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Introduction

The last population census in Romania was carried out in March 2002, ten years after the previous census (January 1992). The most recent censuses were conducted in 1912, 1930, 1941, 1948, 1956, 1966, 1977 and 1992.

The 2002 Census was co-ordinated by a **Central Commission** having legal authority. The Commission included the National Institute of Statistics (INS), representatives from the ministries involved, as well as a representative from the Romanian Academy. The main tasks of the Central Commission, supported by a Technical Secretariat from INS, consisted of discussion and approval of the following:

- general programme for implementation of the census;
- methodology, share of tasks and programme for the different phases;
- questionnaires, control forms and instructions;
- classifications and nomenclatures for data registration and processing;
- organisation of staff recruitment and training;
- actions for census advertising;
- presentation by the Government of the results.

The 2002 Census of Population and Housing was conducted by classical method, and no use was made of population registers, personal numerical code or other administrative registers. A **Census of Buildings** was carried out at the same time. In addition, the Central Commission decided to conduct research connected to the census, namely the **micro-census of children under the protection of residential institutions and alternative families**.

Legislation

According to Romanian Statistical Law, statistical research and surveys such as the censuses are conducted on the basis of special decisions. Two decisions were made: one on the conduction of the population and housing census, the other on the organisation and conduction of the Census in 2002 (Government Decision No. 680/2001).

According to the present Statistical Law, individual data and information registered in the census questionnaires are confidential and can be used for statistical purposes only. Otherwise, penalties are foreseen in the penal code. During data entry, no identification of individuals is made. There is only the number of the questionnaire within the enumeration sector as part of a locality.

Coverage of the survey and new topics

During the Census, all Romanian citizens were registered who had legal residence in the country (whether they were in the country or abroad at the time of the census). This included foreigners or stateless persons with temporary residence at the time of

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the census. Excluded were foreigners who were acting as diplomatic, consular representatives and those from international organisations. Also excluded from registration were buildings located on Romanian territory but owned by other countries.

The UN and EUROSTAT recommendations for the 2000 Census Round were taken into account when designing the questionnaire. In addition, consultation was made of census documentation from various European countries, and experience gained from the 1992 Census proved useful. The number of characteristics for the part of the questionnaire on buildings and dwellings were 20 and 27 for persons in the household.

The following characteristics were included for 2002:

For the non-national population:

- reason and date of establishing residence in the country
- education level and current school attendance
- time for work activity and location of work place
- duration of unemployment

For households:

- rent
- agricultural areas used by the household, by size classes

For dwellings:

- state of dwelling
- number and area of rooms of the dwelling used for other purposes
- endowment of dwelling with air-conditioner

Moreover, in 1992 the concept of *usual economic activity* was used (with reference period equal to the year before the census date), in 2002 the concept of *current economic activity* was used (with the week before the census date as reference period) and focused on:

- the economic circumstances of the individual;
- occupation in the main activity and the time effectively worked;
- professional status;
- work place and branch of industry.

The following indicators had broad coverage:

- civil status (*de jure* and *de facto*);
- citizenship (dual).

Preparatory phases

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The phases regarding the practical organisation of the Census started one year before

the census date and saw the active role of prefectures and other local authorities concerned with public administration⁽¹⁾.

The main activities comprised the following.

- Checking and updating of the denomination of traffic thoroughfares and of buildings; a total of 52 600 traffic thoroughfares were checked.
- Designing of cartographic materials for delimitation of the territory – i.e. 12 100 maps at 1:5000 scale, 1 900 maps at 1:25000 scale and 1 700 simple outlines of localities.
- Establishing the lists of traffic thoroughfares for purposes of enumeration, each including:
 - number of buildings, of which buildings with dwellings
 - number of dwellings
 - number of households
 - number of persons living permanently at that address
- Delimitation of the territory into: **Census Districts** – each under the responsibility of a supervisor and divided into ten departments (in localities with over 15 000 persons); **Census Departments** – each one under the responsibility of a chief enumerator and including 5 sectors; **Census Sectors** – each one assigned to an enumerator and including on average about 90 dwellings and 300 persons. At country level, there were 790 districts, 18 129 departments and 97 698 sectors. These values are very close to those estimated after delimitation was completed.
- Recruitment of census staff. For this activity, the city hall in each locality organised recruitment of staff from different fields of activity (131 670 persons who were at least high school graduates and had passed the test, out of a total of 149 200 individuals). Training was undertaken over two weeks, at the local and central level, in 350 centres (200 participants/2 days).

Public information

To inform the population of the Census, the Technical Secretariat created a programme of activities and means, which was submitted to the Central Commission.

The programme comprised of:

- designing, printing and dissemination of brochures, posters, appeals, calendars, logo;
- activities two months before or during the census, such as conferences and official statements to the press, interviews on TV, daily statements on radio

¹ Counties, municipalities, towns, communes and villages. As statistical division, eight regions at level 2, judet plus Bucharest (42 units) at level 3, communes, municipalities and orajse (2 948 units) at level 5

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- stations, diffusion of TV and radio spots, designing and updating of a web page;
- two toll-free phone lines within the Technical Secretariat (people requested free information on the census).

Similar activities were carried out in each county.

Field operations

From 14 to 17 March 2002 each enumerator made preliminary visits to the field to identify the Census Sector, with the support of cartographic materials, and to establish dates and hours for interviews with the respondents. On this occasion, it was possible to identify any omitted zones.

