eurostat

Statistics, telematic networks and EDI bulletin

3 □ 1998

Letter from the EBES/EG6 - Statistics Chair

The EBES/EG6 is at the forefront of developments in Electronic Data Interchange (EDI). Our task is to follow the rapidly changing technology that delivers electronic commerce solutions, to define, influence and promote standards, and to use the results of this work in production systems. This issue gives a snapshot of our current and future work.

So far 1998 has been a year of change both for EEG6 and for the international process in which we work. The first change is that Philippe Lebaube is not writing this letter. As you will read elsewhere Philippe has left Eurostat and joined the OPOCE, and as a result he has, reluctantly, resigned his position as EEG6 Chair. I am proud to have been elected as the new Chair at the recent EEG6 meeting in Heerlen, Netherlands. I join the group at a time of change for the international EDIFACT process: the old Joint Rapporteur Team Meeting (JRT) held its last meeting on Wednesday 29th April and the new EDIFACT Working Group started its work on Thursday 30th April. You can read about this elsewhere in this newsletter. I also join the group as EEG6 grapples with the issue of emerging technologies. This could also mean a change. However, this is a different sort of change and is one, which we must manage in the way that we want to. What everyone needs is stable standards. What we do not know and cannot really predict is what the technology will be in 5 year's time. All we can see are trends and what we can do today. And what we can do today is different from what we could do 5 years ago. And so it goes on. So, how do we solve this problem? The answer is that, as much as is possible, we use the technology to take care of the problem. Of course, we have do some work as well. We have set a Special Interest Group (SIG) for statistics in the Object Management Group (OMG). We have also set up a Focus group within the XML/EDI group. We will use the EEG6 forum as the interface to the work of these groups. What are we going to do with these groups? Essentially, we want to make our specifications independent of the syntax used. When we chose EDIFACT we chose to make the specifications independent of communications protocol and independent of application systems. However, EDIFACT is a syntax and there are other syntaxes which have emerged which could offer benefits for statistical data collection and dissemination, particularly where

the Internet is concerned. Having said this, EDIFACT will continue to have a significant role to play in our work. So what do our users want? Well, we have discussed this with them over a number of months and they have told us that they want:

- promotion of our standards to a wide community
- stability for the current EDIFACT messages
- ability to offer Internet versions of the messages
- interoperability between different syntax versions of the messages
- integration of our specifications into commercial software

The only way we can really achieve this is to work with the various standards making bodies to ensure that we can define a common set of specifications that are technology independent. In this way users can choose the best technology and the best syntax for the job. This choice will be different depending on the job that needs to be done. This is what we have set out to do, and this is what we intend to achieve.

By Wolfgang KNUEPPEL
EBES/EG6 Chair

Inside This Issue

Who is Who? EBES Expert Group 6, EEG6 Statistics

Chair:
Wolfgang Knueppel, Eurostat, LU
+352-4301-33221
wolfgang.knueppel @eurostat.cec.be

Vice-Chair:
Rune Gloersen, Statistics Norway, NO
+47-22-8644590
rgl@ssb.no

Vice-Chair:
To be nominated

Secretary:
Jacqueline Jansen, Consultant, Eurostat, LU
+352-423113 481
j.jansen@wsel.lu

Editor and **Layout**
Sverre Dommersnes, Anite Systems,
Tel +352 405161 23,
sverre.dommersnes@anite-systems.lu

Working Group 1:
Chris J. Nelson, Consultant, Eurostat, LU
+44-1483-271443, chris@cnelson.demon.co.uk

Working Group 3:
Emile Bruneau, INSEE, FR
+33-1-4117527, emile.bruneau@dg75-d230.insee.atlas.fr

Working Group 4:
Jean-Pierre Grandjean, INSEE, FR
+33-1-41176537, sec@dg75-e201.insee.atlas.fr

Working Group 5:
Antoine Egea, French Customs, FR
+33-1-55074854, dnegea@tedeco.atlas.fr

Working Group 6:
Peter Hofman, De Nederlandsche Bank, NL
+31-20-5243313, dnb_sir@euronet.nl

Working Group 7:
Mr. Pietri Jean Marcel,Les Ports Français (UPACCIM-ADPF),FR
+33-1-42275262, portsfr@club-internet.fr (maritim part)
* Convenor for the aviation part is to be nominated

Address:
Eurostat
Secretariat EEG6
c/o Wolfgang Knueppel
Jean Monnet Building C3/002A
L-2920 Luxembourg

Phone:
+352 4301 33221,
+352 423113 481 (secretariat)

Fax:
+352 4301 32999,
+352 424607 (secretariat)

X400:
C=BE; A=RTT; P=CEC; O=Eurostat; S=EEG6;
G=Secretariat

Internet:
secretariat.eeg6@eurostat.cec.be

News since the last issue:
- Meetings: Joint Rapporteurs Team (JRT) meetings in Anaheim and Miami
- Officers: Mr Lebaube leaves the chair for Mr Knueppel - Messrs. Maqua and Vik, new project leaders
- New technologies: Statistics set up Interest Group in the OMG, and work starts on the hypercube model
- International news: Chinese government plans to use RDRMES
- Awareness: Activities and documentation
- Reports on trials: EDIMARS virtual conference, last news fromEDIBOP pilots, GESMES/CB and Central Banks

1.1 MEETINGS

JRT Meeting in Anaheim, (L.A.) Sept. 29 - Oct. 3, 1997 The Joint Rapporteurs' Team, JM8 officially convened in Anaheim. The group took part in the working sessions of the MOP Group (Mandate - Organisation - Procedures) which drew up the draft mandate and draft Terms of Reference of the future EWG (EDIFACT Working Group, to replace the JRT) as well as a first brainstorming on the new procedures. Ms Probert chaired the IHG (International Harmonisation Group) to develop generic message implementation rules.

JRT / EDIFACT Working Group Meeting, Miami, April 27 - May 1 The EDIFACT Working Group (EWG) came into existence on April 30th after the winding up of its predecessor, the Joint Rapporteurs Teams Meeting or JRT. The first Chair of the Steering Committee is Barry Keogh from Australia, and the first co-Chair is Pierre Georget from France. One aim of the statistics group at this JRT was to ensure a smooth transition for the group from the old JRT to the new EWG. As part of this process it was necessary to elect a Chair and vice-Chair of the new sub working group 8 (SWG8), both positions to be held for 2 years. Chris Nelson was elected as Chair and Joyce Babcock Hoffman from DynCorp of the USA was elected as vice Chair. Chris Nelson, as Chair, will represent SWG8 on the EWG Steering Committee. Also high on the agenda of the EEG6 delegates to SWG8 was to gauge the readiness of the new EWG to set up a liaison with other standards making groups, and in particular with the Object Management Group (OMG) and the XML/EDI group, in both of which statistics has a presence. Consequently, the new SWG8 (sub working group 8 (statistics) of the EWG) decided to start informal discussions with the statistics sub groups in the OMG and in XML/EDI. This decision was reported to the EWG at its closing plenary session. This is an important decision, as this liaison is a critical success factor for the EEG6 strategy to develop specifications, which are technology independent. SWG8 also defended the business case for the structure of the ARR segment, which is used in both GESMES and RDRMES. This segment is not designed in a way that is consistent with the message design rules, and there is now a general acceptance that the ARR is a legitimate exception to these rules, at both the version 3 and the version 4 of the syntax. An interesting session held at the EWG was a presentation on modelling given by members of the Techniques and Methodology Working Group (TMWG). The TMWG, like the EWG, is an empowered group of CEFACT. The TMWG believe that there should be one agreed language used for modelling and it favours the Unified Modelling Language (UML). Working groups 1,3, and 4 of EEG6 are already using the UML as the method of developing a prototype of the specification needed to bridge the three messages of GESMES, CLASET and RDRMES, and so we are supportive of its use. This is one more indication that the CEFACT process is recognising the need to work with and adopt new technologies, whilst retaining stability for the EDIFACT standard. Other important decisions taken by the JRT/EWG were:

