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Press Release of MONSTAT regarding request of the Inquiry Commission to submit an electronic database the Census 2011

Regarding the demands of the Inquiry Commission of the Parliament of Montenegro, to MONSTAT to deliver complete electronic database of the Census 2011 with the individual data, MONSTAT issued a press release which states out the following:

Statistical Office submitted its reply to the Inquiry Commission of the Parliament in the form of solutions referring to the relevant regulations, pursuant to the Administrative Court.

Please note that the Statistical Office allowed the access to electronic census databases to the Inquiry Commission, **but without names of persons**, even with regards to the first request of the Board of Inquiry in June 2013 and the date were submitted by notice 01-1970/2 on CD.

Thus, the electronic database of the Census has been submitted in accordance with the Law on Official Statistics and the system of official statistics, as well as in accordance with the Law on Census, as aggregate data for all required features, but without the possibility to identify individual data.

Statistical confidentiality is a legal obligation

The principle of statistical confidentiality ensures the protection of individual data collected through statistical surveys. Protection of personal data means that to anyone and under no circumstances information by which you can identify individuals can not be provided.

By the Law on Official Statistics and the system of official statistics and the Law on Census, the question of statistical confidentiality is regulated. This is one of the essential principles of our law governing official statistics in Statistical System of Montenegro. **All member states of the United Nations have committed on the principle of statistical confidentiality.** In addition, Montenegro as a candidate for membership of the EU has an obligation to respect the principle of statistical confidentiality in accordance with Regulation (EC) No. 223/2009 on European statistics. Taking into account the obligations of membership in the UN, as well as obligations arising from EU candidate status, Montenegro has quoted all the UN and EU principles governing the issues of official statistics in its legislation 2005 and 2012. With this we achieved full compliance with the EU acquis in this area. Good progress of the harmonization of our legislation in the field of official statistics with EU legislation, was emphasized for the second year in a row, with the grade "good progress" through the progress report published by the European Commission, Chapter 18 - Statistics.

Statistical confidentiality and Census of population

It was very often mentioned during the census, and on the actual census forms it was highlighted, that data collected through Census are going to be used only for statistical purposes. This means that individual data (name, ID number, address, and answers to other questions) may not be used except for statistical purposes.

To the citizens of Montenegro the Law on Census guarantees the right of confidentiality statement which was given in the Census, especially since it was not controlled by examining the personal documentation. Citizens reply were an expression of their free will, and therefore, the statistics may not be used for the exercise of a right, or the imposition of certain obligations, as stipulated by the Law.

Data of electoral roll and census are not comparable

Survey Committee of the Parliament of Montenegro seeks individual-census data (name, address, and other responses given by adult citizen in the list) for comparison with electoral roll, but MONSTAT notes that these figures are not comparable.

Electoral roll and Census of population, and therefore the number of adult citizens towards one or the other source, may not be comparable because of different purposes, objectives and methodology used.

Legal basis and criteria for identification of citizens to the electoral roll and the legal basis and the statistical criterion for determining the number of inhabitants according to the census, are completely different and thus not comparable. The criteria for determining the number of adults under the electoral roll are: citizenship, legal age, and at least two years of residence in Montenegro, as evidenced by the personal documentation.

Statistical criteria for determining the number of adult citizens are statements of respondents that he/she is an adult, as well as his statement about the place of usual residence and intent or plan to stay in Montenegro in accordance with international statistical legislation. Statement of the respondents are not checked by examining the personal documents, and therefore the data obtained in this way can be used only at the aggregate level (village, municipality and state).

Due to the different criteria, and different definitions of residence and habitual residence, the term adult citizen to the electoral roll or the term permanent citizen of legal age according to the census are not comparable. According to statistical criteria, many citizens of Montenegro (which may or have the right to vote) does not constitute a permanent population by census because their usual place of residence at a critical time of the census (31 March 2011) was not Montenegro, which is the main source of the difference between the number of adult citizens to the electoral roll and according to the Census. As an example of these differences, the treatment of the Montenegrin students studying outside Montenegro can serve. As habitual residence of students at the time the census was outside Montenegro, although they were numbered members of their household, they do not make the number of adult residents of Montenegro according to the Census, while to the other side it is entering in the adult population according to the electoral roll. Also, the population of Montenegro, by the Census, it is not made of the citizens of Montenegro for over a year living abroad, on the other hand they can make the number of adult citizens to the electoral roll. Or, Montenegrin population according to the census it is not made of citizens living abroad less than a year, but the members of their family at the time of the Census showed intent or plan that they will stay out of Montenegro for over a year, while on the other hand, that person may enter in the adult population according to the electoral roll.

The above examples indicate that the number of adult residents in Census incomparable to the number of persons registered in the electoral rolls, especially bearing in mind that the methodology of the list in any case did not predict control of personal documents. Therefore, determining the accuracy and quality of data on the number of adult citizens of Montenegro in the electoral roll, based on official statistics of the census data, it is not credible and can lead to erroneous conclusions.

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