

THE ROLE OF FP7 GEOLAND2 IN SUPPORT TO THE CLARIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF GOOD AGRICULTURE CONDITIONS LAID DOWN IN EU CAP

ReSAC activities

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ABSTRACT

Geoland2 is carried out in the context of GMES⁽¹⁾, a joint initiative of European Commission and European Space Agency within the FP7. The project aims to build up a European capacity for global monitoring of environment and security. Geoland2 is designed to support this initiative, and is focused on land cover change, environmental stress, and global vegetation monitoring in Europe. The architecture of Geoland2 is made up of two layers: core mapping and core information services. The core mapping services provide land cover, land use and land cover change, as well as a range of bio-physical parameters. The core information services offer specific information for European environmental policies and international treaties on climate change, food security and the sustainable development.

The policies on integration process between agriculture and environment in Europe fosters the development of agricultural practices that preserve the environment and safeguard the countryside. The current principles laid down by the EU CAP⁽²⁾ are also aligned with that process, giving prominence to the sustainable development of the rural areas and the protection of the biodiversity. Each policy needs reliable information and robust indicators in order to implement successfully its objective. There are two important sets of indicators in the EU CAP, which are critical for the proper assessment of the balance between farming and environment – GAC⁽³⁾ and GAEC⁽⁴⁾.

The main aim of the AgriEnvironment Service, part of the FP7 Geoland 2 project, is to contribute to the improvement of more accurate and timely monitoring of agricultural land use state and its changes at European, national and regional levels by providing common methodologies and indicators covering various temporal, spatial and thematic scales. The particular objectives of AgriEnvCIS are the monitoring and assessment of the area and the rate of abandoned arable land. This is still hot topic for Bulgaria and Romania, which are subject of specific conditions by the European Commission in respect to GAC. In the first years of CAP implementation in these countries, there are problems with proper assessment of the criteria for defining which arable lands are or are not in GAC.

As a member of consortium ReSAC is involved in three sub-projects of Geoland2: Spatial planning observatory (OSP), Seasonal and annual change monitoring (SACHMo), and Agri-environmental indicators core information service (AgriEnvCIS).

The main aim of the research is to share some preliminary findings of the Land Abandoned project package of Geoland2 in respect to monitoring of the abandoned land with the combined use of EO and in-situ data. Examples from the terrain work recently performed on the Bulgarian test site in Struma valley are presented. A comparative analysis between the remote sensing data and the ground truth is shown in order to evaluate the degree of reliability of high resolution satellite data to detect and monitor abandoned land. Some potential outcomes of that study in support to the proper definition of GAC in Bulgaria are outlined at the end.

(1) GMES: Global Monitoring for Environment and Security

(2) CAP: Common Agricultural Policy

(3) GAC: Good Agriculture Conditions

(4) GAEC: Good Agriculture and Environment Conditions