

GMES IS AN EU-LED PROGRAM. IT MUST REMAIN SO AND REINTEGRATE THE MULTIANNUAL FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK 2014-20

GMES: AN OPPORTUNITY THAT THE EU CANNOT MISS

The European programme GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security), the second EU flagship programme in space, is politically and technically the most advanced of its type world-wide: this ambitious Earth observation programme has the potential to give Europe a leadership position in environment monitoring, crisis management and security, by setting up the required infrastructures and services to inform the European decision makers and the citizens.

GMES is offering Europe an opportunity that it cannot miss in a time when the challenges raised by global climate change are formidable, when huge amounts of money can be saved with a better management of risks and crisis and when **access to environmental information is crucial for growth and competitiveness**.

It is a **key pillar for the sustainable development of Europe**, meeting major societal challenges, bringing key contributions to EU2020 objectives and contributing to competitiveness, growth and job creation. Internationally, GMES is required for environmental treaty verification, for development aid and for humanitarian disaster relief. Its pre-operational services have proven their efficiency for the benefit of the users and public stakes. It is worth noting that the GMES project is running on-time and in-cost and that it has reached a sufficient maturity to state that there will be no cost overruns.

The budget mentioned by the Commission in its Communication¹ "**A budget for Europe 2020**" is consistent and sufficient to provide GMES with continuity, sustainability of long term operations. If reintegrated in the MFF, it will in addition enrich the EU knowledge society, foster the downstream markets and create the necessary grounds for investors, researchers and entrepreneurs to invest (in particular SME's), fully in line with the EUROPE2020 objectives and fully demonstrating the EU added value for the benefit of all its citizens and its international relations.

WHY IS GMES AT RISK?

However, today the EC proposes to finance the GMES outside the EU budget! This approach is jeopardising this European programme and is in contradiction with the EU2020 Strategy, recent messages from the EU Council², as well as the continuous support of the Parliament and the affirmation by EC for years that GMES is an **EU flagship**.

Moreover, the EC itself³ in its Staff working paper considers that the decision to fund GMES outside the MFF will *"create high uncertainty for GMES [...], the EU would withdraw from GMES while it has not reached its maturity yet. It would be more than likely that this option would mean a discontinuation of GMES as no other partners would be in a position to take over the prominent role played so far by the EU in structuring and supporting – both politically and financially - GMES. It*

¹ COM(2011) 500 final

² Council Resolution "Global challenges: taking full benefit of European space systems", 16864/10; Council Conclusions on "Towards a space strategy for the European Union that benefits its citizens", 10901/11

³ SEC(2011) 868 final, "Commission staff working paper: A Budget for Europe 2020: the current system of funding, the challenges ahead, the results of stakeholders consultation and different options on the main horizontal and sectoral issues"

would lead to sunken costs and past investment would be lost". Outside the EU Framework, GMES will undoubtedly lose its European dimension, leading to new negotiations for a redefinition of the governance, funding mechanisms and data policy, and will very probably not survive.

ESA and Member States have started to develop GMES sentinels prototypes, ESA as a development agency while EU is to finance the operational phase. If EU doesn't play its role and doesn't finance the operations and maintenance, core services and support to market uptake, it will cause major impacts on the space and services industry, the scientific community as well as public and private institutions working on environment and climate monitoring, security, civil protection. All those have already invested considerable budgets.

CONCLUSIONS

Therefore, considering that,

- GMES will strongly contribute to an economy based on knowledge and innovation and will be an indispensable asset towards a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy, in particular **bringing an outstanding added value to many key policies of the EU;**
- GMES is aimed at dealing with EU-wide (and even worldwide) societal and environmental challenges, **that can only be led at the level of the EU;**

The Commission proposal for the MFF must therefore remain consistent with its own statements and past Communications, and with the Resolutions and Conclusions of the Council and the Parliament. **The EU institutions need to urgently reassure the user's communities, investors and international observers that GMES will continue as anticipated in the Union's Multi-annual Financial Framework.**

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