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EUROPEAN COMMISSION STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)

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Topic (iii): XML and web services

AN APPLICATION OF SDMX-ML FOR THE JOINT DISSEMINATION OF NATIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO EURO AREA AGGREGATES ON THE WEB SITES OF THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK AND NATIONAL CENTRAL BANKS[*]

Supporting Paper

Submitted by the European Central Bank[1]

Summary

1.   There is an increasing demand for easier access to national contributions to euro area aggregates. This demand has been expressed by several types of users of statistics, including market participants, journalists, politicians and researchers. The framework put forward by the European System of Central Banks (ESCB) to address this demand foresees that national contributions to euro area aggregates will be presented in one table, together with euro area aggregates, and disseminated simultaneously on the ECB's and National Central Banks' (NCBs) websites. To guarantee dissemination of consistent data over the Internet, the ESCB has developed a technical solution based on SDMX-ML, the XML standard created by the Statistical Data and Metadata Exchange (SDMX) initiative.

2.   This paper begins by describing the details of the mechanism, involving the publication of XML data files by the ECB and their transformation by NCBs through XSL style sheets. This technique makes it possible for the disseminated data to be presented on each web site with the layout of that particular website. The maintenance costs for NCBs can be kept to a minimum, as the data are retrieved from a central database at the ECB. In the second part of the paper, the benefits brought by this technological innovation are listed and technical issues such as performance and security are examined. The paper concludes by a discussion of the possible extensions of this first application of SDMX-ML in the ESCB.

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[*] For technical reasons, this document has been submitted after the deadline.
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