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

## Second Assessment Report

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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 UN- ECE 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 Management Group has designated Mr. Jean-Michel Durr as Senior Census Expert 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.

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 report of the SC was sent by the Senior Census Manager on May 12 to the IMO MG.

4. 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. 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 SC expert in cartographic issues had also field visits in Republika Srpska (RS), the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) and District Brčko (DB). In addition, the Senior Census Expert participated on July 2 in meetings conducted by Mr. Pieter Everaers, Director of Cooperation in the European Statistical System, International cooperation, resources of Eurostat with the Deputy Chair of the Council of Ministers, minister of finance, meetings with the EU Delegation, and meetings with the three Directors of statistical institutes.

5. 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 reports of each expert as well as his own observations.

6. 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

7. Since the first mission, the SC considers that little progress have been made in the preparation of the population and housing census. Only a small number of recommendations of the first report were implemented. Work of the working groups has been irregular or in- existent due to financial constraints. The main findings are as follows:

- **Organisation and management**

8. The most problematic issue concerns the coordination of the preparation and the decision process. Since the first mission, problems of coordination have arisen among the three statistical institutions. Among the three directors of statistical institutions there is no strict decision making process, agreed and respected by all. This jeopardizes active and efficient preparation. The SC considers that in such a big project as a population and housing census, it is impossible to reach a consensus on each and every item. Therefore, the SC recommends urgently to set up a clear decision making process, to ensure that decisions are taken, accepted and implemented. For example, a Census committee composed of the three directors of statistical institutions and chaired by the Director of the Agency could be established and meet regularly, to take decisions on a pre-defined agenda. Decisions of the committee should be formalised and disseminated to all members of working groups. The whole project should be conducted following strict project management methods.

- **Budget**

9. The budget for 2012 and 2013 has been approved. However, there is not yet a technical mechanism to create a unique account managed by the Agency as requested by the census law, and to delegate the funds to the entities. This prevents from preparing and carrying out the pilot census.

- **Questionnaires**

10. Questionnaires are not yet finalized: discussions are still on going on the formulation of several questions and the final layout. Formulations of questions on ethnicity and religion were not revised in accordance with the recommendation for strictly open questions. This recommendation is even more considered as important by the SC after hearing from representatives of the civil society. In addition, question on mother tongue should clearly allow for multiple answers, as recommended in the CES Recommendations.

11. Questionnaires have not yet been tested and are not translated as recommended. It is not planned to conduct a test before the pilot census. The SC reaffirms its recommendation to test the questionnaires before the pilot census.

- **Enumeration instructions**

12. Enumeration instructions are not finalised. No detailed list of manuals was prepared. Only two manuals are planned at present, one for methodology and one for field workers, whatever their role (enumerators, instructors, municipal commissions...). This is insufficient to ensure proper acquisition of their duties by all participants.

13. The responsibilities of each participant in enumeration fieldwork, including the municipal commissions are not clearly defined and explained in the organisational manuals.

- **Pilot Census**

14. The SC considers that the preparation of the pilot census is not on track. The SC came to the conclusion that the pilot census was actually understood by the statistical institutions more as a test of some components of the census rather than a complete rehearsal of the operation, including organisational dimension. On June 28, the three directors of statistical institutions decided to postpone the pilot census to 15 October, and to include municipalities, following the recommendations, but only via a contact person.

15. Selection of EAs for the pilot takes into consideration urban/rural, and entity boundary areas, but not specifically representation of ethnic groups. This may prevent from identifying some problems linked to enumeration of some ethnic groups.

- **Cartography**

16. The inter-institutional group of experts on census mapping was not created.

17. No timetable of mapping activities is available. However, the companies have started to work in FBiH and produce good quality maps. Mapping is expected to be completed by the end of the year in the Federation. In RS, the situation is more worrying as the Geodetic administration lacks resource to complete mapping, and maps already available show serious lack of update. In Brcko District preparatory activities for mapping are well advanced. However, decisions should be taken on codes to be used for the out-of-date addresses, and for the missing street names.

18. The main urgent issues to be solved in cartography are:

- Common definitions in the Entities of spatial units, codes, criteria to demarcate EAs, tools for quality control (minimum common requirements output oriented)
- Definition in each Entity of a realistic timetable of activities to produce census maps for the pilot census and general enumeration in line with the common definitions taken between Entities

- **Communication**

19. The study on the knowledge, perceptions and attitudes to the census and to the national statistical agency has not yet begun but it has been agreed to outsource a quantitative survey and focus groups to an external company paid out of the EUPHC 2 incidentals. The study is expected to be finalized by the end of July.

20. A non-key expert will be recruited to draft a strategy. However, there is not a common well developed understanding shared among the dissemination and communication staff in the Agency, the Institutes and the TA team of what covers outreach and communication. In particular, emphasis is put on tools for publicity rather than on strategy identifying objectives, target groups, methodology, tools, messages, timeline and the outreach activities. The strategy and action plan has been delayed and inevitably collides with summer holiday. It is therefore realistic to finalize it latest by November 2012.

21. The Agency and the Institutes have established a coordination group for communication, but the group has not met yet. It is strongly recommended to have regular meetings from now on.

22. The internal communication between the three institutions is not satisfying and needs to be strengthened if the census preparation shall succeed and finish within a reasonable time.

- **Data processing**

23. The consortium that won the tender for data capture is composed of Scytl (main), TIS and Ping (a local company). All the developing linked with the OCR/IMR process will be performed by TIS, which has considerable experience in census data capture. The data capture process should be in place in October to capture the questionnaires of the pilot census.

24. Data cleaning and editing is envisaged mainly manual. The SC considers that this option will delay the availability of the census results and may generate human biases in the correction of inconsistencies. The SC recommends consider automatic method for editing and imputation. Technical assistance may be required on this area.

- **Dissemination**

25. No update was given on these topics. The SC understands that top priority is not given to these questions but recommend to start planning the development of a strategy and implementations actions. In particular, users can be a strong support in the preparation of the census, and communication strategy should consider including them in target groups.

- **Evaluation of the results**

26. Since the first mission, the Agency requested technical assistance from TA to review the methodology and organisation of PES activities and plans to test the PES questionnaires and methodology in the pilot census. However, it is not yet decided to include the PES in the pilot census.

**27. In conclusion, The SC expresses strong reservations about the preparation of the population and housing census to meet the date of April 2013 for the enumeration and recommends immediate and appropriate measures to reverse the situation. Practical recommendations are provided in the course of the report in that regard.**