

To: EuroGeographics Heads and Permanent Correspondents

EuroGeographics Head Office
Rue du Nord 76/Noordstraat 76
1000 Brussels
BELGIUM

Our Ref 2018-0139.LT

w. eurogeographics.org
e. contact@eurogeographics.org
t. +32 (0) 2 888 71 93
f. +32 (0) 2 888 71 94

Brussels, 31 October 2018

European Location Services – Next Steps and Your Data

Dear Member,

EuroGeographics is founded on a tradition of exchanging information and sharing knowledge through its core values of collaboration and cooperation. The Open ELS Project, and before it, the European Location Framework (ELF) and ESDIN Projects, demonstrates the huge commitment made by members to develop ways to facilitate access to their data.

The ELF Project developed the standards, specifications, tools, showcase application and technical infrastructure to deliver pan-European geospatial content. As a practical example of INSPIRE implementation, it has supported the delivery of national web feature services and provided valuable feedback on the data specifications as they are implemented in different countries. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this vital work.

As you know, the ELF Project finished in October 2016. The ELF project partners agreed to sustain the platform and services developed through the Project for a two-year period following the end of the project. This two-year period ended on 31 October 2018 and the ELS Transition Programme partners have agreed which outcomes will continue to be sustained under the Open ELS Project.

Following the results of a market analysis and the changing context within which we operate, we have had to revise the approach to European Location Services. At the General Assembly, members gave a clear strategic direction on the way forward, with 85% stating that our vision for enabling access to your harmonised, pan-European, authoritative geospatial information and services remains valid, as is your desire to be recognised in our international effort to contribute to the wider public good.

Of greatest significance to our Association was the very clear message that 98% of members do not want EuroGeographics to be the operational business that an operational European Location Service would require, and 69% agreed or strongly agreed that we should make the case for the European Commission to take European Location Services forward. These conclusions have been drawn together into a statement of intent by members to provide the clear strategic direction required by Head Office to take forward (Appendix A).

Eurostat Tender

The European Union (EU), through the European Commission and our agreement with Eurostat, is already a key customer for EuroGeographics and a proven market for pan-European location services. The Eurostat Agreement accounts for around one-third of

EuroGeographics' income and makes an important contribution to funding activities that benefit all members.

We are currently responding to a new tender for providing Eurostat with our data for the next 4 years. This includes our plans for a Core Reference Dataset (CRD) which aims to meet some of the EU demands, such as European Environment Agency (EEA) plans for a CLC+ 'backbone' data, and potentially European Space Agency (ESA) plans for Digital Terrain/Surface models.

Open ELS Project

Within the Open ELS Project, we are focusing on the development of open data services to meet identified user demand from institutions of the European Commission, including those set out in the Eurostat tender and to meet EU policy objectives.

Open data services are being developed using national open data that is already available from members to meet identified priority data themes. The priority themes that have been identified in the Open ELS project are: Cadastral Index Map, Open ELS Regional Gazetteer Service, Open EuroGlobalMap (EGM) data as a service, and feature services of Addresses, Buildings, and Transport data. The first Open ELS product will release priorities data themes from the Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Spain, The Netherlands and Belgium.

To extend coverage further, the countries identified as having open data for the priority themes are Croatia, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Northern Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Portugal, Serbia, Slovakia and Switzerland. Head office will work with these countries to incorporate their open data for the priority themes in the coming weeks and months.

We continue, however to welcome contributions of open data from all members. Please contact Saulius Urbanas, Services Development Consultant for more information by emailing saulius.urbanas@eurogeographics.org.

The priority areas and themes of datasets required were identified through discussions and workshops held with key potential users, including the European Commission and its institutions. These were cross-referenced and matched with the results of a survey carried out by EuroGeographics head office to gain a comprehensive view of coverage and content to be prioritised.

2018 CEF Telecom Public Open Data Call

We are also submitting an application for funding through the 2018 CEF Telecom Public Open Data Call, for which the indicated budget is €1.5 million with a co-funding rate of 75% of total eligible costs. The deadline for our submission is 15 November 2018. Our general approach is to continue the Open ELS Project work to secure stable technical components for the delivery of open services and to work together with the European Commission to create a proposal to secure support and investment to ensure its long term sustainability. We will, of course, keep you updated on the progress of our submission and expect to have further news to share later in 2019.

To secure further funding, whilst also retaining existing income from the Eurostat tender, we must ensure we continue to meet European Union needs, as this is the only source of pan-European funding available to fund such activity. We must do this by aligning our data to its policy objectives. It is clear that the current policy priority within the EU and the European Commission is open data, and the further CEF call is an indication that this continues to be the case. If we do not do this, then other data, non-authoritative sources will be procured by the European Commission.

Your data is needed!

Whether or not you are a country already listed to provide data, we strongly encourage you to provide your national open data to the Open ELS Project – content and coverage are key. We also urge you to contribute to the CRD which is vital in meeting the demands of the EEA and ESA to name but two EU Institutions.

By enhancing our current product range, we intend to demonstrate how National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities can meet EU needs without the need to go to the commercial market. In doing so, we aim to retain this important source of income that helps fund activities that benefit all members and continue to represent your interests to maintain national and international political awareness of your role.

Appendix A

Statement of Intent

EuroGeographics believes in a society empowered by our members' authoritative geospatial services.

Facilitating access to and the use of our members' geospatial data and services remains a core strategic goal of the Association. We do this by representing the importance of our members' data at European and global levels, as well as by producing pan-European products, and by developing European Location Services.

Our members support the vision for European Location Services. Our strategic goal has been updated to reflect our agreed role in enabling a sustainable, operational service.

However EuroGeographics is not an operational business, and does not intend to become one.

There is strong evidence of a demand for such data and services within European Institutions, and our members have a strong desire to provide their data to meet this demand.

Members agree to provide data, or to source national data, to enable EuroGeographics to meet these requirements. In order to do this we acknowledge the need for sustainable funding.

EuroGeographics, on behalf of our members, will develop a proposal to secure support and investment to co-ordinate and enable the development of the service. This may be a partnership with European Institutions, members or a combination of them. This proposal will be submitted to members for approval.

We will maintain our commitment to the Open ELS project and EuroGeographics Head Office, on behalf of members, will seek additional funding through the CEF open data call to continue this work.

Your sincerely,



M J Cory
Secretary General & Executive Director
EuroGeographics AISBL