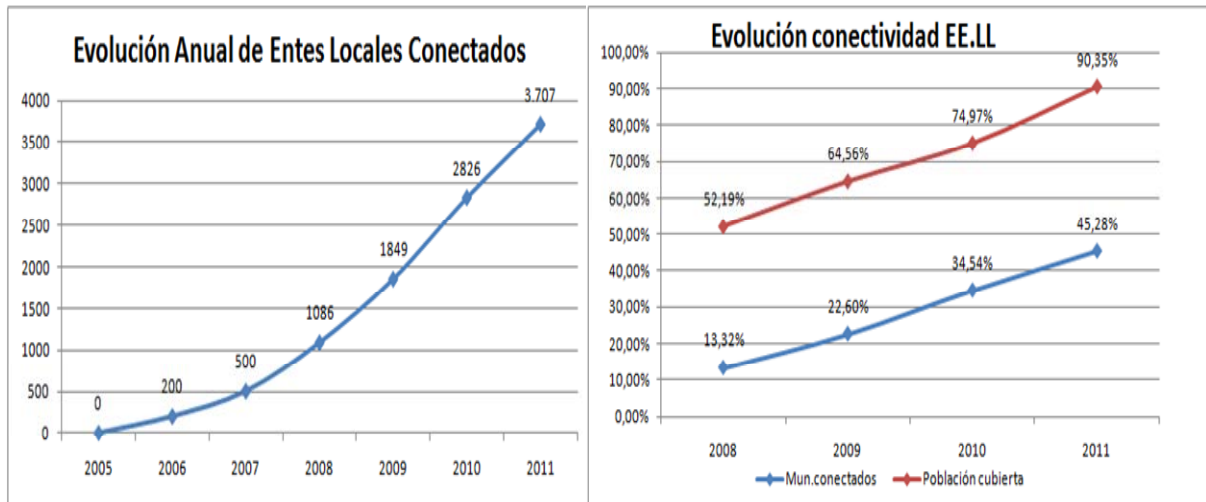# SARA – Telecommunication Network of the Spanish Public Administration

Nervous system of interoperability and efficiency lever in the use of technology resources

Article 43 of **Law 11/2007**, on Citizens' Access to Public Services, sets forth the **obligation of the Spanish Public Administration to take the necessary measures within their scope of action for the creation of a telecommunication network interconnecting their information systems**, enabling the exchange of information and services, and becoming an interconnection gateway for the networks of EU institutions and those of Member States. This provided legal sustainability to the so-called Inter-Administrative Network, which already appeared as a key instrument in administrative modernisation due to the multi-point nature of relations between Public Administration agencies and the growing need for digitisation. Later, Article 13 of **Royal Decree 4/2010**, regulating the National Interoperability Framework, **identified the Telecommunication Network of the Spanish Public Administration with the SARA Network.**

Since 2005, the Directorate-General for the Development of E-Government (former Directorate-General for Administrative Modernisation) reporting to the Office of the State Secretary for Public Service, has been in charge of the deployment and operation of the SARA Network. Within a multi-level responsibility model for the interconnection of administrative units, the Directorate-General for the Development of E-Government has provided Ministries and Regional Governments with the means for network interconnection; they, in turn, had to extend these means to the organisations reporting to them and Local Governments.. **As of 1 December 2011, the joint efforts of the General Administration and the Regional Governments had resulted in SARA connectivity for 45.28% municipalities, i.e. 90.35% of the Spanish population.** Moreover, in some Autonomous Communities, e.g. Catalonia, Galicia or the Balearic Islands, network connectivity reached 100% municipalities already.

