

# The Province of Vojvodina in the Vicinity of EU Regions

## A General Comparison of Human Resources with the Emphasis on (Un)employment

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**Abstract** *The goal of the paper is to point to the similarities and differences in the structure and development of unemployment after the 1990s. At the same time, in order to point to the possibilities and advantages of the international mobility of labour force as one of the possible ways to overcome unemployment, the data about the unemployment trends in the Vojvodina region will be compared with the data from the bordering regions in Hungary (Csongrad and Bacs-Kiskun) and Romania (Timis and Caras-Severin).*

**Key words** *human resources, employment, unemployment, Vojvodina, Serbia, Romania, Hungary*

The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina borders with two countries-candidates for the membership in the European Union, that is with their regions: Caras-Severin and Timis in Romania, and Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád in Hungary. The territory of those neighboring regions covers the total of 51405,5 km<sup>2</sup> and at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had the population of over 4 million. The Province of Vojvodina is rather too large to be compared with the neighboring districts, because it covers 42% of the territory, with more than a half of the total population. If the Hungarian and Romanian regions are at the level NUTS-3 according to the given nomenclature, then the corresponding levels in Vojvodina would be its regions of Srem (3891 km<sup>2</sup>), Bačka (8729 km<sup>2</sup>) and Banat (8886 km<sup>2</sup>). The Province of Vojvodina should be at the level NUTS-2.

Population density is relatively low and is not higher than 100 inhabitants per square kilometer, in all of these regions. In the last decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the population density increased in Vojvodina only, the well-known reason being the massive inflow of refugees. Other basic rates reflect some identical trends in all these regions. At the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the birthrate decreased below 10 per thousand in all regions. The mortality rate fluctuates between 10 and 15 per thousand, and Vojvodina is characteristic for its highest increase. The infant mortality rate is the lowest in the Hungarian and the highest in Romanian regions, while in Vojvodina it is 10 per thousand.

### Level of Employment

In the last decade of the previous century, natural and mechanical movement of the population had a strong influence on the range and structural characteristics of the (un)employed population. In the studied period of time, a continuous decrease in the number of the employed is present in all analyzed regions, except in Bács-Kiskun (Table 1). In 1990, over 628 thousand inhabitants of Vojvodina were employed, and in 2002 only 493 thousand. For example, during 2000 the

number of the employed was on the level of 1977. In the same year, there were only 259 employed persons per 1000 inhabitants (Opštine u Srbiji 2001,2002: 101). Two years later, in 2002, out of 1000 inhabitants of Vojvodina, 243 were employed. At the same time, till 1997 there was an increase in the number of the employed in the private sector, when about 97.000 employed persons were recorded. Already next year, their number decreased to 94 thousand. In 2002, 111 thousand inhabitants were employed in the private sector, which makes 22,5% of the total number of the employed.

According to the data from the Hungarian statistical yearbooks, the trends in the number of the employed in the districts could be studied only in the period from 1997 to 2002. These data are based on the opinion poll about labour force which included the population from 15 to 74 years old. The comparison of the data about the unemployed also resulting from an opinion poll, with the data from the National Employment Office shows a significant variation in the acquired values, but not in the direction in which the changes occur. For example, in 2002, the National Employment Office recorded 19.979 employed persons in Bács-Kiskun, and 14.277 in Csongrád. According to the poll about labour force, in the same year the number of the unemployed in Bács-Kiskun was about 13.600, and in Csongrád 9.300, significantly less than the recorded values.

According to the available data, the number of the employed in Csongrád fell from 163 thousand in 1997 to 159 thousand in 2002. In the same period there was an increase in the employed in Bács-Kiskun from 197 to 207 thousand.

