

The Demographic Profile of The Population in Small, Medium and Large-Sized Cities In Romania

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Abstract

The present study analyzes the demographic profile of the population by categories of urban localities, categories established according to the number of inhabitants, respectively very small, small, medium and large-sized cities. The main conclusions from this study would be that approximately 40% of the Romanian population lives in medium and large cities, the average age of the population in very small and small towns is lower than that in larger cities, the share of the population whose domicile coincides with residence is higher in smaller cities compared to larger ones, and the distribution of the main ethnicities highlights a slightly asymmetric territorial distribution within the Hungarian ethnic group (there are localities with very high percentages of this ethnic group) and a symmetrical distribution for the Romany ethnic group.

Keywords

demographic profile, territorial disparities, very small, small, medium and large-sized cities

Population by category of urban localities - share in total

According to the methodology used in the projects financed by the European Union, a city can be defined according to the number of the population, as follows:

- very small towns if the number of its resident population is below 10,000 inhabitants;
- small towns if the number of its resident population is in the range of [10,000 -20,000) inhabitants;
- medium-sized cities if the number of its resident population is in the range of [20,000 - 100,000) inhabitants;
- large city if the number of its resident population is over 100,000 inhabitants.

Thus, in Romania, according to the 2021 census data (RPL2021), of the 319 existing urban localities at the national level, 103 are municipalities and 217 are cities, and of these 148 are very small towns, i.e. they have less than 10,000 people, 82 are small towns (between 10 and 20 thousand inhabitants), 71 medium-sized cities (between 20 thousand and 100 thousand inhabitants) and 18 cities are large, respectively they have over 100,000 people. The population living in the rural environment represents 47.8% of the total resident population from RPL2021, and the population living in the urban area is more numerous, representing 52.2% of the total population.

Regarding the distribution of urban localities according to the population, as can be seen in figure 1, in the 236 small and very small towns live 11.0% of the total population, in medium cities over 15.0% of the population and a quarter of the population of Romania lives in the country's big cities.

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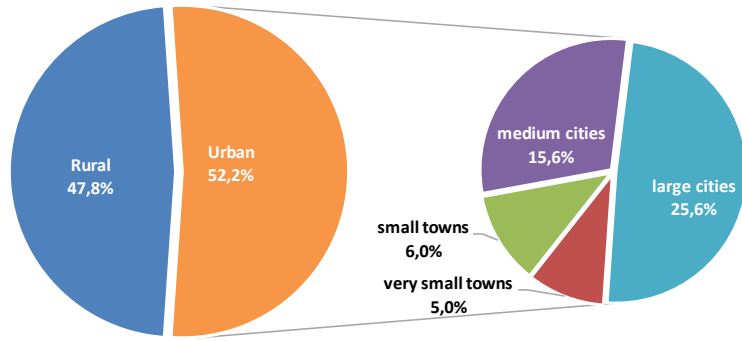
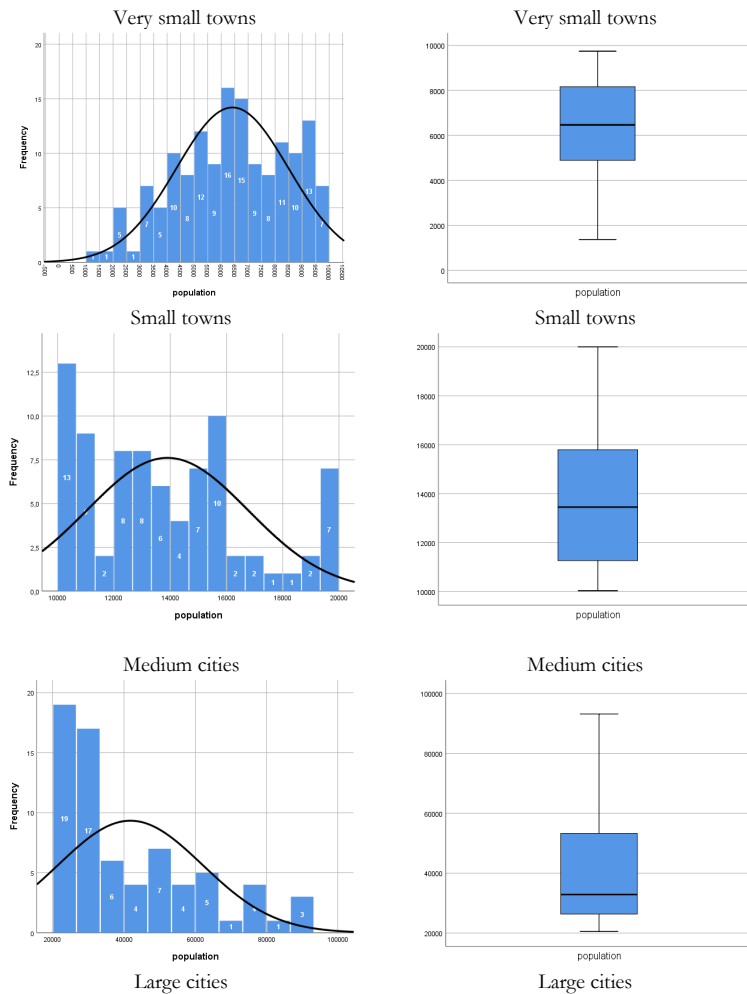


