

On 16 December 1999 the Saeima (Parliament of the Republic of Latvia) adopted the Law on Population Census. This law provided for a strong legal basis for the 2000 Population Census. **Pursuant to the recommendations of international organisations and the experience of other European countries, the Law envisaged that all resident population had to be recorded in the census - natural persons registered in the Population Register, as well as those natural persons who are not, but have legal rights to be registered in the Population Register.** It is indicated in the Law that information characterising dwellings of the mentioned persons also had to be collected and compiled in the census.

The methodology of the census and the range of questions included were developed in compliance with the recommendations of the international organisations - the UN Economic Commission for Europe (ECE) and "Eurostat", as well as the requirements of the state, local governments, scientific institutes, universities and other data users.

In order to verify different methods of data collection, the comprehensibility of the census questions, the responsiveness of the population, as well as to test the data processing equipment, machinery and software of the potential census data, two pilot censuses were carried out. The first one was performed in 1997 in 2 towns and in 2 pagasts. The second one was performed in 1999 in a number of districts of the capital city Riga. Each of these pilot censuses covered about 5 thsd persons.

Before the census start on 31 March 2000, the machinery necessary for data collecting and processing was gathered and the corresponding software was purchased. It included scanners for questionnaires, computers, a. o. equipment. The CSB of Latvia has received financial support from the Governments of Sweden and Finland for resolving the technical problems, software development, printing the basic census forms - Household questionnaires and Person's questionnaires.

Specially chosen and trained enumerators, visiting population at the place of their residence collected information. People had also a possibility to visit local statistical offices or 34 additional enumeration offices in Riga, the capital city, and answer the census questions.

Friday, 31 March 2000, at 00.00 o'clock was set as the crucial census moment. Enumeration questionnaires were completed in correspondence to the situation on the census date and hour.

Over 5 thsd people were involved in the 2000 Population Census in Latvia, of which 430 - as enumeration supervisors, 4260 - as field enumerators.

A part of information pursuant to the Census Programme - answers to 10 of 33 questions - were obtained from the Population Register and from the information system of the State Revenue Service. In the Census 14 questions on each person residing in the dwelling and 9 questions characterising the dwelling were asked to people. Person's questionnaires were completed for each person aged 7 years and over.