

Statistics, telematic networks and EDI bulletin

1 □ 1995

LETTER OF THE EDI-TOR

Welcome to the third issue of this bulletin!

The intention of this issue is to give you up-to-date information on the activities of WE/EB-MD6 and the organisations who are participating to our work.

The development of EDIFACT messages for the statistical sector is only one of the roles of MD6.

We also have the responsibility for promoting the use of these messages. In MD6 we have taken this responsibility seriously by making sure that we develop clear implementation guides for the messages we use and that we liaise with organisations who are using our messages so that we can help them to implement the messages in a consistent way.

As you will see from the articles in this bulletin many organisations are now involved in either trial or live environments in the use of statistical EDIFACT messages, and we wish them good luck in their projects.

The first users of the work of MD6 were, of course, the enterprises which are required to submit EC-INTRASTAT declarations. This project went live in 1993, the year of the creation of the single market. 1994 saw the first use of the messages developed for the balance of payments and of GESMES, the message for the exchange of aggregated statistics. 1995 will see the first use of the raw data response message, RDRMES, as well as an increasing number of pilots for the balance of payments messages and GESMES.

These early pilots signify a vote of confidence in EDIFACT and in the work of MD6.

However, this is only the beginning as the ultimate aim of the work on message development is to makethings easier for the organisations that use the messages.

"A standard which is not used is a dead standard ! "

This can only really happen when the messages are integrated into the computer systems that support the business functions of the enterprises and when these EDI messages will be available in EDI software packages presently on the marketplace, or, even better, integrated as a standard input/output format of commercial products used by declarants or statistical administrations

We have therefore set out on a journey along a long road, and like all journeys sometimes we will travel quickly, and sometimes we will have to slow down, we may even have to make an occasional detour around an unforeseen object which is in the path.

However, it is road down which we must travel if we want to deliver meaningful, accurate, and timely statistics in the future.

We must do all we can to automate the process so that the collection and dissemination of statistics is not a burden

on the organisations involved in the process and on the enterprises which supply the raw data. If we do not do this then the source of the statistics (the raw data) will simply dry up in the ever evolving move to the electronic marketplace. If the source dries up then governments, administrations and individual organisations will have no basis on which to make investment decisions.

EDI and the seamless integration of EDI messages for statistical reporting (and, indeed, the reporting of data required by all administrations) into the business systems of the enterprises will be a major factor that will affect the ability of statistical administrations to perform the role expected of them.

It is not surprising, then, that the organisations participating to work of MD6, view the integration of (statistical) EDI messages into business systems as an ever increasing priority. This priority will naturally be reflected in the future workplan of MD6.

Philippe Lebaube
WEEB/MD6 Chair

INSIDE

- 1 Reporting BOP data in France
- 2 GESMES trials at Eurostat
- 3 PRODCOM at UK CSO
- 4 GESMES/BOPSTA in ITALY
- 5 EDIFACT in Finland and more



OFICINA ESTADÍSTICA DE LAS COMUNIDADES EUROPEAS
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EDI IN FRANCE

An example of EDI in the direct reporting of data: its implementation for the reporting of Balance of Payments data in France

Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) allows banks and companies to replace paper documents or traditional computer media by electronic transmissions for a very wide variety of commercial, financial and administrative information.

EDIFACT, the international standard, makes it possible to go beyond branch-by-branch customer-supplier relationships ("sector-based" EDI) and applies to all between-sector relations thanks to a single, common syntax.

Under the aegis of the Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), a Working Group was created in July 1991 with the aim of defining EDIFACT messages which would allow the communication of the data necessary for compiling the Balance of Payments and the international investment position. The Working Group is composed mainly of central banks but also includes national statistical offices. All the Member States of the European Union are actively involved and Japan attends as an observer.

The Messages

The information needed for Balance of Payments reporting has been integrated into existing financial messages such as payment orders (PAYORD) and credit advice (CREADV).

Five messages have been created in order to make it possible to report statistical information and also to exchange aggregated information

- reporting of foreign payment by a bank on behalf of its customer (BOPCUS).
- reporting of a bank's own transactions (BOPBNK)
- direct reporting by companies (BOPDIR)
- information transmitted by a company to its bank when its account is credited (BOPINF)
- aggregated information exchanged between central banks or with an international organization (GESMES/BOPSTA).

