

STATISTICS OF BIRTHS

LEGISLATION

The survey is conducted pursuant to the Official Statistics Law (Official Gazette of RS, No 104/09) and the Official Statistics Program for the period from 2016 to 2020 (Official Gazette of RS, No 55/15).

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUNDS

Survey objective and description

The objective of the annual survey on births is to collect data on demographic features of live births and stillborns, as well as on demographic and socio-economic characteristics of parents.

The statistics of births are envisaged to cover all births (live births and stillborns).

The following data are collected: municipality of birth, vitality, sex, date of birth and personal number (*JMBG*), citizenship of child, body mass and length at birth, and gestation age as well, place of usual residence of mother, child birth order, child born within wedlock, out of wedlock or is abandoned newborn, parents' date of birth, parents' place of birth, parents' citizenship, ethnicity, educational attainment, activity and occupation.

Reporting units

The data on births are collected and delivered by registrars.

Coverage

According to the legal provisions on keeping the register of births, every birth shall be entered in the register of births maintained for the area of its occurrence, regardless whether the mother usually resides in this area.

When processed, the data are grouped according to the place of usual residence of mother. Thereby demographic statistics are processed according to the principle of place of usual residence, which is in compliance with the concept of usual resident population applied for 2011 Census of population.

Method, frequency and sources for data collection

Registrars are in charge of completing the statistical form on birth event, applying the method of interview and reporting method (i.e. replies to some questions are taken from the Birth registration form).

The data are collected on monthly basis and processed annually.

Individual data protection – confidentiality

The obligation of individual data protection is envisaged by Article 3 of the provision on protection of respondents, Articles 44, 45, 46, 47, 48 and 49 – confidentiality provision stipulated by the Official Statistics Law (Official Gazette of RS, No 104/09).

Main features and indicators – Definitions

Observation unit for statistics of births is a born, i.e. live born or stillborn child/infant.

Live born child is a child that after having been born, even for a short time shows vital signs (breathing, i.e. heartbeats), irrespective of the gestation age. If a child dies soon after having been born, primarily it is registered as a live birth, and then as a death case. If a child was born showing no vital signs, i.e. has not started breathing or showing some other vital signs such as heartbeats or muscular movements, and the gestations age was over 28 weeks (seven lunar months), it is considered as *stillborn* (late foetal death).

Body mass at birth is the first mass of a newborn, measured immediately after the birth and expressed in grams. Small body mass (below 2500 g), very small body mass (below 1500 grams) and extremely small body mass (below 1000 g) are considered as risk bearing.

Body length at birth is the first length of a newborn, measured immediately after the birth and expressed in centimetres.

Gestation age presents the actual duration of pregnancy and is expressed in whole weeks.

Place of birth and assistance at birth. In respect to this feature newborns are categorized as born “at medical institution” and born “at other places”. Those born at maternity hospital are included in the category of born “at medical institution” and they are considered to have received full medical assistance at birth. The category of born “at other places” includes children that have not been born at medical institution and these are further categorized by the feature “medical assistance”. If medical assistance at birth was provided by medical doctor or midwife, this implies that “medical assistance” was rendered. In all other cases, the option – born “without medical assistance” is applicable.

Child birth order. When defining the child birth order, both for live births and stillborns, included are all earlier births that the mother gave, i.e. live births and stillborns, within wedlock or out of wedlock.

Child born within wedlock or out of wedlock. A child is born within wedlock if has been born within wedlock as stipulated by the provisions of the family law.

Marriage duration. For statistics of births, marriage duration is a derived feature expressed in whole years while marriage union existed. The number of whole years of marriage duration presents the time difference between the date of marriage conclusion and the date of child birth.

Age of father/mother is expressed in their whole living years, as the time difference between the date of birth of father/mother and the date of child birth. It is expressed by whole living years and by five-year age groups.

