



BSERVE

Strengthening and development of Earth
Observation activities for the environment
in the Balkan area

NEWSLETTER

No. 5 - July 2012



BELGRADE CARAVAN WORKSHOP & CONSORTIUM MEETING
ROADMAP PRESENTATION AND RESULTS
EARTHQUAKE DISASTER MANAGEMENT USING
REMOTE SENSING TECHNIQUES IN CROATIA



EDITORIAL

Dear friends of OBSERVE,



It has been evident since the beginning of our activities that the huge amount of important data collected within the gap analysis and roadmap framework, would provide us with the opportunity to deliver a comprehensive analysis on the current status of EO activities in the Balkans. The results so far in terms of data collected and stakeholder engagement, exceed our expectations and we are confident that will enable us to compile measures and strategies that can maximize use of EO data for the benefit of the environment and beyond.

Within this issue we summarize and present some relevant and realistic challenges that can be addressed to the EO community as well as decision makers and politicians in the region regarding identified gaps. In addition we have defined key priorities and future trends, referring to the recognized regional priorities. Finally recognizing the importance of institutional networking and capacity building we present results from the 2nd CARAVAN capacity building workshop in Belgrade Serbia, as well as relevant networking initiatives within the framework of GEO.

OBSERVE project is entering the final and most productive phase of a series of open activities that will lead to the OBSERVE Symposium in Thessaloniki, Greece on 15-16 October 2012 titled "OBSERVE – Earth Observation activities in the Balkans: Building on experiences".

Tentative program and administrative details will be available soon through our website. We are looking forward to meeting you in Thessaloniki and share useful experience with you.

Petros Patias
OBSERVE Coordinator

The Newsletter is informative publication of the OBSERVE project for dissemination and promotion of project activities and results.

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Please find more information on: <http://www.observe-fp7.eu/>



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THE OBSERVE CARAVAN WORKSHOP IN BELGRADE



This CARAVAN workshop that was held in Belgrade Serbia (17.05.2012) was the second of a series of informational events organized by OBSERVE project and targeting Balkan EO stakeholders. The CARAVAN training workshop was organized by OBSERVE project and hosted by the local partners of GISDATA and University of Belgrade.

The aims of the Workshop were to inform participants on Earth Observation (EO) activities with focus on European Union and GEO, exchange views on how the above relates or can relate to EO activities in the Balkans, inform speakers and leading EO institutions on needs regarding EO in the Balkans and build-up networks and co-operations, with focus on capacity building and more extensive use of EO.

The speakers in the Workshop were all by invitation and highly esteemed experts and officials from European and international organizations.

For more information about the event please visit [EVENTS section](#).

OBSERVE CONSORTIUM MEETING IN BELGRADE

The regular OBSERVE project meeting was after the CARAVAN workshop in the University of Belgrade. This meeting provided the OBSERVE partners the opportunity to review progress on elements of the projects that are entering the final and most important stage, such as the the policy roadmap, the competition and the OBSERVE events in Split and Thessaloniki.



OBSERVE AT GEO EUROPEAN PROJECTS WORKSHOP (GEPW6)



OBSERVE project and coordinator Prof. Patias attended the 6th GEO European Projects Workshop (GEPW6) that took place at the premises of the National Research Council of Italy (CNR) in Rome on 7 - 8 May 2012.

The workshop brought together those interested in actively contributing to the European effort in the construction of the GEOSS. Participants were mainly from European Commission-funded projects, representatives of

GEO Member States, organizations participating in GEO as well as other concerned individuals. A series of keynote addresses and project presentations were concentrated mainly on the implementation of the GEO Work Plan over the next three years and address how Europe can best contribute. A poster session was also organized.



Prof. Patias presented results of OBSERVE project that deal with the issue of creating critical mass of EO related activities in the Balkans and more specifically Capacity building and Gap Analysis of Earth observation capacity in the Balkans.

Download workshop agenda [here](#).

Download OBSERVE project GEPW6 presentation [here](#).

