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CENSUS PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

Methodological materials for the Population and Housing Census in Kosovo: Preparation and test

Submitted by Statistical Office of Kosovo-UNMIK and TA project "Support to Statistical System and Preparation on Census, Kosovo"

This meeting is organised jointly with Eurostat.
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<h4>Summary</h4>

<p>The Bureau of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES), at its meeting held in Washington, D.C. (United States) on 19-20 October 2006, approved the renewed terms of reference for the Steering Group on Population and Housing Censuses and the plan for future CES activities on population and housing censuses. The CES Bureau also agreed that the Steering Group would coordinate the work on the diverse types of meetings. The present paper was prepared for discussion at the Joint UNECE/Eurostat Meeting on Population and Housing Censuses in Astana (Kazakhstan), 4-6 June 2007. The paper provides substantive basis for the discussion in the session of the meeting dedicated to "Census planning and management".</p>
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I. BACKGROUND AND LOCAL INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

1. In Kosovo, the need for a census is perhaps greater than anywhere else. In fact, major developments that interested the country over the past years have not been tracked since Population Censuses were not taken after recent large movements of population (last Census was taken in 1981). More generally, all statistical information in Kosovo today is largely incomplete. There is a lack of basic data about population (total figure, structure and geographic distribution), employment, business and properties/land use - state and trends.

2. Events in recent years have greatly affected the geographical distribution of the population. Many have moved from rural areas to cities. Others have gone abroad, while many foreigners have settled in the country. There is also an important evolution in fertility, since parents these days on average have fewer children than before. The profound changes in the health system also have had effects on the age distribution. The outcome of the census will finally give the chance to answer to many important questions about these various issues. It will have an immediate effect on policies, but it will also provide material for further study in depth.

3. National Statistical Office of Kosovo (SOK) is the main governmental agency entrusted with responsibility for Kosovo's statistical activities, namely data collection, compilation and dissemination of fundamental statistics, provision of recommendations on statistical related matters, coordination with international statistical organizations. Regulation 2001/14 stipulated that SOK is the only agency that shall produce official statistics in Kosovo.

4. Ministries and other public agencies, NGOs, the private sector, media and the general public are eagerly demanding more data about state and trends of society and economy. There is however a strong motivation to apply new methods and systems and strong support for using international standards. SOK has in a short time established a new organization and made a good start in the work to fill the information gaps.

5. The issue of lack of basic population data comes up often on the national agenda, and discussions aimed at the design and implementation of a new Population and Housing Census in Kosovo have been underway for quite a while now, and considered a national priority. The implementation of the census is very important for the definition of social and economic goals and development plans, and goes for all interests, from the municipalities in urgent need for figures which should be the basis for planning and running of local services, all the way to the economists, who lack the denominator for calculations of per capita income and production. In addition, aside from giving an up-to-date and accurate picture of the demographic, economic and social reality of the country, the census will be an important long-term investment for the whole statistical system, in terms of both capacity and institutional building, on the one hand, as well as for creating the basis for a reliable system of current vital and population statistics and sample surveys, on the other.

6. Lately, based on civic registration, UNMIK¹ has created an administrative population register - including personal identification numbers - that presently serves as electoral register and as basis for identity cards; the register covers 1,268,000 inhabitants above 16 years of age: the census can be an important basis to check, update and complement that information.
7. The forthcoming census is thus aimed at addressing a number of crucial issues, from the setting of reliable time series of demographic and socio-economic basic data for national use all the way to scientific research. It will also enhance the capacity of SOK to implement all phases of the future population censuses and surveys, enabling the development of a master sampling frame and the basic infrastructure of the whole statistical system, in respect of recognized European and international recommendations and standards.
8. The next Census of Population, Households and Housing in Kosovo will be the first census carried out independently by the Statistical Office of Kosovo. The preceding censuses took place within the scope of former Yugoslavia: the methodology was prepared by the Federal Statistical Office, with statistical offices in individual republics applying unified methodology, and the responsibility for the organization of field enumeration and data processing was always the duty of statistical offices in individual republics.
9. In the framework of census preparatory work, a pilot test was taken by SOK from 31 October to 15 November 2005 (for an approximate number of 3,500 households and 19,000 individuals), the results of which were made public by SOK in January 2006.
10. The joint European Commission-Eurostat, UNECE, Council of Europe and United Nations Statistics Division mission put in place for assessing the situation of census preparations identified several areas still needing further testing. It was emphasized the necessity of SOK to carry out another pilot census. It was thus decided that a Pilot Census should be taken, to be held in October 2006, this time with the support of technical assistance² and fully in line with international standards and recommendations, that would mirror as much as possible the real situation expected for the full census.

¹ United Nations Mission in Kosovo. According to United Nations Resolution n.1244 of 1999, Kosovo has a provisional government and Parliament, which are run in the frame of UNMIK international protectorate.