Figure 1. The structure of the resident population from the 2021 census by locality category (%)

Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

Regarding the distribution of localities according to the number of population, it can be observed that in the case of very small towns, their distribution is slightly asymmetric towards the large values ($Q3=8,182$; $Cv=26.5\%$) and small towns still have a slight asymmetry but towards the values small of the series ($Q2=13.453$; $Cv=17.0\%$). The situation is different for medium and large cities, their distribution is asymmetric with an agglomeration towards small values of the population, respectively towards the lower values of the interval. Thus, 50% of medium-sized cities have a population below 32,873 inhabitants, and the coefficient of variation for this series is 40.3%, while the vast majority of large cities ($Q3=75\%$) have a population below 250 thousand people, the municipality of Bucharest making a discordant note with the series.



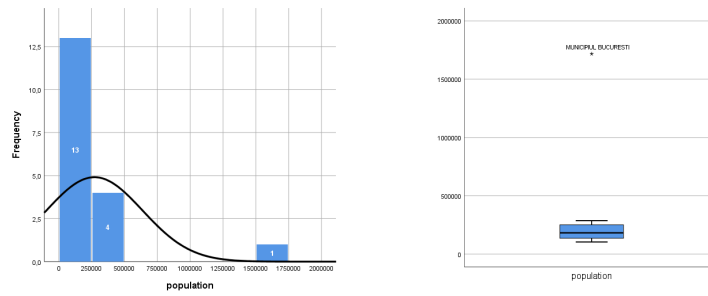


Figure 2. Distribution of urban localities according to the resident population at RPL 2021
Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

In conclusion, the vast majority (72.1%) of the urban localities are small and very small towns with a population of less than 20 thousand inhabitants, and only 11.0% of the Romanian population lives in these cities, their distribution being slightly asymmetric with agglomeration of cities in the range of 6,000-7,000 inhabitants. Medium and large cities represent only 27.9% of the total urban localities, and in these cities live almost half (41.2%) of the Romanian population, in the case of these categories of localities there is an agglomeration of cities towards the lower limits of the intervals.

Distribution of the population in urban localities by age groups

In the 2021 census, children (0-14 years) had a share of 16.1% of the total population, young people (15-24 years) represented 10.5%, adults 53.9%, and elderly people 16.6% of the total population residents of Romania. By residence areas, the share of children and young people (0-24 years old) is higher in rural areas than in urban areas by 3.3 percentage points, while the share of people participating in economic life (25-64 years old) is higher in urban areas than in rural areas with 2.8 percentage points. Also, the share of elderly people (65 years and over) is slightly higher in the urban areas than in the rural areas by only 0.3 percentage points.

By category of urban localities, it is observed that children (0-14 years old) register the highest share in small towns (16.3%), with 1.1 percentage points higher than the lowest share registered in large cities (15.2%). The young population (15-24 years) has the largest share in the total population in very small towns (10.9%) and the smallest in large cities, where the share is only 8.8%. Regarding the active population on the labor market (25-65 years old), the largest share is found in large cities (55.7%) with 2.0 percentage points higher than the share recorded in very small towns. As for the share of elderly people (65 years and over), it can be seen that it registered the highest share in large cities (20.3%), higher than the national average (+0.7 percentage points) and well above the most small share, namely that of small towns (-4.7 percentage points).

