

A Report on the Event

The First Day of the European Surveyor and GI

CLGE took the initiative to launch the first day of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation. Hereafter we give a short report. Future will show how this event will develop and where it will lead the profession.



Carlo des Dorides in front of an interested audience of 300 + Surveyors, gathered in the main conference room of the Belgian Royal Military Academy, Brussels (source: Marcel Ponthier)



Jean-Yves Pirlot, CLGE President, calls for a joint international week of surveyors, to be organized every year. Talks with FIG will start soon (source: Alain Boon)

5 March 2012 saw the first day of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation. Coincidentally, it was the occasion to honour the first of a long series of famous surveyors. For 2012, the CLGE General Assembly gathered in Tallinn in September 2011, had chosen Gerardus Mercator. The 500th anniversary of the birth of Mercator on this very day, gave an excellent opportunity for a splendid celebration. The size of the event was only possible with the help of our long-time partner Trimble and the very professional support given by the Belgian Royal Military Academy.

In presence of Philippe Busquin, Minister of State, former EU Commissioner for Research and President of the Belgian Mapping Agency NGI, distinguished speakers have described the life, the work and the legacy of our illustrious predecessor.

M. Carlo des Dorides, Executive Director of the European GNSS Agency, gave a remarked keynote



CheeHai Teo, FIG president, and Michelle Camilleri, CLGE secretary general, unveiling the Mercator memorial plate (source: Alain Boon)

speech about the future of Galileo, its use for the high precision sector and the excellent collaboration that was established between CLGE and his Agency.

The FIG president CheeHai Teo has honoured the European Surveyors of his presence. He not only gave an interesting speech about his view on the role of the surveyor in modern society but he also unveiled the artwork about Mercator – by the Belgian artist Arianne Weyrich – that will adorn the House of the European Surveyor and GeoInformation from now on.

In the same time a lot of other celebrations were held in the CLGE member countries. We will report about some of these events in the following issues of GeoInformatics. This kind of activities will of course be repeated every year now, to raise the profile of the European Surveyor.

The presentations of that day are available on www.clge.eu.



Vice-President for Geodesy and GI, Director of the Croatian State Geodetic Administration Interview with Danko Markovinić, CLGE

Geoinformatics: Mr. Markovinić, you're the CLGE Vice-President in charge of Geodesy and GI, what does this mean?

CLGE has a bureau, composed by President Jean-Yves Pirlot (BE), Secretary General Michelle Camilleri (MT) and Treasurer Dieter Seitz (DE). There are also three ordinary Vice-Presidents: Pierre Bibollet (FR), Rudolf Kolbe (AT) and Leiv Bjarte Mjøs (NO). They share the traditional tasks of our organization, oriented towards the Education, Professional Practice and European Affairs. The board has the opportunity to appoint additional VP, in charge of developments of special interest. The previous Treasurer, René Sonney (CH), was always insisting on the importance of GeoInformation and the outstanding role CLGE should play in this field. This was visionary. A few years later it became evident that CLGE could not remain inactive in these matters, hence my recent nomination. It suffices to think about new topics such as Galileo, EGNOS, GNSS, GIS, INSPIRE, NSDI, ESDI,... to be convinced that something is going on. We know of course that Surveyors have an important role to play in the European Geodetic Infrastructure but everybody isn't aware of what's an evidence for us.

But there are so many organizations already active in geodesy and GI. What's the added value of CLGE?

You're right. We do not want to duplicate what FIG, IGA and EuroGeographics as well as the European National Mapping and Cadastral Agencies are doing, of course not. We want to be active in the political field, anticipate new regulations and stimulate better pan European Cooperation. For instance, we think that there's a lack of coordination when it comes to the European Geodetic Infrastructure. Although a certain level of scientific and technical coordination exists, we are convinced that it should be improved. In the field of CORS, a lot of people managing the different networks will say that the existing cooperation based on the results of EUREF and bilateral talks are sufficient. However, this cooperation is not homogeneous over the whole European continent. Moreover, cooperation can always be improved. If we take Nord Rhein Westfalen (NRW) and Rheinland Pfalz, two neighbouring German Länder for instance, their cooperation is very good, within SAPOS. The cooperation between



Danko Markovinić



Jean-Yves Pirlot chairing the High Precision and Agriculture GNSS Applications panel (Courtesy of GSA – Peter Gutierrez)

NRW and Flanders is probably good as well, but undoubtedly it could be even more effective to come on the same level than within SAPOS. Does EUREF have the same possibilities? Wouldn't it be interesting to give EUREF and or EuroGeographics or any other Agency such a task? In the field of the use of the true ETRS 89, wouldn't it be interesting to oblige or at least encourage member states to use it? What about the example of EUPOS uniting central and East European states? These are only some examples of questions that we are pondering for the time being.

Do you think that your questions are heard?

We are uniting 36 member states with close to 100.000 individual professionals. Of course, as we always say, this is still a very small number when compared to the European population but you will not deny that within the GI community our association has a respectable size. In front of the European Geodetic Infrastructure one can think of us as a huge user group.

During the Galileo Applications Congress in Prague, end of January 2012, the Executive Director of the European GNSS Agency, Carlo des Dorides, has heavily insisted on the cooperation of his agency, with organisations such as ours. My answer is: "CLGE is ready to take its responsibilities".

As we've stated during the Umeå seminar, held on 22-23 June 2011, CLGE is willing to provide a platform via which this tremendous user group can voice its needs and remarks about existing or lacking services.

Indeed, CLGE seems to have close contacts with GSA, tell us more about it.

