



## **Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management**

### **Twelfth session**

August 2022

Item 5 of the provisional agenda\*

### **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. Executive 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 2021.
2. It outlines the outcomes of the annual Regional Committee meetings, the UN-GGIM: Europe strategy and work plan, activities and work carried out over the past twelve months and future plans. UN-GGIM: Europe is committed to ensuring that its work remains aligned with UN-GGIM programme and its regional activities remain fit for purpose.

## 2. Summary of report on past Regional Committee annual meetings

3. The annual meeting of the Regional Committee aims to bring together senior executives from national geospatial information and statistical authorities within Member States and international geospatial experts from across the region. During the intersessional period UN-GGIM: Europe organised two plenary meetings, the eight plenary meeting which was held in October 2021 and the ninth plenary meeting held in June 2022. The reason for holding two sessions in the twelve months since Committee of Experts' the last session in August 2021 was the Covid-19 pandemic.
4. The original intention was for the eight plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe to be held in Brussels, Belgium as a physical event, the date of the event was moved from June 2021 to October of the same year in the hope that travel disruption cause by the pandemic would have eased. However, since travel restrictions persisted, the regional annual meeting for 2021 was, for the second time organised as a virtual meeting.
5. The eight plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe<sup>1</sup>, which was hosted by the European Commission (Eurostat), was held on the 13 - 14 October 2021. The virtual meeting was held over two days, it was split into three sessions of two and half hours each and was followed by four side-events. Over 110 participants from 35 Member States and 11 International Organisations registered and participated in the eight plenary meeting. Due to the virtual format a large number of Member States participated in the session. The Regional Committee agreed that this should be a future consideration for future events, balancing in-person meetings with virtual ones to encourage greater participation.
6. The four side-events organised after the plenary sessions of the eight annual meeting were on topics of regional interest and organised by various UN-GGIM: Europe partners and stakeholders. The side-events were on: the GGCE (Pulling Together, European Contribution to the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence, organised by the Subcommittee on Geodesy; the challenge of GEOAI(GEOAI for Good & GEOAI for a Sustainable Europe) organised by the European branch of the UN-GGIM Academic Network; European Data Policy (The changing landscape) organised by the European Commission<sup>2</sup>; and Standards (Bringing geospatial information and statistics together) organised by the UNECE Statistics Division.
7. After two years of virtual meetings, the Ninth Plenary Meeting<sup>3</sup> was held as an in-person event in Geneva at the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) on the 20 – 21 June 2022. The Ninth Plenary Meeting was held overlapping with the 70th Session of the Conference of European Statisticians (CES) and was split into two day-long sessions. The first day will be dedicated to the plenary sessions covering items from the UN-GGIM programme and formal business of the Regional Committee. The second day was a joint

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<sup>1</sup> <https://un-ggim-europe.org/past-meetings/plenary-meetings/eighth-plenary-un-ggim-europe-october-2021/>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission: Eurostat, Joint Research Centre and the European Environment Agency.

<sup>3</sup> <https://un-ggim-europe.org/past-meetings/plenary-meetings/ninth-plenary-un-ggim-europe-june-2022/>

session between the UN-GGIM: Europe and the Conference of European Statisticians, this was the second time that a joint event between the two entities was being organised, the first was in 2020. The joint sessions featured topics of common interest to statistical and geospatial communities: strategic directions in official statistics and in geospatial work; moving online in mapping, data and statistics services; future work and future workplace – post-Covid-19 working modalities; and developments in data stewardship. The Common Day was a success and highlighted the benefits and value of collaboration between the two communities. It was agreed that a third Common Day between UN-GGIM: Europe and the CES would again be held in 2024.

8. At both regional plenary meetings, the UN-GGIM: Europe Members welcomed the collaboration of European Member States, European Institutions, international organisations and observer bodies in working together to progress key priorities that are relevant to our region. This continues to strengthen the regional collaboration of the geospatial and statistical communities in Europe, while noting the growing collaboration with the GEO and earth observation community. The regional committee appreciated the importance of trusted data for the decade of action, especially for the SDGs and disaster management and mitigation. And also valued the importance of capacity development, appreciating the example provided by the World Health Organisation. In addition, at the two plenary sessions the Regional Committee valued the efforts of the regional Member States in implementing the IGIF, and encouraged the exchange of regional experiences in this regard, while reiterating the importance of capacity development and education in this area. The Members of UN-GGIM: Europe showed their support to the friends of the co-Chairs in the efforts to strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management, especially the process to prepare the ECOSOC report for 2022.
9. During the plenary sessions the Regional Committee approved and adopted the regional strategy and work plan. An overview of both is provided later in this report.
10. The Tenth Plenary Meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe will be sponsored by the European Commission (Eurostat), though the dates are not yet confirmed it will probably be held in May or June 2023 in Brussels, Belgium.

