

**EARSC Statement on GMES
For the Workshop on GMES Governance, May 11, Brussels**

EARSC is very pleased that the European Commission has now, as announced by Commissioner Verheugen at the GMES/Kopernikus Lille Conference, published a Communication on "Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES/Kopernikus): we care for a safer world"¹. This represents a significant step in setting out the parameters for operational implementation of the programme within the next multi-year financial framework of the EU after 2013. In this context, EARSC particularly welcomes the current preparation of the Bridging Phase until 2013 with a focus on operational funding of services.

EARSC appreciates the positive steps being taken to transfer GMES/Kopernikus into an operational programme, and has a number of suggestions and recommendations with respect to the documents currently under preparation by the EC that it considers essential to ensure that the programme meets its objectives. These are outlined below.

- The need for engagement of the private sector and in particular of service providers, most of whom are SME's and important providers of innovations, is not recognised in the Communication and no view on their future role is presented – it does not acknowledge that many of the current achievements were enabled by substantial investments made by the service companies. A key message in the Communication is that "... due to their (downstream sector) importance for job and growth creation, GMES/Kopernikus services should be considered in the lead market initiative" - this cannot be achieved without integrating or at least hearing the views of the service industry. EARSC looks forward to discussing how it can help bring industry, including SMEs, into this dialogue.
- The Governance section also lacks a clear identification of the future owners of GMES/Kopernikus in particular in the fields of land, emergency and security. It is a matter of fact that different European agencies could become owners of the process and that there is also a significant overlap with Member States interests (subsidiarity principle). We would be pleased to engage with the EC to help identify the next steps required to clarify this complex situation.
- The implementation of a Governance structure should be in line with the Lisbon Strategy – a body from the European geo-information service industry should be involved in the definition of requirements and service implementation rules and procedures at least in a consultancy position.
- The future Governance of GMES/Kopernikus should also take into consideration that "unfair" competition from public/institutional organisations has to be prevented, firstly to avoid the creation of "de facto cartels" of public/institutional organisations which impede the development of Downstream services from SMEs, and secondly to enable access to Core Services which are currently dominated by public sector organisations with no clear mandate to support the downstream. Institutions and the service industry must be partners and not competitors.
- The linkage between GMES/Kopernikus and other European programmes and initiatives like INSPIRE or SEIS² is not yet established. The extent and remit of the programme in domains such as security and climate change remains unclear, for instance on how GMES/Kopernikus will support the European framework for adapting to climate change³. Whilst numerous products and services have already been developed, demonstrated and implemented pre-operationally through GMES/Kopernikus, using investment from the service industry, the resulting opportunities are still not being comprehensively exploited.

EARSC looks forward to seeing the above points recognised and mediating measures implemented so that the ambitions of GMES/Kopernikus can be realised. Without these the programme risks remaining focused on research, and the substantial wealth-creating opportunities for Europe will not be realised.

EARSC, representing 80 Earth observation service companies from all across Europe, would very much appreciate the opportunity to contribute to a constructive dialogue with the EC concerning the above issues, starting as soon as possible.

¹ EC Communication on GMES, Reference COM(2008)748 final, November 2008

² Shared Environmental Information System, see COM(2008)46 final, February 2008

³ See "Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action", COM(2009)147 final, April 2009

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EARSC's MISSION is to foster development of European geo-information service industry. Our VISION is a sustainable market for geo-information services, using remote sensing data, which is openly accessible to all members. To achieve this we focus on increasing customer awareness and acceptance of Earth observation and remote sensing solutions, and on improving market access for our members.