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Steering Committee of the International Monitoring Operation on the Population and Housing Censuses in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Tenth Assessment Report

28-31 May 2013

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Introduction and Background

1. A Population and Housing Census shall take place in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) in accordance with the Law on the Census of the Population, Households and Dwellings in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2013 as adopted by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina on 3 February 2012. The Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina has invited the European Commission to organise the international monitoring of the Census. Therefore, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and the Council of Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina signed on 18 April 2012 a Memorandum of Understanding to agree upon the following:

- The general objective of the International Monitoring Operation (IMO) of the Population and Housing Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina is to monitor the compliance of the whole Census exercise, from the preparation to the data dissemination, with:
- International standards on population and housing censuses as defined by UNECE and Eurostat, and as adopted by the Conference of European Statisticians as Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing;
- Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 on population and housing censuses, and its implementing measures;
- The Fundamental Principles of Official Statistics, adopted by the UN Statistical Commission, as well as the European Statistics Code of Practice, promulgated by the European Commission;
- Standards on data protection and confidentiality, as provided for in the Convention for the Protection of Individuals with regard to Automatic Processing of Personal Data of the Council of Europe, and the relevant European Union regulations in force.

2. The Operation will be carried out by a Committee of International Organisations, the Management Group (IMO MG) assisted by a Senior Census Expert, experts in population censuses, one or more experts in information technology and persons monitoring the census enumeration in the field.

3. The Senior Census Expert, the Census Experts and the IT Experts will assess the compliance of the Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina with the requirements listed in the Memorandum of Understanding, but they will not provide technical assistance.

4. Under the guidance of the Committee and the Senior Census Expert, the Census Experts shall:

- Examine the technical preparation of the Census including the pilot Census and post-enumeration survey, in particular the drafting of questionnaires and manuals;
- Monitor the collection, processing and dissemination of Census data, verifying the accordance with the requirements defined above;
- Control the fair and proper computation at all levels and whether the confidential nature of the individual data is fully guaranteed;
- Investigate any other matter with relevance for the Census.

5. The Management Group has designated Mr. Jean-Michel Durr as Senior Census Ex-

pert and Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Meryem Demirci, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska, and Mr. Guido Pieraccini as experts in population censuses. The Senior Census Expert and the Experts in population censuses form the IMO Steering Committee (IMO SC) of international experts.

6. The first mission of the IMO SC was conducted from 23 to 26 April 2012. The objective of this mission was to assess the preparations for the population and housing census in their main components, including the preparation of the pilot census. The report of the SC was sent by the Senior Census Manager on May 12 to the IMO MG.

7. The second mission was conducted from 26 to 29 of June 2012. The objective of this mission was to assess the progress made since the first mission in preparations for the population and housing census, including the preparation of the pilot census.

8. The third mission took place on 17 and 18 of September 2012 and was conducted by two members of the SC, namely, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr and Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska. The objective of the mission was to assess the implementation of recommendations made in previous reports and to assess the preparation of the pilot census, planned for October 15-29.

9. The fourth mission took place between 10 and 29 of October 2012 and was conducted successively by the members of the SC (5 days each, except the senior expert from 10 to 19 of October). The objective of the mission was to observe the conduct of the pilot census in the field. In addition, a team of four observers, composed of Lidija Naumovska, Gabor Rosza, Jean-Paul Sardon and Per Schöning was present during the whole period of the pilot census. Each of them covered several municipalities, in order to observe the pilot census field operations in all the 60 enumeration areas (EAs) sampled in the pilot.

10. The fifth mission took place from 19 to 21 of November 2012 (3 days) and was conducted by one member of the SC, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska. The objective of the mission was to observe the conduct of the Post enumeration survey (PES) of the Pilot census in the field. The expert covered all 6 EAs (in 6 municipalities) sampled in PES sample in order to observe the PES field operations.

11. The sixth mission took place from 10 to 13 of December 2012 and was conducted by four members of the SC: Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska and Mr. Guido Pieraccini. The objective of the mission was to hear from the Statistical Institutions about the lessons learned from the Pilot Census and to assess whether the preparations are on level that could allow conducting a census in April 2013.

12. The seventh mission took place from 12 to 15 February 2013 and was conducted by one member of the SC, Mr. Roberto Bianchini. The objective of the mission was to assess the situation on the progress of preparation and implementation of the IMO recommendations in the new context of the postponement of the census, with a

13. The eighth mission was conducted by the complete SC from 18 to 22 March 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess in detail progress made in the preparations with regard to the milestones given after the sixth mission in December 2012, when the SC recommended postpone the census to October 2013. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska from 22 to 25 April 2013. The objective of the mission was to

assess the progress made in the preparations with regard to the milestones given in the sixth mission and updated in previous missions.

