



Speech of Colin Paynter,
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Territorial Planning, Agriculture, Mobility and Telecommunications

It's a great pleasure to be with you today and to share with you my thoughts on how satellite enabled services are playing a key role in underpinning the competitiveness of the parts of our economy covered in this session, and how I see this role developing in the coming years.

In the fields of territorial planning and agriculture, satellites are already delivering quality services into the hands of farmers and town planners. Thanks to data interpretation, user friendly maps are addressed to the pertinent end users. This is not a pitch for massive new investment in space infrastructure. Thanks to joint investment from industry and the EC into GMES, the space infrastructure is already in place, and providing operational services to users across the world. The challenge now is to develop new applications to help respond to society's emerging challenges, and to sustain these services in the long term.

At the local and regional levels, space services today provide a range of mapping services, including 3D modelling, that are enabling users to assess the situation on the ground today, and to monitor and predict change. The preoperational GMES Land Monitoring Service (Geoland-2), coordinated by Astrium, is one such successful example. Space data has long underpinned the knowledge base of our national geographical institutions, to help to anticipate emerging threats to our natural and man-made environments, and to provide essential toolkits for crisis response.

Many of the challenges we face today and tomorrow do not and will not respect national borders, such as shared natural resources. Here, the global reach of satellites offer a unique advantage. For instance, services for flood prevention and water quality monitoring can deliver real benefits to the European citizen, in support of the EU's macroregional initiative covering the Danube Region.

Satellites also have a key role to play in supporting the twin pillars of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy – improving production and safeguarding the environment. One service in operation today, Farmstar, helps farmers direct fertilisers and irrigation efforts more efficiently, both boosting crop yields and reducing spend on fertiliser – a boost both to the economy and the environment. In fact, Farmstar has just celebrated its 10th anniversary – there is no reason why Farmstar could not be easily extended into each EU Member State. Such win-win solutions, for the economy and the environment, should be encouraged in the next CAP.

In the field of telecommunications, satellite technology can play an essential role in delivering the EU's Digital Agenda, and its aim of connecting all European households to broadband by 2013. Satellites are a crucial complementary technology for users in hard to reach areas. New generation high throughput satellites already offer ever faster speeds. But public investment in satellite broadband research and development remains essential if we are to keep pace with the fast moving consumer demand for ever faster broadband speeds. A partnership between industry and the public sector is vital if satellites are to remain a crucial part of the mix of technologies that deliver the second objective of the EU Digital Agenda, i.e. to connect every European citizens with a 30 Mbps Broadband connection by 2020.

What do we need to do to take full advantage of our space capabilities?

1) To federate public demand at the European level, with a clearly identified single point of contact in each of the European Commission's DGs that use space-based services. DG Enterprise currently has the lead for GMES, but new focal points should be identified in other DGs including Agriculture, REGIO, Climate Action, etc..

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For instance, we are lacking within DG INFSO a unit that could inform end users of the added value of satellite Broadband, especially in remote areas and help facilitate better deployment of satellite broadband..

2) Financing of the development and deployment phase of space-based services: we need public support to transform data received from satellites into a portfolio of operational services delivered to end users.

In our view, this support could be achieved with existing tools, such as Regional Policy funds (ERDF and cohesion funds), by promoting their use for projects of economic benefit in the fields of Planning, Agriculture and Broadband access.

One example could be to support the EU Danube strategy through combining space based images with in situ observations,,thus using EU regional policy funds to promote economic development in the entire Danube Region, as well as protection against recurring natural problems, such as floods and droughts.

We would also like to see the proper implementation of the Digital Agenda, so that DG INFSO can help rural users access the satellite broadband services available today, and help bring broadband to all.

Space-based solutions are here today, making a difference today, and offering new services for the challenges of tomorrow. There is a clear role for public bodies to step forward as pioneering users of space services, so that we can help develop the next generation of smart, space-enabled public policy services for the European citizen. Space services offer a way to advance the knowledge and skills base of Europe, underpinning Europe's knowledge economy, stimulating new highly-skilled jobs, and creating new niches of European leadership in emerging export markets. All these objectives are fully consistent with EU 2020 strategy: so let's implement them.

Thank you for your attention