

COPERNICUS – The European Union Earth Observation Programme

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ABSTRACT:

Copernicus is the new name of the European Earth Observation Programme, GMES (Global Monitoring for Environment and Security). Copernicus or rather its predecessor was established as an EU programme. It covers all the activities for ensuring an uninterrupted provision of accurate and reliable data and information on environmental issues and security matters to users in charge of policy making, implementation and monitoring, in the EU and its Member States. Copernicus aims at providing Europe with a continuous, independent and reliable access to observation data and information. The EU investment aims at filling the observation gaps, providing access to existing assets and developing operational services. The data policy of the Copernicus programme supports an open, full and free of charge data access that is in line with the data sharing principles of the Group for Earth Observation (GEO).

Copernicus is structured in six Services: Marine, Atmosphere, Land and Climate change monitoring as well as support to Emergency and Security. Copernicus uses data from satellites and in-situ sensors such as buoys, balloons or air sensors to provide timely and reliable added-value information and forecasting to support for example, agriculture and fisheries, land use and urban planning, the fight against forest fires, disaster response, maritime transport or air pollution monitoring. The need for continuing such observations is becoming critical, considering the increasing political pressure on public authorities to take informed decisions in the field of environment, security and climate change and the need to respect international agreements.

Copernicus also contributes to economic stability and growth by boosting commercial applications (the so-called downstream services) in many different sectors through a full and open access to Copernicus observation data and information products.