² The kick-off- mission of the project "Support to the statistical system and preparation for the census - Kosovo" (an European Union funded project managed by European Agency for Reconstruction) took place on the 28 November 2005. The project is implemented by a Consortium, led by ISTAT, the Italian National Institute of Statistics, in partnership with INSTAT, the National Institute of Statistics of Albania and CIRPS – University of Rome “La Sapienza”.

II. PILOT CENSUS: ORGANIZATION AND PREPARATION OF METHODOLOGICAL MATERIALS

11. The Pilot census was taken in selected areas of Kosovo from 30 October until 14 November 2006, under the slogan “How Kosovo knows what Kosovo needs - REKOS³ 2007”.

12. The two stages non-random sample was composed by selecting the municipalities of Kamenicë/Kamenica, Pejë/Pec and Štrpce/Shtërpçë (10 per cent of the total number of municipalities) and eight enumeration areas (EAs) within each of them (four in urban areas and four in rural areas). The purpose was to obtain an approximate sample size of 2,000 households with an expected number of households per EA, going from 40 to 60 in rural areas and from 80 to 120 in urban areas. Both Municipalities and EAs were selected mainly on the basis of their ethnic internal composition, in order to ensure a relevant presence of minorities. In Kamenicë/Kamenica, 7 selected EAs were expected to be inhabited mainly by Albanian population and 1 EA by Albanians, Serbs and Roma. In Pejë/Pec Municipality, all of the 8 selected EAs were expected to be inhabited by Albanians, while in Štrpce/Shtërpçë, 2 EAs were estimated to be found with Albanian population and the remaining 6 EAs with Serbian households.

13. All the census materials (enumeration forms, auxiliary forms, manuals, maps, letter to the head of the household, etc.) were presented in details to supervisors, controllers and enumerators in two different phases: a two days training was given to supervisors and controllers and a three days one to enumerators (during enumerators' training supervisors and controllers were present as well). The training modules for enumerators were mainly focused on census concepts, tasks to be performed before the interview, recommendations concerning the way to perform the interview itself and tasks to be performed after the interview.

14. The training classes were attended by 31 enumerators, 7 controllers and 3 supervisors, and by representatives of the Census Municipal Commissions from the three selected municipalities and the timing of training activities was planned in order to take place as closer as possible to the beginning date of field-work.

15. The enumeration period was preceded by three days of enumerators field activity aimed at identifying on the ground and classifying all buildings existing in their respective assigned EA. A list of buildings was compiled to be used during the enumeration as a supporting tool to improve the coverage.

16. The pilot census took place completely only in 17 of the selected 24 EAs and partially in one mixed EA of Kamenicë/Kamenica where only Albanian households were enumerated. In fact, in Štrpce/Shtërpçë and Kamenicë/Kamenica, the selected and trained Serbian enumerators (in Štrpce/Shtërpçë) and Serbian and Roma enumerators (in Kamenicë/Kamenica) refused to take part in the data collection.

³ RE stays for Regjistrimi (Census in Albanian) and Ko for Kosovo.

17. Testing concepts and definitions, questions wording and design of all questionnaires and manuals was one of the main objectives of the 2006 Pilot census.

18. Different meetings with the PISG (Provisional Institutions of Self-Government), UNMIK and UNFPA representatives and with other stakeholders were organized in order to exchange views on various aspects related to the census preparatory work. All the materials were finally discussed and agreed with the experts of the International Monitoring Mission.

19. A considerable amount of discussion took place as to questionnaire content and wording and several versions before the one to be tested was finalized. Enumeration forms were designed on the basis of local needs and according to internationally agreed concepts, definitions and topics. On 18th October the Central Census Commission approved the proposed questionnaires, manuals and all the other materials to be used in the Pilot census.

20. A major change in comparison to local census tradition concerned the adoption of the "twelve months criterion" for the inclusion of individuals in the total usual resident population. The Administrative Directive comprising the definition of usual residents to be covered by the census was the outcome of a collaborative process between SOK, PISG, the Steering Committee of the International Monitoring Mission, EAR, the technical assistance Consortium and the UNMIK Office for Legal Affairs.

21. Furthermore, all of the *UNECE Recommendations for the 2010 Censuses of Population and Housing* core topics were included, according to the proposed definitions.

22. Data were collected by enumerators through paper questionnaires by face to face interviews. Two were the types of questionnaires tested during the pilot census: enumeration forms and auxiliary ones. Manuals for Enumerators, Controllers and Supervisors (in English, Albanian and Serbian languages) were tested as well.

22. Each question included in the questionnaire had to be tested from the point of view of (i) respondents reaction and quality of provided information answers; (ii) difficulties faced by interviewers; (iii) usefulness of every question with regard to data needs and planned tabulations. The aim was, of course, to determine the way of better fitting questionnaires and manuals to Kosovo peculiarities, while keeping them in line with international standards.

