

EUROGI contribution to the Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society

Context

The European Commission calls for replies to the **Green Paper on Public Sector Information in the Information Society** by all interested parties by the 1 June 1999.

The European Commission has been preparing since 1995 with the Geographic Information (GI) community the **Communication GI2000: Towards a European Policy Framework for Geographic Information**. This Communication is still at the consultation phase.

It is widely recognised that a large percentage of geographic information is produced by the public sector and that the access to and adaptation of this huge amount of information for use by professionals and citizens must be improved.

EUROGI Contribution to the Green Paper debate

1. EUROGI welcomes the appearance of the document treating what we consider to be extremely important issues that we have been grappling with for some time. It should be noted that many issues related to the GI community have been identified and discussed during the preparation of the GI2000 Communication. EUROGI has contributed to the clarification of some of the barriers to greater use of GI, e.g. the EUROGI inventories of the copyright systems across Europe.
2. EUROGI has identified during the preparatory work of our members the importance of the impact of cultural differences. The example of the different perceptions by the British and French communities of the proposed categorisation between administrative and non-administrative information may lead to difficulties.
3. EUROGI recognises the importance of agreeing European definitions of the 'public sector' and 'public sector information'. The fact that the notion of public sector has no legal existence in Community law has to be considered.
4. EUROGI recognises the importance of agreeing to a categorisation of geographic information considering that GI includes both raw data and information and that access rules will have to be different.
5. EUROGI has found it legitimate to have a global approach to the problem but is concerned that specific issues related to GI are not treated explicitly given that GI is a major component of information in the public sector.
6. EUROGI considers that adopting the GI2000 Communication which includes a list of actions and in particular the creation of a High-Level Working Party is for the GI community the answer to question 10 "Which actions should be given priority attention at the European level?"
7. EUROGI is offering support for the implementation of any proposals that may eventually result from the paper.

EUROGI wishes a successful consultation phase and hopes that the necessary political decisions will be made at the European and national levels to unlock public sector information for the benefit of citizens and the development of the market.

For the EUROGI Executive Committee

Christian Chenez
Secretary General of EUROGI

Presentation of EUROGI

EUROGI, the European Umbrella Organisation for Geographic Information, has a membership of 17 national GI organisations and one pan-European organisation. Its strategic objectives are:

- The facilitation of a European Geographic Information Infrastructure
- The improvement of the communication in the GI community
- The improvement of the access to GI

More information on EUROGI's mission, objectives and activities are available at www.eurogi.org.