

# The Census 2011 in Germany

Here we have compiled the most important information about the purpose and methodology of and the data protection arrangements for the Census 2011 in Germany. If you should have any further questions, please contact us using our contact form <http://www.zensus2011.de/Kontakt> or call us on +49 (0) 611 – 75 2011. It will be a pleasure to help you.



# European Union and Census

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In accordance with European Union (EU) legislation, all the Member States are required to take censuses of population and housing every ten years from 2011. To ensure comparability of the results at European level, all Member States have to provide information on a specified range of variables.



# Statistical offices

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The Census 2011 is the largest statistical project in Germany right now. The Census is conducted by the Federal Statistical Office and the statistical offices of the Länder.



# The aims of the Census

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The aim is to provide the most accurate snapshot possible of basic information on the population, housing space, education and employment as of **9 May 2011**.



# The aims of the Census

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These data help to inform many decisions: It is, for example, important to know exactly whether more kindergarten places, schools or homes for the elderly will be required.



# The aims of the Census

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A lot depends also on the official numbers of population: the equalisation of revenue between the Länder, the boundaries of constituencies for Bundestag elections, the distribution of votes among the Länder in the Bundesrat, and the number of seats Germany has in the European Parliament.



# The Republic has changed – the data basis has not

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In the former territory of the Federal Republic, the last complete enumeration was held in 1987, in the GDR a population census was taken in 1981. Ever since, the official current number of population has been determined using a statistical method called intercensal population updates. However, the older the basic data, the less accurate the method. And much has happened since the last population censuses: the Berlin Wall fell, many people moved from east to west, and European integration has progressed rapidly. At present there is reason to assume that the updated total population of Germany is about 1.3 million too high.



# How does the German model of a register-based census work?

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To implement the EU-wide Census 2011, Germany has decided to employ a mixed-mode method that collects data from multiple sources and combines a complete enumeration with sample surveys.





# How does the German model of a register-based census work?

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Nowadays, technological progress enables us to use data that are already stored in administrative registers. Due to the requirement to register with the residents' registration offices, all municipalities in Germany maintain population registers that contain comparable information. In addition, data on all employees who are subject to social insurance contributions and on people who are registered as unemployed or looking for work are available from the Federal Employment Agency.



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However, these administrative data do not contain information on education or a migration background. Likewise, employment information for specific groups (for example, the self-employed) cannot be found in registers. There are no administrative registers of data on buildings and dwellings for the whole of Germany. For those reasons, surveys collecting information on buildings and housing, on households and on people living in residential homes or collective living quarters have to be conducted as separate components of the Census 2011. Especially with regard to the latter groups of people, the population register data are often seriously inaccurate.



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The surveys are conducted in different ways, but response to all of the surveys is compulsory because this is the only means to ensure the collection of high-quality data.



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– For the Census of Buildings and Housing, all 17.5 million owners of residential property will receive a questionnaire by post by the reference date. The questionnaire will request information on residential buildings and dwellings, such as the year of construction, type of building, equipment, floor space and number of rooms.



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– For the Household Survey, a maximum of 10 percent of the population will be interviewed by interviewers on or after 9 May 2011. The respondents who will be selected randomly will be requested to provide information, for instance, on their education and training, employment and migration background.



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– The survey to be conducted at residential establishments and collective living quarters is a complete enumeration with the aim of determining the official numbers of inhabitants. Therefore, the survey only collects the small amount of data that are necessary to identify the respondents' place of residence and hence to establish the official number of population. The residents of residential establishments and collective living quarters which are of a non-sensitive nature – such as student residences, old people's or care homes - will be personally interviewed on or after 9 May 2011.



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In facilities of a sensitive nature – such as psychiatric hospitals, refugee establishments or homes for disabled people – the facility management will be requested to provide the information on behalf of the respondents.



# Data protection is warranted with the Census

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Finally, linking the individual data sources will be a special challenge. The Census of Buildings and Housing will, on its own, provide results, for instance, on the number of dwellings and their size. The population registers contain information on the number of children of kindergarten age. But the Census 2011 is also expected to provide an answer on how much floor space is available on average to families with three or more children or to people living alone. These household relationships will ultimately have to be established between the individual Census components using a separate procedure, the household generating procedure.





# Data protection is warranted with the Census

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Data protection means safeguarding the personal data of individuals against abuse. With regard to the Census, this means that no personal, individual data must be removed from the domain of official statistics.



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Therefore, access to the computer centres of the official statistics agencies is limited by various structural, technical and organisational restrictions in order to keep the data safe. Apart from that, additional measures are taken to ensure data protection and data security so that especially the confidentiality, integrity and authenticity of the data are guaranteed in each phase of the Census 2011.

# Prohibition of transferring data back

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All official statistics in Germany are subject to the prohibition of transferring data back, and this prohibition applies to the Census 2011, too. Personal, individual data must not be passed on by the statistical offices to private or public institutions – neither to the police nor to the tax offices nor to any other authority. There is only one direction for the data to flow: to the official statistics agencies.

# Anonymised results

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All the information provided is exclusively used for statistical purposes. It is not the objective of the Census to find out about the individual living conditions or opinions of the population. The sole aim and purpose of the Census is to provide structured and reliable information on employment, housing and the general living situation in Germany.

# Thank you very much

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It will be a pleasure to help you.

More information:

<http://www.zensus2011.de>