23. In addition, the design and efficiency of the additional set of forms used for reporting and monitoring fieldwork activities and for evaluating the pilot census was to be tested.

A. Enumeration forms (R1, R2, R3 and S1, prepared in English, Albanian and Serbian languages)

25. The first form to be filled in by enumerators was R1, the dwelling questionnaire used for collecting information on both buildings' characters and conventional dwellings' ones.

26. The R2 form was used as the household and housing questionnaire for each household usually resident in the dwelling, according to the international 12 months definition. This form was designed for collecting information on the household composition, on persons temporarily present in the dwelling but usually resident elsewhere, on the type of ownership of the dwelling, on telephone and internet connection availability and on the household's agricultural holdings.

27. Information on household's composition was recorded in List 1 (on the first page of R2), where each member of the household had to be listed with data on his/her sex, father's name, relationship to the reference person, family nucleus ordinal number and family status.
28. For each of them, an individual questionnaire (R3) was filled in after the completion of R2.
29. List 2, on the second page of R2, was designed for recording information on persons temporarily present on census day (but not living or not expecting to live in the dwelling for a period of at least 12 months). For each of them, information on names and surnames, sex, date of birth, place of usual residence and reason for temporary presence in the dwelling was recorded. Finally, the above-mentioned questions concerning the household as a unit of enumeration were included in the third page of R2 form.
30. A separate form, named S1 (supplementary table listing household members living abroad), was added in order to record former household members, previously usually resident in the dwelling, who had emigrated abroad. As requested by many local stakeholders, this form was added to actual enumeration forms with the aim to obtain some estimates concerning people emigrated from Kosovo. Moreover, it was also a tool for improving the enumeration and simplifying enumerators' duties. In fact, the supplementary table allowed enumerators to record every member of the household (considered in a broad sense) while actually enumerating as usually resident only those members fulfilling international criteria (i.e. those who have lived in the dwelling for at least 12 months or for less than 12 months, but with the intention of staying for at least 12 months). On the other hand, it is obvious that information on emigrants living abroad, collected by means of information asked to current usual residents, will not be exhaustive nor accurate.
31. After completion of R1 (dwelling form), R2 (household form) and - where applicable - S1, enumerators were instructed to fill in one R3 form (individual questionnaire) for each member of the household. The R3 form includes 43 questions, with several different paths of completion according to age and sex of respondents.
- B. Auxiliary forms (RS1, BL, DS1 prepared in English, Albanian and Serbian languages)
32. Auxiliary forms were designed in order to help SOK experts to have some fast preliminary figures in a short time (no more than 3 months) after the collection of the data from the field.
33. Form RS1 - RECORD AND SUMMARY FORM was used for making a quick evaluation of the total number of dwellings, households and persons that were covered in each EA. In addition this form helped the enumerator in checking the completeness of his/her work.
34. Form BL – BUILDINGS LIST was used for checking on the field the existence of buildings marked in the EA map, adding possible new buildings and classifying them by type.
35. Form DS1 - DAILY SUMMARY (used for facilitating daily reporting).

III. PILOT CENSUS: MAIN FINDINGS CONCERNING DATA QUALITY AND PROPOSALS FOR QUESTIONNAIRES AND MANUALS IMPROVEMENT

36. Before taking into account the main findings coming from the analysis of Pilot Census data, it should be recalled that, although the Municipalities of Pejë/Pec, Kamenicë/Kamenica and Štrpce/Shtërpçë had been chosen because of their mixed ethnic composition, conclusions that can be derived are essentially limited to the Albanian speaking population and, to a more limited extent, to the Bosnian ethnic community, given the already mentioned non participation of other minorities.

37. Nevertheless, data analysis shed light on the way the questionnaires have been designed, and is crucial for the identification of difficulties in the understanding of some questions, problems in the questionnaires' structures, etc., which are an essential input for the improvements that can be made in view of the full census.

38. The total number of individuals (persons usually resident) recorded in the 18 EAs interested by the survey (8 in Pejë/Pec, 8 in Kamenicë/Kamenica, 2 in Štrpce/Shtërpçë) was of 6,370 and the total number of households was of 1,216. In order to judge about the quality of the information collected, three kinds of errors have been analyzed: a) missing answers; b) *non skipped* answers; c) inconsistencies. These have been analyzed both for each question and by taking into consideration the most frequent error patterns generated by one or more questions (i.e. the most frequent combinations of errors). Indeed, the majority of inconsistencies and the most frequent *missing* and *non skipped* errors were generated by just a few variables.

