

# Message exchange with Finnish Customs: Introduction to message exchange with Finnish Customs

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# Introduction

This guide deals with how to apply for a customer authorisation in the message exchange with Finnish Customs. The guide presents the electronic services of Finnish Customs and describes the two alternatives of message exchange: message exchange via an operator and direct message exchange.

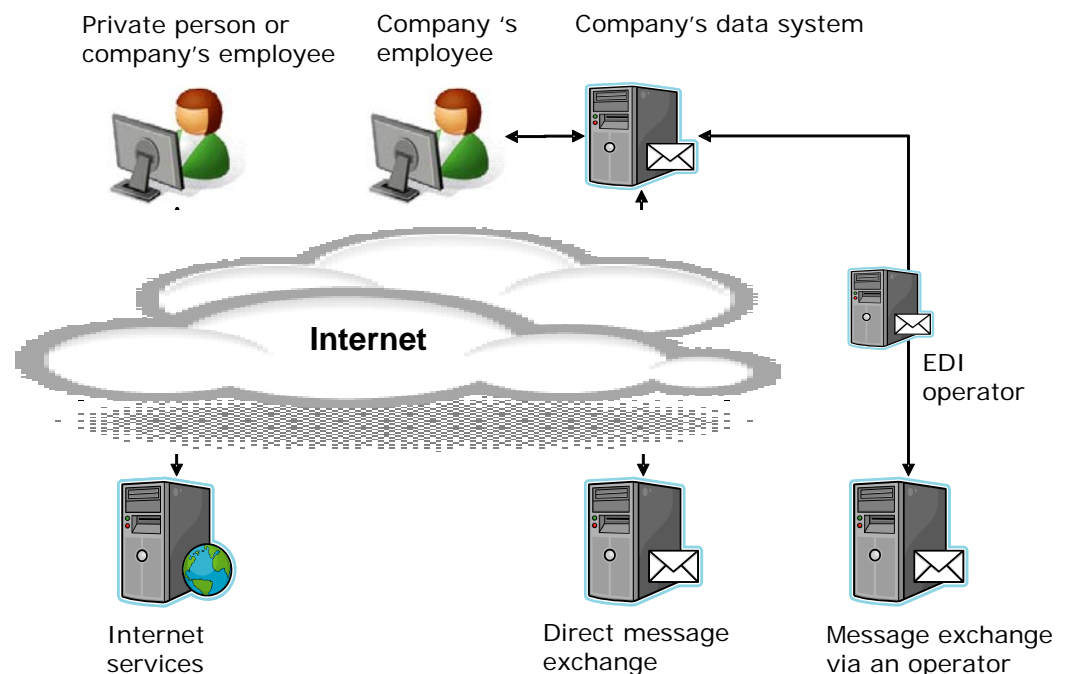
The guide is outlined so that it can be used as a basis for decision making when choosing a service channel. More detailed technical instructions for message exchange are available in the guidebook Message exchange with Finnish Customs: Technical guidebook.

## 1 Electronic services of Finnish Customs

In recent years, Finnish Customs has concentrated heavily on developing electronic transactions. Customs can process the electronically obtained data faster than paper-based data, and it is also faster and easier for the customer to submit an electronic declaration. It is easier to guarantee the quality and accuracy of the data within electronic services.

### 1.1 Electronic service channels

The customer can use the electronic services of Customs either via the Internet or via message exchange. Message exchange between the company and Customs means electronic transfer of standard formatted data with EDI messages (Electronic Data Interchange). In the message exchange, the data systems of the customer (or the customer's service provider) send the messages electronically to the Customs data systems.



**Figure 1: The electronic service channels**

The choice of the service channel depends on the customer's needs and capability to use IT systems.

It is usually well worth investing in **message exchange** when the company has a lot of transactions with Customs. In the assessment, it is advised to consider the overall number of transactions (import, export etc.). It is faster to process an EDI customer's declarations, as the files and registers of the company can be utilized directly. In addition, message exchange has procedure-specific advantages, for example related to guarantees.

All message exchange is subject to authorisation. The authorisations granted by the National Board of Customs (import, export, car taxation, statistical declarations) or by the Customs district in which the trader is established (transit).

The message declarant receives all the amendment requests and requests for additional information, rejection messages, decisions and accompanying documents that are related to the declarations directly to his or her own data system as PDF files. When starting the export procedure, the customer doesn't have to go to the Customs office. The customer doesn't have to go to the Customs office except when presenting a document that must be presented in original or needs to be supplemented with entries by Customs.

For the time being, message exchange can be used in import (import declaration messages), export (export declaration messages), entry summary declarations and exit summary declarations of goods and transit (T1 and T2 transit declarations and electronic TIR-Carne declarations). Car tax declarations, car taxation amendment notifications and the statistical reports of internal trade can also be submitted through message exchange.

All message exchange is subject to authorisation and the authorisation requires software testing with Customs.

**Online declaration** is free of charge and does not require a specific authorisation or specific software.

A few of the Customs services can be used by unidentified users. In such cases, submitting a declaration starts with a blank application form. An unidentified online declarant must always visit the Customs office of the place of dispatch of the goods when the goods are placed under the customs procedure.

Companies can also use Customs services as identified users. The identification requires using a free-of-charge Katso ID issued by the Finnish Tax Administration. For private persons, online bank ID's can be used for identification to the Web Export service.

Declarations which an identified user has lodged earlier can be used as templates for new declarations. Declarations by an identified user can be seen and used during a given time limit after they have been submitted.

The customers can lodge transit declarations, export declaration messages and entry summary declarations and exit summary declarations via Customs web service. Declarations related to moving products subject to excise duties under duty suspension, car taxation and the statistics of internal trade can also be lodged via the Internet.

