

Document exchange centre


Document exchange centre for paperless management of business

The document exchange centre (DEC) is an information system providing a common central document exchange service for various document managements systems (DMS) as well as other information systems dealing with documents. The objectives of the DEC are the following: interfacing dispersed information systems through the secure data exchange layer X-Road; short-term preservation of documents and, in the future, also provision of services that will support the proceeding of documents; long-term preservation and back-up of documents. Using the DEC as a central asynchronous buffering component on the distributed X-Road infrastructure is justified by the need to simplify the joining of DMS with the state document exchange infrastructure as well as to ensure the reliability of document exchange.

The DEC is an infrastructure for the transmission of documents (i.e. a mediation layer for document exchange services of information systems) relying on the X-Road as a transport-level infrastructure. The treatment of the term "document and document exchange systems" should go beyond correspondence between institutions and their document management systems. Documents are messages with described semantics and structure. These can be letters, draft legislation, financial documents (including eInvoices and payment orders), electronic forms, documents related to public procurement procedures etc. Systems exchanging documents can be, in addition to document management systems, accounting information systems or information systems specific to an organisation's main activities.

Development perspectives of DEC

Once the planned developments of the DEC – support for business processes and possibility of long-term document preservation – are implemented, organisations and information systems without a local document register (irrespective of the nature of documents) will also be able to use the centre in their business processes. This is one of the reasons why the DEC has also



been called a document repository and a document storage. In the longer term, an end-user web interface is planned to be added to the DEC for the administration of documents straight in the DEC.

Outcomes

The wider use of the DEC is only just beginning. By February 2007, approximately 60 public bodies, most of them local governments, had joined the environment. Next, the interfacing of the ministries was started. The DEC interface was first implemented in the Ministry of Social Affairs, followed by the Ministry of Agriculture. The interfacing of public bodies is a continuous process; in the course of 2007, all ministries should achieve readiness for the transition to paperless correspondence in mutual communication.

The DEC project was initiated at the end of 2004 and at the beginning of 2005 in co-operation between the State Chancellery and the Estonian Informatics Centre.