

Greater Donetsk (The Donetsk-Makiivka Conurbation), Ukraine

Context

Since its foundation in 1869 and until the early 1990s, the city of Donetsk and the surrounding urban areas have enjoyed a continuous growth in population, which was only briefly interrupted by the devastation of the Second World War. The rise of the Donetsk-Makiivka conurbation coincided, firstly, with the rapid industrialisation of the Russian Empire and then of Stalin's Soviet Union. It was driven by the development and expansion of coal, iron and steel industries, as well as of chemicals and heavy engineering. The collapse of the USSR in 1991 and the beginning of Ukraine's independent transformation have resulted in a severe and protracted economic depression, with a massive loss of regular employment, decline in living standards and an acute demographic crisis.

Population

The population of Donetsk and the Donetsk-Makiivka conurbation as a whole reached its highest-ever figure of 1.1 and 1.6 million respectively in 1992. Since Ukraine's independence, Greater Donetsk has not experienced a single year of positive change in population. Between 1992 and 2007, the city of Donetsk lost 11% of its population, whereas Greater Donetsk's population loss stood at 11.5%. Makiivka suffered from a longer period of shrinkage, which resulted in the total loss of population of over 13% between 1990 and 2007. Moreover, within the old city boundaries, between 1985 and 2007, Makiivka lost one-fourth of its population.

Year	Population		
	Donetsk	Makijivka (old boundary)	Greater Donetsk
1960	699,162	357,575	1,056,737
1965	809,000	399,000	1,208,000
1970	882,000	425,000	1,307,000
1975	950,000	431,505	1,381,505
1980	1,032,000	439,000	1,471,000
1985	1,073,000	451,000	1,524,000
1990	1,117,000	470,500 (427,000)	1,587,500
1992	1,121,400	467,000 (424,000)	1,588,400
1995	1,102,000	458,000 (416,000)	1,560,000
2000	1,016,194	431,000 (389,589)	1,447,194
2005	999,975	420,000 (375,992)	1,419,975
2007	997,000	408,000	1,405,000

Source: Mykhnenko and Turok (2007)

Although the demographic and migration data on the city level are subject to variation in terms of quality, coverage and availability, it appears that the main reason for the Greater Donetsk's population shrinkage is demographic, i.e. extremely low birth rates

accompanied by high death rates. However, the cities of Donetsk and Makiivka have enjoyed positive in-migration levels, both from domestic and international population movements in the case of Donetsk, and from domestic in-migration in the case of Makiivka. In terms of suburbanisation, both cities have historically been characterised by very generous boundaries that encompass all of their built-up areas and most immediate suburbs, with the total area of the Donetsk-Makiivka conurbation stretching to well over 800 square kilometres. Thus, the suburbanisation trends evident in Greater Donetsk tend not to upset to any significant degree the population figures presented in Table 1.

Economy

Throughout the 1990s, the Donetsk region and Ukraine as a whole suffered the most devastating case of economic depression of any post-communist transition country not affected by war. Between 1990 and 1998, industrial output in the Donetsk region declined by 57%, resulting in a massive and steady loss of regular full-time employment and income. By 2006, the Donetsk region lost 50% of its salaried employment and over 40% of all industrial jobs.

Notwithstanding the rapid wave of de-industrialisation, the economies of Donetsk and, especially, Makiivka continue to be based around major heavy industries. Even after a series of mine closures in the 1990s and early 2000s, there are still well over 40 coal pits operating within the city limits of Greater Donetsk. A number of major integrated coking, iron-smelting, and steel-making plants make the Donetsk- Makiivka conurbation one of the largest metallurgical centres of Europe. Coke by-products are the basis of a chemical industry producing plastics. There are several heavy-engineering works, which produce mining and transport equipment. Consumer goods and light industries have also survived the post-communist depression. Since 1999 the economy of Greater Donetsk and the region as a whole has been experiencing a vivid revival. The labour force survey-based unemployment rate in the region declined from its peak of 10.3% in 1999 to 5.7% in 2006. Registered unemployment rate in 2006 was 0.6% in the city of Donetsk and 1.6% in Makiivka. Estimated ILO unemployment rates in both cities were 1.8% and 5.4% respectively.

Consequences

The population shrinkage was accompanied by a severe economic depression in the 1990s. As late as 2007, the overall level of economic activity has not yet recovered to its 1990 level. Even after almost a decade of revival, the area remains a lower-middle income economy. Donetsk region's gross domestic product per capita stands at only €2,000. In August 2007, the average monthly wage in the Donetsk region was €230. The protracted neglect and lack of public investment into housing, heating, transport, and environmental protection infrastructure has resulted in the degradation of urban landscape (outside the city centres) and natural environment, and the overall retrogression of the urban quality of life. Combined with seriously under-financed healthcare and educational systems, the negative consequences of economic transition only exacerbate the demographic crisis faced by Greater Donetsk and the Donbas.

In terms of housing, however, both cities of the conurbation have not yet seriously encountered the problem of vacant or abandoned buildings, as in the Soviet period

residential housing was in shortage supply. Hence, even with the decline in the size and number of households in Greater Donetsk, there still exists some lack of affordable, social housing.

Political and planning responses

On the private side of local responses, there have been some major renovations and office-space expansion in central business districts of Donetsk and Makiivka, all of which were business-owned and -led. Financially, Donetsk and Makiivka city councils have been able to allocate only meagre resources to the renovation of existing housing stock and the maintenance of urban infrastructure. There has not been any consistent strategy in terms of town planning response: neither city has managed to succeed in finalising its new master plan of urban development, whereas the old ones are dated 1970. With a vast number of low-income and insolvent households defaulting on their council tax payments, electricity and heating bills, and municipal charges, the local authorities of Greater Donetsk appear to be fully immersed into the management of debts and day-to-day running and maintaining the municipal economy and its under-funded services. There is much scope for a strategic town planning initiative.