



The major one refers to the introduction of the e-census. For the first time in the history of Bulgarian statistics the citizens were able to complete their questionnaires online. Additional challenge related to the public communications campaign was the decision of the Parliament to advance the Census and to conduct it earlier than it was planned initially. This resulted in a very limited timeframe for the preparation and the implementation of the public communications campaign.

To overcome these challenges and to ensure broadest possible participation in the Census we had to develop a flexible and innovative approach, different from the strategies implemented in the previous censuses. The public communications campaign had three main goals:

- To increase census coverage through making people aware of the importance of census results and motivating them to take part in it;
- To improve accuracy of census results;
- To generate a positive environment and support to the census interviewers during the field work;

The mix of two main ways of data collection (e-census and traditional face-to-face interviews), carried out consequently, required the communications campaign to take place in three phases:

- Educational phase - the period before the Census date;
- E-census motivation phase - the period of e-census (From 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> of February 2011);
- The period of getting support to the traditional field work - the period of three weeks of visiting households and conducting face-to-face interviews.

Each phase required specific actions in order to achieve the goals, to prompt participation and to spread the census messages as broadly as possible. The Census 2011 public communications strategy was incorporated in the general strategy of transparency and openness to the society of the statistical surveys methodologies applied by Bulgarian NSI. This principle was extensively applied in the period of preparation of the Census 2011 when the census program, the questionnaires and instructions had been developed. A number of consultations with academia, government institutions, and non-governmental organizations were carried out. The debate on the scope, content and design of the census questionnaires was opened to the general public and this helped a lot in getting people aware of the importance of census results, of the benefits that the census may bring at local and individual level. The openly sharing of information on