

**THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SDMX CONTENT-ORIENTED GUIDELINES WITH REGARD TO
METADATA EXCHANGE WITHIN THE EUROPEAN STATISTICAL SYSTEM**

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Abstract

Eurostat is implementing the SDMX content-oriented guidelines for the harmonisation of both structural and reference metadata within the European Statistical System. With regard to structural metadata, there is a two-way interaction between the harmonisation at SDMX level and at European level. With regard to reference metadata, Eurostat is using the cross-domain concepts list for the implementation of a Europe-wide standard (ESMS, *Euro-SDMX Metadata Structure*) to be used for metadata reporting to Eurostat and for exchanging metadata between international organisations, for instance between Eurostat, the European Central Bank, the IMF and the OECD.

The ESMS, aiming to document methodologies, quality and production processes in general, draws 21 high-level concepts from the SDMX list, with a breakdown of sub-items. The new structure, fully compliant with SDMX standards and guidelines and with the European Statistics Code of Practice, is being implemented in Eurostat for metadata dissemination. But the key idea behind the ESMS is the improvement of metadata exchange and sharing, reducing redundancies and increasing comparability. Adopting standard concepts (linked to a common terminology) and using SDMX-ML formats with standardised web systems, one organisation will be able to identify and retrieve those metadata which are relevant for its own framework, avoiding duplications and reducing the burden on respondents. European countries, for instance, should be able to provide metadata to more organisations once for all – for the same SDMX concept and for the same data set – using as much as possible information extracted from their original metadata systems, reducing manual interventions, double work and inconsistencies.