainly financial incentives and parental leave support, slow expansion of childcare, **pronatalism** in e.g. Belarus & Russia)
- However: recession in 2008+ temporarily led to renewed declines in fertility in parts of the region

Mortality

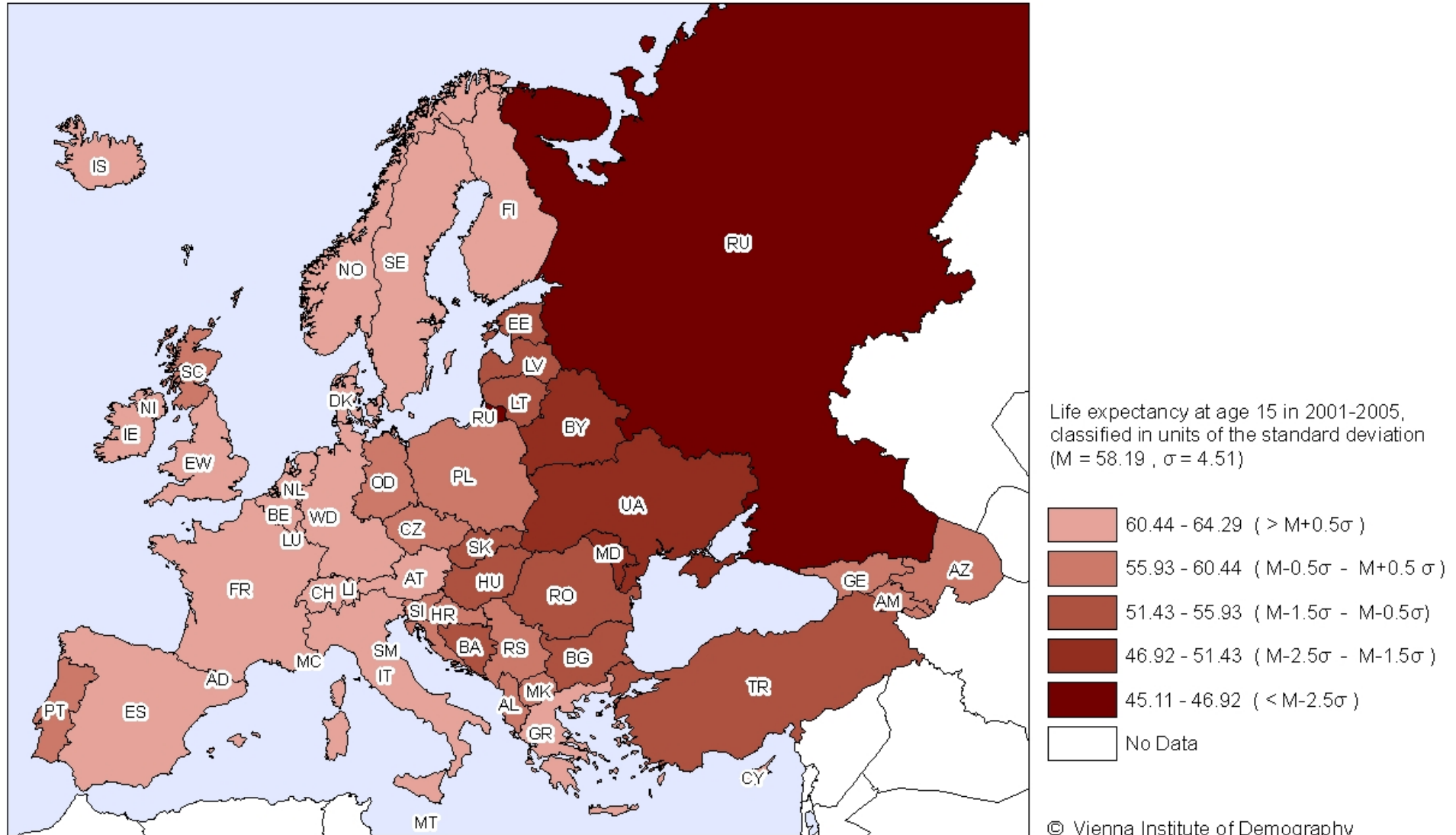
- **Higher death rates** compared to Western European countries
- “ ... the **10 countries with the lowest expected lifespan** of the United Nation’s more developed regions are all from the CESEE region” (IMF 2019)
- **Slow improvement** of life expectancy in some countries (e.g. Russia and Moldova)

