

Civil Registration in German Regions – the example of Lower-Saxony

The civil registration in Germany is characterised by its federal structure. I.e. the State provides the guidelines for civil registration, the Federal States are the legislators that convert these framework conditions in federal acts, and the local registration offices are responsible for service provision. This has led to many differences in the proceedings and processes among the registration offices in the past. To overcome this structure, regional initiatives emerged using standardised formats to enable electronic data exchange among civil registration offices; first within the borders of the Federal States and then, under the influence of two meanwhile legalised standards for data-exchange and civil registration messages, across the regional borders. What started differently in the various Federal States due to different software systems, legislation and financial resources, turned into a rather coordinated project within Germany, called XMeld.

What has started at regional level has finally led to a nation-wide standard. XMeld is seen as forerunner for the employment of standardised workflows for bi-and multi-lateral communication based on XML and OSCI in Germany. Extensions of the standards for other purposes like taxation features are already on the way. One of the biggest successes was the legalisation of OSCI-XMeld and OSCI-Transport as compulsory standards for data exchange in the civil registration. Other initiatives, combined under the umbrella of XÖV projects (XML in public administration), are already following this example. Besides, international registry information is also enabled via XMeld, since XMeld is a partner of the RISER project, a project of the European Commission enabling pan-European registry information by "connecting" national civil registration data.

The article is developed in 2005 as a good practice case in the eGovernment - Interoperability at local and regional level project.

Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Knowledgebase

<http://unstats.un.org/unsd/vitalstatkb/KnowledgebaseArticle50053.aspx>