

**Question for written answer E-007217/2012
to the Commission**

Rule 117

Marije Cornelissen (Verts/ALE) and Tanja Fajon (S&D)

Subject: Census in Bosnia and Herzegovina

The fact that a census law – a requirement in the enlargement process – has been adopted in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is in itself recommendable. However, civil society was not involved in the drafting of the law and there are some problems with its implementation. The proposed census' questions, for instance, include sensitive issues that might be used to determine the ethnic origin of citizens, even if they do not wish to be labelled as belonging to a particular ethnic group.

1. Is the Commission aware of the concerns of the civic initiative in BiH, supported by the Public International Law and Policy Group, which is questioning the form and procedure of the 2013 census?
2. If so, what is the Commission doing to address these concerns? Specifically, the following:
 - the lack of involvement of civil society in, or proper public consultation about, the census law, the census questions and the census procedures;
 - Questions 23, 24 and 25, the last of these being particularly problematic as it is a mandatory question about people's 'mother tongue', obliging them to label themselves ethnically. It is not possible to reply that Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian are all your mother tongue, or to leave the question open; these questions are not a Eurostat requirement;
 - civil society's demand to be involved in the pilot census plan, which begins in the autumn of 2012, determining training, logistics, site selection, etc.
3. What will the Commission do if the BiH authorities are not willing to address the main objections to the census questions?
4. Will the Commission make the International Monitoring Mission's assessment reports on the census public?