### **3. Achievements**

#### **Strategy and workplan**

11. The vision of UN-GGIM: Europe is “*building on the overarching vision of UN-GGIM of positioning geospatial information to effectively address global challenges.*” And its mission is to “*maximise the use of geospatial information in Europe for a safer and more sustainable world.*” In order to help fulfil the vision and mission of UN-GGIM: Europe, the Regional Committee launched a new strategy and work plan that complements the rapidly changing global and regional societal, policy and digital landscape.
12. Both documents, which were adopted and approved by UN-GGIM: Europe at the eighth and ninth plenary meetings, are provided as additional back ground papers to this report. The strategy and work plan have been developed to remain aligned to the global UN-GGIM programme, while also resonating with the specific needs and requirements of our region. The ambition is to then feed the regional outputs back to UN-GGIM as the informed contribution from Europe to the Committee of Experts. This is a circular and iterative process that ensures the work of UN-GGIM: Europe remains relevant.
13. The refreshed strategy of UN-GGIM: Europe is structured into the three main pillars of Sharing Knowledge, Raising Awareness and Strategic Leadership. These strategic pillars are interdependent, their combined actions will frame, inform and drive the work and objectives of the Regional Committee for the next five years.
14. The aims, focus and goals of each of these three strategic pillars are translated into a regional work plan, approved annually in the plenary meeting, and put into practice by activities and tasks carried out by the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe, the UN-GGIM: Europe Secretariat, and Regional Working Groups. The UN-GGIM: Europe has five key priority

areas as the main focus of the work plan: the Integrated Geospatial Information Framework, the Geodetic Reference Frames, Data Integration, the Sustainable Development Goals and Data Strategy and Policy.

15. In the inter-plenary session, between the eighth and ninth annual meetings the Executive Committee conducted a questionnaire asking Member States and regional stakeholders of the relevance of the proposed priority areas to their work and their interest in being practically engaged in the five lines of work. The responses and results from the survey formed the basis to develop, structure, and define the objectives of the work plan which was recently presented for approval at the ninth plenary meeting of UN-GGIM: Europe. In the coming months the regional committee will be promoting and encouraging the collaboration between national mapping and cadastral authorities and national statistical institutes in the European Region, along with European Institutions and observer bodies to implement the five lines of work defined in the work plan.

### **Core Data and Data Integration**

16. The interval between the eighth and ninth plenary sessions was a period of transition for UN-GGIM: Europe. While the Executive Committee and a dedicated Strategy Project Team started setting and implementing the 2021 work plan the regional working groups were the delivering the final outputs from the rolling work plan which was agreed and approved at the seventh regional plenary meeting in 2020. We are pleased to announce that the tasks and outcomes from previous work plan for the Working Group on Core Data and Working Group on Data Integration have been delivered and with any remaining activities concluding by the end of 2022.
17. Following a methodological and consultative approach, the Working Group on Core Data has selected 14 core data themes. These are Geographical Names; Administrative Units; Addresses; Cadastral Parcels; Transport Networks; Hydrography; Elevation; Land Cover; Orthoimagery; Statistical units; Buildings; Area management/restriction/regulation and reporting units; Land use; and Governmental services. The group has focused on proposing recommendations of content of the core data themes through extensive consultations with the wider geospatial community. These are available online on the UN-GGIM: Europe website<sup>4</sup>.
18. The Working Group on Data Integration carried out the assessment of four selected SDG indicators which besides with statistical and geospatial information also include environmental aspects. The indicators which have been analysed are: Access to public transport (11.2.1); Land degradation (15.3.1); Ratio of land consumption to population growth rate (11.3.1) and Forest area as proportion of total land area (15.1.1). Technical guidelines for indicator computation, including recommendations, were produced for the four selected SDG indicators, together with the overarching conclusions document stemming from the four SDG indicators analysis. In addition, an activity report summarizing the work developed and activities undertaken was also produced. A webinar outlining the deliverables of the Working Group on Data Integration was organised together with EuroGeographics in February 2022<sup>5</sup>.
19. All Deliverables of the Working Group Data Integration are uploaded to the UN-GGIM: Europe website<sup>6</sup>. The Working Group has functioned as ‘Advisory Group’ to continuously contribute to global and regional data integration issues addressed by the IAEG SDG WG GI, the UN EG ISGI and the GEOSTAT-4-project.
20. The eighth edition of the Joint UN-GGIM: Europe –UNECE<sup>7</sup> meeting, was organised, for the second time, as a virtual event in March 2022. Over 100 representatives from European

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<sup>4</sup> <https://un-ggim-europe.org/working-groups/working-group-core-data/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://eurogeographics.org/calendar-event/webinar-series-data-integration-paving-the-way-for-new-markets-challenges-and-recommendations/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://un-ggim-europe.org/working-groups/working-group-data-integration/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://un-ggim-europe.org/past-meetings/other-meetings/8th-joint-meeting-un-ggim-europe-unece/>

Statistical and Mapping Authorities and other international organisations gathered online to follow the progress of the work being carried out by the region's statistical and geospatial communities. The meeting was jointly organised together with Eurostat UNECE.