The French EDIBDP Project

The French EDIBDP project is an extension of the European EDIBOP project carried out by UN/WEEB-MD6/WG6 (N.B.: BOP (Balance Of Payments) = BDP (Balance Des Paiements)). It was launched in December 1992 on the initiative of the Banque de France and in agreement with the European organizations responsible for the compilation of Balance of Payments statistics. The EDIBDP project has become the EDI pilot project at the Banque de France.

A working group has been set up between the French Corporate Treasurers' Association (AFTE) represented by 8 companies and the project leaders at the Banque de France in order to study the contents of the BOPDIR message and to put into operation.

The Message Implementation Guide (MIG) was validated by the working group and test data interchanges were carried out.

The technical and legal parts of the data interchange contract (the interchange agreement) have been drawn up. The BOPDIR service has been open to companies which have "direct reporting company" status since March 1, 1995 and the data interchanges may be made secure if requested.

The implementation of financial messages also gave rise to the creation of a working group which is composed of 5 banks and of the French Committee for Banking Standards (CFONB) which has observer status. It is led by the Banque de France and defines the rules for the use of the BOPCUS and BOPBNK messages. The technical features of the data interchange and the suggested safety measures will be defined by existing working groups within the CFONB and EDIFRANCE.

Moreover, the tests organized between the Banque de France, Eurostat and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) should allow the GESMES/BOPSTA message to be used for real data in 1995.

The Business benefits

The expected benefits concern all those involved in the collection of the data from the reporting entities to the international organizations and include the automation of reporting, reduction in operating costs, improvement in data quality, faster transmission and the use of standards both for the data and for the means of communication, all for a small initial investment.

Fabrice Gauduffe
Banque de France

Edi in Italy

The usage of EDIFACT in Italy

In Italy, the usage of EDIFACT messages for statistics started in 1994 with CUSDEC/INSTAT and has been expanding over this last period.

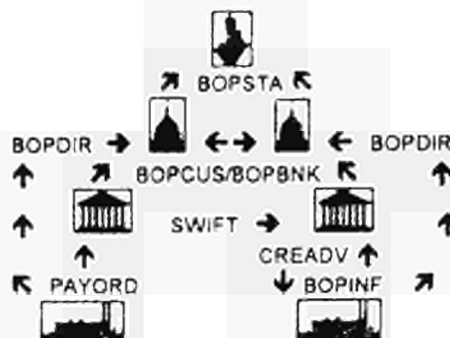
CUSDEC/INSTAT

The first application of the EDI technique in statistics was launched in 1994 on the foreign trade data flow, by using the CUSDEC/INSTAT message for the EC-INTRASTAT declaration. As far as these data are concerned, in Italy the structure is the following: the Ministry of Finance captures the data from enterprises in ten specialized centers widespread all over the territory and then sends them to ISTAT (the Italian Statistics Administration) for the "foreign trade statistics survey".

The pilot project on the usage of CUSDEC/INSTAT comprises the selection of a number of big enterprises (which could easily build a telematic connection with the centre of Rome) and testing with them the new technique.

Future perspectives to be discussed could be:

1. to extend this practice to a larger number of enterprises
2. to use it for the management of the data flow from the Ministry of Finance to ISTAT.



GESMES/BOPSTA

Another use of EDI in statistics is for the Balance of Payments data. The U.I.C. (Italian Change Office) has just begun the trial on the usage of the "GESMES/BOPSTA" message to exchange this type of data flow.

GESMES

Finally, another pilot project is starting soon: ISTAT, the Bank of Italy and the U.I.C. with the Eurostat support, are going to experiment the usage of GESMES. The Bank of Italy and the U.I.C. will experiment GESMES/ECOSER on a consolidated data flow which is already sent to Eurostat via other informatic media. This data flow contains an heterogeneous set of time series of different financial phenomena.

ISTAT will test GESMES to send to Eurostat the results of a survey on education, whose questionnaire was previously agreed upon with other statistical organizations (OECD¹ and UN/ECE²).

