

NMCAs Pledge to Put Data Access at the Heart of EuroGeographicsâ€™ Activities



Facilitating access to geospatial information from official national sources is in the public interest and supports the public good say members of EuroGeographics. European National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities (NMCAs) recently agreed to put data accessibility at the heart of their association's strategy.

At its 2019 General Assembly – held from 6 to 9 October – hosted by Ordnance Survey Great Britain with support from Her Majesty's Land Registry and Registers of Scotland, European National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities (NMCAs) agreed to make data accessibility a key priority. They also pledged to continue working in partnership to achieve its widespread use across the European and international systems. In

doing so, their aim is to realise EuroGeographics' vision of a European society which makes decisions informed by its members' accurate, authoritative and quality-assured land and geospatial information, services and expertise.

"National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities understand change," says Colin Bray from Ordnance Survey Ireland who was re-elected as EuroGeographics' President at the meeting in Manchester.

"We respond to it daily to provide certainty to citizens, to our governments and to businesses alike. Users trust our authoritative data because our role is to capture an ever-changing landscape accurately, and to enable efficient, secure and reliable land administration."



EuroGeographics President, Colin Bray (left) with the Association's Secretary General and Executive Director, Mick Cory.

"The physical environment, however, is not the only change that we must respond to in fulfilling our essential role of providing official and detailed geospatial information for public purposes. Our wider operating environment has changed too, not least as a result of the increasing availability and use of alternative sources of data. However, the need for authoritative, official geospatial data remains. This is clear from official reports and our discussions with European and global institutions, such as reliable data for reporting and monitoring progress towards the sustainable development goals."

"I am delighted therefore that members have agreed that facilitating access to their data should be at the centre of the activities we carry out on their behalf. This will drive our representation activity and be supported by two-way communication through knowledge exchange and other membership activities."

Open Data PSI Directive

Mick Cory, Secretary General and Executive Director, EuroGeographics added: "In Europe, the new Open Data PSI Directive identifies geospatial data as one of five 'high-value' data themes that warrant further regulatory action. Whilst we expect this to create opportunities for members, realising these against a lack of policy coherence or ownership for geospatial matters within the Commission will prove challenging. As a result, Europe does not always appear 'joined-up' and the use of authoritative geospatial information can be inconsistent."

"By committing to support and coordinate our international positions, in particular with the European Union, we will provide an even stronger voice for our members. In addition, we will continue to work in partnership with them to explore how appropriate pan-European datasets can be made more widely available to meet international requirements under terms that are free for use and reuse, consistent

with the new Open Data PSI Directive. This, of course, requires sustainable funding in an appropriate model and we are investigating ways to achieve this."



Nigel Clifford, Deputy Chair, UK Geospatial Commission provides an overview of its role. Its vision is to be published in 2020 and will take into account the international context.

Multipurpose cadastral tool

The conference also heard from a record number of member organizations who shared how they are responding to the challenges, changes and opportunities in meeting ever-changing user needs.

These included the digitization of Croatia's Cadastral System by the State Geodetic Administration which is achieving paper-free administration; the Italian Revenue Agency's evolution of the cadastral cartographic system and new geoportal which gives access to this information free of charge; and the Spanish fiscal authority's use of data from the General Directorate for the Cadastre to combat fraud. The Latvian Geospatial Information Agency provided a military perspective with an insight into the national geospatial information system.

Further sessions focused on how cadastre can be used as a platform to provide information from other authorities, with an example from National Land Survey Finland, and a case study from the Danish Geodata Agency showing how a multipurpose cadastral tool is used in land management. Registers of Scotland also gave an overview of past and future developments in land registration – from deeds to data. The Estonian Land Board presented on the use of open data and crowdsourcing whilst a presentation by the Working Committee of the Surveying Authorities of the States of the Federal Republic of Germany described how three federal institutions work under the one rule with geocoding services for addresses and geonames.

Mr Bray commented: "These examples show that EuroGeographics is a collaborative network of members in a unique association of mapping, cadastre and land registries. Our strength lies in the ability to cooperate and share our data, our experience and our knowledge for the wider public good. I look forward to this cooperation continuing, so that together we can deliver our ambition of a society empowered by the use of our trusted geospatial services."



Leaders and senior representatives from 48 member organisations from 39 countries attended EuroGeographics annual General Assembly hosted by Ordnance Survey Great Britain with support from HM Land Registry and Registers of Scotland.

Keynotes

Users were also represented with keynotes from Chris Pope, Greater Manchester Combined Authority who spoke on connecting people and places; Richard Parker, Altitude Angel, who talked about drones; and Christine Wirtz, Director, Eurostat who spoke on combining statistical information with geospatial data in EU projects. In addition, the agenda included welcomes from Steve Blair, Chief Executive Officer, Ordnance Survey and David Henderson, Managing Director of OSGB and speakers from the DG Connect, European Space Agency, United Nations Global Geospatial Information Management initiative (UN-GGIM), the UK's Geospatial Commission, Manchester City Council, European Environment Agency, Hexagon Geosystems, Google and the International Cartographic Society.

Management Board

The conference concluded with the election of Management Board Members and the President.

As a result, it now comprises:

- President Colin Bray, Ordnance Survey Ireland.
- Andreas Hadjiraftis, Department of Lands and Surveys of Cyprus.
- Kristian Møller, Danish Agency for Data Supply and Efficiency.
- Sylvain Latarget, National Institute of Geographic and Forest Information, France
- Martin Lenk, Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy, Germany
- David Henderson, Ordnance Survey, Great Britain.
- Sanja ZekušiÄŹ, State Geodetic Administration, Croatia
- Martin Salzmann, The Netherlands' Cadastre, Land Registry and Mapping Agency.
- Amalia Velasco MartÄŹn-VarÄŹs, Spanish Directorate General for Cadastre.

More information about EuroGeographics, which is an international, not-for-profit association, and its members can be found at www.eurogeographics.org.