European Earth monitoring programme (GMES) and its initial operations 2011–2013

2009/0070(COD) - 20/05/2009 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a Community programme for Earth observation (GMES) and the rules for the implementation of GMES initial operations (20112013).

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

BACKGROUND: GMES is an Earth observation initiative led by the EU, which has decided to develop its own operational Earth observation capacity in order to reflect its growing responsibility in European and world affairs. Over the last thirty years, the EU, the European Space Agency (ESA) and their Member States have made substantial R&D efforts in the field of Earth observation, with a view to developing infrastructure and pre-operational Earth observation services. However, with the exception of the field of operational meteorology, the data provided by the existing services either do not cover all the parameters needed by policy-makers or are not provided on a continuous basis. In other words, many of the existing Earth observation services in Europe are unreliable due to infrastructure gaps and lack of guarantees on their availability in the long term. GMES was conceived to ensure operational Earth observation in environmental and security domains beyond operational meteorology. It comprises both development activities and an operational phase.

Following the Commission Communication entitled “Global Monitoring for Environment and Security: From Concept to Reality” (see COM(2008)0748) and the orientations of the Third Space Council, implementation of GMES operations is following a phased approach, based on clearly identified priorities, starting with development of three fast-track services on emergency response, land monitoring and marine services. Establishing such a system marks a strategic choice, with a lasting impact on the further political, economic, social and scientific development of the EU.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT: in addition to the baseline (“Do nothing”) scenario, the Impact Assessment report analyses three options for implementation of GMES initial operations:

1. Open method of coordination only;
2. Regulatory intervention;
3. Community financing.

The Impact Assessment demonstrates that **Community financing** is regarded the best option, as it is likely to be more cost-effective and would offer value for money and give the downstream sector a sustainable basis on which to develop customised services.

CONTENT : the objective of this proposal is to establish a legal basis for the GMES programme and EC funding of GMES initial operations (2011–2013), in order to:

- enable the provision of emergency response services (including emergency maps and reference maps) to various emergency response actors at Community and Member State level, as well as the key United Nations agencies, in the areas of civil protection, humanitarian aid and crisis management between 2011 and 2013, on a 24/7 basis, so that they can respond to emergencies and humanitarian disasters more efficiently and effectively;
- enable the provision of land monitoring services (in particular, pre-processed data, pan-European land cover products, high-resolution maps of cities, soil maps and thematic maps) to public

authorities (including environmental agencies) in Europe between 2011 and 2013, so that they will be better able to perform their policy-making, implementation and monitoring tasks. Land monitoring services could support, inter alia, the implementation of the Soil Thematic Strategy and the assessment of ecosystems;

- contribute to the production and availability to public of environmental information, in line, in particular, with the principles of the Aarhus Convention, the INSPIRE Directive and the Shared Environmental Information System (SEIS);
- stimulate, by lowering the cost of access to information, the growth of the downstream Earth observation sector in terms of jobs, innovation and international competitiveness between 2011 and 2013.

A fully fledged GMES programme is expected to be in place in the course of the next multiannual financial framework (from 2014).

BUDGETARY IMPLICATION: research and development aspects of GMES are currently, and will continue to be, co-financed at European, intergovernmental and national levels. Part of the cost of development and operation of all the space-based and in situ installations providing data for the GMES services will be borne by Member States and intergovernmental organisations. The EC will concentrate on domains where Community intervention will provide clear added value.

The EU will both coordinate these partnerships and manage its own contribution to GMES. With the exception of a limited contribution to operation of the emergency response and land monitoring services financed as preparatory actions, this contribution currently consists, in particular, of co-financing the following research activities under the space theme of FP7:

- space infrastructure development carried out by ESA to fill gaps in existing space infrastructure;
- research on integration of in situ data and space data;
- pre-operational service development.

For pre-operational services, the funding is focusing mainly on development of the processing chain and efforts to validate the concepts and the technologies and services developed.For the period 2011–2013, this means that the FP7 funds already allocated to the space theme should be supplemented by additional non-research funds under the proposed Regulation to cover GMES initial operations.

The proposed Regulation states that the financial envelope allocated to the implementation of the Regulation shall be **EUR 107 million**. Third countries or international organisations may also provide additional funding for the GMES programme.