

To: All Members of EuroGeographics

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Dear colleagues,

Important development regarding EuroGeographics data supply contract to European Commission

I am writing to update you of a recent important development in the long standing supply by EuroGeographics of geospatial data to the European Commission.

EuroGeographics currently supplies the European Commission with pan-European geospatial data and services through a commercial agreement with Eurostat. We have supplied geospatial data to the European Commission, under commercial agreement, since 2005 and the current four year agreement was signed in 2015.

In May this year, we were invited to participate in a negotiated procedure for “GISCO acquisition of topographic data layers” for a further four-year period. Having submitted a comprehensive proposal that we believe met all the requirements at similar cost to the current agreement, we were very surprised to be told the contract award will be only for administrative and statistical regions, to be provided by EuroBoundaryMap. This means that EuroRegionalMap is no longer required. Nor is our enhanced offer which included Core Reference Data (CRD) and a free evaluation of European Location Services.

We are of course very disappointed and surprised as we tendered in good faith for ‘topographic’ datasets that we believe met the stated requirements. I can assure you that we were not complacent in assuming that our proposal would be successful. It was prepared by a team of technical and business experts, who also provided full, complete and detailed responses to the clarifications Eurostat sought over the summer. Furthermore Eurostat has

made some very clear public statements about the importance of authoritative data, and the need for our members' official national data.

The Eurostat request was for the supply of 'topographic datasets', and yet it appears that they no longer want the most comprehensively available authoritative topographic dataset for the whole of Europe. We are unclear what alternatives they intend to use. At the same time as this negotiated procedure was underway, we are aware of a discussion document, prepared by Eurostat, for "Priority Geospatial Datasets for the European Commission". This discussion paper was presented to the INSPIRE MIG committee, and culminated in a proposal by Eurostat and JRC to establish a sub-Group of MIG in order to develop pan-European core reference data. We were not aware of this proposal, and had not been asked to comment on either the discussion document or the proposal. It is essential, therefore, that over the coming weeks we analyse more fully the situation in order to better understand the issues that gave rise to this decision, and engage positively with Eurostat to understand how we might constructively assist the Commission in meeting its future requirements.

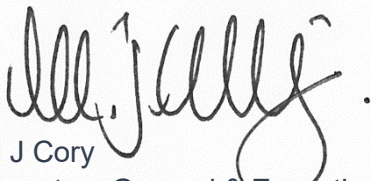
EuroGeographics Management Board discussed this matter in some detail at its recent meeting. Whilst very disappointed about the decision and its financial impact on our Association, the Board also recognised that this decision, along with a number of recent developments regarding the use of authoritative data in Europe, suggests an underlying issue that needs to be more fully understood and addressed. In particular it is essential that we assess the nature of our future relationship with the Commission, as it is an important relationship that must evolve beyond EuroGeographics becoming merely a data supplier to Eurostat for a commercial consideration. A focus on data supply requires an operational approach that our members have stated clearly they do not want. We have other strengths, and relationships with other parts of the Commission, that we must not allow to drift.

Whilst we remain disappointed and surprised by its decision to no longer take our members' official, authoritative topographic data and the CRD extension as part of their agreement with us, we must now develop a constructive dialogue with EU stakeholders to better understand their geospatial information needs and how we, as an Association for the National mapping, cadastral and land registries of Europe, can better help them obtain this information from our members. Whilst we will continue to produce our pan-European products, as there are a number of other customers for these, we will nevertheless need to review our future product strategy carefully, taking into careful consideration our dialogue with the Commission, and our members' clear desire that we do not become an operational business. Within this context it is important that we review our approach to European Location Services too.

Further work is now required by EGHO to analyse and fully assess the budgetary and strategic implications of this decision, and to engage with the Commission on the way forward. Our Extraordinary General Assembly in May 2019 will give us an opportunity to more fully brief you on these implications, our plan to address them, and any further requirements or assistance required from our members to help address these issues. In the meantime I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

While this particular Eurostat decision is of course a disappointment it is only part of the story. The Association continues its participation in many other European and International policy initiatives towards optimal use of NMCA geospatial information. We are planning for the arrival of new geospatial legislation in 2019 along with a new European Commission and Parliament. We believe these developments will hold opportunities for the Association and we look forward to the New Year with optimism.

Yours sincerely, and with seasonal greetings and best wishes to you and all your staff.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M J Cory', with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive style.

M J Cory
Secretary General & Executive Director
EuroGeographics