

# Public Hearing on INSPIRE Rome, on 10<sup>th</sup> July 10:00 – 13:00



Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio  
via Cristoforo Colombo 44 – 00147 Roma  
Sala Europa – 7° piano (lato via Capitan Bavastro)

## Background and Participation

The objective of the public hearing was to inform parties interested in INSPIRE about the results of the Internet consultation and to obtain feedback on the draft extended impact assessment of INSPIRE.

The public hearing on INSPIRE took place in Rome on 10 July 2003. An open invitation was published on the Internet.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the following interested parties were informed about the public hearing:

- Interested parties who had registered through the INSPIRE website,
- European environmental NGOs (The Group of Eight; Birdlife; Climate Action Network; Friends of the Earth; Transport & Environment; EEB - European Environmental Bureau; WWF – World Wide Fund for Nature European Policy Office; Greenpeace International European Unit, International Friends of Nature);

The following interested parties were asked to distribute the invitation among their members:

- Selected consultative bodies in a range of sectors from industry and research (EPRO - Environment's Platform of Regional Offices; Eurocities; ENCORE – Environmental Conference of the Regions of Europe; CEMR – Council of European Municipalities and Regions; CRPM - Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions of Europe; UNICE – Union of Industrial and Employer's Confederations of Europe; EuroCommerce);
- Committee of the Regions (COTER – Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy; ECOS – Commission for Economic and Social Policy; DEVE – Commission for Sustainable Development);
- European Economic and Social Committee (NAT – Section for Agriculture, Rural Development and the Environment; TEN – Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information Society).

51 organisations or persons expressed an interest in receiving information on the public hearing. They have received a draft extended impact assessment report of INSPIRE and a summary of the results of the Internet consultation.

39 participants from the following countries were present at the public hearing (Annex 2): Italy, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Spain, Sweden, Poland,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://inspire.jrc.it/>

Germany, Denmark and France. They represented the following types of organisation: research & development institutes, local, regional and national governments and administrations, in particular related to mapping and geographical information, land registry and the environment. Commercial and professional organisations active in the following areas were also represented: software tool developers, surveyors, spatial data service providers, satellite image and data vendors and commercial users of spatial data.

## Minutes

In his welcome word Mr. Bruno Agricola, General-Director of the Italian Ministry of the Environment, hosting the Public Hearing, stressed the high interest of his organisation in the outcome of the INSPIRE initiative.

Mr. Claude Rouam, Directorate-General Environment – European Commission, expressed his gratitude towards the Italian Ministry of the Environment and introduced the agenda (annex 1). The Public Hearing being an opportunity for the participants to share their views on the orientation of the INSPIRE initiative, the results of the Internet consultation and the Extended Impact Assessment.

Mr. Marc Vanderhaegen, Directorate-General Environment – European Commission informed on the collaborative and transparent effort of expert groups in defining the scope of the INSPIRE legal framework. In addition, the results and outcome of Extended Impact Assessment, the Internet Consultation and the Public Hearing will help shaping the Commission's proposal for the INSPIRE legal framework.

A lively debate followed the presentation of both the results of the Internet consultation by Mr. Marc Vanderhaegen, and the draft extended impact assessment report by Mr. Stefan Carlyle, Environment Agency for England and Wales.

The following key issues were raised and are summarised below together with the responses of the Commission's representatives.

- **Edward Mecha**, GISPOL (Polish Geographical Users Association), Poland considers the proposal well prepared. He stresses the importance to require mandatory registration of information on spatial objects, with an assured level of quality and clear legal responsibilities, also for 'invisible' objects and phenomena (underground utilities etc.). Although many of these spatial objects are covered in the scope of INSPIRE, a more refined definition is required. The Member States should start working on this issue as soon as possible, also through well targeted research and development projects, well before the entering into force of the INSPIRE legal framework.
- **EC. - INSPIRE will be a framework directive, it is therefore a starting point, opening the way for further defining the spatial data sets and related issues in the future. The framework does not require Member States to collect new data, improving coverage and quality is to be seen in a longer perspective.**