POST GEWP6 WORKSHOP IN ROME

EGIDA, BALKANGEONET and OBSERVE Joint Workshop projects organized a joint workshop immediately following the GEPW6 on the 9th May. This workshop also took place at the CNR on Wednesday, 09th May 2012. The workshop focused in Capacity Building and Resources Mobilization for the Balkan region and more specifically on the question of how to integrate the outcomes of the FP7 projects.

Participants had the opportunity to get informed on the latest development and results of the 3 funded projects through detailed presentations and open discussions on future developments and remedies.

Download workshop agenda [here](#).

Download OBSERVE project presentation [here](#).



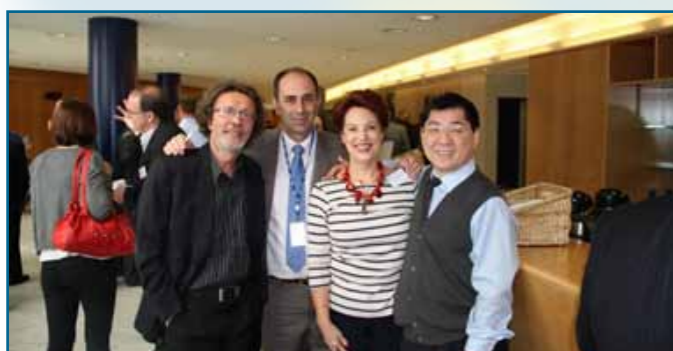
OBSERVE AT THE GEO WORK PLAN SYMPOSIUM 2012 IN GENEVA

OBSERVE project was represented at the third Work Plan Symposium held on 30 April-2 May 2012 in Geneva, Switzerland convening about 130 participants from 43 GEO Members and Participating Organizations. The Work Plan Symposium represented a key opportunity to highlight progress, exchange information, and foster coordination across the whole Work Plan. The main focus was on cross fertilization of the new Tasks – bringing together Leads and contributors from all GEOSS areas as well as members of the new Implementation Boards.

Key objectives of the Symposium were to:

- Identify cross-cutting issues and build synergies across Tasks;
- Guide and accelerate Work Plan implementation;
- Support progress assessment towards the GEOSS 2015 Strategic Targets;
- Collectively address issues and gaps; and
- Develop practical recommendations for the 2013 Work Plan update.

All Symposium documents (incl. presentations) may be downloaded [here](#).



ORGANISATION AND FUNCTIONING OF NSDI IN THE REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA - UPT PARTICIPATES IN LEGISLATIVE PREPARATION PROCEDURES

On 28 June, the Albanian Parliament approved the Project Law: “Organisation and functioning of NSDI in the Republic of Albania”, where main outcome was the Establishment of the Governmental Authority on Spatial Data and Geoinformation.

Albanian OBSERVE Partner University Polytechnic of Tirana (UPT) participated actively in drafting the law as scientific partner of the Governmental Group by conducting several presentations and meeting with policy makers and providing useful insight on INSPIRE related issues. It must be underlined that this development signals a new era for Albania regarding future participation in the international institutional context.



UPCOMING B.GNET & OBSERVE JOINT WORKSHOP IN SPLIT CROATIA

University Library, Split, Croatia
September 24-25, 2012



more information at:
<http://balkangeo.net>



OBSERVE AT THE TRAINING WORKSHOP AT THE SEISMIC INSTITUTE IN TIRANA ALBANIA

Balkan GeoNet Project in collaboration with OBSERVE project organized a training workshop for local stakeholders at the Seismic Institute, Tirana Albania on the 21st June 2012. The workshop informed participants on the principles of GEO and GEOSS and INSPIRE and was attended by 31 participants.



