

Demographic Patterns and Return Intentions of Croatian Citizens in Germany

Tamara Bodor, PhD

University of Zagreb Faculty of Croatian Studies Borongajska cesta, Zagreb, Croatia

Monika Balija, PhD

Assistant Professor, Faculty of Croatian Studies Borongajska cesta, University of Zagreb, Croatia Associate

Marica Marinović Golubić, PhD

Professor, Faculty of Croatian Studies Borongajska cesta, University of Zagreb, Croatia

Abstract:

Multiple waves of emigration from Croatia to Germany and a long tradition of mobility have resulted in a sizeable Croatian population in the Federal Republic of Germany. According to the latest data of the German Federal Statistical Office (31 December 2024), 425,810 Croatian citizens reside in Germany, with almost 60% concentrated in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. Baden-Württemberg alone hosts 121,995 Croatian citizens, underscoring the relevance of targeted research on this community, particularly in light of Croatia's pronounced demographic decline. This study combines an analysis of official German statistical data with insights from semi-structured interviews to examine the key factors influencing Croatian citizens' intentions either to return to Croatia or to remain in Baden-Württemberg. Special emphasis is placed on generational differences in return intentions. Understanding these dynamics is essential for shaping effective return (re-migration) and immigration policies and for strengthening the relationship between Croatia and its diaspora.

Keywords:

Croatian migrants, Baden-Württemberg, return intentions, migration determinants, generational differences.