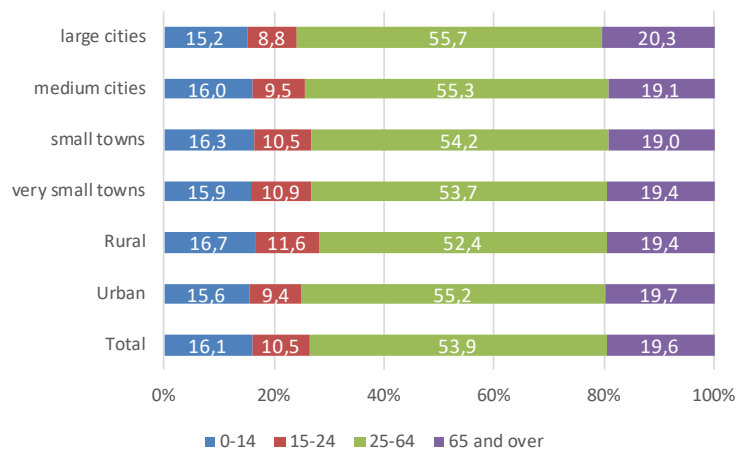


Figure 3. Age group structure of the resident population at RPL 2021 (%)
Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

Analyzing the shape of the age pyramid for urban localities, it can be observed that small towns and very small towns have a pyramid shape similar to the one related to the rural areas, a larger base, approximately the same number of the population in the 10-19 age range and between 60-69 years, there being some balance between young and elderly people (approximately 1.1 elderly people to one young person). Medium-sized cities and large cities have a shape of the age pyramid similar to that of the urban areas, a smaller base (the share of children in total is small), and the parity between the elderly and the young is 1.5.

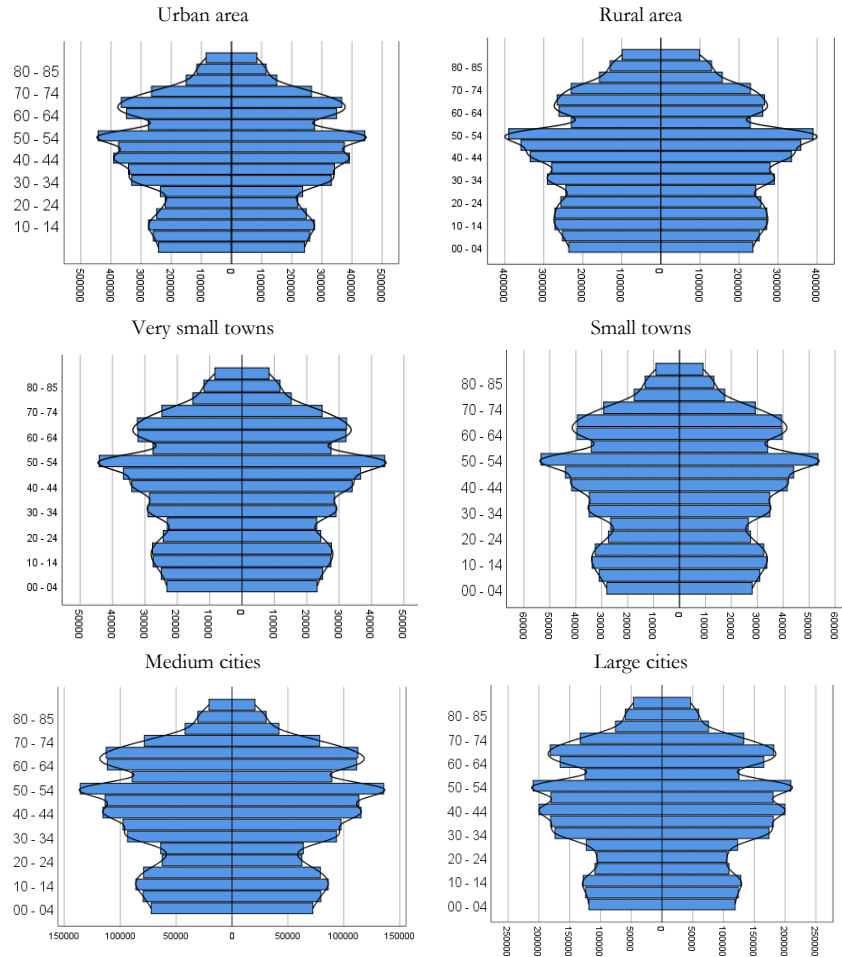


Figure 4. Age pyramid for the resident population at RPL 2021
 Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

Due to this distribution of the population by age groups, the average age of the urban population is 1.1 years higher than that of the rural population. The youngest population is found in the small town, where the average age is 42.5 years, with -0.4 lower than that of the urban environment and approximately the same value as at the national level, and the highest value of the average age is found in large cities, 43.1 years, +0.2 years above the average of the urban areas and +0.7 years above the national average.

