

S U M M A R Y
THE ROMA PEOPLE IN BULGARIA -
THEIR NUMBER AND LOCALIZATION,
FROM THE LIBERATION (1878)
UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE 21ST CENTURY

In recent years, not only in Bulgaria, but also in Europe, and around the world, an increased interest in problems related to the ethnic communities is being observed, and in particular – to their number, demographic development, spatial mobility and spatial location. In our country, this interest is mostly directed towards the Roma ethnic group.

There is strong discrepancy between the number of the Roma, reported in the official census results, and the number estimated through scientific and empirical research. As a result, huge speculations on this topic take place in the society and in the media, which further complicates the relations between ethnic communities in the country. All that imposes a necessity of exploring this topic on the basis of a scientific study, in attempt to establish the actual number and location of the Roma ethnic group in Bulgaria.

The main objective of this study is to trace accurately the changes in the number and in the location of the Roma ethnic group, which group constituted no more than 2% of the population during the whole history of our country after The Liberation. In this study, general and regional features of the dynamics of demographic processes and spatial distribution of the Roma in Bulgaria have been traced, and some main trends in the development of these processes have been established.

The current situation in the number and location of the Roma ethnic group is a result of its demographic development through different periods. The study covers the years from The Liberation of Bulgaria (1878) till the beginning of the XXI century. Such a retrospective analysis makes it easier to clarify the current status of the Roma ethnic group. Despite the prolonged co-existence between Bulgarians and Roma, too little is known about the Roma in Bulgaria. So far, no complex geographical study of this population has been made, which includes the same time span and covers the entire present territory of Bulgaria.

The information necessary for realization of the current study, is provided by the following main sources:

- Statistics on the ethnic composition of the population, in particular of the Roma ethnic group – census data for the period from The Liberation till the beginning of the 21st century;
- Roma-related data, accessible in the archive funds after the year 1989 – Central State Archive - Sofia
- Other information from scientific and other studies on the Roma ethnos in Bulgaria.

Reviewing the data sources, it can be concluded that despite some shortcomings in the period 1900-2011, a rich fund of statistical data exists, allowing us to