

THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Introduction

The first population counts in today's territory of the 'The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' were carried out in the 15th century, when Turkish authorities only counted tax payers and the male population. There are Russian, French, Greek and other sources of data on population censuses in the 19th century. The first contemporary population census was conducted in 1921, and the next in 1931. After the Second World War, eight censuses were conducted in 1948 (15 March), 1953, 1961, 1971, 1981 and 1991 (31 March), 1994 (20 June) and 2002 (31 October).

Until 1991, the Federal Statistical Office of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia was in charge of preparing and carrying out the project. The statistical offices of the former Yugoslav republics took active part in the preparation of methodological census tools and each republic statistical office was responsible for carrying out the census in their own territories. The 1991 Census began within this framework; however, because of the country's dissolution and breaking apart, the republic statistical offices took over the completion of the project independently. As the 1991 Census coverage was incomplete another census was undertaken in 1994. This project was prepared within an extremely short period and was conducted with international financial and technical assistance and broad range monitoring⁽¹⁾.

All the most recent censuses were based on self-enumeration (1948 and 1953) or face-to-face interviews carried out by trained enumerators (from 1961 on). The 1948 Census aimed to count only the population, and data relating to only a few topics were gathered. The 1953 Census was broader, the enumeration paid more attention to biological, fertility and economic topics concerning the population in order to meet future development planning requirements. Since 1961 the contents of the census have been similar although their basic topics are being regularly extended.

The censuses in 1991 and 1994 comprised the enumeration of population, households (individual and collective), dwellings and individual agricultural holdings. The 2002 Census covered population, households (including some agricultural topics) and dwellings⁽²⁾.

¹ The European Commission and the Council of Europe provided 1.6°million and 300 thousand ECU respectively. The Council of Europe appointed an Experts' Group including demographers and specialists in personal data protection. Forty observers from 19 European states were finally engaged throughout the country during field activities.

² Censuses of individual agricultural holdings, as a separate statistical survey, were already conducted in 1951, 1960 and 1969. Though, mostly for financial reasons, since 1981 basic data on agriculture have been gathered through the population censuses. Another separate survey is planned in 2003.

The evolution of the population concept

The 1921 and 1931 surveys were based on the *de facto* population definition. All eight censuses carried out since 1948 used the *de jure* definition, with some differences.

In the censuses taken from 1948 to 1991 population data referred to the concept of *'permanent population'*, i.e. to all persons having their 'place of permanent residence' in the country irrespective of whether or not they were present in the country at the time of the census and, if not, of the length of their stay abroad.

In the 1994 and 2002 censuses population data referred to the concept of *'usually resident population'*: population included all persons with official (legal) place of residence (1994) respectively with usual place of residence (2002⁽³⁾) in 'The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia', present in the country or absent abroad for less than one year, as well as persons granted residence permits staying in the country for more than one year. Persons having official (legal) place of residence in the country, but were absent abroad for more than one year, were enumerated in the 1994 Census but not included in the population count⁽⁴⁾. For the first time, since the 1971 Census, these individuals were not enumerated at all in the 2002 Census.

The organisation of the 2002 Census

The last census in 'The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' was planned to be conducted on 31 March 2001, so as to return to a ten year periodicity. With adoption of the Law on the 2001 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings (cf. *'The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia'* No. 16/2001), the Census was scheduled on the 14 of May 2001. Because of the political and security situation in certain parts of the country, started in March 2001, it was impossible to respect the legally scheduled date. Since then, the Census was postponed three times: to October 2001, to April 2002 and to November 2002. Finally, the survey was conducted from the 1 to the 15 of November 2002, with the reference date fixed at 24:00 hours on 31 October.

The preparation and conduction of the Census was under the responsibility of the State Statistical Office ⁽⁵⁾ (SSO) and the State Census Commission (SCC). The (Republic) SCC was created by the Census Law as the special body for organisational purposes and from the viewpoint of the importance of the project to the state.

³ In the last census the official (legal) place of residence was also collected.

⁴ The enumeration of these persons in 1994 was important, because their number explains the discrepancy between the 1994 total population and the previous census figures. This data was relevant to the analyses of international migrations, which had been based on low quality information arising from surveys based on administrative sources.

⁵ The SSO was established on 1 June 1945. Among administration bodies, the Office is an expert and independent organisation in charge of carrying out some 290 (i.e. more than 70%) of all statistical surveys in the country. Its activity is based on the Law on State Statistics and a five year program.

The project was carried out in the presence of an **International Census Observation and Mission** (ICOM⁽⁶⁾) organised by the European Union and the Council of Europe. Its objective, structure and principles are set out in the Memorandum of Understanding between the Government of 'The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' and international organisations. The general objective of the mission is to verify the fair and impartial enumeration and post-enumeration in accordance with international census and data protection standards. The mission aimed to evaluate the census methodology and advised on appropriate modifications that would contribute to the building of confidence in the Census, encourage the population's participation and lead to an accurate picture of the country's population and results that could be widely accepted.

