

# Green light for Global Monitoring for Environment and Security

September 24 2004

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An agreement was reached at this meeting among ESA's Member States to release a total of ^80m to fund the next stage of the [ESA](#) component of the European GMES initiative. Part of this funding will cover a socioeconomic assessment of the benefits of GMES and the follow-on to the work already done by ESA on definition and demonstration of the services to be provided by GMES. More importantly, the Board gave the green light to the start of work on the space component of GMES by approving ^30m for preparatory activities comprising architecture studies, ground segment design and initial definition studies for the five "sentinels" which will be the backbone of the future European Earth Observation System to monitor the environment. These activities will pave the way to the decision to be taken at the next ESA Council meeting at ministerial level, in late 2005 or early 2006, on full implementation of GMES.

Professor José Achache, Director of Earth Observation at ESA, said: "Natural disasters, such as the hurricanes in the Caribbean this year and the floods which devastated Eastern Europe in 2002, are becoming increasingly frequent and violent. In order to understand their connection with man-induced global changes and mitigate their impact, there is an increasing need for better global monitoring and forecasting capabilities. That is what GMES will provide. I am particularly pleased at this decision, which comes at the end of my term at ESA, where I have worked hard to build the foundations of this programme".

Dr Steven Wilson, Chairman of the ESA Programme Board and Director

of Earth Observation at the British National Space Centre, said: "ESA Member States have now agreed on the provision of key information services for critical aspects of our environment, and the underpinning technologies to guarantee comprehensive monitoring of our environment from space. The UK is playing a leading role in both the science and engineering capabilities in this field as well as developing ground-based services to utilise satellite data."

### **About Global Monitoring for Environment & Security**

Global Monitoring for Environment & Security (GMES) is a joint initiative of the European Commission (EC) and ESA. It is a response to growing concern among European policy-makers to have reliable access to information on the environment on the global, regional and local scales, with the emphasis on global change, environmental stress and natural and man-made disasters.

While GMES is looking to expand the use of space-based systems, the development of operational GMES services will also incorporate the advanced technical and operational capability offered by terrestrial and airborne observation systems.

The initial phase, 2001 to 2003, ended in December 2003 with the publication of a joint final report and a Commission Communication laying the basis of a way forward for GMES. Currently, GMES is funded through two separate streams of activity, subscriptions by ESA Member States and EC Framework calls.

An action plan for the next (interim) period, 2004-2005, has been proposed, to be managed through a GMES Programme Office set up in early 2004 that brings together EC and ESA staff and a number of key stakeholders, such as the European Environmental Agency and Eumetsat. The Programme Office and an Advisory Committee of Member States are supported by the Commission Directors General for

Environment, Research and Information Society, the JRC and the ESA Director General.

A key requirement during this next stage is to identify the priorities for GMES services through a number of preparatory activities, including a study on the socioeconomic case for GMES themes. This could lead to a proposal for implementation of the GMES Earth observation space component in time for ESA's next ministerial-level Council meeting.

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