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Eurostat Liaison Report to ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 32
April 5, 2005

By Dan Gillman

Eurostat

In 2004, Eurostat produced a strong effort for standardising the production, exchange and dissemination of metadata documenting EU statistics. A corporate template for textual metadata was enforced and a policy of "free dissemination" of data and metadata over the Internet was implemented.

Eurostat is now focusing on the development of more advanced standards for the exchange and sharing of statistical metadata, together with the international partners sponsoring SDMX (www.sdmx.org). These new common standards will make use of the latest technological standards, also taking advantage of other standardization initiatives. SDMX standards are based on a common information model and on the "key family" concept, imported from GESMES, an EDIFACT standard being transposed into XML. The main XML-based exchange formats can be used in conjunction with a registry which is accessed through queries, returning information on the content and location of data and relevant metadata.

As the ISO SC32 is also developing standards in these areas, the point has been raised of a liaison with ISO (SDMX has been officially presented to ISO Technical Committee 154 as a Technical Specification) and of a better coordination and mapping with the ISO 11179 standard on metadata registries maintained by JTC1/SC32. Euro stat is also testing the feasibility and usefulness of SDMX standards for exchanging data with a selected group of member States, in a so-called SDMX-aligned project. Therefore, a better liaison and coordination between Euro stat and ISO SC32 could also provide a good input to the work conducted at European level in the same area.

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