➤ Male life expectancy at birth: **East-East and East-West contrast**



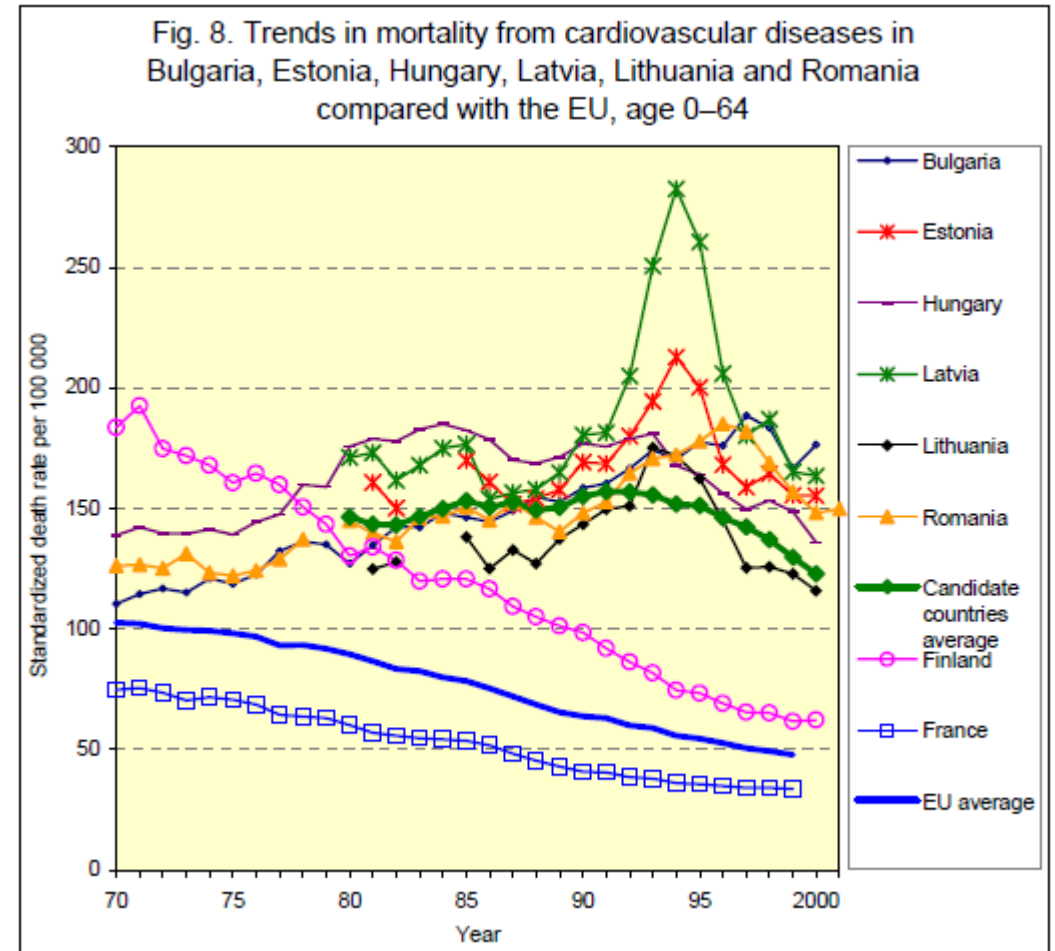
Source: Eurostat 2015, Council of Europe 2006, Vishnevsky 2013, Tab. 8.2

➤ Male life expectancy at age 15 by country in Europe, 2001-2005



Why did some countries experience falling life expectancy in the 1990s?

- A combination of **lifestyle & economic factors**
- **Deterioration of the healthcare system**
- A spike in **cardiovascular diseases**, ischemic heart diseases, external causes (incl. suicide), cancer (esp. Hungary)



Source: WHO and EC Report 2002;

