

Updated on February 22, 2023

## **MOST OFTEN QUESTIONS ON CENSUS OF POPULATION, HOUSEHOLDS AND DWELLINGS**

### **Question #1      What is census?**

Census is a comprehensive collection of data on population.

Contrary to interview-based surveys implemented on a sample basis, a census is both the largest, and the most complex statistical survey in terms of contents and its organization, and due to its comprehensives represents the most important source of information on number and characteristics on population, households, and families, as well as number, size, and equipment of dwellings.

With its ten-year periodicity, a census provides complete and quality statistical data up to level of settlements which cover data on: number of persons; their age and gender structure; economic activities, household structure, housing conditions, as well as other information important for assessment of current state and future planning and creation of different policies, both at national, and local level.

### **Question #2      What is purpose of census?**

The purpose of a census is to collect data on total number and territorial distribution of main census units (inhabitants, households, dwellings), main demographic, educational, migration, economic, and other characteristics, at the level of country, local self-government units, and settlements. Population censuses are the basis for population estimates in period between censuses and serve for projections on number of populations.

### **Question #3      For what purpose will be data collected by census used?**

Census collects data on the most important resources of country, on population. Demographic, educational, economic, ethnic and cultural, and other characteristics of population are very important for producing strategies, policies, and plans aimed at bringing progress to an entire society. Additionally, a census provides data on households and families, changes in their size and structure, and opportunity for users to analyse how much impacts some phenomena in the society on the family life. Number, size, and equipment of dwellings are also the subject of data collection by a census. A lack of complete records on dwellings requires to collect the area of dwellings still by traditional manner - census. In the pyramid of importance of national statistical system data, the data on population are a basis for the production of official statistics. The importance of census is also recognized by what the census represents:

- The only source of data at the settlement level;
- Sampling framework for all future sample-based surveys.

**Question #4      How and when the public will be informed that the census is ongoing?**

Statistical Office will inform population via a public campaign on all activities related to the census. The regulation on determining the period of implementing the census of population, households, and dwellings, and reference moment of census, adopted by the Government of Montenegro defines that the census will be implemented in period from 1 to 15 November 2023. The reference moment of census will be 31 October 2023, at 24.00.

**Question #5      How much time is needed to prepare the census and what is considered under preparation?**

Census is the largest and the most important statistical action, and as such is conducted every ten years. Complexity of preparation and organization of census is the reason why the census is conducted every ten years. Preparation activities of the current census start immediately after the end of the previous census. At the UN level there have been already established working groups that work on producing recommendations for the 2030 census round. The UN recommendations are usually ready five years before the very census round. Thus, a country has five years to carry out all necessary preparations – from adopting legislation, preparation of questions, decision on manner of census implementation, and all other preparations for the census. Currently, Montenegro is in the final stage of preparations, and questionnaires and guidelines are expected to be finalized very soon. This stage is followed by a preparation of trainings for census participants. This is also a demanding stage which requires both good organization, and preparations to prepare census participants, i.e. enumerators and other participants for the field work in a properly manner. Further on, a stage not visible outside is a stage that refer to data entering and processing. Statistical Office, both in the 2011 Census, and the 2023 Census, develops by its own capacities the program for data entering and processing which provides an independence in this stage too. Afterwards, there is a stage of data releasing which is the most interesting for users.

**Question #6      Are there made some actions on census preparations, and which ones?**

Within the census preparation framework under competence of Statistical Office, activities were done, as it follows:

- The pilot census was implemented in period from 1-15 April 2019, aimed at testing the prepared census instruments on a sample of 50 enumeration areas. The pilot census is supported via IPA 2015 multi-beneficiary project;
- The Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings was adopted (Official Gazette of Montenegro No 140/22 of 16 December 2022) by which the rules for collection of comprehensive data on population, households, and dwellings.
- Organizational structure established for preparing and implementation of census in Statistical Office,
- Under preparations are the instruments of the population census: questionnaires, methodological, and organizational instructions for the implementation of census. The preparation of the population census is based on: (i) EU Regulation No 763/2008 of the

European Parliament and of the Council on population and housing censuses, (ii) The Conference European Statisticians Recommendations for the 2020 Censuses of Population and Housing, and (iii) the European Statistics Code of Practice (15 quality principles);

Update of spatial register is ongoing.

