



Leaving no Child Behind: The 2021 Population-Housing Census in Greece

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1. The Census in Greece (1821-2021)

TIMELINE

1821 The Greek Revolution

1836 The first Census conducted by the Office for Public Economy of the "Secretariat for the Interior of Greece". Until 1845 the Census was conducted on a yearly basis. After that, the Censuses were conducted at varying intervals (1848, 1853, 1856, etc.)

1870 For the first time, data on the literate and illiterate population were published

1889 The Census was conducted, for the first time, on one single day throughout the Greek territory

1907 The first Census conducted in accordance with the principles of the modern statistical science

1923 Enumeration of the refugees from Asia Minor and Eastern Thrace

1940 The Census was conducted on 16 October, just 12 days before the outbreak of the Greco-Italian war

1951 The first Census when the frontiers of the Greek state were as today

1971 Special groups of enumerators enumerated those who were travelling by sea, train or plane on the Greek territory

1991 Processing of the total of the enumeration questionnaires, instead of sampling processing

2011 The first Census of the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT), as an independent authority



The first Population Census in Greece, under Governor Ioannis Kapodistrias, with a retrospective estimate of the population of 1821

1828

The first Census that was conducted not for military or tax purposes but in line with the applicable, at that time, principles of the statistical science

1861

For the first time, the data were processed uniformly by one single agency

1879

Total use of individual enumeration forms. Their processing was not completed on account of a fire

1896

Enumeration of the population of the new provinces of Greece

1913

Machine processing of the census results, for the first time

1920

The Census was conducted by the General Statistical Service of Greece, established in 1925

1928

Enumeration of the population of the Dodecanese islands

1947

For the first time, a pilot census and a post enumeration survey were conducted

1961

Change in the date of the census conduct on account of a big earthquake

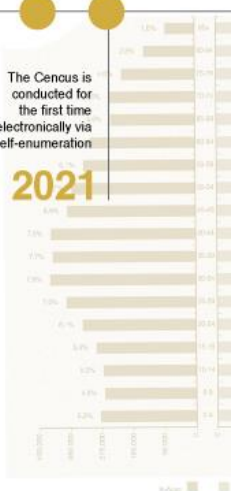
1981

Optical Mark Recognition (OMR) technology was used for the processing of the paper questionnaires

2001

The Census is conducted for the first time electronically via self-enumeration

2021



The population of Thessalia and Arta was enumerated

1881





1. The Population and Housing Census in Greece

- After 1951, the Population Census takes places every ten years.
- The purpose is to collect up-to-date and valid data on the demographic, economic and social characteristics of the population and its housing conditions.
- Within the scope of the 2021 Censuses was included also the compilation of Statistical Registers for Buildings and Population.

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1. The Population and Housing Census in Greece

- Based on the impact assessment and given that the Census of 2021 had to be done with the traditional (door-to-door) method, where the whole population would be approached, the collection of variables which will serve as unique IDs and will be used as "keys" for linking the census data with the appropriate administrative registers, was decided.
- These variables were the Tax Identification Number (TIN Number or ΑΦΜ) and the Social Security Number (ΑΜΚΑ).

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1. The Population and Housing Census in Greece

Data regarding special groups (hard-to-reach or marginalized populations) was in the spotlight.

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2. Legal and Institutional Framework

- A very important aspect of the 2021 Population-Housing Census was the **strong legal statistical framework** with a **solid democratic legitimization** in line with the best chosen scientific statistical practices.





2. Legal and Institutional Framework

The General Censuses of 2021 were carried out in accordance with the following framework:

– **European Union Legislation**

- Regulation (EC) No 763/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council
- Implementing Regulations (EC) No 543/2017 and No 881/2017
- Regulation (EC) No 712/2017 of the European Parliament and of the Council
- Regulation (EC) No 223/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council
- GDPR Regulation (EU) 679/2016 of the European Parliament and of the Council

– **National Legislation**

- The Census Law 4772/2021 regulating the Census
- The Greek Statistical Law 3832/2010
- The Law 4624/2019 implementing GDPR in Greece
- Regulatory Decisions of the President of ELSTAT

– **United Nations Recommendations**

- United Nations Recommendations for the Population - Housing Censuses of 2020 round



