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Prospects of prevention depopulation in Latvia

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HISTORICAL BACKGROUND:



Number of population in the three Baltic countries and selected Nordic countries, 1910-2021

(millions and changes in %)

Source: Official publications of the National Statistical Bureaus and EUROSTAT. ¹ 1919, ² 1914, ³ 1913, ⁴ 1911.

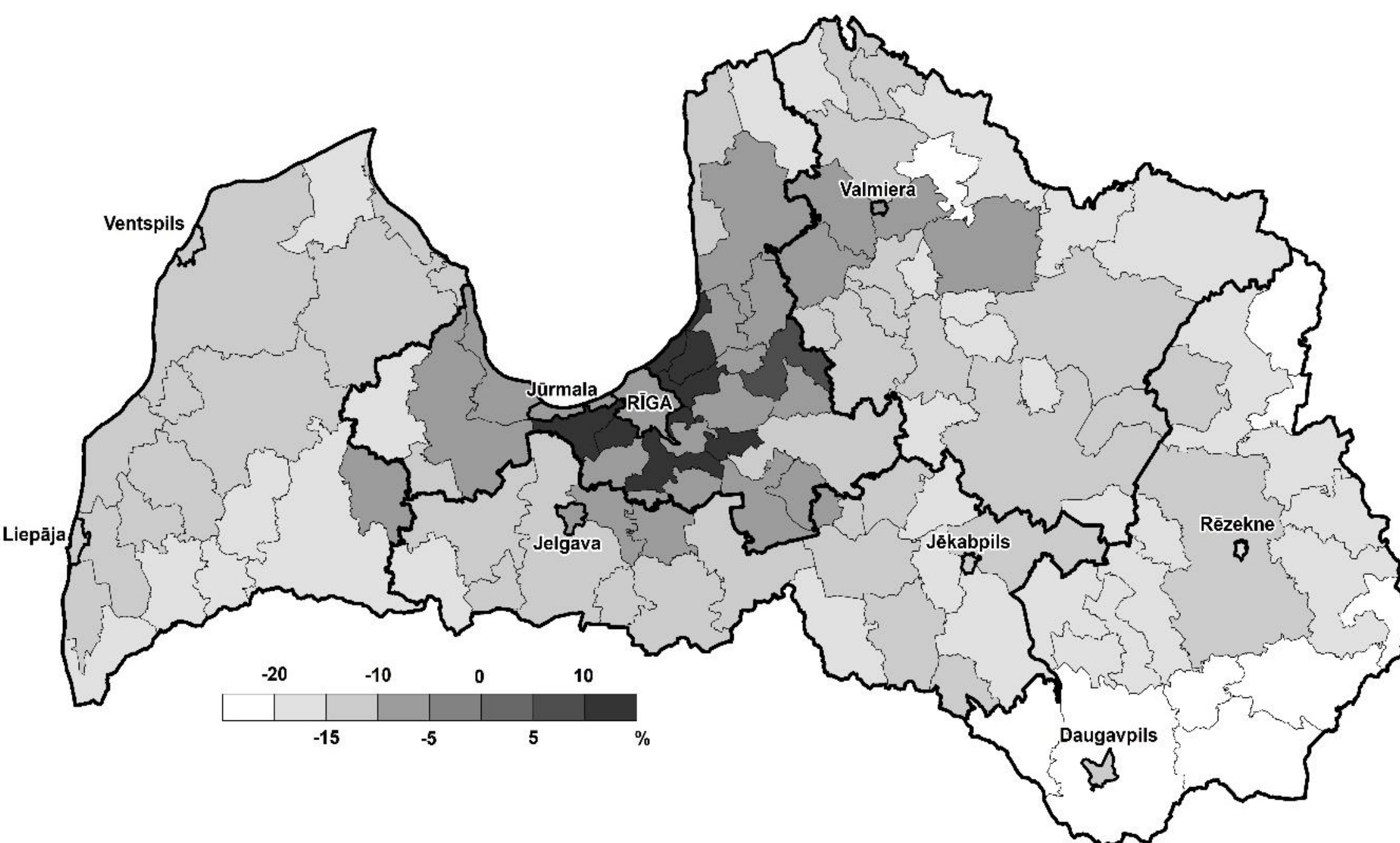
	1910	1950	2021	2021/1910 (%)
Estonia	1.07 ¹	1.02	1.33	+24
Latvia	2.55 ²	1.94	1.89	-26
Lithuania	2.83 ³	2.57	2.80	-1
Denmark	2.76 ⁴	4.28	5.84	+112
Finland	2.94	4.03	5.53	+88
Norway	2.36	3.26	5.39	+128
Sweden	5.52	7.04	10.38	+88

Projected and factual population changes in Latvia, 1940-2000

(thous.)

Source: E. Bulmerinc. Die Zukünftige Bevölkerungsentwicklung in Lettland. Riga, 1935.

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
Const.	1976	1986	1977	1951	1898	1837	1783
Fert. change	1962	1932	1874	1802	1707	1609	1523
Fert.& mort. change	1973	1958	1905	1834	1740	1642	1554
Factual	1931	1957	2104	2352	2509	2668	2377