**More information** about Customs web services can be found at the Finnish Customs website (only available in Finnish and Swedish):

<http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yrityksille/sahkoinenasiointi/internet/>

[http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/e\\_tjanster/internettjanster/](http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/e_tjanster/internettjanster/)

## 1.2 Factors affecting the choice of service channel

### **Volume of transactions with Customs**

When choosing the eService, the volume of transactions with Customs is a significant factor. A rule of thumb is that a large number of Customs declarations tilts the balance in favour of message exchange. It is, however, impossible to define any exact numbers of declarations. **Content of Customs declarations**

The more diverse the Customs declarations by the company are, the more likely message exchange is to be worthwhile. Lodging a Customs declaration containing several consignments online is burdensome.

### **Customs know-how**

Customs know-how here refers to the competence level of the employees of the company in transactions with Customs. The aim has been to make online declarations as simple as possible, as online declarations are also meant for occasional declarants. Message exchange requires a broader competence in transactions with Customs.

### **Data systems of the company**

A separate data system is not required for online declarations. Data cannot be transferred directly from the data system of the company (e.g. ERP) to the online form.

Message exchange systems can be integrated directly into the data systems of the company, in which case already existing data can be transferred electronically to the Customs declaration faster and more correctly than when entered manually. In addition, customs clearance software can contain registers of changing data (such as exchange rates, commodity codes, import and export restrictions) managed by the software supplier.

## 2 Message exchange

For the time being, message exchange with Customs is only possible via operators authorised by Customs. In the near future, Customs will also provide an opportunity for direct message exchange via the Internet, without operators.

In the first phase, only certain Customs systems will be subject to direct message exchange. Message exchange via an operator will remain as a supported service channel. Mixed use of the service channels is also possible: The customer company can, when necessary, declare to certain Customs systems using direct message exchange and declare to others using message exchange via an operator.

The longer-term target state is to enable all message exchange between the customer companies and Customs using direct message exchange (web service). In such cases, the customer company can, when necessary, shift to only using direct message exchange and stop using the communications provided by an operator.

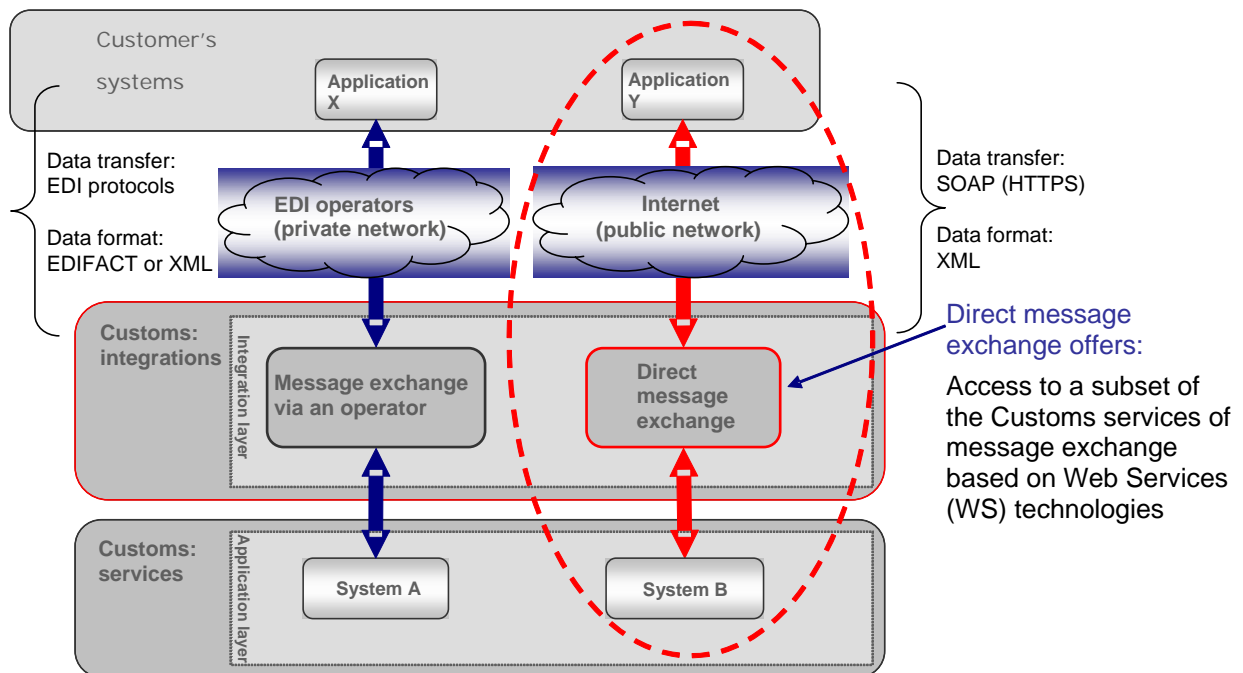


Figure 2: Direct message exchange and message exchange via an operator

### 2.1 Message exchange via an operator

#### 2.1.1 Role of EDI operators in direct message exchange

In message exchange, Customs uses reliable communications provided by EDI operators authorised by Customs. The contact information of the EDI operators authorised by Customs can be found in appendix 1.

The EDI operator is responsible for the reliability of both the data security and the availability of the message exchange. The EDI operator is to identify the customer and check that the customer has an authorisation to use direct message exchange with Customs.

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### 2.1.2 What message exchange via an operator requires from the customer

From the customer, message exchange via an operator requires

- An authorisation for message exchange from Customs. Matters related to the authorisation are further specified in the next chapter.
- The communications needed for transmitting messages.
- An agreement with the operator of one's own choice.

**Customs is not liable for the quality of the service provided by the EDI operator. The customer must make sure that the service level is described accurately enough in the agreement that the customer signs with the operator.**

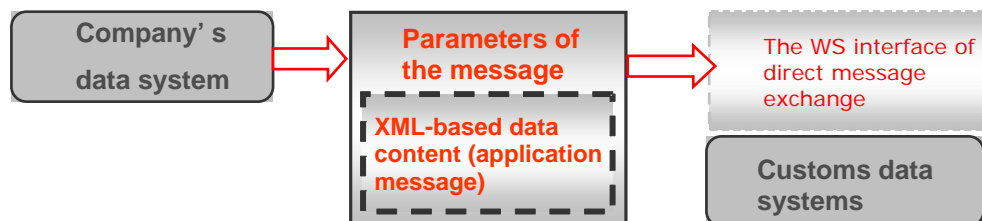
## 2.2 Direct message exchange (web service)

In direct message exchange, the data system of the customer of Customs can send messages to the Customs systems over the Internet and retrieve response messages produced by Customs systems.