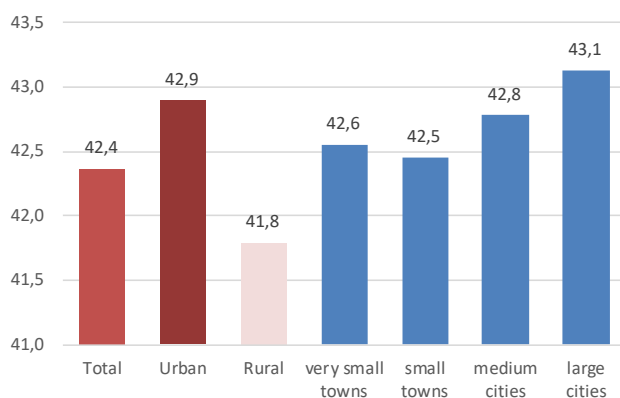


Figure 5. Average age of the resident population at RPL 2021 (years)

Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

In conclusion, in small towns and very small towns the share of the young population, under 24 years of age, is higher than in medium-sized cities and large cities, and the situation changes when we talk about the population participating in economic life, it has a greater share high in larger cities compared to that in smaller cities.

Distribution of the resident population in urban localities by domicile

In the census of 2021, 96.9% of the resident population declared that they live in the town of review, which means that only for 3.1% of the Romanian population, the town of domicile does not coincide with the town of residence.

We mention that according to the census methodology, the domicile is the address entered in the Romanian identity document by the competent authorities, and the usual residence is the place where a person normally spends his daily rest period, independent of temporary absences for the purpose of recreation, vacation, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimages. Only persons who: have lived at their place of usual residence for a continuous period of at least 12 months before the reference date, or arrived at their place of usual residence with no more than 12 months before the reference time, with the intention of staying for at least one year. As previously stated, the habitual residence may or may not coincide with the domicile².

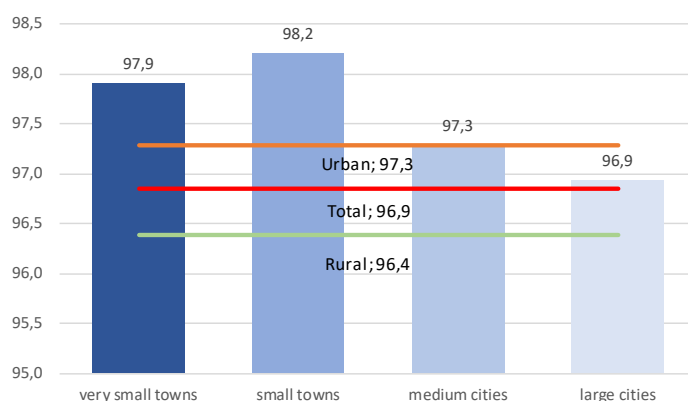


Figure 6. The share of the population with residence and domicile in the same locality in the total resident population at RPL2021, by category of localities (%)

Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

² <https://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/DEFINITII.pdf>

As can be seen in the graphic representation, the share of the population for which the place of residence coincides with the place of residence is higher in the urban areas (97.3%) than in the rural areas by 0.9 percentage points. The highest percentage of the population for which the domicile coincides with the residence is found in small towns (98.2%), and the lowest among the categories of urban localities analyzed, in large cities (96.9%), a value close to the national average.

In the territorial profile, there are slight disparities in the distribution of urban localities depending on the share of the population for which the domicile coincides with the residence. Thus, the smallest variation is found in small towns ($C_v = 0.90\%$), followed by the very small town category ($C_v = 1.09\%$), and the highest value was recorded in large cities ($C_v = 1.99\%$), therefore can state that the distribution of localities according to the share of the population with residence and domicile in the same locality is homogeneous.

