



EUROGI ANNUAL REPORT 2020
Draft Report
for consideration at the EUROGI General Board meeting on
25 May 2021

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EUROPEAN UMBRELLA ORGANISATION FOR GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Draft ANNUAL REPORT 2020

1. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

1.1 Main Highlights

The highlights of the year were the adoption of the Strategic Framework 2020-2024 in its final form, the adoption of the Action Plan 2020, the establishment of Portfolio Groups, and the manner in which we accommodated and coped with the COVID-19 pandemic. The accent was also put on our digital infrastructure, supporting our online activities.

Also, we are very pleased to note that there has been a very big increase in the involvement of members and there has been a distinct feeling of 'we are going places' amongst membership.



Figure 1 - Vice-President Bruce McComarck on the last representation for EUROGI in 2020, in Riga (LV)

1.2 Meetings

During the year we held two General Board Meetings and established a pattern of holding monthly Executive Committee Meetings. We activated the Management Board (President, Vice President, Treasurer, supported by the Secretariat), which met on a weekly basis.

1.3 Events

The COVID-19 pandemic which was impacting strongly across Europe from March onwards meant that no face-to-face meetings or travel was possible. However, in early March Bruce McCormack gave a presentation on 'Beyond Spatial Data Infrastructures' at the Baltic Geoinformation Technology conference in Riga, Latvia.



The pandemic resulted in the postponement (into late 2021) of the Global World Forum conference which was to have been held in Amsterdam. EUROGI was due to hold a whole afternoon session focusing mainly on the topic 'Beyond Spatial Data Infrastructures'. Later in the year EUROGI arranged a session 'Women in GI' at the virtual Belgian BEGEO conference.

EUROGI was supportive of members who were holding webinars, in particular the monthly IRLOGI webinars.

1.4 Secretariat

During the year a Secretariat arrangement was introduced instead of the Secretary General situation which has previously been the case in EUROGI. The new arrangement has worked very well, thanks in no small measure to the efficient and effective engagement Daria Cornea and Jean-Yves Pirlot.

1.5 Finances

We ended the 2020 year with a budget surplus of €11 493, which compares favorably with the anticipated budget deficit of €4 480. This positive situation was in no small measure due to both the COVID-19 pandemic, meaning that for almost the whole year no face-to-face meetings took place, and the fact that all members paid their annual membership fees.

2. 2020 ACTION PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

This 2020 Action Plan provided the key basis on which activities during the year were structured. It was approved at the General Board Meeting in June. A key provision of the Plan was the establishment of seven Portfolio Groups, each of which got a leader. Some Groups were more active than others during the setup phase. A brief outline of the main activities of the Groups is set out below.

(1) Policy Portfolio Group (leader Bruce McCormack: IRLOGI)

This Group established four policy focused Sub-groups as mentioned below.

- **Beyond SDI**(leaders Bruce McCormack and Josef Strobl). This Sub-group, consisting of 12 global geospatial specialists and three 'corresponding members', was particularly active. It secured submissions from 13 global geospatial thought leaders regarding their ideas on what would be a framework which could replace the SDI framework (which was originated in the 1980s and 1990s). The submissions were published on the EUROGI web site. The Sub-group held meetings and 'deep dives' which explored in some detail the likely future geospatial environment and what might be an emerging framework to move beyond the SDI framework. A document setting out a Vision, Mission, Key Principles and Key Features of a 'Beyond SDI' framework will be finalized in 2021.



- **Women in GI** (leader Monica Sebillio). The start of the Focus Group consisted in sending an open invitation to all member's members, women and men, interested in the topic. The primary activities of this Sub-group were to run a session at the Belgian BEGEO conference in October 2021 at which four ladies gave their views on the women in GI issues, Monica



(AMFM Italia), Ulla Kronborg Mazzoli (GeoForum), Marion Murphy (Mallon Technology), and Annelies Van Alphen (GeoSolutions). Also, Monica made contact with ladies from the Women for Copernicus initiative and mutually beneficial discussions took place. The outline of a policy position paper on the subject was prepared and will be finalized in 2021.

- **Harmonised Authoritative Geospatial Data across Europe**(leader Jean-Yves Pirlot). This Focus Group includes Bruce McCormack and Alejandro Guinea de Salas and is working on a white paper that aims to promote the creation of easily accessible authoritative, updated and integrated geographic information at the European level, by analysing the current situation of the availability / absence of this GI in Europe and its benefits/consequences. This White Paper is intended mainly for European Commissioners and Commission staff, Members of the European Parliament and the European Council. The intention is also to reach out to all the European bodies, working closely with GI, on a day-to-day basis (DG Env and EEA, Eurostat, Frontex, GSA, JRC, SatCen). The Paper may also be of interest to National Mapping Agencies and government departments across the Union as they have the responsibility for creating or approving authoritative geospatial data. Support from external experts was sought and we got some very strong contributions so far. The thoughts developed in the paper were already used for to opinions published during consultations, one in the end of 2020 and the other prepared, as reported hereafter.
- **Draft Data Governance Act.** In response to an open call from the European Commission for submissions on the draft Act. During 2020 a small group was convened with Ulla Kronborg Mazzoli (GeoForum) and Dara Keogh (GeoDirectory) making particularly strong inputs with submission of our EUROGI views taking place in January 2021.

(2) EU – Relations Portfolio Group

In the case of the Liaison with European Union Group the decision was taken not to take any initiatives until EUROGI had approved policy position papers as these would provide an excellent basis on which to engage with Commission officials and others in the EU.

(3) Projects Portfolio Group (leader Maurice Barbieri: SOGI).

During the year this Group was involved in two consortia putting together submissions in response to EU Horizon 2020 calls. It was also involved in preliminary discussions regarding EUROGI involvement in an already running EU funded programme.