Direct message exchange with Customs is based on general international standards, which are referred to as web service. The standards provide a possibility of implementing integration between the data systems in a manner that complies with data security. The technical standards of direct message exchange are listed in [appendix 2](#) of the technical guidebook.

### 2.2.1 Message content

Direct message exchange is used as a transport layer for different XML-based data contents. The data content (for example an export declaration addressed to the ELEX system of Customs) is included in a general-purpose frame message, which is transmitted to the web service (WS) of direct message exchange.



**Figure 3: Message content in direct message exchange**

The structure of an application message transported through the direct message exchange with Customs (e.g. an ELEX export declaration) is identical with the structure of an application message in message exchange via an operator.

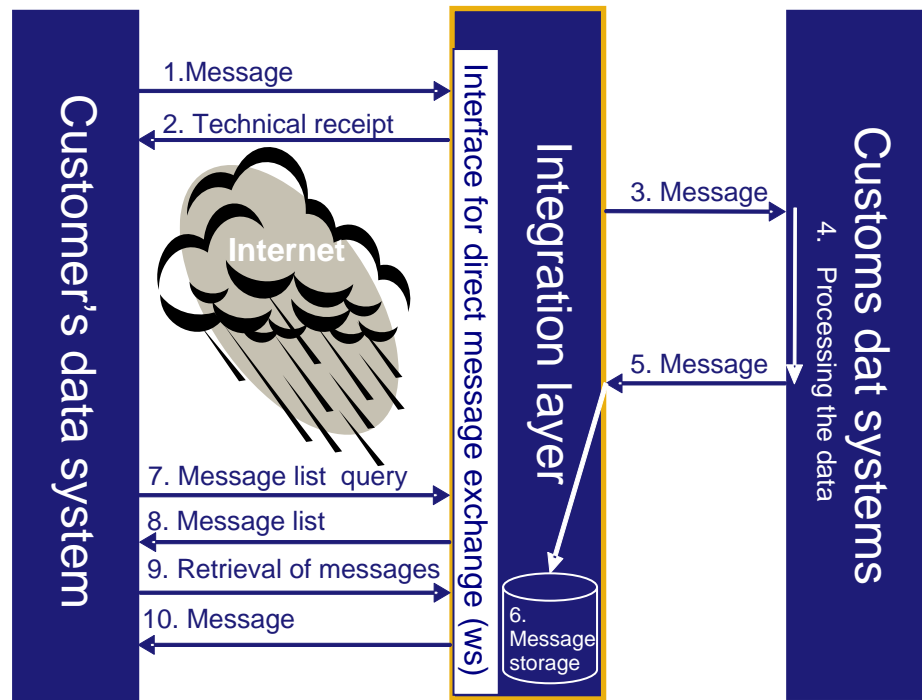
### 2.2.2 Operations and process

The web service of direct message exchange enables the following operations:

- Sending one data entity, for example a customs declaration, from the customer to Customs systems.
- Producing a list with basic information of the customer's messages that are to be retrieved.

- Retrieving one data entity from Customs systems. With this operation, for example, a response to an earlier sent Customs declaration can be retrieved.

The customer uses the operations in accordance with the following process:



**Figure 4: Direct message exchange process**

- The data system of the customer builds and transmits the message to Customs web service for direct message exchange.
- Customs performs security audits on incoming service requests. If the customer's message is accepted, the integration layer of Customs reports the technical receipt of the message. A technical acknowledgement of receipt will end the customer's service request.
- The integration layer of Customs converts the parameters of the message into the internal format of Customs and routes the message to the relevant Customs system.
- The Customs system processes the data in the message and builds a response message.
- The Customs system sends a response message to the customer through the integration layer.
- The message transmitted by the integration layer of Customs will not reach the customer directly. Instead, the message is recorded in the message storage. The customer must retrieve the response messages addressed to him or her from the message storage.
- The data system of the customer requests a list of messages that are to be retrieved from the message storage.
- As a response, the customer receives the message list.
- The customer requests an individual message from the message storage.
- The customer receives the requested message as a response.

11. The customer repeats the two previous stages of operation for each message that is to be retrieved.

### 2.2.3 Actors and roles

Two actors can utilize direct message exchange with Customs: **the message declarant** and, when used, **the service provider** of the declarant.

1. **The message declarant** is the party who has the responsibility to provide declaration data or similar data to Customs and who does this by using message exchange. Depending on the procedure, the message declarant can be a principal, a representative (for example a forwarding agency) or other.

If it is a question of, for example, customs declarations, the decisions made by Customs apply to the message declarant. If the message declarant is a representative, the decisions also apply to the principal of the message declarant.

In direct message exchange, each message declarant has to go through the Customs customer testing. The testing is customer-specific regardless of whether the service provider used by the message declarant has other message declarants in production

2. **The service provider** is the party who can take over certain technical roles related to direct message exchange. In direct message exchange, it is possible for the message declarant to use a service provider for transmitting or building and transmitting messages. The topics covered in the Technical guidebook in chapter 5 apply also to a service provider.

The technical roles are related to message building and transmission.

- Declarations are to be given in the XML message format. In direct message exchange, the XML message is embedded in a specific frame message, which is marked with an electronic XML signature.

