

EuroGeographics' feedback on the EU Roadmap for a Communication on "Europe's Digital Decade": 2030 digital targets

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Key points:

- Authoritative public sector data, in our case geospatial data, is a key building block for digital transformation, a block which supports applied research and innovation and the range of legal, fiscal, security and other public administrative purposes.
- Coherence with and within existing policies, budget programmes and strategies is indispensable for the success story of the digital transition.
- Demand for trusted authoritative geospatial information from official national sources will continue to grow into the next decade, with quality, value, reliability and ease of re-use remaining key requirements for users.
- As such, EuroGeographics and its members are willing to support and contribute to the efforts for a successful Digital Decade and hope to be closely associated.

About us

EuroGeographics is the independent international not-for-profit organisation representing Europe's National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities (NMCAs). Our members provide a vast range of geospatial services, expertise, research supporting navigation, emergency response, reliable and secure land and property market and many more government and business decisions and services as long as they are formally located somewhere or have a localisable impact.

Making available authoritative data for use and re-use by others across all sectors is at the core of our members' public task. During emergencies and crises such as Covid-19 pandemics when health efforts in the have been based on analysis and use of spatial data (provision of a secure dashboard and indicators for the use of the respective national rescue, emergency or civil protection teams). Our members have a long track record of delivering emergency services right after earthquakes, droughts, floods, or other environmental related disasters. Many of our members provide data to Copernicus earth observation programme essential for the risk management.

NMCAs also provide on a day-to-day basis way more data that are necessary for managing territories, land, or supporting any policy with a geographical aspect.

Data based on agreed rules of creation and use, a legal aspect, accountability, quality management, certification, traceability, and maintenance are needed everywhere by everybody. Our members also create, manage and maintain cadastre and land registries needed for the adequate management of property rights and related policies.

EuroGeographics' members' data, the building block for Europe's Digital Decade

Authoritative public sector data, in our case geospatial data, is a key building block for digital transformation, a block which supports applied research and innovation and the range of legal, fiscal, security and other public administrative purposes. Authoritative geospatial data plays an important role in helping to achieve the commitment of the 2030 Agenda. It addresses the key global and regional issues that affect society and the planet, such as poverty, climate change, sustainable development, a digital economy, migration, security, health and many others.

By providing online public services including cross-border public services, the NMCAs of Europe are an integral part of the eGovernment which involves deploying and using technology. Many members are well advanced at national level, but the cross-border provision of e-services is still in need of additional effort.

As such, EuroGeographics welcomes the Commission's effort to create the clear vision for the Europe's Digital Decade: 2030 digital targets. It is very much appreciated that this vision will complement and build on existing policies, budget programmes and strategies which NMCAs have already embraced and invested in. Coherence is indispensable for the success story of the digital transition.

Eurogeographics members are fully aware of the constant and dramatic growth of data volumes, and that these data tend to move to the clouds and to be shared through data spaces. As such NMCAs welcome overall European Strategy for Data and the transparent governance tools proposed in the Data Governance Act. These initiatives will represent an important milestone aiming to underpin reaching the goals of the Digital Decade. The proposals embed the idea of Data Sovereignty, with the desire to set up adequate governance tools, and the desire of the EU to reduce its dependencies on foreign data infrastructures and technologies and to increase EU-based cloud services. European NMCAs fully support a digital transition anchored in fundamental rights and common EU values. Our members pay particular attention for the respect of data privacy (GDPR), Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), legal protection of databases and other rights. Trust is essential in providing online services for citizens and supporting public administration.

Being producers and users of data, the NMCAs are welcoming the idea of opening some privately held data for public interest, i.e., business to government data sharing as it will boost service developments, especially in the AI domain.

EuroGeographics is built on international cooperation. Our 60+ members, in 46 countries, have been early age pioneers in data interoperability through the creation of pan-European datasets overcoming a wide range of geographical, technical, political, organisational, linguistic and business parameters. We are eager to share the lessons and experience acquired while engaging in multi -country projects. We would appreciate any programme to support this effort aiming to mitigate the fragmentations as a key obstacle towards digital decade.

Final remarks

From our viewpoint, a successful digital transformation would result in a society empowered by the use of trusted public sector data and services. Knowing that reliable sources of geospatial data exist, and where to obtain them, is essential for governments and decision-makers making critical decisions that affect all our lives.

Digital infrastructures and capacity, digital education and skills, digital government are fundamental requirements of modern state and economy and are subject to our highest attention for keeping pace with digital transitions.

Demand for trusted authoritative geospatial information from official national sources will continue to grow into the next decade, with quality, value, reliability and ease of re-use remaining key requirements for users.

We look forward to being able to make a significant contribution to the success of Europe's Digital Decade and the 2030 digital targets, and will welcome being part of the conversation on how best we might do this.

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