· acceptance of the corrigendum to version 4 of ISO 9735 (EDIFACT syntax) which makes the date format in the UNB year 2000 compliant, and which contains a syntactical solution for segment collision

· acceptance of option 2 for the implementation of the new message design rules: in essence this means that any request for a change to an existing structure which at present does not comply with the new rules, will cause that structure to be marked for deletion in the directories and a new, compliant, structure will be developed. The effective date of this process is 4th May 1998. A full report of the meeting, the minutes, SWG8 workplan and the SWG8 agenda for the next EWG in Brussels can be found on the DSIS IRC.

By Chris NELSON, EEG6 Programme Office

EEG6 Meetings in 1997-98 EEG6 has convened four times since July 1997:

- In Dublin, November 12-14, 1997, hosted by CSO Ireland
- In Heerlen, February 18-20, 1998, hosted by the CBS

During the plenary meetings, the Chair recalled the end of the IDA programme which sponsored the EEG6 activities, and the preparation of an "IDA 2" programme. He emphasised the importance of informing the national IDA/TAC representatives of EEG6 activities and pilot projects in progress or yet to come, and stress the usefulness they have for national administrations. The re-organisation of EEG6 was also placed on the agendas, but only for "brainstorming". From the discussions and from the way the last meetings took place, it appears that more and more joint meetings between working groups are needed, in particular between WG1, WG3 and WG4, but also between all the working groups. Until now, two suggestions are emerging: one proposal is the convening of a joint meeting to deal with common issue or horizontal activities (e.g. awareness, security...), each Working Group delegating one or two representatives. This procedure has already been applied in Luxembourg, Paris, Dublin and Heerlen. Another suggestion is to split the plenary in two:

1. An opening plenary, for one hour, held after the Horizontal meeting and before the working sessions, where general information is disseminated, new technical approaches proposed, questions asked and calls for opinion requested, each Working Group delegating one or two representatives to report to their group during the working sessions;

2. An "interactive" closing plenary at the very end of the meeting where debates are expected --: reactions, feedback, answers to questions and points of views on specific issues -- and decisions made. A paper on this topic will be presented at the EEG6 meeting in Rome for decision. Contributions from the EEG6 Conveners are requested. In the meantime, a joint meeting on horizontal activities will be take place on May 7 in Luxembourg on awareness outside EEG6 and on the EDI/Internet issue.

1.3 OFFICERS, CHANGE OF CHAIR....

Change of Chair: Philippe Lebaube who launched EEG6 (MD6 at the time) in 1989 and was chairing the group since then, presented his resignation at the Plenary meeting of the Dublin meeting in November '97. He was warmly thanked for his dedication and his leading initiatives during all these years.Mr Bruneau, the Convener of WG3, made a humorous speech on the old couple they formed after 5 years of looking after their CLASET child!

Philippe in turn thanked all the EEG6 participants for their faithful attendance and patient work which ended in 7 Status 1 EDIFACT messages for the statistical sector. He wished the group good luck in his quest for efficient world-wide used EDI solution! For more about Philippe's departure, please read article on page 6. During the EEG6 Plenary meeting in Heerlen, on February 20, 1998, Mr Wolfgang KNUEPPEL, Head of Eurostat Unit A2 was nominated Chair of EEG6. No election was needed since he was the only one volunteering for the position and its responsibilities. The assembly expressed its satisfaction and applauded his nomination. Wolfgang Knueppel thanked them for their trust and promised he would do his best to deserve it. EEG6 also welcome the arrival at Eurostat of Mr Leonhard MAQUA and Mr Torgeir VIK. Mr MAQUA will take over Philippe Lebaube responsibilities as Eurostat project leader in the field of EDI. He was present at the EEG6 meeting in Heerlen and attended working sessions of WG3, WG4 and WG1, as well as the joint meetings (Tel +352 4301 33363, e-mail: leonhard.maqua@eurostat.cec.be). Mr VIK is a FND from Statistics Norway. He will work as a project leader in the field of EDI (Tel +352 4301 32463, e-mail: torgeir.vik@eurostat.cec.be)

Looking for Conveners 1. Due to the increasing responsibilities of Ms Marie-Françoise Rivet within the French Customs, it had not been possible for her to participate in the EEG6 meetings as much as she wished nor to hold her Convener position of WG5 (external trade statistics). Ms Sylvie Colas had been carrying out the difficult task of being both WG5 consultant and deputy Convener. In Heerlen, at the request of the chairmanship, WG5 nominated a new Convener, Mr Antoine EGEA, from the French Customs, who has been an active participant of WG5 for the last 5 years.

2. Chris Nelson is also still holding the double position of WG1 Deputy Convener and WG1 technical expert. He performs both missions with great success, but the work load on his shoulders is heavy. WG1 is looking for a candidate for the position. A suitable candidate should be part of a EU national statistical administration. His duties would include assisting with the planning of the Work Programme, chairing the work sessions, supervising the minutes of the group, preparing the agenda and interfacing with the EEG6 secretariat. He would get the dedicated assistance of the consultant. If you are interested, please make yourself known at the next EEG6/WG1 meeting.

3. WG7 received the resignation of both its co-conveners during the past 6 months, each of them driven away to other tasks and responsibilities. New convenor for the maritime part is Mr Pietri. For the aviation part, the group expects to elect a new convenor during its next EEG6 meeting in Rome at the beginning of October.

Statistics set up Interest Group in the OMG

The Domain Technology Committee of the Object Management Group (OMG) voted to set up a Statistics Interest Group (SIG) at the April meeting of the OMG. The intention of the group is to define the requirements for an object specification which supports statistical data collection and dissemination. There was a lot of interest in the exchange of and access to statistical data from a number of the existing Domain Groups in the OMG. This, coupled with the specific interest of statistical organisations and software houses, means that we can start now to develop the object oriented standards for statistical data exchange and access. This will result in a Request for Proposals (RFP) which will be issued by the OMG to the software industry. It is hoped that the RFP can be issued early in 1999, the winning proposal adopted by the OMG in mid-late 1999, and a commercial implementation within 12 months of this adoption. It is the intention of EEG6 to influence the requirements specification and to ensure that the functionalities embodied in the current EDIFACT specifications are supported in the object specifications. In this way, the EDIFACT messages can still be used with the object technology. If any organisation wishes to be kept informed of developments then for a limited period it can request to be included in the list server statistics@omg.org, without the need to join the OMG. Contact cathy@omg.org to be included on this list server.