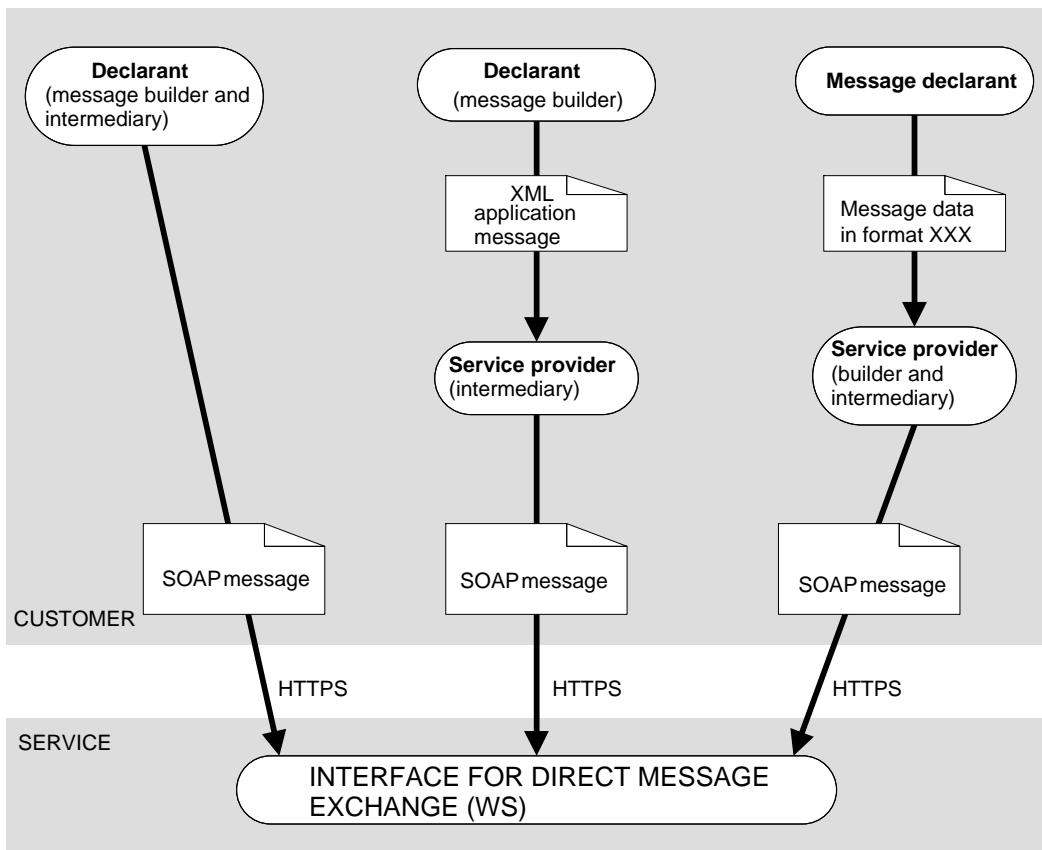
The company whose data system builds messages in a prescribed format required by Customs and signs messages with an electronic XML signature has **the role of the builder**.

- The customer's service requests are transmitted to Customs using the HTTPS connection and marked with the transfer frames required by the web service of direct message exchange.

The company whose data system is connected to the web service of the Customs direct message exchange over the internet has **the role of the intermediary**.

The roles refer to the actors in a purely technical sense. The terms do not refer to the actors in the data content of the messages. Therefore, the intermediary does not mean, for example, the intermediary of goods or transport.

In direct message exchange, the technical roles between the message declarant and the service provider can be divided as follows:



**Figure 5: Actors and roles in direct message exchange**

1. The message declarant can act alone without particular service providers. (The leftmost option in the figure.)

This option describes the simplest way of using the web service of direct message exchange. The software of the message declarant performs all of the following operations:

- Builds an application-specific message according to the specifications set by Customs, signs it and places the signed message in the data element according to the rules.
- Creates a SOAP message, into which the data element created in the previous phase is entered.
- Transmits the SOAP message to Customs web service for direct message exchange using the HTTPS protocol.

2. Alternatively, the message declarant can hand over the task of transmitting messages to Customs web service for direct message exchange to another company (service provider). (The middle option in the figure.)

In addition to message sending, a part of the message transmission is that the service provider retrieves messages addressed to the message declarant from Customs web service for direct message exchange.

In this option, the application-specific message according to the specifications set by Customs is built and signed with an XML signature in the software of the message declarant. The communications to Customs web service for direct message exchange have been outsourced to a service provider that also operates as the intermediary.

3. If the customer company does not want to produce an application-specific message according to the specifications set by Customs, the company can hand over the task of

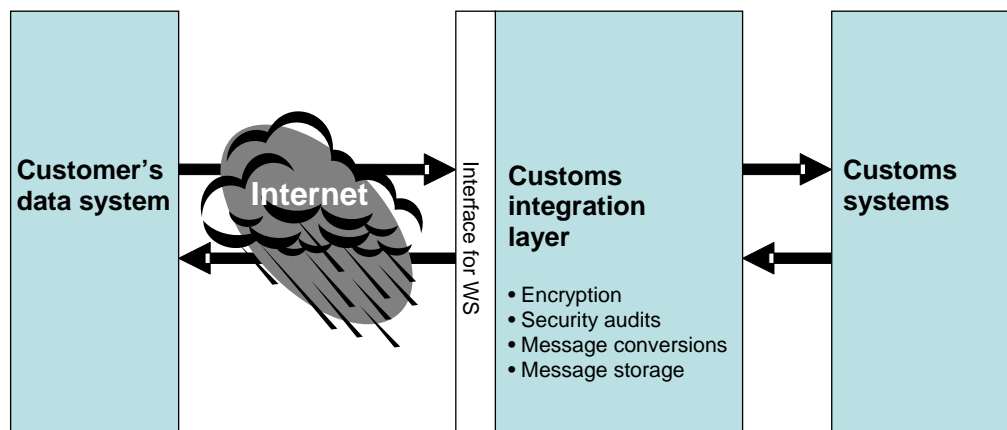
building XML messages in a prescribed format required by Customs to another company. (The rightmost option in the figure.)

In this case, the message declarant doesn't produce an application-specific message according to the specifications set by Customs, but provides the service provider with the data required for building the messages in its own internal format. In this case, the XML message cannot be electronically signed in the software of the message declarant either.

The service provider converts the messages into an electronic data format, builds (and signs with an XML signature) the message declarant's application-specific messages according to the specifications set by Customs and transmits them to Customs web service for direct message exchange.

