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

## Twelfth Assessment Report

3-6 September 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 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.

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 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 preparations 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 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 tenth 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 eleventh mission was conducted by three members of the SC, Mr. Jean-Michel Durr, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 16 to 19 July 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess whether the preparations were still on track after the positive assessment of the 10th mission to conduct a census in October 2013. A special focus was put on the preparation of data processing.

17. The twelfth and present mission was conducted by four members of the SC, Mr. Roberto Bianchini, Mr. Bent Noerby Bonde, Ms. Katerina Kostadinova-Daskalovska and Mr. Guido Pieraccini from 3 to 6 September 2013. The objective of the mission was to assess the state of play regarding to forthcoming census field activities (including PES) and data processing activities following the field activities as well as the overall census preparations in accordance to the Census milestones and SC recommendations and advices given through the previous missions and SC reports.

18. The present assessment is based on the information reported at the 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.

19. 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**

20. The objective of the mission was to assess the state of play regarding forthcoming census field activities (including PES) and data processing activities as well as the overall census preparations in accordance to the Census milestones and SC recommendations and advices given through the previous missions and SC reports.

21. The SC on its 12th Mission has noted that the census preparation is well on track. Important progress has been made in the preparations. The planned census activities are performed, some with a certain delay. So far the delays did not jeopardise the beginning of the enumeration scheduled for 1<sup>st</sup> of October. However, there are issues that need to be resolved in time before the start of the enumeration.

22. The mechanism of decision taking has to be further improved between the three Statistical Institutes, but it remains a slow process. On the contrary, it is urgent to have in place a procedure for quick decision taking in relation to methodological and managerial issues that may arise during the enumeration. This is also important in order to ensure that similar situations will be faced in the same way in the overall territory of BiH.

23. All Census Commissions for the Units of Local Government (MCC) are established. In this stage, it is essential that the governments of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (including cantonal authorities) and of Republika Srpska and their ministries of Local Government to strongly support the statistical institutions legally responsible for organisation and conducting the census. In that regard, the entity governments should call for support from all local governments and their agencies and ask them to perform their obligations prescribed in the Census Law timely, seriously and with due responsibility, which will provide the necessary preconditions for a timely and efficient conduct of all census operations.

24. The selection and hiring of staff as municipal instructors and as enumerators is entering its final phase. However, a large work is ahead with preparation and signing of contracts, and ensuring that any defecting staff are substituted with eligible staff from the reserve lists. It is also recommended that all the census field staff have a signed contract before the commencement of operations.

25. In addition, the definitive and adopted payment procedures have to be in place before signing the contracts. It is recommended to adopt the procedures before the end of the training for the municipal instructors i.e. by 10 September. The procedures should cover all necessary elements including the rules for payment of the expenses to the census field staff in relation to attending the training, travel and telephone costs.

26. For the training of all census staff, 26 PowerPoint presentations accompanied with word documents with slide notes were prepared. A CD with the training presentations and word documents with the slide notes was prepared for all census staff supposed to deliver trainings. The training presentations are well prepared and the training Agenda and slide notes are guidance for the trainers on how to perform the training and what to say for each topic. So far the training for state and entity instructors was held and from 6-10 September the training for municipal instructors and members of the MCCs was held. Both were well organised.

27. For the training that was held during the SC mission (6-10 September), it is recommended to pay special attention to the municipal instructors for their role of checking and re- reporting the dynamic of the enumeration and coverage of the census units in the EAs of their responsibility. This should allowed timely reaction and taking necessary measures for completing the enumeration within the time period prescribed in the Census Law.

28. The preparation of the training for enumerators is in the very last phase. Not all municipalities have the necessary projectors and laptops available and some of them

cannot provide the equipment at all. In addition, it cannot be expected that all selected municipal census instructors have their private computers to use the CD with the training presentation and to prepare themselves for the training that they have to deliver. To overcome the shortage and not to jeopardize the training quality and the uniformity of the content, it is recommended that:

- The MCCs should rent the needed equipment at places where possible and urgently to provide information on how many training classes remain without laptops and projectors;
- The three institutions BHAS, RSIS and FOS should make common efforts to prepare, print and deliver:
  - slide notes) in order to enable them to prepare the training;
  - printed presentations to municipalities (or other possible tools) by 15 September 2013 for following the training by enumerators.

29. A register of spatial units was not established yet at BHAS (art. 20 state census law) because the Statistical Offices and/or Geodetic Administrations did not provide to the Agency for Statistics the necessary spatial data in electronic vector formats. It is recommended to reach an agreement between the three Statistical Institutions for the transmission of such data and the establishment of the register.

30. The procurement procedure to select the premises for the central census operation and data processing has been delayed and there is still no place that fulfills the security conditions for storage of census questionnaires and central data servers. A storage place should be selected by 15 September 2013. The selected place should fulfill the necessary conditions to store the census materials returning from the field, including security. A procedure for the delivery, checking and storing materials should be detailed, including the access to the materials and to the servers.

31. At this stage, the SC considers the finalization of the Daily Progress Report System as potentially problematic as: i) the system is developed and was recently installed in the Agency but is not yet tested; ii) the communication between the System and CMIS system is still under development iii) the alternative procedure for accessing, reviewing and modifying the daily progress data with CMIS is not yet developed and not yet available to the MI (even if their trainings is started on 6<sup>th</sup> September). The SC urges to finalize the system on time to be presented and tested during the training of the Enumerators.

32. A comprehensive strategy to ensure that there is no risk of disclosure or misuse of personal information and potentially sensitive information during and after data processing is still in the draft phase. Since the SC will take a final decision on the adequacy of this strategy when it becomes available and this decision may have a potential impact on many other phases, this document should be finalized at the latest by the third week of September.

33. The PR campaign has started very late and needs to be comprehensive and up to speed very rapidly.

34. An efficient mechanism for crisis communication shall be established to respond to any upcoming critical issues raised by the media.

35. There is a need to communicate that participation in the census does not imply that any personal information is given to tax authorities.

36. In the remaining time before the enumeration period, the BHAS ensures that the diaspora is informed on how to fill the questionnaire available in the census website, and that the diaspora will not be enumerated as residents in BiH as they are residents in other countries. Furthermore, the diaspora is informed that they do not risk losing any rights to property, passports or any other things by not being in BiH during the census.

**37. In conclusion, SC believes that the conditions for carrying out a successful census can be fulfilled. It is however important to stress that should any of the above issues not be resolved before the beginning of the enumeration process it could jeopardize the quality of the census outcomes.**

**38. The SC therefore urges the statistical offices to pay particular attention to solve all of the remaining issues in time and the SC will continue monitoring the progress during its next missions.**