Work Starts on the Hypercube Model

A three day brainstorming session was organised in March as the first step on the development of an object specification for statistical data dissemination. Representatives from each of the working groups 1,3,4 of EEG6 were present as well as specialists in the fields of metadata and implementation of statistical data base systems. The object model comprises the multi-dimensional data (the "cube") and the meta-data which combine together to form the "hypercube". The following key points about the model were identified.

1. The target user is the systems integrator and implementor.

2. It is a common model for statistical data and meta-data including nomenclatures.

3. There is a need to understand and agree the concepts behind the model, the actual data format is immaterial at this stage.

4. The model must be accepted widely (e.g. by data brokers).

5. The learning curve for implementation must be as short as possible.

6. It should be efficient in transmission.

7. Versions should be upwards compatible - so it is important to get the fundamental structure correct.

8. It should be comprehensive enough to be useful - there is no need to be frightened of complexity if the complexity is really required (quoting Einstein "it should be as simple as possible, but not less simple").

The group developed a number of different high level models. It is clear that there are many ways to represent the exchange of multi-dimensional data and related metadata in an object model. In general the fewer objects that are in the model, the more complex will be the programming. The objective is to develop a model which is flexible, generic where it needs to be, but with sufficient specific objects so that specifications and programs are not over complex. It was agreed that the first object model needs to support both multi-dimensional statistical arrays and classifications. A report on the workshop can be found on the hypercube model user forum on the DSIS IRC (this is a part of the EDI and Statistics group). Work will progress on this user forum. And another workshop will be organised when more concrete specifications are available. The work on the model will be input to the Statistics SIG of the OMG, for consideration when it creates the Request for Proposals (see the article on the Statistics SIG in this newslatter).

By Chris NELSON, EEG6 Programme Office

1. The second release of the DSIS-IRC (Information Resource Centre) has now been implemented at Eurostat and amongst others, an EEG6 www has been created. It includes a library of documents, such as agendas, minutes and Message Implementation Guides, a list of EEG6 related meetings and a list of EEG6 contacts.

2. EEG6 Annual progress report. The 1997/1998 Annual Report on EEG6 activities will be issued in September 1998.

Sadly, with the promotion of Captain James T. Lebaube to Admiral, the five year mission of the Federation starship, CEC Enterprise, has come to end, and the fleet has been recalled to Earth for a refit. Its five year mission - to seek out new standards; to discover new syntaxes; to boldly go where no statistician has been before - will be remembered warmly by all the crew. The ship's doctor "Bones" McCoy has been responsible for the health of not only the crew but has also tried to rescue alien life forms "I'm afraid the punched card is dead, Jim". Lt. Uhura, the lynchpin for inter-galactic communications, was always scanning the galactic airwaves to pick up any messages of importance. "Message from Working Group 3, Jim. Its very weak and on a sub-space frequency. They have lost power to the anti matter drive and are relying on CLASET for all essential life support systems and other nomenclatures. They request immediate assistance and don't know how long they can survive". The power house of the Enterprise was the engineer, Scotty: "I've managed to by-pass the JRT and wired the DSIS meta-data service directly into the

UN/EDIFACT directory. It'll give us the codes we need but I don't think we can survive for much longer. If we can't get GESMES going quickly I'm afraid she'll just blow". Of course, no mission would be successful without the first officer Spock "The new message design rules are just not logical, Jim". There have been many successes during the five years, but not everything has been easy. Notable problems have been experienced with the Klingons, who have tried to pollute the galaxy with proprietary data formats. The fire power of the Enterprise, with its photon torpedoes and phasers, were often pitted against the naked aggression of the Klingons. Yes, it's just like the STNE meeting!

Well, the Captain is now Admiral, and we all wish him well in the future. I hear Mr. Sulu has joined the Admiral in his new position. We are sure that after the frenetic pace with which he has driven the Enterprise in the last five years, he will be taking a well earned rest.

"Warp factor nine, Mr Sulu".

Captain James T. Lebaube leaves the enterprise

The State Information Centre (SIC) of the Peoples Republic of China will shortly start work on integrating RDRMES, the EDIFACT message for Raw Data Reporting, into the information flow between enterprises in China and the SIC. This is a part of a project which is co-funded by the European Commission., and which also involves two organisations from the EU, CESIA from France and ETNOTEAM from Italy. The first part of the project is nearly complete, with the development of a harmonised questionnaire and data

The picture above shows the welcome screen from the SIC data entry package, EPIS

entry package for the reporting of Foreign Loans. The last part of the project is to integrate into this package the RDRMES message and to carry out EDI trials with the selected enterprises. A key aspect of this new way of collecting data is that the SIC will act as the "one stop shop" for the enterprise reporting this type of information to the government. With the move to electronic reporting the SIC have taken the opportunity of combining several different questionnaires and have harmonised the nomenclatures used. Data destined for government departments other that the SIC will be forwarded automatically to them by the SIC. So the enterprise need report this data once only. The SIC was set up in 1987 under the jurisdiction of the State Planning Commission (now the State Development Planning Commission or SDPC) and, in addition to some economic forecasting and statistical production activities, is responsible for the State Economic Information System and the information backbone network in China called CEInet. The work is being carried out in the Department of the Database of the SIC which is responsible for the databases used by the SIC, as well as providing consulting services to the rest of the SIC. The Foreign Loans questionnaire is filled out by 4,000 organisations on a bi-annual basis, and its timely and accurate submission will help the government manage its foreign debt commitments. If the project goes well there are plans to add other electronic questionnaires to the software. It is hoped that by automating this process the reporting burden on the enterprises will be minimised.

By Chris NELSON

1.6.1 EDIMARS, the maritime transport pilot projcet - a virtual meeting for transport

On February 25, 1998, a meeting of the EDIMARS (EDI for Maritime Statistics) project took place, organised by the Transport Unit of Eurostat and consultants from Alcatel Telecom Software & Services (ATeSS), within the framework of the IDA/DSIS Lot 8. Holding such a meeting is nothing special - as a matter of fact, it has taken place twice a year for two years now - except that, this time, there was no meeting room, but an address on the web! Indeed, Eurostat and ATeSS decided to experiment a "virtual meeting" where all the participants instead of a physical venue, would meet in an Internet-based environment, accessible from their PC through their usual browser. The organisation was similar to the one of a real meeting: convocation, agenda, contributions required from the participants, need to be "there" at a given time...

The environment which was used has been developed under another Eurostat contract (IDA/DSIS Lot 2) and is part of the DSIS-IRC, the web site developed by Eurostat for exchanges between participants of the various Member States.

No meeting room, but an address on the Web The role of EDIMARS is to ensure the implementation of an electronic network of statistical data collection in the field of maritime transport in Europe. The project partners are executives of NSAs or ministry of Transport, officers of port authorities or transport operators, fonctionnaires of the transport Unit of Eurostat, one representative of DGVII and the ATeSS consultants. All of them took an active part in this virtual meeting. They participated in the on-line discussions from 7 European capitals in addition to Brussels (DGVII), Luxembourg (Eurostat) and Paris (Alcatel). Some participants had provided before the meeting information which was stored in the DSIS-IRC electronic library where it was possible for everybody to browse or download these documents. At 10 o'clock (GMT+1), kick-off of the experiment, taking into account the European local times. Participants are slightly worried: will the system work properly as last week during the test? Will they be able to exchange messages easily from their workstation? During the first hour, they all learned how to introduce themselves with the help of their keyboard and screen.. Then, after this testing phase and polite interchange, the agenda is presented by the Convener of the meeting. Discussions can start, with a strong trump in the sleeves: each participant can speak in his/her own mother language by using one of the translation systems available on-line on Internet. Each participant can speak in his/her own mother language by using one of the translation systems available on-line on Internet.