#### 2.2.4 Data security and server certificates

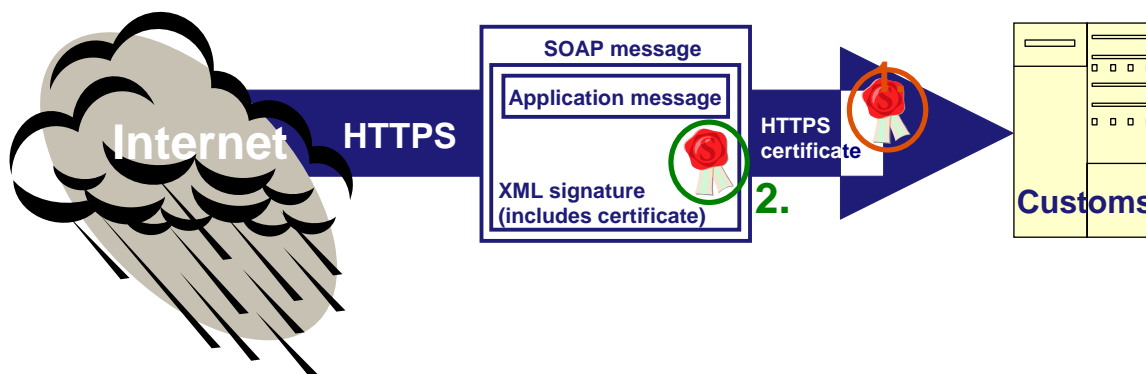
Direct message exchange is carried out over a secure HTTPS connection. The web service which enables direct message exchange with Customs has been realized with a specific configuration, which acts as a security boundary in the Internet direction (Customs integration layer in the figure). The encryption algorithms in use and the lengths of the encryption keys increase the data security.



**Figure 6: The web service for direct message exchange:**

The Customs integration layer identifies the actors in direct message exchange with the help of server certificates.

1. When forming a HTTPS connection to the web service for direct message exchange, the customer (intermediary) is authenticated by the server certificate.
2. When building a message, the message is signed with a server certificate, which is saved in the frame message around the application message. Data on the customer (builder) is transmitted to Customs.



**Figure 7: Authentication of the actors in direct message exchange**

The actors and the roles in direct message exchange have been presented in the previous section. From the options above it follows that:

- The data system of the message declarant can build an application-specific message according to the specifications set by Customs and a frame message related to it, as well as transmit the message to the web service for direct message exchange. In this option, only one server certificate for the customer is in use. The server certificate is used for the authentication of the builder and the intermediary and for generating an electronic signature. Only the message declarant needs a server certificate.
- It is possible for the message declarant to build the application-specific messages according to the specifications set by Customs (with an XML signature) but use a service provider to transmit the messages. As the server certificates are company-specific, the EDI customer and the service provider both need their own server certificates. In this option, two server certificates are needed altogether: a server certificate for the builder and a server certificate for the intermediary.
- The message declarant can send the data required for building the messages to the service provider, who builds and signs the message declarant's application-specific messages according to the specifications set by Customs with an XML signature as well as transmits the messages to the web service for direct message exchange. In this option, the message declarant has handed over to the same company the task of building and transmitting the XML messages. One server certificate is enough: the service provider needs one server certificate, the EDI customer does not need any.

For transactions with Customs, the server certificates granted by the Population Register Centre are used. The customer has to acquire the server certificates him- or herself. Detailed information on acquiring the server certificates can be found in chapter 1 of the technical guidebook.

### 2.2.5 What direct message exchange requires from the customer

From the customer, direct message exchange requires

- An authorisation for message exchange from Customs. Matters related to the authorisation are further specified in the next chapter.
- Communications (Internet connection) for transmitting messages.
- A server certificate by the Population Register Centre for building and transmitting messages.
- Software with which the customer builds the right kind of application and frame message and is connected to the web service of the Customs direct message exchange.

**Direct message exchange does not require that the customer of Customs (the message declarant) uses a service provider.**

**The customer can use a service provider for transmitting or building and transmitting messages. Customs is not liable for the quality of the service provided by the possible service provider chosen by the message declarant. The customer must make sure that the service level is described accurately enough in the agreement that the customer signs with the service provider.**

If the customer already uses message exchange via an operator, changes are to be made in the data systems in use. The changes are necessary so that the customer's data systems form the right kind of frame message around the application message. The actual application message remains unchanged.

More detailed technical information on the web service of direct message exchange can be found in the technical guidebook.

## **2.3 Customer's software**

Both in message exchange via an operator and in direct message exchange, the customer needs to use software. With the software, the customer builds and sends messages that are to be delivered to Customs and receives messages sent by Customs.

### 2.3.1 Suppliers of customs clearance software

Customs will not provide the required software, but businesses should contact their own software suppliers.

Further information on suppliers of car taxation software is provided by the contact persons for customer cooperation.

### 2.3.2 Example implementation of direct message exchange

Using direct message exchange requires that the customer has communications software for the web service for direct message exchange. An example implementation of direct message exchange is available from Customs free of charge. The example implementation and its source code are meant as a model for the customer software developers. The example implementation is not complete and Customs does not support its production use.

## 3 Applying for an authorisation to use message exchange

### 3.1 General information on applying for an authorisation to use message exchange

Message exchange with Customs is subject to authorisation. For the EDI customers of message exchange, there are procedure-specific requirements which the applicant must meet. The EDI customer's responsibilities are also described in the procedure-specific instructions.

The EDI customer authorisation must be applied for and the test must be passed separately for each Customs system.

In order to ensure problem-free message exchange, Customs requires that companies looking to receive EDI sender status have competence in the procedure in question and in customs clearance.

A company acting as an EDI customer is responsible for ensuring that its personnel sending EDI messages to Customs know how to send messages and take care of the follow-up of messages.

The employees who submit EDI declarations must participate to the maximum extent possible in the part of the testing where the company's own test material is used.

Authorisation to use message exchange is applied for by using the online form on the Customs website, where completion and delivery instructions for the forms can also be found.

The authorisation procedure is different in direct message exchange and in message exchange via an operator. The authorisations for both service channels are presented below.

