

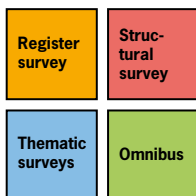


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Population

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The new census



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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Federal Department of Home Affairs FDHA
Federal Statistical Office FSO

Swiss Confederation

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The new census

From 1850 to 2000, every 10 years the census provided important information on the structure of the population in Switzerland. In 2010, a fundamental change took place: the census is conducted and evaluated on an annual basis in a new form by the Federal Statistical Office (FSO). In order to ease the burden on the population, the information is primarily drawn from population registers and supplemented by sample surveys. Only a small proportion of the population (about 5%) is now surveyed in writing or by telephone.

Thus, Switzerland now has a modern statistical system which makes it possible to observe on a continuous basis the structures and the development of the population and households, as well as of buildings and dwellings. Thanks to this new census, today's greatly accelerated economic and social change can be analysed much more effectively. At the same time, approximately CHF 100 million can be saved compared with the traditional census.

The new census is more modern, cheaper, faster and thematically more comprehensive.

Why a census?

The census is a very important source of information on population, politics, economics and science. In almost all countries in the world, censuses are conducted on a regular basis.

Census statistics on the age structure, the share of foreigners in Switzerland, the labour market, commuting behaviour and many other subjects form a significant base of information to answer many current questions, as well as for planning, policy development and decision-making in various policymaking and business sectors. These range from traffic to health, education, energy, environment, regional planning to the social insurance funds.

For example, businesses use population statistics to conduct market studies, for personnel planning and when choosing locations for new branches.

What is the new census?

- The new census is based on a register survey that evaluates existing administrative data. To this end, the FSO uses cantonal and communal population registers, federal registers of persons and the Federal Register of Buildings and Dwellings.
- Only necessary information that is not contained in a register still has to be collected with additional sample surveys:
 - an annual structural survey of 200,000 people; cantons and cities can enlarge the sample for their area;
 - thematic surveys of 10,000 or 40,000 persons (five themes, a different one each year);
 - an Omnibus survey of 3,000 persons on current issues.

Register survey

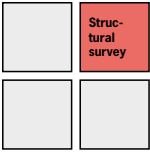


The register survey provides basic information about the entire population. It furnishes results on the size and structure of the population and of households, as well as of residential buildings and dwellings. The results are available each year at the end of August (population statistics, buildings and dwellings statistics) and at the beginning of the year following the survey (household statistics, housing conditions).

Characteristics of the register survey:

- provides information about people and households on age, sex, civil status, nationality, household size, etc.;
- provides information about buildings and dwellings according to age, building category, number of dwellings, number of rooms, area etc.;
- complete census based on available register data;
- the survey is evaluated annually;
- the data can be evaluated at a very detailed geographical level.

Structural survey

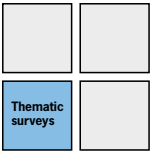


In the structural survey, a small proportion of the population is surveyed in writing. The survey complements the information from the registers and provides additional statistics on the structure of the population. The first results are available one year after the reference day. Cumulative results for the 2010–2012 period will be available by the end of 2013.

Characteristics of the structural survey:

- provides information on the themes of population, households, families, housing, employment, mobility, education, language and religion;
- written sample survey of 200,000 persons;
- participation by internet or by completing written questionnaire;
- conducted annually (reference day: 31 December);
- geographic aggregation levels: Switzerland, major regions, cantons and communes with more than 15,000 inhabitants;
- the results can be aggregated from 3 to 5 years. This facilitates geographically smaller-scale evaluations (after 5 years for communes with more than 3000 inhabitants);
- cantons and cities can enlarge the sample.

Thematic surveys



The thematic surveys are also carried out through random sampling. The statistics from these surveys can be used to add considerable depth to the information from the structural survey. The first results are available one year after the collection of data from the respondents has been concluded.

Characteristics of thematic surveys:

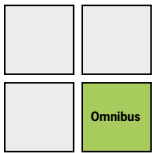
- telephone sample survey of 10,000 to a maximum of 40,000 persons;
- one thematic survey conducted annually;

- cantons and cities can enlarge the sample;
- a repetition of the same theme every five years is planned;
- information on specific themes at the level of Switzerland and the major regions.

Schedule of thematic surveys:

- 2012: Health
- 2013: Families and generations
- 2014: Language, religion and culture
- 2015: Mobility and transport
- 2016: Education and training
- 2017: Health

Omnibus



Omnibus surveys are multiple-theme surveys aimed at providing quick answers to current questions of interest to policymakers and the scientific and research community. The results are available about six months after the collection of survey data.

Characteristics of the Omnibus survey:

- telephone sample survey of 3000 persons;
- at least one Omnibus survey is conducted every year;
- flexible selection of topics depending on need;
- information on specific topics at the national level.

Topics covered by the Omnibus surveys:

- 2010: Internet use
- 2011: Multi-thematic survey on life in Switzerland

What about data protection?

Data protection and data security are among our most important concerns. They are guaranteed by the Federal Statistics Act and the Data Protection Act.

- all information is kept strictly confidential;
- names and addresses as well as the completed survey documents are destroyed after the data collection phase is completed;

- the data are only used for statistical tasks defined by law;
- the published results do not make it possible to draw any conclusions about the individual circumstances of individual households and persons;
- The employees of the FSO and of participating survey institutions are subject to statistical secrecy.

The new census in a nutshell

- reduces the burden on communes, cantons and the population;
- guarantees full data protection;
- guarantees the production of thematically broader and more up-to-date statistics on the structure and development of the population;
- makes an important contribution to rapid, information-based and consequently well-founded decision making by policy-makers and business leaders;
- saves about CHF 100 million compared with the traditional census;
- publishes the results quickly and regularly.

Further information:

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