

historical and international context. The objectives, social benefits, definitions and methodology of the census were explained. Data confidentiality and related dissemination issues received greater emphasis than ever before.

There were a large number of targeted actions aiming at improving the participation of special population groups, such as students, the elderly and foreigners residing in a country. Traditional kits and gadgets were provided to schools, but some countries such as Italy and the United Kingdom went beyond that. In order to facilitate the communication with minorities and migrants the messages and data collection instruments (questionnaires and guidelines) were almost everywhere presented in several languages.

The 2001 Census awareness campaign in Italy was particularly intensive, with the participation of a number of public and private agencies and service providers. Messages to the population aimed to increase participation and to establish confidence. "Italy you are, Italy you will be" was the slogan. The fullest use of the Internet was an objective from the earliest stages of the project. This included releasing pilot forms being tested in view of the introduction of a new population concept⁴ and very detailed instruction material. The official site maintained by the National Statistical Institute (ISTAT) served for the usual presentation of final questionnaires, leaflets, multi-lingual posters, FAQ, animations, press releases and school material. It also established an exchange platform for ad hoc information material prepared by municipalities, and provided plenty of other guiding documentation.

A comprehensive educational activity named '**Census at school**' was organised by various authorities six months before the census day in about 2,000 compulsory education schools. It included 190 000 students participating in the preparation and undertaking a survey about their daily activities. The results of this work were summarised in a novel that was published on the website and afterwards turned into a play performed in theatres.

In the case of United Kingdom, the advertising was highly important in persuading respondents to mail back their completed forms. The publicity was based on simple, positive and frequently delivered messages. Many events and promotions were undertaken at the national and regional levels, in partnership with local media. Organisations in the public, private and non-profit sectors of society facilitated the contacts with target groups. The people-friendly nature of the census was emphasised all the time. In Wales and other parts of the nation special activities addressed ethnic issues - in particular the importance for all groups to be properly represented in the counts.

⁴ Apart from the present and resident populations, the last Italian census introduced the notion of the population "standing on the territory", that is the resident and non-resident persons who depend on the facilities of the community. This includes residents not staying temporarily elsewhere, and non-residents temporarily staying in the community during the reference period.