#### Question #7 What must a census necessarily contain?

To have an official statistical survey, the first thing is to prepare it according to the stipulated methodology. For the census, there are two international documents: UNECE Recommendations for census rounds, and Regulation EU for census.

To have the census data internationally recognized and comparable, it is necessary to cover all data envisaged by regulations and obligatory questions from the UN recommendations.

The legal basis for implementation of the 2023 Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings in Montenegro is the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings. This Law regulates the rules for preparations, organization, and implementation of census of population, households, and dwellings.

The Law is fully harmonized with the mentioned international documents, except in terms of census implementation period what is also confirmed by the opinion of EC on the draft law.

Based on the Law, Statistical Office prepares all methodological documents and instructions necessary for implementation of census.

#### Question #8 How does data collection for population census look like?

The envisaged census of population, households, and dwellings will be implemented using the traditional method, i.e. collecting the data directly from the citizens of Montenegro, i.e. 'door-to-door'. In the 2023 census, hired enumerators will collect the data on households, dwellings, and other housing units by using the direct method of interview, directly from an adult household member, from 1 to 15 November 2023. The data are collected according to the situation on 31 October 2023, at 24.00 hour.

Enumerators must show their authorization card when entering a household to collect the data. Enumerators must enter the data in the census questionnaires in the same manner as provided by a respondent. Enumerators, instructors, state instructors, controllers, and other persons that perform the census related tasks must perform census activities in both timely and determined manner, in line with rules and instructions of Statistical Office.

Statistical Office is planning measures for protection and confidentiality of data in all stages of census, from collection to releasing. During the field work, in addition to legislation measures, every enumerator will be obliged by contract to protect the data collected as an official secret. An additional measure is signing the statement on confidentiality by which the census participants are met with provisions of Law on Protection of Individual Data, Law on Official Statistics and Official Statistical System, and Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings.

Measures and manner of keeping data confidential are stressed out during trainings of census participants to provide a physical protection of data against the use of the third persons.

Additionally, Articles 34 and 35 of the Law on Census envisage a fine in amount of 100 to 500 euro, both for census participants, and persons not giving data or not giving accurate data, but also for recording or taking photo during the interview, and releasing it via internet or media.

**Question #9      Why is the census implemented by using PAPI method (face-to-face interview during which enumerators use paper forms)?**

Respecting sound methodology principle, principle of cost effectiveness and accuracy, and reliability principle (Article 6 paragraph 1 items 7, 10 and 12 of the Law on Official Statistics and Official Statistical System) – Statistical Office prepares the implementation of census within its and offered capabilities.

Accordingly, this body has neither technical, human, nor financial resources for the above-mentioned implementation, and additionally the analysis 'Advantages and disadvantages of CAPI data collection (interview face-to-face, where enumerators use computer/tablet) in the population census' pointed out that the interview 'face-to-face', where enumerators use paper questionnaires (PAPI method) is the only way appropriate for the conditions in Montenegro.

**Question #10      Who will be census participants, and how will they be selected?**

Census participants are: enumerators, instructors, state instructors, controllers, and other persons which perform census-related tasks. A responsibility over the selection of instructors and enumerators, pursuant to Article 16 Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings, is on census commissions that will be established at the local self-government units.

Census participants whose engagement is responsibility of Statistical Office are determined pursuant to Article 13 of the Law on Census of Population, Households and Dwellings. Currently, there are active five commissions in Statistical Office with 52 members in total (Statistical office's staff), and which work on preparation and implementation of individual census activities: production of normative acts, methodological instructions and organizational rules; preparation of cartography; public campaign and preparation of program for entering, processing, and dissemination of data that will be collected by the census, and other specific census activities.

**Question #11      How many persons will be necessary for the field work? What type of trainings do they need to take? When do the trainings start?**

It is expected from 4 000 to 4 500 census participants (enumerators, instructors, state instructors, controllers, and other persons performing census-related tasks). In this moment, there are formed 5 commissions with 52 members nominated among the Statistical Office's staff that actively work on census preparations.

Trainings of census participants are obligatory and are implemented in accordance with the training plan. The training plan has been not yet finished, but what can be said for sure that the best is to hold the trainings as close as possible to the data collection period so to keep fresh knowledge gained on trainings.

Period of selecting and trainings of enumerators, instructors and controllers will be defined after the census commissions are established.

