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**Remarks on the future of ebXML and EWG/X12  
joint development of ebXML Core Components**

**SOURCE:** Belgium delegation  
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Agenda Item 4

## **Preparation of the UN/CEFACT meeting of Geneva (26-29 March 2001)**

### **Remarks on the future of ebXML and EWG/X12 joint development of ebXML Core Components**

#### **1. The organisation responsible in the future for XML solutions**

The ebXML initiative will be finalised in May 2001, with an agreement about the technical specifications and some guides and rules (basic documents) to discover, to develop and to name Core Components. Based on the outcome of the ebXML Vancouver the real work on the development of the semantic part of ebXML has to be carried out after the closing of the ebXML initiative.

One of the initiatives in respect of the development of the Core Components was taken at the UN/CEFACT – EWG meeting in Taipei of last year. EWG and X12 standard bodies agreed to set up a joint working group to develop XML Core Components for being the building blocks for XML solutions.

Today it is not clear which organisation will continue the work on the semantic part of XML, based on the ebXML guidelines hopefully approved and available at the closing of the ebXML initiative. Information received from the outside world, it seems that the final decision for hosting (eb)XML will be in favour of UN/CEFACT. But the possibility can be that under the UN/CEFACT organisation the responsibility is given to EWG or a new working group.

Taken in consideration the current business knowledge put in the EDIFACT standard and the fact that most of the EWG participants are business experts, Belgium is in favour that the scope of the actual EWG group is extended in such a way to guarantee:

- Cross-sectorial analysis of business processes and data flows,
- To carry out business process- and information modelling,
- Continue to support the development of UN/EDIFACT messages,
- To play a major role in the development of XML solution, and new syntaxes as they emerge.
- To maintain CC coherence between business sectors

The possibility to create a new working group to deal with the development of XML solution, will disturb the industry sectors by creating a overhead of meetings and manpower to support different EDI standards, by doing twice the same fundamentals (defining business process– and information modelling) in different groups by the same persons.

**Therefore it is for the Belgium delegation unacceptable that a new working group is installed for the development of the XML Core Components and solutions apart of the EWG process. The integration of the XML business process definition in the existing EWG is for Belgium the only way to increase the efficiency of the current activities in respect of e-business and B2B Integration.**

## **2. EWG/X12 joint development of ebXML Core Components**

As mentioned above the decision was taken at the EWG Taipei meeting to set-up an EWG/X12 joint working group for the development of XML Core Components. At the CEN/ISSS/EBES Board meeting held on 11 January 2001, the EBES Board members were informed that X12 has taken the initiative to hold the first meeting of the joint EWG/X12 working group during the X12 Seattle meeting scheduled on 4-8 February 2001.

This information was electronically transmitted by EBES to the Board members on 17 January 2001. No official announcement was send out before the X12 meeting on behave of EWG to their members, informing about the first meeting of the X12/EWG joint group with the request to participate in the initiative.

The lack of informing the EWG members has resulted in a very low level of attendance of EWG members (4 persons of Europe) and an overwhelming participation of X12 members (a few of them are official EWG members delegated by X12).

Based on the items addressed during the EWG/X12 meeting the experience and impression of the Belgian delegates is, that:

- It seems to be an X12 initiative to start the activities of the EWG/X12 joint development group on Core Components without the support of UN/CEFACT – EWG,
- The joint working group started up without any mission, mandate and objectives,
- Organisational and operational procedures are not defined,
- The chairmen of the different sub-working group have been appointed prior to the meeting by X12 and are of course all X12 members,
- Depending on the audience during the joint meeting sub-working groups have been initiated.

In the first week of March, we received the official draft agenda of the EWG Washington meeting with as attachment the draft agenda, established by X12, of the third EWG/X12 joint meeting on CC in parallel with the EWG meeting. On request when the second meeting of the EWG/X12 joint group has taken place, we received the answer that the ebXML Vancouver meeting was seen as the second meeting. Conclusion is that nobody of EWG was informed before Vancouver's meeting of the fact that ebXML's meeting was also seen as a joint development meeting.

Looking to the future meeting places during 2001, all the EWG/X12 meetings will take place in parallel with X12 meetings, ebXML meetings and EWG meetings. This means that for each EWG/X12 joint meeting the working group will be confronted with a permanent changing number of participants. This can lead us to a permanent review or restart of the output of the previous meetings.

**The above way of acting concerning the EWG/X12 joint working group is totally unacceptable for the Belgian delegation and we strongly request UN/CEFACT to take the adequate decisions to clarify the current situation.**

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