

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Margot WALLSTRÖM
Pedro SOLBES MIRA
Philippe BUSQUIN
Members of the Commission

11 April 2002 D(02)330523

Memorandum of understanding between Commissioners Wallström, Solbes, Busquin

Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE)

1. WHY AN INITIATIVE TO SUPPORT GEOGRAPHICAL¹ INFORMATION FOR COMMUNITY POLICIES

The European Sustainable Development Strategy advocates a new approach to policy-making through more coherence in the Community policies. An information base that provides detailed relevant harmonised spatial information for different policy areas and that is commonly accessible could significantly contribute to this objective.

Currently, exploitation of the potential of geographical information is hampered by lack of standards, of data and of a coherent data policy. A Community initiative to address these difficulties could unlock a vast potential of information and information services, e.g. related to identification, access to and visualisation of information. These would stimulate increased coherence and integration of Community policies. Standardisation of geographical information services would furthermore open up new ways of communication, narrowing the gap between Europe and its citizens.

2. OBJECTIVE OF THE PRESENT MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

This Memorandum of Understanding provides the basis for continued co-operation between the services of DG Environment, EUROSTAT and the JRC for developing the INSPIRE initiative. It is without prejudice to the mandate of the COGI interservice group.

¹ The terms "spatial information" and "geographical information" are used interchangeably in this document
Commission européenne, B-1049 Bruxelles / Europese Commissie, B-1049 Brussel - Belgium. Telephone: (32-2)299 11 11.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE INSPIRE INITIATIVE

The INSPIRE initiative intends to make available harmonised sources of geographical information in support of the formulation, implementation and evaluation of Community policies. It relates to the base information collected in the Member States in order to respond to a wide range of policy initiatives and obligations at local, regional, national, international level. This information often already exists today, but it cannot be exploited in a broader context because of the fragmentation of the current existing monitoring system definition and implementation. The initiative intends during the first phase to define a legal framework providing for the co-ordination of the collection and exploitation of geographical information. The framework will be implemented and expanded in further phases, starting with information in support of environmental policies and gradually adding information specific to other sectors, such as transport, agriculture, etc.

4. GENERAL OUTLINE OF WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

First phase (definition of the INSPIRE framework legislative)

During the first phases, the preparation of the INSPIRE framework legislative act, the initiative is co-led by Eurostat and DG Environment, with the JRC acting as overall technical co-ordinator and research correspondent.

Where relevant, synergies with the GMES initiative will be sought in order to ensure coherence between INSPIRE and GMES.

The role of Eurostat

Eurostat, as chair of the Commission inter-service group for geographical information (COGI) also co-ordinates the interaction between the INSPIRE initiative and the COGI group.

Eurostat will jointly with DG Environment prepare the Commission proposal for the INSPIRE Community framework legislative act.

Eurostat co-chairs with DG Environment the INSPIRE Expert group who overlooks the overall process of the preparation of the INSPIRE initiative and co-finances with DG Environment the organisation of an INSPIRE Expert group meeting in 2002.

Eurostat chairs the INSPIRE Working Group on Reference Data and Metadata that will provide its orientation paper and position paper respectively in April and June 2002.

Eurostat overlooks the study "State of play for geographical information in Europe" and co-finances the study with DG Environment.

The role of DG Environment

DG Environment will jointly with Eurostat prepare the Commission proposal for the INSPIRE Community framework legislative act.

DG Environment co-chairs with Eurostat the INSPIRE Expert group and finances the organisation of the INSPIRE Expert group meetings in 2002.

DG Environment supports Eurostat for the follow up of the study "State of play for geographical information in Europe" and co-finances the study with Eurostat.

DG Environment interacts with the EEA for co-ordinating the collection of thematic data requirements on the environment.


The role of the JRC

The JRC acts as overall technical co-ordinator of the INSPIRE initiative, ensuring the technical coherence and exchange of information between the INSPIRE working groups, ensuring the liaison with the European and international research community and their networks and initiatives.

The JRC chairs the INSPIRE Working Group on Standards and Architecture that will provide its orientation paper and position paper respectively in April and June 2002.

Further phases (negotiation, adoption, implementation and further development of the INSPIRE framework legislation)

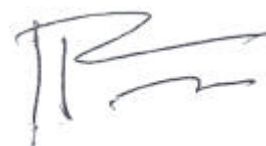
Once the proposal for an INSPIRE framework legislation adopted by the Commission, the three lead services remain committed to continue to lead its negotiation and further implementation. The work arrangements between the lead services will be revised at the end of the first phases.



Margot Wallström



Pedro Solbes Mira



Philippe Busquin

Encl (1) INSPIRE, a new Commission initiative to contribute to, sound knowledge for good governance through a European Spatial Information Infrastructure