#### Question #12 Is it planned to have the international monitoring of census?

International monitoring, i.e. *'Assessment mission in Statistical Office for preparation and organization of census'* was organized by Eurostat in the 2011 Census. This census received high assessment rates in terms of institution readiness to prepare and conduct the census.

Statistical Office has not been able until now to ask officially from the Eurostat to organize the monitoring of census, having in mind that the Law is adopted at the end of December 2022, and Decree on defining the implementation period of census of population, households, and dwellings and census reference moment is adopted on 9 February 2023 by the Government of Montenegro.

Statistical Office will send the request to the Eurostat for the international monitoring of census.

#### Question #13 Why are not reference moment, implementation period of census or at least year of census regulated by the law?

Several reasons for making this decision exist. There are some:

- Draft law which was sent to the public discussion contained 2021 as a proposed year for implementing census. One of comments was to delete year from the draft law with very detailed and justified explanation. It was accepted.
- Uncertainty related to the adoption of law and with this, implementation of census.
- Uncertain epidemiological situation caused by COVID-19 additionally impacted on defining the census implementation by shorter procedure, i.e. regulation of the Government.
- Practice of the 2003 census shows that the Law was 6 times in the parliamentary procedure due to the change of reference moment of census implementation period due to the different reasons.
- Very often elections and their postponement directly impact on the census implementation period, having in mind the recommendation of not overlapping election and census campaigns.

Afterall, it is important to point out that when defining the date of census, the UNECE recommendation for the 2020 census round will be considered, especially recommendation 77, where it is said that it is very important the timing of the census should not overlap with major political events such as state or local election campaigns, since the population may confuse the two events and be less responsive to the enumerator at home.

For implementation of census it is very important a stable political and social secure environment in the country.

UNECE further reports in recommendations 75 and 76 that it is of great importance period of the year the census is implemented, and recommends to avoid period:

- Of expected unfavourable weather conditions (in case of Montenegro winter period)
- When the most of population is not in their usual place of residence (in case of Montenegro a period of tourist season).

Question #14

**Is it a practice here and in the world to adopt the census law without defined time and reference moment of census implementation?**

Worldwide and in Europe, a practice for the census implementation differs a lot. In the most countries there are not adopted separate laws for implementing census, but the census implementation is regulated by the programme of work, i.e. annual plan of official statistics that includes all statistical activities for the relevant year.

Certain countries possess one law on census that is valid for decades and by which only obligation for the implementation of census every 10 year is defined, and everything other is defined by secondary legislation.

Balkan countries (except Slovenia which does not possess the law) adopt separate laws before the census implementation with defined period and reference moment. This has been done up to now also in Montenegro for the 2003 Census and the 2011 Census. But, uncertainty in the condition of pandemic and social and political conditions in Montenegro caused that Statistical Office proposes neither the period of data collection, nor the reference moment of census.

Additionally, the accent and essence of the law in the European countries is on the data obtained by the census, while the practice in the region is that a new law for every census is adopted and mainly referring to the organizational part of the census.

Contrary to the region, some countries worldwide implement the register-based census, and public is not informed that that this statistical survey is carried out.

Question #15

**Are there rules or statistical standards that the census of population cannot be implemented in period or year of political elections?**

The UNECE recommendations for population census, 77 recommendation more specifically envisage:

'It is very important that the timing of the census should not overlap with major political events such as state or local election campaigns, since the population may confuse the two events and be less responsive to the enumerator at home. Unfortunately, NSIs may have sometimes little or no control over this.

It is also very important that the census should be taken within a stable political and socially secure environment in the country. In times of political or military instability the public are less likely to be compliant and the security of enumerators may not be guaranteed. The level of security should allow enumerators to reach all parts of the country safely.'

Question #16

**How will be the census implemented? Are we obliged to answer all questions?**

A person providing the answers must pursuant to the law provide accurate answers to all questions. It is important to point out that respondents do not need to give answers on questions on ethnic and cultural characteristics, but in this case the enumerator must enter answer 'Does not want to declare himself/herself'.

Pursuant to the Law on Census of Population, households and dwellings Article 26, paragraph 3 'The enumerator must enter into the census questionnaire data in the way the person covered by the census has provided.'

