

SOFIA CONCLUSIONS-II

On 17 and 18 of March 2011, 250 participants from 22 countries met in the city of Sofia for the Second workshop “**Earth Observation program – Global Monitoring of Environment and Security Operational Capacity**”.

Considering

- The positive results of the first workshop **GMES -OPERATIONAL CAPACITY, the EU12 role**, organized by the Bulgarian government, and a group of NGO's, research organizations and universities with the support of the European Commission held in Sofia, 25 and 26 March 2010;
- The opinions of the participants in the first workshop resumed in the agreed Sofia Conclusions-I at the end of the workshop;
- **The Regulation (EU) No 911/2010 of the European Parliament and the Council on the European Earth monitoring programme (GMES) and its initial operations (2011 to 2013)**, called further **the Regulation**.
- That the European Earth monitoring Programme - GMES is a user-driven programme, bringing together the efforts of EU Member States to preserve the environment, to protect the climate and to safeguard the security of its citizens.
- That the development of GMES services, based on the needs expressed by communities of users representing all EU countries, is in an advanced stage.
- That data gathered, assessed, relayed and processed by GMES, will help us to improve the management of land areas, the preservation of the marine environment, the monitoring of the atmosphere, the definition of adaptation and mitigation policies to reduce the impact of climate change and enhance public safety by providing preliminary risk management, early warning and real time data on natural disasters and citizen's security;

The participants at this event conclude that:

- The approach making GMES a user oriented program, is expected to provide long term positive effects and benefits to different communities of users.
- Many of the conclusions of the first Sofia workshop are fully in line with the final adopted text of **the Regulation**
- As part of the implementation of **the Regulation**, it is necessary to streamline the Governance of GMES to clarify the role, relations and coordinated actions between the different actors at European and national levels.
- In order to achieve the objective of GMES on a sustainable basis, it is necessary to coordinate the activities of the various partners involved in GMES, to implement the developed services in a flexible and efficient way, as well to foster the development of the downstream sector,
- The Member States should actively participate in the ‘User Forum’ established by **the Regulation** to facilitate the identification of user requirements, the verification of service compliance and the coordination of GMES with public sector users. Attention should be given to adequate involvement in User forum preparatory activities of national and international NGOs, scientific organizations and businesses, especially SMEs.
- As an EU program GMES should maintain the coherence with other EU initiatives as the INSPIRE Directive, the GEO initiative, the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS) Initiative and Union activities in the field of emergency response.
- The implementation of GMES services would benefit from new or existing regional networks between countries, facilitating sharing of common user requirements, direct access to data and information, good practice, coordination of take up of GMES activities and ensuring synergy and the integration of local, national and regional capacities. The initiative "Regional Unit for integrated risk and security management for South East Europe (RURSE)" is considered a step into this direction.
- Risk and security management are important for the safety of citizens, border control, maritime surveillance and support to EU external actions, thus EU support and attention should be paid for developing and strengthening regional capabilities in support of GMES.
- For the needs of general coordination/management of data collected/generated by GMES, it is necessary that all Member States, besides their own national models, provide the possible use of an agreed standardized reference data model, based on an internationally accepted methodology
- Participants welcome the future organization of the third workshop on GMES Operational Capacity in Poland in 2012.

These conclusions are adopted by workshop participants on 18th of March 2011.

Additional information on articles from the REG 911 in favor of the “Sofia Conclusions-II” (**The Regulation** can be found at the following address: [http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/space/files/gmes/regulation_\(eu\)_no_911_2010_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/space/files/gmes/regulation_(eu)_no_911_2010_en.pdf))