

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

*Fourth Assessment Report – Pilot Census*

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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 Expert and Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Meryem Demirci, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska, and Mr. Guido Pieraccini as experts in population cen-

suses. 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, Mr. 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 present assessment is based on the information reported by the observers and on direct observations of the members of the SC. 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 on the basis of the individual reports of the observers as well as their own observations. The report was finalised by the Senior Census Expert.

11. 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, the Geodetic institutions and the members of the Municipal Commissions for their availability and collaboration and to the staff of Council of Europe for the perfect organisation of the mission.

## **Executive Summary**

12. Despite late preparation, the pilot census could be conducted in a satisfactory way. All institutions and staff involved demonstrated high commitment to the operation. The population, even in the absence of large communication campaign, was supportive to the operation and participated actively. The media showed great interest in the pilot census and were eager to cover the operation, focusing on the technical and practical aspects for the population. This is very encouraging for the real census, which seems to be eagerly expected by the country.

13. However, the pilot census was conducted on a small number of enumeration areas (60), in 36 municipalities. Each municipality had only one EA, rarely two or three. This leads to be cautious about extrapolating the observation to a full-scale census. Re-

cruitment of hundreds of enumerators, logistics and supervision of fieldwork will be completely different in the real census and problems will arise that were not foreseen in the pilot census.

14. Beyond the general positive appreciation on the operation, the SC noted several issues that require to be treated before full-scale implementation. The main problems relate to:

- a. Questionnaires: there is a need to review the questionnaires in light of the lessons learned from the pilot census. In particular, formulation of some questions, as well as path and skips according to situation of age or activity, should be revised;
- b. Manuals of instructions: they should be revised accordingly, to provide more example and clarification for some difficult questions. Instructions should be presented following the timeline of activities;
- c. Clear instructions have to be given regarding people living abroad. The specific operation provided by the Census Law should be developed, tested, and implemented at the same time of the enumeration in the country to avoid duplicates. In case people living abroad would be enumerated with the P1 form, only the first questions should be asked but not the complete questionnaire;
- d. Training materials should be improved in a more educational way and to adapt them to the target public. Guidelines for trainers should be developed;
- e. Logistics has to be improved. If the principles are good, such as the system of boxes and barcode, the operational implementation shall be improved and tested before enumeration;
- f. Cartography is progressing considerably. However, the numbering of buildings on the maps could be improved in order to have unique ID codes for each address of buildings. Prior to the enumeration, maps should be updated and new buildings listed to better estimate the number of households to enumerate and take decision of splitting in two EAs if needed.
- g. Communication campaign is to develop, in light of the lessons learned. Communication messages should be uniform across the country to avoid discrepancies.
- h. The system for monitoring the enumeration should be developed and tested before the census. This system should state clearly the roles of census actors and should be explicitly described in the manuals.

15. In addition, the difficulties faced by the three statistical institutions to cooperate demonstrated their negative impact during the operation, leading to delays or misunderstanding of instructions. In the field, municipal commissions and the population consider statistical institutions as a whole and expect smooth collaboration among them to make their task easier. It is urgent that the three institutions agree on what has to be decided in common, what can be decided by the Agency for the whole country, and what can be decided at the entity level. Reasonable consideration of the specificities of each

entity should be taken in order to make the operation easier while preserving strictly identical statistical methodology.

16. It was noted during the pilot census and in media articles that some groups were encouraging the population to declare their ethnicity, religion or even mother tongue in a certain way. This confirms how those questions are sensitive and bear risks to jeopardize the census. This has to be closely monitored before the census and actions taken to not transform the census into a political operation.

**17. In conclusion, the SC considers that the pilot census was conducted successfully, but still expresses reservations about the preparation of the population and housing census. The way the statistical institutions will be able to take quick decisions from the analysis of the pilot census and implement on time technical improvements will be decisive in determining whether meet the objective of April 2013 can be met. In particular, the SC considers as a major condition that by the beginning of December 2012, questionnaires are revised according to its recommendations, and a detailed plan for census logistics is prepared.**