

Statistical References

Achievements of user support and on Eurostat's website

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Dear reader,

For nearly three years now Eurostat has offered its products and services free of charge and easily accessible on its website in accordance with the free dissemination strategy. From the beginning, the user support helped to put this policy into practice, and over the years both the website and user support have undergone a number of modifications.

The user friendliness of website functionalities has been improved considerably taking into account the observations and recommendations of the users and the findings of a benchmarking exercise. Among other amendments, the number of extractable cells was increased considerably. A new feature for the predefined tables, called TGM (tables, graphs and maps) has been implemented in June 2007. Further projects to re-enforce the usability are in the pipeline, including the improvement of the search functionalities.

The three-level support helps users to find data, methodology and publications and has also been subject to several improvements.

On the level of online help, the content of the website was amended. To ease the troubleshooting for the most common problems, the number of FAQs were increased and they were structured in relevant areas. Efforts have been made to improve the methodology and documentation.

To provide a fast and efficient service in nearly all European languages, Eurostat collaborates with the national support centres for the treatment of user requests. Currently, 23 countries participate in the programme, providing support in 21 languages.

To improve our service, cooperation between these national centres and Eurostat is fostered by providing information, quality controls and training on a regular basis.

The national institutes report on their activities and provide user feedback which is taken into consideration for further improvements.

The amendments led to a higher level of user satisfaction in particular concerning the technological aspects for which a decrease of requests could be observed. The approach to provide more sophisticated tools to find and download data and publications has been successful and accepted by the users.

Efforts to improve our website and the user support will continue, and we will keep you informed about Eurostat's activities in the upcoming issue of *Statistical references*.

Gunter Schäfer
Head of Unit 'Dissemination'

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