- **Mrs. Daniela Florea**, Geo Strategies Ltd, Cambridge active in Romania, emphasises the need to take into account the different situation of the accession countries when compared to the EU15. In some accession countries the spatial data identified in the INSPIRE consultation document are available only from the private sector while also the quality of the data may be very different from those in the EU15 today. The culture of public-private partnership still requires developing due to historical reasons. The economic importance of INSPIRE is high and it is recommended to also cover private sector spatial data both in the INSPIRE legal framework and in the Extended Impact Assessment, which is too much focussed on public sector data only and to examine carefully intellectual property right issues. Certainly, private sector participation needs to be taken into account throughout the implementation.
- **EC. - Experts from a number of accession countries participated in the elaboration of the proposal and the problems are not completely unknown while the high level of disparity of spatial data across the EU is one of the main reasons to have INSPIRE. The door is open to the private sector for contributing to the implementation of INSPIRE but we will also attempt to accommodate for these concerns in the legal proposal. The INSPIRE policy principals, when applied to public-sector data, will potentially influence the data and information market, and may stimulate the development of more cost-efficient public-private partnerships. The Extended Impact Assessment is based on broad assumptions and on the basis of cases involving private sector data in UK it is assumed that it will not influence the Extended Impact Assessment significantly. However, the issue will be taken into consideration and further elaborated for the final version of Extended Impact Assessment.**
- **Mr. Peter Bartak**, Spatial Data Infrastructures, NL sees other major obstacles not mentioned in the INSPIRE consultation document: the need for education and training, the variability of data quality across all administrative boundaries as well as the lack of co-ordinated data maintenance;
- **EC. INSPIRE addresses a number of key obstacles, such as quality and co-ordination issues. Also the Internet consultation pointed out the importance of education and training. Clearly an issue to be further developed throughout the implementation of INSPIRE.**
- **Mr. Michael Wlaka**, Astrium GmbH, Germany, questioned the role of the EU portal as a 'single' European point of entry. **Mr. Antonio Dinetti**, Italian regional government – waste committee, Italy, elaborated on the high levels of complexity of the 'architecture' of the 'information system networks' and the many thematic sectors to be searched making it unthinkable to consider a single "megaserver". Only a network based on standards can make the physical implementation of INSPIRE a reality.
- **EC. Mr. Allesandro Annoni**, Joint Research Centre of the European Commission - **The EU portal as a 'single' European point of requires clarification. The physical backbone of INSPIRE will consist of as a network linking together existing servers. The EU portal is one of its points of entry, facilitating links and coherence with the many institutional servers and portals, serving**

**different sectors and others that are open and/or operated also by the private sector.**

- **Mr.Jes Ryttersgaard**, (Geoforum, DK), the private sector sees INSPIRE as a major step forward, facilitating developments across boundaries more easily. It is needed to involve early in the implementation sectors other than environment such as health and agriculture in order to avoid seeing many different standards emerge from parallel and uncoordinated initiatives while interoperability in general should be based upon open standards.
- **EC. - Commission services involved in other policies than environment collaborate in the development of INSPIRE, while also EUROSTAT and the Joint Research Centre stand guarantee for a ‘horizontal’ co-ordination. In addition, it is foreseen to organise as a part of the Implementation Strategy of INSPIRE stakeholders in so called Spatial Data Interest Groups. Their requirements in spatial data will form the basis for further implementing actions such as the development of standards, meeting both common and sector specific needs.**
- **Mr.Giovanni Cannizzaro**, Telespazio, IT, and **Michael Wlaka**, Astrium GmbH, Germany, raised the issue of the interaction between the Commission’s research and development initiative Global Monitoring for Environment and Security initiative, GMES and INSPIRE.
- **EC. - INSPIRE sets a legal framework for EU spatial data standards and fosters interoperability and sharing of data at EU level in close collaboration with global spatial data infrastructure initiatives. GMES will develop through research and development partnerships and later, following the assessment report of the Initial Period possibly through other actions, the monitoring and service capacity needed to actually collect and distribute quality verified information in a timely way meeting different use-case scenarios. Hence, contributing to the population of the spatial data infrastructure, which is indeed one of its priorities, while meeting user application requirements and information needs from local to global scale. Both are therefore complementary in reaching similar objectives and actions such as cost-benefits analysis and impact assessments are closely co-ordinated.**
- **Mr.Paolo Breghin**, ECOSOC, Agriculture and Environment Section CES, highlighted that INSPIRE potentially brings important benefits for both the public and private sectors in the accession countries. The costs of its implementation need to be seen in the light of their commitment to comply with the Community *acquis* for which many of the INSPIRE data will be needed. Such will indeed require investments, however without a significant increase in costs due to INSPIRE alone, while on the other hand INSPIRE will result in a higher economic and societal return.
- **Mr.Ignacio Garcia Rodriguez**, Cadastre of Spain noted that INSPIRE can bring important benefits, not to be underestimated, to the property market and, for example, also to the management of the new Common Agricultural Policy and the mitigation of natural and technological hazards. Estimates of costs on the other