39. The main problem concerning the dwelling form (R1) where the high percentages of missing answers recorded for some open questions, where (most likely) enumerators left a blank instead of writing a zero value. The difference between "no" or 0 and a blank answer has to be strongly pointed out to enumerators, underlining the extreme importance of avoiding leaving blank answers whenever an answer is clearly required by the questionnaire path.

40. As to the household and housing form (R2), the most frequent errors found in questionnaires show that enumerators encountered 2 main difficulties:

- a) the first one concerns the difference between the concept of relationship to reference person and that of family status (not always easily understood by enumerators) and, more generally, the task of reconstructing family nuclei on the field. In order to make enumerators task easier, thus increasing accuracy of data collection, more time should be dedicated in the training to the explanation of these two concepts, especially by means of examples and by active involvement of enumerators in simulating interviews to possible existing households;
- b) the second main problem was originated by the misunderstanding of the filter-question about "land in ownership or in use" probably intended as cultivated land and thus giving rise to many non skipped answers. In this case, both the question wording and enumerators' instructions need to be clarified.

41. As to individual form (R3), the only really problematical area was the section on education, especially because of inconsistencies between question on completed years of education and question on highest completed education level.

- a) Most of the problems related to these questions were probably due to recent changes in education system that might have caused a misclassification of respondents' completed education level, thus originating above mentioned inconsistencies and further increasing the probability of inaccuracy due to proxy answers;
- b) A certain inaccuracy was probably due also to a wrong interpretation of question on completed years of education, answering to which the total number of completed years might have been reported (including repeated years) instead of that of successfully completed years. The wording of the questions could then be changed (turning it into a more precise "years of *successfully* completed education"), so to be sure that possible repeated years will not be counted. Secondly, the question itself could probably be better asked only to persons aged 10 years and over, in order to avoid asking it to the majority of children who are still attending primary school, thus simplifying both the enumerators' duty and the subsequent data check and editing. Indeed, the main purpose of the question is to classify persons not only by completed education level but also by years of completed education information, thus being useful especially concerning those who could have completed at least primary school (being aged 10 years and over) but did not complete any education level (and above all for adults);
- c) A clearer correspondence on the questionnaire between levels of currently attended education and years corresponding to each given level (and between highest completed education levels and years needed to successfully complete a given level) might be helpful; this could be easily done by writing in brackets on the questionnaire the number of years needed to complete a given education level (e.g. primary school – 5 years). However, it should be done in combination with a more in depth training of enumerators concerning specifically the educational system structure, in order to make them able to help respondents to give accurate answers.

42. A second (much less than the education one) problematical area was that of daily journeys for study/work, addressed to people who work and/or study, whom were asked for municipality and settlement (or foreign country) of place of study/work and for frequency of the journey between home and place of study/work. Errors concerning only the first of the two main questions of this section can probably be ascribed to the combinations of filters leading to it, since it was depending on both age and activity status and since it was addressed both to students and workers. Some enumerators might then have found it too difficult to check the combination of age and activity status of respondents. Here again the need shows up for a greater training's emphasis on the different questionnaire paths.

43. As for remaining few questions that originated a somewhat remarkable number of errors, a high percentage of missing answers was recorded to marital status question, probably because it was considered as a sensitive question to pose to unmarried girls (missing answers were in fact mostly due to children less than 10 years old. It should then be strongly remarked to enumerators that the question is to be answered by every respondent, including children.

44. Same is for question about number of children born alive and subsequent ones, for which in a number of cases the enumerators were probably omitting to write down 0 (but it could also

be thought that they omitted putting the question since they considered it sensitive for non married women or young girls); thus suggesting once again the need of remarking to enumerators that questionnaire paths have to be accurately followed, directly addressing every question to all of the respondents concerned and without guessing the answer, even when it might appear unnecessary (e.g. in the case of children even though they can be expected to be non married).

45. Other questions for which a notable errors percentage was recorded were questions of the economic section, the heaviest part of the questionnaire. The need to work on the latter, both on the wording of some difficult questions and on a general simplification by means of reducing the number of questions, is to be underlined in this case, together with the already mentioned higher attention that should be given to questionnaire paths in the training.

46. As far as training is concerned, field observation and data analysis have shown that field staff would require a longer and more intensive training, with more emphasis on case studies and practical exercises. The timing too should be planned in order to leave to field operators more time to get familiar with concepts, definitions, materials and expected duties. Finally, manuals will require a bigger share of practical examples and a greater attention to Kosovo specificities.

47. Current work is focusing on improving questionnaires and manuals on the basis of findings coming from data analysis, field observation from both staff members and independent observers (namely the Steering Committee and International Observers) and what reported by enumerators.

48. The need for further simplification and adaptation to Kosovo reality clearly showed up; wording and questionnaire paths will thus be modified according to local needs, on the basis of internationally agreed concepts, with the aim of fulfilling local informational needs and at the same time producing internationally useful and comparable data.