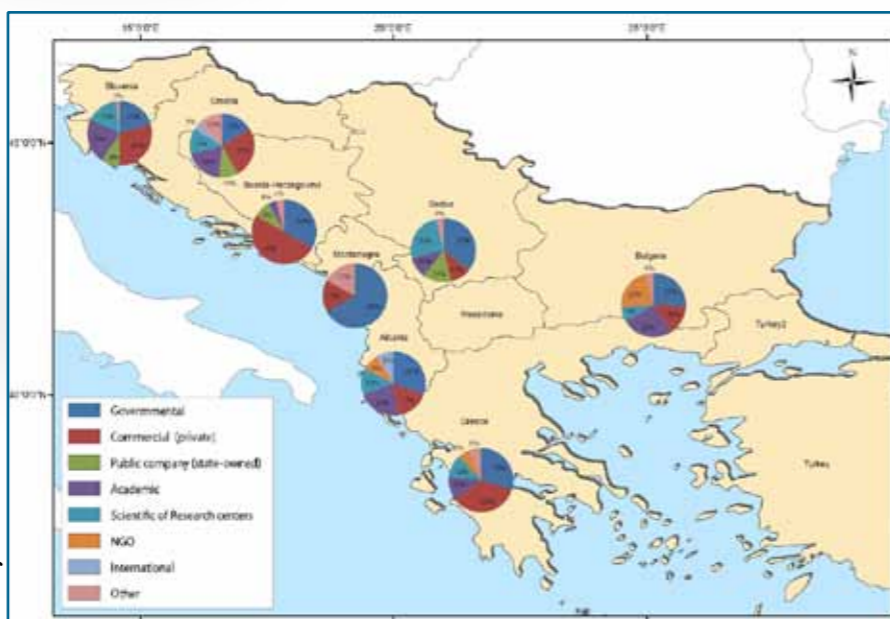
ROADMAP AND STRATEGY PLAN FOR STRENGTHENING EO CAPACITY IN THE BALKANS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING

The Deliverable D2.5 deals with the analysis and synthesis of the work accomplished within the OBSERVE project and presents its upgrade into the strategy plan and the roadmap for the Balkan countries that cooperated in this project.

The main goal of the OBSERVE project has been to collect and compile all the necessary information for delivering an integrated analysis on the current status of Earth Observation activities and networks in the Balkan area regarding environmental monitoring, the potential benefit from the full exploitation of an integrated capacity development strategy and the prospect of establishing a relevant permanent EO Community in the region. The methodology applied in the OBSERVE project consists of different steps and activities. As a first step, the database of stakeholders, who are active in the broader field of the EO, has been created. The database contains basic data on identified stakeholders in the countries that cooperated in the OBSERVE project. The structure of database was defined in cooperation with the partners from the BalkanGEONet project. The partners in the OBSERVE consortium and BalkanGEONet consortium identified stakeholders from their own country using different strategies (contacts from their business, contact with state administration, internet examination, interviews with possible stakeholders etc.).

In the field of EO activities, the critical point found for the Balkan countries is how to create a future environment of cooperation between different partners and at various levels where companies of different scale from many countries would be involved in joint projects. Experience gained in projects supported by the EU paves the way towards the future models of cooperation and will help to identify new products and market niches for these products and services. Future cooperation between Balkan partners becomes much easier if experience from initial projects is already available. In this sense, the OBSERVE project has significantly contributed through developing a network and capacity building in the region.

Many activities within the OBSERVE projects have been focused to collect information and investigate the current state of affairs in the field of the EO in the Balkan region. The analysis of this very detailed data shows that there are inevitable differences between the contributing countries due to historical, political and other reasons. On the other hand, we can find many common trends as well striving after some common goals and actions of the EO in the region.



Based on different inputs of the project, the roadmap and strategy plan has been prepared as an important result of the project. The following short term and medium term actions have been proposed:

Short term (1-2 years):

- Start initiatives to set a common GEO forum for networking and application exchange at the national level.
- Consider and evaluate ways to participate in international standards bodies and activities in the EO domain (e.g. OGC working groups, GEOSS Architecture Implementation Pilot).
- Develop different communication channels for international and national exchange of ideas on various aspects of Earth observation activities and environmental monitoring (South-Eastern European Journal of Earth Observation and Geomatics - SEEJoEOG, e-forum or blog for thematic discussions etc.).
- Promote GEOSS as a common data platform in the region for data producers, providers and end-users that will allow the sharing and exchange of EO data.
- Strengthen scientific, research and educational cooperation by different activities (follow scientific development and expand to other, not traditional market niches; develop new applications; continue the knowledge-transfer concept named CARAVAN - visit a target audience at their location rather than transporting them to the scientific and professional events; develop a model for training courses and workshops for the region as a permanent education for the professional community; use available tools; organize seminars by universities or professional associations tailored to the needs of the Balkan countries; use the good practice of the ISPRS Summer School Seminars as a model for cooperation in the Balkan region; promote the currently available exchange programs for students, researchers, professors e.g. Erasmus, CEEPUS).
- Offer institutional support (at the regional and European level) to the countries that are not yet GEO members (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) in order to help them to join the GEO, as well as provide support for cooperation with ESA (only Greece is ESA member; in the region Romania is also ESA member but was not the partner of the project and therefore not included into the study).
- Encourage national bodies to perform market researches on the end-users needs (at the national and regional level) aiming at getting objective information on real needs and achieving a qualitative collaboration between the end-user, EO producers and providers.

