



Piraeus, 19 February 2021

ANNOUNCEMENT

Memorandum of Cooperation between the Hellenic Statistical Authority and the National Observatory of Athens / Greek GEO Office

The utilisation of earth-observation data, for statistical purposes, is the subject matter of the cooperation between the Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) and the National Observatory of Athens (NOA), which hosts the Greek GEO Office (GGO), the main representative of Greece in the Group on Earth Observations (GEO).

The President of ELSTAT, Dr. **Athanasios C. Thanopoulos**, the President of the NOA, Prof. **Emmanouil Plionis**, the Director of the GGO Dr. **Evangelos Gerasopoulos** and the National Representative at the GEO, Prof. **Christos Zerefos**, were remotely gathered on 18 February 2021, as dictated by the pandemic restrictions, to formalize the substantial initialization of the current Memorandum of Cooperation, whose signature by all parties was completed on 30 December 2020.

Taking into account the current needs for managing geospatial information for the production of statistics and the rapid progress of technology and science in the field of Earth Observation, the cooperation of the two agencies aims to compile and monitor national and European statistical indicators, as well as to monitor the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals, using Earth observation data. The main pillars of the joint effort are the development of relevant methodologies, knowledge sharing and pilot testing of the use of Earth observation data and information for specific statistical indicators.

"The development, production and dissemination of statistics by utilising Earth observation data is the most modern, but also the most comprehensive and intuitive way for analysing and depicting statistical information, giving special added value to the statistical product. ELSTAT, in the context of developing synergies with scientific and social agencies, is looking forward to the cooperation with the National Observatory of Athens and the Greek GEO Office, especially in the light of the first geospatial Agricultural-Livestock Census and the first geospatial Population-Housing Census for 2021", said the President of ELSTAT, Dr. **Athanasios C. Thanopoulos**.

"The cooperation initiated between the National Observatory of Athens (NOA) and ELSTAT is in the context of a rigorous policy of NOA for developing synergies, at national level, on issues related to the combat against Climate Change and its impact, an important tool towards this direction being the collection and statistical processing of large amounts of Earth observation data but also of social and economic parameters. This cooperation will undoubtedly have the multiplier benefits produced when agencies join forces at national level", stated the President of the NOA, Prof. **Emmanouil Plionis**.

"The synergy between statistical offices and research and academic entities specialised in Earth observation, including both satellite and ground-based observations, is a global challenge that has recently been particularly highlighted by a plethora of international actors. With this Memorandum of



Cooperation, Greece is automatically among the first countries to initiate such a cooperation systematically, while facilitating the transfer of know-how and the adoption of good practices, within and across borders", said the Director of the GGO Dr. **Evangelos Gerasopoulos**.

"The framework for implementing the Sustainable Development Goals in the United Nations 2030 Agenda is an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the added value of the combined use of statistical, socio-economic and Earth observation data, assisting Greece to fulfil its obligations to monitor the relevant indicators", said the National Representative at the GEO, Prof. **Christos Zerefos**.

The main initiatives of ELSTAT and the Greek GEO Office include, inter alia, the creation of a joint task force, the submission of proposals and participation in research/academic programmes, the organisation of communication actions to inform stakeholders and the presentation of relevant pilot applications.

Finally, it should be noted that ELSTAT, as a member of the European Statistical System and provider of official statistics in Greece, and the Greek GEO Office, as the contact point for Earth observations at national level and representative in the intergovernmental organisation GEO, will both contribute to promoting issues pertaining to the combination of socio-economic data with Earth observation data.

About ELSTAT

The Hellenic Statistical Authority (ELSTAT) is the National Statistical Institute of Greece. The mission of ELSTAT is to safeguard and continuously improve the quality of official statistics of Greece. Its purpose is to produce, on a regular basis, relevant and reliable statistics on all areas of private and public sector activities, by observing the highest international and European statistical standards.

More information about ELSTAT is available on its website at: www.statistics.gr

About the Greek GEO Office/National Observatory of Athens

The action of the Greek GEO Office (GGO) focuses on the coordinated and effective participation of Greece in the global and regional activities of the Group on Earth Observations (GEO). It aims to maximise synergies between the main partners of earth observation in Greece, involving different communities of users, stakeholders and industry. It assumes a connecting and coordinating role, while promoting the principles of open sharing of data, information and knowledge.

More information about the Greek GEO Office is available on its website at: <http://www.greekgeo.noa.gr/>

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