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**ALL-RUSSIA POPULATION CENSUS - 2002: STATISTICS, INFORMATION,
COMMUNICATIONS, PUBLIC RELATIONS**

Submitted by State Committee on Statistics, Russian Federation¹

The population census is the largest statistical operation carried out at regular intervals in the majority of countries of the world. The following is necessary for its successful implementation:

- A high level of confidence of the population in the authorities and state statistics.
- Overall reach of the census to the whole population.
- The readiness of statistical institutions to work directly with the population.

To complete these tasks during the preparation and carrying out of the population census, the following is required:

- Large-scale operations on informing the population about the purposes and tasks of the population census.
- Usage of special public relations tools to turn the public opinion and the media to the benefit of the population census.
- Readiness of statistical bodies to work continuously with the mass media during the period before the census starts.
- Preparation to process the results of the population census at a professional level and to bring them to the users of the statistical information.

One of the characteristic features of the modern population census is the active information work, especially during 2000. First of all, here in Russia, we have attentively studied the experience from the population census 2000 in the USA and exchanged experience with our colleagues in other countries, including the New Independent states.

In this report we shall focus on some conceptual and practical questions of activities aimed at informing and explaining during the preparation and implementation of the population census in Russia, which ended on 16 October, this year.

One of the features of the population census in 2002 was, first of all, the fact that it was the first population census in the new state. The previous population census was conducted in 1989 in the Soviet Union - a state with different frontiers, different political and economic system, and different mentality of the population. The population census of 2002 should demonstrate the qualitative changes, which have occurred in the past 12-13 years, showing the new structure of the economy and the society; the new political and social situation; new demographic tendencies, including a significant migration process in the last decade.

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In addition, new tendencies have surfaced during last year, which might cause some difficulties among the population, namely:

- The mistrust that has developed during the transition period amongst a significant part of the population towards the government institutes.
- The prevalence of considerable fear concerning the procedure and consequences of the population census (for example, usage of the population census results for fiscal purposes or by criminal units).

Therefore, the concept of ‘activities aimed at informing and explaining’ had a number of objectives, among which were to:

- Explain the purpose and role of the population census.
- Remove fears.
- Differentiate arguments of various social-demographic and professional groups in the population.
- Take into account the national (ethnic) aspects and features.

In particular, the following arguments were used during the preparation of the population census:

- The population census is a global event, which is part of Russia’s obligations according to international standards.
- Under new historical conditions, the population census is a factor of national consolidation in Russia; the test for confidence towards the state institutions.
- Participation in the population census is stipulated in the Federal law, which was especially developed and accepted by the State Duma in 2001 as a social responsibility of citizens in society and state.
- The population census is not linked to taxing authority, special services (the analogue of the American slogan "No FBI, no CIA etc.").
- The state guarantees the confidentiality of the information and the protection of citizens against the criminal factor.
- The population census is a unique possibility to realize the constitutional right of declaring to which ethnic group you belong.

The concept of ‘activities aimed at informing and explaining’ was implemented in one and a half year by Goskomstat Russia, its Press service and ZAO "KROS" (the Company of Development of Public Relations), which won the tender competition to obtain a contract of 8 million US dollars. It was the first time that Goskomstat uses outsource activity to conduct a census.

The information campaign consisted of the following strategies:

CREATION OF INFORMATION AND METHODOLOGICAL MATERIALS

In the period from March 2001 to September 2002, more than 100 scripts for interviews; 120 backgrounds for statements; about 100 letters and appeals to various ministries and departments; 375 articles and circulars; about 75 scripts for TV and radio programs; more than 50 press releases; 5 press-kits; and also 12 special scripts for games and quizzes were prepared. More than 20 methodical developments and guidelines have been prepared.

The total quantity of information materials prepared during the period since March 2001 is more than 800. There were more than 555 materials prepared under the responsibility of the mass media, about 100 under the responsibility of Goskomstat of Russia and territorial committees of state statistics, about 100 under the responsibility of officials and more than 60 for public persons, scientists and artists.

WORKING WITH MASS MEDIA

From the beginning of the launch of 'activities aimed at informing and explaining', there were more than 30 press conferences, briefings and other actions aimed at informing the public conducted in Moscow, with participation of Goskomstat of Russia's senior management, other ministries and the departments involved in organizing and implementing the population census. A group of journalists highlighting the issues of the population census was formed and continuous working contacts are supported with them. In September, the Press Centre "Population Census-2002" was opened.

The main emphasis in the work with central (nation-wide) mass media was on the initiation of information events and invitation of journalists to various actions, and also to address the work with correspondents. From April 2001 to the end of August 2002, there were more than 12 thousand information outputs registered in central and regional mass media. The monthly quantity of information outputs on the subject of the "Population Census-2002" reached several hundreds. In the framework of the special project "How Many of Us, Citizens?", weekly programs entirely devoted to the population census were organized on popular radio stations.

In the last month before the population census took place, work with national television became more active. Subject telecasts were prepared on various channels in the framework of the most popular programs.

Work with regional mass media is considered similar in importance, and in some cases (for example, print media) - even more important, than work with central mass media. It was possible to build contacts with more than 100 regional broadcasting companies in most regions of the Russian Federation, with 420 printed issues in the whole country, with more than 100 radio stations in 65 regions of the Russian Federation.

