

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 2016.

2. 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.

3. Objectives

3. 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.
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.

4. Activities, Areas of Work - achievements

4.1. Contribution to UN-GGIM Activities

7. The UN-GGIM Committee of 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. This followed from the report on the determination of global fundamental geospatial data themes that was prepared and presented by UN-GGIM: Europe to Committee at its Fifth Session in August last year. At the meeting the Committee agreed that there was “an urgent need for a set of global fundamental geospatial data themes that could be harmonized in order to enable the measurement, monitoring and management of sustainable development in a consistent way over time and to facilitate evidence-based decision-making and policy-making”.
8. A working group was established with 16 members from UN Member States and three from observer organisations. All regional committees accepted invitations to participate and as a result all regions are represented in the global working group.
9. While the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe acts as the steering group for this global Working Group it has appointed the United Kingdom to lead UN-GGIM: WG Fundamental Data. UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat acts as the permanent secretariat to the Working Group.
10. The main objective of the Working Group is to produce a recommendation for a minimum list of global fundamental geospatial data themes by collating results from existing activity being undertaken by UN-GGIM regional committees to avoid duplication and using where possible existing resources.

11. The process used by the UN-GGIM: WG Fundamental Data has been to consider similar pieces or work from the various Regional studies and draw out the ‘common denominators’, that is only those which appear in all Regions, and secondly to consider what data themes are required for the implementation and monitoring of the SDGs. This methodology has produced a minimum list of data themes. This proposed Minimum List was then reviewed by the different UN-GGIM Regional Committee and UN-GGIM Global Working and Expert Group members.
12. A report on work of the UN-GGIM: WG Fundamental Data is being submitted to the Committee of Experts.

4.2. Administrative arrangements

13. 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. The Articles and Rules of procedure are publicly available.
14. UN-GGIM: Europe is coordinated and managed by an Executive Committee of nine: one chair (Sweden), two vice-chairs (The Netherlands and Spain) and six members (Germany, Ireland, Italy, Poland, Portugal and Slovenia). The Executive Committee members are nominated and approved during plenary meetings of UN-GGIM: Europe, the current Committee was approved at the Fourth Regional Plenary Meeting
15. The Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe is assisted in carrying out its functions by a Secretariat. The Netherlands is responsible for providing the secretariat to UN-GGIM: Europe. The function of the Secretariat of UN-GGIM: Europe is carried out by EuroGeographics through a Service Level Agreement with Kadaster Netherlands.

4.3. Capacity Development

16. 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. A few examples are included below.
17. EuroGeographics, the membership association of the European National Mapping, Cadastre and Land Registry Authorities, is an Observer Organisation of UN-GGIM. The association hosts eight [Knowledge Exchange Networks](#) (KENs) which bring together experts from the national mapping and cadastral authorities to provide forums for the exchange of best practice, sharing knowledge and experiences and directly contributing to the capacity development of the European NMCA. The topics covered by the KENs overlap with the areas of interest of the Committee of Experts, and EuroGeographics is working towards facilitating collaboration opportunities between UN-GGIM: Europe and EuroGeographics.
18. [Eurostat \(the Statistical Office of the European Communities\) Grants Programme](#) funds projects that support the role of statistics in European integration: harmonisation of concepts, definitions and methods, integration of production processes and implementation of common interoperable systems. The programme specifically aims at supporting a series of projects in member states that deal with combining statistics and geospatial information in order to derive new types of information significant for EU policy purposes. The results are intended to contribute increased cooperation on the integration of statistics with geospatial information. A number of projects have been awarded grants under this programme to different member states.

4.4. Publicity and Outreach

19. UN-GGIM: Europe believes that the wider geospatial and statistical communities in Europe have much to offer UN-GGIM. As a result the regional entity actively engages with relevant professional, research and academic organizations and associations for them to become observer organisations. In October 2016, at the Third Plenary Session of UN-

GGIM: Europe, ConsultingWhere and the Global Spatial Data Infrastructure Association (GSDI) were formally admitted as Observer Organisations of UN-GGIM: Europe. Ten entities are currently formally recognised as [Observer Organisations to UN-GGIM: Europe](#). In a proactive approach to further engage with these representatives of the wider geospatial and statistical community, UN-GGIM: Europe organised a special event with them. The scope of the meeting is to have an informal discussion on collaboration and engagement between UN-GGIM: Europe and its Observer Organisations. This well attended meeting was held in Brussels in June 2017.