There are great expectations of this project because it is envisaged that having a unique identified standard for aggregated statistical data to be disseminated would have a positive impact on all the statistics users and could certainly solve a lot of organizational problems.

Stefania Macchia
ISTAT

UN/ECE/STAT Activities in EDI.

Standards for Electronic Data Interchange in Statistics

1 The Conference of European Statisticians adopted at its 1994 plenary session within its programme of work to continue the development and implementation of international standards for EDI in statistics. The main activities were identified as follows: participation in the development of standards in the framework of the Western European Edifact Board, Message Development Group MD6 -Statistics (WE EB/MD6); trial electronic collection of data from transition countries; and coordination of implementation of these standards in transition countries.

¹ OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

² UN/ECE = Economic Commission for Europe of the United Nations

2. The ECE secretariat participated in the development of GESMES/ECOSER -- message for the transmission of statistical time series. Limited resources did not permit the secretariat to participate in the development of other messages being prepared by WEEB/MD6.

3. The trial electronic collection of data from transition countries (EDI trial) launched in 1993 continued throughout 1994/1995. Experiences have shown some problems of a technical nature which need to be resolved -- implementation of the updated message structures (GESMES 95A and GESMES/ECOSER), modification of software tools (message editor and message translator) and introduction of new communication facilities (INTERNET).

4. The ECE secretariat plans to introduce gradually EDI means to collection of all macroeconomic data for the purposes of the ECE annual publications (Economic Survey of Europe and Economic Bulletin for Europe). In this respect the ECE secretariat is working also on methodological description of statistical indicators required from national statistical offices. This work is coordinated with other international organizations, in particular with OECD and IMF³. As a first result the secretariat prepared the revised version of the Questionnaire on Selected Macroeconomic Indicators and three trial questionnaires -- on industrial production, financial statistics and foreign trade.

5. The implementation of electronic data collection within the ECE secretariat is done in a close cooperation with maintenance of the ECESDB, mainly when metadata handling is concerned. The secretariat is at present in the process of setting-up the clientserver database in newly established local area network.

6. Several countries participating in the EDI trial were interested in obtaining data from the ECESDB. This obliges the ECE secretariat to establish two-way communication with transition countries when data are disseminated from the ECESDB using the same UN/EDIFACT means through which they were collected. This primarily requires the implementation of REQARR (array request) message which is currently under development in WEEB/MD6.

Moreover, in order to allow national statistical offices in transition countries to extend the use of UN/EDIFACT for their internal purposes, it is necessary

³ IMF = International Monetary Fund

to assist them in the implementation of other messages apart from GESMES -- most importantly the Raw Data Response MESSAGE (RDRMES) and, consequently, other suitable messages according to the needs of national statistical offices.

This report, submitted to the 1995 Plenary Session of the Conference of European Statisticians, was supplied by

Juraj Riecan
UN/ECE

EDI in Australia

A NEW COUNTERPARTNER!

In April, the WEEB/MD6 delegation to the Joint Rapporteurs' Team meeting in Sydney had the opportunity to meet members of the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) and of the Statistical Department of New Zealand.

It was explained that the Australian government intends to promote the use of EDI by showing the example: by 1997 the Australian administration will use EDI techniques in its relationships with the private sector, such as purchasing orders, public procurement, invoices ...

In the statistical sector, the ABS is interested in new methods for collecting raw data, such as CADE (Computer Aided Data Entry), CATI (Computer Aided Telephone Interviewing), CAPI (Computer Aided Personal Interviewing), CASI (Computer Aided Self Interviewing) and of course EDI.

In this context, ABS expressed its interest in the SERT project, and in particular in the SERTO1 study of the 19 pilot projects.

They also showed their willingness to become active partners in the standardisation process by creating the Australian/New Zealand equivalent of WEEB/MD6!

There seem to be good perspectives of co-operation between Australia/ New Zealand and Western Europe, and between Australia and Eurostat in the following MD6 activities:

- Exchange of Classifications
- Raw data collection
- Security counter-measures
- Multi-format exchanges

News from Finland Uutisia Suomesta

Finland has been one of the most active countries in planning trialling and implementing EDIFACT practices. In MD6 Statistics Finland has been active in the development of the Generic Statistical Message GESMES and Bank of Finland in the development and trialling of Balance of Payments (BOP) messages.

