

EARSC Statements for the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM 12th session)

Summary

In preparation for the 12th Session of the UN-GGIM, the present paper presents the EARSC written submissions supporting the European private service providers' views on several topics of the UN-GGIM agenda.

European Association of Remote Sensing Companies - EARSC:

EARSC represents the Earth Observation geo-information services sector in Europe with today over 135 members coming from 26 different Member States in the EU or in ESA, covering the full EO services value chain, including commercial operators of EO satellites, resellers of data, value-adding companies, geospatial information suppliers, consultancies and system/software providers.

The sector plays a key role in providing value-added, geospatial information to its customers in Europe and the world. In 2021, the sector revenue in Europe was over €1.71b, giving work to over 11600 highly skilled employees¹. The sector is experiencing a rapid growth and many new company establishments. Hence, it is today dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises with over 95% of the companies employing less than 50 people, and over 60% of the companies employing less than 10.

In November 2021, EARSC launched a Green Deal Working Group with the overall objective of raising awareness on the vast use potential of Earth Observation data and services to achieve the ambitious EU climate targets. The Green Deal requires an abundance of resources, including systematic and reliable data, allowing to monitor and quantify processes on the earth's surface over time. We are convinced that the unprecedented technologies in the EO-based services can play a significant role in a range of Green Deal policy arenas.

For any further information on this position paper, please contact us at: info@earsc.org.

AGENDA ITEMS:

Agenda item #3. Strengthening global geospatial information management arrangements

- EARSC supports the UNGGIM initiatives to sensitise relevant UN bodies but also Member States to inform them about the potential of EO in the context of global challenges and the 2030 Agenda
- EARSC would like to offer its support on strategic thoughts concerning EO/GI Sector Skills Strategy fundamental for training/capacity building/upskilled and re-skilling activities at the newly formed centres of excellence.

Agenda item #4. Determining the future geospatial information ecosystem

- EARSC supports the UNN-GGIM initiative to draft a report of the Secretariat on determining the future geospatial information ecosystem for consideration by the Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management and express its willingness to contribute to it providing feedback on a more holistic approach pushed by political, economic, societal, technological, legal and environmental practises.

Agenda item #5 Contribution of regional committees to the global geospatial information agenda

- EARSC acknowledges and extends its appreciation for the efforts made by the Regional Committees. Specially supports the efforts of the PSN, and we are willing to complement their activity contributing with the views of the European services providers which EARSC represents.
- In view of increasing international collaboration between the space industry, governments and user communities, it is crucial to develop new innovative solutions and improve the European EO industry's capacity to meet end users' needs, specifically as required for achieving the ambitious targets related to climate change mitigation and adaptation actions. Particularly timeliness, spatial detail, repetition frequency, long-term reliable service availability and product accuracy are the typical key requirements and drivers for related continuous innovation and development.
- EARSC would like to reiterate its intention to strengthen the collaboration across stakeholders, suggesting that more cross-communication will further help the broader UN-GGIM work programme.
- EARSC has generated several policy materials that can help stakeholders fast track progress in using EO by final users. EARSC is ready to participate in various meetings organised by GGIM (High-level forum, regional GGIM, plenary sessions etc.) and to provide knowledge of what is happening in the European private sector and to carry views of the GGIM back to companies to help them improve their offerings towards Member States. (i) Analysis of the "Value of Earth Observation" with dedicated case studies (ii) A eoTAXONOMY of Earth Observations and their markets (iii) Analysis of the sector including revenue and employment statistics and trends (iv) An eoWIKI to help newcomers understand potential applications (v) Marketplace tools for users to find both partners and suppliers.

Agenda item #7. Integrated Geospatial Information Framework

- EARSC supports the work of the high-level group of experts on integrated geospatial information management and appreciates the efforts that have brought forward this umbrella framework strengthening geospatial information in the production and dissemination of statistical information.
- EARSC express the willingness and interest to collaborate with this group, specifically bridging the gap with Earth Observation National capabilities under the IGIF and proposing connections with the EO Maturity Indicators (EOMI) methodology which complements the IGIF overarching framework providing specific pillars (stakeholders ecosystem, infrastructure, uptake, partnerships, innovation) to embrace the EO country perspective. EOMI has been undertaken in eight countries: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Czechia, Finland, Greece, Italy, Portugal.