21. A deep dive round table on Public Private Partnership (PPP) co-organized by UNGGIM-Europe and co-hosted by UN-GGIM PSN was held at the Geospatial World Forum in May 2022. The roundtable brought together leaders from public agencies and industry to discuss the innovations in partnership help deliver next-gen infrastructure and services. The points of discussion included: financing and business model around PPP, identifying the merits and risks of PPP delivery structures and appropriate project delivery models

#### **4. Challenges and solutions**

22. UN-GGIM: Europe believes that the challenge facing the geospatial community is the rapidly changing landscape, ensuring that the work of the Regional Committee remains relevant the Member States, the geospatial and statistical organisations and communities, and our region which is dynamic and active in implementing data policy and geospatial information management. This was one of the main reasons why the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe felt the need to develop a strategy and work plan that are grounded in the broad programme of the Committee of Experts and also based on the frameworks and policies already existing in Europe.
23. The Regional Committee believes that strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management is important and the Executive Committee has provided numerous occasions to inform the Members of UN-GGIM: Europe of the review process of UN-GGIM by ECOSOC. These have included ensuring that this item is given dedicated space during the eight and ninth annual plenary sessions and a webinar co-organised with EuroGeographics. UN-GGIM: Europe Members have showed their support to the friends of the co-Chairs in their efforts to strengthening institutional arrangements on geospatial information management, especially the process to prepare the ECOSOC report for 2022.
24. Believing that the five Regional Committees of UN-GGIM can improve their collaborative efforts and share knowledge and experiences across the regions, the secretariat of UN-GGIM: Europe is working with the secretariats of UN-GGIM Africa and UN-GGIM Americas to organise a side-event on the knowledge exchange across the Regional Committees during the Twelfth Session of the Committee of Experts.

#### **5. Future Plans**

25. Recognising the mutual benefits of working together, UN-GGIM: Europe and UNECE set up a collaboration agreement to pursue the collaboration activities in the period 2018-2020. The collaboration focused on 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.
26. This collaboration agreement between UN-GGIM: Europe and UNECE has been successful, producing tangible results. Over the years a number of joint and collaborative events, capacity development activities and workshops were been organised, the latest being the in the common session of the CES and UN-GGIM: Europe in June of this year, the second such event. The current collaboration agreement will come to an end in December of this year, UN-GGIM: Europe and UNECE are planning to renew this for a further two years at the end of 2022.
27. UN-GGIM: Europe supports the Second United Nations World Geospatial Information Congress which will be held in Hyderabad, India in October 2022. The Regional Committee plans to actively participate in the Congress and has submitted proposals for presentations focussing on the regional outputs and how these experiences can be shared with the broader global community.

28. In addition, the Regional Committee is planning to actively participate in various events including:
- Twelfth Session of UN-GGIM, New York, 1 – 5 August 2022
  - FIG Working Week, Warsaw, 11 – 15 September 2022
  - 15th European Forum for Geography and Statistics Conference, 2022
  - INSPIRE Conference, 2022 tbc
  - 2nd UN World Geospatial Information Congress 2022, Hyderabad India, 10-14 Oct 2022
  - Ninth Joint Meeting UN-GGIM: Europe -ESS -UNECE, March 2023

## **6. Administrative arrangements**

29. 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.
30. UN-GGIM: Europe is coordinated and managed by an Executive Committee. The Executive Committee members are nominated and approved during plenary meetings of UN-GGIM: Europe. The current Committee was approved at the ninth Regional Plenary Meeting in June 2022. The committee is chaired by a representative from Slovenia, with vice-chairs from Portugal and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Also, on the Executive Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe are Members from Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Poland, Serbia and Sweden.
31. 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 December 2020 for a further period of two years.

## **7. Points for discussion**

The Regional Committee of UN-GGIM: Europe would like the Committee of Experts to:

- i. Note the strategy and work plan of UN-GGIM: Europe (provided as background documents), which have been developed to both align with the global UN-GGIM programme and meet the specific needs and requirements of our region.
- ii. And also note that the intention is that the regional outputs are provided to UN-GGIM as the informed contribution from Europe to the Committee of Experts in a circular and iterative process that ensures the work of UN-GGIM: Europe remains relevant.

### **Background documents:**

1. Strategy of UN-GGIM: Europe
2. UN-GGIM: Europe Work Plan 2022