14. The ninth mission was conducted by two members of the SC, Jean-Michel Durr and focus on the achievement of the deadlines regarding cartographic preparations. A second objective was to collect information and materials for a more detailed assessment on the progress of census preparatory activities to be made by all members of the SC in March 2013.

15. The tenth and present mission was conducted by the full SC from 28 to 31 May 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess whether the progress made in the preparations was sufficient to consider that the country was ready to conduct a census in October 2013.

16. The present assessment is based on the information reported at three meetings during the mission, and on some direct observations during the mission. As a consequence, the comments and recommendations presented below are based on the understanding of the experts, and may not reflect the real situation. This report was prepared by the members of the Steering Committee and was finalised by the Senior Census Expert.

17. The experts wish to express their gratitude to the directors and staff of the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BHAS), the Statistical Institutes of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska for their availability and collaboration, and to the staff of Council of Europe for the perfect organisation of the mission.

Executive Summary

18. The focus of the mission was to assess the situation on the progress of census preparation and implementation of the IMO recommendations in order to provide to the IMO Management Group with a formal recommendation if the BiH authorities should go ahead with the conduct of the census in October 2013 or to postpone it. Recommendations given in the previous SC reports were a guideline for the discussions, focusing on the problematic areas, and the annex 2 to the last SC report was taken as reference to measure the progress.

19. Important progress has been made in the preparations, and most of the remaining critical issues highlighted in previous reports were solved.

20. On the basis of the discussions held during the mission with the Statistical Institutions, the main findings are:

- a) The budget has been officially adopted and the EU direct grant signed. Decisions were taken and agreed regarding the sharing of expenses and the amount and allocation of funds between the Agency and Entities ;
- b) Coordination and cooperation among the three statistical institutions has considerably improved. A videoconference equipment allows regular meetings of the directors and working groups;
- c) Cartographic preparation is completed and maps under printing;
- d) On the question of the inter-entity boundary line, a working group composed of representatives of both entity geodetic institutions has come up with a delineation operational for the census;

- e) Questionnaires are finalised and being designed for printing. The translation in all languages needed remains to be completed;
- f) Instructions and manuals are finalised and in the step of final proofreading before translation and printing; form of the questionnaires;
- h) Call for tender for printing and logistics was launched end of April, and opening of bids is planned on 3 June;
- i) Procedures for selection of Municipal Census Commissions and field staff have been finalised and sent to the municipalities. In particular, estimated number of required field census staff according to ethnicity, by municipality were agreed by the 3 statistical institutions and corresponding tables are included in the document "Procedures" sent to the MCC;
- j) The Central Monitoring Information System is under development and should be operational by the end of July. However, it is recommended to carefully test the system and pay special attention to the training;
- k) The daily reporting system, using SMS, is still in the specification phase. It is recommended to consider alternative procedures that use traditional methods of reporting in case the system would not be ready on time;
- l) In the domain of Communication, little has been achieved, apart from the selection of the PR Agency. In spite of external critics and threats of boycott related for example to questions on ethnicity, no formal responses were given to explain the methodology and the international standards the census has to comply with. It is strongly recommended to respond systematically and uniformly to critics, to intensify presence and interaction with media, to set a new positive discourse, to employ a spokesperson with solid experience, and to immediately develop and implement plan for outreach activities towards civil society organisations, mayors, national politicians, and local religious, social and political leaders;
- m) No progress has been made in the preparation of the Post Enumeration Survey and the team needs urgent additional technical assistance;
- n) Preparations of data processing activities are in general progressing well. Decisions have to be taken shortly on the protection of individual data with personal information, and on the location of the servers for the replication of census data.

21. In conclusion, the SC observed significant improvements in the technical preparations of the census. Most of the critical milestones activities were completed, thanks to improved coordination and cooperation among the statistical institutions. Therefore, the Steering Committee considers that the Census can be reasonably taken in October 2013. Nevertheless, the SC urges the statistical institutions to fulfil all the remaining preparatory work in a timely and efficient manner. Considering the external critics, for example regarding the way ethnicity is recorded, the SC recommends develop strong communication and outreach activities and stresses the importance for the BiH authorities and political forces to create a favourable environment for the Census process.