Ethnicity. Pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia that envisages the freedom of expression of ethnic affiliation for the citizens, the data on ethnicity are provided according to the free and direct declaration of father and mother. Also, in accordance with the Constitution of the Republic of Serbia they do not have to declare their ethnicity.

The distribution of statistics of births by this feature was carried out in accordance with the classification of ethnic affiliation applied for 2011 Census of population.

Educational attainment. This means the highest educational level attained by accomplishing certain schooling, regardless whether obtained by graduating from regular school or school replacing regular, i.e. whether obtained by passing examinations in regular school or by completing certain courses of regular schooling within the formal educational system. The data on educational attainment are expressed by following categories: no formal education, incomplete primary school (1–3 grades of primary school and 4–7 grades of primary school), primary school, secondary school, (vocational) specialization after secondary school, higher school/college, university faculty/basic academic graduation, Master/MSc and PhD holders.

Activity. The data on activity for father/mother are expressed aggregated according to the following categories: person performing job paid in money or in kind or working as unpaid/supporting family worker in shop owned by household member or at family holding, person actively seeking job or trying to start private business, pensioner, person performing only housework at own household, pupil/student, person with income from real property, and other.

Occupation. By this feature aggregated are economically active persons by type of job they perform in order to earn means of sustenance. In data processing all occupations were categorized in compliance with the classification of occupations applied for 2011 Census of population.

Representative data

The data on births are presented on the level of settlement, municipality, area and the republic.

Starting from 1998 the SORS may not provide the data for the AP Kosovo and Metohija; therefore these data have not been included in the coverage for the Republic of Serbia (Total).

Harmonisation with international recommendations, standards and practice

The statistical survey of births is implemented according to the methodology harmonised with UN Principles and Recommendations for a Vital Statistics System Revision 2, Regulation (EU) No 1260/2013 of the European Parliament on European demographic statistics, Regulation (EU) No 205/2014.

SURVEY ORGANISATION

Implementation

As an authorized producer of official statistics, the SORS is in charge of defining the survey instruments, creating the methodology, the code lists required for the surveys, preparing and printing the survey forms and distributing them to the SORS regional departments.

The SORS regional departments distribute the survey forms to the reporting units in their territory, compile the filled forms, evaluate data coverage, accuracy and completeness, and carry out data entry and corrections.

The final evaluation, analysis, creation of tables and data publishing is carried out at the SORS.

Responsiveness

The obligation of responding to the survey is stipulated by Article 26, and the penalty provisions for the cases of refusing to respond or providing incomplete and false data are envisaged by Article 52, the Official Statistics Law (Official Gazette of RS, No 104/2009).

Main survey stages and release of data

1. Design and printing survey forms: September – November.
2. Delivering survey forms to the SORS regional departments until 30 November (to reporting units i.e. registrars: until 31 December).
3. Survey forms receipt at the regional departments, check-up and forwarding accurate data in electronic form to the SORS:
 - Regional departments: until 1 April
 - AP Vojvodina statistical department: until 1 May.
4. Logical and accounting control, creating tables and producing results: until 1 June.
5. “Vital events in the Republic of Serbia” release: until 30 June.

SURVEY INSTRUMENTS

Survey form

Statistics of births form, *DEM-1*

Guidelines for completing survey form

- Guidelines for registrars on filling forms on statistics of births, deaths and contracted marriages (forms *DEM-1*, *DEM-2* and *DEM-3*)

Nomenclatures and specifications

- Systematic list of settlements of the Republic of Serbia
- Classification of occupations

List of publications

The methodological explanations concerning the statistics of births can be found in the edition *Methodologies and standards: Registrar guidelines for filling statistical forms*, number 56 (Belgrade, 2014) and *Statistical forms coding* (Belgrade, 2015).

The results are published as the release “Vital events in the Republic of Serbia”, in the publications *Statistical Yearbook of the Republic of Serbia*, “*Demographic Yearbook*” and “*Municipalities and regions of the Republic of Serbia*” and in other thematic publications, also available at the SORS site www.stat.gov.rs

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