2. Legal and Institutional Framework

- For the first time, following preparation and consultation by ELSTAT, a designated draft bill was submitted to Parliament, which was voted into law (Census Law 4772/2021) by the vast majority of its members, gaining broad support from both government and opposition parties.
- The Census Law was offered for public consultation, as all proposed laws in Greece, for more than a month and ELSTAT was able to explain the scope and answer all the questions arising within the parliamentary committees.
- ELSTAT also had the opportunity to discuss questions arising from the citizens regarding the necessity of the Census, the variables and their justified agony regarding the pandemic and how this might affect the Census.
- The aim of the bill was to provide a long-term and comprehensive legal basis for the population statistics, in Greece, to meet evolving user needs and exploit the opportunities provided by the growing usage of administrative data sources and new methods.



2. Legal and Institutional Framework

- The bill was written aspiring to prevent any kind of problems that aroused in previous Censuses in Greece or abroad and to prepare the ELSS for future obligations regarding statistical information and data provision.
- The Census Law specified:
 - the purpose of the Census
 - the subject,
 - the statistical definitions and the variables,
 - the budget,
 - the methodology,
 - data collection,
 - post-census activities
 - creation of the statistical registers
- Special clauses allowed for the President of the ELSTAT to be able to make all the appropriate adaptations regarding the data collection period, the variables and the people working for the Censuses.



3. The Population and Housing Census 2021

New approach

- Electronic self-enumeration of the households via a specially designed (in-house) web application.
- **For the households where the electronic self-enumeration was not possible, as well as people in reception facilities, nursing homes, hospitals, camps etc., the Census was conducted through a face-to-face or phone interview in compliance with the applicable public health protection measures.**
- The enumerators were responsible for helping, via phone, the representatives of the, around 120-150, enumerated households with their questions and visit again the households that didn't self-enumerate to arrange a physical or telephone interview.



3. The Population and Housing Census 2021

- **Preparatory Phase: The Building Census**



- **Phase A: Population and Housing Census – Electronic self-enumeration**



- **Phase B: Population and Housing Census – Data Collection via interview**



- **Phase C: Population and Housing Census – Electronic self-enumeration for those who didn't manage to contact their enumerator**





3.1 The Questionnaire

- The Census questionnaire included all the variables in accordance with the European Regulation (EU) 763/2008 on Population and Housing Censuses, while it also included variables that meet national requirements in statistical information.
- For the first time, the Population Census included the collection of:
 - the tax identification number (TIN Number) and
 - the Social Security Number (AMKA)
- The aim is to introduce a unique identification number for each person that will be used as a “Key” to link the statistical data from the Population Census to data from administrative registers, in line with the Digital Transformation Bible in Greece (Law 4727/2020) regarding the interoperability of the administrative registers.



3.1 The Questionnaire

- The **purpose** was dual:
 - to link the variables gathered in the Census with data from administrative registers, with the aim to **verify their quality** (for errors/uniqueness and to ensure full coverage of the entire population) in order to safeguard the results of the Census and
 - to help build a solid basis (together with the results of the 2021 Census) for the **establishment of the statistical Population Register**, subject to a continuous updating with the use of administrative data.



3.2 Processing Census data

- **Collected Data**

- The data obtained from the Population Census have been inserted in the database of ELSTAT during the data collection period and were subject to processing right after the end of the Census.
- The quality of the collected data in terms of completeness and correctness was of a high level due to the integrated automatic controls in the questionnaire.
- The data were checked for identification of duplications and missing values / variables.



3.2 Processing Census data

- **Administrative sources**
 - The use of administrative sources was part of ELSTAT's Strategy for the 2021 General Censuses.
 - ELSTAT asked for and used administrative data from the Tax Authorities (key: TIN Number), Social Security (key: AMKA), the Ministry of Labor & Social Affairs as regards special groups of the population (e.g. Roma and homeless people), etc.
 - Data from administrative sources were used as a mean to control and supplement the missing values of main demographic characteristics of the population, such as place of permanent residence, age etc. or any missing records.



4. Leaving no one behind

- It is essential to recognize that not all population groups can be adequately reached, such as:
 - Monasteries,
 - military barracks,
 - correctional facilities - reformatories,
 - orphanages,
 - care homes,
 - nursing homes,
 - psychiatric hospitals,
 - centers for individuals with special needs,
 - hospitals,
 - migrant/refugee camps,
 - Roma camps,
 - homeless shelters and
 - other marginalized communities.



