

Digital Transformation in Agriculture: press release

On March 27th, 2019 the workshop “Digital transformation in agriculture: the role of remote sensing” took place in Scotland House, Brussels. The event was organised by EARSC in collaboration with the Directorate General for Agriculture (DG AGRI). The workshop focused on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and the role of the remote sensing industry in supporting the new framework of policy requirements. We had the honour of hosting a speech from Pierre Bascou, Director of Sustainability and Income support at DG AGRI, who introduced the main digitalisation measures envisioned in the proposal for the post-2020 CAP: from the Monitoring Approach to the inclusion of digitalisation and innovation in the Strategic CAP Plans of the Member States. The first session was dedicated to setting the scene from the points of view of European players and policy-makers: besides Pierre Bascou, Claudia Muresan (policy officer at DG GROW) and Markus Probeck (EARSC Director) also spoke. The perspective of DG GROW complemented the one of DG AGRI, highlighting the role of Copernicus as a key European asset in boosting sustainability in different sectors, including agri-business. Markus Probeck introduced the role of the remote sensing industry, the use of satellite imagery in agriculture (in the context of smart farming, monitoring and control, efficient management of resources) and the new business models that can be generated thanks to the use of RS technology.

The second session was centred on the implementation of the CAP measures: the speakers were Lucie Savelkova (Czech National Paying Agency), Maria Ostegarrd (Copa-Cogeca), Isidro Campos (DG AGRI), Polymachi Symeonidou (Recap Project – DRAXIS) and Elli Tsiforou (Gaia Epichirein). The session combined European and national perspectives: its goal was to identify specific challenges and related solutions for complying with the new CAP requirements. Isidro Campos from DG AGRI presented the FaST tool, a digital platform that the Commission is proposing to help farmers manage the nutrients at farms’ level, to improve the digital skills of the farming sector and to simplify their compliance with administrative obligations.

The afternoon panel was dedicated to the presentation of remote sensing services in support of agriculture: eight members companies of EARSC presented their products and services in a pitching-style session. The event was concluded by approximately 20 minutes of debate and Q&A session. The workshop was attended by a number of stakeholders from different organisations: local authorities, European institutions, private companies and trade associations, NGOs and consultancies.