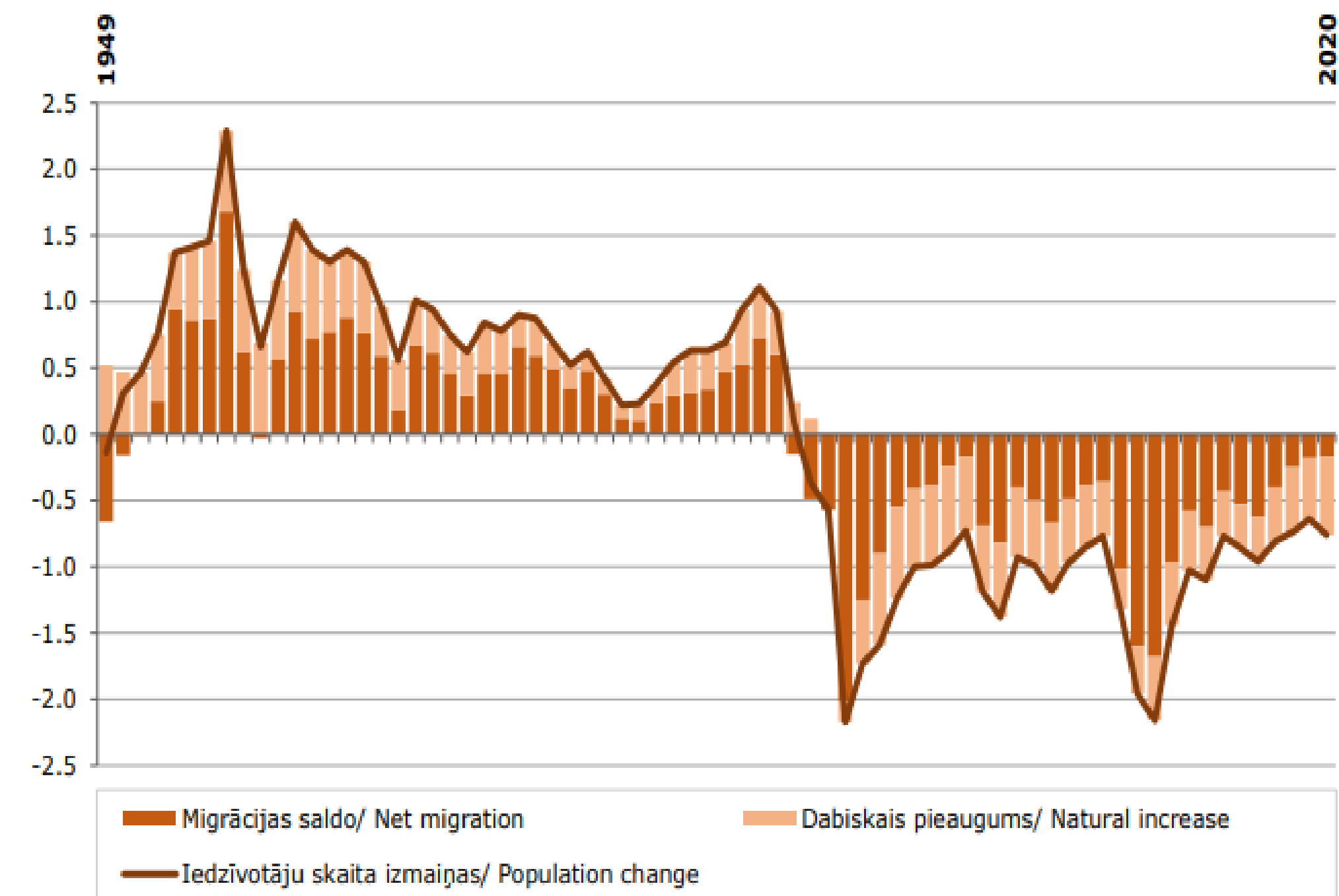


Almost 30 per cent of Latvia's population has been lost since 1990. According to the population loss Latvia has been among the leading countries in the world.

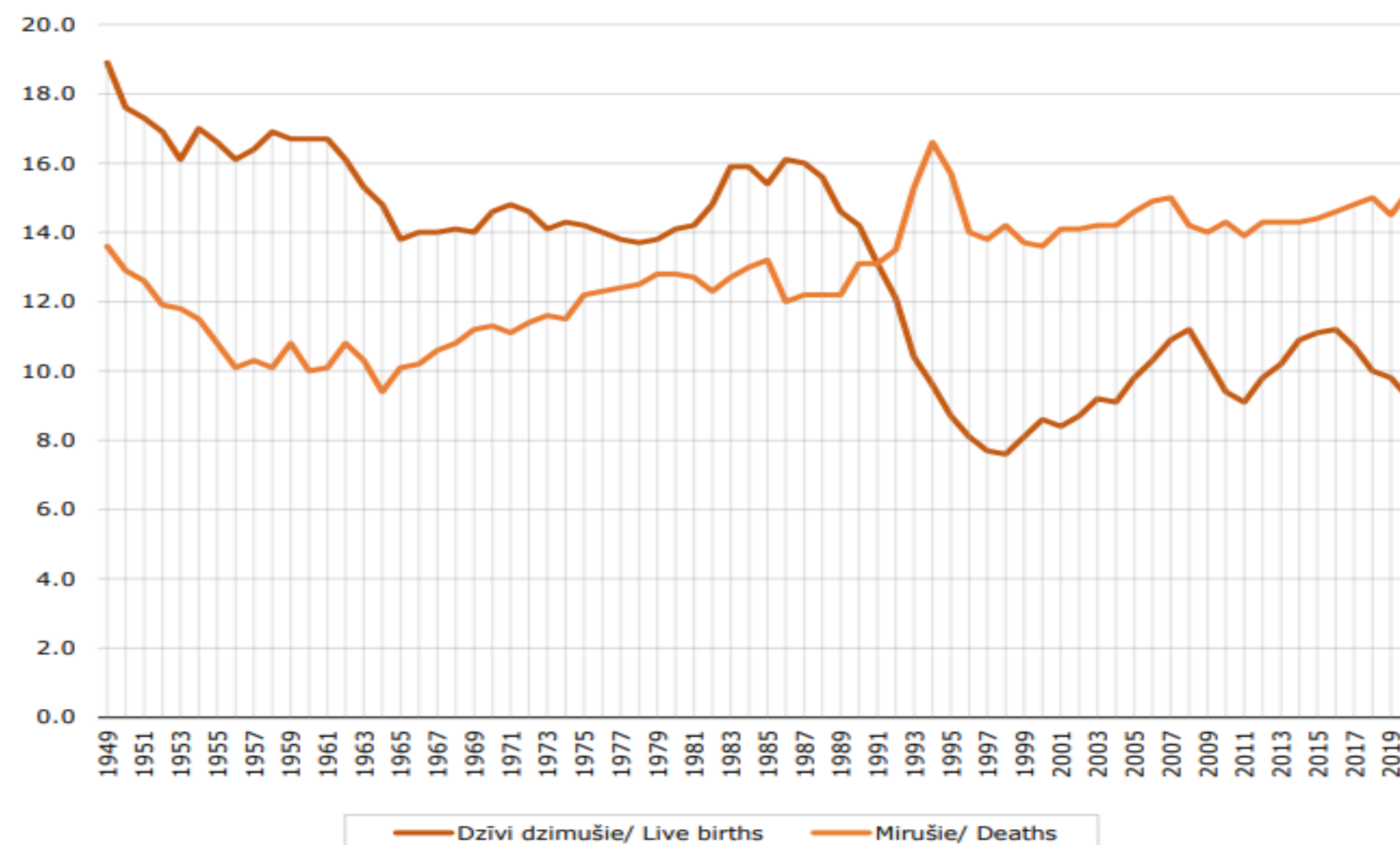
Objective of the study is to analyse changes in depopulation since the beginning of 1990s, its further development, reflections of depopulation on population policy measures and on the opinion of population.