Each participant can speak in his/her own mother language By using one of the translation systems available on-line on Internet each participant can speak in his/her own mother language. Each participant sees the messages appearing on his screen. (S)He is not obliged to answer immediately to a question. (S)he can take time to think about it and prepare his/her reply, then send it out. And everybody can read it. The rhythm is slow, but the discussions are progressing. Different conversations can develop in parallel: the dialogue is precise, targeted - no diversions. At 5:00 p.m., the Convener closed the meeting. By one keystroke, all the messages appear on screen and can be printed on paper. Participants can continue their discussions and exchange more messages during the following days. As soon as the meeting was closed, participants expressed their satisfaction:

« pleasant afternoon on the net; let's keep in contact and proceed with this [...] in the future! »; « This new meeting forum is useful and interesting »; « thank you for the interesting virtual meeting »; « it has been an interesting experience »; « the virtual meeting was a very successful experiment », the final word being: « ...this meeting is not completely virtual anymore... ».

Interesting virtual meeting - very successful experiment We can already take stock of the benefits and the disadvantages of this first virtual meeting, thanks in particular to the reactions of the participants expressed at the end of the meeting. Amongst the advantages listed, the first one is of course avoiding travelling! No travel expenses, no time wasted in planes or trains (a simple calculation showed a global saving of 25 KECU). Understanding between partners is also improved since, once on screen, accents disappear and become understandable, in addition to the on-line translation tool. Other benefits were also put forward, such as the possibility for people who did not attend the meeting to have a later access to all what was "said".

Once on screen, accents are understood by everybody The major disadvantages listed were the slow response time, the complicated communication procedures in the environment used and the difficulty to discuss the various topics of the meeting in details. A more political problem is the commitment implied by the written word! Indeed we know that words fly and writings stay.

We must therefore be cautious about what we say - ugh - write! Thanks to the partners' remarks, the Eurostat transport unit and the ATeSS consultants are already thinking at ways to reduce these disadvantages. Several recommendations to improve the environment used within the context of virtual meetings are already being discussed: e.g. find a way for each partner to know who takes part in the meeting without having to introduce oneself; limit the number of topics and launch them in parallel at the beginning of the meeting instead of sequentially as in a traditional meeting; the organisation of questions/answers on screen and the access to the documents in the library should also be made faster. Eurostat offered to alternate virtual meetings and real meetings for the EDIMARS project. However, it is also agreed that a virtual meeting - even with all its benefits - is indeed complementary to a real meeting, but does not replace it. By the way, partners all agreed to meet in Paris in June 1998 in order to discuss it...viva voce!!

By Mr V. Tronet

1.6.2 Last news from the EDIBOP Pilots

May 1998, Fiat group will use BOPDIR. As a result of the EDIBOP pilot project (EDI for Balance of Payments' reporting), real implementations are taking off. In Italy the Fiat Group responded positively to the prospect of reporting via the EDIFACT message BOPDIR. They immediately saw the benefits of being able to replace the traditional paper forms with a more automated electronic system: shorter processing time, reduction of the number of errors, and a substantial save on costs as a result of improved productivity. In the scenario that was jointly drawn up by UIC (Ufficio Italiano dei Cambi) and Fiat GEVA (the group's co-ordination centre), the latter will report directly to UIC for the whole group. Fiat GEVA will collect the necessary information from the BOPDIR messages received from their close to 80 branches. This centralised reporting system not only improves the communication between UIC and Fiat, it also enables the co-ordination centre to receive data for its core activity. The system uses Microsoft Excel as user interface. A bespoke EDIFACT translator takes over the creation op BOPDIR in a completely transparent way. The system is scheduled to be fully functional in June 1998 and could be used as a model for a number of other direct reporting companies. Information: pfranck@inetgate.capgemini.nl

By Philippe Franck, Eurostat Consultant

1.6.3 GESMES/CB, the time series data exchange message for Central Banks

During the course of Spring 1998, the EU National Central Banks (NCBs) are preparing for future two-way statistical data exchanges with the European Central Bank (which will continue to be called the European Monetary Institute until the end of this year). In all data exchanges the message format to be used will be GESMES/CB. This is a fixed GESMES Version 2.1 profile based on a powerful time series data model. GESMES/CB. It has been jointly developed by the EMI and the Bank for International Settlements (BIS) with technical advice on GESMES being given by EUROSTAT. By the end of 1998, several non-EU Central Banks will also be ready to exchange GESMES/CB messages. GESMES/CB can be used to exchange any type of time series data exchange and even to exchange cross-sectional data if time is one of the dimensions of the data to be exchanged. If a certain degree of complexity is needed, this is accommodated by the design of the data structure (time series names and attribute fields). In spite of being very powerful (with full metadata support) and able to meet any time series data exchange requirements for any economic (or non-economic) domain, GESMES/CB is fixed and very simple to "write" and "read". The majority of the National Central Banks are developing their own applications to extract data from their databases to be loaded directly into GESMES/CB and to "read" GESMES/CB messages directly into their database systems. Partner institutions which decide to use GESMES/CB in their data exchanges will have the option of making only basic or more sophisticated use of the message according to their requirements. Recently, GESMES/CB has also attracted the interest of other international organisations which are gradually becoming involved. The central banking community hopes and expects that sooner or later GESMES/CB will become the single standard for world-wide time series statistical data exchanges.

By Christos Androvitsaneas, European Monetary Institute

2. EEG6 Message implementation guides available

Since July 1997, these Message Implementation Guides are available in their latest version on the EEG6 web site (http://europa.eu.int:8000/dsis-irc) for browsing and downloading.

BOPxxx Messages

Various national versions of the Message Implementation Guides (MIGs) for the Balance of Payments messages are available for most EU countries. The Group has finalised the international versions of their MIGs. It is available on the DSIS-IRC web site.

CUSDEC/INSTAT

In English, French and German. INSTAT Subset of CUSDEC User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, March, 1996 ISBN 92-827-6206-8

CUSDEC/EXSTAT

In English, French and German. EXSTAT Subset of CUSDEC User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, March 1997 ISBN 92-827-6207-6

CUSRES/INSRES (Response to INSTAT)

In English, French and German. INSRES Subset of CUSRES User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, March, 1996 ISBN 92-827-6208-4

GESMES General (in English)

GESMES Version 2.1, Eurostat, Luxembourg, July, 1997. GESMES Version 2.1 "Quick Results", Eurostat, Luxembourg, August, 1997.

GESMES/PRODCOM (in English)

PRODCOM Subset of GESMES User Guide, Eurostat, Luxbg, 1994 (Rev. 1)

GESMES/BOPSTA (in English)

BOPSTA Subset of GESMES Guide to the User, Eurostat, Luxbg, 1996. National versions and an international version.

