

Infrastructure for spatial information in the European Community (INSPIRE)

2004/0175(COD) - 14/03/2007 - Final act

PURPOSE: to create a legal framework for the establishment and operation of an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (INSPIRE).

LEGISLATIVE ACT: Directive 2007/2/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing an Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE).

CONTENT: the purpose of this Directive is to lay down general rules aimed at the establishment of the Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (“Inspire”), for the purposes of Community environmental policies and policies or activities which may have an impact on the environment. Inspire will build upon infrastructures for spatial information established and operated by the Member States. It does not require collection of new spatial data, and does not affect existing intellectual property rights.

Data interoperability and data sharing are prime objectives.

The aim of INSPIRE is to strengthen the knowledge base for environmental policy and make it more accessible to citizens, stakeholders and decision-makers. The Directive will cover a wide range of spatial data ranging from basic mapping information, such as geographical names and administrative units, to key environmental information such as emissions, environmental quality and location of protected sites.

The Directive deals with the following key points :

- the creation of metadata ;
- technical developments promoting interoperability ;
- the use of data services ;
- principles on access to data and the related charges ; and
- national co-ordination.

The Directive sets out the obligations of Member States’ public authorities in respect of the data they collect. Public authorities holding data covered by the directive will have to share their data with other public authorities (e.g. EU institutions). They must allow the public to view data for free and buy the data for download and use over the Internet, and must comply with technical implementing rules to improve consistency.

INSPIRE will provide metadata, thereby making it easier to search for the data and to assess its quality and potential use. Detailed technical rules will be developed for a wide range of spatial data themes in order to make it easier for different data sets to be combined.

A portal will be developed to provide a single entry point for users to access the data.

The European Environment Agency set up by Council Regulation (EEC) No 1210/90 will contribute actively to the implementation of this Directive.

The Directive deals with a number of related issues, such as safeguarding privacy, and where appropriate, enabling data owners to charge for their datasets or services. Data search services designed for the public will generally be free of charge, although the directive allows fees to be charged for access to data under certain circumstances.

Reports: no later than 15 May 2010 Member States must send to the Commission a report including summary descriptions of:

- how public sector providers and users of spatial data sets and services and intermediary bodies are coordinated, and of the relationship with the third parties and of the organisation of quality assurance;
- the contribution made by public authorities or third parties to the functioning and coordination of the infrastructure for spatial information;
- information on the use of the infrastructure for spatial information;
- data-sharing agreements between public authorities;
- the costs and benefits of implementing the Directive.

Every three years, and starting no later than 15 May 2013, Member States must send to the Commission a report providing updated information in relation to these items.

By 15 May 2014 and every six years thereafter the Commission must present to the European Parliament and to the Council a report on the implementation of the Directive based, inter alia, on Member States' reports as detailed above. Where necessary, the report shall be accompanied by proposals for Community action.

ENTRY INTO FORCE: 15 May 2007.

TRANSPOSITION: 15 May 2009.