**Question #17      What type of persons are covered by census? Is the population obliged to take part in the census?**

According to the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings, the census covers:

- Montenegrin citizens with permanent or temporary place of residence in Montenegro, no matter they are present in place of residence or temporary reside in another place in Montenegro or another country,

- Foreigners with approved permanent or temporary residence in Montenegro, and foreigners with the usual place of residence, defined by Article 7 paragraph 1 item 4 of the Law on Census of population, households, and dwellings.

Every natural person who does not provide data asked from him/her by the census, and if he/she does not provide accurate and complete answer to every question will be imposed to a fine.

**Question #18      Can respondents reject the enumeration?**

Pursuant to the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings, Article 26, paragraph 1 'Person covered by the census is obliged to take part in, i.e. to answer to all questions and to provide accurate and complete answer to every question, in accordance with the census methodology.'

**Question #19      What questions will be collected by the census?**

All questions that will be covered by the census are provided in the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings (Articles 9, 10, and 11).

Citizens can expect in the census approx. 50 questions from key areas: demography, education, economic activity, migration trends, disability, housing, structure of family, and household.

**Question #20      Are there changes in census questions compared to the previous census, and if yes, which ones?**

Questions covered by the census are defined by Articles 9, 10, and 11 of the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings.

Compared to the previous census, a change is visible at the level of domains by including question from the domain of agriculture. Additionally, there are also changes at the level of defining questions, due to implementing national legislation or additional requests from users.

**Question #21      Does the census cover questions on disabilities?**

Article 9 paragraph 1 of the Law among other things defines: 'functional ability of persons for everyday routine activities and disability'. This is a standard formulation defined by the Washington Disability Group dealing with the disability issues, and which refer to persons with disabilities. Questions related to this domain are in details covered by the methodological instructions, as a secondary legislation. When defining questions, there have been an open cooperation with Association of Youth with Disabilities of Montenegro with a proactive approach in this area.

**Question #22 Does the census cover the same-sex partnership?**

The census will cover the same sex partnerships, pursuant to the existing legislative regulation, i.e. Law on the Same-Sex Life Partnership.

**Question #23 How can respondents answer to questions if they do not speak one of the languages officially used or they need the assistance with the language?**

This question will be regulated by the census methodology. A usual practice is that the Statistical Office prepares a publication with the questionnaires on foreign languages the most often used in Montenegro, and that the census commission provides a person trained and speaking the language of the respondent.

**Question #24 Are Montenegrin citizens abroad enumerated? How are they enumerated?**

The Law on Census envisages that all persons with residence or stay in Montenegro are enumerated, regardless of whether they are present in the place of residence or temporarily reside in another place in Montenegro or abroad.

The data on absent household members will be provided by an adult household member

Pursuant to the Law on Census, Article 3, the census will cover the following units:

1) Persons:

- Montenegrin citizens living in Montenegro, or with the place of permanent or temporary residence in Montenegro regardless of whether they are present in the place of residence or temporarily reside in another place in Montenegro or abroad;

- Foreigners with permanent or temporary residence in Montenegro, and foreigners who have a place of residence from Article 7, paragraph 1, item 4 of this Law;

2) Households;

3) Dwellings, and other occupied housing units.

For Montenegrin citizens abroad, an adult household member will provide the data on absent household members.

In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Statistical Office organizes and implements the enumeration of representatives of the state of Montenegro working in diplomatic and consular representative offices of Montenegro, international organizations, household members residing abroad with these individuals.



Statistical Office, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence, organizes and implements the enumeration of members of the Army and other persons sent to participate in international forces or peacekeeping missions abroad.

**Question #25      How can respondents be sure that data will not be misused by enumerators?**

Envisaged measures for protection of data by enumerators are:

1. Pursuant to the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings, Article 34 – a fine ranging from 100 euro to 500 euro shall be imposed on census enumerator, instructor, controller, and other persons performing census related activities if he/she:

- Fails to perform census tasks in a timely and stipulated manner (Article 24 paragraph 1);
- Fails to take care about accuracy of entered data provided by data providers, i.e. about accuracy of data entries and processing (Article 24 paragraph 2 indent 2);
- Fails to keep as official secret all data on enumerated individuals (Article 24 paragraph 2 indent 3);
- Misuses the enumeration procedure in a manner he/she records take photo of interview in presence of persons covered by census or filled census questionnaires and forms or video file or photo publicly announce through internet or media (Article 24 paragraph 2 indent 4).

