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NEWSLETTER

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QUARTERLY INFORMATION BULLETIN OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER
FOR THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF NATIONAL MINORITIES IN HUNGARY



Census 2022



The census is a decennial data collection **that affects us all** and in which **everyone is obliged to participate**.

It is carried out at the same time throughout the country, with the same content and using the same methodology. The census **provides an accurate and detailed picture of all important characteristics of the population of our country**, in particular its size, demographic characteristics, health, education, employment, ethnic and religious composition, living and housing conditions. Its data provide a reliable basis **for the preparation of the most important economic, social and spatial development decisions affecting our settlement and the surrounding area, for scientific analyses and provide important information on local care and service needs**.

The census **is also of particular importance for the nationality communities living in Hungary**: the credible, substantiated and professional official statistical data obtained during the census contribute to our knowledge, understanding and assessment of the social phenomena and processes of the nationalities in Hungary.

Respond responsibly!

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

WHY IS IT NECESSARY?

The census is provided for by law, which requires a population and housing census (census) to be carried out by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) on the basis of the situation on the territory of Hungary at 0:00 on 1 October 2022.

WHEN DOES IT TAKE PLACE?

Timing of the census data collection

The census will be conducted between 1 October 2022 and 20 November 2022. The replacement census of persons and their dwellings who have dropped out of the census shall be completed by 28 November 2022.

- **between 1 and 16 October 2022** - self-completion online; in the absence of this:
- **between 17 October and 20 November 2022** - enumerator census
- **between 21 and 28 November 2022** - those who have not done provided data in either form by 20 November 2022 may submit their returns to the notary of the municipality.

WHO PARTICIPATES IN THE CENSUS?

Filling out the census questionnaire is compulsory for everyone living in Hungary, regardless of age or nationality; for those temporarily staying abroad for less than 12 months; and for foreigners living in Hungary who have been staying in Hungary for at least 3 months.

WHAT ARE THE NATIONALITY ASPECTS?

In the census questionnaire, respondents can declare the following about their nationality:

1. nationality,
2. mother tongue,
3. language used in family and friends.

Responses to the census questions are compulsory, but answering questions on nationality, mother tongue, language used in the family, language spoken in the community of friends is optional.

HOW WILL YOU BE NOTIFIED?

KSH will send a postal request letter to all addresses in Hungary in the last days of September. The census measures the actual living situation per household, not the registered place of residence. The identity of the persons who live at a given address will be revealed by the completed questionnaires, but it is not known in advance, so the questionnaire is not addressed to a person, only the address of the dwelling (up to the house number) is given in the address.

WHAT HAPPENS TO THE DATA?

Unlike in the past practice, the 2022 Census will collect data by providing the surname and forename in a way that can be used to identify the individual. The reason for this is to check that everyone's name has been included in the questionnaire and to ensure that everyone is included only once in the census results. Identification is common in international census practice.

KSH manages census data in a highly secure environment and the IT system has been developed with the approval of the Hungarian data protection authority (NAIH).

Data handling is strictly regulated by national and international legislation. Data collected during the census may be used for statistical purposes only. The results may only be published in aggregate form and may not be linked in any way to the identity of the respondents.

THE MAIN IMPORTANCE OF THE CENSUS

Credible, substantiated and professional official statistics on the nationality communities living in Hungary obtained through the censuses contribute to our knowledge, understanding and appreciation of social phenomena and processes in Hungary. The aim is to collect data that provide accurate information on the cultural-linguistic and socio-spatial indicators of each nationality community, its integrated or segregated existence, the diversity and intergenerational development of its identity, and the potential disadvantages associated with being a nationality. The data collected provide a basis for preparing social, economic and policy decisions. The census is the only data source that cannot be replaced or substituted by other sources, and which provides both the completeness and the spatial detail of the data required, thus meeting both domestic and international data needs.

The data obtained during the censuses are also of particular importance because **the Act on the Rights of Nationalities links the exercise of language rights and the organising of municipal-level nationality self-government elections to the proportion and number of nationalities registered in the census.**

It is of utmost importance that the data recorded on natural persons living in Hungary during the 2022 census provide a real, reliable and as nuanced as possible picture of the complex situation of the thirteen nationality communities living in Hungary.

GENERAL COMMENT NO. 2/2020. OF THE MINORITY OMBUDSMAN ON THE ISSUES RELATED TO NATIONALITY LAW CONCERNING THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2021 CENSUS – SUMMARY –

On 14 April 2020, Minority Ombudsman Elisabeth Sándor-Szalay issued [General Comment No. 2/2020](#), on the issues related to nationality law concerning the preparation and implementation of the 2021 census.

The census affects a number of fundamental rights of the members of nationality communities. The aim of the wide-ranging presentation in the general comment of domestic and international data protection rules on census-related data collection and data processing is to provide the nationality communities living in Hungary with a thorough and credible overview of the 2021 census process.

The study has reviewed the following topics thematically:

- Anonymity of the census:
 - The issue of surname and forename as mandatory set of data to be recorded;
 - The issue of the interconnection of the recorded data sets (data on the nationality affiliation of the surname and the forename);
 - Data protection issues of the census.

