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DEVELOPMENT OF COPERNICUS DATA POLICY AND LICENSING TERMS AND CONDITIONS:
AN OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS

Abstract

The Earth observation programme Copernicus (previously called GMES) is the most significant European initiative that was set up to provide Earth observation data from multiple sensors to the European Union. The European Commission coordinates and manages Copernicus programme. The European Space Agency is in charge of developing the space component of the observation infrastructure, while the European Environment Agency and the Member States are responsible for its in situ component. After years of hard work, consolidation of efforts, debates, etc. it is nearing the stage of its being fully operational: the current stage of initial operations that started in 2011 is envisaged to end by 2014. Entering into full operational mode necessitates that effective and functional data policy, as well as mechanisms for accessing to Copernicus data and services are agreed upon, adopted and implemented as soon as possible.

The authors of this article will focus on the process of implementing the provisions of the Regulation 911/2010 on GMES and its Initial Operations, in particular with regard to the Copernicus data policy. The analysis will address the progress made, as well as concerns and hurdles that need to be overcome in order to achieve full and open access to data collected through Copernicus infrastructure, and information produced by its services. It will also put the Copernicus data and information policy in the context of post 2014 operational Copernicus as well as the relationship with and influence of other, international initiatives (like Geographic Earth Observation System of Systems, GEOSS) on its development. In addition, the article will address the major and most important elements of the licensing regime that should be applied to successfully implement the goals of providing full and open access to Copernicus data and services, as well as of complying with the relevant international agreements, security restrictions and licensing conditions.

This article will be written in co-authorship with Daniel Quintart (European Commission, DG Enterprise) and Pär Åstrand (Joint Research Centre).