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Contribution of Europe Regional Committee of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information (UN-GGIM: Europe) to the global geospatial information agenda

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1. Summary

1. This report provides an overview of the activities carried out by the Europe Regional Committee of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information (UN-GGIM: Europe) in the past 12 months since the last meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information in August 2018.

2. Objectives, Introduction, background

2. UN-GGIM: Europe is one of five UN-mandated regional bodies established to facilitate regional development and discussion of the Committee of Experts within and across the European UN Member States. UN-GGIM: Europe was formally established on 1st October 2014 in Chisinau Moldova. In line with the other regional bodies UN-GGIM: Europe aims to identify regional issues relevant to geospatial information management and recommend necessary actions on them so that the economic, social and environmental benefits of European geospatial information are maximized.
3. UN-GGIM: Europe fully respects existing European regional and national frameworks and capabilities in the context of European geospatial information management. UN-GGIM: Europe aims to encourage the implementation of the recommendations of UN-GGIM. UN-GGIM: Europe also supports capacity building, donor funding and other measures, for the development of geospatial information and spatial data infrastructure development in Europe. UN-GGIM: Europe aims to cooperate in the development of a European geospatial information infrastructure which supports the integration of statistics and avoids duplication of cost, effort and data.

3. Administrative arrangements

4. UN-GGIM: Europe is governed by the Articles and Rules which were adopted at the inaugural meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe, and subsequently reviewed and amended at the Fourth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe held in June 2017 to include wider the UNECE Member States within UN-GGIM: Europe. The Articles and Rules of procedure are [publicly available](#).
5. UN-GGIM: Europe is coordinated and managed by an Executive Committee of nine: one chair (Slovenia), three vice-chairs (Spain, Portugal and United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) and five members (Ireland, Italy, Poland, The Netherlands and Sweden). The Executive Committee members are nominated and approved during plenary meetings of UN-GGIM: Europe, the current Committee was approved at the Sixth Regional Plenary Meeting in June of this year.
6. The Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe is assisted in carrying out its functions by a Secretariat. The Netherlands, represented by Kadaster, takes responsibility for the Secretariat, the function of which is funded and executed by EuroGeographics AISBL, the European Association of National mapping, cadastral and land registries, through a Service Level Agreement originally signed in January 2015, and which was extended in October 2018 for a further period of two years.

4. Contribution to UN-GGIM Activities

7. UN-GGIM: Europe has contributed to a number of the activities being undertaken by the committee of Experts. It should be noted that individually the members of the Europe region are very active and support and participate towards many items of the Committee. This report only focuses on the work coordinated and/or carried out by the Executive Committee of the regional entity.
8. UN-GGIM: Europe continues with its active participation and contribution to Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goals Indicator (IAEG-SDGs) Working Group on Geospatial Information. The European members actively participate in the meetings of the group. In addition, tasks of the UN-GGIM: Europe Working Group on Data

Integration to provide European are aligned towards providing an European input to the IAEG-SDGs Expert Group.

9. UN-GGIM: Europe, through the annual EuroGeographics General Assembly in October 2018, provided the Heads and Directors of National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities of European Member States with an overview of the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework (IGIF). A regional consultation workshop on the development of the draft Integrated Geospatial Information Framework Implementation Guide was organised in June of this year prior to the Sixth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe.
10. The Experts Committee mandated UN-GGIM: Europe to establish and lead a Global Working Group to draw together current projects from different UN-GGIM regional bodies to determine global fundamental geospatial data themes. UN-GGIM: Europe believes that the Working Group has successfully fulfilled its mandate and terms of reference, the global fundamental geospatial data themes are now being embedded in various items of work of the Committee, such as the Global Statistical Geospatial Framework and the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework. A report on work of the UN-GGIM WG on Fundamental Data is being submitted to the Committee of Experts.
11. UN-GGIM: Europe actively participated in the First United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress, November, Deqing, China, engaging with and contributing to the exciting programme of the Congress.
12. Members of the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe contribute to the Expanded Bureau Meetings, which are periodically organised over the intersessional period.

5. Regional and international collaboration and capacity development

13. UN-GGIM: Europe accepted an invitation from UN-GGIM: Arab states to participate in their sixth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Arab States which took place in Jeddah in February 2019. UN-GGIM: Europe was happy for the opportunity to share and exchange experiences and knowledge with the Regional Committee of the Arab States.
14. Continuing what has now become a tradition, representatives from European Statistical and Mapping Authorities congregated in Luxembourg City for the fifth edition meeting which on focus on capacity development in the statistical and geospatial communities. The meeting is jointly organised together with Eurostat and UNECE. The [Fifth Joint UN-GGIM: Europe - ESS - UNECE Meeting](#) was hosted by Eurostat in March 2019.
15. Through their collaborative agreement UN-GGIM: Europe and UNECE organised a [Workshop on Data Integration](#) which brought together almost 100 experts from the statistical and geospatial communities to share their experiences on realising the potential of statistical and geospatial data. The three-day international event provided experts with insights into the benefits of data integration, practical examples and case-studies, challenges and innovations in the field and also opportunities to discuss and explore future collaboration. Hosted by the Republic of Serbia, the workshop was a collaboration between UN-GGIM: Europe, UNECE, Eurostat, the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the Serbian Statistical Office.
16. The Sixth Plenary Meeting of the European Region of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management (UN-GGIM: Europe) was held from 5 – 6 June 2019 in Brussels, Belgium. The Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe was hosted by Eurostat. The [Sixth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe](#) brought together senior executives and experts from the national geospatial information and statistical authorities of 24 Member States, and 11 international and observer organisations. It included a half day workshop on developing the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework Implementation Guide, and presentations on global and regional issues and items, together with an overview of the work being carried out by UN-GGIM: Europe.
17. Since the last session of the Committee of Experts, UN-GGIM: Europe has actively participated in the following regional events:

