

Summary of the GMES Session of TOWARDS eENVIRONMENT Conference

The European conference TOWARDS eENVIRONMENT 2009 was dedicated to information exchange among scientists, public administrations, environmental agencies and institutions involved in environmental information processing, as well as environmental informatics end-users. The conference was held on March 25th – 27th, 2009, at hotel CORINTHIA TOWERS Prague, Czech Republic.



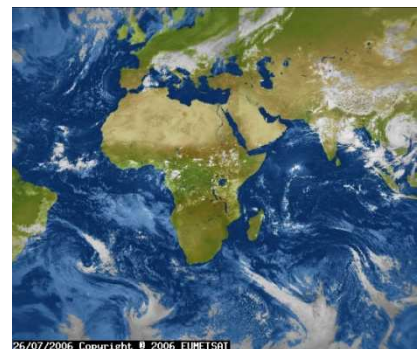
The main focus of this GMES session was to bring together representatives of institutions with end users especially from new member states, the same as to bring closer already the existing communities within GMES.



The first day of the conference representatives of two major players in GMES – European Commission and European Space Agency took the role of giving out extensive information about the state of the art in GMES. Most recently, GMES is now facing urgent need to transfer GMES from its initial period (funded from FP7) to the operational platform. There will also be an important role for the rest of the Czech Presidency to play, in helping the Commission find support among other MS, to move on to the new period of GMES.

In the second part of the opening day participants were informed about the currently starting project funded from FP7 programmes representing three fast track (land, emergency, marine) plus two additional services (atmosphere and security).

The second day of the conference was oriented at two main topics - atmosphere and land GMES services, which are highly relevant for the needs of the Czech Republic and most probably for Central Europe as a whole. The atmosphere part was mainly focused on the possible future benefits of the atmosphere services. Especially in the context of the recent situation in the Czech Republic, where in some urban areas air quality is a critical topic resulting in many consequences to human health. Also participants were informed by the representatives of the European Commission on how GMES will approach its contribution to climate change monitoring.



Thursday afternoon's session was organised together with the GSE land project where the main idea was to show via "GMES land user workshop" the practical results of this project. There were many impressive presentations on how land services could help in day to day,

work especially at the regional level within the daily decision making process. Topics were covered from the GMES application in spatial planning, water quality, agriculture and forest applications. Interesting outcomes were presented by representatives of the Prague Spatial Planning Authority using products of GSE land in daily decision making.



Thursday evening was dedicated to the social event for all participants in Bethlem Chapel in the centre of Prague, where also the three best presentations were awarded. From the GMES session the jury gave the first prize to Jiří Čtyřoký for “Urban Atlas helps Urban Planners in Prague”, the second prize went to Volker Kraut for “A Testbed for INSPIRE and GMES” and third prize to Eleni Paliouras for “Satellite Based Monitoring and Forecasting of PM in Europe”.

On Friday the last day of the conference six presentations opened the discussion on several GMES related issues, also focusing on possible synergies with INSPIRE and SEIS.



From the point of view of the Czech Republic we can see the main outcomes of this conference in two main areas. The first one is that GMES is a very strong and capable tool showing how to monitor and support our information needs, as it was proved not only by possible future benefits, but also via already existing services bringing information to its final beneficiaries. This fact focuses us in on the strong support of the next steps needed to be done in order to ensure full functionality of GMES beyond funding from EU Framework programmes.

The second important area, which was also mentioned several times by many participants, is the unique opportunity where communities involved in similar programmes and activities came together and had a possibility to exchange experiences and ideas across their fields of interests. SEIS, INSPIRE and GMES are closely connected in their final designation and there is also room to find possible synergies to make all three programmes more efficient.

Ondřej Mirovský, GMES coordinator, Czech Space Office

mirovsky@czechspace.cz

GSM: +420 774 170 126