2. Service contract is concluded with enumerators in which a special attention is devoted to the data confidentiality. Additionally, all census participants will sign a special statement on respecting the confidentiality principles where it is a clearly defined obligation to protect the data collected by the census, in accordance with the Law on Official Statistics and Official Statistical System, Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings, and Law on Protection of Individual Data.

3. A special attention during the trainings of all census participants will be devoted to articles of the mentioned law referring to confidentiality and protection of data.

**Question #26      Can citizens exercise some rights based on the copy of census form?**

Pursuant to Article 29 of the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings, paragraph 3, data and questionnaires for census collected by the census can be used neither for the purpose of determining obligation of citizens, nor as a proof for exercising citizens' rights.

**Question #27      Having in mind the pandemic COVID-19, will you have special recommendations related to the population census?**

Statistical Office will adopt organizational instructions with detailed recommendations for the census implementation, which will also comprise, in case of need, recommendations for COVID-19, in cooperation with competent institutions in Montenegro.

**Question #28**    **What are EU regulations connected with the upcoming census?**

The EU requirements related to the census are defined by the Regulation EU 763/2008 as a framework regulation on census. It regulated the main elements related to the data produced by the census such as definitions of the basic terms, data to be transmitted to Eurostat, possible data sources for census, deadlines for data transmissions, as well as principles for quality provision. Additionally, there are three implementing regulations determining closer contents of certain questions, manner of data transmission, and contents of quality reports.

**Question #29**    **Why is it important to have a regular implementation of census, i.e. what are negative impacts on country and society if this statistical survey is not implemented in the defined period?**

Based on the principles of European Statistics Code of Practice, Statistical Office put efforts to provide to all users quantitative and representative information on economic, demographic, social and environmental state in Montenegro, in line with the internationally defined methodology and the highest professional standards. Implementing the principles of official statistics, coherence and comparability are also compulsory principles, according to which the official statistical data must be aligned in terms of contents, terminology, and periodicity, as well as with internationally recognized concepts, nomenclatures, classifications, definitions and methods, aimed at reaching their comparability.

Thus, the data comparability is also ensured by defined periodicity of implementing statistical survey.

In terms of census implementation dynamics, global UN recommendations envisages the implementation of census every ten years, the 2020 round. Respecting the mentioned recommendation, there is enabled to determine the world population number.

Additionally, in the European Union, a census year is the 'first year', and accordingly the EU regulations envisages the census implementation for the European Union in 2021.

The importance of data that are a result of implemented census is multiple. Namely, the census results not only give numbers of population, households, and dwellings, they are also used as a frame for sample, and as a database for many surveys in the period between two censuses.

In this sense, the best quality is succeeded in years immediately after the census. Some countries, like Ireland, implement the census every five years to ensure a quality database for a large number of surveys.

Thus, from one side, as much the implementation of census is prolonged, a risk for reduced comparability of data with countries that completed the census is higher. On the other side, the database from which sample-based surveys are derived is becoming outdated.

**Question #30**    **Importance of census from scientific approach?**

The importance of census is very high. In a pyramid of statistical surveys, census i.e. population statistics represent a basis/database/ground of statistics, and peak of pyramid is provided for

National Accounts and GDP that subsume all statistics. Without goods bases, there are no other parts of pyramid.

The importance of census from statistical perspective is multiple:

- Source of data at the lowest level of territorial units – settlement level (which ensures data on specific population groups – demographic, geospatial, migration, ethnic, culture, educational, economic activity, and other population characteristics). Data on dwellings refer to dwelling space, number of rooms, installation equipment, and other questions. Data on households will refer to number of members and structure of household and family.
- Frame for sample for all sample-based surveys based on households.

Census data possess a special importance in almost all policies that a country creates, because a base data of every policy is population, regardless of work domain: health, education, employment, economic development, human rights, etc.

### Question #31 When will be the census results released?

Pursuant to the Law on Census of Population, Households, and Dwellings (Article 30), Statistical Office will release the preliminary results of the census by settlements, local self-government units, and for the territory of Montenegro (number of populations, households, and dwellings, and other occupied housing), within 30 days of the completing of the census.

Statistical data will be considered preliminary (subject to change during the statistical data processing) until such time they are subject to regular reviews.

Statistical Office will release final data in line with the Annual Plan of Official Statistics and Statistical Release Calendar.