In the Romanian districts Caras-Severin and Timis, the trends in the number of the employed were studied for the period from 1990 to 2001. The last decade of the previous century was characterized by the decrease in the number of the employed in both districts. In Caras-Severin, their number decreased from 145 to 68 thousand, and in Timis from 282 to 168 thousand. In both districts, the pronounced decrease in employment appeared at the beginning of the 1990s. For example, from 1990 to 1991 the number of the employed in Caras-Severin decreased for 28 thousand, from 145 to 117 thousand, and in Timis for 22 thousand, from 282 to 260 thousand. In Timis, the pronounced decrease in employment appeared in the period from 1998 to 1999, when the number of the employed decreased for 36 thousand, from 209 to 173 thousand.

Decrease in the number of the employed is characteristic both for male and female part of the population (Table 2).

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Table 1. Level of employment, in 1000

Years	Vojvodina	Hungary		Romania	
		Bács-Kiskun	Csongrád	Caras-Severin	Timis
1990	628	-	-	145	282
1991	619	-	-	117	260
1992	599	-	-	106	237
1993	584	-	-	89	224
1994	572	-	-	103	221
1995	565	-	-	95	210
1996	559	-	-	87	201
1997	548	197*	163*	92	190
1998	538	197*	163*	86	209
1999	522	202*	162*	73	173
2000	513	204*	164*	69	169
2001	505	203*	166*	68	168
2002	493	204*	159*	-	-

Sources:

for Vojvodina: from 1990 - 2000: SGS, 2001 : 77; for 2001 and 2002: Saopštenje o zaposlenima, ZP 20, Republički zavod za informatiku i statistiku, Beograd, 2002;

for Hungary: for 1997: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 1997, p. 95; for 1998: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 1998, p. 100; for 1999: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 1999, p. 100; for 2000: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2000, p. 99; for 2001: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2001, p. 85; for 2002: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2002, p.108;

for Romania: from 1990 to 1995: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1996, p. 768; from 1996 - 2001: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2002, p. 644.

Table 2. Gender of the employed

Districts	Years	Total	Male	Female
Bacs-Kiskun	1998	212.900	120.300	92.600
	1999	214.000	121.300	92.700
Csongrad	1998	171.800	97.200	74.600
	1999	168.000	95.500	72.500
Caras-Severin	1998	187.900	100.300	87.600
	1999	177.400	94.100	83.200
Timis	1998	357.200	181.200	176.300
	1999	337.100	170.100	167.400
Vojvodina	1998	538.000	311.000	227.000
	1999	522.000	302.000	220.000

Sources: for the districts in Hungary and Romania: International Statistical Yearbook, 2002; for Vojvodina: the same as for Table 1.

Table 3. Employed according to the branches of activities, annual average

Activity	Vojvodina 2003	Caras-Severin 2001	Timis 2001
Total	100,0	100,0	100,0
agriculture, forestry and water management	11,3		
fishing	0,2	4,6	3,7
mining and stone-quarrying	0,6	4,7	1,0
processing industry	36,1	34,8	40,4
production of electric energy, gass and water	2,4	3,6	3,1
construction industry	4,7	6,4	6,6
commerce, wholesale and retail, repair services	6,3	11,1	10,7
hotels and restaurants	1,1	2,0	1,2
traffic, storage and communication	6,6	7,9	7,1
financial mediation	2,3	1,0	1,0
real estate, renting	1,7	2,3	4,0
state administration and social security	4,5	4,6	2,6
education	8,6	7,7	9,0
health and social work	10,9	7,6	7,0
other public and private services	2,7	1,7	2,5

Sources: for Vojvodina: Vuksanović, 2003 : 69; for Romania: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2002, p. 646 - 649.

## Occupations

At the regional level, the data about the structure of the employed related to their occupations were available only for the Romanian districts. In comparison with Vojvodina, one does not notice any significant differences in the stratification of the population according to the branches of their activities. In Vojvodina, about 1/4 of the employed worked in the non-economic sector, and over 3/4 in the economic one (Table 3). The most numerous group included the persons employed in the processing industry (36,1%), then agriculture, forestry and water management (11,3%), health service and social work (10,9%), education (8,6%) etc. Unlike Vojvodina, in Caras-Severin and Timis fewer persons were employed in agriculture, forestry and water management (4,6% and 3,7%) and much more employed in commerce (11,1% and 10,7%).