hand, such as those for metadata documentation should not be overestimated in order to build a convincing case. Which initiatives will therefore be developed to render the cadastres more efficient to support the new Common Agricultural Policy?

- **EC. - In the context of the Implementation Strategy of INSPIRE so called Spatial Data Interest Groups will be established, the cadastre is a prime candidate and its evolution to a multi-purpose land-information system will be pursued in collaboration with non-EC initiatives such as the Permanent Committee of cadastres.**
- **Mr. Michael Wlaka, Astrium GmbH, Germany, Considered the Extended Impact Assessment to not elaborate sufficiently on “who” will actually carry the costs of the INSPIRE implementation and who will benefit at the different levels. He stressed the importance to ‘open the door’ to the data held by the private sector, supporting the statements made earlier by other speakers.**
- **Mr. Stefan Carlyle, Environment Agency for England and Wales. Noted that first of all costs were generally over - and benefits underestimated. Due to the highly variable situation in the Member States the Extended Impact Assessment aggregated costs and benefits at EU level over a ten years period. How investments will be made, is left to the implementation and the initiatives the Member States will take to comply. The requirements to Member States to collect and provide spatial information, within the scope of INSPIRE, and related to the implementation and monitoring of EU legislation, such as the Water Framework Directive, will influence strongly the arrangements between the private (profit), the semi-private sector (reasonable cost-return) and the public sector. However, the nature of these arrangements is essentially a matter of the Member States.**
- **EC. – It is more straightforward to assess costs than benefits, as a very broad range of stakeholders will potentially benefit. EU financial instruments may be mobilised to support several levels, the local authorities and others, to carry the costs (example: cadastre in Greece supported by Structural funds).**
- **Peter Bartak, Spatial Data Infrastructures, NL, - presents written statement (annex 3) by INTERGRAPH - emphasises that EC initiatives, such as INSPIRE and other projects, will have to work together with industry to ensure an infrastructure not be locked into a proprietary technology without open access. The key is open interoperability starting at the data encoding, technology level and standards-based, open systems through collaboration with organisations such as the Open GIS Consortium(OGC) and the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI). Open interfaces and protocols support interoperable solutions and a return on investment for the user. INSPIRE must ensure open technical standards, open protocols, and open data policies. A sensible enforcement of governmental policies is needed to ensure the tax contribution of the private sector more efficiently used to increase the benefits for all.**

- **Mr. Stefan Carlyle, Environment Agency for England and Wales expresses his agreement on the issue of interoperability and open access architecture. The expert groups emphasised equally this issue.**
- **Mr. Claude Rouam, took note of the proposal of Mr. Edward Mecha, GISPOL (Polish Geographical Users Association) to test INSPIRE in Poland and concluded by thanking the participants for their contribution which will be duly taken into account in the preparation of the Commission's proposal together with the other inputs. The Commission will now further develop the INSPIRE proposal which, once adopted by the Commission, will be subject over the next two years to discussions with the Council and European Parliament in the context of the Co-Decision Procedure. A lot of work and interaction with stakeholders will still be needed over the next months, also in the context of preparing the implementation, and to further develop the INSPIRE initiative.**