Data and methods. Register based Population census 2021 data, the analysis of relationship between GDP, unemployment tends and main demographic changes. Content analysis of the policy documents dealing with demographic issues. Comparative analysis of population projection scenarios, and «Migration and Population Policy Survey» data (stratified random sampling, 2016 n=2049 and 2021 n=1246) .

Change in usually resident population, 1949–2020, %



LIVE BIRTHS AND DEATHS IN LATVIA; 1949–2020 (uz 1 000 iedzīvotāju/ per 1 000 inhabitants)



Demographic changes in Latvia: comparison of three time periods

Calculated from: Demography 2012. CSB. Pp.10,21,78; Demography 2021. CSB. Pp. 18,70, 90.

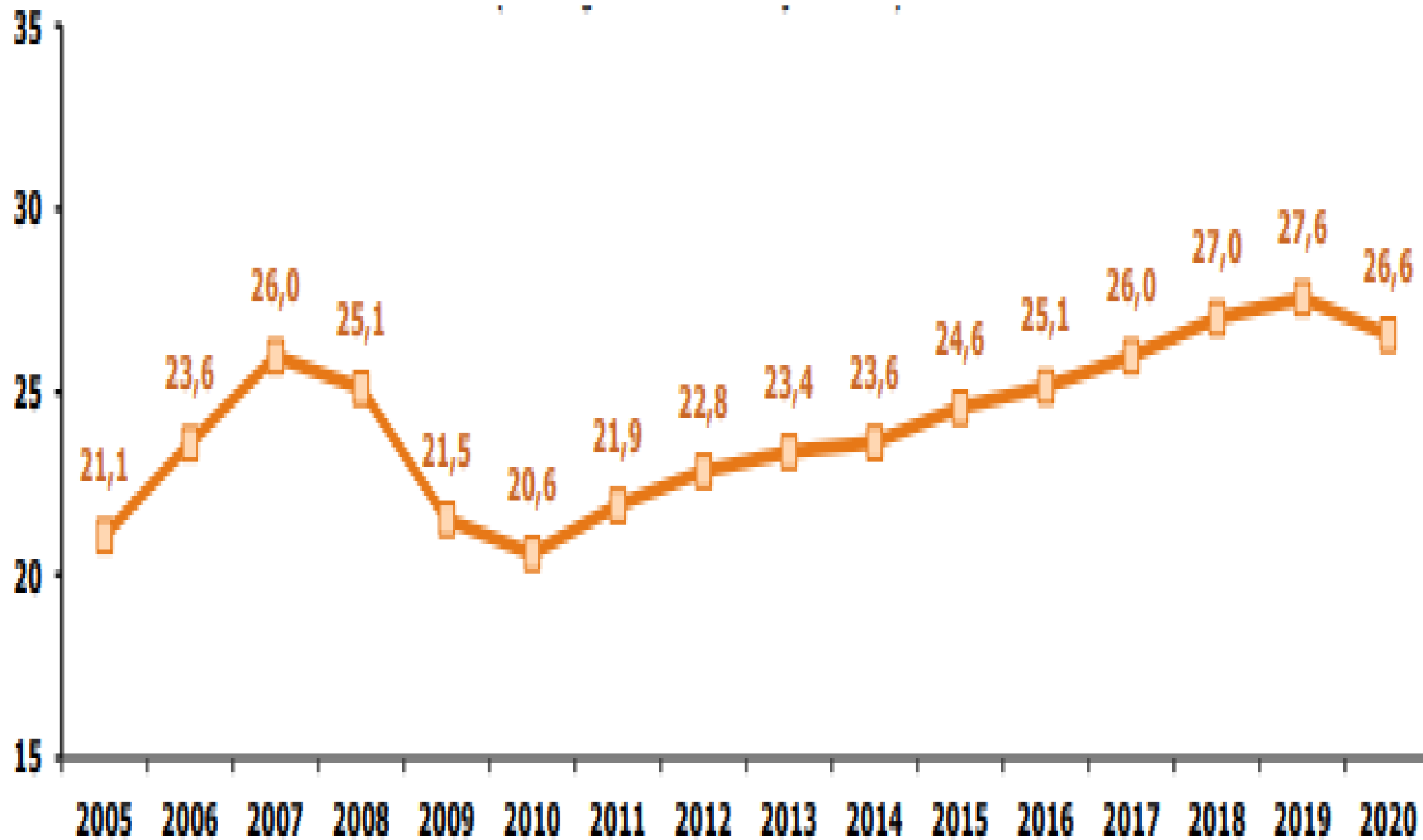
	1992-1994	2008-2010	2019-2020
Change of the total number of pop. (%), of which	-5,4	-5,3	-0.8
due to natural increase (%)	-1.3	-1.1	-0.6
Due to international migration (%)	-4.1	-4.2	-0.2
Total fertility rate and its change (%)	1.56 -19%	1.47 -14%	1.58 -4%
Life expectancy for both sexes at birth (years) and its changes (%)	67.5 -3%	72.8 +1%	75.4 -1%