According to the available data about the gender structure of the employed and about their occupation, in 1998 women made slightly more than 1/3 (34,6%) of the employed in economic sectors, and even about 2/3 (68,7%) of the employed in the non-economic sector (SB 2274, 2001: 28). According to the same source, those employed in industry and mining included 37,1% women.

## Unemployment

Increase in unemployment is a characteristic of all studied regions (Table 4). From 1990 till 2002, the number of the unemployed in Vojvodina was continually increasing. In 1990 it was 127.962, and in 2002 it was 275.091. The number of the unemployed decreased only in 1997, which could be partly explained by the increase in the employment in the private sector. Among the employed, there was a growing number of those who sought a job for the first time. We could assume that most of them were young persons who completed school and tried to realize their right to work. In 1990, those who sought a job for the first time made 42,4% of the total number of the unemployed, and 56,7% in 2002 (Vuksanović, 2003: 70). According to the data from 2000, in Vojvodina there were 117 unemployed persons per 1000 inhabitants (Opštine u Srbiji 2001, 2002: 117). Two years later, their number increased to 135.

In the period from 1990 to 2002, in the Hungarian districts Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád the number of the unemployed increased from 3.793 to 19.979, that is from 3.077 to 14.277. The unemployment rate increased from 1,5 to 6,2 for Bács-Kiskun, that is from 1,5 to 5,5 for Csongrád. In the Romanian district Caras-Severin, 1.212 unemployed were recorded in 1991, and 17.707 in 2001. In that period, the number of the unemployed in Timis increased from 507 to 9.839. In both Romanian regions, the greatest number of the unemployed

was recorded in 1994. In that year, the unemployment rate for Caras-Severin was 10,4 and for Timis 7,2. The higher unemployment rate was recorded only in 2001 for Caras-Severin, 11,6.

### Age/Gender Structure of the Unemployed

The data about the gender structure of the unemployed are related to Vojvodina and to the Romanian districts (Table 5). From 1990 to 2002, the number of the unemployed women in Vojvodina increased for 69.968, from 77.484 to 147.452. In 1990, women made 60,5% of the total number of the unemployed. After that year, their share in the total number of the unemployed was always above 50% and ranged from 51,7% (1996) to 56,1% (1991). We could assume that among them there was a significant number of women who lost their job because their firms were liquidated or they became the surplus work-force in the conditions of the unstable market, ownership transformation, restructuring of production. Many of them probably worked part-time, but were not able to keep their jobs in the closed-marked conditions. This assumption is further confirmed by the skills structure of the unemployed women. Out of the total number of the unemployed women in Vojvodina in 2002, more than 1/3 (37,2%) were unskilled, which doubtlessly made it more difficult for them to get a job. Among the unemployed women, only 2,3% had university education.

In the first years of the studied period, women prevailed among the unemployed in both Romanian districts. For example, in 1994 women made 62,0% of the unemployed in Caras-Severin and 63,1% in Timis. According to the latest available data, there were 50,7% unemployed women in Caras-Severin, and 49,0% in Timis.

If one takes into account that the inclusion of women into the social division of labour represents a prerequisite for gender equality, as well as for the realization of a series of other, so-called human rights, we could assume that the continuous increase in the number of the unemployed women creates a possibility for various kinds of discriminations, both at the family level and at the level of the society as a whole.

The International Statistical Yearbook also includes the data about the range and age/gender structure of the unemployed for both Hungarian and Romanian districts, but only for 1998 and 1999. If we compare these data with the range and age/gender structure of the unemployed in Vojvodina, we would face the problem of the methodological nature which diminishes the precision of conclusions. From 1998, The Republic Institute for Work Market presents the data about the unemployed only at the level of The Republic of Serbia. Therefore, one could not compare the unemployment rate in 1998 and 1999 in Vojvodina and in the