## Annex 1

# Public Hearing on INSPIRE Rome, on 10<sup>th</sup> July 10:00 – 13:00

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Sala Europa – 7° piano (lato via Capitan Bavastro)

## Agenda

**Duration :**  
10 :00 – 13 :00

### **Introduction**

chairman Claude Rouam (European Commission, General direction Environment)

### **Presentation of the results of the Internet consultation**

Marc Vanderhaegen, (European Commission, General direction Environment)

### **Presentation of the main elements of the Extended Impact Assessment**

Stefan Carlyle, (Environment Agency for England and Wales)

### **Discussion with contribution from participants**

### **Information about next step ahead**

chairman Claude Rouam (European Commission, General direction Environment)

## Annex 2

### Participants to INSPIRE Public Hearing

10<sup>th</sup> July, 10:00 to 13:00

Ministero dell'Ambiente e della Tutela del Territorio  
via Cristoforo Colombo 44 – 00147 Roma

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## Annex 3

### Written statement INTERGRAPH (Peter Bartak, Spatial Data Infrastructures, NL)

*Distinguished committee members and guests, it is a privilege to make this statement on behalf of Intergraph mapping and Geospatial Solutions.*

*Launched by the European Commission (EC) and developed in collaboration with Member States and accession countries, the INSPIRE initiative is working to realise a European spatial information infrastructure that is easily accessible from a local to a global level with data from a number of different sources. Intergraph strongly believes that open interoperability and open standards-based systems are a prerequisite to this vision becoming a reality.*

*INSPIRE, as well as other similar EC projects, opens doors to enable development, implementation and positive use of spatial data infrastructures. These initiatives will have to work together with industry to ensure an infrastructure that will serve the masses and not be locked into a proprietary technology without open access.*

*Technology has always been an important part of delivering spatial data to users. If technology from different suppliers does not work in harmony data will have limited access and therefore little use beyond the primary range of the project – not an efficient use of time or money.*

*Society is not living and working in isolated communities, laboratories or islands, but is linked by the need for information, whether a single citizen or a large government organisation. The vision for building a European geospatial infrastructure to support the seamless use of spatially oriented information to meet high-priority requirements at all levels of government and the private sector is well within grasp. The key is open interoperability starting at the data encoding and technology level.*

*Intergraph has long been a strong advocate of Interoperability, and standards-based, open systems through our work with organisations such as the Open GIS Consortium(OGC) and the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure (GSDI) to further the availability and accessibility of spatial data world-wide. Existing OGC implementation specifications can be adopted to build a baseline platform that takes advantage of a foundation of standards by OGC and activities with ISO. For instance, Web standards based on GML have proven successful in building open, interoperable spatial data infrastructures accessible by any organisation or technology that integrates these standards. For communities that have limited resources and time, using interoperable standard interfaces and encodings will create systems that are easily grown or integrated into other standards-based systems. This guarantees choice and usefulness of these systems, which translate to a return on investment for the user.*

*The operative word in this message is “open”. Open interfaces and protocols support interoperable solutions. The increasing maturity of the industry – by users and suppliers – recognises open interoperability as the key to unlocking valuable databases and making them easily accessible and available. It is important that applications can access various distributed databases directly without proprietary barriers. Initiatives such as the ones that OGC proposes seek to mandate interoperability between many different suppliers so that users can select the technology that provides the best return for the end-user. As the first step of the European Committee in the realisation of an open spatial data infrastructure for Europe, INSPIRE must ensure open technical standards, open protocols, and open data policies. I would like to thank the committee for the opportunity to speak to you today and hope that through a mutual purpose the mission INSPIRE will be fulfilled for the benefit of society.*