



The Association of Geological Surveys of the European Union
(EuroGeoSurveys)
in their position as
custodians to their national natural resources
and
guardians of their terrestrial environment

present their contribution

Input to the GMES Expert Meeting

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First conference: 15-16-17 July 2002 GMES Forum

As representative of EuroGeoSurveys, the Association of Geological Surveys of the European Union, I have participated at and contributed to the First Conference of the GMES Forum.

Further to this GMES Forum Conference, EuroGeoSurveys, and its member Geological Survey Organisations, has the following input:

INSPIRE

- 1) Much to our surprise, and despite the presence of and the presentation by the representative of DG Environment (Dr. M. Vanderhaegen), there seems to be no structural integration or even co-operation between the GMES and INSPIRE initiatives.

In the opinion of EuroGeoSurveys, an effort should be made to partly integrate the two initiatives as soon as possible, either by jointly co-ordinating and structuring the research programmed, or by making the INSPIRE system the fundamental tool for all relevant GMES initiatives.

- 2) Cost efficiency

At the meeting, most of the experts seemed to agree on the issue of cost efficiency.

In the opinion of EuroGeoSurveys, whether a cost efficiency evaluation is beneficial depends on the definition of cost efficiency.

If cost efficiency were to be regarded only in terms of benefit, use and reimbursement for use by commercial and industrial companies, EuroGeoSurveys would strongly object.

Indeed, both INSPIRE and GMES have not been conceived out of commercial interest only. Both initiatives also aim at supporting political decision making and providing a safer, healthier habitat for the citizen.

Therefore both initiatives also provide or help to provide a Service of General Interest.

Services of General Interest do not always have sufficient commercial value to be paid for by the industry. Yet, they may be of paramount importance to the safety of the citizen and the well-being of society

EuroGeoSurveys would therefore suggest to change the terminology cost-efficiency into cost-for-quality, the advantages being:

- A. A clear measurable definition of what quality of service can be provided to the customer (decision maker, citizen, industry) at what cost.
- B. Quality-based operation will allow for improved integration and improved interoperability of local or national laboratories or data systems.
- C. Quality-based operation provides a better basis for standardisation and quality assurance/evaluation than cost efficiency.

3) GMES ownership

GMES can achieve its goals set forth only, if there is a clear political commitment, not only by the Commission, but also by the EU Member States to steer, develop and finance GMES for long term stability.

The EuroGeoSurveys members, in relation to their mission and their responsibilities to their national government would propose that GMES has a structure comparable to the INSPIRE set up with:

- A European GMES committee
- An executive/co-ordinating office
- A user group

4) At the meeting, one of the issues discussed was the conflict between human land occupation and biodiversity.

EuroGeoSurveys would like to point that likewise, human land occupation constantly enters into conflict with the earth-substratum; e.g.: Paris sinks as result of metro works, landslides occur as result of intensive farming, mudflows occur in tourist areas, ect.

Problems between the earth substratum and human interest (settlement, infrastructure) are becoming more abundant and resulting in more heavy risks of casualty and economic loss.

EuroGeoSurveys suggests adding to the GMES plans: earth physical ordering together with security systems based on up-front evaluation of earth related risks. This would bring the GMES initiative inline with future land-use directives.