Government perceptions and policies, Latvia

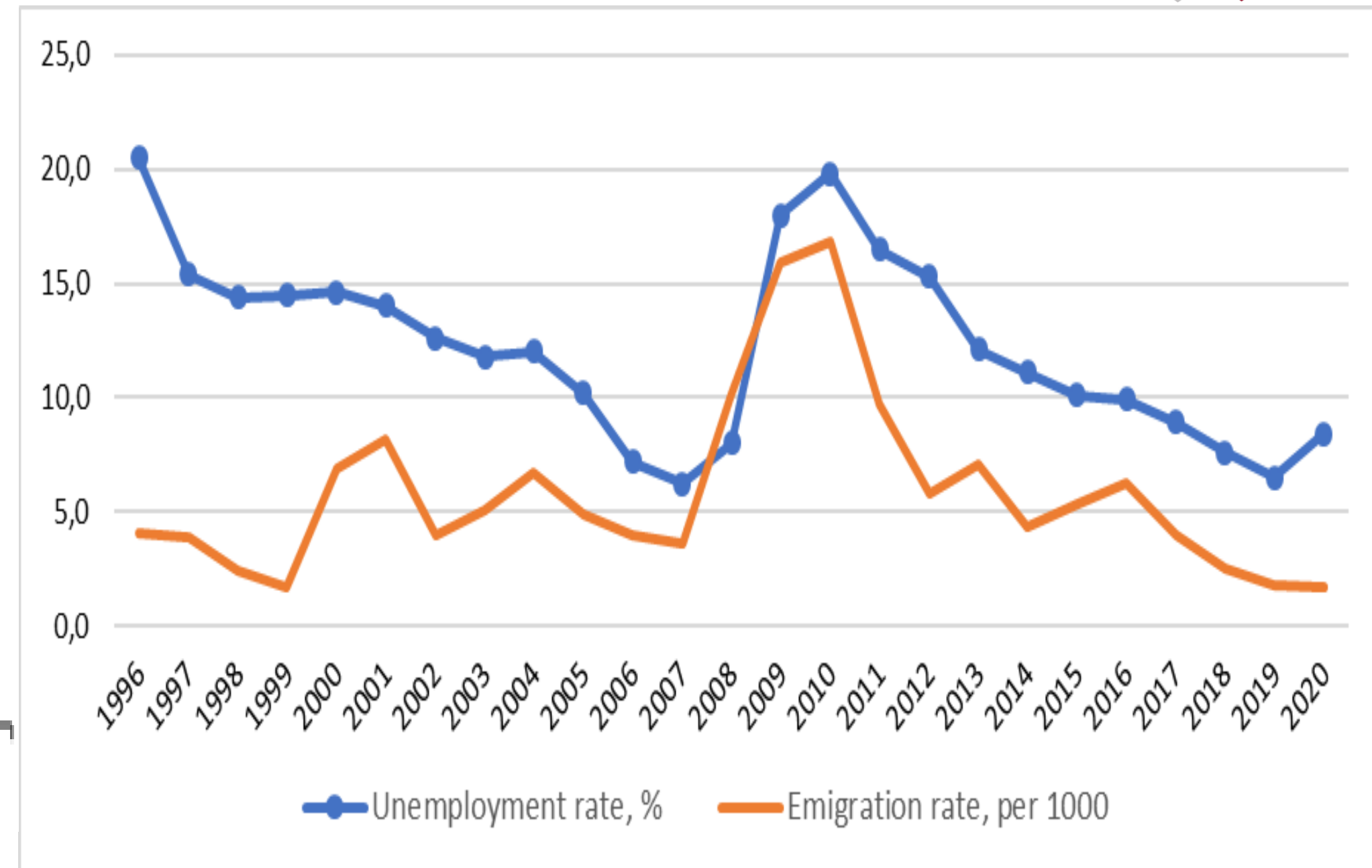
Source: World population policies datasets 2015. UN, 2015.

<https://esa.un.org/poppolicy/cprofile.aspx?MainMenu&Type=Variables>

	1996	2015
Pop.growth	Too low	Too low
Policy	No intervention	Raise
Fertility	Too low	Too low
Policy	Raise	Raise
Life expectancy	Unacceptable	Unacceptable
Immigration	Too high	Satisfactory
Policy	Lower	Maintain
Emigration	Too low	Too high
Policy	Raise	Lower



