Identification of suppliers and customers in Mercurius

abstract
When it comes to identification of parties, the PEPPOL model - in particular, the transport infrastructure and PEPPOL BIS formats - provides flexibility to the correspondents. This strength of PEPPOL has a drawback: people can get confused by the diversity of scenarios supported, and fail to identify parties properly. This leads to parties not properly identified or even misinterpreted. Additional guidelines may be useful to avoid this undesirable situation. This article clarifies the use of identifiers, at least in the Belgian Business to Government (B2G) e-Invoicing context (but might be valid elsewhere outside the scope of Mercurius), where to use and in what circumstances. It also provides useful information on how Mercurius - the central e-mailroom of the Belgian public sector - handles the identifiers.

Preamble

Participants are to be identified for transport purposes and for business operations purposes. In the Belgian B2G e-invoicing context, the PEPPOL transport infrastructure and the PEPPOL BIS Invoice, Credit Note and MLR are used to exchange invoices, credit notes and responses to these documents (*). Considering this, the supplier and the customer must be identified in different parts of the message header (SBDH) and body (document type Invoice, Credit Note or MLR, depending the case).

Participants can be identified in many ways. PEPPOL uses identifiers based on a subset of ISO6523. The list of IDs available on PEPPOL, can be consulted on https://www.galaxygw.com/iso6523/. See also: https://peppol.eu/downloads/the-peppol-edelivery-network-specifications/ and select **Policy for using identifiers** to see possible values (not necessarily up to date, though).

This document explores these identification elements and identification schemes, and provides the necessary practical information to properly fill them in.

(*) notice that MLR is a short term workaround, awaiting for the standardized Invoice Response document type.

Identification schemes used by Belgian public sector entities

scheme	agency	usage	format specification	ICD	schemeID
Enterprise number	Belgian Crossroad Bank of enterprises	This is the **most recommended option**, covers most of the situations, enables integration with other administrative domains	must be 10 numerical digits; 2 last digits are the result of modulo 97 operation on 8 first digits subtracted from 97.	9956	BE:CBE
VATnumber	Belgian VAT administration	can be used by those who are not yet able to use the enterprise number (example: the software they use does not yet support it). see also later, "remark".	unless exception, is the enterprise number prefixed by "BE"	9925	BE:VAT
GLN number	GS1	to use when Government (or private) entity is unable to use their enterprise number, for it is shared among different entities. Example: DAB Vloot has the same enterprise number as Ministeries van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, but is a distinct customer, from the invoice processing point of view.		0088	GLN

Remark: In some exceptional situations, an entity can have a VAT number that applies to another enterprise. Then it is **not** possible to use the VAT number to identify the entity (except for VAT purpose). Example: The Police zone of Antwerp (BE0207500123, enterprise nr: 0862884185) has the same VAT number as the City of Antwerp (enterprise nr: 0207500123), but is a distinct entity from invoice processing point of view.

These schemes can also be used to identify private sector entities, in the B2G e-Invoicing Context and elsewhere. The Belgian public sector also recommends use of the **enterprise number** for domestic trade.

Additional consideration applying to the StandardBusinessDocument (SBDH)

In the SBDH, sender and receiver must be specified:

- sender: StandardBusinessDocument\StandardBusinessDocumentHeader\Sender\Identifier
- receiver: StandardBusinessDocument\StandardBusinessDocumentHeader\Receiver\Identifier

Pattern to be used: using the pattern:

`icd:identifier.`

Examples:

- based on enterprise number (and preferred): <Identifier Authority="iso6523-actorid-upis">**9956:0451542621**</Identifier>
- based on VAT number: <Identifier Authority="iso6523-actorid-upis">**9925:BE0425702910**</Identifier>
- based on GLN number: <Identifier Authority="iso6523-actorid-upis">**0088:5488888004948**</Identifier>

Additional consideration applying to the BIS INVOICE / CREDIT NOTE / MLR document types

Elements available

Based on the current PEPPOL BIS specifications (https://peppol.eu/downloads/post-award/?rel=tab404) consider following data elements:

Sender/Supplier:	Receiver/Customer
1. Invoice\AccountingSupplierParty\Party\EndpointID 2. Invoice\AccountingSupplierParty\Party\PartyIdentification\ID 3. Invoice\AccountingSupplierParty\Party\PartyTaxScheme\CompanyID 4. Invoice\AccountingSupplierParty\Party\PartyLegalEntity\CompanyID	1. Invoice\AccountingCustomerParty\Party\EndpointID 2. Invoice\AccountingCustomerParty\Party\PartyIdentification\ID 3. Invoice\AccountingCustomerParty\Party\PartyTaxScheme\CompanyID 4. Invoice\AccountingCustomerParty\Party\PartyLegalEntity\CompanyID

Use of each element

These explanations apply to both the supplier party as the customer party.