- **Osmosis-Intelligence.** In this case EUROGI would be responsible for the *'Dissemination, Communications and Stakeholder/End user Engagement Work Package*. The focus of this proposal was regarding water quality monitoring and actions to deal with problematic situations. Unfortunately, the submission was not accepted by the Commission but the concept will probably be reused by the project initiator and might lead EUROGI's involvement again.
- **ETIC.** EUROGI became involved in this Horizon 2020 proposal to promote the European Green Deal at the invitation of Afigéo, our French member. EUROGI would be responsible for the Work Package *'Green Deal Consensus and Liaison'* which would involve liaisons with EU persons, the establishment of a Consensus Advisory Board and Local Advisory Councils. While a lot of the work was done in 2020, the submission of the consortium proposal was made in January 2021.
- **e-shape.** EUROGI was approached by its member EARSC to participate in the e-shape Horizon 2020 project of which it is a consortium member. The project involves publicising and securing engagement of potential end users with satellite remote sensing platforms in seven different domain areas. Discussions were ongoing at the end of 2020 but in broad terms EUROGI would hold workshops focusing on the platforms of particular interest in EUROGI member countries.

In all three of the initiatives mentioned above, much of the work which is required to be undertaken would be carried out by EUROGI members. Strong member (and members' members) involvement is a cornerstone aim of EUROGI's involvement in funded projects.

(4) Communications Portfolio Group (leader AlejandroGuinea de Salas: Geograma).



Figure 2 – A view of a typical monthly “new normal” ExCom meeting

This Group was particularly active during the year undertaking the following activities:

- Creation of a team for communication activities;
- Migration of EUROGI to the Microsoft365 environment for internal communications, calls, file repository, forms and chat;
- Reassignment of roles for content on EUROGI's social network platforms;
- Revitalization of the EUROGI's website at www.eurogi.org;

- Design of a form to standardize how members can send content to be published;
- Creation of a group in LinkedIn;
- Monthly posts from the President to the LinkedIn page, and website.



(5) Membership Portfolio Group (leader Monica Sebillio)

At the commencement of 2020 EUROGI had 20 members, 10 of whom were National GI associations and 4 were corporate members. At year's end EUROGI had the same number of members as it had at the start of the year. However, it became clear during the year that Afigéo the French member was considering leaving EUROGI. A successful meeting was held with Afigéo representatives at which current EUROGI activities and other matters were discussed, the outcome being that AFIGEO wished to remain in EUROGI. In fact, as mentioned above, AFIGEO subsequently drew EUROGI into the ETIC project.

The Membership Group focused strongly during 2020 on legal matters which have implications for members as well as various operational matters, namely;

- Revision of the Articles of our Statutes enabling online and blended (virtual and face-to-face) meetings, and a new election process for the President.
- Revision of the By-laws, implementing urgent changes:
 - The use of internal or external auditors for the accounts. At the second General Board meeting in November two auditors from within EUROGI membership were appointed: Ulla Kronborg Mazzoli (GeoForum Denmark), and Dara Keogh (GeoDirectory, Ireland);
 - The possibility to reimburse non-Excom members who undertake missions on behalf of EUROGI;
 - The possibility to organise online meetings and decisions;
 - The review of the limitations of numbers of mandates.

It was also decided to get closer to the members by organising regular meetings of members' delegations, with, for instance, the ManBo.

As a matter of policy EUROGI decided to give members who incur costs on behalf of EUROGI (EG taking a flight to attend a conference, hotel accommodation etc) the choice to make financial contribution to offset the green house gas implications of their activities.

(6) Liaison with pan-European Geospatial Domain Organisations (leader Gyorgy Szabo)

The basic objective of the Pan-European Portfolio Group is to build and manage professional relationships with relevant pan-European organisations and working groups which operate in the broadly defined European geospatial domain.

During 2020 the Group identified just under 20 pan-European organisations with which EUROGI could make contact in order to explore the establishment of mutually beneficial working relationships. The Group also identified a number of possible types of relationships, including for example, information exchanges, invitations to present at events, organising joint events, providing support where appropriate for positions taken when making representations to EU or other authorities, or possibly jointly developing policies in areas of mutual interest. 2021 will be the year in which active outreach will take place on the basis of a priority listing of the pan-European organisations.

(7) Education and Capacity Building Group

The Education and Capacity Building Group was in the process of getting organized during 2020 and will become active in 2021.



3. FINANCES

All activities undertaken in the year 2020 were related to the mission of EUROGI. An important role is given to various portfolios. In essence the model means that members take responsibility for one or more areas and deliver the activities set out in the annual Action Plan in these designated areas. 2020 was the first year without a Secretary General. EUROGI operated instead with a Secretariat that included a number of persons that in good cooperation did various activities. This approach was very beneficial for the operations of EUROGI.

Travel expenses were again much lower due to the fact that COVID-19 made travel impossible and to the fact that President and part of the Secretariat reside in Belgium. The meeting costs were considerably lower because there were no physical meetings.

At the closing of the financial accounts on 31 December 2020 all fees for 2020 have been paid. This has hardly ever (if ever) happened in the past. EUROGI is indeed very grateful to all its members. EUROGI warmly thanks our colleague and friend Bino Marchesini who helped us very efficiently in financial matters.

4. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

Overall, 2020 may be regarded as a year of transition for EUROGI and one in which it became very active across a number of fronts. In no small measure this is due to the establishment of the Portfolio Group system, an arrangement which provides an opportunity for member and members' members to engage with others within the EUROGI community network.

This efforts are pursued in 2021 with considerable anticipation, in the confident belief that the groundwork established in 2020 will bear considerable fruit.