The operational implementation of the BOPDIR message between the central bank and an economic operator first saw light in Finland. The high level of activity can be explained by the strategic choices made by the Finnish government to guide the country rapidly into the electronic era, despite the fact that the paper industry is a major part of yesterday's economy.

According to the first country review of the OECD on national information technologies the IT-infrastructure of Finland was evaluated to be one of the best in the world. The early opening up of the competition in the field of telecommunications has led to low telephone and network costs, to the explosion of mobile phone usage and to most sophisticated value-added services. EDIFACT is one part of this evolution which apparently is not slowing down.

A few years ago the Finnish National Land Survey agency started developing EDI-based information services for the dissemination of geographic (GIS) data. This concept has later been used to define the architecture of a general message based information service for the administration and its customers. The standard which will be applied is UN/EDIFACT and part of the services are already operational.

GESMES will be implemented for the exchange of statistical tables. In principle the customer sends a request to a database in the form of an EDIFACT message through the chosen network (usually x.400) and gets the response also as an EDIFACT message into his application. One of the first sectorial applications using GESMES will be the Municipal Database for Social and Health Statistics (SOTKA).

The development of a generic interface for message based services - used also by SOTKA - is called Tietoikkuna (=Information Window) and is partly funded by one of the EU information technology projects.

More information on Finnish statistical EDIFACT applications can be obtained from:

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**Markku Saijets
Statistics Finland**

EDIFACT at Eurostat

DSIS/GESMES Trials Task Force Take-Off

The implementation of GESMES messages as a standard format for exchanging aggregated statistical data between Eurostat and the EEA member states has started. The kick-off meeting of the task force uniting the representatives from the four trial countries (Finland, Italy, Norway and United Kingdom) and from two observer countries (Greece, Sweden) with the contracted consultants (Cray Systems Ltd.) and Eurostat personnel was held in April 5th. At the meeting the task force agreed on the basic rules of the game, the consultants presented the blueprints of the project plan and negotiated the schedules of first member state visits. The selected trial countries have enough differences in their IT&CT platforms and organisational structures to offer the consultants a demanding task to develop generalised solutions which can later be implemented in all member states. According to the famous subsidiarity principle the trial data flow proposals will at first be collected from the trial countries by the consultants and then negotiated with the appropriate Eurostat production units. At the same time the reception and forwarding centre of Eurostat (STADIUM) will be developed to cope with genuine GESMES messages. Live trials are expected to start before the autumn rains.

**Olli Janhunen
Eurostat**

UK CSO's Pilot Project to collect PRODCOM data using EDI

1

Data entry

1.1. The PRODCOM EDI Pilot Project offers enterprises two different methods of using RDRMES (Raw Data Response MESSage) to send statistical returns to the CSO:

(i). by setting up RDRMES within the enterprise's EDI translator package, and an extraction interface programmed to obtain the data from the enterprises' internal systems;

(ii). by the use of an electronic questionnaire package (supplied by CSO) as a screen-based data entry system. When the questionnaire has been completed, the data is loaded into an RDRMES message structure ready for transmission.

1.2. Method (i) requires an amount of programming effort from the enterprise's IT department, so it is envisaged that fewer enterprises will take this option than the alternative (method (ii)).

1.3. Method (ii) requires much less programming effort for the enterprise, but also some effort to fill in the data at the response time. This will be alleviated to a large extent by file import utilities, which will form part of the package.

1.4. The electronic questionnaire will also have a question search facility, to enable the enterprise to identify and correctly code any new products which they might be producing. Under the paper-based system this is written onto the form and when received by the CSO is clerically allocated to a PRODCOM product code, often requiring reference back to the enterprise for further information. This facility should reduce the need to bother the enterprise further, in addition to reducing the free-text to be processed at CSO's end.

2. Transmission

2.1. Transmission of the RDRMES file (from both methods of input) to the CSO will be carried out by using the communications facilities provided by EDI translator software (in general use amongst the electronic trading communities) to connect to the Value Added Network (VAN) infrastructure which is used fairly extensively by industry within the UK.

