1. Introduction

- Eurostat introduced the Metadata Working Group (MWG) 2013 and welcomed in particular Croatia as the 28th member of the EU.
- Eurostat outlined the context of the work of the MWG covering:
  - Modernisation of statistics: sharing of standards and services for data processing and sharing of data to reduce burden and improve efficiency;
  - Discussing a program to implement the Vision: ESS.VIP programme. SIMSTAT and EGR.
  - The UNECE/ESS Common Statistical Business Architecture.
  - All initiatives lean upon common standards: for data and metadata, common descriptions of the statistical production process: for interoperability we need to document the statistical processes.
  - Use standards such as SDMX and share e.g. common Data Structure Definitions;
  - Convergence and streamlining of services.
  - The challenge to modernise the ESS in also leaning on the experience of countries.
2. Summary and conclusions from MWG 2012

- The minutes from the Metadata Working Group in 2012 were approved.
3. ESS vision and the ESS VIP program

- Eurostat gave an overview of the ESS Vision, the ESS VIP program and the link to metadata standardization, the need for standards for integration, shared services and for sharing data; also the legislation needs to be integrated (like the framework regulation for business statistics).

- The ESS planning is also reflecting the business process integration (e.g. European Statistical Program 2013-2017).

- The implementation of the ESS Vision through the 26 ESSnets projects organized since 2008, the Sponsorships on Quality Communication, and Standardization, the Eurostat VIPs and the comprehensive ESS.VIP program started in 2012/2013.

- The ESS VIP program consists of common infrastructure and standards, sharing of information and services through business related projects (currently 7 areas covered) and the governance framework.

- This means for the ESS: metadata standards, common information models, technical and statistical standards and their successive implementation in the ESS.
4. Governance and mandate of the ESS Metadata WG

- Eurostat presented the current ESS Group Structure related to Corporate statistical and IT services (covering Director Groups, Working Groups and User Groups);
- More integration of the current structure is needed and currently discussed at Eurostat; a revised draft group structure will be presented to DIME and ITDG asap;
- The work structure should be more organized along business layers as outlined in enterprise architecture;
- IT, quality and metadata should move more close together (e.g. combined ITDG and DIME); task force meetings should be enforced; the needs of small countries should be taken into consideration (e.g. through e-task forces);
- The MWG mandate might need to be adapted depending on the upcoming work structure;
- The MWG recognized the need for rationalization; the EA as model for reorganization does not seem to be ideal.
5. ESS legislation on standards and metadata

- Eurostat provided the latest update of the work on ESS legislation related to standards and metadata;
- The Sponsorship on Standardization (SPS) recommendations are now ready and usable;
- The current proposal is: an ESS classification framework regulation (EP/Council Regulation plus Commission Regulations); the technical and statistical standards (such as SDMX, ESMS) should use the standardization procedure as determined by the SPS;
- This procedure could be used e.g. for the Single Entry Point, SDMX, Validation, metadata standards, ESMS, etc.
- The standard setting itself should be decoupled from the implementation of the standards in statistical processes;
- This proposal is currently discussed at Eurostat; when decisions are taken, the results will be reported to DIME and ITDG and other groups.
6. The SDMX Statistical Working Group (SWG): latest deliverables

- Eurostat reported on the progress of work of the SDMX Statistical Working Group (20 members) dealing with the SDMX statistical standards;
- Main progress achieved: guidelines for the design of SDMX DSDs; guidelines for the creation and management of harmonized cross-domain code lists; development and maintenance of the SDMX COG; and template for the review of SDMX DSDs.
- Recently adopted by the SDMX Sponsors: the Governance rules of commonly used SDMX artefacts (plus annexed tables on DSDs); Member states are involved in the creation of SDMX artefacts through the domain specific working groups;
- The main upcoming work is related to release of Guidelines for Code lists and the further standardization and harmonization of Code lists as such;
- The MWG participants are invited to provide comments on the work of the SWG by the end of July 2013.
7a. The standardisation and management of ESS reference metadata

- Eurostat gave an high-level overview of the implementation of standard reference metadata in the ESS, covering the different ESS standard report structures and the progress achieved in their implementation.

- Given the national progress to adapt their metadata systems to accommodate the ESS metadata standards (also supported through the ESS grants 2012), Eurostat presented possible enhancements of the ESS Metadata Handler in order to facilitate the further integration.