■ Table 4. Unemployment, in 1000

Years	Vojvodina	Hungary		Romania	
		Bács-Kiskun	Csongrád	Caras-Severin	Timis
1990	127.962	3.793	3.077	-	-
1991	159.927	-	-	1.212	578
1992	188.052	44.677	26.604	-	-
1993	201.894	-	-	-	-
1994	212.002	-	-	18.352	25.460
1995	225.429	24.919	18.347	16.374	13.409
1996	243.291	24.370	17.643	12.313	7.563
1997	210.945	24.711	18.118	-	-
1998	-	21.970	15.391	-	-
1999	-	22.829	15.783	-	-
2000	231.434	21.248	15.141	-	-
2001	246.836	20.143	13.588	17.707	20.073
2002	275.091	19.979	14.277	-	-

Sources: for Vojvodina (annual average): from 1990 - 2000: SGS, 2001 : 77; for 2001 and 2002: Saopštenje o zaposlenima, ZP 20, Republički zavod za informatiku i statistiku, Beograd, 2002; for Hungary: for 1990: Hungarian Statistical Yearbook 1990, p. 59; for 1992 i 1995: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 1995, p. 81; for 1996: 1996, p. 86; for 1997: 1997, p. 96; for 1998: 1998, p. 101; for 1999: 1999, p. 101; for 2000: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2000, p. 100; for 2001: 2001, p. 86; for 2002: Statistical Yearbook of Hungary 2002, p. 109; for Romania (as of December 31): for 1991: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1992, p. 144, 145; for 1994: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1995, p. 774, 775; for 1995: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1996, p. 778, 779; for 1996: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 1997, p. 818, 819; for 2001: Romanian Statistical Yearbook 2002, p. 656, 657.

Remark: for Vojvodina: annual average; for 1998. and 1999 The Republic Institute for Work Market published only the data for The Republic of Serbia.

districts in Hungary and Romania. However, the trends in the number of the unemployed before 1998 and after 1999, for which the data are lacking, point to the increase in the number of the unemployed in these years, too. The same tendency is also observed in the border districts in Romania, Caras-Severin and Timis; in the Hungarian districts Bács-Kiskun and Csongrád, in the period from 1998 to 1999, there was a decrease in the number of the unemployed, both of men and women (Table 6). Unlike Vojvodina in which women prevail among the unemployed, in the Hungarian and Romanian districts men made the majority of the unemployed.

The share of the unemployed persons younger than 25 in the Hungarian and Ro-

manian districts, as well as in Vojvodina, ranges in the interval from 20,6% to 30,7% (Table 7). The smallest and the highest share of this age group was recorded in the Hungarian district Csongrád. From 1998 to 1999, there was no increase in the number of the unemployed in this age group; the share of this age group in the unemployed persons decreased due to the decrease in the general number of the unemployed.

In the total number of the unemployed women, the smallest share of women younger than 25 was in the Romanian district Timis (19,5%), and the highest in the Hungarian district Csongrád 33,3%, 1/3 of the unemployed women. In Vojvodina, women younger than 25 make almost ¼ of the unemployed women, 24,6%. Ac-

■ Table 5. Unemployed persons, women, annual average

Years	Vojvodina		Caras-Severin		Timis	
	women	women in total, %	women	women in total, %	women	women in total, %
1990	77.484	60,5	-	-	-	-
1991	89.722	56,1	1.164	96,0	507	87,7
1992	100.678	53,5	-	-	-	-
1993	107.422	53,2	-	-	-	-
1994	111.971	52,8	11.378	62,0	16.073	63,1
1995	118.286	52,5	9.784	59,7	8.436	62,9
1996	125.834	51,7	7.752	63,0	4.527	59,8
1997	114.472	54,3	-	-	-	-
1998	...	...	-	-	-	-
1999	...	...	-	-	-	-
2000	127.191	55,0	-	-	-	-
2001	134.188	54,4	8.983	50,7	9.839	49,0
2002	147.452	53,6	-	-	-	-

Sources: from 1990 to 1997 for Vojvodina: Savezni zavod za tržište rada i migracije; as in: SGJ 2000, SZS, Beograd, 2000, p. 98; For 2000 (as of December 31, 2000.): Opštine u Srbiji 2001, 2002: 117; For 2001 and 2002 the data were acquired from The Republic Institute for the Work Market - branch in Novi Sad; for Romania: the same as for the table 4.