20. UN-GGIM: Europe has a formal communications plan, which is managed and coordinated by the UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat. The communications strategy includes press releases to relevant stakeholders publicising regional and global UN-GGIM activities and achievements. The regional entity maintains a [website](#) that provides information of the activities, outputs, news and documents of UN-GGIM: Europe. In addition UN-GGIM: Europe has an active twitter [account](#) which has over 660 followers from the regional and international geospatial and statistical communities.
21. A number of geospatial and statistical events and activities are organised in Europe throughout the year. UN-GGIM: Europe has actively participated in some of these events raising awareness of the aims and objectives of UN-GGIM and engaging with the European geospatial and statistical communities and other relevant stakeholders. A list of some of these events includes:
 - i. ISPRS Congress, July 2016, Prague
 - ii. Session at the INSPIRE Conference, September 2016 held in Barcelona
 - iii. [3rd Joint UN-GGIM: Europe and ESS](#) meeting March 2017 held in Luxembourg
 - iv. 10th Regional Conference on Cadastre and Spatial Data Infrastructure, June 2017 held in Skopje
22. UN-GGIM: Europe has held two plenary meetings since the last meeting of the United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information held in August 2016.
23. UN-GGIM: Europe held its [Third Regional Plenary](#) meeting in October 2016 in Budapest, Hungary; the event which was supported by EuroGeographics was attended by 101 delegates from 31 Member states and 10 observer organisations. The meeting focused on the global progress of UN-GGIM, together with the activities and accomplishments of the Executive Committee, the Regional Secretariat and regional Working Groups. The meeting highlighted good practice of cooperation between National Mapping and Cadastre Authorities and National Statistical Institutions in Europe. A proposed work plan for UN-GGIM: Europe for 2015 – 2018 was presented and approved by the regional committee.
24. The [Fourth Plenary Meeting](#) of UN-GGIM: Europe was held in the beginning of June 2017 in Brussels, Belgium. More than 60 delegates from 24 UN Member States and 13 international and observer organisations gathered for the Plenary in Brussels which was supported by the European Commission. Besides updating the UN-GGIM: Europe Work Plan 2015 - 2018. Participants also decided that UN-GGIM: Europe's Working Group on Data Integration will further develop a policy outreach document outlining recommendations for, and raising political awareness of, the integration of geospatial and statistical data. Discussions also focused on agreeing how to improve capacity building as well as extracting statistical and geospatial information from earth observations and exploring ways to strengthen collaboration with the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe.

4.5. Technical

25. UN-GGIM: Europe has three regional working groups: Working Group - Core Data and Working Group Data Integration and Working Group on Geodetic Reference Frame-Europe. A short update on the work, progress and outcomes from the three regional

working groups of Europe follows. Further detailed reports on the work of the regional working groups can be found on the Un-GGIM: Europe website.

4.5.1. Working Group on Core Data

26. Work Group on Core Data (WG A) comprises 15 European UN Member States and three Observers and is coordinated by France. It aims at increasing data interoperability and harmonisation in Europe by proposing core geospatial data which meet essential user needs. Core Data can be defined as the geospatial data that are the most useful, either directly or indirectly, to analyse, to achieve and to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
27. The Working Group A (WG A) Work Plan includes two main work packages:
 - Recommendations for Content: Over the past year, WG A has determined the scope of core data¹ by selecting a list of priority INSPIRE data themes. Furthermore, WG A has set common principles for recommendations for content. Last, WG A has drafted recommendations for content for three core themes.
 - Economic model, political and financial frameworks for supporting core data availability: This work package remains to be dealt with in 2018.
28. The methodology determined by WG A consists in using as starting points INSPIRE data specifications and SDG user requirements, then in defining priorities by extracting core data from INSPIRE data model and theme scope, and finally in deciding on levels of detail and quality criteria to ensure data homogeneity.
29. Recommendations for content will be structured according to a step-wise approach:
 - Core recommendations will pertain to first priority. They will be achievable, ideally through short term actions;
 - Good practices will pertain to second priority. They will bring added value to core data, and deserve to be encouraged;
 - Considerations for future pertain to potential core data in long term.
30. The Working Group has focused first on the content on three themes, “Cadastre Parcels”, “Addresses” and “Geographical Names”. Work is still ongoing on other core themes namely ‘Statistical Units’, ‘Administrative Units’, ‘Elevation’, ‘Orthoimagery’, ‘Area Management’, ‘Transport Network’, ‘Hydrography’, ‘Land Cover’ and ‘Land Use’.

4.5.2. Work Group Data Integration

31. Work Group Data Integration (WG B) is chaired by Germany and deals with the integration of geospatial data (including cadastral parcels) with other information. Currently there are 17 European UN Member States comprising 20 National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities or National Statistical Institutes participating in WG B.
32. Working Group B accomplished its work in January 2017 focusing on the three main tasks: definition of the priority user needs for combinations of data (B.1), recommendation for methods implementing the prioritized combinations of data (B.2), and recommendation about how to manage side-effects induced by data combinations (B.3).
33. The UN-GGIM: Europe Work Plan 2017 - 2020 first approved at the 3rd UN-GGIM: Europe Plenary outlines that the Working Group Data Integration should continue its work by contributing to the “geo-dimension” of the UN SDG indicators. The kick-off meeting for this new work was held on the 28th February - 1st March 2017.