- The MWG took note of the different ESS standard metadata report structures, their relationships and the expected volumes of metadata.

- The MWG participants recommended to allow for different ways of exchange of metadata depending on the set up of the national metadata production systems.

- In the short-term, Eurostat will modify the ESS-MH to also allow Member states to send the ESS metadata in SDMX-ML format via EDAMIS for import in the NRME.

- In the medium-term, the ESS-MH could be opened up for national metadata production purposes as well.
7b. The standardisation and management of ESS reference metadata

- Eurostat provided an overview of the implementation of the ESS metadata standards for national metadata exchange with Eurostat since 2012.
- The implementation has accelerated in the last year. 57 workflows have been opened in the NRME covering 16 statistical domains.
- Now also national ESQRS files will be disseminated on the Eurostat website.
- Eurostat is also working on a new info-site for providing comprehensive information on the ESS metadata standards, the implementation status of standards in statistical domains, the IT tools, training material and training events etc.
- The MWG took note of the progress made and the planned additional workflows for 2013/14. Eurostat will undertake a screening of new domains/reference metadata flows which will be standardized in 2014.
- The participants appreciated the training program offered by Eurostat (in particular the webinars) and the regular newsletters related to ESS reference metadata.

- Eurostat presented the progress of work on standardizing reference metadata flows in the EU Labour Force Survey (EU-LFS).
- The LFS quarterly accuracy reports are already migrated from Excel to the NRME since March 2012 (for the regular production and exchange).
- The LFS annual quality reports are in the process of being migrated from Excel to the ESQRS using the NRME. This work is more demanding since the LFS reports are quite comprehensive and need to be aligned to the ESQRS. The first reporting according to ESQRS is expected to take place during summer 2013.
- Quality reports for the LFS ad-hoc modules may also be prepared in 2014 and launched in 2015.
- The MWG participants took note of this concrete use case of the ESS metadata standards and of the NRME for the production and exchange of LFS quality reports.
9. The ESMS – Indicator profiles

- Eurostat reported on the progress on the standardization of the ESMS Indicator Profiles (ESMS-IP) which are now replacing the previous so called Quality Profiles and the Environmental Factsheets;
- The ESMS-IP uses the standard ESMS structure; it contains a short "quality box" at the top providing users with a summary assessment of the quality characteristics; it refers back to the main ESMS describing the basic statistical process.
- The ESMS-IPs are successively implemented for the EU2020 Indicators, the Sustainable Development Indicators, and Environmental Indicators;
- The ESMS-IPs are produced using the ESS Metadata Handler;
- The MWG participants recognized the progress with the standardization and implementation of the ESMS-IPs.
10. The SIMS and the ESS reference metadata standards

- The work on developing the Single Integrated Metadata Structure (SIMS) and the revision of the ESS Handbook on Quality Reports is done by a Eurostat and Member States Task Force in order to implement the recommendations from the Sponsorship on Quality to streamline ESS quality reporting.
- The SIMS is an inventory of concepts (providing a unique definition for each concept) used in the ESS standard metadata report structures (currently ESMS and ESQRS). The SIMS will evolve over time with new concepts to be included (e.g. those coming from the EPMS).
- The short user quality report (i.e. quality information for the users) is implemented through increased visibility of the ESS quality concepts in the ESMS.
- The detailed producer-oriented quality report (i.e. quality information for the producers) is implemented through ESQRS.
- The MWG participants acknowledged the usefulness of SIMS as a conceptual framework from which different ESS metadata report structures are derived (currently ESMS and ESQRS).
- The final report of the TF including SIMS and the revised Handbook on Quality Reporting will be presented to the ESSC meeting of 11/2013.
11. The Euro Process Metadata Structure (EPMS)

- Eurostat presented the EPMS used for better documentation of the Eurostat statistical production processes; this documentation is used for progressing with the own Eurostat business process integration.
- The EPMS complements existing documentation and has a special focus on data validation and also on IT applications used at Eurostat.
- About 100 statistical processes at Eurostat are documented according to EPMS.
- For further process integration with Member States, a standard process metadata structure for national statistical business processes will need to be defined.
- The MWG participants acknowledged the usefulness of an ESS-EPMS, as a standard process description for supporting the use of standards and shared services.
- A short paper on developing such an ESS-EPMS will be submitted to ITDG/DIME meeting during autumn for decision if such a development project should go ahead.
12. Harmonised structural metadata (code lists) – progress report

- Eurostat provided a report on the progress of harmonization of structural metadata (code lists), the implementation of standard code lists (SCL) in statistical domains and the future planning.