4. Leaving no one behind

- To ensure the comprehensive inclusion of all communities, specialized enumerators were deployed by ELSTAT to visit and conduct interviews in their respective settlements and camps.
- This targeted approach was crucial in overcoming barriers related to digital literacy, language, and trust, which are often prevalent among these marginalized groups.
- By employing skilled enumerators familiar with the cultural and linguistic nuances of these communities, the census authorities facilitated meaningful engagement and accurate data collection.



4.1 Leaving no one behind: Children

- As a group, children have special characteristics that place them at elevated risk to certain vulnerabilities and dangers compared to other groups.
- Their age and often limited or non-existent legal capacity generally means that they lack the ability to make legally binding decisions for themselves and decisions are made by their parents or appointed guardians.
- In the Census, children usually are not considered suitable respondents for the Household.
- Things become more challenging when children reside in collective accommodations or belong to hard-to-reach or marginalized populations.



4.1 Leaving no one behind: Children

- ELSTAT had to be sure that all children in Greece were counted in the Census:
 - Use administrative data for those who forgot to enumerate their children (!!)
 - Use the Statistical Literacy strategy to inform people that they could trust the Census and the statistics in general
 - For children in reformatories, orphanages, centers for individuals with special needs, and hospitals, we had close collaboration with their administrations and ensured to conduct a comprehensive census of all residents living there.
 - Refugees: Special Enumerators
 - Roma Population: Special Enumerators



4.2 Leaving no one behind: Refugees

- ELSTAT, in collaboration with the Greek Ministry of Migration & Asylum, performed the Census in refugee camps, with special enumerators and questioners, collected data:
 - For the number of people living in each Camp.
 - For each family, which was considered as a separate household, so they had to answer the special questioner for the “Household in special facilities”,
 - For each member of the “household” had to answer the special questioner for the individual (same for all the individuals that took part in the Census) regarding their characteristics with the appropriate disaggregation.
- Special Enumerators were chosen by the Camp facility, accompanied by translators to help the respondents.
- At the same time, social workers as special enumerators, collected data, in the whole country, regarding refugees (and unaccompanied children) who weren't living in camps, but in dedicated houses provided by the Greek Ministry of Migration & Asylum.



4.3 Leaving no one behind: Roma People

- ELSTAT, in collaboration with the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity & the Fight Against Poverty of the Greek Ministry of Labor, performed the Census in Roma settlements, with special enumerators and questioners, collected data:
 - For the number of people living in each settlement.
 - For each family, which was considered as a separate household, so they had to answer the special questioner for the “Household in special facilities”,
 - For each member of the “household” had to answer the special questioner for the individual (same for all the individuals that took part in the Census) regarding their characteristics with the appropriate disaggregation.
- To ensure trust among Roma, the Special Enumerators were Roma themselves and were suggested by the General Secretariat for Social Solidarity & the Fight Against Poverty.
- For the Roma people living in houses, they participated in the Census as the rest of the population, without any question characterizing them as “Roma”. (no sensitive personal data in the Census).



4. Leaving no one behind

- Moreover, concerns regarding the sensitive nature of personal data posed additional challenges in identifying and enumerating hard-to-reach or marginalized populations.
- Keeping in mind that Censuses are not the appropriate statistical task to collect sensitive data and in order to address indirectly revelation of sensitive personal data ELSTAT had:
 - To be in close collaboration with trusted community organizations played a vital role in building trust and encouraging participation.
 - Implemented strict protocols to safeguard the privacy and confidentiality of respondents, particularly those belonging to vulnerable groups.
- Data protection measures were meticulously designed to comply with international standards and regulations, ensuring that sensitive information (which was gathered indirectly), was handled with utmost care and discretion.



5. Why the Census is so important?

- Reliable data and official statistics are key to developing successful policy strategies.
- Data that can be disaggregated allow for non-obvious trends to be identified, highlight the visibility of vulnerable groups and assist policymakers and stakeholders in their evaluations of measures taken by the State.
- The Census is not only a (very detailed) spotlight. The Census provides the sample frames for all the statistical surveys of the next years so helps official statistics to include the whole population spectrum with their disaggregated characteristics.



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