

A Single Entry Point for Data Transmission to Eurostat

Summary

According to more than 150 legal acts (as well as informal agreements and *ad hoc* projects) **Member States regularly transmit statistics to Eurostat** - an estimated total of around 36000 “dataset occurrences¹” per year. Around half of the data are sent by National Statistical Institutes, the rest come from nearly other 1000 national authorities which are responsible for statistics in specific domains.

The Single Entry Point (SEP) concept is that data for all statistical domains should arrive at a common reception area in Eurostat, so they can be automatically monitored, checked and delivered into the target production environment, with a set of common informatics tools.

In June 2005, the Directors and Heads of Unit of Eurostat adopted the principle of a Single Entry Point (SEP) for data sent to Eurostat. **In May 2006, the Statistical Program Committee (SPC) endorsed the SEP strategy.**

All the partners involved in the regular transmission of statistics to Eurostat are bound by this decision of the SPC (the senders in the Member States and the receivers in the production units at Eurostat).

This decision has been implemented in eDAMIS (electronic Data files Administration and Management Information System) which is an integrated environment of data transmission tools.

The Single Entry Point (SEP) concept

Member States regularly transmit statistics according to more than 150 legal acts (as well as informal agreements and *ad hoc* projects) - an estimated total of around 36000 “dataset occurrences¹” per year. Around half of the data are sent by National Statistical Institutes, the rest come from nearly other 1000 national authorities which are responsible for statistics in specific domains.

The Single Entry Point (SEP) concept is that data for all statistical domains should arrive at a common reception area in Eurostat, so they can be automatically monitored, checked and delivered into the target production environment, with a set of common informatics tools. The SEP implies that incoming data files are identified as being instances of a dataset which is included in the inventory of datasets to be transmitted by Member States to Eurostat. The aim of this activity is to ensure efficient, secure and monitored transmission of statistical data from Member States to Eurostat.

The SEP is an organisational concept which is implemented through eDAMIS, an integrated family of IT applications, which assure secure transmission of data files, as well as monitoring and delivery to production units.

eDAMIS, at a glance

eDAMIS (electronic Data files Admistration and Management Information System) is an integrated set of tools for the transmission of statistics from Member States to Eurostat via the Single Entry Point. eDAMIS is installed in all the National Statistical Institutes (NSIs) and in several other organisations (ministries, agencies, central banks...). Data senders who do not have an eDAMIS installation at their disposal can connect to the eDAMIS Web Portal on Internet and directly upload their data.

From the perspective of Member States, there are two visible components of eDAMIS:

eDAMIS Web Application (eWA): NSIs normally send data through eWA. This application is installed on one server at the NSI, and can be accessed by authorised NSI staff members on their intranet, through a web browser interface. eWA can also be used for fully automatic transmission of data files to Eurostat.

eDAMIS Web Portal (eWP): Eurostat receives data from around 1000 different national authorities. Unlike NSIs, many of these send small numbers of data files to Eurostat, so few that they can not be expected to use applications which require a local installation. eWP is a web portal² through which data files can be directly uploaded to Eurostat. This is a simple solution for national authorities other than NSIs that currently send data by email. eWP requires no local installation as it is used via a normal Internet connection and a web browser. Some Web Forms are also becoming available in eDAMIS for direct entry of small volume of data.

The Management Information System (MIS), accessed through the eDAMIS portal, gives access to online traffic reports, which are updated in real time and show the actual reception date as well as the indicative deadline for each dataset occurrence. It also gives access to reports on datasets, users and organisations.

Invisible to normal users, but a vital part of eDAMIS, are two more components:

The **eDAMIS/Stadium server** and the eDAMIS Kernel (which is part of eWP) constitute the central hub of the eDAMIS system. Together, these provide many back-office services for eDAMIS, including: the inventory of datasets transmitted to Eurostat by Member States, the reception and delivery of data files; the generation of notifications (at data delivery), acknowledgements (at data arrival) and reminders (to users who are expected to send data); and the storage and query of information for the MIS.

STATEL is the communications "middleware" for eDAMIS. It creates a mirrored "Virtual File System" (VFS) linking components of eDAMIS (currently eWA) installed in Member States with the eDAMIS/Stadium server. It transfers data files in segmented packets, with encryption, and ensures that all segments of a data file are transmitted successfully.

The Single Entry Point implementation

The implementation of the Single Entry Point requires that the incoming datasets are correctly identified in the dataset inventory and the information needed to route them to the Eurostat Production Unit is present and correct. Production Units are asked to create and keep up to date their dataset descriptions and the associated metadata in the eDAMIS dataset inventory, and to motivate Member States to send statistics to Eurostat via the *Single Entry Point*.

How is measured the achievement of the Single Entry Point strategy?

The main indicator is the number of first transmissions of “dataset occurrences”¹ as a percentage of the total number of expected dataset occurrences, over a period of a year. This "Single Entry Point coverage indicator" has grown from 18% for 2003 to 33% for 2006 (and 41% the quarter 2-2007).

In the first quarter of 2007, Eurostat received an average of about 50 new dataset occurrences each working day. At the end of a quarter, when many statistics are delivered, the traffic level can be much higher: for example, 576 data files were received in one single day, on Friday 30/6/2006 (last day of the week, last day of the quarter and just before holidays).

The current operational targets for the SEP coverage indicator are: 2007-60%, 2008-70%, 2009-90%. These targets are ambitious. In fact, several NSIs already send a very high proportion (possibly >90%) of their data through eDAMIS. What is much more difficult to achieve is a high usage of eDAMIS by the numerous national authorities other than NSIs, which individually send only small numbers of data files. The introduction of eWP in 2006, with the possibility of uploading files through the portal with no local installation, will encourage non-NSI national authorities to use eDAMIS. eDAMIS is for data senders as simple to use than email, but much more secure and it brings value added services.

¹ “dataset occurrence”: an occurrence of a dataset for 1 country for 1 period (or time series or sequence), excluding replaced and appended files. Since for various reasons it is often necessary to send revised data, the number of data files transmitted is around twice the number of dataset occurrences.

² <https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/edamis>