- i. INSPIRE Conference, September 2018, Antwerp, Belgium
- ii. European Forum for Geography and Statistics Conference, October 2018, Helsinki, Finland
- iii. Fifth Joint UN-GGIM: Europe-ESS-UNECE Meeting, Spring 2019, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
- iv. Joint UN-GGIM: Europe – UNECE – Eurostat – EFTA workshop on data integration, May 2019, Belgrade, Serbia

18. In addition, UN-GGIM: Europe supports various initiatives that foster knowledge sharing and capacity development across and within the region. These initiatives are led, funded or initiated either through cooperation between Member States or formally funded programmes. Examples include: the [Eurostat \(the Statistical Office of the European Communities\) Grants Programme](#) which supports projects intended to contribute increased cooperation on the integration of statistics with geospatial information; the [Knowledge Exchange](#) activities carried out by EuroGeographics contributing to the capacity development of the European NMCAs; and the work of [European Forum for Geography and Statistics](#) and the GEOSTAT projects. The topics covered by these initiatives overlap with the areas of interest of the Committee of Experts.

6. Regional working Groups

19. The tasks of the Regional Committee are defined by a work plan that is annually updated to reflect the global developments and work of the Committee of Experts, together with additions agreed upon by the Member States of UN-GGIM: Europe at their last Plenary Meeting. It also takes into consideration the fact that the Regional Working Groups are continuously delivering and completing the work they tasked with. The current work plan covers the period 2019 – 2022 and was approved by the Member States at the last regional plenary meeting.

20. UN-GGIM: Europe has three regional working groups:

- i. [Working Group on Core Data](#) is focusing on increasing data interoperability and harmonisation by proposing core geospatial data which meets essential user needs. The group has delivered on its task to identify the users and their needs and requirements for core data. The group is now focusing on proposing recommendations of content of the core data themes through an extensive consultation with the wider geospatial community. The latest report from the Working Group is available online. This Working Group is led by France.
- ii. [Working Group Data Integration](#) works to ensure that the regional entity focuses on how geospatial data can enhance sustainable development and the 2030 Agenda in Europe. The working group was also set up with the intention that it will interact with the Inter-agency Expert Group on SDG Indicators (IAEG-SDG) Working Group on Geospatial Information. The European working group works closely with the European Member States which have been nominated as experts to the IAEG-SDG Working Group on Geospatial Information. The latest report from the Working Group is available online. This Working Group is led by Germany.
- iii. [Working Group on Geodetic Reference Frame - Europe](#) is evaluating its role, tasks and relations to other entities. Development on the global level has been active, and this sets new demands on the regional level. Europe has a developed geodetic infrastructures and geodetic Core Sites, this together with the establishment of the Sub-Committee on Geodesy (SCoG), has had a bearing on the agreed tasks of the GRF- Europe group. For this reason, the Executive Committee and the Working group are considering ways in which to combine tasks to avoid duplication and overlap of the GRF- Europe Group and existing geodesy-related initiatives and entities in Europe. The latest report from the Working Group is available online.

7. Coordination for geospatial information management activities within the United Nations system

21. Recognising the mutual benefits of working together UN-GGIM: Europe and UNECE have set up a [collaboration agreement](#) and plan to pursue the following collaboration activities in the period 2018-2020:

- i. Geospatial information for sustainable development
- ii. Building networks and promoting communication
- iii. Integration of geospatial, statistical and other information
- iv. Capacity building
- v. Involvement of other UNECE work programmes
- vi. Cross-representation in the activities of the other body
- vii. Reporting on progress / work accomplished

22. The above will be achieved by establishing reciprocity and participating in each other's regional meetings, organising joint events on topics of mutual interest, collaborating in producing outputs on relevant topics, collaborating on exchange of good practices, developing joint capacity building activities in member states, developing the concept of core data for geospatial and statistical communities, promoting easier access to data, and developing wider communication networks. Joint and collaborative events and activities have already been organised and further collaboration is planned and envisaged for the future.

8. Priority Issues and Challenges

23. The Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe consider that some of the priority issues for the coming period include:

- i. The Sustainable Development Goals
- ii. Improved collaboration between the statistical and geospatial communities
- iii. Capacity Development
- iv. The Integrated Global Geospatial Framework

9. Future plans and events

24. The regional Committee will continue with the work and delivery of the working group tasks as outlined in the Work Plan 2019 - 2022.

25. UN-GGIM: Europe plans to participate actively in the following future events:

- i. Balkans Regional Conference, September 2019, Neum, Bosnia and Herzegovina
- ii. European Forum for Geography and Statistics Conference, October 2019, Manchester, United Kingdom
- iii. Sixth Joint UN-GGIM: Europe-UNECE-ESS Meeting, March 2020, Luxembourg City, Luxembourg
- iv. UN-GGIM High Level Forum, April 2020, London, United Kingdom
- v. Seventh Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe, June 2020, Geneva, Switzerland

10. Conclusion

26. The Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe will continue to actively contribute to and promote the work of the UN-GGIM, both at regional and global levels.