

Intra and extra-Community trading of goods: trans-European network for the collection of statistics, Edicom II

2000/0201(COD) - 23/04/2009 - Follow-up document

The Commission presents its report on the implementation of the EDICOM II programme (2001-2005) in accordance with Decision No 507/2001/EC. The evaluation has been based on the standard criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, utility and sustainability. The commission examines each of these criteria in turn.

The report notes that results obtained in the framework of the Edicom II programme enabled a noticeable modernisation of the trans-European network for the collection, production and dissemination of statistics on the trading of goods within the Community and between the Community and non-member countries.

Whilst the programme covered the period 2001-2005, administrative tasks lasted until 2008. In total 393 projects were implemented by Eurostat and the Member States accounting for an expenditure of EUR 31.2 million, or 61% of the total budget approved in the Edicom Decision.

The Commission and Member States successfully developed new IT technologies and Web-based solutions, thus benefiting the PSIs, relevant administrations and users.

Trade statistics of high quality are provided faster, new statistical products were generated, satisfying the needs of institutional and private users. Statistical information has been made available, free of charge, to all users. Resource efficiencies were achieved at both Eurostat and national level.

Studies carried out on the simplification of Intrastat have highlighted that PSIs consider the burden caused by Intrastat reporting as acceptable. Future simplification efforts should focus on the maintenance or improvement of data quality for the users.

IT tools have been developed centrally and have been made available to Member States for setting up the basis of a fully integrated and interoperable European system. Its implementation has not yet been fully achieved, due to difficulties of Member States to change their national systems.

The following points should support any future programme:

- Member States did not participate in all Edicom actions due to lack of staff;
- further improvements to systems and methodology can still be achieved;
- all new Member States need to work on similar projects to improve their data quality and to integrate better into the European Statistical System;
- actions aimed at reaching greater automatisations of data collection tools should be pursued;
- the framework for a fully integrated European network for the production of external trade statistics was created but it is not yet fully operational.

Main areas for future intervention could be:

- continuation of work on estimation techniques and now-casting methods, on management of confidentiality, statistical value, trade registers, intra-firm trade and globalisation;

- measures for improving cooperation between Member States and Eurostat for the collection and transmission of basic information should be implemented through a secure network;
- studies on the adoption of future technologies;
- further harmonisation of collection systems at EU level and the adaptation of tools in order to achieve a totally integrated and harmonized statistical system.