



Weekly Briefing

**Czech Republic social briefing:
The 2021 Census: Basic Features in The Social Context
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The 2021 Census: Basic Features in The Social Context

Summary

The Czech authorities took a census in 2021. The censuses have been carried out periodically since 1869. People's participation is legally binding, nevertheless, some questions (ethnicity, religion) are not obligatory. According to the official statistics, however, several hundred citizens did not fill in the census form. The census uncovered that the Czech Republic's population is growing steadily, reaching the number of 10,524,167 inhabitants by 2021. This increase is caused by immigration though. The demographic development as a whole remains to be negative.

Introduction

In March 2021, an official census was carried out in the Czech Republic. For the first time, it was realised in a predominantly electronic form since 85 per cent of the population made use of the online method. The final, comprehensive results have not been published yet, nevertheless, the Czech Statistical Office, responsible for the census, presented the first results in January this year. The data show the basic features and development tendencies of Czech society. Those regarding the demography such as ageing, ethnic structure or religion are of special importance. In the present briefing, attention is paid to the population development, demography, age structure, nationality and ethnicity.

A historical perspective

The census was held for the third time in the history of the Czech Republic (2001, 2011 and 2021). The census is carried out regularly and the final results are usually processed and published no later than 18 months after the census itself. The formal state censuses have been taken since the mid-18th century. In 1754 Empress Maria Theresa ordered to carry out the census which is considered the first of its kind in Europe. In 1869, the census got a modern form with characteristics that have been used until the present day (nationality, marital status, religion, and so on), and at the same time, the 10-year periodicity was introduced. The censuses were subsequently taken in 1890, 1900, 1910 (within the Austro-Hungarian Empire), 1921,

1930, 1950, 1961, 1970, 1980 and 1991 (the 1940 census was cancelled due to the war events as well as territorial changes and state transformation resulting in the establishment of the Berlin-dependent Protectorate of Bohemia and Moravia in 1939).¹ Naturally, parameters and categories varied over the last three centuries. The same applies to the scope of people who are eligible to take part in the censuses. For instance, persons with long-term residence permit but without the Czech Republic's citizenship have been included in the censuses since 2011.

The 2021 census covered several relevant areas. The state authorities inquired the place of usual residence, type and conditions of living (including parameters of the real estate, energy or water supplies, heating), people with whom the respondents shared their household, education, mother tongue, ethnicity, religion, career and profession or the kind of transport used for going to work or school.² The problem of the current setting is that in many cases people can indicate whatever they want including evident nonsenses which devalue the information value of the census. Even though participation is obligatory and people are obliged to answer truthfully, the cases of lies, ironical or provocative replies are not rare at all. Up to hundreds of thousands of citizens broke their legal obligation avoiding participation in the census while many others intentionally lied. Some of these will be punished financially, however, the fine is only nominal amounting to 10,000 CZK (around 411 EUR). Moreover, it is often difficult to prove that the information given is false unless the case is absolutely obvious. The Czech Statistical Office expects that mere hundreds of people will be penalised.³

Ethnic composition

By 2021, the Czech Republic had 10,524,167 inhabitants, which is by 87,607 people more than ten years ago. The population has been growing since the beginning of the century. Interestingly, the number of foreigners has been increasingly relatively rapidly. In 2001, when this indicator was introduced to the census statistics, 124,608 foreigners lived in the country while the figure rose to 490,438 people, the real number being probably even higher. Among them, men always outweighed women. Not surprisingly, most of them live in the capital of Prague where foreigners account for 13.9 per cent of local residents, while the lowest numbers

¹ *History of Censuses* (2020, April 01), czso.cz. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://www.czso.cz/csu/czso/history-of-censuses>.

² *Translation of a paper Census form into English* (2021), czso.cz. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from https://www.czso.cz/documents/142154812/156229594/LSF_2021_vysvetlivky_EN_VZOR.pdf.

³ Švihel, P., „Bydlím se 120letou osobou z Grónska.“ *Za lži při sčítání lidu padnou pokuty* (2022, January 16), seznamzpravy.cz. Retrieved February 15, 2022, from <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/domaci-zivot-v-cesku-bydlim-se-120letou-osobou-z-gronska-za-lzi-pri-scitani-lidu-padnou-pokuty-185754>.

are typical of Olomoucký and Zlínský regions (mere 1.7 per cent). The difference between Prague and the remaining regions is substantial in this regard, which demonstrates the overall attractiveness and international competitiveness of the Czech capital. The highest share of the foreign nationals, accounting for 4.7 per cent of the population, is represented by the citizens of Ukraine (1.4 per cent), Slovakia (0.9 per cent) and Vietnam (0.5 per cent). Among the foreigners, those from beyond the European Union prevail (3.2 out of 4.7 per cent).⁴

