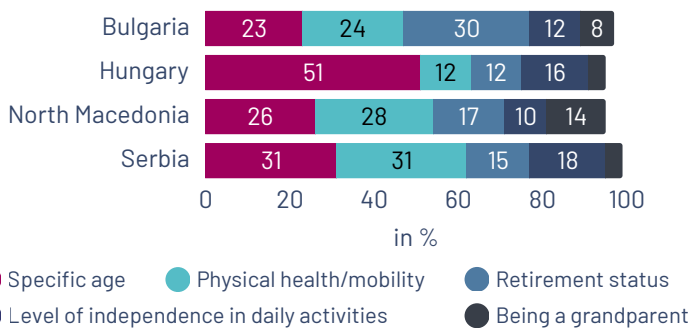


VOICES FROM THE REGION

Understanding Public Sentiment on Ageing in Bulgaria, Hungary, North Macedonia, and Serbia

Across all four countries, population ageing emerges as a widely shared concern, with over two-thirds of respondents expressing anxiety about its long-term effects. Immigration, as a solution to population decline, is met with skepticism and broadly negative public sentiment, suggesting limited support for this policy avenue. A strong majority agrees that ageing is closely linked to feelings of loneliness. Evaluations of state-provided social support are overwhelmingly critical, reflecting a pervasive lack of confidence in the state's ability to offer adequate social structures. Despite these concerns, there is notable consensus on the most effective policy responses: strengthening economic stability, securing social support for young couples, and offering direct financial assistance to families with children. This reflects a shared belief that improving prospects for younger generations is key to addressing demographic challenges, reducing youth out-migration, and encouraging the return of citizens living abroad.

DEFINITIONS OF OLD AGE



IMPACT OF EU MEMBERSHIP ON OLDER PEOPLE



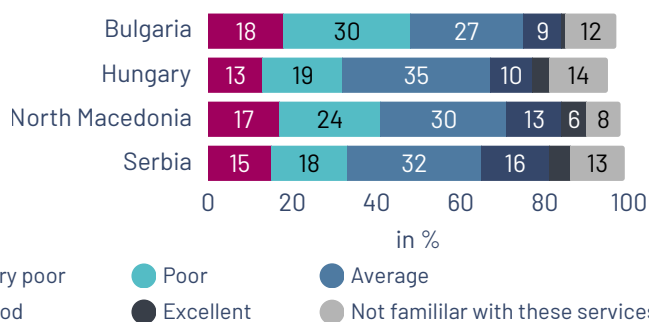
The percentages shown represent the highest share of responses in each country.

ANXIETY OF PERSONAL AGEING

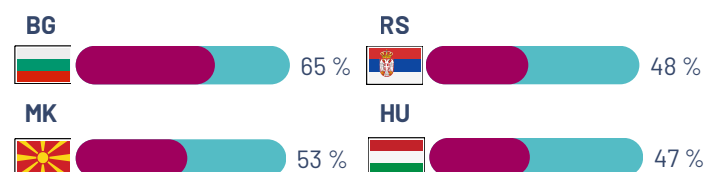


At 54%, Bulgaria shows the highest combined share of people who feel anxious about ageing – whether “all the time” or “occasionally,” while Hungary reports the lowest level, with only 19%.

