

EuroGeographics Briefing Paper: Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Copernicus Programme [2013/0164 (COD)]

Reference: July 2013 V1.0

Briefing

- The current EU Regulation on GMES initial operations, in Article 5.2, takes account of member states' geo-information and the preference to avoid duplication of this valuable European asset
- EuroGeographics and its members are pleased to make a constructive contribution to the development and delivery of Copernicus. A good example is the agreement about access to authoritative geospatial reference data for the Copernicus Emergency Management Service
- We believe it is important that the Regulation establishing the Copernicus Programme retains Article 5.2 of the current law - the Regulation on GMES initial operations - and better reflects the use of third party information in Copernicus services

1 Copernicus: the European Earth Observation Programme

The Copernicus programme aims to guarantee continuous access to information on the environment and security issues through permanent space-based observation and, importantly, in-situ infrastructures. The Copernicus programme will play a vital role in monitoring the sea, land and atmosphere, aiming for a better understanding of European and global environments. Beyond improving the provision of services, both to public policy-makers and to citizens, Copernicus has the potential to create opportunities for increased private-sector usage of information sources thus stimulating job creation and economic growth.

2 Copernicus: access to reference data component

EuroGeographics and its members stress the importance of good geographic reference information services, particularly those from members' (in-situ) resources which provide a context for, and help in the interpretation of, the permanent space-based observation. We recognise our role to supply, as appropriate, as third party data, geographic reference information in support of the Copernicus programme.

EuroGeographics supports the Copernicus Programme and believes its development should be compatible with, and complementary to, the national spatial data infrastructures (NSDIs), the EU's INSPIRE Directive, and the evolving European Location Framework of the EU member states and other countries.

EuroGeographics reaffirms that appropriate geographic reference information should, as a general rule, be sourced from the existing and developing in-situ resources in the member states so avoiding duplication and wasted resources.

3 Copernicus: emergency management mapping services

The Copernicus Emergency Management Service (EMS) has set up an operational mechanism for:

- delivering emergency mapping products, including emergency response maps produced in rush mode showing the impact of an incident;
- geographic reference maps made available in rush mode providing basic topographic information on areas affected by the incident; and,
- pre-disaster or recovery mapping products supporting the prevention or reconstruction phases.

EuroGeographics recognises the importance of providing topographic and other mapping both depicting the land before a disaster and as reference data for use in rush mode.

We believe availability of this is best achieved through constructive discussions with the holders, which may include third parties, of the existing and developing national data sets including through the coordination authority of mapping agencies, EuroGeographics.

These constructive discussions led in December 2012 to the agreement signed between the European Environment Agency (EEA), EuroGeographics and its members about access to authoritative geo-information reference data for the Copernicus Emergency Management Service.

The European Commission, the EEA and the Copernicus Emergency Management Service Provider are satisfied by the good progress enabled by this agreement. Indeed, the reference data of EuroGeographics and its members now enable the Service Provider to rationalise and reduce the production time of Copernicus emergency maps. Moreover, because the reference data of EuroGeographics and its members are authoritative, the Copernicus emergency maps that are derived from them are easier to integrate in the information systems of national civil protection organisations.

4 The Regulation establishing the Copernicus Programme

The agreement about access to reference data for Copernicus Emergency Management is a good example of the decentralised approach, by which space, in-situ and reference data inventories and capacities in Member States are integrated, providing a successful service and avoiding costly duplication.

This decentralised approach is reflected in Article 5.2 of the current law (Regulation¹) which says:

The provision of GMES services shall be decentralised, where appropriate, to integrate at European level existing space, in-situ and reference data inventories and capacities in Member States, thus avoiding duplication. Procurement of new data that duplicate existing sources shall be avoided unless the use of existing or upgradable data sets is not technically feasible or cost-effective.

However, the Commission's new Proposal for a Regulation establishing the Copernicus Programme does not benefit from this approach since it omits to include a similar provision to that in the current applicable Regulation. This omission could lead to duplication of effort

¹ Regulation 911/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Earth monitoring programme (GMES) and its initial operations (2011 to 2013)

between Copernicus and Member States including its associated waste and cost. Moreover this could lead to inconsistency issues between Copernicus data/ information and national data/information, impeding Copernicus service uptake by national users.

We do not know why the Commission's Proposal has omitted this important Article however we do recommend, for a better, more workable Regulation, that it is reinstated.

5 Definitions

In order not to exclude third party and other sources of appropriate information for sustainable and successful Copernicus services we suggest that the Regulation will benefit from an expanded section of definitions. The Proposal currently limits those inputs to "Copernicus data and information". This may exclude third party sources such as those referred to in Article 5.2 of the current Regulation.

For further information or discussion please contact:

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Please see next page for some background about geo-information, EuroGeographics and its Members – the Geodetic, Cadastre, Land-Registry & Mapping Authorities of Europe.

Connecting you to the authoritative geo-information framework for Europe

About geo-information

Geo-information (also called geographical or geo-spatial information), taken in its widest sense, is location information about land, sea and air. Geo-information relates to the earth's landscapes, people, places and environment. Geo-information, for example, records official names and the location of features, from points of interest (a post box) to linear features running through many countries (such as the River Danube). Geo-information provides the essential framework which allows attributes about features to be related or connected to them. This includes information about ownership, construction, environmental conditions, and the existence of essential services. Geo-information is increasingly found in everyday applications especially within our digitally enabled society and is said to be increasingly pervasive. It is this information that allows so many features to be geo-referenced.

About EuroGeographics and its members - the national mapping & cadastral authorities of Europe (NMCAs)

EuroGeographics is an international not-for-profit organization, the representative body and membership association for the National Mapping, Land Registry and Cadastral Authorities of Europe. We bring together 59 members from 46 countries.

EuroGeographics' members invest around €1.5 billion in the development of geo-information each year and use cutting-edge technology to create, manage, maintain and make available authoritative national databases. Together, we are developing an infrastructure to integrate their national data – including topographic and land information – to deliver the definitive European Location Framework for a wide range of uses.

By sharing best practice and creating standard data specifications and policies, EuroGeographics aims to ensure that members' individual geo-information databases are compatible and can interact with one another. This will provide Europe with the high quality official geo-information it needs to develop policies and legislation for the environment, business competitiveness, public services, legal systems, security and more.

To see our members' geographical information in action, please visit our showcase at www.youtube.com/eurogeographics

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