According to information gathered from monitoring, from the beginning of the 'informing and explaining' work, more than 6300 TV- programs in the Russian Federation highlighted the preparation for the population census. In addition, more than 550 messages were heard on regional radio, and more than 4500 articles on preparation for the population census were published in regional print media.

Based on information materials that were regularly sent by "KROS", the local statistical committees formed their own information packages, published brochures, reports etc. which were disseminated through regional, local, factory printed issues and other mass-media.

One more part of the 'informing and explaining' activities was the start of an interaction with, and the support from a positive information background in the branch and professional issues, in which over 200 items have been published, devoted to the population census and oriented at specific groups. The same applies to work with rural and regional newspapers (about 300 issues).

To encourage the journalists and keep their interest in the subject of the population census, a competition on the best coverage of preparation and implementation of the All-Russia population census of 2002, in print media, TV-channels and radio stations was organized in each federal district. Winners of the competition will be announced in November 2002. Within the framework of the 'informing and explaining' activities, contacts with credible Internet-resources was established.

WORK WITH FEDERAL AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT BODIES.

Work with federal and regional government bodies including deputies of parliament and governmental structures, also took place. In the framework of the special project "Children's Census", "Lessons of Census" with special programs for students in 2.-4., 5.-7., 8.-11. grades, was conducted in all schools. A business-game, "Children's Census", was also organised, which entailed a competition on the best

compilation of the census sheet, on the best essays on the population census and on the best counter, with souvenirs as rewards for the winners.

From the beginning of the project's implementation, a brochure for teachers was printed and disseminated, souvenirs were manufactured, and a special children's encyclopaedia was published.

The special project "Hot line of the All-Russia population census" allows any citizen to call for free a special number and to ask questions related to the population census.

After having summarized the results of the activity of the hot line, 100 thousand copies of a special brochure "All-Russia population census of 2002: questions and answers" were printed and disseminated.

Co-operation with municipal agencies: Contacts with the press-services of institutions of local government were established. The most intensive information exchange was ensured with the self-government institutions of the thirty largest Russian cities.

Within the framework of the special project "Russia - multinational country", contacts were established with the Azerbaijan, Armenian, Georgian, Ingush, Korean, Kurdish, Tatar, Ukrainian, Gipsy, Chechen, and other ethnic communities, diaspora, national/cultural autonomies. Two hundred and thirty thousand copies of special informational booklets about the population census in 15 languages were prepared and distributed.

It was possible to establish business relations with leading spiritual leaders of the country. "KROS" organized and conducted some meetings and seminars, during which main problems of carrying out the population census and involvement of representatives of national and religious associations were considered.

A special project called "Youth", implemented from April to October 2002 in seven large cities of each federal district of Russia, included a number of mass propaganda and entertaining actions for the youth, such as popular performers and film actors handing out souvenirs symbolising the population census.

The official Internet site "Population Census-2002" www.perepis2002.ru was launched in October 2001, one year prior to the beginning of the population census. During the existence of the project on the web, the site was visited by more than 210.000 individuals. In summary, about 460.000 pages of a site were read. The daily average number of users was nearly 1200 persons.

Within the framework of the 'activities aimed at informing and explaining', several sorts of leaflets were printed and sent to locales: for lonely pensioners and invalids (circulation of 100 thousand copies), a general leaflet of the "last day" (six million), a leaflet for the high income citizens, distributed to the residence (70 thousand), for refugees and the forced immigrants (40 thousand), for "problem districts" in cities (three millions), booklets for high remunerative citizens for distribution in air planes (ten thousand), and also posters of the previous population censuses for organization of mobile exhibitions in each federal district. Letters to 5000 leaders of a public opinion in locales were prepared for direct address dispatch. A program of partnership with a number of large corporations under the motto "Population Census - area of the social responsibility of the Russian business" was carried out, which has allowed for the intensification of the information work.

THE ADVERTISEMENT CAMPAIGN.

The advertisement campaign on the population census was carried out by an advertising agency MUVI and the "VIDEO INTERNATIONAL" company. The advertisement campaign was divided into three phases. Advertising on the central television (tv-channels ORT, RTR, NTV, Ren-TV, MTV) was divided into periods: from January 15 to March 10, from May 13 to July 7 and from September 1 to

October 16, 2002. Advertising on the regional television was from June 17 to July 7; the second part was from September 2 to October 15. Advertising on the central radio ("Mayak" and "Radio Russia") started on August 19 and will be prolonged to October 16. At the final stage of the 'informing and explaining' work, from middle of September to October 16, more than 1000 outdoor advertisement boards were set up in 59 of the largest cities in the country.

SOCIOLOGICAL RESEARCH AND THE MONITORING OF MASS MEDIA.

Goskomstat actively cooperated with the Fund "Social opinion" which conducted sociological researches of the knowledge of the Russians about the forthcoming population census. Depending on results from the polls, the 'informing and explaining' work was adjusted as appropriate, including to selected "problem" groups of the population. Sociological researches confirm efficiency of the 'informing and explaining' work of the "Population census-2002". Based on the data from polls, the number of interrogated people, intending to take part in the population census, increased for the year by more than 10 percents.

In summarising, we can say;

- Information activity is a necessary part of a successful implementation of the population census.
- It is necessary to take public opinion into account during a particular period in the development of country.
- It is of great help to make use of other countries experience, creatively adjusting it to the conditions of the country.