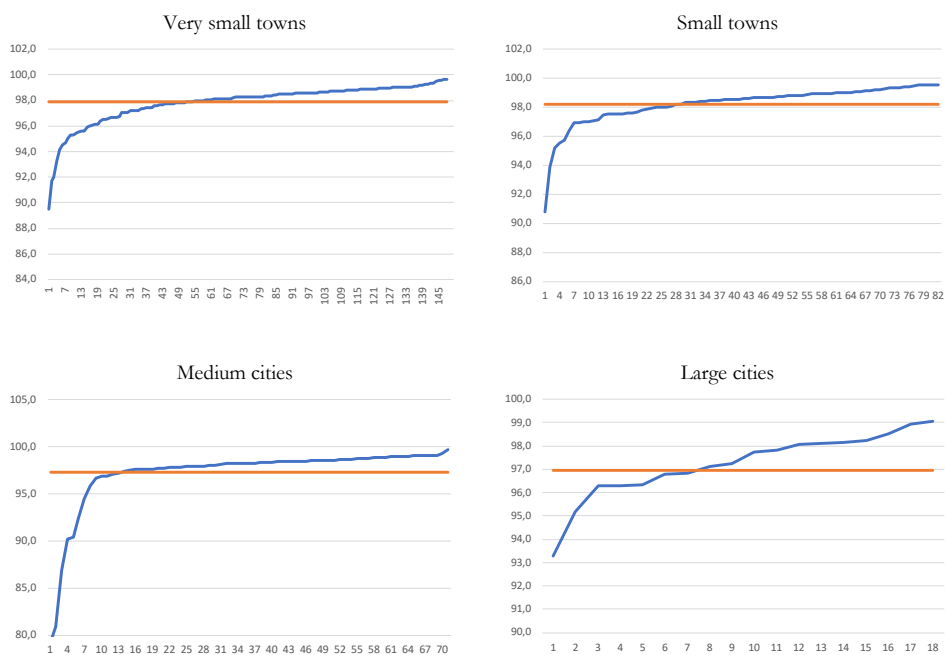


Figure 7. Share of the population with residence and domicile in the same locality in the total resident population at RPL2021, by locality (%)

Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

In conclusion, at the 2021 population and housing census, the vast majority (approximately 97%) of the population declared that the domicile coincides with the residence, and in terms of territorial profile there are no significant differences between the urban localities.

The structure of the main ethnicities of the population in urban localities

The distribution of the population by ethnicity shows that the Romanian ethnic population is the majority (77.7%) in Romania, a slightly smaller percentage is found in the urban area (75.2%), and in the rural area 80.4% of the population declared that they are of Romanian ethnicity. In urban localities, shares below the one calculated for the urban area were recorded in very small towns and large cities (74.8%) and shares with approximately one percentage point higher were found in medium cities and small towns.

The shares of the ethnic Hungarian and Romany population are higher than the national average or the averages for the residential areas, in very small towns and small towns, so the share of the ethnic Hungarian population is 8.3% and 6.7% respectively (compared to 5.3% at the level national and 4.7% for urban) and of the Romany population of 4.8% and 4.0 respectively (compared to 3.0% at national level and 1.8% for urban). Weights below the national average are recorded in

large cities, where the Hungarian ethnic population represents only 3.1%, and the Romany ethnic population only 0.8%.

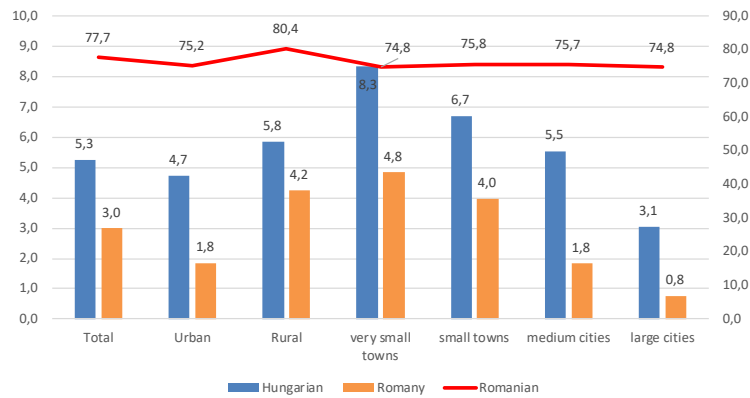
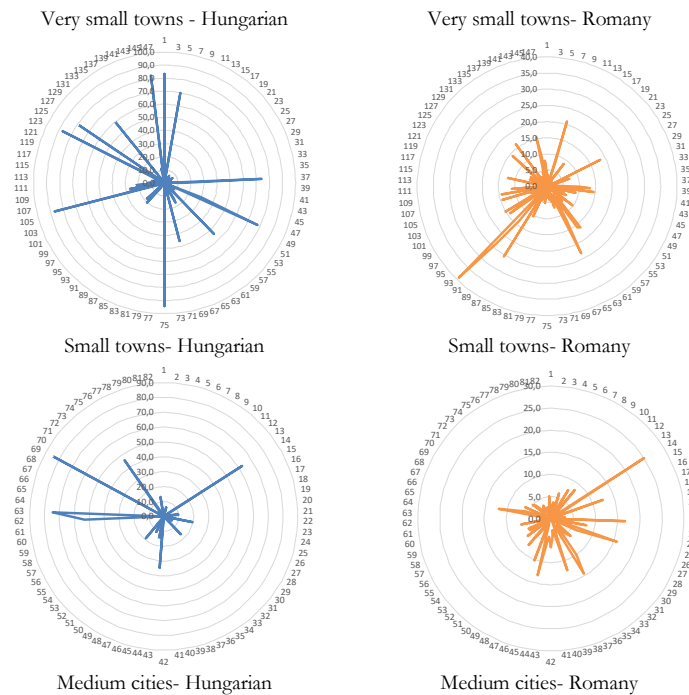