Messages for Transport Statistics (in English)

Guidelines for extracting a subset for maritime transport statistics, Eurostat, Luxembourg, 1996 (Draft)

- BAPLIE Subset for Transport Statistics
- IFCSUM Subset for Transport Statistics
- CUSCAR Subset for Transport Statistics
- GESMES dataset for Transport Statistics

RDRMES (in English)

RDRMES 96 Reference Guide, Eurostat, Luxembourg, November, 1996. RDRMES 96 "Quick Results", Eurostat, Luxembourg, February, 1997

WG1 is concerned with the exchange of multi-dimensional statistical tables and time series. The type of data exchanged in this way is many and varied: insurance, tourism, National Accounts, structural statistics, population, transport, etc. The result of this work is GESMES - Generic Statistical Message - which reached Status 1 in March 1995. GESMES supports the exchange of statistical figures together with its associated metadata (e.g. footnotes, methodological notes, dataset structures). GESMES works in synergy with CLASET, the message for the exchange of classification. Various profiles of GESMES have been developed: GESMES for DSIS datasets, GESMES/BOPSTA for balance of payments data, GESMES/PRODCOM for PRODCOM data, and GESMES/CB for time series data. GESMES can also be used as a request message for data number of organisations operating at the international level have implemented GESMES to collect a wide variety of statistical data:

1. From National Statistical administrations to Eurostat
· product data to transportation data
· industrial indicators to national accounts
· insurance to structural statistics

2. From Central Banks to Eurostat and to the International Monetary Fund:
· Balance of Payments

3. From Central Banks to the European Monetary Institute:
· Balance of Payments to money & banking
· industrial indicators

4. From transition countries to the UN/ECE:
· a wide variety of macro economic data

5. From economic operators to the National Statistical Administrations:
· transport data from port authorities & shipping lines

The appeal of GESMES is not confined to statistical organisations, any organisation which has a need to exchange data of a tabular, multi-dimensional, or time related (time series) nature will find GESMES useful. The data modelling method was applied for the design of GESMES. This allowed its implementation in more than one EDI syntax:

· An EDIFACT message has been implemented which was granted status 1 in 1995.

· An XML DTD (Document Type definition) is under development. A GESMES toolbox has also been developed: A prototype software is available, for training and awareness purposes, that converts GESMES/EDIFACT to HTML. Demonstration tools are also available to generate GESMES from an Excel spreadsheet.

User guides A number of user guides are available on the DSIS IRC

· A User Guide, GESMES Version 2.1 is available on the DSIS IRC both as an Acrobat file and as an HTML file for viewing in a browser. This guide is the blueprint from which all sectorial GESMES user guides are being developed. This guide explains the architecture of GESMES, defines the rules for the use of all the data structures in the message, and contains many examples of its use.

· For users wishing a short introduction to GESMES, the "GESMES - Quick Results" booklet has been developed. With the aid of this booklet, it is possible to use many of the more popular features of GESMES, without the need to understand its more complex features.

· The GESMES Guide to DSIS datasets and sector specific guides of examples, describes the use of GESMES in the DSIS environment

· Various specific sectorial guides such as transportation and balance of payments.

In the European Reference Environment, GESMES and CLASET are used to exchange data and metadata. Trials are in progress in ES, IT, NO, SE and at Eurostat. In the DSIS environment a commercial GESMES reader has been made available free of charge. This reader will enable users to validate the GESMES message before it is transmitted to Eurostat. Details of this are also on the DSIS IRC.

Workplan 1998-2000

GESMES activities will concentrate on studying an object data model to be later implemented in XML (Extensible mark-up language) and object approaches like CORBA while protecting the investment achieved so far. Priority activities for 1998-99 are:

- Hypercube data model, September 1998
- Participation XML/EDI standardisation (XML Focus team) since February 1998
- Participation in the Object Management Group (OMG) since April 1998

CONVENER Chris NELSON, Consultant, Eurostat, LU, +44-1483-271443, chris@cnelson.demon.co.uk

By Chris NELSON, Consultant, Convener WG1

The primary aim of WG3 is to define structured EDI message to exchange the structure and contents of classifications (e.g. nomenclatures, code lists, directories, tree structures..), and their relationships. In addition to this WG3 aims at:

- Easing the use of classifications by economic operators, maintenance agencies and international bodies (e.g. National Standards Institutes, National Statistical Administrations, Customs Authorities, professional federations, Chambers of Commerce, Eurostat, OECD, UN/STAT, etc.).

- Promoting the use of official classifications, in particular statistical classifications, in EDI messages. A specific side of this work is to ensure that the multi-lingual aspects of the classifications and the use of different character sets within the same message are catered for, including the handling of textual components.

For instance, solutions are being analysed allowing for the cross-referencing between EDIFACT-oriented message parts and SGML oriented message parts. EEG6/WG3 is interested in the EDIFACT studies on multi-format exchanges (now called EDIFACT and Associated Objects) and in Open EDI in general. Following the requirements of the exchange of classifications during the different phases of their life cycle (e.g. compilation, consultation, dissemination), WG3 has conceived and designed one structured message: CLASET

CLASET has 3 functions:
- To transfer a selected set of information elements relating to a classification (whole or part of it)
- To transfer a selected set of information relating to relationships between classifications (or correspondence tables) in different layouts
- To request information relating to a classification.

The data modelling method was applied for the design of CLASET and one exchange conceptual data model was designed.

This allowed its implementation in more than one EDI syntax:

- An EDIFACT message has been implemented which reach the EDIFACT Status 0 in Spring 1993 and Status 1 is targeted for September 1998.

- In parallel, an SGML DTD version (document type definition) was finalised during Spring '97.

CLASET toolbox A CLASET toolbox has also been developed: An HTML version of CLASET, for tutorial, awareness and validation purposes, has also been developed and is maintained. Filters allowing for the translation between all these formats have been developed. An XML format will be developed during 1998. The Group supported the CLASET trials project, which involved INSEE, Statistics Finland and various units of Eurostat where the three formats were successfully tested for a wide variety of classifications. A future activity of the group is to extend its work into the development of messages allowing the exchange of other metadata (e.g. statistical unit, definition, concept, methodology). In a study carried out by DSIS Lot 4.2 on Internationally used Classifications, CLASET has become the emerging standard for the transfer of classifications. The group will build on the output from other groups working in this area (e.g. DSIS, METIS and the DOSIS research programme).

Workplan 1998-2000

- SGML, Documentation, promotion, implementation
- EDIFACT, Status 1, September 1998
- XML Implementation, December 1998
- Participation in the hypercube data modelling during 1998

Convenor Emile BRUNEAU, INSEE, FR, +33-1-4117527, emile.bruneau@dg75-d230.insee.atlas.fr

Consultant Xavier XHENEUMONT, xxh@isea.lu

By Emile BRUNEAU, Convenor WG3

SGML: Standard Generalized Mark-up Language - ISO 8879

WG4 is concerned with investigating new ways of collecting raw statistical data. In order to reduce the burden of compiling statistical information on individual organisations, the vital job of statistics gathering needs to be integrated into the information systems currently being used on a day to day basis by the economic operators (e.g. payroll, accounting, production, distribution). Ideally, this integration should support both regular surveys and ad hoc enquiries for ALL declarative purposes (statistics, customs, trade associations etc.). The target public for such messages includes the National Statistical Administrations, the economic operators and the professional bodies representing the economic operators (e.g. the professional unions and chambers of commerce).

