

European Surveyors Celebrate Mercator's 500th Birthday

The Council of European Surveyors has launched the first 'Day of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation' in Brussels, Belgium. This day will be dedicated to the 500th birthday of Mercator. This initiative marks the start of a new tradition: to organise a 'Day of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation' every year, celebrating a renowned surveyor each time.

The CLGE is looking for the support of the European Parliament for this event, following the example of the United States, where a National Surveyor's Week is organised each year, with the support of the Congress.

5th March 2012 marked exactly 500 years to the day since the famous cartographer Gerardus Mercator was born. Several events have been organised all over Europe to celebrate this birthday. In Brussels, the Belgian union of surveyors (OBGE npo) organised the first 'Day of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation', under the guardianship of the Council of European Geodetic Surveyors (CLGE). The event was organised in close cooperation with the Royal Military Academy and the National Geographic Institute.

In his keynote speech, Carlo des Dorides, Executive Director of the European GNSS Agency (GSA), mentioned the status and outlook of the Galileo-project, the satellite navigation system currently being built by the European Commission and European Space Agency (ESA). In the academic part devoted to Mercator, there were three lectures on the importance of Mercator after 500 years: 'Mercator, a man of all seasons in The Netherlands as well as in Europe', 'Mercator, his life, his legacy', and 'Mercator and the challenges for the modern European surveyor'.

The day was attended by Philippe Busquin, Minister of State, former European Commissioner for Research and President of the Belgian Mapping Agency NGI, and surveyors and geomaticians from all over Europe.

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