- The MWG was also informed about the draft ESS code lists "Unit of measure" and the recommended SDMX guidelines for the SCL creation.

- 158 ESS SCL's are harmonized and released on Eurostat website (24 new SCL's in 2012/2013). An alignment of the ESS code lists with the SDMX code lists is envisaged.

- The MWG participants took note of the progress made on ESS SCL and the future plans as outlined.

- The participants were asked to provide comments on the documents presented by the end of July 2013.

- The MWG participants also emphasized that GSIM, the Neuchatel model and SDMX need to be aligned further, also with regard to the harmonization of structural metadata.
13. The ESS Metadata Handler – version 2013

- Eurostat presented the plans for the next version of the ESS Metadata Handler (ESS-MH), the user feedback for improvements and the clearer GUI and data model. Eurostat also gave a short demo highlighting the new features of the ESS-MH.

- The new ESS-MH is expected to be released by the end of 2013.

- The MWG participants recognized that the new ESS-MH will respond to many of the enhancements brought forward by them.

- Four countries (SI, IT, CH, DK) volunteered to test the new version of the application in September/October 2013.

- The MWG participants discussed the enhancement "versioning and history of files" and recognized that this is important for metadata production and exchange.

- The MWG participants also asked Eurostat to reflect further on the access and dissemination of "old" reference metadata files.
14. The Vision Infrastructure Project (VIP): Eurostat Dissemination Chain

- Eurostat presented the deliverables of the Eurostat VIP "Enhanced Dissemination Chain" covering: the Dissemination Process Impact Manager, the Flexible Dashboards for policy indicators, the embeddable ESS visualization tool and the SDMX-compliant web services reusing the SDMX Reference infrastructure.
- The MWG appreciated the work done on these deliverables/shared services, e.g. improving the visualization of European statistics in an easy way for the users.
- Several of the deliverables can be used for national data visualization (the Widgets can be embedded in any website); access to Eurostat data and metadata is granted via the SDMX-compliant web-services in the second half of 2013.
- Due to licensing restrictions, the flexible dashboards cannot not be used by Members states.
15. The SDMX implementation in statistical domains

- More and more statistical domains implement SDMX for standardising their statistical production processes, covering both data (creation of data structure definitions etc.) and metadata (metadata structure definitions, standard code lists etc.).
- The SDMX implementation process covers 4 phases: preparation, compliance, implementation and production.
- The implementation process also takes into account data sets shared with other (international) organisations and the rationalisation of data sharing.
- Shared IT tools are offered to facilitate the production of SDMX data and their exposure via Web Services technologies.
- The SDMX Technical Working Group works on better data validation services to be added to SDMX.
- The MWG participants acknowledged the progress of SDMX implementation in statistical domains. A broader use of SDMX in many more statistical domains can however only be achieved in the medium term.
16. The Euro-SDMX Registry – version 2013

- Eurostat presented the Euro-SDMX Registry (= repository of SDMX artefacts used for SDMX based data/metadata exchange in ESS and beyond).
- The next version of the Euro-SDMX Registry (v. 2013) is delayed, but in preparation with a new GUI, more user friendly functionalities and additional access options; it is expected to be deployed by end 2013.
- Eurostat also presented the SDMX Global Registry for storing and retrieving SDMX artefacts for global use. Eurostat and OECD will act as Global Registry Managers regarding the registry contents.
- The Euro-SDMX Registry will be linked to the Global SDMX registry and their artefacts.
- The MWG participants took note on the progress of the Euro SDMX Registry and the work on the Global Registry. Once the Euro SDMX Registry is deployed, its contents will be cleaned and Eurostat will also provide training services.
17. The implementation of SDMX/ESS metadata standards in ISTAT (horizontal and vertical integration)

