



“Copernicus – Sentinels Serving Society and the Environment”

Conference jointly organized by the Greek Presidency of the Council of the European Union, the European Space Agency and the European Commission

Athens, Greece, 12-13 May 2014

Athens Conclusions

The conference, underlining the important benefits to be expected from the use of applications based on Copernicus data for administrations at all level and for the economy, states that:

Copernicus is a **European flagship** programme for space and is now at a crucial point in its build up as it swiftly moves from its **development phase to operations**, aiming to serve a large and diverse number of users. **Two** recent events, namely the entry into force of the **Copernicus Regulation** and the successful launch of **Sentinel-1A**, represent major milestones in this transition to operations. Copernicus also plays a very significant role in the whole domain of Space policy, not only as an operational programme in itself but also as part of the wider European objectives.

Copernicus is designed as a **user-oriented programme** which shall take into account the current and future needs of end-users and downstream service providers. The whole of Europe will enjoy benefits related to the programme's ability to closely and continuously monitor environmental conditions and their impact on every-day life. There is also an enormous potential for tangible financial benefits for EU states across the entire value chain and Copernicus will provide invaluable opportunities for **economic, sustainable, inclusive growth**

and skilled job creation in Europe, representing an important tool to be used at local, national, European and global level.

The new dynamic market that can be created in downstream Earth Observation value-added services and derived applications has the potential to improve the efficiency of specific sectors, allowing industry to offer better value for money in products and services to end-users. Furthermore, the free and open data policy will foster the entry into market of small innovative businesses.

By ensuring the provision of **unique, timely and sustainable Earth observation measurements**, Copernicus is Europe's answer to the vital needs of decisively supporting the **protection of the environment** and of addressing **major challenges** such as emergency response, risk prevention, agriculture, atmosphere and forestry monitoring, as well as marine protection, border control and climate change, providing solutions that are suited to the **particular characteristics of each state and region**.

Copernicus serves as a **showcase on how to successfully work together in Europe** to assume a global European leadership role in Earth monitoring. It also demonstrates the significant potential of an increasingly close and efficient **cooperation between the European Union and the European Space Agency** in the domain of space activities serving the European citizens.