We are very proud about our cooperation with this Agency. It is the first time that the policy started under our previous President, Henning Elmstroem (DK), has achieved really tangible results. We have to anticipate professional developments and not endure them passively. First GSA has asked us to conduct a study with them about the penetration of EGNOS (the European Geostationary Overlay System). Then they've appointed some of our experts to assist them in writing a market report about GNSS. Finally, President Pirlot, had the honour to chair one of the sessions of the Galileo Applications Congress 2012, in Prague [see our inset]. We feel that eventually we've raised profile towards the European Bodies in charge of Geodesy and GeoInformation. However, the way to appear on the radar of the European and national politicians with the intensity we would deserve is still long, I am afraid.

INSPIRE is an enormous initiative, isn't it? Can you really take part in the game?

We are aware of the size of INSPIRE and do not want to play Don Quixote. We know that the NMCA's and EuroGeographics are very deeply involved in these topics. We do not want to interfere with them. Bear in mind that we are representing the profession as a whole. It means that we unite civil servants, academics as well as publicly appointed and private surveyors. Knowing this, it makes no sense trying to compete with the employers of many of our members. As a matter of fact our current president is Deputy Director General of the Belgian Mapping Agency and I was recently appointed as Director General of the Croatian State Geodetic Administration. We would never destroy during weekends what is painstakingly



built during the week... No, CLGE wants to liaise with the professionals from the different sectors and only intervene when we've a real added value.

I've mentioned our ideas about the Geodetic Infrastructure. Another example is in the initiative we've taken to define new measurement code for the surfaces of buildings. This was the missing link within INSPIRE and we're happy that we've helped to raise awareness about that fact.

What are the prospects?

I've reported about what we've done. It's a good start but we have to go on, pushing for more cooperation at the state level and CLGE playing its role as a user group.

However, we feel that other tasks are awaiting us.

Especially in Western Europe we are facing problems in recruiting youngsters. We have to

increase our presence in political discussions about academic issues. For CLGE, the geodetic engineers need a solid initial education completed with a trustworthy Continuous Professional Education.

At several occasions CLGE has underlined the absolute need of a Master diploma completed with a one or two year traineeship as well as an additional examination, when it comes to cadastral surveyors. This does not mean that Geodetic Technicians are of no use, of course not!

But the technical field (geodetic infrastructure, GNSS, ...) is yet another domain implying this high level education for the surveyors taking responsibilities in that aspect.

Moreover, sufficient proportion of Master students should access the PhD studies, to ensure the preservation of high level knowledge, especially in Geodesy.

The offer of high level geodetic education is declining, at least in several western European countries whereas the number of students is also vanishing in the last years.

Thus, there is an urgent need to react.

And the prospects with the European Commission?

We're still eager to interact with the European Commission as well. About my speciality, we think that Article 26 of the Services Directive gives room for quality management and quality certification initiatives.

A lot to do, huge challenges but there's a saying that we follow "One need no hope in order to undertake, nor success in order to persevere".

But, as we have hope and experience some success, it's even easier to go on.

The GNSS Application Congress in Prague 2012

On 26 and 27 January, the CLGE president took part in a high level congress about the future of GNSS in Europe.

In his report, Jean-Yves Pirlot insisted on the very good organisation ensured by the Czech host. He had the honour to chair a session about GNSS applications for the High Precision and Agriculture segment.

During this session, the meeting room was totally full. It could even have been a bit larger but on the other hand the high attendance has shown the interest for this section.

The attendants were invited to take a very active part in the discussion and they did it above all expectations. Even at the end of the session, discussions went on for a long while, despite the lunch going on in the hall...

Following remarks or conclusions can be drawn:

- In the farming sector, EGNOS is perceived as a valuable tool that has still a relevant growth potential. Moreover this potential should absolutely be exploited since the diminishing land resources and growing population will require getting the full intelligence

out of the sparse number of available m².

- EGNOS is also perceived as a genuine democratisation, reducing the hurdle newcomers have to take.
- Without surprise, the applications/services are very important and our session has shown several successful examples as well as a candidate application that could easily find solutions.
- There was clear demand from the farming sector to channel research activities in universities and institutions towards high added value applications (work in the logistic applications, consider GNSS solutions combined with other sensors, ...).
- This confirms the need of a better communication between the stakeholders of given user segments, here the agricultural sector. We definitely have to take on board farmers, vendors, suppliers, SW and HW developers, Universities, Research centres, ...
- Similar groups could be formed for other user segments, for instance the Surveying community.

- Galileo is eagerly awaited by some actors of the Farming sectors whilst others are wondering what the benefit will be. However, buyers currently always ask if devices are Galileo compatible. Some farmers esteem that since money was diverted from agricultural subsidies to the European GNSS programme, they are entitled to earn the
- The very high precision sector also awaits Galileo to improve the availability of GNSS.
- Both sectors would like the European authorities to take into account the numerous ground based augmentation systems that exist across Europe. Coordinating these, frequently public initiatives, would be an additional asset for the user segments when operating at borders or in international projects.
- CLGE should be regarded as a strong user community available for cooperation with the GSA and other relevant authorities, especially when it comes to voice the needs remarks and suggestions about existing or missing services.

First STEP in professional live

CLGE has developed an initiative called First STEP (First Students and Trainees Exchange Programme). We are looking for companies willing to take part in this effort by offering traineeship or student jobs for 2012 and 2013.

Please read the advertisement in the First STEP section of our website www.clge.eu or contact Michelle Camilleri for additional information (michelle.camilleri@clge.eu).



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In the last issue of GeoInformatics (2012-2) we've provided a lot of short news. This was an invitation to follow us on Twitter.