# EuroGeographics Information Paper on the Proposal for a regulation establishing the space programme of the Union

- Geospatial reference data and in-situ data provide a context for and help in the interpretation of Earth Observation data.
- EuroGeographics and its Members work to expand further integration of Earth Observation and reference data, through initiatives such as European Location Services and Core Reference Data.
- The regulation establishing the space programme should, as much as possible, foster complementarity between Copernicus and Member States reference data.

## 1 Purpose

This paper proposes a contribution from EuroGeographics to the development of the regulation establishing the space programme of the European Union[1].

This programme aims to provide and maximise the socio-economic benefits of high-quality space-related data, information and services, including promoting the widest possible use of the data, information and services provided by the Programme's components.

## 2 Context

The members of EuroGeographics are national mapping, cadastral and land registration authorities. One of their basic duties is to provide official mapping and geospatial authoritative information for use and re-use by government, businesses and citizens. EuroGeographics members have, for many years, actively promoted the re-use of the information they provide in the wider public interest which has created a well-established ecosystem of inter-related uses and users.

## 3 The respective roles of Earth Observations from space, in-situ data and reference data

Data collected via satellites, when processed and combined with reference data and other in-situ information, provides an important information resource which is vital to the better management of the environment and enhancement of security for citizens. This includes the more efficient management of natural resources and biodiversity. For example, by monitoring the state of the oceans and the chemical

[1] Regulation proposal COM (2018) 447 final 2018/0236 (COD)

composition of the atmosphere - two key factors in climate change – it is possible to prepare for and respond to natural and man-made disasters, and to ensure more effective border surveillance.

None of these outcomes can be achieved by Earth Observations from space, reference data nor in-situ environmental observations in isolation. All these types of data must be integrated for effective results. This is why the Copernicus services rely on in situ-data i.e. data collected from ground-based, sea-borne or air-borne monitoring systems, as well as geospatial reference data (which include topographic and cadastral surveying).

Despite the maturity of Earth Observations, there is still a need to encourage an understanding that in-situ infrastructures and Earth Observation space infrastructures are complementary not competing assets. When managed in a coordinated manner they deliver greater benefit and lower cost than when deployed independently. For example, geospatial reference data provide a context for, and help in the interpretation of, Earth Observation data.

This is why the regulation proposal rightly asks the Commission and Member States to "work together to develop the in-situ component of Copernicus and to facilitate the integration of in-situ datasets with space datasets for upgraded Copernicus services".

## 4 How to expand further integration of Earth observation and in-situ data

The *State of Play of the Copernicus In Situ Component 2017 Report* [2] mentions the "need for all the Copernicus service components operating at Local and EU level to improve the accessibility to national datasets, which have proven to be capable of providing in-situ data of a high quality and accuracy." The required improvements pertain to the data model as well as data policy and accessibility.

In the matter of the data model, the Report expresses the need from Copernicus for the following elements to access national datasets in-situ datasets:

- Standard web services (e.g. download) and interactive spatial search and query tools; and
- Integration with other similar resources, in terms of data model (e.g. INSPIRE).

In the matter of data policy, some national datasets are accessible on a full, free and open basis. Some are not as they are collected by public sector bodies that are required by their governments to generate revenue to cover a substantial part of their costs relating to the performance of their public tasks[3]. In this respect, the Report states that the "involvement of these actors in downstream strategies should be encouraged by European Institutions and service operators, and it may be necessary to consider setting aside a dedicated budget also for the national mapping, cadastral and land registration authorities, which collect essentially in-situ-and ground-based reference data to address this gap."

## 5 EuroGeographics and its Members work to expand further integration of Earth Observation and reference data

### 5.1 European Location Services

Solutions are being developed by EuroGeographics members under the banner of European Location Services (ELS). Our vision is that European Location Services will provide the single access point for international users of harmonised, pan-European, authoritative geospatial data and services, ensuring access under professional conditions in conformance with the interoperability rules of the INSPIRE Directive.

[2] Document ID: EG-RPT-EEA-SC1-0024; Issue: 0.9; Date: 20/12/2017
[3] In compliance with the Public Sector Information (PSI) Directive.

EuroGeographics and its members have committed substantial investment to the development of ELS within the framework of the existing INSPIRE Directive, and we look forward to seeing this investment come to fruition and meet the requirements for standard web services and INSPIRE data model integration as expressed in the State of Play of the Copernicus In Situ Component 2017 Report.

### 5.2 Core Reference Data

In terms of data model integration, EuroGeographics and its members are also setting up Core Reference Data to meet European users' needs (especially from Copernicus) for pan-European harmonised data. Under an INSPIRE based structure, this Core Reference Data will provide a minimal data content that will be common to Member States, thereby harmonising national datasets into one integrated and homogenous database. As far as this common content is concerned, it will allow Copernicus to avoid building data access procedures on a country-by-country basis.

### 5.3 Open ELS

In the matter of data policy, the Open ELS project, co-financed by the European Union, develops operational open data services building on the work undertaken by ELS. Its aim is also to help users identify INSPIRE compliant pan-European geospatial data services from authoritative sources, providing certainty about what is free and what is charged for, and under what terms and conditions of use or reuse.

### 5.4 Harmonised Data Policy

Regarding the reference data whose costs are not fully funded, and therefore that are not accessible for free, EuroGeographics and its members have developed single harmonised terms and conditions of use or reuse. This enables European users of e.g. Core Reference Data to deal with one single data policy, thus avoiding coping with language barriers as well as with the variety of Member States data policies across Europe.

## 6 EuroGeographics Position Statement

To provide greater clarity for all stakeholders in Copernicus, EuroGeographics recommends that the proposed regulation takes the following points into account.

### 6.1 Complementarity of reference data

EuroGeographics and its members have committed substantial investment to improve interoperability, harmonisation and coherence in the matter of geospatial reference data, as shown in the development of European Location Services and Core Reference Data in the framework of the INSPIRE Directive.

These developments are able to significantly improve Copernicus access to Member States reference data. Therefore, the regulation establishing the space programme should, as much as possible, foster complementarity between Copernicus and Member States reference data by ensuring that Copernicus information integrates Member States reference data and does not duplicate them.

### 6.2 Sustainability and consistency of reference data

Such complementarity and effort sharing will help to ensure the appropriate use of Member State and Commission funding and contribute to the sustainability of both Copernicus and Member States reference data.

Moreover, such complementary will ensure consistency between Copernicus information and Member States reference data, which will help Copernicus uptake for national users whose applications are generally based on national reference data.

### 6.3 European coordination of reference data

Improving the access from Copernicus to national reference datasets requires improving coordination at European level. For example, through initiatives such as European Location Services and Core Reference Data, which due to their supra-national nature, need to be supported by the European Union in terms of institutional backing, demand formalising and operational funding.

## 7 About EuroGeographics

EuroGeographics, an international non-profit organisation based in Brussels, is the membership association and representative body of the European National Mapping, Cadastre and Land Registry Authorities. We currently bring together 63 organisations from 46 countries, delivering benefits for each regardless of the geographical, technical, political, organisational, linguistic and business parameters in which they work.

By providing a single point of contact, the Association's main activities focus on representing members' interests.

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