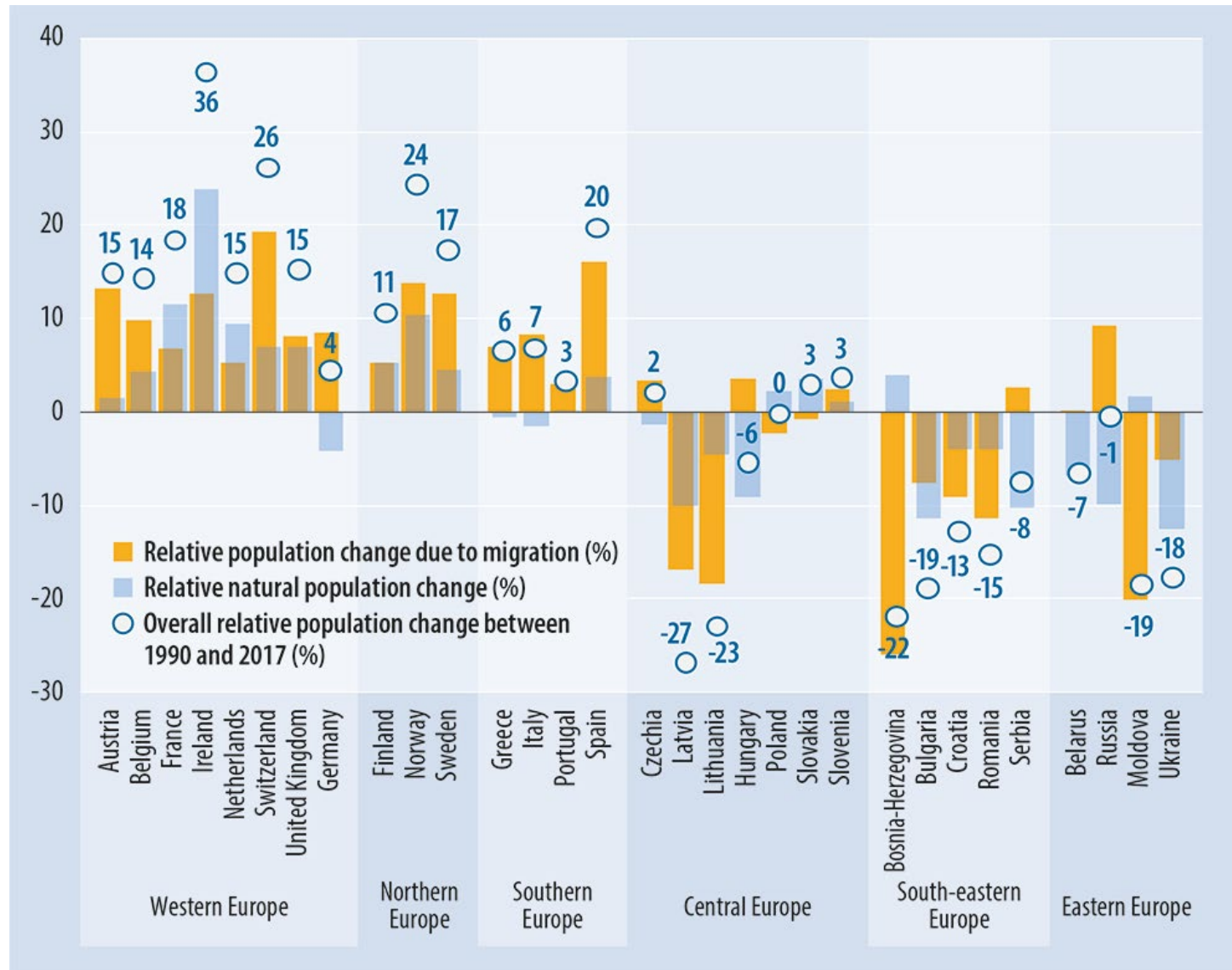
http://ec.europa.eu/health/ph_projects/1999/monitoring/health_status_overview_en.pdf

Migration and population decline since 1990s

- The main migration stream in the last 30 years is from the **East to the West** (including Southern Europe) of Europe
- Serious consequences in the East: **low fertility & higher mortality & outmigration** imply accelerated long-term demographic decline
- New EU members: **access to labor market & social protection in other countries** (with a delay) fueled increased migration
- **European migration split**: the **shrinking** Central & Eastern & South-Eastern Europe (except for Russia) vs. the **expanding** West, South & North

However uncertain data on migration: data gaps, incomplete data & estimates

➤ Migration is the most important driver of population growth/decline in Europe (1990-2017)



Source: *European Demographic Data Sheet 2018;*
www.populationeurope.org

➤ The impact of emigration on growth

- Direct effect: less workers -> lower GDP
- “Brain Drain”: Emigrants from CESEE tend to have a higher education than the general population.
- Emigration therefore **lowers average productivity**
- Emigration of better-educated people has also been associated with other negative effects, such as weaker governance.
- Without skilled emigration, productivity growth could have been **significantly higher** in some CESEE countries.

