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STATISTICAL OFFICE OF THE
EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES (EUROSTAT)**

**ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC COOPERATION
AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD)
STATISTICS DIRECTORATE**

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Topic (iii): Exchange/sharing/re-use of components, common models among statistical offices

EUROSTAT'S APPROACH TOWARDS SHARING STATISTICAL SOFTWARE

Invited paper

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Abstract

The aim of this document is to report on Eurostat's activities in the field of statistical OSS.

In cooperation with the Directorate General Informatics of the European Commission, and partially financed by its IDABC programme, Eurostat has published several applications for the handling of statistical data in SDMX and GESMES format under the EUPL. The EUPL is the European Union Public License, a GPL-like license compatible with European law and jurisdiction, available in 22 languages.

Eurostat has set up a portal on statistical OSS, as a next step, an OSS repository will be made available, which is as well prepared to host OSS applications created by Member States' administrations or other statistical bodies.

I. THE EUROPEAN UNION PUBLIC LICENSE

1. The European Union Public License EUPL was developed by DG Enterprises and Industry and has been endorsed by the European Commission in January 2007. It is published on the website of IDABC¹ on <http://ec.europa.eu/idabc/en/chapter/5980> and available in 22 languages.
2. The EUPL is a GPL²-type license, which takes into account European law, culture and jurisdiction.
3. In accordance with the Commission decision on EUPL, Eurostat has published a number of tools developed under the IDABC programme and its predecessor programme IDA. Most of these tools are dealing with SDMX³.

¹ Interoperable Delivery of European eGovernment Services to public Administrations, Businesses and Citizens, a programme of the European Commission developed by DG Enterprises and now run by DG Informatics

² GNU General Public license, see <http://www.gnu.org>

II. THE PROJECT

4. Eurostat is currently working on a large scale project called X-DIS (XML for Data Interoperability in Statistics), aiming in improving transmission, interpretation and understanding of statistical data and metadata. X-DIS is financed by the IDABC programme with 3.65 Million €

5. To ensure the long-term sustainability of the tools developed under X-DIS, Eurostat has set up a special work area on OSS (Open Source Software) under X-DIS.

III. THE CIRCA IG ON STATISTICAL OSS

6. In the framework of the abovementioned project, the following results have been achieved until now:

- A CIRCA Interest Group *OSS and Statistics*⁴ has been set up intended to be the **single starting point on OSS for administrations dealing with statistics**; this CIRCA IG is updated regularly.
- Guidelines for writing OSS and for publishing existing software as OSS (including packaging source code and making available documentation for developers and end users) have been written and are available in the IG mentioned above. These Guidelines can be obtained from the CIRCA IG *OSS and Statistics*.
- Special Guidelines for publishing existing software as OSS and for developing statistical OSS have been developed. These guidelines have been uploaded to the CIRCA website of the ITDG.
- A survey on applications developed by national administrations dealing with statistics has been executed; this survey aimed to identify both software already available as OSS or software not yet published, but suitable to be released as OSS. The results of the survey have been worked into the CIRCA IG.

IV. THE NEXT YEARS

7. The X-DIS work area on Open Source Software for Statistics is planned to be conducted up to end 2009. The main achievements for these years are expected to be:

- Obtaining a Commission Decision to publish software owned by Eurostat, but not developed under IDABC, under the EUPL (expected 2007/2008).
- Continuous update of the CIRCA IG *OSS and Statistics*, including as well the results of the recently conducted survey (continuous action, the results of the survey will be made available in Q4 2007)
- Migration of the CIRCA IG *OSS and Statistics* to CIRCABC, which is the new version of CIRCA developed under the IDABC programme (expected end 2008 or first half of 2009).
- Special Guidelines on how to produce software shared between Statistical Administrations: what are the general rules for shared software, and what are the special issues in the world of statistical administrations (2007-2008).
- A quarterly newsletter on sharing statistical applications. this will as well be an opportunity for other statistical organisations to present their projects and to look for partners to share development costs.

³ Statistical Data and Metadata eXchange, see www.sdmx.org

⁴ This group is found on Eurostat's CIRCA site: <http://circa.europa.eu/dsis>

V. A REPOSITORY OF STATISTICAL OSS

8. Another important service is currently under preparation: A repository of statistical Open Source Software. This will be realised as a special section of a repository currently is under development by DG Informatics and is financed via the IDABC programme. It will have similar functionalities as Sourceforge, but specialises in OSS for or developed by public administrations.

9. This repository will be open to parties outside the European Commission for their projects, even if these projects are under a different licensing scheme than EUPL. The further administrative and technical details will be communicated as soon as available.

10. Eurostat has already committed to contribute its applications to this registry, and invites its partners to make as well use of this free service of the European Commission.