



EUROGI, EUROpean umbrella organisation for Geographic Information
Hofstraat 110 – room 11.10
7311 KZ Apeldoorn
The Netherlands

Tel: + 31 55 528 5532
Fax: + 31 55 528 5032
e-mail: eurogi@eurogi.org
web: <http://www.eurogi.org>

EUROGI Extra Members Meeting Innsbruck/ Austria, 4-5 November 2005

Short Report

Introduction

Nestled among the Tyrolean Mountains, the EUROGI members recently gathered for a meeting in Innsbruck. It was hosted by the Austrian National Geographic Information Association, AGEO. With eleven European countries in attendance, a group of 24 persons discussed relevant issues and EUROGI's way forward. Below is a short overview of the outcomes, based on input from the final session with the *rapporteurs*. A more detailed report is being prepared.

INSPIRE

- EUROGI should support members by:
 - updating them on the INSPIRE process evolution;
 - facilitating the sharing of different national views on key issues;
 - providing EUROGI position documents, to be used nationally for interacting with political authorities, national institutions, drafting team members, etc.

- EUROGI should support the implementation rules drafting activity by:
 - collecting user and private sector requirements, based on real life" experience, and conveying them to the drafting teams;
 - identifying commonalities in single national views and producing pan-European position documents.

- EUROGI INSPIRE position papers should be produced by:
 - collecting and circulating early implementation rules drafts, as they are available;
 - collecting national member comments to the drafted rules;
 - identifying commonalities in national views and producing an integrated preliminary position document
 - circulating the document to members for their revision and producing a final release;
 - The analysis and review of draft implementation rules should concentrate mainly on policy aspects, even though comments on technical matters are possible; more, in this respect, shall be decided on after the first draft is worked on, early next year.
 - The finalized document should both be presented by EUROGI to the EC and made available to members for local actions toward national authorities and national components of the drafting team. All possible communication channels to the EC should be exploited in parallel.

- EUROGI should also try and achieve a formal role in the implementation rules drafting process, becoming a member or a recognized advisor of the implementation rules consolidation team. The EUROGI President shall discuss this possibility with the EC, emphasizing the pan-European, wide representation of the association, with particular regard to that of operational GI users and of the private sector, which, presently, is scarcely involved in the INSPIRE process. *EUROGI should position itself as not being simply a SDIC*
- In order to effectively interact with the EC, a considerable effort will be required both from EUROGI and from the EUROGI members in order to timely produce position documents and stay synchronized with the very tight drafting schedule; proposing modifications to such schedule does not seem possible at this stage.

Addresses

- From the morning presentations, both the importance of address geocoding in many GIS application areas and the problems existing in many countries in Europe have clearly emerged.
- Europe could play an important role in establishing mechanisms for a pan-European address geocoding capability, thus also stimulating the development of adequate systems/infrastructures at national level.
- An opportunity exists for EUROGI to contribute to this, promoting the creation of a thematic network in the eContent+ context, with the purpose of exchanging experiences and create a common knowledge base on European address geocoding problems.
- Such an initiative should be based on and expand the work previously done on the address theme (e.g. recent European survey) and be closely coordinated with what is being done in the INSPIRE context (address data in annex II).
- The possible eContent+ proposal and related activities (in the case of success) should not imply a large EUROGI effort, in order to avoid a negative impact on INSPIRE related activities. To this purpose EUROGI should just contribute as a partner of the proposed network, to be lead by a different organization or company, to be identified

User Access

The answers to the question "what is the main application field of GIS in your country?" show many different applications, with one main conclusion: "Spatial data is everywhere".

The discussions lead to the following conclusion:

Role of EUROGI

- Raise awareness
- Show best practices (improve standard and quality)
- Establish a network of interested parties
- Facilitate information flow
- Widen beneficial usage of spatial data

The main point is the first one, which is directly connected with the next subject:

WebCastle

The general observation is that WebCastle has the advantage to be an existing tool, unfortunately it is not well used, and no new case-studies were added. The discussions lead to the following proposals:

1. Raise awareness of WebCastle
 - National websites must point to WebCastle
 - This is straightforward and only requires a little time. John Leonard offered to write a few lines, that can be translated/adapted for others countries, which was gratefully accepted
 - Use examples from WebCastle, and mention WebCastle in national presentations or papers, footnotes, etc.
 - This also doesn't require a significant amount of resources, but it does require a full commitment from EUROGI members.
 - Find a way to connect WebCastle to Google
 - This is yet to be explored (KML files, user group, etc.), but should not require a significant amount of resources.
2. Better/new examples
 - Run a contest at a European level,
 - One to one approach in obtaining new case-studies (which is labour intensive).
3. How to maintain WebCastle
 - We need to define a maintenance policy (what are the long term objectives?)

Bino Marchesini
Secretary General
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