

CROATIA

Introduction

Population censuses in Croatia were undertaken in 1921, 1931 and, following the constitution of RSF of Yugoslavia, in 1948, 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991, with 31 March as reference date from 1953 on.

Midnight of the same 31 March was afterwards considered as reference date for the 2001 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, which was the first for the Republic of Croatia established after the Yugoslavian crisis. The census was based on a traditional method of enumeration through interviews based on a personal questionnaire and a questionnaire for dwellings and households. Based on previous experience, several changes were introduced mostly related to the content of questionnaires for enumeration and the data capture process. Administrative population registers were not used, however, as in the 1991 Census, an individual's personal identification number⁽¹⁾ was recorded. In line with international recommendations, the 2001 Census also covered institutional households.

The Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) organised the Census. The project was also supported by the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice, Public Administration and Local Self-Government and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, each enumerated selected persons in institutions or facilities under their control (prisons, barracks, embassies, etc.).

Legislation

The *Law on Territories of Counties, Towns and Municipalities (Narodne novine*, official gazette of the Republic of Croatia, No. 90/92) established 21 counties, 70 towns and 419 municipalities, with the City of Zagreb as a separate territorial and administrative unit. Since 1992 the number of territorial units has changed frequently. During the 2001 Census there were 20 counties, the City of Zagreb, 122 towns and 423 municipalities. All census results refer to this territorial constitution.

The 2001 Census was carried out on the basis of the *Law on the Census of Population, Households and Dwellings 2001* adopted by the House of Representatives of the Croatian National Parliament in July 2000 (No. 64/2000). In addition, the Act on Amendments to that law (No. 22/2001) had to be considered.

Based on the Census Law, the following enumeration units were:

citizens of the Republic of Croatia, foreign citizens and persons without citizenship who were usual residents in the country, irrespective of whether, at reference date, they were present or were abroad as well as persons who, at reference date, were temporarily present;

households of persons;

dwellings and other uninhabited premises.

¹ JMBG in Croatian.

The Law stated the obligation of respondents was to “give accurate and full answers to all the questions in the census questionnaires”. Exceptions were to questions on national and religious affiliation, which respondents were not obliged to answer. The legal regulation on this right was printed on the individual questionnaire. In addition, the enumerators were obliged to indicate this right and to record the exact answers as provided by the respondents, putting down “The person did not want to answer” if the person did not want to answer any or both of these questions.

The questionnaire was not available in minority languages but the enumerator was obliged to advise representatives of national minorities on their right to review specimens of the basic questionnaires in the language and script of his/her minority.

Confidentiality issues

Enumerators were obliged by the census law to respect the secrecy of all data collected from individuals regarding their personal, family and property conditions.

Census results should be used for statistical purposes only. Exceptionally, particular data on individuals (name and surname, identification number, place of birth and address) may be used to enter or update existing registers of inhabitants in the counties and the City of Zagreb. On the other hand, individual data on households having land and/or livestock at their disposal or engaged in agricultural production in the reference period⁽²⁾ shall be used to establish an address list of agricultural households, which will be useful in undertaking an agricultural census. The Government of the Republic of Croatia shall make a decision on making selected census data available for other purposes based on the judgment of the CBS.

The law established the destruction of enumeration material following data capture and control and the CBS responsibility to define and apply measures for data protection during the work and access to the census database.

Topics of enumeration

In previous censuses the count referred to the **permanent population**, that is, the population having its usual residence in the territory of the Republic of Croatia, irrespective of whether persons were present or, for one reason or another, absent at the census moment. Starting from 2001 the new definition of **usual resident population** was applied, based on the most recent UN recommendations and its criterion of the ‘*place of usual residence*’ with the time limit of absence up to 12 months. This means that the total population will exclude:

- persons absent from the country for a year or longer, although their usual place of residence is in the country;
- persons temporarily present in the country for less than a year.

² Name and surname of a reference person of the household, address, total and agricultural surface area of available land, agricultural production by types of cultivated products, data on livestock, poultry and beehives.

New questions or alternative possibilities for responses were included in the 2001 Census. As a consequence of the events of war, the reasons for absence/presence were extended from two to four categories (the former 'in the country' and 'abroad' plus 'displaced person' and 'refugee'⁽³⁾). The first (preliminary) results presented displaced persons as residents of the place of the Census, while final results included them in the total usual resident population of the place of usual residence.

Apart from the concept of usual residence many other new questions were inserted, such as the time of absence/presence (up to one month, month, year), the place of usual residence of mother at the time of the individual's birth, reason for immigration, usual weekly working hours, information on unemployment as well as information on disability, cause of disability⁽⁴⁾ and physical state of a person⁽⁵⁾.

In addition, the available area of the household's land, type of heating and type of energy used for heating were added to the dwelling and household questionnaire.

In comparison to the 1991 Census, when a whole page of the household questionnaire was devoted to the agricultural situation, the last survey included only three questions (see above) because of plans to organise an agricultural census.