Legislation

The first draft of the Census Law was prepared in the second half of 2000 and then sent for comments to all relevant national and international agencies and institutions. The procedure for adopting the Law began fairly late, instead of April; the start of the census was scheduled for May 2001. After the adoption on 20 February 2001, the law was changed three times – twice for the date, the third time for the date and methodological aspects⁽⁷⁾. The definitive law is very detailed, covering all relevant aspects: reference date and duration, enumeration units, topics of data collection, organisation and method of enumeration, selection of staff, necessary documents for enumeration, signature of respondents, use of data, data protection, funding, and international monitoring, etc.

Personal data collected through the census are confidential and are subject to protection based on the provisions of the Census Law, the Law of Personal Data Protection ('*The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia*' No. 12/1994) and the Law for State Statistics (No. 54/1997). Responsibilities regarding personal data protection apply to all persons taking part on any basis whatsoever in any census activities. Data collected in the census shall not be used to make decisions related to individuals and shall be used for statistical purposes only.

The same data may not be used to establish, maintain or update administrative registers. However, the Law foresees the use of census data to establish and update the statistical register. The *Unique Personal Number of the Citizens* was collected for this purpose.

Preparatory phases

Since 1995 SSO representatives have taken an active part in updating the UN Census Recommendation for the ECE Region. Initial preparations for the next census started after completion of the 1994 Census data processing in the second half of 1996.

⁶ The ICOM is lead by a Steering Committee including representatives of Eurostat, the Council of Europe, UNECE and OSCE and made up of a high level expert group, some 50 observers from 26 European countries and IT-experts in charge of monitoring and assessing the various stages of the Census.

⁷ cf. 'The Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia' No. 37/2001, 70/2001 and 43/2002.

Intensive preparations on census methodology and questionnaires began in 1998. Drafts were completed in accordance with international recommendations taking care to satisfy users' needs and to ensure comparability with previous censuses. Consultations with national and international counterparts provided a few minor suggestions on the formulation of the questions and questionnaire design.

The draft census methodology and the questionnaires were successfully tested in **two Census Tests** carried out in October 1999 and April 2000 on a random sample of respectively 420 and 1 550 households. Later, in June 2001 (with the third postponement of the census) methodological changes referring to the persons covered by the enumeration and the definition of total population were introduced.

Preparation of data processing took place at the beginning of 1999 after the definition of draft questionnaires. Programs for data capture and coding were self-developed by the SSO. During the Census Tests data were collected on paper questionnaires and on handheld computers. Despite the good results of data entry and simultaneous coding during field operations, the second solution was finally not implemented as the financial, organisational and logistical preconditions did not exist.

At the start of 2000 the updating of the statistical cadastre was started and the definition of the **7 712 Enumeration Districts (EDs)** – each one covering on average between 50 and 100 households, depending on the settlement type – **within the 39 Census Regions** – each one included one to nine municipalities, depending on the 1994 Census population and the geographical and infrastructure communications. Field activities and the necessary documentation (paper maps and descriptions) were completed by March 2001. Further updating and digital maps were completed only for two towns.

The Regional Census Commissions were set up in 2001. Because of parliamentary elections, which took place on 15 September 2002, all other preparations for field organisation were carried out in the two months before the census date. The selection of the census participants took place in the first half of October, and their training took place over 3-5 days⁽⁸⁾ in the second half.

A global plan of activities and the estimation of the necessary budget were completed in the summer of 2000. Later, the official plans and budget of the SCC were adopted in 2001 under the authorisation provided by the Census Law. These plans were updated with each postponement of the project.

Publicity and information

⁸ The duration of training was planned for five days. In some regions this was for three or four days because of the delay in selection of candidates. In these regions there was a second testing which prolonged the overall selection time.

The SSO organised information activities and, for the first, time a paid publicity campaign to inform the entire population of the census and to encourage them to provide correct and complete answers to the enumerators. The motto of the campaign was: *'CONFIRM YOURSELF! FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR COUNTRY'*.

The public relations campaign included the following basic steps:

- dissemination of basic information material (pamphlets, brochures, placards, and billboards) in Macedonian and in the languages of the Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roma and Serbian community (pamphlets and brochures were also printed only in English); pamphlets were distributed to households through daily newspapers twice, to public places and by the enumerators;
- creation and updating of a Census page on the SSO website;
- telephone information and help line;
- journalist's training (paid and organised by USAID) on the aims and importance of the Census and essential distinction from electing activities;
- regular press conferences;
- regular information in national and local written and electronic mediums issuing programs in Macedonian and/or the language of other communities⁽⁹⁾.

Field operations

One enumerator was appointed per ED; however, in districts having a multi-ethnic composition of the population, two or more enumerators were appointed, depending on the number of represented communities. Within the Census Regions, the overall staff responsible for the field work were as follows:

- o **State Instructors (120)**
- o **Regional Instructors (778)**
- o **Enumerators (9 012)**

In addition, the enumeration was also carried out by:

- the Ministry of Defence, for enumeration of persons doing their military service in the Army,
- the Ministry of Justice, for enumeration of persons in pre-trial confinement or serving a sentence in a prison or reformatory, and
- the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, for enumeration of persons absent abroad.