2.2. Gradually however, other transmission media such as Internet are expected to play an increasingly important role, with obvious consideration to any security implications of the media concerned.

3. Software

3.1. The prototype electronic questionnaire has been developed using Paradox for DOS. The runtime software is distributed by floppy disc because of the size of the PRODCOM question library (which is part of each copy), but it is envisaged that changes or upgrades to the software could eventually take place over the network.

3.2. Currently, only a DOS version of the electronic questionnaire is under development, but a Windows version is planned in a not too distant future.

Colin Bowler
UK CSO

EDIFACT in the Czech Republic

Introduction

The importance of EDI for the future of the Czech industry was recognized by the Czech government since 1990.

FITPRO, the Czech national trade facilitation body, in charge of the co-ordination of the promotion and the implementation of UN/EDIFACT messages, co-ordinates the activities of various groups:

- * the **EDI User Club** which disseminates information on EDIFACT and launches UN/EDIFACT pilot projects
- * the **EDI Service Club** which consists of service organisations supporting widespread implementation of UN/EDIFACT messages, especially for SMEs,
- * and the **sectorial user groups** which aim at preparing common EDIFACT solutions.

EDI in Banking statistics

The Czech National Bank (CNB) is responsible for the national banking statistics: its 30 yearly reports deal with almost 40 million items of data. The 55 Czech commercial banks (CB) used the old ABIS system for banking statistics until mid 93, when the interbank committee of BIS¹ required

¹ ¹BIS= Bank for International Settlements

ABIS to be replaced by a more modern system.

CBN in co-operation with 2 service and software companies, APP and EDITEL CZ, prepared the so-called "Statistical and Accounting Data" system based on UN/EDIFACT.

The project was approved in mid 94 with the following 5-step schedule:

① till end 94: methodology and basic reports

At the Vienna JRT (Sept. 94), an EDITEL representative participated in the JMB (Statistics) working sessions in order to obtain the Status 1 of GESMES necessary for that project.

② April 95: launching of the testing period

③ July 95: Trial period 1 - comparison between old and new system

④ October 95: Trial period 2 - new methodology for 1996

⑤ January 96: Production phase

The following flows are planned:

- a) CNB --->> CB s the methodology of statistical reports
- b) CNB <<--- CB s statistical reports
- c) CNB --->> CB s urgencies
- d) CNB --->> CB s error reports

For a), b) and c), GESMES data sets will be used, while for d), they'll use the BANSTA message.

The methodology is explained in a regularly updated manual. A Message Implementation Guide is under development and will be included in the next version.

This article is based on information supplied by

Boris Prochaska
EDITEL CZ, Praha

The Importance of User Guides in the Development of an EDIFACT Message

During the development of the EDIFACT messages for the EC-INTRASTAT declaration, User Guides were found a useful tool for setting up the message specifications. On the other hand, once the message is stabilised in a given directory, the user guide becomes the reference to be consulted at the stage of implementation at a user's site.

The structure of the guide is essential for the comprehension of the message during the writing up of the specifications and for the implementation.

Presently, for the external trade statistics messages, the User Guide structure is the following:

- Introduction recalling the principles and the objectives of the message, the possible associated regulations and the Guide structure;
- the branching diagram of the message with the indexing of each segment (very important afterwards to find the segment within the message, during the detailed explanations);
- the cross-reference table between the data to be transmitted and their location within the message (as well as their location on a paper form, if such a form exists);
- detailed description and function of the service segments;
- detailed description and function of the message segments (application ones);
- list of associated codes;
- examples of data to be transmitted (for instance on a paper form) and their equivalent format in a EDIFACT message.

During the preparation of EDIFACT messages within the framework of the European Union, the choice of the language for the Guide is also quite important.

For WE-EB/MD6 multilingualism does not appear necessary for the development phase (writing up of the specifications) nor for the EDIFACT technique references (syntax and directories).

Since English has been the common EDIFACT working language until now, all pure EDIFACT technicalities such as the content of a segment was kept in English in order to preserve the semantics of the data elements.

Because a guide is targeted at final users for the implementation, explanations originally written up in English, are translated into French and German.

The general introduction was even translated into the 9 official EC languages (in the future into the 11 official languages of the European Union).

