Press release

12 May 2021

The Census has finished. Thank you!

At midnight on 11 May, the most visible part of the 2021 Population and Housing Census – collection of data from households – has definitely finished. As at now, we keep a record of 4.2 million electronic census forms (questionnaires) sent by households and 683 thousand completed paper census forms (questionnaires) sent. Whereas the online system switched off right at midnight and only those who had logged in into it before midnight could continue filling in the electronic census form (questionnaire), the collection of paper census forms (questionnaires) will still be running for several days, even at contact points that will thus remain open for a couple more days.

*“We are over six demanding weeks of the Census and I would like to express my thanks to all fellow citizens who have actively participated in it. We are very glad that they were enumerating not only themselves and their households – they were also helping each other by getting their relatives, friends, and acquaintances counted. We were aware that the current difficult situation was not exactly suitable for a nationwide census and therefore we appreciate even more that an overall majority of people got counted (enumerated) successfully and in time. Our thanks also belong to thousands of census officers (census enumerators), the Czech Post, employees of the Czech Statistical Office (CZSO), and other partners. Together, they all helped piece together the picture of the current life in the Czech Republic,”* Marek Rojíček, President of the Czech Statistical Office, says.

As at today, the Czech Statistical Office received 4.2 million electronic census forms (questionnaires) and 683 thousand paper census forms (questionnaires). However, only during their processing it will be made clear how many dwellings (flats), households, and persons got counted (enumerated) by them. *“In the previous Census, we enumerated 4.1 million dwelling households, in which 10 million 145 thousand of usually resident persons lived. A further 292 thousand of the usually resident people lived out of dwellings (flats), mainly in collective accommodation establishments,”* Robert Šanda, the 2021 Census project responsible person, explains. From 2011 until the end of 2020, according to construction statistics, a further approximately three hundred thousand dwellings (flats) were completed. *“From the previous Census until the end of 2020,* *the number of permanently residing population increased by about two hundred thousand. When taking into account all these pieces of data, it can be assumed with high probability that an overwhelming majority of the population got counted (enumerated),”* Robert Šanda adds.

*“We will only find out the precise number of the enumerated during the processing of the results. Naturally, we will inform the public about the progress of the processing and we will share, on an ongoing basis, the information found out and interesting facts that will emerge from it. However, those will not be the results in any case. The complete results will truly be available only at the turn of this year and the next year,”* Marek Rojíček, President of the Czech Statistical Office, says. It is because the paper census forms (questionnaires) have to be scanned, digitalised, first of all, quality of filled in data must be checked, and further data from administrative data sources must be matched with all of them, i.e. also with the electronic ones. Only then will personal data be erased from all the forms, i.e. birth certificate numbers (“*rodné číslo*” in Czech), names, surnames, and document numbers (ID card numbers). All these actions require time, i.e. weeks up to months. Only after that starts processing of statistics. Therefore results cannot be published before the turn of the year.

The Census Contact Centre as well as information services of the Czech Statistical Office played an important role in the Census as people were addressing their questions there. The Census Contact Centre opened on 12 March and since then it has dealt with 263 034 phone calls. A unique chatbot, which people turned to even right when filling in the electronic census form (questionnaire), gave its advice to 264 845 users. Operators of the Census Contact Centre and staff of the CZSO information services were successfully solving even more complicated cases when, for example, a respondent could not tell whether he/she is also obliged to get counted (enumerated) or when he/she tried to use a type of papers (ID) not suitable for logging in. Such cases were solved case by case. It also applied to cases of expired IDs without machine readable data, which were added to the system after it had been consulted with the Ministry of the Interior. Operators also helped fill in the forms over the phone while they went through the form with the caller step by step and advised to him/her what shall be entered into which place.

The 2021 Census is organised by the Czech Statistical Office and its results will influence life in the Czech Republic during the next decade. The Census not only measures the population size; it is mainly indispensable for the CZSO – for it to be able to release information every year about the population change (an increase or a decrease) and about distribution of the population. On that, for example, allocation of taxes from the budget is based every year. Mainly municipalities are interested in that because data from the Census can significantly influence life of their population. It is because the Ministry of Finance distributes tax revenues namely according to the data from the Czech Statistical Office. When inhabitants do not participate in the Census, municipalities (and therefore also their citizens) can lose a big amount of money designated for their development every year. The CZSO is also obliged to make population forecasts every five years – in order to set the pension system or due to a pension reform, in order to plan services such as construction of kindergartens or community care homes (retirement homes). That would also be impossible without data from the Census. Moreover, it is necessary to know, for example, what type of people live in a given locality – what their education is, their profession, and how far they commute to work. From that, one can tell whether there is potential labour force in some region for a certain type of enterprises, to which people would not have to commute two hours, and therefore direct investments towards there. Besides that, commutation also shows spatial territorial relationships – it means that people may belong to some Region in terms of administration, however, in reality it is obvious that they commute to work somewhere else. Therefore, the benefit of the Census for the next decade is enormous and without it we would not have essential information about ourselves.

Contact:

Jolana Voldánová

2021 Census spokeswoman

Mobile phone number: +420 704 659 357

e-mail: jolana.voldanova@scitani.cz