- -Identifying census questions on nationality affiliation, with particular reference to the need to survey data on “language used in the family and with friends”.
- Use of nationality mother tongue during the census:
 - Issues of creating census questionnaires in the nationality language.
- Participation of nationality self-governments in the preparation and implementation of the census:
 - Providing organized information for members of the nationality community on the census and its technical implementation;
 - Census data collection (inquiry about nationality affiliation);
 - The method of selecting census interviewers.

In the course of her proceedings, the Minority Ombudsman did not reveal any structural problems in connection with the census practice of the Central Statistical Office and the preparation and planned implementation of the 2021 census. Nevertheless, she examined a number of practical issues that could have a decisive impact on the preparation, implementation and consequences of the 2021 census.

With her proposals, the Minority Ombudsman called on the Parliament's Committee of Nationalities in Hungary and the national-level nationality self-governments to increase the enforcement of the rights of nationality communities in Hungary during the preparation and implementation of the 2021 census.

The general comment made a number of recommendations to the Central Statistical Office, partly on compliance with the relevant data protection rules and on cooperation with the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, and partly on the methodological and technical implementation of the census.

The Minority Ombudsman asked both the representatives of the nationality communities in Hungary and the Central Statistical Office for continuous and close co-operation. In her proposal to the National Authority for Data Protection and Freedom of Information, the Minority Ombudsman asked the authority to pay special attention to the professionalism and legitimacy of nationality-related data management in the preparation and implementation of the 2021 census.

It is important to point out that ignoring the proposals set out in the general comment could lead to a violation of nationality rights.

The census, originally scheduled for May-June 2021, has been postponed by the Government due to the emergency situation. The census will take place between 1 October 2022 and 20 November 2022.

GENERAL COMMENT NO 2/2020 ON THE ISSUES RELATED TO NATIONALITY LAW CONCERNING THE PREPARATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE 2021 CENSUS - FOLLOW-UP -

Following the adoption of the [General Comment No. 2/2020](#), the Minority Ombudsman continued to actively support the preparation of the forthcoming census with her professional proposals.

In the summer of 2020, she provided an opinion and technical suggestions on the content of the implementing regulation on the tasks related to the implementation of the census.

It can be positively assessed that Annex 2 of the Regulation already includes – in line with the proposal made in the general comment and the needs of the nationality communities living in Hungary – that KSH shall examine the composition of the nationalities of Hungary on the basis of nationality, mother tongue and language spoken in the family and in the community of friends.

It should be emphasised that the Act CI of 2018 on the 2021 Census stipulates that during the preparation, implementation and processing of data, KSH shall cooperate with the interest groups of nationality communities and ensure the transparency of census-related activities. The Minority Ombudsman drew attention to the fact that the draft implementing decree lacked a definition of the concrete tasks necessary for practical implementation.

In the opinion, she explained that KSH can make a positive contribution to the implementation of a successful census from the point of view of nationality law if the following conditions are met:

- the Parliament will seek to cooperate with the Committee of the Nationalities in Hungary and the nationality self-governments, obtain their views, get to know their needs and take them into account as far as possible;
- during the preparation and implementation phases, it provides information to raise awareness and encourage nationality self-identification, and campaigns on compliance with statistical and data protection rules and the future use of data;
- formulate proposals to the notaries responsible for territorial implementation on close cooperation with the municipalities' nationality self-governments, with the persons belonging to the nationality communities living there and on the involvement of enumerators with nationality ties and nationality language skills in territorial implementation;
- allowing the census to be supported by information and questionnaires available in the nationality languages.

It can be considered as a success that, as a result of the proposal, pursuant to section 3 (1) (g) of the Government Decree 362/2020 (VII. 23.) of 2021 on certain tasks related to the implementation of the 2021 census and amending Government Decree 388/2017 (XII. 13.) on the mandatory data provisions of the National Statistical Data Collection Programme, the notary, as the person responsible

for the implementation of the local census, is obliged to cooperate with the local nationality self-government, provide information on the tasks to be performed, and consult with the local nationality self-government in the establishment of the network of enumerators.

On 26 July 2022, staff members of the Minority Ombudsman participated in a meeting initiated by the KSH, the purpose of which was to meet in person with the staff of the KSH and representatives of nationalities living in Hungary, as well as other professional organisations, including the Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, to discuss the most important current issues related to the census.

At the meeting, the KSH staff informed the participants about the method and schedule of the census, the questions on the nationality issue and the possibilities of responding, and introduced them to the census website (<https://nepszamlalas2022.hu/en>) and its **Solidarity is smart** page (<https://nepszamlalas2022.hu/solidarity-is-smart>), where they intend to share important information with the members of the nationality communities.

During the relevant technical consultation, the KSH staff referred to and welcomed the Minority Ombudsman's General Comment No 2/2020 on this issue.

One of the main objectives of the consultation organised by the KSH was to provide information on the **Solidarity is smart** page about the cooperation with the Parliament's Committee of the Nationalities in Hungary, the nationality self-governments and other professional organisations, including in particular the Minority Ombudsman, thus encouraging persons belonging to nationality communities to participate in the census.



Solidarity is smart

**For more information on the census,
visit**

<https://nepszamlalas2022.hu/en>

website.

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The census questionnaire is also available
in nationality languages at

**[https://nepszamlalas2022.hu/about-the-
questionnaire](https://nepszamlalas2022.hu/about-the-questionnaire)**

page.