

Key stakeholders came together to discuss the ‘now and tomorrow’ of Earth Observation at the two-day EXPANDEO and the FIRE Forum 2022 joint event

Brussels, 15 June 2021

The EXPANDEO and FIRE Forum 2022 joint event took place on the 14th and 15th of June 2022 at the International Auditorium in Brussels and online. Key representatives from user communities, Earth Observation (EO) service providers and institutional actors attended this two-day event to discuss the ‘now and tomorrow’ of EO in Europe. This is the second year EXPANDEO and the FIRE FORUM join forces to bring to discuss how Earth Observation can be brought closer to users.

The first day was dedicated to the FIRE Forum which targets EO uptake in six key industries –agriculture, wind energy, infrastructure, marine, raw materials and urban development. After an introduction by EARSC Secretary General Emmanuel Pajot, the audience was welcomed by a video message from Thierry Breton, Commissioner for the Internal Market. Keynote speaker Isabella Poldrugo (Deputy Head of Unit, DG DEFIS) emphasized the “wide range of socioeconomic benefits for citizens around the world” brought by EO, as well as the role of Earth Observation in addressing current European challenges. This speech also highlighted two pillars of action – green transition and increasing security and European autonomy – which were echoed in many discussions of the day.

What followed was an intensive day composed of seven panels, bringing together 37 speakers and moderators to discuss a various range of cross-cutting topics, including research and development trends, policy, capacity building, market development, and technological infrastructure enabling EO. “We – the FIRE team – are very proud to have successfully achieved our objectives to build a strong community and a well-defined process that captures the ‘now’ and shapes the ‘tomorrow’ of the European EO sector,” said Natassa Antoniou, the project coordinator from EARSC. The discussions at the second FIRE Forum were built upon findings from the first and second round of FIRE Focus Group events, as well as the first FIRE Forum which took place last June 2021. All these activities are shaping the roadmap of the research and development strategy for Earth Observation in Europe, which will be delivered at the end of the FIRE project.

At the end of the first day of EXPANDEO, EARSC held its **EARSC Awards 2022 ceremony**, where the winners of the EARSC Awards were announced in four categories at the BelVue museum in Brussels followed by a reception and a networking opportunity. The winners of the EARSC Awards are the following:

- The European Start-Up Award – **OilX Ltd**
- The European Partnership Award –**Hypos by EOMAP, SMHI, NTNU, CNR, Gruner-Stucky**
- The European Product Award – **AgroSoil by GAF AG GmbH**
- The European Company Award – **Kayrros**

All twelve finalists were recognised as well and received the certificates.

On the **15th of June** we started the second day of EXPANDEO with the **Annual General meeting** restricted to EARSC members. The members accepted the new board.

The second day of EXPANDEO continued with **‘Green Deal Dialogue’** sessions discussing how to establish a dialogue with the policy process:

- on the New EU framework to forest monitoring and strategic plans, the Legislative act to reduce methane emissions in the oil, gas and coal sectors and Certifying Carbon removals.
- the **“EO4GreenDealPolicies”** dedicated to facilitating conversation and exchange views on the contribution of satellite-EO based services for the measurement, reporting and verification (MRV) on certain policies as well as to deliver crucial information to support the Green Deal agenda.

- the **'Accounts for Green Deal'** where we discussed about EU and national policy makers needs of information on the extent and condition of ecosystems to improve their management, environmental statistics or how EO is supporting the 2030 agenda.
- the **'Global Development for Green Deal'** to capitalise on EO information to achieve sustainable development presenting ESA initiatives such the EO4SD Forest Management cluster and the GDA AID Climate Resilience cluster.

And the last sessions were about the contribution of the two projects 'Harmonia' and 'e-shape' EARSC is involved in. The Harmonia session shed light on the various administrative levels that contribute to tackling Climate Change within the project, from the pilot cities to the national and European levels. The aim of this workshop was to connect the urban and Earth Observation (EO) communities as well as increase awareness in regards to EO-based solutions tackling climate change in an urban environment. The final session **'User communities engagement supporting the green transition'** introducing the e-shape project and addressing the challenges for a convincing user/market uptake strategy. We also discussed how to develop relations among EO and non-EO communities and how the public, research and private sector can strengthen EURO GEO and Copernicus to contribute to GEO/Geo.

The EXPANDEO 2022 journey ended with a speech from **EARSC Secretary General Emmanuel Pajot** thanking all the speakers and attendees for contributing to the success of this hybrid event. We thank all the speakers and participants for spending these two intensive and insightful days of EXPANDEO & the FIRE Forum 2022 with us and making it a success.

If you have any suggestions or feedback for the next EXPANDEO edition in 2023, please reach out via e-mail to info@earsc.org.

For more details about the FIRE project activities, please visit the [FIRE project website](#) or contact us:

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About FIRE

FIRE is the first initiative fully dedicated to bringing actors from key commercial sectors together to outline the now and tomorrow of their market and to use these insights to shape a strategic roadmap for the EO downstream sector. FIRE will focus on fostering the development of current and new markets and supporting capacity building activities to realise the EO-enabled benefits. During the next two years, the project will further engage sector community representatives and promote the benefits of EO among their sectors. Conclusions from these user-driven activities will ultimately be a major contribution in developing a roadmap and Research and Development strategy for EO to address the needs and challenges of the six FIRE focus sectors and beyond. The three-year project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No 869634. Its consortium brings together four partners: [EARSC](#) is partnering with SMEs supporting innovation and user uptake ([Evenflow](#) and [Verhaert](#)) and the [National Observatory of Athens](#).

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