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Preparatory works for the 2011
population and housing censuses
in the region:
plans, changes and problems

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Introductory remarks

- Population and housing census rounds in Europe are scheduled for the start of each new decade, now in 2011 for most countries.
- IPA (Instrument for Pre-Accession Activities) national and multi-beneficiary projects to assist countries before joining the European Union.
- IPA projects with a component for assistance in preparing population and housing censuses.
- Beneficiary countries: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey.

International requirements

- UNECE and Eurostat common Recommendations at European level, containing helpful information on methodology, but mainly the list of, and explanations to, the most relevant demographic, migration, educational, economic activity/employment, household/family and housing/building characteristics to include in a census;
- EU Regulation on population and housing censuses, including definitions, data sources, transmission of data, list of topics to be covered and regional detail required.

Elements of preparatory works

Preparatory works in beneficiary countries have included:

- legislative work,
- pilot censuses,
- organization and budget,
- questionnaires and related materials,
- cartography,
- plans for data processing and dissemination,
- data quality issues, as to comply with both their traditional and new national data needs and international requirements.

Different situations at the start of preparatory activities

- some countries were at a very initial stage of preparations,
- others technically almost ready to conduct the census, on the basis of their own traditions and/or means,
- but all of them are willing to harmonize their national census programme with the European census standards and rules.

Data collection method

- All countries but Turkey will use traditional, full-scope, door-to-door interview method with paper questionnaires;
- Turkey is still working on its new census methodology, to be based on a combination of the use of central registers (population, dwellings, education), a full-scope enumeration for some other basic data and the use of a more detailed questionnaire (long form) on a sample; the mail-out method and e-census will also be tested.

Pilot census, field test

- Kosovo carried out census field tests since 2005; this was owing to the very particular situation and the lack of reliable full-scope data (back to 1981!).
- Four other countries that had begun their preparatory works in 2007-2008, carried out successfully their pilot census almost at the same period, the second quarter of 2009 (Croatia, FYR of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia). In autumn 2009 Serbia carried out a second pilot census as well.
- In Albania the pilot census is just now underway.

Pilot census, field test (ctd.)

- Turkey had planned its census to be carried out in 2010 and a pilot census in 2009, but TurkStat decided to postpone the census to October 2011 and the pilot census to 2010; until now small-scale pre-tests and some quality checks of the central registers to be used have taken place.
- In Bosnia and Herzegovina the questionnaires and other forms have been agreed upon at the statistical institutions level, but Census Law was refused by the Parliament and the new developments from the political decision makers are to be expected.

Challenges and problems

- The new concept of “usual resident population”, i.e. to include in total population only persons having lived at a place for at least 12 months, is a challenge.
- In some cases the problem of also enumerating people having left the country or their former place of residence has emerged (wars, forced displacement, refugees etc.)
- All countries but Turkey plan to deal with ethnicity and religious affiliation topics.
- Still, the basic statement is that all countries’ efforts have tended to comply with international standards and comparability, including all of the “core topics” of the UNECE/Eurostat recommendations.

Thank you!