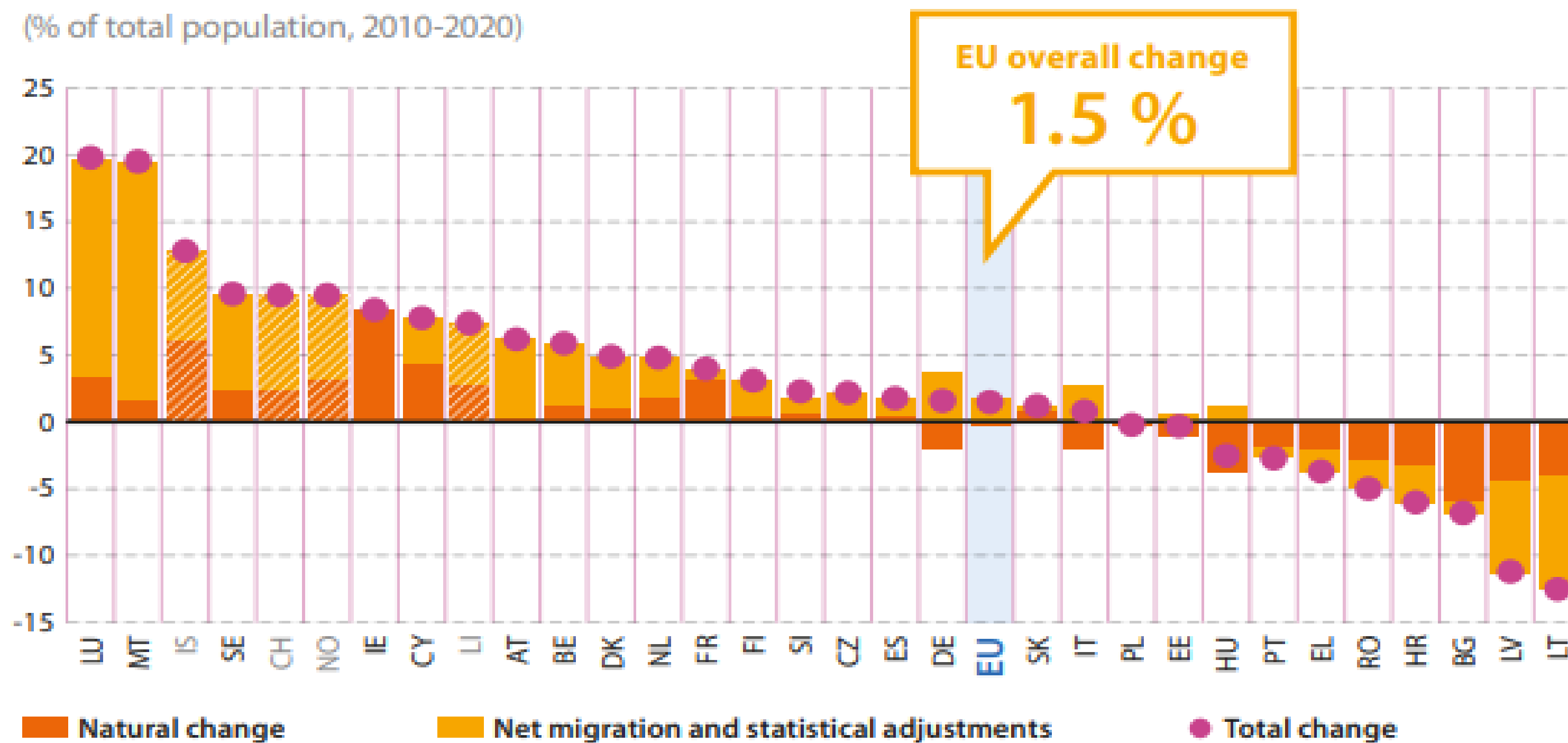
Volume of Gross Domestic Product, Latvia 2005-2020 (billion euro, chain-linked reference year 2015. Source: Latvija. Galvenie statistikas rādītāji 2021. Rīga: CSP, 2021. P.48.