	Data Element	usage	scheme to use	Examples
1	EndpointID	Technical identifier, electronic address.	BE:CBE is **recommended**	<cbc:EndpointID schemeID="BE:CBE">**0425702910**</cbc:EndpointID> <cbc:EndpointID schemeID="BE:VAT">**BE0425702910**</cbc:EndpointID> <cbc:EndpointID schemeID="GLN">**5488888004948**</cbc:EndpointID>
2	Partyidentification/ID		BE:CBE is **recommended**	<cbc:ID schemeID="BE:CBE">**0425702910**</cbc:ID> <cbc:ID schemeID="BE:VAT">**BE0425702910**</cbc:ID> <cbc:ID schemeID="GLN">**5488888004948**</cbc:ID>
3	PartyTaxScheme/CompanyID	VAT identifier	BE:VAT is **mandatory**	<cbc:CompanyID schemeID="BE:VAT">**BE0207500123**</cbc:CompanyID>
4	PartyLegalEntity /CompanyID	legal registration identifier	BE:CBE is recommended	<cbc:CompanyID schemeID="BE:CBE">**0454157562**</cbc:CompanyID> <cbc:CompanyID schemeID="BE:VAT">**BE0454157562**</cbc:CompanyID> <cbc:CompanyID schemeID="GLN">**5488888004948**</cbc:CompanyID>

How does Mercurius handle participants identifiers

Customers

Mercurius only receives documents from the PEPPOL Transport Infrastructure. So it primarily uses the SBDH customer information (which was used by the transport infrastructure to transmit the document) to identify the customer. Additionally, if Invoice\AccountingCustomerParty\Party\EndpointID and/or Invoice\AccountingCustomerParty\Party\PartyIdentification\ID is not consistent with the SBDH customer information , then Mercurius intercepts the document (suspecting a problem), and triggers an error to the Tech support.

Customer identification: additionally, the SBDH Receiver identifier must be coherent with \AccountingCustomerParty\Party\EndpointID and/or \AccountingCustomerParty\Party\PartyIdentification\ID. Otherwise Mercurius will block the document and generate an error.

Suppliers

- Preamble: we assume that all identifiers are related to valid Identification schemes, such as BE:CBE, BE:VAT, GLN, ... **Mercurius always leave this information UNTOUCHED (and displays it as is)**. Foreign identifiers are treated 'as is' eg. NL:VAT, NL:KVK, DK:CVR, NO:ORGNR, ...
- Mercurius does only consider endpointIDs and PartyIdentification/IDs. Other elements belong to the business domain, and are not suited for the Mail distribution and collection functions filled in by Mercurius.

Supplier identification: additionally, the SBDH Sender identifier must be coherent with \AccountingSupplierParty\Party\EndpointID and/or \AccountingSupplierParty\Party\PartyIdentification\ID. Otherwise Mercurius will block the document and generate an error.

General prioritization rule

if PEPPOL BIS document contains **2 identifiers for the same entity**, then following logic is used to extract/identify the partner:

1. look after an identifier belonging to scheme BE:CBE. In the unlikely case that there is more than one such identifier, then use PartyIdentification\ID (in case of AccountingSupplierParty/AccountingCustomerParty)
2. look after an identifier belonging to scheme BE:VAT, and containing a VAT number. In the unlikely case that there is more than one such identifier, then use PartyIdentification\ID (in case of AccountingSupplierParty/AccountingCustomerParty)
3. use PartyIdentification\ID (in case of AccountingSupplierParty/AccountingCustomerParty)
4. use EndPointID (in case of AccountingSupplierParty/AccountingCustomerParty)

   Remark: so, following priority rule above, if PartyIdentification\ID BE:VAT and EndPointID BE:CBE are present, then EndPointID is used.

Useful links

Check CBE identifier numbers in Belgium and/or find a CBE number based on the name of a Belgian company: https://kbopub.economie.fgov.be/kbopub/zoeknummerform.html;jsessionid=3AC52E057A0C9F39D6787880C882211A.worker4a?lang=en

Check VAT identification in Europe: http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/vies/?locale=en