This decision to have texts in three languages in the same publication has the inconvenience of making the guide heavier and less easy to consult, but it also has the advantage to make it

possible to refer to the original text in English.

After the success of the first official issue of the CUSDEC/INSTAT User Guide, it was decided to go on publishing similar User Guides for the other messages concerning external trade statistics.

Article 5 of Commission Regulation (EEC) No 3590/92 of 11 December 1992 concerning the statistical information media for statistics on Trade between Member States (OJ No L 364, 12.12.92) states that the specifications of the Edifact message CUSDEC/INSTAT are in the user guide published by the Commission.

Therefore national rules have settled the usage of this guide and it is considered as a technical annex of the EDI agreement.

Because the number of User Guides to be published and disseminated is constantly increasing, electronic publishing is now foreseen.

As an extension to the existing guides the description of the specificities and code lists of the individual Member States is proposed.

The addition of new chapters to the Guides is also under study. They would deal for instance with the application of security counter-measures.

Sylvie Colas
Eurostat Consultant
and
Maarten Boon
Eurostat

Although of a "simple" nature, these tests have proven the feasibility of the process.

It is now time to implement it in a production environment.

The ROLL OUT

To realise this major step, Eurostat is currently conducting trials with 6 Central Banks where an EDI workstation is configured for the generation of the GESMES/BOPSTA messages (step 1).

Furthermore 3 countries having installed their own equipment will also participate. The other EC countries are scheduled for the next year (step 2).

After installation, trial exchanges will be realised during a couple of months. The ultimate target is to progressively bring all EC's Members in a live system with EDIFACT for BOP reporting to Eurostat.

In addition to the package and a complete documentation, Eurostat provides full technical assistance to the candidates. An expert can provide help on site, defining technical details and integrating the EDI environment with the local IT specialist.

The six candidates are: Germany, Italy, France, Portugal, Spain and Greece. Belgium, Finland and Austria will also participate with their own equipment.

The CHALLENGE

Installing an EDI workstation is rather simple: a PC, a package, some configuration files and some training. This being done, it is easy to generate an EDIFACT message with some dummy data.

The extraction of live data from the bank data base is quite another story. In the data bases, BOP data are not necessarily correctly organised or formatted and sometimes the information does not even exist yet...

The challenge is to succeed in developing this interface application.

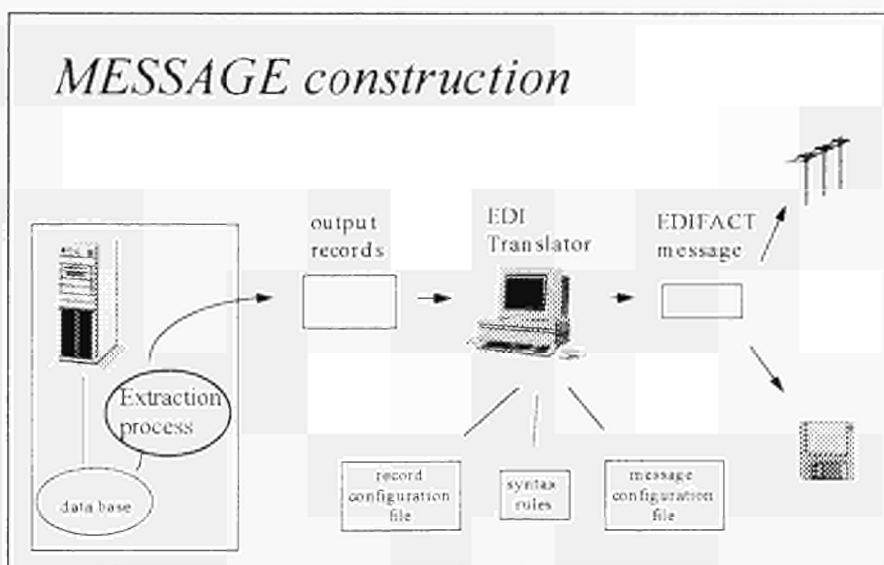
The FUTURE

The BOP reports from the Central Banks to Eurostat are the first flows of this type using EDI.