The objectives of this group represent the most challenging work for EEG6.

The technical aspects of the work are concerned with the development of EDI messages which are used for declarative purposes; one such type of message is a generic message which supports the responses to a questionnaire. Initiatives in this field had been taken in America, Australia and in Europe:

- In 1993, the US Bureau of the Census started developing RDRMES (Raw data Reporting message)

- In early 1994, WG4 started developing a general data model for questionnaire data

The two projects were merged and a new version of RDRMES, which meets the requirements of Europe, Australia and North-America, was finalised during the September 1994 JRT in Vienna. The data modelling method was applied for the design of RDRMES and one conceptual data model was designed. This allowed its implementation in more than one EDI syntax.

- An EDIFACT message has been implemented which reach the EDIFACT Status 1 in September 1995.
- An XML version is foreseen for the near future, in order to adapt RDRMES to the new concept of EFI (Electronic Form Interchange) showing that EDI and Internet can be intelligently combined.

The message has been successfully trialed in 1995 and 1996 in a number of pilot projects within the framework of the SERT project.

The SERT project In 1995, EDIVAT.I (VAT declaration) in BE and NL, and the statistical returns from the UK Steel Industry (ECSC framework) and in 1996-97, EDIVAT.II: (VAT and INTRASTAT data) in Belgium. In addition, the UK Tax Administration is carrying out a pilot project for the collection of tax returns using RDRMES as an alternative to the paper declaration. In 1996, most efforts were dedicated to the writing-up of User-oriented technical documentation for RDRMES. A RDRMES 96 Message Reference Guide and an "RDRMES 96 - Quick Results" short implementation Guide were issued in Nov. '96 and Feb. '97, respectively. A leaflet specifying the differences and the synergy between GESMES and RDRMES, and when one message - or the other - should be used will be written up during 1998.

Workplan 1998-2000

RDRMES, a Joint Development between the Western European and Pan American regions, will be documented, promoted and implemented. A booklet on the differences between RDRMES and GESMES will be drawn up.

- XML Implementation, December 1998
- Participation in the hypercube data modelling during 1998

Convenor Jean-Pierre Grandjean, INSEE, FR +33-1-41176537, sec@dg75-e201.insee.atlas.fr

Consultant Anders TORNQVIST, anders.tornqvist@comfact.com

By Anders TORNQVIST, Consultant WG4

WG5 is concentrating on the procedures for collecting and disseminating statistical information in the field of international trade. The target public for the messages developed by the group are the EU National Statistical Administrations, the national or regional collection centres, and the economic operators who are direct declarants. WG5 works in close collaboration with EBES/EG3, the Customs Message Development Group responsible for the management of customs messages, and with the Statistical Committee for External Trade. Three subsets of messages have been developed so far:

a) INSTAT
For the declaration of intra-Community trade (Intrastat declaration). This is a subset of the Customs declaration message, CUSDEC. CUSDEC/INSTAT has been part of the EC INTRASTAT regulation since the opening of the Single European Market in 1993. The related MIGs were published in Feb '93 (91.1 Directory) and in March "96 (S.93A & 92.1 directories). A new MIG is being published electronically in D.97B directory; the main changes concern the Euro and year2000.

b) EXSTAT
For the declaration of extra-Community trade, which is also a subset of the Customs declaration message, CUSDEC. The publication of its MIG was issued in March '97 (D.96.B directory). A new MIG is being published electronically in D.97B directory.

c) INSRES
The response message to INSTAT, implemented as a subset of the Customs response message CUSRES. The related MIG has been published in March '96 (S.93A & 92.1 directories). A new MIG is being published electronically in D.97B directory.

CLASET/CN8/TARIC A subset of CLASET was studied for the transmission of the updates of the Combined Nomenclature (CN8) with TARIC codes from the Competent National Administrations to the companies providing extra-Community trade statistics. This study is postponed.

CONTRL The MIG of the CONTRL message as a syntactical response to CUSDEC/INSTAT and EXSTAT is completed. CONTRL is implemented in the IDEP/CN8 package.

Security and legal issues In 1995, the group created a prototype for the implementation of security counter-measures for EDIFACT messages in the field of statistics. Promotion and demonstrations have been held in various organisations involved in EDI. Studies about implementation of confidentiality and EDI security over internet are scheduled.

STATEM subset A feasibility study was achieved comparing the advantages and disadvantages of having STATEM implemented as a dataset in GESMES or as a subset of CUSDEC. STATEM is the name for the results of intra- and extra-Community trade sent by the Competent National Administrations (CNA) to Eurostat for the compilation of trade statistics. Eurostat decided to abandon the EDIFACT format and to keep the existing application format for this data exchange.

OO-EDI and new technologies Object Oriented EDI and new technologies are under consideration for the messages in trade statistics. Considering the emergence of the Internet technology and pilot projects implemented in some Member States in order to collect the small Intrastat declarations (less than ten lines) by e-forms on Internet, the INSTAT XML format of the Intrastat declaration is being studied.

Workplan 1998-2000

This group is developing subsets of existing Customs messages and writing the corresponding MIGs. The final CUSDEC/INSTAT and CUSRES/INSRES MIGS. EC paper publications of the MIGs of CUSDEC/INSTAT, CUSDEC/EXSTAT and CUSDEC/INSRES are available. Electronic versions are in progress.

Convenor Antoine EGEA, French Customs, FR +33-1-55074854, dnegea@tedeco.atlas.fr

Consultant Sylvie COLAS, sylvie.colas@wanadoo.fr

By Sylvie COLAS, Consultant WG5

The aim of WG6 is to design the messages to support the compilation of the Balance of Payments (BOP) statistics. The partners in this project will ultimately be the enterprises (direct declarants), the corporate banks, the Central Banks and the (inter)national statistical institutes. WG6 has close working relationships with the EDIFACT Balance of Payments Task Force, one of the task forces set up under the Committee on Financial, Monetary and Balance of Payments Statistics chaired by Eurostat. This Task Force was responsible for the development of a strategy for the collection of Balance of Payments (BOP) statistics in terms of EDIFACT while EEG6/WG6 was in charge of the standardisation process necessary to support this strategy. The statistical reporting requirements for BOP data were integrated by EEG4, the group responsible for financial messages, into the electronic payment order information exchanged between enterprises and corporate banks. These restructured EEG4 messages were granted Status 1 in 1995. WG6 developed so far four new messages: and uses two profiles of GESMES.

a) BOPCUS
A commercial bank reports to the Central Bank the debit and credit transactions.

b) BOPBNK
A commercial bank reports to the central bank its own transactions and portfolio transactions.

c) BOPDIR
An aggregated declaration sent by an individual enterprise to a central bank or national statistical office.

d) BOPINF
The beneficiary informs its bank of the nature of a transaction.

e) GESMES/BOPSTA - GESMES/CB
Aggregated BOP information is sent by the collection agency to an international statistical organisation. BOPSTA is implemented as a dataset in GESMES (based on the Status 1 version reached in March 1995). Because of the harmonisation with EMI , BOPSTA will be replaced in 1999 by another GESMES subset, specifically developed for the Central Banks: GESMES/CB. GESMES/CB is also under study by IMF and the OECD. The BOPxxx messages reached Status 1 in September 1994 and in the IMF Guide for Balance of Payments Reporting, one chapter is dedicated to the EEG6 BOPxxx messages. BOPSTA is operational in most countries of the EU, with Eurostat, the OECD, the IMF. These international organisations, as well as the remaining Member States and even Japan will be involved in more pilot operations with GESMES/CB, the successor of BOPSTA. France, Finland and the Netherlands are now using BOPDIR, BOPCUS and BOPBNK on an operational basis. Trials are carried out in Germany, Italy, Spain, Portugal and Belgium for BOPDIR, and more trials of the four messages should start in the other countries during the coming year.