¹ Core Data Scope, Working Group A deliverable at: <http://un-ggim-europe.org/content/wg-a-core-data>

34. The UN-GGIM: Europe Work Plan 2017 - 2020 outlines a supportive task to the global process and additional specific tasks for the Working Group:

- **Supportive tasks:** As a European contribution to the global process on developing a framework for monitoring UN SDG indicators, UN-GGIM: Europe will through the Working Group on Data Integration, ensure a two-way interaction with the IAEG-SDG WG GI.
 - Develop geospatial methodologies and approaches on monitoring, based on the specification of indicators from the IAEG-SDG, making these available to the European authorities.
- **Specific tasks:** In addition
 - Develop practical examples (best practice) on specific national implementations on how Geospatial Information can support achieving SDG indicators and where the need shows to measure, monitor and mitigate challenges;
 - Suggest links between communities: demographic, statistical and environmental data together with Geospatial Location – ranging from the conceptual level to specific indicators.

4.5.3. GRF- Europe

35. The Working Group on Geodetic Reference Frames in Europe, GRF- Europe, is chaired by Finland. The Regional Working Group is composed of ten members representing European Member States and also geodesy-related organisations in the region.

36. The UN-GGIM: Europe working group GRF-Europe will be working as an expert group within the UN-GGIM: Europe with close connection to the various geodesy-related organisations in Europe and actively contribute to the work of the sub-committee on Geodesy.

37. The objectives of the group are to provide an intergovernmental forum for the communication and cooperation on issues relating to the maintenance and enhancement of a geodetic reference frame within Europe, as well as creating strategic partnerships between mapping, space and other geo-referencing related agencies and national mapping authorities. Moreover the group will encourage open sharing of geodetic data and information that contribute to regional and global reference frames and advocate for guidelines and standards to advance the interchangeability and interoperability of geodetic systems and data especially in Europe.

38. The next immediate goal is to define tasks and next steps, and defining and distributing the work within the group. Development of a GGRF Implementation plan will be followed closely in order to ensure that regional tasks are aligned with the global deliverables. Discussion on developing connections to the various expert organisations will be one of the main items.

4.6. Partnerships, Regional and International Collaboration

39. UN-GGIM: Europe participated in the Extended UN-GGIM Bureau Meeting held at the UN Headquarters in New York in December of 2016. The focus of the meeting was the UN-GGIM 2017-2021 Strategic Framework. The Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe welcomes the opportunities for further global and inter-regional coordination and cooperation presented by the Expanded UN-GGIM Bureau Meetings, and suggests that these are held on a regular basis.

40. UN-GGIM: Europe accepted an invitation from UN-GGIM: Arab states to participate in their Fourth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM Arab States which took place from 21 to 23 February 2017 in Doha, Qatar.

41. According to its latest work plan UN-GGIM: Europe will through the Working Group Data Integration ensure a two-way interaction with the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators (IAEG-SDG) Working Group on Geospatial Information (WG GI). This is being considered as the European contribution to the global

process on developing a framework for monitoring SDG indicators. UN-GGIM: Europe nominated two participants from Germany and Italy to contribute to the IAEG-SDGs WG GI. UN-GGIM: Europe has participated in the IAEG-SDGs WG GI meetings held in Mexico in December 2016 and China in May 2017.

42. UN-GGIM: Europe has a continuous, proactive and positive engagement with the National Statistical Institutions, and National Mapping and Cadastral Authorities of the European UN Member States through its collaboration and communication with EuroGeographics and Eurostat. In addition UN-GGIM: Europe is keen to further the collaboration between the statistical and geospatial communities,

4.7. Priority Issues and Challenges

43. 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. Global Fundamental Data Themes
- iv. The continuation of the work of the Committee of Experts

4.8. Perspectives/Outlook, Future Plans

44. The regional Committee will continue with the work and delivery of the working groups as outlined in the Work Plan 2017 - 2020.

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

- i. INSPIRE Conference, September 2017, Strasbourg/Kehl
- ii. European Forum for Geography and Statistics Conference, November 2017, Dublin, Ireland
- iii. Joint workshop with UNECE Workshop on Integrating Geospatial and Statistical Standards, November 2017, Stockholm
- iv. UN-GGIM High Level Forum, November 2017, Mexico
- v. Fourth Joint UN-GGIM: Europe-ESS Meeting, Luxembourg, March 2017

4.9. Conclusion

46. 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.

4.10. Acknowledgements

47. This report was compiled through the contributions of:

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