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

First Assessment Report

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List of acronyms

BiH	Bosnia and Herzegovina
DB	District Brcko
EA	Enumeration area
FBiH	Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina
GIS	Geographic Information System
IMO	International Monitoring Operation
IMO MG	International Monitoring Operation, Management Group
IMO SC	International Monitoring Operation, Steering Committee
IT	Information Technology
MCC	Municipal Census Commission
PES	Post Enumeration Survey
RS	Republika Srpska
TA	Technical Assistance
TOR	Terms of Reference

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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

2. The first meeting of the Management Group has designated Mr. Jean-Michel Durr as Senior Census Expert and Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska, Ms. Meryem Demirci, Mr. Roberto Bianchini and Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde 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. One expert in information technology shall complement the team in a near future.

3. 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 team had meetings with the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Institute of Statistics of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Institute of Statistics of Republika Srpska. In addition, the team met representatives of the Geodetic administrations of both entities (Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Republika Srpska). The Senior Census Expert participated in the first meeting of the IMO Management Group and paid a visit to the Delegation of the European Union to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

4. The present assessment is based on the information reported during these meetings, and on some direct observations of 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 Senior Census Expert taking into consideration the individual report of each expert as well as his own observations.

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

Executive Summary

6. The census law adopted in February 2012 has given way to the preparation and implementation of the Population and Housing Census of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This will allow the country to conduct this operation 20 years after the previous one and to participate in the 2010 international round of population and housing censuses. This represents a considerable step for the country and its inhabitants.

7. The mission could assess the main points of the census preparations with the excellent collaboration of the three statistical institutions and the geodetic institutions.

8. As outcome of the mission, an assessment of each component of the census project was conducted and presented below. The main points of this assessment are the following:

- The preparation of the census is underway in the statistical and geodetic institutions in charge. However, the three statistical institutions stress their lack of experience in census taking, as few staff participated in the previous census in 1991. All three statistical institutions report shortage of qualified staff due to budget restrictions.
- The collaboration among institutions is satisfactory. Thematic inter-institution working groups are regularly meeting to define the methodology and prepare the operation.
- The law is quite comprehensive and should provide a sound ground for the preparation and the implementation of the census. However, some points have to be

clarified by specific instructions, such as the case of persons living abroad and the role of the census commissions in the control of enumeration.

- The budget should be sufficient for the operation, but is still in the process for adoption.
- The units and topics to be covered in the census as well as their definitions are in compliance with the International Recommendations as well as with the EU Regulation on Population and Housing Censuses.
- The method for enumeration (traditional door to door interviews) is suitable for the country.
- A clear concept and plan for training exists, but the preparation of the training materials has not started yet.
- A pilot census is planned for September. However, it is not planned to test the complete organisation, and in particular the role of local self-governments.
- The methodology and the implementation phases for the census mapping programme are correct and generally in line with international recommendations and European standards. However, serious concerns have to be expressed on the timetable for implementation, which seems not realistic with the deadline of 1st October 2012 stipulated in the law.
- An important issue is that the border between entities is not clearly defined on maps.
- A communication campaign is foreseen, but insufficient attention is paid to communication and outreach strategy and action plans. For example, there has been no survey or analysis on the public's perception and attitudes to the upcoming census.
- The selection municipal instructors and enumerators can experience difficulties in satisfying the "Ethnic structure" criteria prescribed in the Census Law, because of changes in the population structure in comparison with the situation in 1991.
- There is no Logistic group for Census in the statistical institutions.
- There are no clear strategies for monitoring fieldwork neither in terms of content nor in terms of practical organisation.
- Data capture will be delegated to a contracted company using optical reading technology. While this technology is well established for census data processing, it requires specialised skills. In that regard, the selected company does not seem to have large experience in census data capture.
- A Post Enumeration Survey will be conducted after the enumeration to assess the coverage and quality of the census. The PES should be tested in the pilot census, but there is not yet any specification available.

9. Considering the assessment made for each step of the census, detailed recommendations are proposed in the report. However, the experts wish to highlight some **recommendations** they consider of utmost importance for the success of the operation in the following areas:

- **Organisation:**

10. The line of responsibilities and line of reporting should be clearly defined and explain in the organisational manuals for each participant in the census activities.

- **Budget**

11. It is highly recommended to secure the multi-year census budget as soon as possible. This is a paramount milestone in the census project to monitor closely.

- **Questionnaires**

12. The formulation of the questions on ethnicity/nationality and religion should be revised according to international recommendations.

13. Questionnaires should be pre-tested before the pilot census to ensure that wording and order of questions are suitable in all languages.

- **Enumeration**

14. It is recommended to develop precise instructions regarding the enumeration of persons temporarily absent to avoid any inclusion of non-resident persons in the population.

15. Detailed manuals of instructions need to be prepared for each participant in the census activities. In drafting these manuals, it is important to tailor the language and layout to the category of census staff they target.

- **Pilot Census**

16. Pilot census should be designed to test all stages of census including the checking the quality of census maps, field organization, method for monitoring the field work, data processing (data capture, recognitions, coding, editing/imputations), evaluation of census results and dissemination plan and tools.

17. It is highly recommended that all census committees planned for the census be established and their roles tested in the pilot census. In particular, the role and involvement of local self-governments should be tested.

- **Cartography**

18. A group of experts on census mapping with representatives from the Agency, the Institutes for Statistics and Geodetic Administrations of both Entities, Municipalities and the BiH Ministry of Civil Affairs should start functioning as soon as possible to take decisions by mid-June 2012 on: census spatial units to be used, criteria to demarcate enumeration areas (EAs), demarcation of the border line for census purposes between entities.

19. It is recommended that the Institutes for Statistics and Geodetic Administrations of both entities produce a technical document by mid-June 2012 on the applied and planned quality control procedures and methods on census mapping, to ensure that each enumerator will be able to be orientated in the field and have an overview of the buildings/units to visit.

- **Communication**

20. Research must be carried out before 1 July 2012 through interviews, focus groups and possibly also a quantitative questionnaire based survey to identify the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes to the census and to the national statistical agency.

21. Based on this research, evidence based communication and outreach strategy must be developed with defined aims, objectives, target groups, methodology, tools, messages, and a plan with actions, timeline and budget. The communication and outreach strategy with detailed action plan and budget must be finalised by 1 September 2012.

- **Data Processing**

22. The Agency in collaboration with the entities should develop continuous monitoring system regarding all activities entrusted to the selected company to control the quality of work undertaken by the company. This system should be established early enough to test all phases through pilot census to finalize everything before the enumeration.