



UN-GGIM: Europe – Side Event

UN-GGIM: Europe and the Subcommittee on Geodesy invite Director Generals and others to:

GGCE: Pulling together

European Contribution to the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence

Thursday, 14 October 2021

14:00 – 15:30 (CEST)

CONCEPT NOTE

The side event will explore European needs, priorities and contributions to the Global Geodetic Reference Frame (GGRF), will give status on the establishment of the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (GGCE) and discuss how the GGCE can be a focal point in strengthening the European geodetic community.

The audience will be updated on the progress on establishing the GGCE and Member States will elaborate on specific GGRF challenges and contributions.

As background to the discussions it is interesting to note that the biggest European challenges related to the GGRF are; insufficient collaboration and coordination; insufficient funding; reliance on in kind contribution; lack of capacity and capability; lack of redundancy¹.

To prepare for this Side Event, the audience may consider discussing internally their national geodetic needs, priorities and possible GGCE contributions, and European GGRF ambitions.

Provisional agenda

Introduction and setting the context

Zuheir Altamimi (moderator)

*Lead of Geodetic Infrastructure Working Group, Research Director IGN and IPGP France
President, International Association of Geodesy*

Opening address

The role Global Geodesy is playing in Science and Society and the challenges it faces

Gregory Scott

Inter-Regional Advisor, UN-GGIM, United Nations Statistics Division

Germany's offer to host the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence (GGCE)

Paul Becker

President, Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG), Germany

Status of the establishment of the GGCE

¹ European geodesy forum, 23 June 2021, Slido poll



Johannes Bouman

Member of the SCoG, Head of the Geodesy Department, Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy (BKG), Germany

Challenges in establishing and operating global geodetic infrastructure

Per Erik Opseth

Head of Geodetic Division, Norwegian Mapping Authority, Norway

Swedish contribution to the international geodetic Infrastructure

Martin Lidberg

Head of Geodetic Infrastructure Department, Lantmateriet

IAG Statement

Zuheir Altamimi

President, International Association of Geodesy

Open discussions and feedback from the audience

Summary and concluding remarks

Zuheir Altamimi

Background

The Global Geodetic Reference Frame is the foundation for all geospatial information and plays a fundamental role in Member States reaching the targets of the sustainable development goals and in our everyday lives. Accurately georeferenced spatial information is vital for policy development as it informs everything from urban planning to emergency service response. Importantly, the GGRF underpins land management which is fundamental for economic growth. It is also a key enabler of spatial data interoperability supporting disaster mitigation. The GGRF supports environmental monitoring and improving our understanding of the Earth and climate change. It provides valuable information to policy makers who strive for more sustainable development.

The main geodetic products that are critical to Earth science and operational geodesy applications are produced by the Services of the International Association of Geodesy (IAG). These products are based on geodetic infrastructure owned and operated by national mapping agencies, space agencies, universities, and research institutions. No long-term contractual commitments exist for continued operation and maintenance of this infrastructure and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the infrastructure owners to raise funds to develop and sustain it.

In 2013, the UN-GGIM – United Nations Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management, where the top management of many geodetic infrastructure owners took part, became aware of this and other challenges related to the GGRF. This resulted in the adoption of a UN General Assembly resolution on "A global geodetic reference frames for sustainable development" in 2015. This resolution called for improved cooperation by all UN Member States to (1) Sustain and improve the

accuracy of the GGRF, by sharing data and improving and sustaining the geodetic infrastructure for the long term; (2) Ensure accurate access to the GGRF by all nations, in particular via GNSS technology.

The UN-GGIM Subcommittee on Geodesy is working towards developing an inter-governmental mechanism suitable for the long-term sustainability of the GGRF. Based on work of the Subcommittee, the United Nations Member States in August 2019 strongly supported the concept of creating a Global Geodetic Center of Excellence (GGCE) under the auspices of the United Nations.

The GGCE is intended to be a federated centre, with multiple contributors, partners, sources of funding, and locations. There are on-going opportunities for Member States to engage!

At the 10th Session of UN-GGIM held virtually in August 2020, the United Nations Member States strongly supported the offer by the Federal Republic of Germany to host the GGCE in the UN Campus in Bonn². The mission of the Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence is to actively contribute to realizing the ambitions and intent of the General Assembly's resolution.

At the 11th Session of UN-GGIM held virtually in August 2021, the UN-GGIM Committee of Experts has adopted two reference documents, prepared by the Subcommittee after thorough consultations:

- Position Paper on Sustaining the Global Geodetic Reference Frame³
- Concept Paper on Establishing a Global Geodetic Centre of Excellence⁴

How to join?

Connection details to the side event will be provided to registered participants on the 12 October, the day before the plenary meeting.

Language

The European Geodesy Forum will be conducted in English language and there will be no simultaneous translations.

Organizers

The Side Event is organized by the European members of the Subcommittee on Geodesy and UN-GGIM: Europe.

Point of Contact

For additional information on the side event, please contact –
Carol Agius
Email: Carol.Agius@eurogeographics.org

² <https://ggim.un.org/meetings/GGIM-committee/10th-Session/documents/GGCE%20Offer%20Germany%2027July2020.pdf>

³ [E-C.20-2021-7-Add-2 Position Paper on Sustaining the GGRF 29Jul2021.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

⁴ [E-C.20-2021-7-Add 3 Concept Paper on GGCE 29Jul2021.pdf \(un.org\)](#)