### 3.2 Authorisations to use message exchange via an operator

The authorisations required for the Customs message exchange via an operator are system-specific.

Application form for EDI customer authorisation for import can be found (only available in Finnish and Swedish) at:

[http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yriyksille/sahkoinenasiointi/lomakkeet/rekisteroidyt\\_luottoasiakkaat/index.jsp](http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yriyksille/sahkoinenasiointi/lomakkeet/rekisteroidyt_luottoasiakkaat/index.jsp)

[http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/e\\_tjanster/blanketter/Registrerade\\_kunder/index.jsp](http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/e_tjanster/blanketter/Registrerade_kunder/index.jsp)

Applications for other systems can be found (only available in Finnish and Swedish) at:

[http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yriyksille/sahkoinenasiointi/lomakkeet/edi\\_lomakkeet/index.jsp](http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yriyksille/sahkoinenasiointi/lomakkeet/edi_lomakkeet/index.jsp)

[http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/e\\_tjanster/blanketter/EDI\\_blanketter/index.jsp](http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/e_tjanster/blanketter/EDI_blanketter/index.jsp)

EDI customers of car taxation are to apply for registered customership. Further information can be found (only in Finnish and Swedish) at:

[http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yriyksille/verotus/autovero/rekisteroity\\_asiamies/index.jsp](http://www.tulli.fi/fi/yriyksille/verotus/autovero/rekisteroity_asiamies/index.jsp)

[http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/beskattning/bilbeskattning\\_importor/registrerat\\_ombud/index.jsp](http://www.tulli.fi/sv/foretag/beskattning/bilbeskattning_importor/registrerat_ombud/index.jsp)

### 3.3 Authorisations to use direct message exchange

For Customs web service for direct message exchange, the customer needs a general *customer authorisation for direct message exchange* and system-specific *appendices to authorisations*. The number of these appendices is determined case by case.

**The message declarant** must apply for a general *customer authorisation for direct message exchange*. In the application, the appendices to authorisations for the declaration procedures which the message declarant wishes to use with the direct message exchange must also be enclosed.

The conditions in the appendices to authorisations depend on the declaration procedure. For instance, it may be required that the message declarant is a registered credit customer of Finnish Customs. The authorisation enables the declarations concerning the licence holder (or similar) to be lodged electronically as messages, according to the specifications set by Customs.

**The service provider** must also apply for a general *customer authorisation for direct message exchange*. If the service provider does not act as a message declarant, the appendices to authorisations are not to be filled in.

The authorisation of the service provider is not tied to a single Customs system but to the use of the web service for direct message exchange.

When processing applications for authorisation, the applications for authorisation of the message declarant and the service provider, if any, are connected so that it is technically possible for the service provider to transmit messages on behalf of the message declarant.

Both the message declarant and the service provider agree to adhere to the conditions of the authorisation mentioned in the authorisation application form. Customs is not liable for the quality of the service provided by the service provider chosen by the message declarant. Furthermore, using a service provider will not affect the message declarant's responsibilities in relation to Customs.

There is no factual connection between the authorisations and authorisation application forms for direct message exchange and the authorisations for message exchange via an operator and authorisation application forms.

## 4 Testing and launching the production

An EDI customer has to test the functionality of the software and that it produces messages in accordance with the specifications. The data communications are also tested with Customs. Customs also recommends that the testing of the message exchange shall be carried out again if the customer's software is updated after an accepted case of testing.

In direct message exchange, each message declarant has to go through the Customs customer testing. The testing is customer-specific regardless of whether the service provider used by the message declarant already has other customers in production.

The objective of testing is that the company sends as error-free messages as possible before the production phase. During testing the company sends declaration messages with varying content (for example complete, amended, clearance). Customs replies with response messages (for example acceptance, error, request for further information and so on). The company replies to the response messages in the required way, for example corrects the error or sends additional information.

## 4.1 Parties in testing

EDI customer testing is company-specific. Separate testing for each company office will not be carried out. If different offices of a company use separate IT systems, then the test is carried out in each IT system. In case of a consolidated corporation with several Business ID numbers, it is necessary to test all ID numbers separately. On the other hand, if one of these companies sends EDI messages on behalf of all companies, only the sending company has to pass the testing.

The contact person for testing is the same as the contact person mentioned in the EDI customer authorisation application, unless agreed otherwise. The software supplier's representative may assist the company in testing, but the company making the application is always responsible for the testing.

## 4.2 Agreement to start testing and consultation

After Customs has processed a company's application form for EDI sender status, the Customs contact person for customer testing contacts the applicant in order to agree on the testing schedule and the date when the network connection is opened. The Customs contact person for customer testing also inquires if there is a need for optional consultation.

If consultation is needed with regard to messages used in the customs clearance system, the customer contact person of the Customs district contacts the company in order to agree on the consultation date and time. Consultation is voluntary and it can be carried out over the telephone or by arranging a meeting at the company's or Customs premises. The consultation meeting covers:

- message exchange flow: which messages have to be sent and received
- data content of the messages: what the company needs to consider when completing electronic declarations and producing messages.
- the material for technical testing: declarations defined by Customs for testing and messages built from the declarations as well as arriving response messages.
- if necessary, the identifying serial number and control reference number of the company, which are used in both testing and production phases.
- the company's own questions

It is desirable, that both a declaration expert and a message exchange expert of the company take part in the consultation meeting. Consultation is free of charge.

## 4.3 Test phases and schedules

The testing consists of two or three parts, depending on the procedure.

<b>System</b>	<b>Parts of the test</b>
AREX summary declaration system, Intrastat System for Intra-Community Trade Statistics, ITU import system, NCTS transit system	1 Technical testing
	2 Parallel testing
ELEX export system	1 Independent testing
	2 Technical testing
	3 Parallel testing

EMCS Excise Movement Control System	1	Technical testing
MOVE car taxation system	1	Technical testing
	2	Independent testing

### **Table 1: Parts of the test**

The technical and parallel testing is carried out with the Customs testing official. Communication is mainly by e-mail.

The general testing schedule is defined separately for each Customs system according to the situation. The testing material is system-specific.