The enumeration was based on the following questionnaires:

- o **P-1 - Individual Form**
- o **P-2 - Household and Dwelling Form**
- o **P-3/STR - Individual Form for persons enumerated abroad**
- o **PD-1 – Supplementary Form (on additional documents)**

⁹ A first agency prepared the main TV and radio spot launched in the first half of October. Six additional TV spots started immediately before field operations and information pamphlets were distributed twice through daily newspapers was paid, organised and carried out by IOM-SBI.

Enumeration was based on identification using documents. Because of the relatively recent establishment of independent countries out of the Former Republic of Yugoslavia, subsequent migration and forced migration flows resulting from the 1999 Kosovo War and the internal crisis of the previous three years, a broad set of solutions were foreseen and established. Persons without one of the legal documents proving their identity and place of residence were able to identify themselves using other documents such as paid electricity bills. People without identification were enumerated anyway but not counted as part of the population afterwards.

The enumeration was carried out in the field during the planned two weeks. Five days before the census (27 to 31 October) and five days after (16 to 20 November) the population could be enumerated at Regional Census Commissions premises. A **Post-Enumeration Survey** on coverage and quality was carried out from 16 to 22 November in about 80 EDs.

The reception and controlling of the filled census material and counting of the first results from control forms (for each ED, settlement and municipality in the region) was performed within ten days after the legal time for enumeration. Following this the census material was handed to the SSO for further checking and processing of data at the national level.

The language of the enumeration

The enumeration throughout the territory of the Republic of Macedonia was completed in the language selected by the person enumerated: Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roman, and Serbian. When the enumeration was carried out in Albanian, Turkish, Vlach, Roman or Serbian, data were recorded also in the Macedonian language. The following types of census forms were used:

- forms in the official Macedonian language in Cyrillic script;
- bi-lingual forms in Albanian language and its alphabet, and in the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic script;
- multi-lingual forms in Turkish, Vlach, Roma and Serbian languages and their letters, and in the Macedonian language and its Cyrillic script.

Difficulties during field operations

All censuses having questions on ethnic affiliation and religion are subject to politicisation and there is sometimes a tendency to 'enumerate' specific ethnic communities more than usual. Thus, the 2002 Census was no exception, and there were some instances of the following:

- enumeration of persons absent abroad for more than one year based on photocopied documents;
- information of existing pressure on the population of certain communities in some places with multiethnic structure of the population to declare themselves to belong another community;

- enumeration of people in a language they neither understand or speak;
- information related to the photocopying of filled census forms, in some places having a multiethnic structure of the population, with the aim of intimidating individuals in the population by stating their declaration could be used against them.

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Data processing

Data entry and processing differ from census to census, depending on available equipment and technology. Data entry and coding for the 2002 Census was conducted manually using a self-developed program, i.e. an MS Access 97 based application. The entry application contains on-line controls. A control of entered data with sample double keying and batch controls is foreseen. The initial entered data and aggregations will be stored in DB2 6000. The database was processed with Access 97 and SQL for simple tables, SAS for complicated tables.

Data dissemination

Preliminary results on total population, households and dwellings were to be published by the end of January 2003, while **definitive results** are expected 1-1.5 years after completion of field work. All provisions of the Census Law on data confidentiality were respected during the preparation of data for publishing and dissemination.

The SSO planned to apply data publishing and dissemination to allow simple access and use for all users' categories and increase information awareness of the 2002 Census results. The defined tabulation plan is in accordance with the Eurostat Census Tabulation Program. Census results will be published in printed and electronic (CD-ROM) form, with about 20 volumes on the different territorial levels for all census units and topics. Selected data will be available at the SSO website. As always, ad hoc tables will be prepared upon user request.

Costs

According to the first estimations made in 2000, the 2002 Census should cost about €6.7°million, mainly for the preparatory phase (18.4%), field operations (49.3%), additional and temporary human resources and technical assistance (10.9%). The finances required were approved under the Census Law and the commitment of the Government of 'The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia' to provide this from the budget. International donors covered some additional expenses: European Commission donated €0.66°million and the United States Government through USAID €0.5°million.

Conclusion

The date of the 2002 Census was accepted by the census authorities as recommended by the Government and the international community, despite the fact that the scheduled period was inconvenient for the following reasons:

- the last methodological changes in the Census Law were adopted only on 28 June 2002 causing many changes to the already prepared census material, and
- it came too soon after parliamentary elections, reducing the time required for field preparation (selection of census participants and training).

Nevertheless, despite these difficulties the preparations and field operations were completed successfully. The preliminary conclusion of the ICOM report on the generally favourable conditions and good field work. Difficulties or uncertainties (with identification documents, distribution of enumerators by ethnicity and language, or enumeration of people abroad) did not have a negative affect on the collected data.

The definitive census data will be used as a foundation for the annual population estimates in the coming years and for population sampling. Aggregated data obtained from census data are used for different purposes, such as analysis and evaluation of the status and trends in the economic and social development, planning and monitoring the implementation of programs, scientific research and statistical activities.

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