GESMES/BOPSTA ROLL OUT

INTRODUCTION

In 1994, 8 countries achieved trial exchanges of a GESMES/BOPSTA message with Eurostat. This message is a subset of GESMES specifically designed for the exchange of aggregated Balance of Payments (BOP) data.

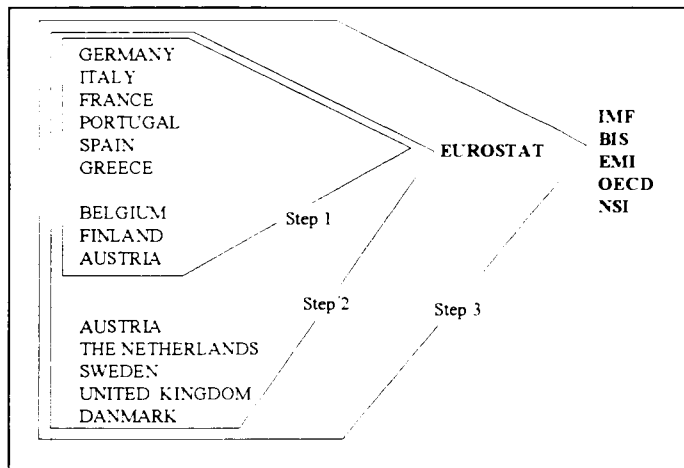


Other monetary reports to bodies like IMF, OECD, BIS, EMI¹ and to national statistical institutions will also be taken in consideration (step 3). New profiles of GESMES/ECOSER will be defined in the coming months

For some flows work is progressing fast. For some others the work will be longer. Difficulties will arise for technical reasons but also for political reasons as people are not yet convinced of the advantages of EDIFACT.

However we have good hope to succeed in the coming years.

Philippe Franck
Eurostat Consultant



EDI in the Netherlands

An EDIFACT pilot with respect to the reporting of Balance Of Payments (BOP) data in the Netherlands

Recently in the Netherlands, a pilot project with respect to the message BOPCUS was set up and was successfully concluded.

The BOPCUS message deals with the reporting of BOP information regarding client transfers vis-à-vis non-residents by commercial banks to the BOP compiler (the Central Bank).

A commercial bank, specialised in high level payment operation services for large corporate clients, was found ready to undertake a pilot project on BOPCUS with the Central Bank of the Netherlands. A "MIG" (Message Implementation Guide) had to be written before the project started.

The commercial bank in question, Bank Mendes Gans, undertook the necessary software investment and presented on diskette the test results regarding one client.

The test phase has now been converted into production phase:

1) In the near future the diskette will be replaced by a computer-to-computer communication (X.400) and 2) an interchange agreement covering

technical as well as legal aspects, describing rights and duties of the two parties (commercial bank and Central Bank) will be set up as soon as possible.

Peter Hofman
De Nederlandsche Bank

ordered from MD6 secretariat (cf. contact information on page 2).

Olli Janhunen
Eurostat

GESMES/ECOSER

The time series oriented subset of GESMES - called ECOSER - has been finalized and user guides in different formats have been published recently. The simple Quick Results booklet is meant for those, who have no prior knowledge on the implementation of EDIFACT for statistical purposes. The complete guide containing in one volume Guidance to Users and Reference Guide parts is available both as a book and as a Windows help file with hypertext browsing facilities. These give complete and detailed instructions on the application areas, functionalities and message structures of ECOSER. Compared to the original GESMES this subset lacks only a few of the most complex multidimensional functionalities of GESMES and step forward in understanding the philosophy of the generic statistical message. The user guide of the complete GESMES is scheduled towards the end of the year and at that time we hope to have also user support services available through the Internet World Wide Web. The guides can be

International Institutions get also involved in EDIFACT Projects

The Transmission of BOP (Balance of Payments) final statistical Results to international Institutions.

For the transmission of BOP final statistical results, i.e. the BOP statistics or BOP statements, the EDIFACT BOP message GESMES/BOPSTA was designed and developed.

The electronic transmission via e.g. an X.400 link guarantees fast and timely reporting far better than other means.

Another very important advantage of the use of the GESMES/BOPSTA message is that both senders and receivers of the information are concerned with only one (standard) format instead of a number of different types. This also implies an important step forward in efficiency.