#### **4.3.1 Independent testing**

The company runs these test cases independently without the assistance of the Customs testing official. For the time being, independent testing is only used in the export and car taxation systems.

Customs will participate in the independent testing only by opening a connection between the operator of Customs and the operator of the company. The company notifies the testing official by email of the start of the independent testing. The opening date of the network is agreed on with the contact person of the customer testing. On the opening date (or after it) the company sends a message to the Customs system and waits for the response. If no response is received from the Customs system, the company first contacts its own operator and only after this the Customs testing official for fixing the problem. When the connection works, the company sends a message to the Customs system.

Test material published on the Customs website is used in the independent testing of the messages concerning export. Some of the test cases contain content-related errors and some don't. If the test message received in the Customs system does not correspond to the test case, the Customs system sends an automatically formed rejection message and the company must resend the message in a corrected form / with data that corresponds to the test case.

Since the Car Taxation Unit uses independent testing only after other testing, opening of the network connection will already be completed at this point. In the independent testing of car taxation messages, the company's own examples are used.

If the content of the message sent by the company does not have errors, the Customs system automatically sends the company a reply message and in case of the export system an acceptance message and a "Release for a Customs procedure" message.

If the content of the test case is erroneous, the Customs system automatically sends an error message to the company. After this, the company must send a corrected declaration message to Customs. If the corrected declaration message contains no errors, the Customs system sends a reply message and in case of the export system an acceptance message and a "Release for a Customs procedure" message.

The company may send the same message content several times throughout the independent testing phase. However, the identifying data of the message has to change, if the same content is resent.

#### **4.3.2 Technical testing**

During the technical testing, the Customs testing official ensures that the communications are working and the messages sent by the company comply with the message implementing guidelines (MIG) of Customs.

In direct message exchange, testing of the communications is carried out so that the customer company tries to run the first test case of the technical testing. The communications are

working if the web service of the direct message exchange reports the receipt of the message. In addition, the customer has to be able to retrieve the reply message from the Customs message storage. The content of the reply message (acceptance, rejection etc.) is not significant for of the testing of the communications.

Since independent testing of the car taxation messages is only carried out after other testing, the technical testing starts with opening the connection. In car taxation, the technical testing is carried out with the test cases prepared by Customs and the customer's own production material, which the customer must send to Customs by no later than two weeks before starting the tests.

In the technical testing of other systems than the car taxation system, the test material prepared by Customs is used. The number of test cases depends on the company's line of business and the character of its transactions. The test cases are agreed on with the Customs testing official at the same time as the test schedule.

In the testing of car taxation messages, the sending of the first message is agreed on in advance. When starting the technical testing of messages used in other systems, the company sends a message to the Customs system and notifies the Customs testing official of the message by email.

The Customs testing official examines the flow of the message in the communications network used by Customs. The testing official informs the company if the message has not been received due to a problem between the company and its operator. The company or the operator then fixes the problem.

After the message has arrived at the Customs system, the Customs testing official checks that the structure of the declaration message complies with the MIG. If there are errors in the structure, the testing official informs the company about them. The company or the software supplier used by the company must fix the errors in the application.

When the message structure is correct the Customs testing official checks the message data. If the message contains errors, the testing official notifies the company of it and the company will correct the errors and resend the corrected message.

In this way all test case messages will be gone through one by one.

After all test case messages have been carried out in a satisfactory manner, the testing official informs the company by e-mail of the successful completion of the technical testing.

### 4.3.3 Parallel testing

Parallel testing is conducted to ensure that the company's employees know how to complete the declaration messages correctly. The material used in the test cases are based on previous declarations lodged by the customer and if necessary, procedure-specific additional documents. The company delivers the numbered test cases to the testing official before the testing starts.

When starting the parallel testing, the company sends a message and notifies the testing official about it by e-mail.

The testing official compares the content of the message to the content of the numbered test case. If the message contains errors, the testing official informs the company about it and the company will correct the errors and resend the corrected message.

In this way all test case messages will be gone through one by one. After all messages sent by the company have been accepted, the testing official informs the company by e-mail of the acceptance of the parallel testing. The testing official also agrees with the company on the date when the production can be started.

It is desirable that as many as possible of the employees who will be submitting electronic declarations in the production phase participate in the parallel testing.

The names of the employees participating in the parallel testing should either be listed in the EDI sender application under Additional information or sent later to the testing official.

After the testing has been successfully completed, Customs will send to the company the decision on authorisation and the accompanying test report containing information about the test phases and problems that occurred during the testing. The date when the production can be started is given in the authorisation. The company may start sending messages on the date specified in the authorisation.

The testing and the production phase are described in more detail in chapters 2 and 3 of the technical guidebook.

## 5 Message exchange production phase

### 5.1 Production launch of message exchange

After the testing has been completed successfully, Customs will send to the company the EDI sender authorisation and the accompanying test report containing information about the test phases and problems that occurred during the testing. The date when the production can be started is given in the authorisation.

The company may start sending messages on the date specified in the authorisation. The company and the Customs testing official will agree on the date and time when the first declaration message will be sent.

The clearance officials of the Electronic Customs Clearance Centre may request the company to provide copies of the customs declaration and accompanying documents at the start of the message exchange production phase.

**In message exchange via an operator**, the operator of Customs opens the connections of the company approved as an EDI customer to the production environment. This is done once the testing phase has been completed successfully and Customs has granted authorization for production. The EDI customer must arrange the opening of the connection to the production environment with their own operator.

**In direct message exchange**, the customer is granted authorization for production once the testing phase has been completed successfully.

### 5.2 Follow-up of messages, acknowledgements and keeping log file

The customer is responsible for the reception of the messages, i.e. that the messages are received by Customs in time. EDI customers must take care of the follow-up and flow of messages, i.e. make sure that replies are received for each sent message. In direct message exchange, the message declarant has full responsibility in case the message declarant has decided to use a service provider for transmitting or building and transmitting messages.

A response message from Customs must be replied to as requested, for example with a corrected message, if Customs sends an error message as response message.

