

Weekly Policy News Summary

Year 2018 – week 5

European Commission launches the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum

The Commission launched the EU Blockchain Observatory and Forum with the support of the Parliament aiming to highlight key developments of the blockchain technology, promote European actors and reinforce European engagement with multiple stakeholders involved in blockchain activities. Blockchain technologies are expected to impact digital services and transform business models in a wide range of areas, such as healthcare, insurance, finance, energy, logistics, intellectual property rights management or government services.

The Commission has been funding blockchain projects through the European Union's research programmes FP7 and Horizon 2020 since 2013. Up to 2020, it will fund projects that could draw on blockchain technologies for up to €340 million. For more Information please see: [Factsheet on blockchain](#) [Blockchain technologies](#)

The Copernicus In Situ Component releases two milestone reports on the State of Play

An essential element of the EEA's coordinating role, formalised in its agreement with the European Commission in 2014, is to maintain an overview of the state of play in the availability of in situ data to meet the needs of Copernicus. Two reports, one dealing with Observations and the other with Reference Data, are a key output from work by expert consortia contracted by the Agency to pursue solutions to issues around in situ data availability.

The State of Play Reports are available here: [State of Play 2017 Report – Observations](#)
[State of Play 2017 Report – Geospatial Reference Data](#)

DG REGIO: EU Competency Framework is helping public officials to develop their skills

The Commission is making available an EU Competency Framework and an accompanying Self-Assessment Tool for national coordinating bodies, managing, certifying and audit authorities, joint secretariats and intermediate bodies. These instruments will support administrations in their efforts to improve their administrative capacity for management of the funds by helping them to identify and address potential competency gaps. It is designed for public institutions involved in managing the European Regional Development Fund and Cohesion Fund. This tool covers a full range of competencies and can be applied to all kinds of administrations regardless of their size or whether they are managing a sectoral or regional operational programme. Its impact goes well beyond the management of the funds. It can also contribute to a greater focus and a strategic approach towards longer-term competency development, ultimately improving the functioning of the entire administration and the quality of the services it provides for citizens and businesses. [EU Competency Framework](#)