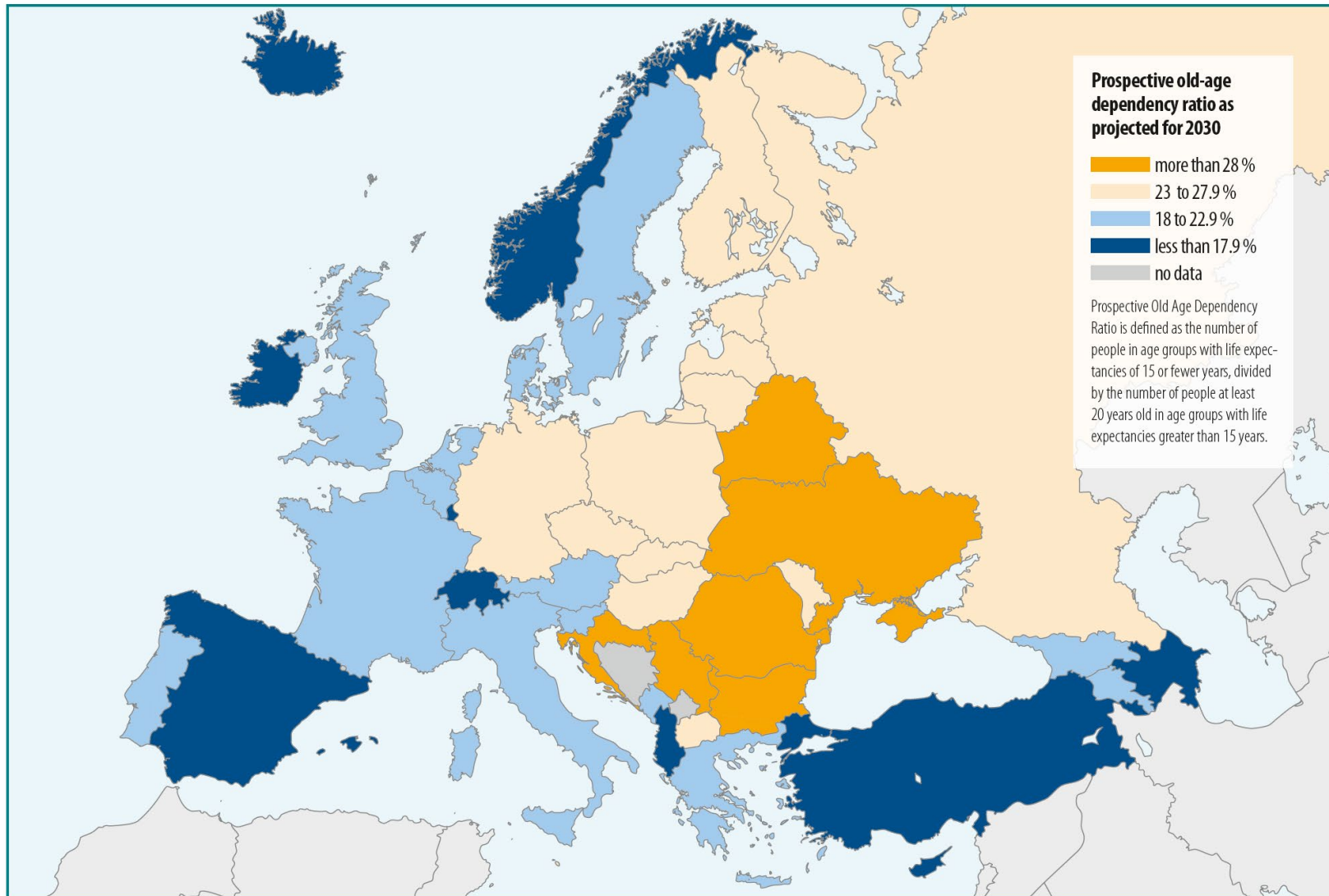
Future outlook: population ageing and shrinking

Migration pressures & flows likely to stay high in Europe

- But shifting importance of the sending & receiving regions
- **Central Europe**: fewer potential emigrants and booming economy: migration reversals like in Southern Europe in the 1980s-1990s?
- **Eastern Europe & Balkan countries**: poorer and destabilized countries likely to continue facing outmigration; Ukraine may become the strongest source of migrants in the future
- **Negative population momentum**: past migration and low fertility lead to shrinking numbers of women in reproductive age and long-term declines in the number of births

Major future challenges: **Population ageing and population shrinking, especially in peripheral regions**

➤ Population ageing



Prospective old-age dependency ratio, projected, 2030

Conclusions

- **Outmigration & low fertility rates** will likely continue depopulation trend in Eastern & Southeastern Europe
- **family policies** (parental leave, childcare, financial support, flexible work conditions, etc.) may partly attenuate low fertility
- **Increased economic prosperity** likely to lower one-sided migration and help recovery of fertility rates
- CESEE countries especially susceptible to **population ageing**

Already attempted policies: higher retirement age, abandoning lower retirement age for women, elderly bias in public spending

Many thanks for your attention