



What is IMI?

The Internal Market Information System (IMI) is a secure, multilingual online tool, facilitating the exchange of information between public administrations across the EEA that are involved in the practical implementation of EU law.

IMI was initially conceived as a tool to help competent authorities to fulfil their obligations under the Services Directive and the Recognition of Professional Qualifications Directive. It was designed as a generic solution that could be adapted, with very little or no development effort, to support communication relating to other policy areas. IMI has been developed by the Commission in close collaboration with the Member States and has been funded mainly by the IDABC and ISA programmes.

How is information exchanged through IMI?

Communication in IMI depends on specific obligations imposed on Member States by each of the different legal instruments. There are different administrative cooperation procedures in IMI, which can be activated independently for the policy areas. These procedures may involve two or more Member State competent authorities, and where required also the European Commission experts.

- **IMI requests** are 'one-to-one' exchanges where an authority in one Member State sends a request for information or for action to its counterpart in another Member State. The exchange is based on structured content using predefined sets of questions, information or instructions and answers or reactions to these. The predefined content of communication for each area of legislation is drawn up jointly by the Commission and Member States based on the administrative cooperation provisions in the EU legislation. Only the authorities directly involved in an exchange can access the content. IMI requests are currently mostly used between two different Member States, though the procedure could also be used for communication between authorities within the same country.
- **IMI repositories** are databases containing information relating to specific policy areas. They provide a centralised secure way of sharing information, where competent authorities are given the responsibility for the stored information. A repository can be populated directly by Member State competent authorities, via notifications or by input of external actors (citizens or businesses). Access to a given repository can be restricted to selected authorities or can be open to the whole IMI community. If desired, some of the content of the IMI repositories could also be published outside the IMI system and thus made available to external actors (e.g. businesses).
- **IMI Notifications** are 'one-to-many' exchanges where an authority can notify or alert one or more authorities and/or the Commission about a new event, a piece of information or an action that has been taken (e.g. the issuance or withdrawal of a licence). Different notification types can be defined and content can be structured according to the needs of a particular policy area. The content is visible only to the authorities concerned. As a result of the notification procedure the content of the exchange may populate an IMI repository.

- **The IMI Public interface** is a technically independent and separate part of the system. It allows external actors to communicate with competent authorities registered in IMI. These external actors can manage their own accounts on the interface and can have an overview of their communication with the Member State authorities. Requests or complaints submitted by external actors can then be further processed in IMI using any of the above exchange procedures. As of 2016, European professionals will be able to submit their applications for a European Professional Card using this public interface.
- **IMI Content syndication** will allow for the external publication of information exchanged in IMI. It is foreseen to be used mainly concerning information shared in IMI repositories. The defined part of the content of an IMI repository could be made publicly available on e.g. an external website. It is planned that the list of documents required for the issuance of a European Professional Card will be stored in IMI, but will also be made publicly available for citizens on different European or national websites.

Benefits of (re-)using IMI

- IMI can be used in all EU languages. Standardised content, questions, answers messages and form fields are pre-translated. In addition automated translation is made available for information provided in free text.
- IMI is flexible and can accommodate any national administrative structure (centralised, fully decentralised or anything in between).
- Exchange of information via IMI is fully secure and data protection proof.
- The use of IMI generates no IT costs for the Member States.
- All users can benefit from the existing network of National IMI Coordinators for training and support.

A few facts and figures

- The first information exchanges took place in January 2008.
- Volumes of IMI requests have grown from a modest 30 per month in 2008 to more than 600 per month in 2014. (In October 2014, the number exceeded 800.)
- The total number of requests sent through IMI is more than 23,000.
- There are now more than 7,000 registered authorities with over 13,000 registered users.
- In our last survey (June 2012), 86% of respondents said that IMI was easy to use.
- Today IMI supports 15 administrative cooperation procedures in 8 different policy areas.

IMI website:

Further information about the IMI System, including links to the supported legal areas and the contact details of national IMI coordinators, can be found on the IMI website: <http://ec.europa.eu/imi-net>.