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Space: European Commission to sign landmark Cooperation Arrangements with three Latin American partners

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As part of its Space Diplomacy and to allow the benefits of its Copernicus Earth Observation and Monitoring programme to extend beyond the EU territory, on 8 March the European Commission will sign Cooperation Arrangements with Chile, Colombia and Brazil

The Copernicus programme provides a wide range of applications, e.g. land, ocean and atmosphere monitoring as well as support in the forecasting, management and mitigation of natural disasters. Its full, free and open data policy has proven its merits by allowing the development of a thriving user base in Europe and beyond.

Recognising that data sharing will provide mutual benefits, the European Commission and three Latin American countries, Chile, Colombia and Brazil, have decided to sign Cooperation Arrangements with the aim to strengthen and stimulate cooperation on Earth observation.

Under these arrangements, the European Commission intends to provide its partners in the three countries with access to the data from the Copernicus Sentinel satellites using high bandwidth connections from data hub to data hub. The three cooperation arrangements include reciprocity clauses benefitting all parties. In the case of Brazil, this reciprocity clause will allow the Copernicus programme to gain full, free and open access to Brazilian Earth observation satellite data (e.g. from the CBERS satellites).

Considering the importance of in situ observations, which are complementary to space-based observations, the three Latin American partner countries will facilitate access to in-situ data from their regional observatory networks, including geophysical and meteorological networks, to support the enhancement of the Copernicus data architecture and the development of global products.

These Cooperation Arrangements are also expected to lead to the development of an active downstream sector in the European Union and in the three partner countries as well as to joint product development. They aim at facilitating the involvement of the private sector in the development of products and services, i.e. by enabling policies and supporting inventories of relevant private sector companies.

Both sides wish to foster cooperation activities in the areas of data access and use of Copernicus Sentinel data for the agencies entrusted with the operations of the Sentinel satellites on one hand and data centres in the partner countries on the other.

Chilean, Colombian and Brazilian partners will provide technical support to the Copernicus programme for calibration and assessment of the data generated by the Sentinel satellites for Latin America and to jointly develop new applications.

Both sides support free, full and open access for end users to Sentinel satellite data and information, and each side will fund their own activities and adhere to the principle of ‘no exchange of funds’.

The Cooperation Arrangements will be signed on 8 March by Philippe Brunet, Director for Space Policy, Copernicus and Defence, on behalf of the European Commission and by the Undersecretariat of Telecommunications (for the Republic of Chile), the Institute of Hydrology, Meteorology and Environmental Studies (IDEAM, for the Republic of Colombia) and by the Ministry for Science, Technology, Innovation and Communication (for the Federative Republic of Brazil).

Background

Copernicus, a leading provider of Earth observation data across the globe, already helps save lives at sea, improves our response to natural disasters such as earthquakes, forest fires or floods, and allows farmers to better manage their crops, collects data from Earth observation satellites and ground stations, airborne and sea-borne sensors.

The benefits and full, free and open data policy of the Copernicus programme extend globally.

For example, the European Commission's Emergency Response Coordination Centre activated the EU Copernicus Emergency mapping service for damage assessment grading maps for the most affected areas by the January 2017 forest fires in Chile. Similar support had been provided in the aftermath of the September 2016 earthquake in the same country.

Copernicus processes data and provides users with reliable and up-to-date information through a set of services in six thematic areas: land monitoring, marine monitoring, atmosphere monitoring, climate change, emergency management response and security.

These services are operational and are enabled by the Earth observation data from the six Copernicus Sentinel satellites currently in orbit, as well as a number of contribution missions from other operators.

More information available at:
Copernicus web site
Space Strategy for Europe

Stockshots
Video: the Copernicus Programme
Stockshots: EU space programmes