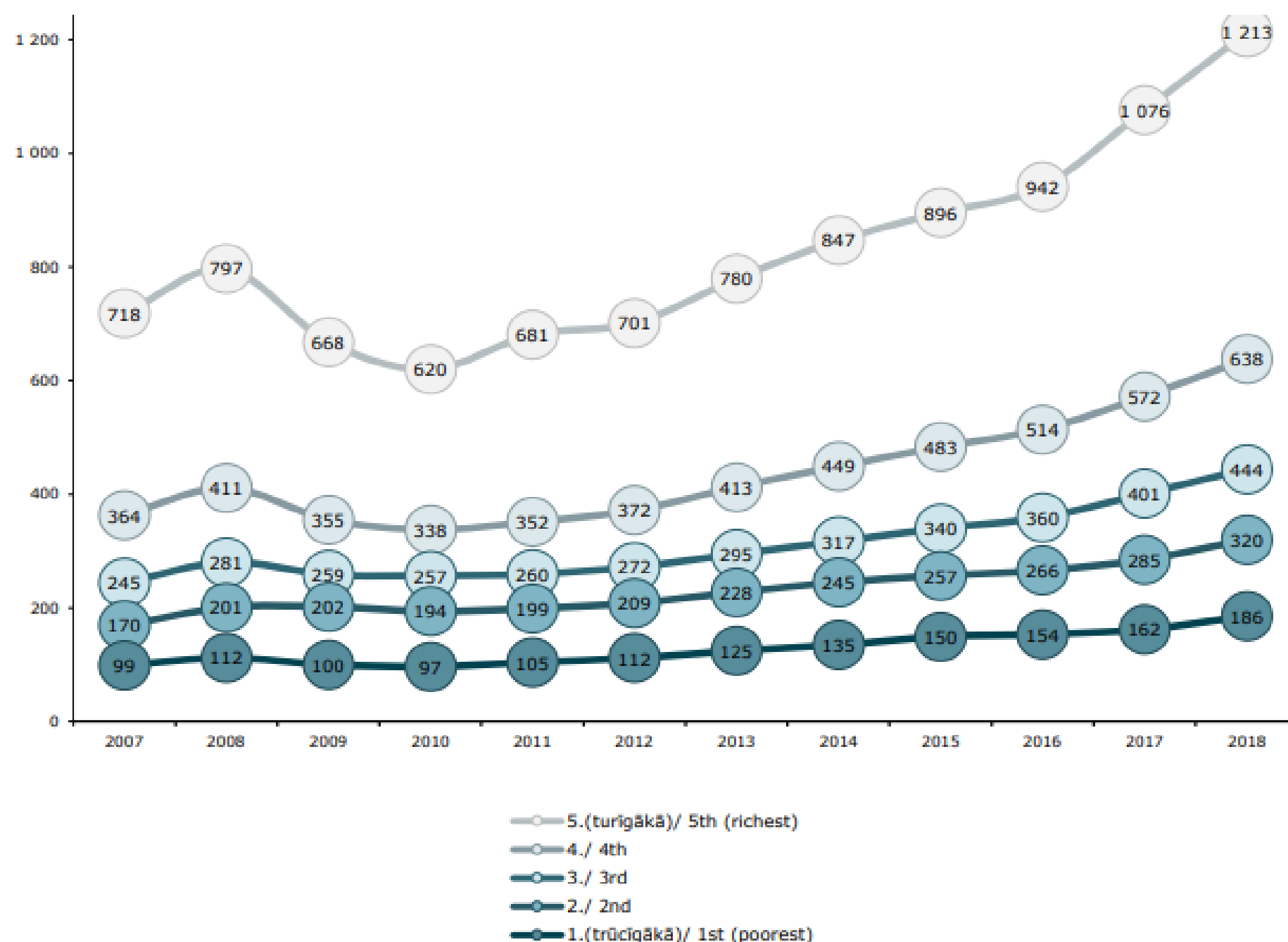


Unemployment rate (in %, age group 15-64) and **emigration** rate (per 1000 inhabitants) in Latvia 1996-2020 Source: CSB database, tables IRS030 and NBA0302. Authors' calculations.

Population change

(% of total population, 2010-2020)





Monthly income per household member by quintile group, Latvia (euro); 2007–2018. Source: Statistical yearbook of Latvia 2020. Riga: CSB. P.128

As response to massive emigration during the economic crisis of 2008-2010, population policy initiatives intensified :

Demography Affairs Council – consultative and coordinative state institution, secretariat in the Ministry of Welfare (established by Cabinet of ministers 12.04.**2011**, 22 members, chaired by the Prime minister);
<https://vestnesis.lv/ta/id/229250>

Order of the Cabinet of Ministers No.356 (**2013.06.30**) «**About return migration support measures plan for 2013-2016**».

Demography Subcommittee of the Budget and Finance Committee, Saeima (**2014-2018**, seven parliamentarians);

Experts' cooperation platform “**Demography Affairs Center**”, initiated by Cabinet of ministers (established 05.04.**2016**, 10 members).
<http://likumi.lv/ta/id/281353-par-sadarbibas-platformu>

On **2020.07.02**. Saeima (Parliament) approved **National Development Plan of Latvia** for 2021-2027.

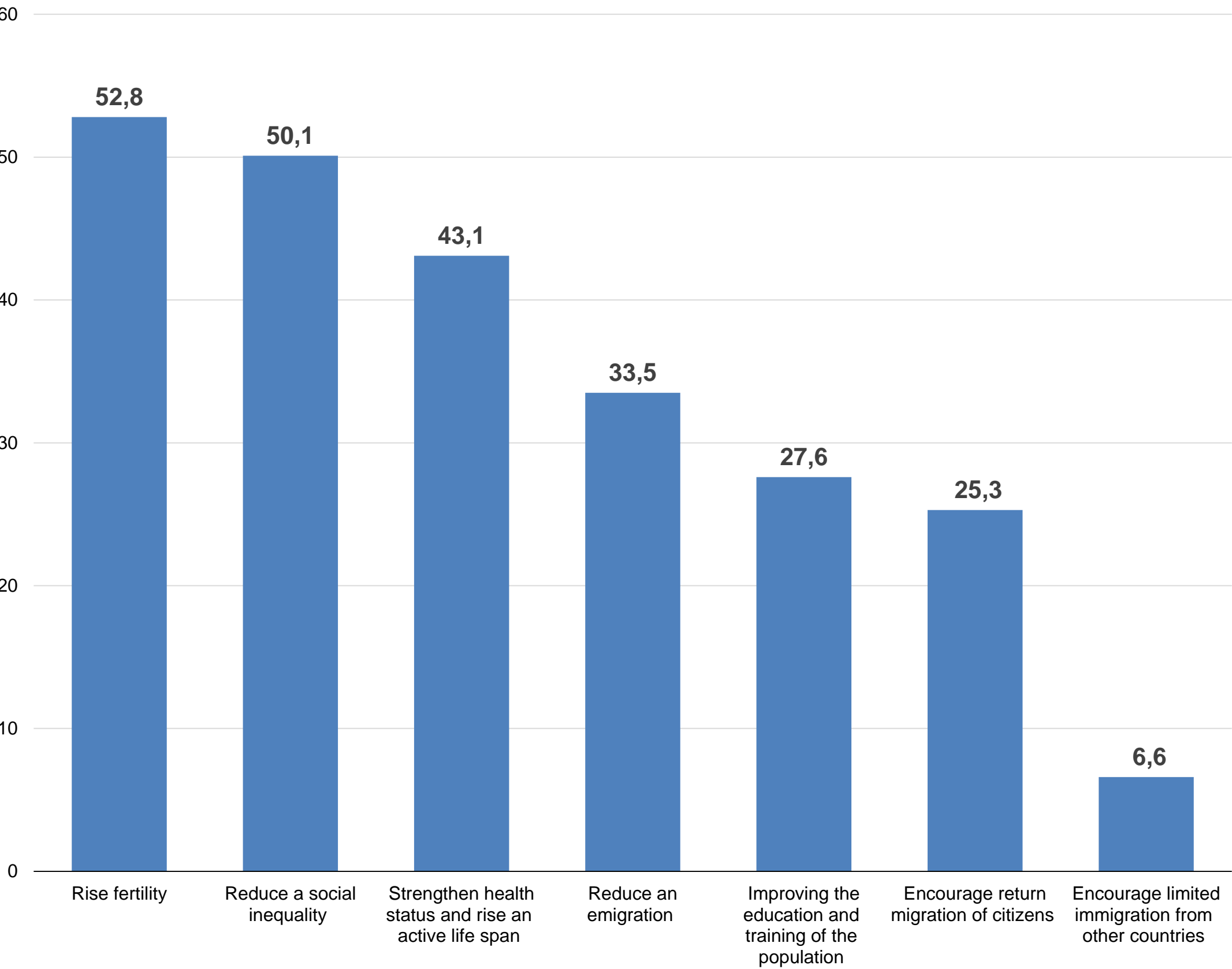
Relative frequency of answers provided by respondents to the survey question
«What would be the major contributors to be involved in solving forthcoming demographic problems in Latvia»
 (up to three answers are provided by each respondent, 2016, n=2049; 2021, n=1246)