Agenda item #9. Geospatial information for sustainable development

- The geospatial industry is making huge strides in technology advancement, application development, and implementation of geospatial technology across varied societal areas and economic sectors. EARSC encourages the vision to facilitate a shared understanding of how geo-information can help communities to support most effectively the achievement of the SDGs. The integration of best practices bridging multiple economic sectors such as agriculture, energy, insurance, etc., with SDGs monitoring and reporting will help build transformational capacities and facilitate companies to align their investments towards the implementation of the 2030 agenda.
- EARSC supports the SDGs Geospatial Roadmap and its vision recognising earth observation and geospatial information on the reporting and monitoring of the SDGs. It is a valuable tool to support the national discussions on how geospatial information can be used to help the production and dissemination of SDGs indicators but also indicates the importance to bring "targets" into these SDGs discussions.
- EARSC is working to bridge interested user communities to identify geospatial applications that may contribute to the targets and some indicators ([EO Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals](#))

Agenda item #10. Integration of geospatial, statistical and other related information

- EARSC welcomes the UN GGIM initiative to "support statistical and geospatial integration" through the Expert Group activities supporting the "Geospatial information for sustainable development" and guiding the Member States to promote the integration of statistical and geospatial information at country level.

- In connection with these types of activities, EARSC will lead the uptake of the SDGsEYE project which will boost the European capacity for monitoring the UN SDGs based on a Copernicus-driven approach by exploiting and integrating data, tools and infrastructures to build a portfolio of decision-making products and services serving the assessment and monitoring of SDG indicators whose trends could impact the environment and the society from an inter-sectoral perspective, aligning with the EU Green Deal priorities and challenges

Agenda item #11. Application of geospatial information related to land administration and management

- The Framework for Effective Land Administration, FELA acts as an overarching policy guide, providing a reference for Member States when developing, renewing, reforming, strengthening, modernizing, or monitoring land administration. EARSC proposes the engagement of the private sector in the evolution of these discussions.
- EARSC encourages the expert group to involve the private sector in providing “Best Practises” cases to raise awareness and advocate the value of efficient land administration and management and initiate discussions of PPP in land administration.
 - Affordable, high-resolution Earth Observation provides a critical communication tool, helping idigenous peoples visualize their lands and understand spatial concepts for conservation, agriculture, and safety.
 - Affordable reliable, consistent data source for Public Private Partnerships initiatives of any budget, over any areas of interest worldwide helping on the adoption of EO for studies as well as accelerated outcomes across all forms of land use/land cover classifications.
 - Member companies have experience on the continuous monitoring of at-risk and remote communities can support detection of trespassing, encroachment, and illegal logging or other mining of resources without consent.

Agenda item #12. Geospatial information and services for disasters

- EARSC believes in the potential of EO data to support evidence-based and data-driven decision making, and is willing to work together with MS to make the best use possible of this beneficial information on Disasters risk reduction
- EARSC support awareness on “Strengthening national security” by empowering countries to monitor high-risk areas and infrastructure as well as plan for disaster response
- EARSC members share results from its participation in The International Charter Space and Major Disasters as well as an OGC Disaster Pilot Project aimed at improving the ability to discover, manager, access, qualify, share, and exploit location-based information for disaster preparedness and response
- EARSC members aim to achieve daily global remaps for near real-time analysis of ground conditions; this is a key component in advancing Earth Observation capabilities to inform first responders and anticipate risks as an event unfolds.
 - demonstrate how critical geospatial information can be disseminated more efficiently
 - detail examples of constellation-as-a-service model which removes financial and operational risks, enabling countries of any size and budget to deploy or enhance a national geospatial program with direct tasking and data delivery

Agenda item #14. Policy and legal frameworks, including issues related to authoritative data

- The geospatial sector has a major role to play in policy frameworks by providing services supporting policy objectives. EARSC develops position papers to support the sector engagement on different policies; green deal, forestry, common agriculture policy, marine framework, etc

ⁱ [EARSC Industry Survey 2021](#)