- ISTAT presented the ongoing work on implementation of SDMX and the ESS metadata standards in ISTAT. The project will run until end 2014.
- ISTAT has a clear SDMX strategy in heading towards a coherent Enterprise Architecture framework, to integrate the SDMX Reference Infrastructure and – inter alia - to integrate SDMX in their Unified Metadata System. ISTAT also aims to develop IT tools and services from the SDMX-RI further.
- Some lessons learnt so far: if SDMX is part of the NSI strategy, it will be one of the drivers for standardization and industrialization of processes; communication and capacity building actions are a prerequisite for implementing SDMX.
- The MWG participants took note of the progress of work in ISTAT and how SDMX implementation impacts the national statistical data and metadata system; also the role of the Enterprise Architecture in supporting the implementation of standards in production and dissemination was emphasized.
18. The implementation of ESMS/ESQRS in Statistics Denmark

• Statistics Denmark presented the implementation of the ESS metadata standards in the NSI. By end of 2014 all existing quality declarations will be migrated to the ESS metadata standards.

• Statistics Denmark uses Colectica which can support many standards; DDI is also used with the reuse of concepts, variables, categories and codes etc.

• The national metadata business process will be redesigned as metadata must get connected and reusable.

• The national workflows are aligned to the GSBPM model.

• Further work on the alignment of standards and models such as DDI, SDMX, GSIM etc. is indeed needed.

• The MWG participants acknowledged the integration work of Statistics Denmark. Countries were invited to provide further input for improving the ESS shared services or the links between national and international IT infrastructure.
19. The monitoring of ESS metadata systems

- Eurostat presented the 5th survey for the monitoring of the ESS metadata systems covering the implementation of business process models, the use of ESS standards and IT tools for producing and exchange of metadata.
- Integration progress is visible with the adoption of business process models based on the GSBPM.
- More ESS technical and metadata standards such as SDMX and ESMS are used.
- Many NSIs are developing IT infrastructures that support central metadata management.
- The MWG participants took note that the national metadata systems are gradually getting more integrated within the ESS.
- The MWG participants were invited to provide written comments by the end of July 2013 as input for the next monitoring exercise in 2013/2014.
20. Progress report from the UNECE

• The UNECE reported on the context of standard-based modernization; the work (including the METIS Work Session held in 05/2013 in Geneva) and governance issues covering:
  • The High-Level Group for the Modernization of Statistical Production and Services (composed of 10 heads of national and international organizations) defining a Vision/strategy/implementation for meeting current and future challenges;
  • The METIS 2013 work session on metadata standards and models, case studies and tools and metadata flows in statistical business processes;
  • The work on fostering interoperability in official statistics by use of common statistical production architecture;
  • The four Modernization Committees that will be set up to improve the UNECE governance structure.

• The MWG participants took note of the comprehensive work carried out by UNECE needed for the modernization of statistical production and services.

• The MWG members were invited to get involved in this work.
21. SDMX progress report

- A short overview on the work and deliverables of the SDMX Sponsors, the SDMX Secretariat and the two SDMX working groups was provided;

- Main outputs of the SDMX Sponsors/Secretariat are: the SDMX Global Registry, SDMX implementation in statistical domains, governance rules for SDMX artefacts and the preparation of the SDMX Global Conference 2013;

- Main outputs of the SDMX TWG: technical input for the SDMX Global Registry; SDMX IT tools strategy; security guidelines for the registry and the web services; improved technical documentation focused on SDMX standard 2.1; and improved validation services to be added to the SDMX technical standards;

- Main outputs of the SDMX SWG: Guidelines for the design of DSDs, creation and management of SCLs, and for the development and maintenance of the SDMX COG; and review of draft SDMX artefacts in SDMX implementation projects;

- The MWG participants took note on the progress of SDMX and the shift of work in 2011/2012 from the creation and maintenance of the standards to implementation of SDMX in more and more statistical domains.
22. All other business

- Redesign of the ESS work structure still to come in 2013.
- Combined ITDG and DIME meeting could take place already in autumn 2013.
- The next SDMX Global Conference will take place in Paris, 11-13 Sept. 2013.
- The EDAMIS and Validation user Group (EVUG) will take place 19-20 Sept. 2013.
- The Classification WG is scheduled for 28-29 Nov. 2013.
- Also an HLG Workshop with expert groups will take place on 25-27 November 2013 in Geneva (the MWG is invited to send up to two representatives).