GOVERNMENT SERVICES FOR OLDER PEOPLE



PENSION INCREASES



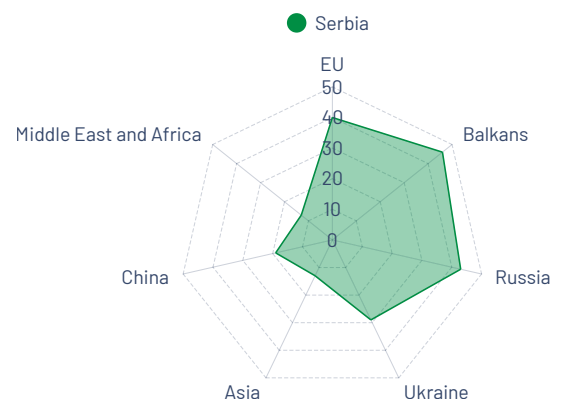
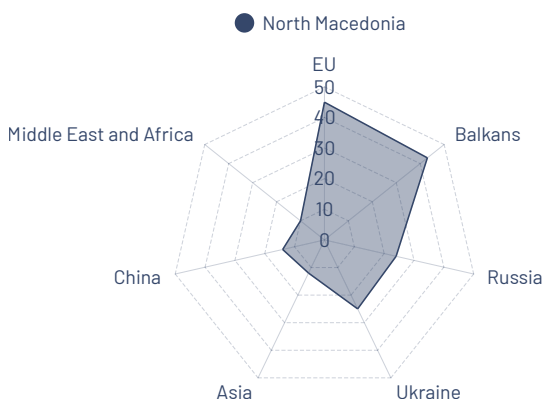
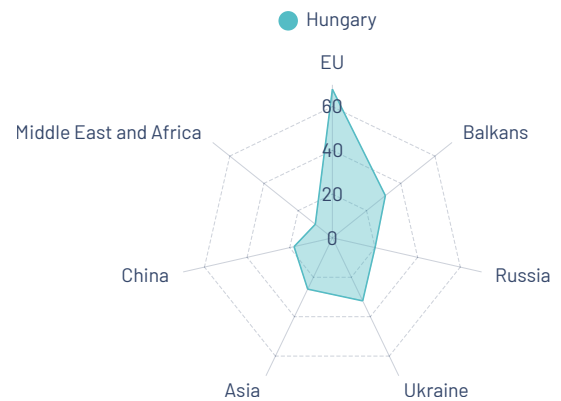
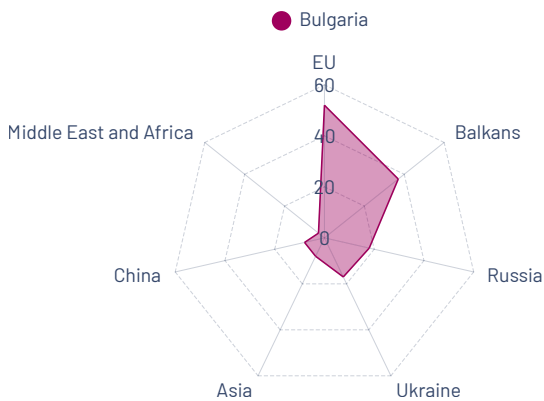
Support for pension increases is highest in Bulgaria (65%) and lowest in Hungary (47%).

IMMIGRATION, IMMIGRATION PREFERENCES, AND REPLACEMENT THEORIES

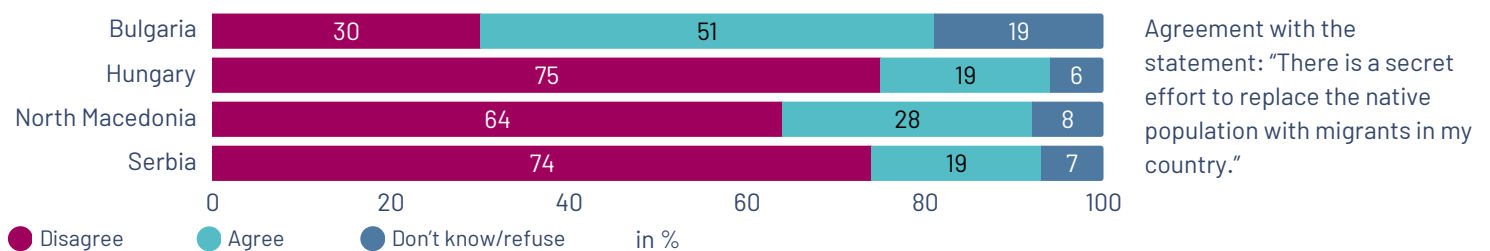
All four countries show strong resistance to immigration as a means of addressing the challenges of ageing populations, with Serbia standing out at 79%.



The radial charts illustrate immigration preferences (in %). Hungary stands out for its openness to diverse sources, whereas Serbia is exceptional in showing the strongest support for immigration from Russia.



Bulgaria stands out with the strongest belief in population-replacement conspiracy theories.



ETHNIC CONSIDERATIONS

In Bulgaria, Serbia, and North Macedonia, the **majority ethnic group** is viewed as **most affected** by population decline. The **Roma** are mentioned in all four countries but are widely seen as **least affected**, especially in Bulgaria and Hungary. In Serbia and North Macedonia, **Albanians** are likewise perceived as **less affected**.

Learn more: transforming-anxieties.ios-regensburg.de/