Workplan 1998-2000
BOPBNK, BOPCUS, BOPDIR, BOPINF will be deeply restructured and the new version replace the old Status 1 in the EDIFACT directory during 1999. The GESMES/CB profile used by Central Banks to exchange time series with the EMI is envisaged to replace GESMES/BOPSTA.

Convenor Peter HOFMAN, De Nederlandsche Bank, NL +31-20-5243313, dnb_sir@euronet.nl

Consultant Philippe FRANCK, pfranck@inetgate.capgemini.nl

By Philippe FRANCK, Consultant WG6

EMI: European Monetary Institute, soon to become the ECB, the European Central Bank
IMF: International Monetary Fund

The main goal of WG7 continues to be to identify and demonstrate ways in which EDI techniques can assist with and reduce the cost of the collection and dissemination of transport statistics. The group works in close co-operation with EBES/EEG2, the European regional UN/EDIFACT transport message development group, the European ports and agents working groups ESPO & ECSA and with the International Chamber of Shipping. Since its inauguration WG7's first priority has been maritime transport, considering the needs stemming from the proposed maritime transport statistics directive (adopted on December 8, 1995). Increasingly activities are now being additionally focussed in the areas of aviation, road and intermodal statistics. WG7 has identified the minimum statistical requirements in the field of maritime transport and studied the messages already existing - in particular those of EEG2, EEG3 and EEG6 - and selected those of interest for WG7 (i.e. IFCSUM, CUSCAR and GESMES respectively). Technical analysis has resulted in extraction guides detailing where to find the statistical data in the operational messages. Similar study is currently underway investigating the aviation and road environments. In order to test these results, a DSIS-SERT pilot project has trialled the collection of statistics from commercial manifest messages (IFCSUM and CUSCAR) and the exchange of semi-aggregated maritime statistics using GESMES. These trials are now in their third year and have involved ports and economic operators in several Member States. During the third year the main emphasis is on awareness with the objective of sharing the experiences gained in order to assist all member States during their implementation of the Directive.

Initial aviation and intermodal trials have also been scheduled for 1998. In support of this work, WG7 participates actively in the current UN/EDIFACT initiatives to harmonise the implementation of transport messages. There are two current standardisation activities, which are particularly important to WG7. These are the agreement and publication of global principles and rules for implementation of the messages and the second is the move towards international agreement to use common code lists and where relevant the appropriate UN/ECE recommended set of codes. In the first case the consultant of WG7 is chair of the UN/EDIFACT IHG (International harmonisation Group) at the Joint Rapporteurs' Team meetings and in the second case is a member of the newly formed CEFACT Codes Working Group.

Workplan 1998-2000

This EEG6 sectorial sub-group works in close co-operation with EEG2 (Transport). It is trialing subsets of existing operational EEG2, EEG3 and EEG6 messages (including IFCSUM, CUSCAR, GESMES) to convey transport statistics while minimising the burden for the declarants. In 1999 work will continue in both the Maritime and Aviation sectors.

Convenor Mr. Pietri Jean Marcel, Les Ports Français (UPACCIM-ADPF), FR+33-1-42275262, portsfr@club-internet.fr (maritim part) * Convenor for the aviation part is to be nominated Vincent TRONET (deputy Convenor), vincent.tronet@eurostat.cec.be. ne.

Consultant Sue PROBERT, sue@ets-edi.compulink.co.uk

By Sue PROBERT, Consultant WG7

The tables below shows a list of the EEG6 messages. They also show who is using the different messages, testing them, or contributing to their development. For explanations for the symbols see the note below the tables.

	Status	AT	BE	CH	DE	DK	ES	FI	FR	GR
GESMES/PRODCOM	1	⧗	≈	≈	≈	≈	⧗	⧗	≈	≈
GESMES/ECOSER	1	≈	≈		≈		≈	≈	≈	
GESMES for transport	1				≈			♦		⧗
GESMES (other uses)	1				≈		📖		≈	
GESMES/BOPSTA	1	♦	♦		♦	♦	⧗	♦	♦	
BOPBNK	1		📖		⧗	📖	≈	📖	♦	
BOPCUS	1		📖		⧗			📖	♦	
BOPDIR	1		≈		≈			♦	♦	
BOPINF	1								⧗	
CLASET	0			📖				≈	≈	
CUSDEC/INSTAT	1	♦	♦	📖	≈	♦	♦	♦	♦	♦
CUSDEC/EXSTAT	1	📖	📖	📖					⧗	
CUSRES/INSRES	1	⧗		📖			♦		≈	
RDRMES	1		≈						📖	≈

	Status	IE	IT	LU	NL	NO	PT	SE	UK	EStat
GESMES/PRODCOM	1	≈	≈	≈	≈	≈	≈	≈	≈	≈
GESMES/ECOSER	1	⧗	≈		≈	♦	⧗	⧗	≈	≈
GESMES for transport	1	≈			⧗				≈	≈
GESMES (other uses)	1				♦		⧗	≈	≈	⧗
GESMES/BOPSTA	1	♦	♦		♦	⧗	♦	♦	♦	♦
BOPBNK	1		✗		📖		✗			
BOPCUS	1		✗		♦		✗			
BOPDIR	1		≈		📖		≈			
BOPINF	1				📖					
CLASET	0							📖		≈
CUSDEC/INSTAT	1	♦	♦	♦	♦	≈	≈	♦	⧗	📖
CUSDEC/EXSTAT	1			📖	📖		≈		📖	📖
CUSRES/INSRES	1		≈	≈	📖			♦	📖	📖
RDRMES	1		≈		≈	⧗			≈	📖

♦ = used in production
≈ = tests and/or pilot projects in progress

📖 = participant in the writing up of the specifications
✗ = replaced by BOPDIR
⧗ = pilot project starting soon

The tables below shows a list of the EEG6 messages and the use by international organisations in trials or production. For explanations for the symbols and abbreviations see the note below the tables.

