



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INFORMATION NOTE

from : General Secretariat of the Council
to : Competitiveness Council on 3 and 4 December 2009 (Any other business)
Subject : Communication on Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES):
Challenges and Next Steps for the Space Component
– Information note from the Commission

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Commission on the *Communication on Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES): challenges and next steps for the Space component* with a view to the meeting of the Competitiveness Council on 3 and 4 November 2009.

Competitiveness Council on 4 December 2009

Information Note to Ministers

Communication on Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES): Challenges and Next Steps for the Space Component

Objective and Context

Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES) has been an EU initiative for more than 10 years, aiming at providing information on the Earth's environment in support of policy making and monitoring. Leading principles of GMES are its user-driven character and the fact that it builds on existing and planned capacities in Europe. Through this public investment for growth, the Union also contributes to innovation and competitiveness in the Earth observation services sector.

This Commission Communication follows an invitation from the EU Competitiveness Council to report on the progress made towards the full operation of GMES, including funding and governance issues. By clarifying the long-term arrangements for the space component of GMES, and without prejudice to future decisions, this Communication prepares the ground for the necessary steps in the short- to medium-term.

Current situation

GMES services currently make use of existing satellite missions (scientific, meteorological and other public or private satellites). However, a gap analysis based on information needs expressed by users showed that exclusively relying on these capacities is neither sufficient nor sustainable. As a result, the GMES Space component programme was launched by ESA to develop six "Sentinel" Earth observation missions, co-financed by the EU (with the first launches planned in 2012). The EU should start financing operations of the Sentinels under a new GMES programme (a Commission proposal for a Regulation to this effect is currently before the Council and the European Parliament for adoption under the ordinary procedure). Decisions on governance and financing of the space component beyond 2013 must be prepared soon, as part of the work on the next multiannual financial framework, to avoid data discontinuity.

Key messages of the Communication

The Commission, in coordination with ESA, will conduct dialogues with Member States and EUMETSAT to address synergies with other European Earth observation missions and ensure maximum added value of Community action.

Based on an ESA analysis, the Commission will propose a funding strategy for the Space Component, bearing in mind the cost-effectiveness of GMES operations. This strategy should allow the finalisation and operation of the six Sentinel series while preparing the recurrent units and future technological upgrades, with the objective to ensure timely and seamless flow of data matching user requirements.

The Commission will further examine the option of becoming owner of the co-financed infrastructure in order to be able to apply a free and open data access policy.

Subject to successful adoption of the proposed GMES Programme Regulation, the Commission will become the programme manager of GMES.