Medium terms (5-7 years):

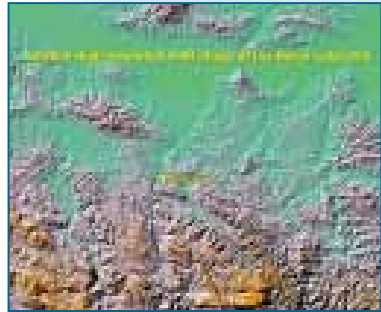
- Extend the initiative of a common GEO forum for networking and application exchange from the national to the Balkan region.
- Further expand dissemination and stakeholder involvement.
- Disseminate good practices to other parts of the world.
- Further promotion of GEOSS data sharing facilities.
- Organize permanent training courses and workshops in the region.
- Increase cooperation between the universities in the region (student and teacher exchange; organization of specialized courses, etc.).
- Strive for increasing funding for scientific research in the EO field.
- Take advantage of future EU open calls in the Environment.

EARTHQUAKE DISASTER MANAGEMENT USING REMOTE SENSING TECHNIQUES IN CROATIA



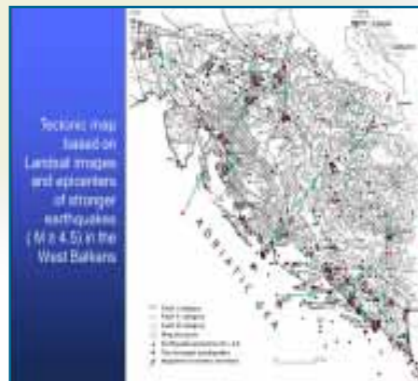
Prof. Marinko Oluic

Earthquakes and floods are the most devastating natural disasters. The Balkan area, as a part of the Mediterranean region, is seismotectonically the most active part of the Europe. Numerous earthquakes occurred in this region. Most of them with a catastrophic result. To depict the areas of the high seismotectonic activity, remote sensing techniques, particularly satellite images, are very useful for registration of different structural elements important for seismotectonic relations.



Geotectonic movements in the Earth's crust are the major contributors to earthquakes emergencies. The results of tectonic movements have been manifested through the geological features of the terrain: faults, folds, ring structures etc.

The tectonic map of the Western part of the Balkan, shows the faults registered on satellite images, as well as the epicentres of large magnitude earthquakes. Most of these earthquakes' epicentres are located along the large faults, or at their intersections (Examples: Banja Luka, Zagreb, Ljubljana etc.).



For a detailed seismotectonic exploration, the High resolution satellite radar images are very useful (Example Banja Luka): for the recognition of structural elements, and the intersections of strong faults.

The catastrophic earthquake which occurred in Banja Luka in 1969, had its epicenter just on the intersection between faults of different orientation.

Data obtained from satellite images in combination with the data obtained by geophysical surveying and the data obtained by instrumental measurement of earthquakes:

- (1) give an opportunity for better understanding of seismic-tectonic activity,
- (2) allow terrain classification according to the degree of potential seismic activity, and
- (3) give an insight into possible seismic risk.

The passage above is part of the multilingual interviews held by OBSERVE project consortium that will be available and presented during the final OBSERVE Symposium.

UPCOMING FINAL EVENT IN THESSALONIKI



Earth Observation activities in the Balkans Building on experiences

October 15-16, 2012
Thessaloniki, Greece

- Capitalizing the outcomes of the OBSERVE project.
- Scaling up in challenging times.
- Sharing experiences.
- Raising awareness in the Balkans.
- Emerging policies and support.

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