Preparatory phases

The CBS issued the methodology, defined the contents and designed the basic census questionnaires as well as accompanying control forms and the publishing programme for the results. The questionnaires were based on the UN recommendations on census aiming to facilitate the international comparability of data.

The census questionnaires were printed in Croatian and using Latin script using a technique adjusted for optical reading on a computer medium. Responses were, in fact, to be provided in the Croatian language, using Latin script.

The enumeration structure was based on counties, towns and enumeration centres, and Enumeration Districts (ED). The following staff were appointed to ensure correct implementation of the methodology:

- **Co-ordinators**, engaged in the work of county commissions and the Commission of the City of Zagreb;
- **Instructors**, engaged in the work of branch offices of commissions in towns;
- **Controllers**, who operated in enumeration centres, on the proposal of the Commission and by the consent of the co-ordinator competent for that area;

³ The answer 'displaced person' referred to every person who was absent from his/her place of usual residence, but was present, at the census moment, in another settlement in the Republic of Croatia. The reason for absence or temporary presence of those persons from the place of usual residence was exiled due to the war, that is, such a person had the status of displaced person. The answer 'refugee' as a reason of presence referred to all persons who, due to the war, left their places of usual residence outside the Republic of Croatia and were temporarily present at the census moment in the place of the census, providing that they had refugee status in the Republic of Croatia.

⁴ 'From birth, Second World War and its consequences', 'war for independence and its consequences', 'work-disabled', 'sickness', 'traffic accident', 'other'.

⁵ 'Completely mobile', 'permanently limited mobility aided by a walking stick, crutches or walking frame', 'permanently limited mobility aided by a wheelchair', 'permanently immobile'.

- **Enumerators**, responsible for the interviews.

The technical documentation for the field work consisting of plans of ED (forms PK). ED data and review maps were prepared by the State Geodetic Directorate through its cadastral branch offices and cadastral management body of the City of Zagreb. The technical documentation was prepared for land units based on the situation as of 31 December 2000. The State Geodetic Directorate was obliged by the Census Law to submit review maps to the CBS by 15 January 2001.

Publicity

CBS informed people (by means of TV, newspapers, radio, and the Internet) of the aim, significance and contents of the Census. However, the information was released only one month before the census date because the Government decided at the last moment that the Census would take place in 2001. Most attention was given in newspapers and on television to questions concerning religion and ethnicity. Though in TV commercials on the census the population was informed frequently that it was not necessary to respond to these questions.

Field operations

Branch offices of the county commissions organised training of controllers and enumerators for its area, supervised the work of the enumeration centres, supervised the control of the census material received from enumerators in the enumeration centres and returned them, if necessary, to enumerators for supplement and correction.

Enumeration was carried out from 1 until 15 April 2001. Immediately following a Post-Enumeration Survey was conducted on a representative sample of EDs to evaluate both coverage and quality of data.

Data processing

The data was read by IBM system for optical reading and recognised by IFP (Intelligent Forms Processing). The main enumeration questionnaires were scanned using KODAK 3520DP scanners.

German CGK Recostar software was used for sign recognition (Croatian Latin script). After the sign identification the forms were made in ASCII format. Some descriptive answers (for example questions about language, nationality, religion, activity...) had to be coded and for that is used the Canadian statistical software ACTR ("automated coding by character recognition").

After that the data was exported in Microsoft SQL database and then there was some additional processing that included control of contingents, corrections etc. using the SQL and applications created in Visual Basics.

When the data was ready for publishing, tables were made by using the SAS programme. In the same time, using the same programme (SAS), the graphical presentation was made, all the tables were created in English and Croatian.

Data dissemination

First (i.e. preliminary) results on the total number of population, households and dwellings based on the enumeration control forms) were published a couple of months after the enumeration, final results about one year later. The main difference with these results is related to displaced persons. In the first results they were considered resident in the place of enumeration, and in the final results in the place of their usual residence.

A large set of tables, by territorial unit, were published on the CBS Internet site. The broader data are in Croatian and English, and include methodological information, questionnaires and the Census Law.

Costs

Funds for the preparation, organisation and conduction of the Census and for processing and publishing of data were covered by the State Budget for the years 2000, 2001 and 2002. Total funds shall amount to 192°million Kuna (€2 630 thousand).

Conclusion

As stated above in the 2001 Census most attention was placed on questions concerning ethnicity and religion. Although it was clearly stated in the census forms that individuals did not have to respond to these questions. However it may be concluded that Croatian laws are contradictory because, at the same time, the number of minority representatives in Parliament depends on their relative proportion to the total population.

The main complaint came from the Serbian minority, and was related to the new definition of usual resident population. This was because a large number of this minority were absent from Croatia as refugees during the 1991-1995 war and were not included in the total population. Based on the final data, Serbs were 4% of the total population compared to 12% for the 1991 Census. This result provoked suspicion of reliability. Serbian representatives stated that the Census should be repeated in the presence of international observers.

In the accompanying census form on households of married women and widows, it was required that the name of the husband be entered – which caused protests to be made by feminist associations.