At the moment pilot projects are being carried out with Eurostat, IMF and the OECD, and in the near future more pilot projects will be set up with EMI and possibly BIS: - seven pilots have been

¹EMI = European Monetary Institute

concluded successfully with Eurostat (one is still in its test phase), - three with the IMF, and - one with the OECD.

All three international institutions are prepared to start the production phase with Member States immediately after successful testing.

Eurostat is taking steps to support Member States in the production phase to transmit information to international institutions via the installation of translation software.

Peter Hofman
De Nederlandsche Bank

LAST NEWS

JRT IN SYDNEY

delegation of six WEEB/MD6 members attended the EDIFACT JRT (Joint Rapporteurs' Team Meeting) which was held in Sydney from April 24 through April 28.

Eurostat, INSEE and the French Customs were represented in the JM8 (Statistics) international group, while the Australian Bureau of Statistics (A.B.S) sent two representatives.

The statistics group was co-chaired by Mr. Philippe Lebaube, our WEEB/MD6 Chairman, and Mr. Brian Pink, of the A.B.S.

JM8 took an active part in open sessions dealing with:

◆ Multi-Format Exchange (MFE):

The capability to handle non-EDIFACT data is now seen as the only future of EDIFACT in an open EDI environment.

A JRT technical group will be created for the next JRT to take place in Oxford in September 1995.

◆ Multilingualism in EDIFACT (MLT):

WEEB/MD6 opinion was that before going any further in this area, the terms of reference and the mission specifications of this group should be clearly defined.

◆ New JRT procedures

The whole EDIFACT process is undergoing full re-engineering of its structures. As a consequence, the JRT, which used to be an international technical forum, will soon become a decision body.

WEEB/MD6 member, National Representatives and Eurostat should be aware of the impacts it may have on the internal procedures of the JRT, such as voting rights and procedures, status of attendees, representativeness status of possible resolutions, consensus Vs voting, etc.

MD6 IN AUSTRALIA/NEW ZEALAND

GOOD NEWS: WEEB/MD6 is not alone on earth anymore!!

The Australia / New Zealand EDIFACT region, known as the AZEB, has launched an EDIFACT statistical group counterpart of the European MD6.

WEEB/MD6 wishes them "GOOD LUCK" and "Happy EDIFACT" and hopes that similar groups will now be created in the PAEB (Pan-American region) and the ASEP (Asian region).

Co-operation, synergy and technical support of the statistical messages is now expected which will lead to:

→ better co-ordination of Data Maintenance Requests (DMRs) to be applied on the EDIFACT directories,

→ wide-spread implementations of the existing statistical messages and the internationalisation of EDI in Statistics in the field of Transport, Customs and Balance of Payments.

Messages should be developed to support users' requirements and the success of this is measured by the usage which is made of that standard.

The GESMES/ECOSER Message Implementation Guide is out of the oven

**Eurostat has published the
MIG for GESMES/ECOSER
which is available since the
end of May.**

**Copies can be ordered at
the OPEC (Office for official
Publications of the
European Communities).**

ISBN Nr : 92-827-0137-9

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27TH MD6 PLENARY MEETING IN STOCKHOLM

Dispites of the SAS strike, more than 35 MD6 members managed to come in Stockholm for the Working Group Working Sessions and the WEEB/MD6 27th Plenary meeting.

4 Working Groups met: WG1, WG3, WG5 and WG6, while WG7 had a joint meeting with WEEB/MD2 (Transport) in Paris.

Message Development Group 6 – Statistics Who is Who

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Calendar of Meeting for 1995

September 11-15	OXFORD	Joint Rapporteurs' Team Meeting (JRT): attending the JM8 (Statistics) sessions
October 5-6	Luxembourg	"Statistics, Telematic Networks & EDI" (STNE) Working Group 2d Meeting WEEB/MD6 Annual Progress Report
November 23-24	LISBON	WEEB/MD6 28th Plenary meeting

1. An Awareness Session will be held in Lisbon on November 22 on the use of EDI in the statistical sector
2. A "Demo Day" will be held in Luxembourg on October 4 within the framework of the STNE meeting.

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