Contributors to be involved in solving forthcoming demographic problems	2016	2021
Government	52.0	70.2 ↑
Self comes first	49.7	49.4
Family / Household	53.4	43.8 ↓
Saeima (Parliament)	22.0	32.1 ↑
Municipalities	30.9	30.9
Political parties	9.0	9.1
Attitude in working place	24.8	8.6 ↓
NGOs	7.1	2.9

Source: Migration and Population Policy Surveys realized in the frame of National Research Programmes

Proportion of answers (%) concerning **main policy actions to promote a demographic development in Latvia** (n=1246, up to three answers are provided by each respondent)

Source: Migration and Population Policy Survey – 2021.



National development plan: Latvia 2014 – 2020.
Accepted in 20 Dec. 2012 by Saeima , p.41



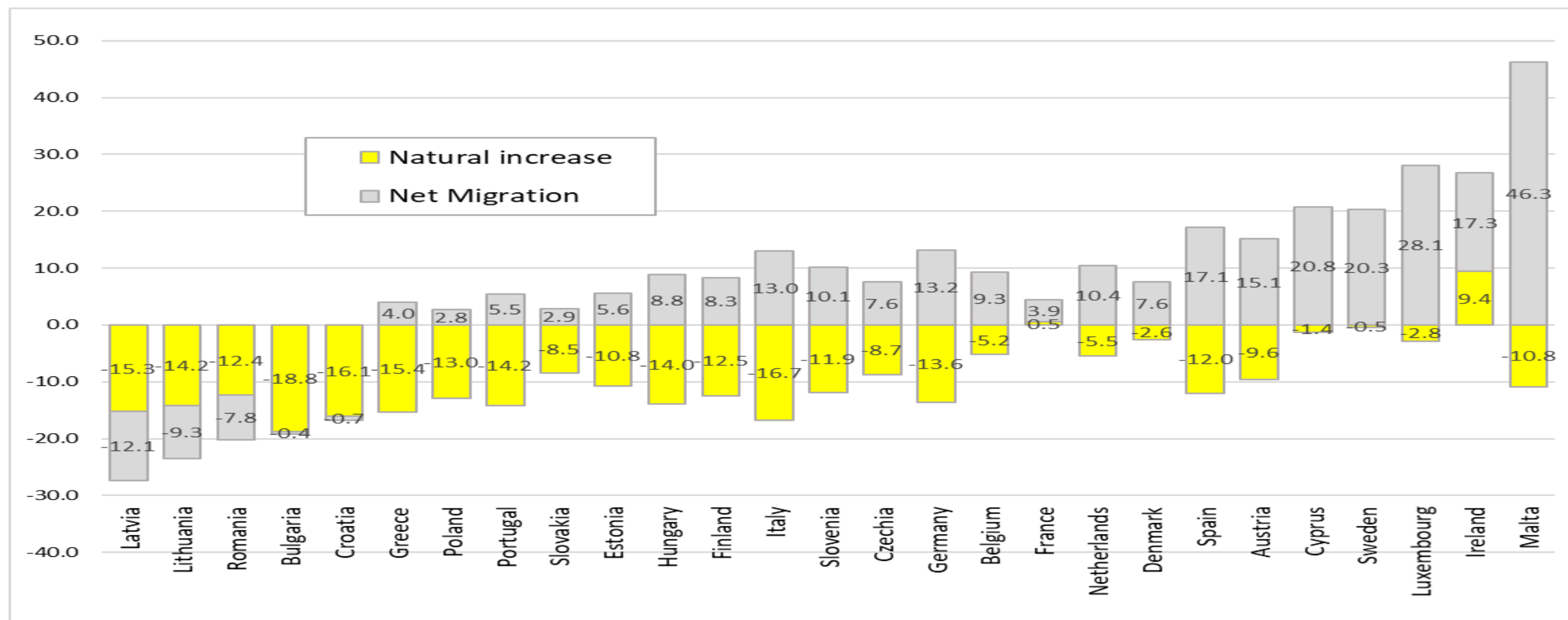
Purpose indicator - births

	2014	2017	2020
Purpose	23 000	27 000	28 000
Preferable scenario forecast	21 300	25 300	24 000
Factual	21 746	20 828	17 552

Selected results of projected number of population since 2011 (thous.)

Institution performed projection, base year	Projected population number, thous.	
	2020	2030
Eurostat, 2019	1907	1713
United Nations, 2018	1886	1720
OECD, 2018	1904	1735
Workd Bank, 2018	1893	1732
National Research programme EKOSOC, 2018	1901	1748
CERTUS, 2017	1920	1870
Group 93, Ministry of Environment Protection and Regional Development, 2013	1880	1635
Institute of Economics, Latvian Academy of Sciences, Active projection variant, migration included, 2011	1821	1637
Bank of Latvia (A.Melihov), 2011	1930	1890

