

# **Simplification of Intrastat**

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Statistics on intra-EU trade in goods (Intrastat) are in se a source of information which is crucial in the decisions making processes of a number of macro- and micro-users. Moreover, Intrastat data directly feed into Member States' Balances of Payments and National Accounts and are therefore important inputs for many EU policies such as the monetary policy of the European Central Bank, the Lisbon Agenda, the Excessive Deficit Procedure etc.

On the other hand, due to its monthly frequency and the detailed character of data provision, Intrastat is often perceived as quite burdensome. It is usually to be found on top of all lists of administrative obligations to be simplified.

If such simplification could be (further) put into practice without allowing data quality to deteriorate and hence maintain user satisfaction, considerable savings in time and in financial terms could be generated. The investment in the future would be represented by resources being made available for more creative activities.

Eurostat will present a historical background on the simplifications which have been brought about since the inception of Intrastat in 1993. Attention will be given to the work carried out by the Working Group on the Simplification of Intrastat and the resulting amended Intrastat Regulation which was adopted in co-decision this year and came into force retroactively from 1 January 2009.

A considerable number of Member States have conducted studies and surveys into the matter in 2008. An overview of the results of this work will be presented. The Single Flow reporting system will be treated. Although it is currently regarded as unrealistic by most, it was never completely discarded and was kept at the long term horizon.

Finally, attention will be given to the way forward in the short term and more specifically to the MEETS (Modernisation of European Enterprise and Trade Statistics) programme which has become operational this year and will continue until 2012.