Figure 8. The structure of the main ethnicities of the resident population at RPL 2021 (%)
Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

Analyzing in territorial profile the distribution of the share of the population by ethnicity, it can be observed that the distribution of the ethnic Hungarian population is uneven, there are some localities where they are the majority. Thus, in 8 very small towns, 3 small towns and 2 medium-sized cities, the ethnic Hungarian population was the majority (more than 70.0% of the total reviewed population).



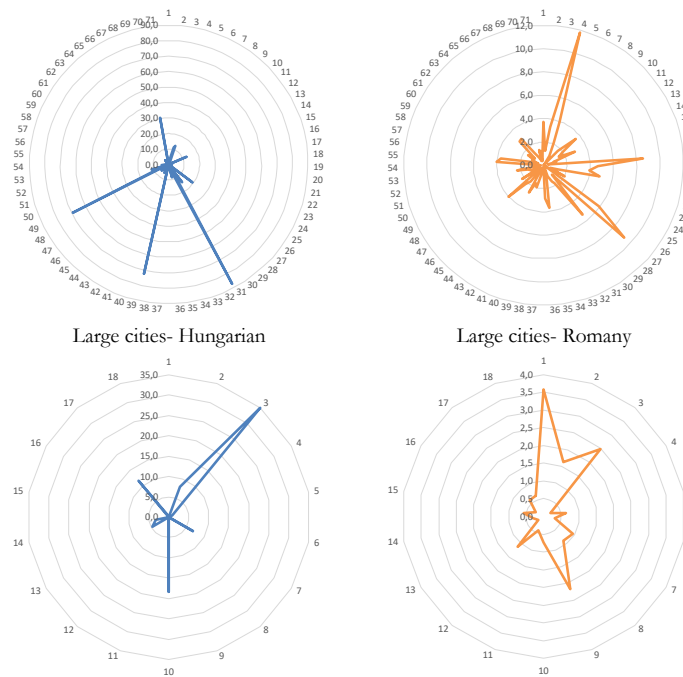


Figure 9. The share of the main ethnic groups of the resident population at RPL 2021 in urban localities (%)
 Source: Personal processing of the INS available data

As regards the Romany population, it is relatively evenly distributed in the territorial profile, only in one very small town there is a weight over 30%, in 20 very small towns the weight is comprised between 10%-30%, in in a single medium-sized city the weight is approximately 10%, and in large cities the highest share does not exceed 4%.

Conclusions

The analysis of the demographic profile of urban localities, in the main categories depending on their size, is a necessity in knowing the economic environment, a radiography of the demographic component, as is the present study, offering valuable information to entrepreneurs, decision-makers in the economic or political environment.

Thus, the vast majority of the urban localities are small and very small towns and only 11.0% of the Romanian population lives in these cities. Medium and large cities represent only 27.9% of the total urban localities, and in these cities live almost half (41.2%) of the Romanian population. Regarding the distribution by age groups, in small towns and very small towns the share of the young population, under 24 years of age, is higher than in medium-sized cities and large cities, and the situation changes when we talk about the population participating in economic life, it has a greater share high in larger cities compared to that in smaller cities.

Regarding the distribution of the resident population in urban localities by domicile, 97% of the population declared that the domicile coincides with the residence, and in terms of territorial profile there are no significant differences between the urban localities. The analysis of the population by ethnicity has highlighted the fact that the shares of the ethnic Hungarian and Romany population are higher than the national average or the averages for the residential areas, in very small towns and small towns, and the share is below the national average in large cities.

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