Sources: Europop2019 population projections. <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/population-demography/population-projections/database> ; World Population Prospects 2019. Volume I: Comprehensive Tables. United Nations, New York, 2019, p. 31.; https://population.un.org/wpp/Publications/Files/WPP2019_Volume-I_Comprehensive-Tables.pdf ; World Bank. Population estimates and projections. <https://databank.worldbank.org/source/population-estimates-and-projections> ; Tautas ataudze Latvijā. 2019., p. 278; Latvijas demogrāfiskais portrets šodien ...un rīt. Rīga: Domnīca Certus. 2017., p. 4; http://certusdomnica.lv/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Certus_LatvijasDemografiskaisPortrets_2017_LV-1.pdf ; Demogrāfisko izmaiņu raksturojums un prognozes. Rīga: VARAM, 2014., p. 42. http://ilgtspejigaattistiba.saeima.lv/attachments/article/702/Petijums_1%20starpatskaite.pdf ; Demogrāfiskās prognozes Rīgā un Pierīgā. Rīga: LZA EI, 2012., 33 p. https://sus.lv/sites/default/files/media/faili/demografiskas_prognozes_riga_un_pieriga_rd_lza_2012.pdf ; Aleksejs Melihovs. Latvijas iedzīvotāju dabisko pārmaiņu prognozēšana. Rīga: Latvijas Banka, 3, 2014., 25 p. https://www.bank.lv/images/stories/pielikumi/publikacijas/petijumi/LV_3-2014-Melihovs_final.pdf

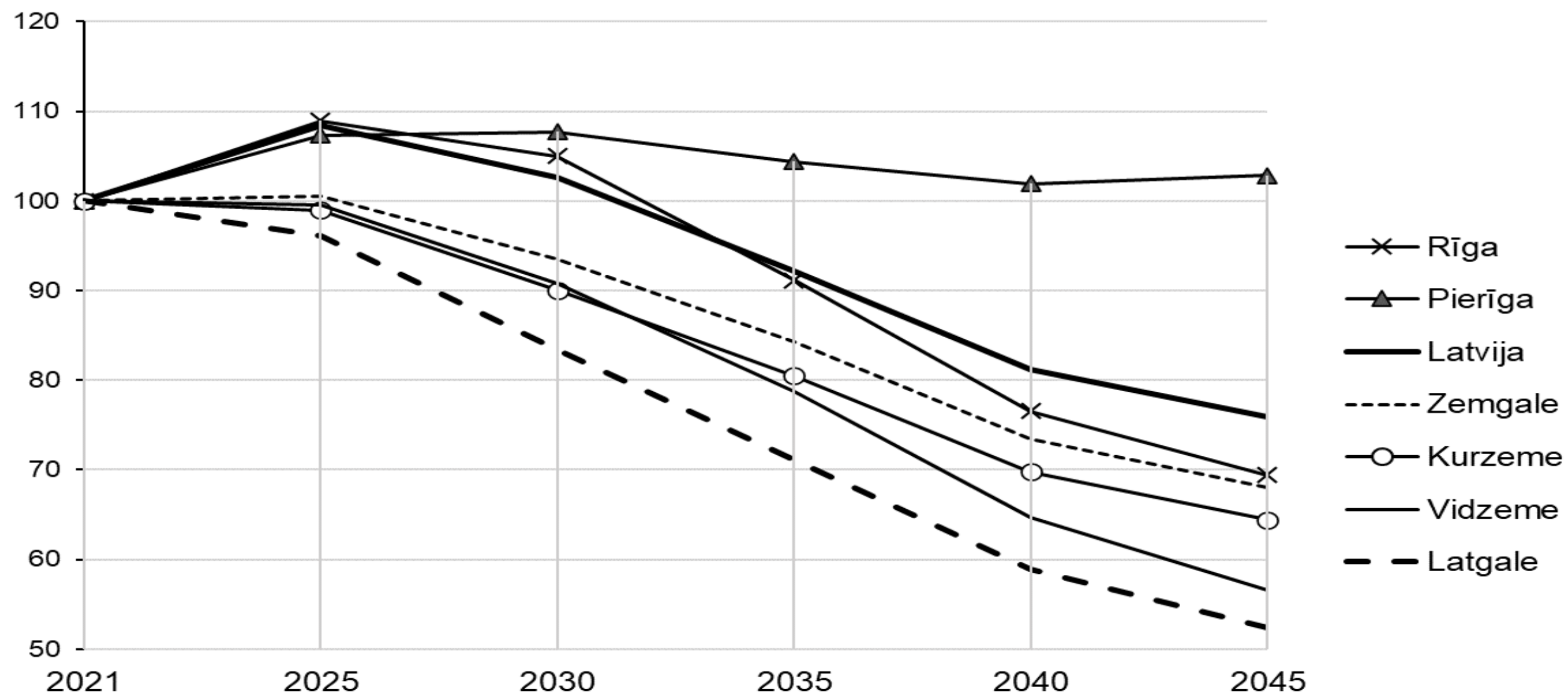


Projected population change in 2019-2050 by demographic factors, EU-27 (as % of the number at the beginning of 2019).

Source: Eurostat – EUROPOP2019 population projections (PROJ_19NP). Authors' calculations.

Projected numbers of population in 7 - 18 years of age by regions in Latvia, 2025-2045 (factual number of population in 2021 = 100%)

Source: Calculations by authors performed in the DemoMig project.



Respondents' perception concerning relationship between the population growth and further development of the national economy in Latvia (2016, n=2049; 2021, n=1246; one answer is provided by each respondent)

Answers to the question: «By your mind, growth of national economy in Latvia is possible only in case of following preconditions»	Frequency of answers	
	2016	2021
All answers, including following answers:	100,0	100,0
By stabilizing current number of population (1.9 milion)	27,1	29,6
Only by increasing number of population	19,9	26,1
No connection between population growth and further development of national economy	19,6	23,0
Also with smaller number of population	9,4	8,8
Difficult to answer and no answer	24,0	12,5

Conclusions

1. Despite the policy documents and plans consequent and efficient population policy actions to prevent depopulation have not succeeded. The Covid-19 pandemic accelerated depopulation. According to different medium term population projections, depopulation in Latvia most likely will continue.
2. More than ½ of respondents believe that growth of national economy might be ensured by increasing or stable number of population. Radical change in further demographic development could be expected only by joint efforts of politicians, scholars and positively oriented innovative generations.

Thank you for your attention

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