



Press Release

Luxembourg, 9 January 2020

Use of the EU's space assets under scrutiny of Auditors

The European Court of Auditors is examining how effectively the European Commission has promoted the uptake of services provided by two of the EU's key space programmes, Copernicus and Galileo. Around €260 million were allocated to these activities from the EU budget for the period 2014-2020.

The EU currently has three space programmes: Copernicus, which provides data from earth observation satellites; Galileo, a global satellite navigation and positioning system; and EGNOS, a European regional satellite-based augmentation system used to improve the performance of global navigation satellite systems. Up to the end of 2020, total EU expenditure for the deployment of infrastructure and the operation of satellites and ground stations will amount to some €19 billion. A further €15.5 billion has been proposed by the Commission for the 2021-2027 period.

The EU is not the only provider of space services worldwide. The United States have been pioneers in the area of earth observation (Landsat) and they launched the world's first global satellite navigation systems (GPS). China, Russia and other countries also operate global navigation satellite systems or satellites providing earth observation data. In view of this, and the large amount of public money involved, the Commission has emphasised the need to maximise the use of the EU's space assets and promote a strong user uptake of space services. Wide use of these services should also create new jobs, boost technological innovation and productivity, and contribute to better designed policies, for example in the environment and security policy sectors.

Today, the auditors have published an Audit Preview on the EU's space assets and their use. Audit Previews provide information on an ongoing audit task. They are designed as a source of information for those interested in the policy or programmes being audited.

"Following substantial financial efforts, the EU has become a global player in terms of space-based earth observation and navigation services. But these services are not yet used widely enough in the EU internal market", said Mihails Kozlovs, the Member of the European Court of Auditors responsible for the audit. "Our audit will determine in particular if the European Commission's promotion measures have been effective in maximising the benefits of this public investment for EU taxpayers and the economy as a whole."

The purpose of this press release is to convey the main messages of the European Court of Auditors' audit preview. The full preview is available at eca.europa.eu in English.

ECA Press

12, rue Alcide De Gasperi - L-1615 Luxembourg

E: press@eca.europa.eu @EUAuditors eca.europa.eu

The audit will assess specifically whether the Commission is promoting effectively the services provided by the EU's main space programmes. In particular, the auditors will examine whether:

- o the Commission has decided on a robust strategy regarding the use of services and data from the EU's flagship space programmes;
- o the regulatory framework in place facilitates service and data uptake;
- o the Commission's activities have actually succeeded in boosting the uptake of services and data; and
- o the Commission has set up a proper monitoring system for this purpose.

Note to editors

Currently, the EU has three flagship space programmes:

- Copernicus: the world's largest earth observation programme. Operational since 2014, it currently has seven satellites in orbit. Copernicus aims to provide accurate information for use in the environment, agriculture, climate, security and maritime surveillance fields.
- EGNOS: the European Geostationary Navigation Overlay Service. Since 2009, this system has been supplementing the Global Positioning System (GPS) by reporting on the accuracy of its data and sending corrections for aviation, maritime and land-based navigational use.
- Galileo: Europe's global navigation satellite system (GNSS). Launched in 1999, the programme has currently 26 satellites in orbit. Galileo aims to provide very precise navigation services.

The audit report is expected to be published towards the end of 2020.

Press contact for this preview

Vincent Bourgeois – E: vincent.bourgeois@eca.europa.eu

T: (+352) 4398 47502 / M: (+352) 691 551 502