Remark: From 1998 The Republic Institute for the Work Market publishes only the data for The Republic of Serbia.

Table 6. Unemployed persons according to gender

Districts	Years	Total	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women
Bacs-Kiskun	1998	19.100	11.800	7.300	100,0	61,8	38,2
	1999	13.700	8.300	5.400	100,0	60,6	39,4
Csongrad	1998	10.700	6.000	4.700	100,0	56,1	43,9
	1999	7.500	4.500	3.000	100,0	60,0	40,0
Caras-Severin	1998	12.700	7.400	5.300	100,0	58,3	41,7
	1999	13.500	7.600	5.900	100,0	56,3	43,7
Timis	1998	14.500	7.200	7.300	100,0	49,7	50,3
	1999	16.700	9.000	7.700	100,0	53,9	46,1
Vojvodina	2002	274.525	127.309	147.216	100,0	46,4	53,6

Sources: for the districts in Hungary and Romania: International Statistical Yearbook, 2002; for Vojvodina: the same as for the Table 5.

Table 7. Unemployed younger than 25, according to gender

Districts	Years	Total	Men	Women	Younger than 25 in the total number of the unemployed		
					Total	Men	Women
Bacs-Kiskun	1998	5.400	3.600	1.800	28,3	30,5	24,7
	1999	4.200	2.600	1.600	30,7	31,3	29,7
Csongrad	1998	2.300	900	1.400	20,6	15,0	29,8
	1999	2.300	1.400	900	30,7	28,9	33,3
Caras-Severin	1999	3.700	2.300	1.400	28,0	29,9	23,7
Timis	1999	3.500	2.100	1.500	21,1	23,3	19,5
Vojvodina	2002	68.364	32.204	36.160	24,9	25,3	24,6

Sources: for the districts in Hungary and Romania: International Statistical Yearbook, 2002; for Vojvodina: the same as for the Table 5.

Table 8. Unemployed persons who are 25 or older, according to gender

Districts	Years	Total	Men	Women	25 or older, in the total number of the unemployed		
					total	men	women
Bacs-Kiskun	1998	13.700	8.200	5.500	71,7	69,5	75,3
	1999	9.500	5.700	3.800	69,3	68,7	70,3
Csongrad	1998	8.500	5.100	3.300	79,4	85,0	70,2
	1999	5.200	3.200	2.000	69,3	71,1	66,7
Caras-Severin	1999	9.800	5.400	4.500	72,0	70,1	76,3
Timis	1999	13.100	6.900	6.200	78,9	76,7	80,5
Vojvodina	2002	206.161	95.105	111.056	75,1	74,7	75,4

Sources: for the districts in Hungary and Romania: International Statistical Yearbook, 2002; for Vojvodina: the same as for Table 5.

According to the available data, in both Hungarian districts and in the Romanian district Caras-Severin, men younger than 25 make about 30% of the total number of the unemployed. In the second Romanian district, Timis, and in Vojvodina, their share is much smaller, 23,3% and 25,3%.

In the total number of the unemployed, the share of those who are 25 or older ranges in the interval from 69,3% in both Hungarian districts, to 78,9% in Timis (Table 8). In Vojvodina, this age group makes 75,1% of the unemployed.

As for the age structure of the unemployed, we can conclude that there are no significant differences between the analyzed regions.

Similarities and differences in the range and age/gender structure of the (un)employed, as well as in the structure according to the branches of their activities, could present a stimulus for future co-operation which would include not only the circu-

lation of goods, but also of labour force. The circulation of labour force could doubtlessly contribute to a better solution of the problems which these spatially, and not only spatially related regions face. However, in order to set up a programme of future co-operation, it is necessary to form statistical data-bases at the comparative level - that would show in which directions the co-operation could and should be developed. In order to achieve that, the first task is to harmonize the methodologies related to the collection of data.

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