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NOTE

From: Commission

To: Delegations

Subject: Copernicus, a Union flagship programme observing the Earth
- Information from the Commission on the state of play and on next steps

Delegations will find attached a note from the Commission on the above-mentioned topic with a view to AOB item 17 e) at the Competitiveness Council on 5 December 2014.

Information Note**Copernicus, a European Union flagship programme observing the Earth**

Copernicus is the EU's Earth Observation and Monitoring Programme and constitutes a key contribution to the objectives of the Union's 2020 Strategy. It is a civil, user-driven programme under civil control, which builds on the existing national and European capacities and ensures continuity of the activities and achievements of its predecessor programme GMES. Its main purpose is to implement the next, fully operational phase of this European flagship initiative, which will notably encompass the launch of six families of dedicated, EU-owned earth observation satellites and instruments - the so-called Sentinels – and the ramp-up of the 6 Copernicus Services in the fields of atmosphere-, marine- and land-monitoring, climate change, emergencies and security. In addition to the space- and service-components, Copernicus also includes an in-situ component that ensures coordinated access to additional data from airborne, seaborne and ground-based sensors. Its total financial envelope is EUR 4.291,48 mio. for the current 2014-2020 MFF period.

Copernicus data and services will be made available on a full, open and free-of charge basis to users, including EU institutions, Member States' authorities, the private sector for the development of commercial downstream applications and services, international partners, the global scientific community, and interested citizens. Copernicus is a large-scale industrial project that contributes significantly to Europe's competitiveness, growth and jobs in the strategic high-tech domain of Space. It also constitutes a major asset for the EU's climate and environment policies from the local to the global level. Copernicus will generate concrete benefits and applications in many other areas such as maritime safety and security, agriculture, the prevention and management of disasters, urban and infrastructure planning, etc.

Copernicus Satellites: the first Copernicus Satellite, Sentinel 1-A, was launched on 3 April 2014 from Kourou and has successfully passed its In-Orbit Commissioning Review. It has started to deliver data of unprecedented quality to the full satisfaction of EU users, international partners and the scientific community at large, who are eagerly awaiting its full operational capacity and outputs.

In 2015/2016, we will launch and start operations of Sentinel-2A and Sentinel-3A, and prepare for the launches and operations of subsequent Sentinels later in 2016/2017. Looking ahead, Copernicus' short- and mid-term priorities include the 24/7/365 operations of the Space Component and the Ground Segment, as well as the necessary Ground Segment enhancements.

The objective is to gradually deploy the Copernicus infrastructure and to make the services operational by 2017. Copernicus is to be adopted by a broad user community as an independent, state-of-the-art programme delivering reliable and operational earth observation data and services with a high degree of performance. Copernicus will provide considerable economic, societal and environmental benefits in a wide range of domains. Its expected direct and indirect benefits amount to some EUR 30 billion over the period 2014-2030, and the programme will be critical to create or maintain some 40.000 skilled jobs in a high-tech sector of strategic importance for the EU.

Governance of the Copernicus programme

The Commission has the overall responsibility for Copernicus and for the coordination among its different components. It manages the budget and oversees the implementation, including the setting of priorities, user involvement, cost, schedule, performance and procurement. We manage relationships with third countries and international organizations, and ensure the coordination of Copernicus with related activities at national, EU and international level. The Commission also facilitates coordinated contributions from Member States for the operational delivery of data and services, supports the development of the services, ensures the complementarity and consistency with other EU policies and programmes, and promotes a stable long-term investment climate.

By means of a Delegation Agreement signed with the Commission on 28 October 2014 and with a budget of EUR 3 148 million - ESA will ensure the technical coordination of the Copernicus Space Component, define its overall systems architecture and its evolution, manage the funds allocated to it, ensure monitoring and control, develop new dedicated missions and procure recurring ones, operate the dedicated missions under its responsibility, coordinate the access to contributing mission data and procure the necessary complementary data from commercial operators.

Following the signature of a Delegation Agreement with the Commission on 7 November with a budget of EUR 229 million EUMETSAT will, in its domain of competence, operate, monitor and control the dedicated missions under its responsibility, manage the funds allocated to it, and provide access to contributing meteorological mission data.

Service Operators are entrusted by the Commission with implementation tasks to develop, ramp-up and operate the various Copernicus Services in their respective areas of expertise. To this end, dedicated delegation agreements have been signed with the European Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) worth EUR 291 million, Mercator Océan on 11 November 2014 worth EUR 144 million, whereas an agreement with the European Environment Agency (EEA) is expected to be signed in December 2014. Agreements with the European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders of the Member States of the European Union (FRONTEX), the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), are due to be signed early 2015.