Evolución Anual de Entes Locales Conectados

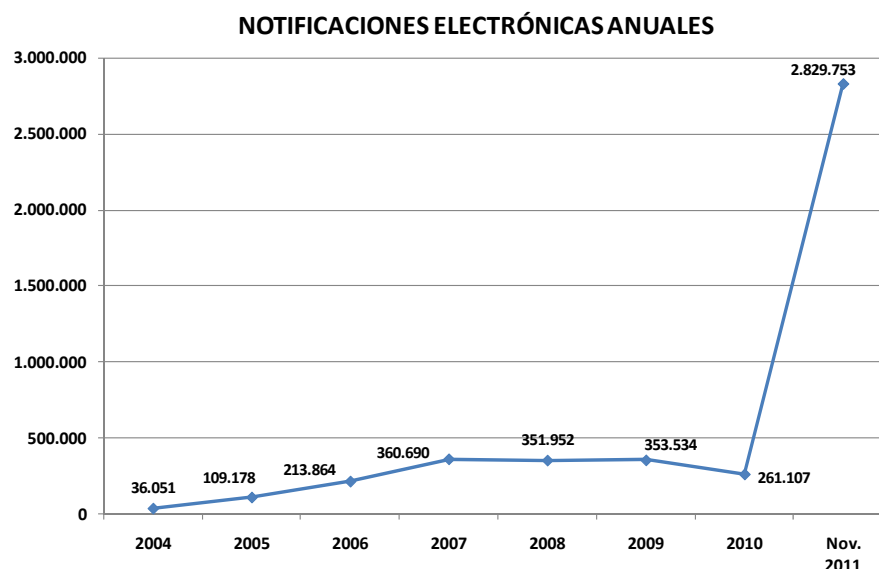**Evolución conectividad EE.LL**

As indicated earlier, the SARA Network enables interconnectivity between Spanish Public Administration Agencies and connectivity with EU institutions. Furthermore, **embedded in the SARA infrastructure are the services to recognise electronic procedures as equivalent to conventional office ones**. This means SARA is a **tool for the automated exchange of information** in accordance with the confidentiality and security standards of administrative activity, as well as a **lever for efficiency in the use of technology resources, facilitating access to common services** required for the life cycle automation of administrative procedures. The deployment of these services by each administrative unit would have meant going back to square one once and again, and this would have been financially inefficient and unfeasible for some Public Administration agencies at the regional and local level.

A fine **example of the common services deployed through the SARA infrastructure is the Public Administration Certificate Verification Platform, @Firma**. The free establishment of certification service providers as envisaged in Law 59/2003 has resulted in a high number of providers of this kind of services. Reaching agreements with all of them and developing the relevant applications would have been costly at the regional and local level, and it would have ultimately become an insurmountable barrier to the development of e-government in Spain. @Firma, on the other hand, provides a reliable service to Public Administration

agencies with few resources and it is almost the only provider[1] of e-ID certificate verification for all agencies and of supporting infrastructure for those agencies with their own certificate verification services due to the high number of administrative cases the deal with electronically. **The public bodies using @Firma are 847**, whereas the number of certificate validation cases **was 20 million in Q3 2011.**

Besides the @Firma certificate validation service, SARA hosts other services that have proved to be fundamental in administrative burden reduction. For instance, the **identity and residence verification service** that did away with the need to attach copies of your ID card or registration certificates. In its man-machine interface versions for automated information exchange and enquiry, this application has led to **savings equivalent to over 55 million photocopies since it was implemented in 2007**, also contributing to environmental footprint reduction in the Public Administration.

In 2011, a third SARA service became available: **e-notifications**. Coming full circle in the dematerialising of relationships with businesses, the Tax Agency (AEAT) established a compulsory e-notification for businesses through the safe

NOTIFICACIONES ELECTRÓNICAS ANUALES

Year	Value
2004	36.051
2005	109.178
2006	213.864
2007	360.690
2008	351.952
2009	353.534
2010	261.107
Nov. 2011	2.829.753

administrative e-box set up by Royal Decree 1363/2010. The new tax legal

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[1] Only Andalusia, AEAT and Social Security have their own e-ID certificate validation services, and this is due to the high number of transactions they deal with.

framework doubled the number of safe administrative e-box in just one year, totalling 240,000. Meanwhile, the number of notifications sent increased tenfold.

After seven years in the service of interoperability and administrative efficiency, **SARA is now facing a new challenge: the transition to IPv6**. The implementation of a new Internet protocol after the Council of Ministers agreement on 29 April will make SARA more scalable, eliminating the scars and seams that were the result of the shortcomings of IPv4 and the fast automation process undergone by the Public Administration in Spain. The new protocol will turn SARA into the cornerstone of cloud-computing inter-administrative services, reaching new efficiency heights.