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Contemporary Considerations about the 1986 Principles Relating to Remote Sensing of the Earth from
Space (3)

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IS THERE THE NEED TO EXPAND THE SCOPE OF THE UNITED NATIONS REMOTE SENSING
PRINCIPLES?

Abstract

The year 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of the United Nations General Assembly Principles relating to remote sensing of the Earth from space. Satellite remote sensing or Earth observation activities worldwide have progressed enormously since that time. Not only new satellite remote sensing missions in various countries were set up and carried out, but new actors, international and private stepped into the field. In addition, the terrestrial activities that satellite remote sensing data support today are much broader and diverse than they were when the UN Remote Sensing Principles were adopted.

In the light of the developments within the field of satellite remote sensing or Earth observation activities this paper addresses the question as to whether the scope of the UN Remote Sensing Principles adequately addresses the need of the satellite remote sensing communities they apply to. The analysis in particular concerns the subject-matter scope of the document. Namely, the author assesses the wording and interpretation of their definitions and principles, and the current state-of-play within the satellite remote sensing community that includes states, agencies, international organisations and private actors.

The author analyses how current trends and practices within the satellite remote sensing community may affect interpretation or implementation of the UN Remote Sensing Principles, and assesses the need for the adjustment of their scope to the needs of today.