	Status	EStat	UN/ECE	IMF	OECD	EMI	BIS	US BoC	USBoLS	Stat CA	AU ABS
CLASET	0	↻	☑		📖						
GESMES/ECOSER	1	♦									
GESMES/CB	1					↻					
Austria		⧖		⧖		↻					
Belgium/Luxembourg		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Finland		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Finland		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
France		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Greece		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Germany		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Ireland		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Italy		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Netherlands		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Portugal		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Spain		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
Sweden		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
United Kingdom		⧖		⧖	⧖	↻					
GESMES/BOPSTA ***	1										
Austria		♦									
Belgium/Luxembourg		♦		♦	♦						
Canada				♦							
Denmark		♦									
Finland		♦			♦						
France		♦		♦							
Greece											
Germany		♦		♦	♦						
Ireland		♦		♦							
Italy		♦									
Japan		♦									
Netherlands		♦									
Norway											
Portugal		♦									
Spain		♦		♦	♦						
Sweden		♦									
United Kingdom		♦									
RDRMES	1	↻						📖	📖	📖	☑

♦ = used in production
↻ = tests and/or pilot projects in progress
☑ = Organisation consulted during development

📖 = participant in the writing up of the specifications
✕ = replaced by BOPDIR
⧖ = pilot project starting soon

ABS = Australian Bureau of Statistics
BIS = Bank for International Settlements
BoC = Bureau of the Census
Stat CA = Statistics Canada
EStat = Eurostat

BoLS = Bureau of Labor Statistics
EMI = European Monetary Institute
IMF = International Monetary Fund
UN/ECE = United Nations/Economic Commission for Europe

5. EEG6 - National and international representatives

A) NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVES

Austria
Mr. A. Petz Austrian Statistical Office
+43-1-71128-7558

Belgium
Mr. W. Janssens   National Statistical Institute of Belgium
+32-2-5486500

Denmark
Mr. L.E. Gewalli,   Danmarks Statistik +45-3-9173156

Finland
Ms. H. Seitsamo, Statistics Finland +35-9-17343509

France
Mr. J.P. Grandjean, INSEE, FR +33-1-41176537

Germany
Mr. D. Sarreither, Statistisches Bundesamt
+49-611-752040

Greece
Ms. K. Cogolfinopoulou, National Statistical Service of
Greece +30-1-3249-491

Iceland
Ms. S. Helgadottir, Statistics Iceland +354-1-609828

Ireland
Mr. D. Jennings, Central Statistical Office, IE
+353-1-6767531

Italy
Mr. G. Budano, ISTAT, IT +39-6-46732463

Luxembourg
Mr. G. Schuller, STATEC, LU +352-4784271

Netherlands
Mr. M.. Boon, CBS, NL +31-45-706757

Norway
Mr R. Gloersen, Statistics Norway +47-22-8644590

Portugal
Mr. Aquiles De Oliveira, Instituto Nacional de Estatistica, PT
+351-1-8470050

Spain
to be nominated, Instituto Nacional de Estadistica, ES
+34-1-5839nnn

Sweden
Mr. E. Malmborg   , Statistics Sweden +46-8-7834027

Switzerland
Mr. C. Macchi, Office Fédéral de la Statistique, CH
+41-31-3229811

United Kingdom
Mr. R. Pape, UK ONS +44-171-2706399

B) REPRESENTATIVES FROM INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS

EBES
Mr. A. Dechamps, CEN, Brussels +32-2-550 0867

EFTA
Mr. J. Byfuglien, EFTA Secretariat at Eurostat, LU +352-4301-32046

EMI
Mr. C. Androvitsaneas, EMI, Frankfort
+49-69-27227676

IMF
Mr. A. Bloem, IMF, Washington +1-202-6237900

ISO
Ms. S. Clivio, ISO Central Secretariat, Geneva
+41-22-7490111

OECD
Mr. G. Salou, OECD, Paris +33-1-45248846

UN/ECE
Ms. J. Meliskova, UN/ECE Statistical Division, Geneva +41-22-9174150

UN/STAT
Mr. H. Habermann, UN Statistics Office, New York +1-212-963-4996

C) CONTACTS IN OTHER RAPPORTEUR REGIONS

Australia
Mr. B. Pink, Australian Bureau of Statistics
+61-6-2525139

Canada
Mr. L. Hill, Statistics Canada
+1-613-9514612

Japan
Mr. S. Kawasaki,   Statistics Center
+81-3-52731138

Poland
Mr. J. Olenski, Central Statistical Office
+48-22-254896

United States
Ms. C. Ambler, US Bureau of the Census
+1-301-457 2668

United States
Mr. R. Clayton, US Bureau of Labor Statistics
+1-202-606-6520

6. GLOSSARY

CEFACT:
Centre for Facilitation of Practices & Procedures for Administrations, Commerce and Transport - Replaces the former WP.4 since March '97.

CNA:
Competent National Administration.

DOSIS:
Development Of Statistical Information Systems - Eurostat initiative.

DSIS:
Distributed Statistical Information Services - Eurostat project.

EDICOM:
EDI for COMmerce - Eurostat project.

EBES:
European Board for EDI Standardisation - This Western European EDI authority placed under the umbrella of CEN (Comité Européen de Normalisation) replaces the WE/EB (Western European EDIFACT Board).

EEG:
Sectorial EDI Expert Group - These groups are presently 14. They replace the former Message Developments Groups (MD's). EEG6 is the 6th group, in charge of EDI for the statistical sector. EEG's are regional and Western Europe specific - When they meet inter-regionally (during JRTs), they become JMs (Joint Meetings).

EWG (EDIFACT Working Group) :
These International meetings comprise all EDIFACT regions and all Development Groups. They traditionally take place twice a year: in April and in September.

JM8:
International Joint Meeting Group dealing with Statistics during EWG.

JRT (Joint Rapporteurs Team meeting):
Joint Rapporteurs's Team Meeting. Replaced by the EWG in April 1998.

MIG:
Message Implementation Guide.

NSA:
National Statistical Administration.

REGION:
In the UN terminology, vast geographical areas, roughly corresponding to continents: there are 6 regions: Africa, Asia, Australia/New Zealand, Central & Eastern Europe, Pan-America and Western Europe.

SERT:
Business Statistics and Telematic Networks - Eurostat initiative.

SGML:
Standard Generalised Mark-up Language - ISO-8879.

UN/EDIFACT:
EDI For Administration, Commerce and Transport - UN Standard (ISO 9735).

UN/ECE:
United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

The 2 levels of the EDIFACT Messages:
MiD   : Message independent
Status 1: Messages for Implementation

Acknowledgements

IDA: Interchange of Data between public Administrations

7. Calendar of Meetings for 1998 & 1999

"Statistics,Telematic Networks,EDI" Working Group meetings

'98	March 30-April 1	Luxembourg
	Mid October	Luxembourg

EEG6 Working Sessions and Plenary Meetings

'98	February 18-20	Heerlen
	Sept. 30-Oct. 2	Rome
'99	February 24-26	Geneva
	October 6-8	Frankfurt

Joint Rapporteurs' Teams Meetings (JRT)

	April 27-May 1	Miami
	September 7-11	Brussels
'99	April	Cape Town (to be confirmed)

Other EEG6-related Meetings

GESMES Task Force 6th meeting: April 2 in Luxembourg
EEG6 Meeting on Horizontal activities: May 7 in Luxembourg
International Statistical Institute May: 25-29 in Bratislava
Seminar (ISIS)
GESMES Task Force 7th meeting: July 9 in Luxembourg

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