In car taxation, Customs does not send the customer a separate control message as an acknowledgement of system controls. The message sender receives a response message, which is either rejection, error, interruption or decision.

Some of the Customs systems send a control message about customs declaration messages that have reached the server used by Customs. After receiving a positive control message, the EDI customer has to wait for the Customs application level message.

If the message sender receives a negative control message or does not receive any message, or after a positive control message no application level message is received during a processing time, which includes the processing time given by Customs and the maximum processing time given by the used networks, the original message shall not be resent automatically. Instead, the state of interchange must be confirmed from the company's own service network before resending the message.

The Intrastat application does not send an acceptance message. Only an error message is sent, if the declaration contains a major error.

It is primarily the customer who has the burden of proof:

- if the data in the Customs system differs from the data in the customer's system
- if the declaration is received by Customs after the deadline, even though the customer has sent it in time

A log system may be used as proof. If it is a question of proving the integrity of the message content, the log should contain the whole message in a readable form. A log with information on the sender, the recipient, the identification and time of the interchange, is sufficient proof of the sending time. In the statistics on Intra-Community trade (Intrastat) the statistical numbers in the declaration must also be included in the log. However, even if the customer shows proof of the log, a delay or discrepancy of the declaration may cause administrative consequences or other actions by Customs authorities.

### **5.3 Problem situations**

In problem situations related to message exchange, EDI customers should start solving the problem by contacting their own Help Desk and their own operator in message exchange via an operator. If the problem causes an interruption in the message exchange, the instructions for the fallback procedure defined for the system or the procedure should be applied.

If the problem of the message exchange is related to a customs declaration, the Electronic Clearance Centre is to be contacted.

If the problem of the message exchange is related to car taxation, Hanko Customs is to be contacted.

If the message exchange with Customs is not possible, a fallback procedure will be used. There are system-specific instructions on the fallback procedures on the Customs website.

### **5.4 Changes in the EDI customer's system**

If the system in which the data of the EDI messages is built is upgraded or entirely changed, Customs must be informed of it.

As for summary declarations concerning import, export, arrival and exit, the company must send a notification of any new customs clearance software or upgrade to the e-mail address EDI-luvat@tulli.fi in order to discuss possible need for testing with the Electronic Customs Clearance Centre in Turku. A new version or software may not be implemented prior to approval by Customs.

As for changes of programmes for other systems than those of import, export, arrival and exit, it is advised to contact the contact persons of the Customs districts.

## **5.5 Change of operator of EDI customer**

If the EDI customer changes the operators, Customs must be informed of it. As for summary declarations concerning import, export, arrival and exit, the company must send a notification of any new customs clearance software or upgrade to the e-mail address EDI-luvat@tulli.fi in order to discuss possible need for testing with the Electronic Customs Clearance Centre in Turku.

As for the changes of operators in other systems than those of import, export, arrival and exit, it is advised to contact the contact persons of the Customs districts.

## **5.6 Change of service provider of direct message exchange**

A direct message declarant may, but is not required to, use a service provider for building and transmitting the messages.

If the direct message exchange declarant starts using, changes or stops using a service provider, he or she must inform Customs of it by sending a notification to the e-mail address EDI-luvat@tulli.fi.

## APPENDIX 1: Contact information of the EDI operators of message exchange via an operator

EDI operators	Contact information
CapGemini	Yhteys ongelmatilanteissa: HelpDesk CapGemini /Editeam editeam.fi@capgemini.com Yhteyshenkilö muissa asioissa: Kari Männistö, kari.mannisto@capgemini.com +358 9 4526 7420 / +358 40 730 2495
IBM Business Consulting Services	Edi Services, As Finland (IBM EDIPalvelu) Yhteydenotto ongelmatilanteissa: EAI.CENTER@fi.ibm.com Yhteyshenkilöt muissa asioissa: Jukka Manner, jukka.manner@fi.ibm.com Tekninen yhteyshenkilö: Matti Alatalo, matti.alatalo@fi.ibm.com
Itella Information Oy	<u>HelpDesk</u> (teknisiin ja tuotannollisiin kysymyksiin liittyvät vika- ja ongelmatilanteet) +358 20 452 9348 <a href="mailto:helpdesk@itella.net">helpdesk@itella.net</a> <u>Customer Care</u> (myyntiin ja asiakaspalveluun liittyvät asiat) +358 205 388 260 <a href="mailto:info@itella.com">info@itella.com</a> <a href="mailto:myynti@itella.com">myynti@itella.com</a>
Kustannusosakeyhtiö Koivuniemi	Asiakastuki: helpdesk@koivuniemi.com (09) 888 2820 Myynti: Timo Kujanpää, p. 045 126 1824 Ari Mervelä, p. 040 962 8528 etunimi.sukunimi@koivuniemi.com
Liaison Technologies Oy	Asiakastuki: Liaison European Support +358 10 3060 999 support.europe@liaison.com Myynti 010 3060 900 info.europe@liaison.com
Logica	Asiakastuki: <a href="mailto:tuki.sanomavalitys@logica.com">tuki.sanomavalitys@logica.com</a> +358 50 3949 330 Myynti: <a href="mailto:sales.bis.fi@logica.com">sales.bis.fi@logica.com</a>
TeliaSonera Finland Oyj	Ongelmatilanteet: eCenter Tuotanto ecenter@sonera.com Myynti:

Pekka.Pinnioja@teliasonera.com

TietoEnator

Asiakastuki:  
B2B Support / Integration Customer Support  
[B2B.support@tieto.com](mailto:B2B.support@tieto.com)  
Sopimusasiat:  
Nina Juneja  
+ 358 400485695,  
[nina.juneja@tieto.com](mailto:nina.juneja@tieto.com)

Rauhala Oy

Asiakastuki:  
[tuki.oneway@rauhala.fi](mailto:tuki.oneway@rauhala.fi)  
0201 210 272  
Yhteydenotto muissa asioissa:  
Jari Lankinen  
+ 358 40 842 1355  
[jari.lankinen@rauhala.fi](mailto:jari.lankinen@rauhala.fi)