

Future Outlook

Since fully functioning crystal balls are rare these days, brainstorming about the future is the only option left to you if you want to anticipate what lies ahead. Forming your own vision on current and likely developments can help you in your entrepreneurial or policymaking activities. Now, more than ever, it is necessary to be prepared. At the special FIG/GIM Forum on the Future of Land Administration during the FIG Working Week in Rome, chaired by our contributing editor Chrit Lemmen, specialists will share their views on the future of cadastre and land administration.

In this very issue of *GIM International*, we are covering the 'green' aspect of cadastres in an article by contributing editors Rohan Bennett and Paul van der Molen, both working at ITC in Enschede, The Netherlands. The question that Bennett and Van der Molen pose is the one of how to incorporate of natural boundaries in 'organic cadastres'. This is an issue that will undoubtedly become very topical in the new 'green economy' in which land needs to be assessed based on its social and environmental features. Please read their article on page 20. While it is true that the 'green economy' may be on its way within the concept of natural capitalism, the need to add this new dimension to cadastres is still a long way off for many people. Today, citizens in countries lacking a proper land administration first need a cadastre that gives them security of land ownership in order to be able build an economic existence for themselves; millimetre accuracy and new dimensions are not necessary. This demonstrates that one person's future is not always another's (immediate) future. There is certainly enough food for thought for ongoing discussions here in GIM International and at conferences like the FIG Working Week and others.

This issue also features an interview with EU Commissioner Kroes who is responsible for the European Union's Digital Agenda. While a lot of geoprofessionals are missing any mention of geoinformation in the Digital Agenda's policy papers, Ms Kroes admits she is very aware of the head start INSPIRE has in major IT projects in Europe and comments that she sees a strong link between geoinformation and the Digital Agenda. As a strong advocate of open data, she also foresees a vibrant ecosystem around geoinformation in the European Union and beyond (see page 14). In addition, Ian Masser leads us through the recent past and imminent future of INSPIRE. The Directive's emphasis is shifting from policy and preparation in Brussels to implementation in the 27 Member States. Needless to say, future developments in this field are also viewed differently in the various parts of the EU, with some countries much further in terms of implementation than others (see page 29).

The future, as the indefinite time yet to come, will reveal all when it is ready. We do not know exactly what it has in store for the field of geomatics, but we always have the opportunity to influence and shape that future ourselves, by thinking, researching, discussing, writing and rewriting. And plenty of all of those things have gone into preparing this issue of *GIM International* for you.