Another category surveyed was ethnicity. It should be stressed that answering this question was voluntary, therefore, many respondents did not provide the state agency with their details. Whilst 25.3 per cent of people did not respond in 2011, last year the number increased to nearly one third.⁵ A role might be played by negative experiences from the past when similar data were used to various kinds of discrimination. Nevertheless, 83.8 per cent (6,033,014) of those who filled in the form claimed allegiance to the Czech ethnicity, 5.0 per cent (359,621) to the Moravian one, 1.3 per cent (96,041) to the Slovak one, 1.1 per cent (78,068) to the Ukrainian one and 0.4 per cent (31,469) to the Vietnamese ethnicity. The Czech ethnicity is highly represented first and foremost in the South Bohemian Region (94.2 per cent) and Hradec Králové Region (94.0 per cent). In an overwhelming majority of regions with the exception of the South Moravian and Zlín ones, more than 75 per cent of respondents identified with the Czech ethnicity. In the two latter regions, the proportion of the Moravians is relatively highest.⁶

Sex & age

In terms of sex, the imbalance is only minimal with 50.7 per cent of females and 49.3 per cent of males. An insignificantly higher number of females in the Czech society is a long-term constant confirmed by all censuses since 1869. The share of females is highest in Prague with 51.3 per cent.⁷ The last census reaffirmed the negative tendency of ageing. The average age increased to 42.7 years compared to 41.0 years in 2011. The figure for women amounted to 44.1 per cent while for men to 41.2 per cent. Overall, the number, as well as the percentage of the elderly (65 years and more), has been increasing. Whereas it equalled only 0.91 per cent in 1961 and 1.30 per cent in 1991, in the post-socialist period the situation began to change

⁴ *Census 2021 – Citizenship* (2022, January 13), czso.cz. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from <https://www.czso.cz/csu/scitani2021/citizenship>.

⁵ Černý, P., *První výsledky Sčítání 2021 v kostce* (2022, February 16), statistikaamy.cz. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from <https://www.statistikaamy.cz/2022/02/16/prvni-vysledky-scitani-2021-v-kostce>.

⁶ *Census 2021 – Ethnicity* (2022, January 13), czso.cz. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from <https://www.czso.cz/csu/scitani2021/ethnicity>.

⁷ *Census 2021 – Sex* (2022, January 13), czso.cz. Retrieved February 16, 2022, from <https://www.czso.cz/csu/scitani2021/sex>.

considerably. The opposite tendency can be observed in the case of children (0–14 years). In 1961, their proportion was 2.43 per cent, and 2.41 per cent in 1980 while dropping to 1.69 per cent in 2021.⁸

The average age has been increasing rapidly how demonstrated by the comparison with the 1991 data, according to which the figure was 36.3 years irrespective of sex. However, the age structure of the population is not even. The youngest population lives in Prague (41.4 years) and Central Bohemian Region (41.6 years), on the contrary, the oldest one in Zlínský region in an eastern part of Moravia (43.8 years) and Karlovy Vary Region in the western tip of the country (43.6 years).⁹ It is beyond any doubt that these figures reflect the economic situation and perspective of individual regions. Both regions with the oldest population are relatively remote from the economic centres with insufficient infrastructure connectivity and economic base which hinders quicker development as well as creating both economic and social opportunities for younger people.

Conclusion

The 2021 census has reaffirmed long-term tendencies, particularly that of population ageing, slow increase of the total number of inhabitants as well as a rapid one of foreign nationals living in the Czech Republic. At the first glance is it obvious that the capital of Prague maintains its specific position as demonstrated on the data regarding the number of foreigners or age structure. The capital has become increasingly multicultural. At the same time, it attracts more foreigners from non-EU countries than from the West. It relates especially to the Ukrainians whose number is undoubtedly higher than the official statistics show which is connected with labour migration processes. The recent census has revealed the increasing problem of demographic factors. The Czech Republic's population pyramid has been more and more negative with a substantial rise in the proportion of the elderly and concurrent decline in the figure of children. It will have multiple and far-reaching consequences for the whole society.

⁸ *Češi zestárli, průměrný věk je 42,7 roku. Pět procent populace jsou cizinci* (2022, January 13), idnes.cz. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/cesky-statisticky-urad-scitani-lidu-2021-tiskova-konference.A220112_162902_domaci_knn.

⁹ *Census 2021 – Age structure* (2022, January 13), czso.cz. Retrieved February 17, 2022, from <https://www.czso.cz/csu/scitani2021/age-structure>.