



Minutes of the of  
the Working Group on SPACE AND SECURITY of Wednesday, 3 February 2010 on  
in cooperation with the European Security Foundation

## “THE ONGOING DISCUSSION ABOUT GMES - STATE OF PLAY AND NEXT STEPS?”

Chaired by Karl von WOGAU

### Introduction by

- Karl von WOGAU, Secretary General

### Statements by:

- Norbert GLANTE MEP, Member of the European Parliament's Committee on Industry, Research and Energy
- Mauro FACCHINI, DG Enterprise and Industry, Directorate Aerospace, Deputy Head of Unit of the GMES bureau, European Commission
- Thomas BRANDTNER, Directorate General C, Head of Unit "Competitiveness, Lisbon strategy and industry", Council of the European Union

In his introductory contribution Mr von Wogau underlined the importance of ensuring autonomous access to space as a key priority in terms of European space policy. Space capabilities become increasingly significant on areas as humanitarian aid and security, as recent experiences on observation of natural disasters worldwide showed. Raising European awareness on space security is highly relevant in the respect of these monitoring and observation activities as well. Therefore a special attention has to be paid to protecting space assets for the sake of increasing security of European access to space.

Mr Glante as rapporteur for the related committee report introduced the current state of play of GMES-related legislation at the European Parliament. Mr Glante reminded that GMES is a public infrastructure based on already existing capacities of Member States. A significant aspect of the utilisation of data provided by the system is that they are openly accessible for European users while in terms of access from non-European users the principle of reciprocity has to be applied. Mr Glante referred to the excellent research activities of the past period that enabled the project to enter the operational phase, managed by the European Commission. Mr Glante recalled that the overall aim of the initiative is to create a better environmental management system for monitoring the composition of atmosphere, Earth surface and oceans, natural catastrophes, and parallel with these the system has to observe critical infrastructures such as pipelines, thus contributing to public security.

With regard to developments at the European Parliament Mr Glante informed that the project gained wide support from the side of different political groups as members are aware of its significance for the society as a whole and for the market for diverse applications as well. The draft report in the Committee for Industry, Research and Energy is expected to be adopted without major problematic issues and political division and the final vote in plenary is foreseen for June 2010. The opinions of the Committees on Environment and on Budget are already available to the draft report.

Among the challenges ahead Mr Glante mentioned that some important budgetary aspects are reflected by the budget committee members who referred to the need for an appropriate financial monitoring and control for GMES on longer term as well, putting the project on a solid financial basis. Similarly to the case of the Galileo programme financial resources have still to be ensured in sufficient amount which has to be ensured by the close cooperation of the European Parliament, Commission and Council. If the institutions will be able to make appropriate commitments at the current stage, higher costs at later stages can be avoided, thus protecting European taxpayers' money. Another important aspect of the programme is the strict respect for the planned timing for its realisation.



In his statement Mr Facchini underlined the strategic value of Earth observation information, both for EU policies and priorities in terms of environment and security. GMES is strongly contributing to innovation and growth through enabling the emergence of downstream markets, facilitating innovation, services market and the knowledge economy. The project is highly relevant for EU leadership in climate change, mentioned also in the political guidelines of the Barroso Commission aiming to ensure access to all existing scientific and economic data to help the EU to adapt its relevant policies. The aspect of international cooperation must also be considered. While ensuring autonomy is crucial it is important to establish the ability for contributing to global goals. Mr Facchini repeated that GMES services are designed to provide information on Earth main constituents such as land (e.g. land use, land management, urban planning), sea (e.g. temperature, salinity, currents) and atmosphere (gas concentrations, aerosols, UV exposure). But GMES services are also crucial in support to civil protection activities or to security related issues, for example maritime surveillance, border control, or support to external action.

Among current challenges Mr Facchini mentioned the change of gear, moving from short-lived research actions to long-term stable framework, which has to be included in detail into a Community programme. The relevant regulatory proposal foresees for the shorter-term to bridge the financing gap between preparatory actions accorded by the EP in 2008-2010 and the next financial framework for the period starting in 2014.

Finally, Mr Facchini expressed his thanks for the support of the Parliament for the relevant Commission proposal and welcomed the ambitious timetable presented by the rapporteur. According to the Commission the ongoing legislative procedure is well on track and overall the views both in the committees of the EP and the Council working group are converging. Mr Facchini also reminded that beyond the current legislative procedure new tasks are ahead, in particular it will be necessary to prepare the budgetary strategy for the next financial framework.

Mr Brandtner welcomed the leadership of the Parliament on the GMES dossier and he reminded that this driving approach helped to manage and solve sensitive situation also in the past, for example in the case of the regulation on the Galileo programme or on the European Institute of Innovation and Technology. Mr Brandtner considered the Commission proposal as a solid and viable basis that enables the decision-makers to avoid heavy related costs for European taxpayers. According to Mr Brandtner the principle of free and open access to GMES data opens some question and it is a vital European interest to ensure the right minimum of accessible information for the relevant users and markets. Through a proper comitology procedure it will be possible to define and enforce the necessary legal parameters at the end. Another open question is the involvement and role of Member States in the realisation of the projects which has to be based on the principle of partnership, avoiding to create an excessive bureaucratic architecture. Access to data is often limited not by technical obstacles but complex bureaucratic procedures, which is a challenge to be solved in short term.

In the questions and answers session the audience covered the issue of decreasing space budgets in the US which has to be considered by European space policy and actions as well. Contributions stressed the need for proper involvement of the public ensuring the necessary expertise of technicians and enthusiasm of citizens for Europe's space programmes. Professional organisations' representatives highlighted the importance of the downstream sector and the excellent chances for SMEs and start-ups to get involved into these space projects in case of an appropriate regulatory framework and financial environment.

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