

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

Ninth Assessment Report

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Jean-Michel DURR, Senior expert, SC Team Leader

Katerina KOSTADINOVA-DASKALOVSKA,

Expert

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. Ka-

terina 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, 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 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 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.

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 prepara-

tions with regard to the milestones given after the sixth mission in December 2012, when the SC recommended to postpone the census to October 2013.

14. The ninth and present mission was conducted by two members of the SC, Jean-Michel Durr and 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.

15. The present assessment is based on the information reported during mission 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 two members of the Steering Committee who conducted the mission and was finalised by the Senior Census Expert.

16. 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

17. The focus of the mission was to assess the situation on the progress of census preparation and implementation of the IMO recommendations. 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.

18. Important progress has been made in the preparations, thanks to decisions taken on critical issues noted in the previous report as likely to prevent the conduct the census in October 2013. However, some critical issues remain unsolved, and external pressure seems growing on statistical institutions to influence the statistical process, which represents a serious concern.

19. 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. However, the financial plan concerns only expenditures, and no decisions were taken regarding the sharing of expenses, especially for expenses that cannot be supported entirely by Agency;
- b) The Council of Ministers took the decision to maintain the formulation used in the pilot census for sensitive questions and to include a question on entity citizenship. Questions 24-26: Ethnicity/nationality, Religion and Mother tongue shall be semi-open type of questions, and the enumerator shall not read the modalities to the respondent. These decisions allow finalizing the questionnaire and thus all census material, including manuals and training documents;
- c) The Council of Ministers also decided that codebooks shall be drafted after the enumeration, and the unified database shall contain records of all the answers related to ethnicity, religion and mother tongue;
- d) The RS census law was amended and the provision regarding possibility for MCC to proceed to changes has been removed;

- e) Coordination and cooperation among statistical institutions is still problematic, and there is still no official decision-making procedure. However, coordination is considered as improving by the 2 entity statistical institutions;
- f) Preparations for cartographic work have significantly progressed and are finalised in FBiH and District Brcko. In the RS, the Geodetic Institution completed the preparatory cartographic work using orthophotos on 90 per cent of the territory and 10 per cent using satellite images with a precision of 1 meter. Cartographic work is expected to be completed by mid-May.
- g) On the question of the entity boundary line, a working group composed of representatives of both entity geodetic institutions is working on the basis of preliminary work conducted in FBiH and should come to a delineation operational for the census;
- h) Call for tender for printing and logistics was launched end of April, and opening of bids is planned on 3 June;
- i) In the domain of Communication, nothing has progressed, apart from the selection of the PR Agency. It is strongly recommended to start outreach activities as soon as possible;
- j) Preparations of data processing activities are in general progressing well, and recommendations made in previous reports to clearly separate steps of data capture, coding and editing were taken into consideration. Decisions remain to be taken shortly on the access to individual data with personal information, and on the location of the servers for the replication of census data.

20. In conclusion, the SC observed significant improvements in the technical preparations of the census, thanks to decisions finally taken on critical issues such as the financial plan and the questionnaire. However, little time remains to finalize the materials and have them available in the field, and statistical institutions are urged to expedite preparations. In addition, external pressures are observed to interfere with the statistical process, for example regarding the way ethnicity is recorded. Such pressures may jeopardize the correct conduct of the census. These pressures highlight, even more, the crucial need to start developing strong communication and outreach activities.