Enumeration was carried out from 18 to 27 March; the reference moment was 00:00 of 18 March. Registration of answers to questionnaires was done based on the declaration of the head of household and on identification cards. It was forbidden to request additional documents of identification. Registration of housing data was based on the declaration of the landlord or other responsible person from the household. Collaboration of the population was considered good throughout the country.

Immediately after field operations, further activities included:

- the codification of questionnaires and the filling in of control forms with provisional data by the enumerator (28-30 March);
- checking of questionnaires and control forms by the chief enumerators and by supervisors (1-8 April);
- validation and transmission of questionnaires and control forms from the local administrations to the various commissions (9-20 April).

Post-Enumeration Survey

During the period from 1 to 10 April 2002, a post-census survey (PES) was carried out. The main objective of the survey was to check the quality of information collected during the Census – both for individuals and housing – without correcting data.

Through comparison of responses obtained during the Census and the PES, the frequency and extent of errors could be established, the tendency to accumulate errors and the causes generating them. At the same time, the processing of survey data before those of the census facilitated the study of methods to eliminate any inconsistencies through logical and numerical checking. The codification of the errors permitted grouping them by cause (e.g.: due to the interviewed persons, enumerators or other sources).

The PES was carried out randomly using a representative sample of dwellings, individuals and households in all counties. The sample was established through probabilistic selection (cluster samples) in two steps: selection of Census Sectors

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(504) and dwellings (14 279 dwellings and 14 units for living in common for a total of 38 396 persons).

After data processing, important characteristics were revealed:

- omissions, duplications or wrong inclusion of individuals in a household;
- total number of errors taking into account the data source;
- number of errors and their type, for persons and dwellings registered during the census and at PES, in order to analyse the causes in detail;
- number of persons and dwellings for which errors occurred and their grouping taking into account the number of errors;
- the gross and net errors for each of the characteristics, in order to reveal how the enumerators' errors are reflected in the census data;
- the tendency to concentrate errors towards responding variants.

The main conclusion drawn after the PES and the comparison with the Census was the coverage of 99.83% of the number of persons registered at the time of the census. The omission was greater in urban areas (99.77%) than in rural (99.40%). The coverage for dwellings was 99.89%, results were not significantly better for the urban area. A total of 98.0% of responses were correct.

Data processing

Processing of census data was carried out in two steps – entering and processing of preliminary data and final data.

To obtain results within four months of the entering and checking of the **preliminary data** – a few indicators from the base questionnaire – and to obtain control tables the work was carried out at the county level. These results were validated by comparison with the 1992 census results and data from current statistics.

The preliminary data will be used as control figures for the validation of the **final data**. The automatic correction of these data, as well as data editing and validation will also be done at county level. The databases from the county level will be transmitted to INS for a new logical check and for calculation of secondary indicators.

In order to obtain the files with 2002 Census data in an electronic format (numeric indicators only) about 20 applications were designed using Visual FoxPro and distributed to the counties. Finally, data will be processed using programs written in Visual FoxPro and IMPS⁽²⁾ to obtain the final tables.

All programs and applications used to process the census data were designed within the INS Census Division, Informatic System Unit.

Data dissemination

² Integrated Microcomputer Processing System.

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After validation, a **publication with the preliminary results** will be published comprising data by territorial level referring to:

- the number and structure of population by sex, ethnic group, religion and mother tongue;
- the number of buildings and dwellings, as well as other information on housing.

In addition, the final tables, both those published and those at the disposal of users will ensure total transparency of results. The following **final census volumes** will provide information for preparation of in depth analyses:

- *Population – demographic structure* includes information regarding the number and structure of the population by demographic, educational, ethnic and confessional characteristics;
- *Population – social and economic structure* includes information on the number and structure of active and inactive population by demographic and socio-economic characteristics (sex, age group, professional status, occupation, branch, training level);
- *Population – ethnic and confessional structure* includes information on the number of population by nationalities, mother tongue and religion, in complex correlation, by some demographic, social and economic characteristics;
- *Buildings, dwellings, households* includes information regarding the number and the structure of buildings, dwellings and households, as well as the living conditions;
- *Population, buildings, dwellings*, in English, focusing on population characteristics, households and families, buildings and dwellings at different geographical levels.

In addition, final data will be disseminated on CD-ROM, and on a website.

Costs

The census budget was €26.6°million. To carry out the work on the Census, the budgets for the NSI, Ministry of Public Administration and local councils were increased by extra payments from the State Budget.

The expense budget was as follows:

- 82.3% for staff expenses direct costs (all enumeration and PES staff, data-entry workers at county level, additional personnel hired at local level, fees, transport, accommodation);
- 15.9% for material expenses (delimitation of enumeration sections, cartographic materials, questionnaire printing and diffusion, advertising, renting locations for training sessions, data transmission, fuel and local expenses);
- 1.8% for capital expenses, i.e. IT equipment.

Conclusion

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The results of the census will be used to increase knowledge of population and housing in Romania by administrative structures, i.e. distribution of human resources in the territory by demographic characteristics and socio-economic activities and use of housing resources. This represents the basis for substantiation of the socio-economic policies of the Government Programme, the national strategy for development of the country.

In addition, census results will facilitate the set-up of the sampling base for socio-economic surveys conducted by the INS or other agencies and to revise and forecast the population data series.

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