



EuroGOOS
European Global Ocean
Observing System

EG14.43
8 May 2014

EuroGOOS AISBL

Chairman's Report 2014

Chairman's Report

2013 was the year when EuroGOOS ended a long journey to become a legal entity – **the EuroGOOS AISBL**. Therefore 2014 in my mind is the year when we shall redirect our full focus back to the many challenges that we face in the implementation of a strong, high quality and sustainable operational oceanographic system in Europe, a process where EuroGOOS has an important role to play. This is a task that has the full attention of the EuroGOOS Board and the EuroGOOS Office.

Strategy

The first step in planning the future activities of EuroGOOS is formulation of a strategy with clear priorities and goals for the coming years. The Board and the Office has started, under the leadership of Kostas Nittis, the work of formulating a EuroGOOS Strategy for 2014-2020 and a draft is available for this meeting.

Realising our environment is constantly changing, it is important that we regard the strategy document as a living document that needs a regular (annual) update.

ROOS's

It is a high priority for me to take part in the annual meetings of the ROOS's in order to get more familiar with the work, the challenges and the people engaged in the individual ROOS's. Due to the changed timing of our annual meeting I have up to now only had the chance to take part in the meetings of Arctic ROOS, IBI-ROOS and BOOS but I look forward to also meet with NOOS and MONGOOS later this year.

It is my impression that during the past years, where EuroGOOS have had a relatively low activity level due to the organisational transition process, the ROOS's have continued to develop its activities and I certainly feel that a lot of good and solid work is done to the benefit and development of operational oceanography. It is also my impression that the level of activities and the direction of priorities are differing from region to region – this is probably natural since the challenges are different. I however think that we shall be observant on this in order not to have too large differences in the level of services between individual ROOS's; I therefore suggest to find ways to increase the communication, coordination, inspiration and harmonisation between the regions.

Working Groups

Opposite to the ROOS's our Working Groups have lived, except for the DATAMEQ WG, a rather silent life over the past years, which I feel is a pity, since in the early days of EuroGOOS our working groups really had a strong position and contributed substantially to defining the scientific and technological priorities for

operational oceanography. It is a pleasure to follow how the work of the DATAMEQ WG is recognised and used on a global scale.

The WG's are an important part of the implementation of the new EuroGOOS Strategy. It is therefore of high priority to revitalise all our WG's in order for EuroGOOS to regain a strong position in the definition of scientific, technological and product/service priorities. For this reason, we have over the past months put efforts into appointing new members to some of the WG's as well as a new chair for the SAWG (see the report of the Secretary General).

I do however still feel some of the WG's could use more members, so I shall hereby sincerely urge the EuroGOOS members to appoint members to our WG's – the outcome of the WG's hard work is to the benefit of the EuroGOOS members!

I also think that it is important that we in close cooperation with the WG chairs on an annual basis define clear priorities, goals and timelines for their work.

Ocean observations

An important task of EuroGOOS is the coordination of European contribution to a sustained marine observation system. Much of this work is done in the framework of the ROOS's who coordinate the regional activities and the members who secure the practical collection, handling, quality control of data and secure the availability of data and data products.

On the overall level, EuroGOOS has engaged itself in preparing for the future by being an active partner in the GMES-PURE project with the task of mapping future requirements for satellite data. Additionally EuroGOOS plays a leading role in promoting the concept of a European Ocean Observing System (EOOS), a system intended to be based on past and planned investments. This effort will be carried out in close collaboration with the European Marine Board and others. The conceptual idea of EOOS has been presented by EuroGOOS at several conferences and has been positively received.

In relation to exchange of marine data, EuroGOOS is also playing a leading role especially through EU's EMODnet programme, and it is amazing to see the increase in the exchange of real time marine observations we have experienced over the past 15 years due to the work done within EuroGOOS and its ROOS's. This work is well recognized globally and the EuroGOOS office is supporting the development in other GOOS Regional Alliances.

Promotion

One of the purposes of EuroGOOS is promotion of operational oceanography, an activity that we address by giving presentations at various conferences. Since our last annual meeting, I have represented EuroGOOS at the Oceanology International 2014 conference on ocean observations and the European Maritime days where EuroGOOS had a joint workshop with EMODnet.

Additionally EuroGOOS has a strong challenge in promoting itself to resume the strong visibility, we had a few years ago; but also to signal that we now are a sovereign organisation, that represents operational oceanography in Europe and that can enter into contract on projects or similar.

Fortunately, the two promotion activities can to a large extent be combined and important tools in this activity are:

- **EuroGOOS web page** – it is very satisfactory that EuroGOOS's new web page is now alive, but to make this a strong promotion tool, it is important that the members are helpful by providing informations (a good way to promote your own activities, products and services)
- **Presentations at conferences and meetings** – a good way to visualise both EuroGOOS and operational oceanography, which we continuously will use; but taking into account the wealth of conferences offers available and the limited human resources we have available, it is extremely important that we select the right venues for our promotion activities.
- **EuroGOOS Conference** – a key activity of EuroGOOS over the years. The seventh conference is under preparation and it is very satisfactory to notice that we have received more than 125 abstracts for the conference, which I take as a sign of great interest.
- **Publications** – EuroGOOS has produced over the years some very valuable publications although not so much in recent years. It is my hope we can increase our publication activity again and I especially want to rely on the working groups to be active here.

Other activities are also important for instance, it is important to hang onto and grow the network of organisations in Europe with whom EuroGOOS has established good working relations.

In our strong focus on external promotion, it is important not to forget the internal promotion. It is important to keep our members well informed about our activities also in between the annual meetings. For this reason the Secretary General and I have agreed to initiate a monthly “news mail” with updates of the past months prime events in bullet form – you received the first mail mid April.

Copernicus

During the past few years, EuroGOOS has followed closely the preparations for a Copernicus Marine Service and has participated actively in the ECOMF planning work where the Secretary General and the Chair have represented EuroGOOS and we have via the ECOMF Strategic Partnership WG supported the ECOMF preparations. The recent discussions have displayed a clear role for EuroGOOS to address national uptake and to lead the science advisory work in support of ECOMF.

Additionally EuroGOOS has taken a strong position in the coordination of the marine observation part and in that context signed an agreement with EEA in early 2013.

The recent developments are:

- EU have launched a call for expression of interest for providing the Copernicus Marine Service.
- ECOMF, represented by Mercator Ocean, responded to this call as the only one.

- EU have started negotiations with Mercator Ocean, but not ECOMF. They want Mercator Ocean to lead the Marine Service but a majority of the services shall be subject to an open tender.
- The ocean observation part has not been clearly defined yet.

The situation is therefore rather unclear right now and thereby the role that EuroGOOS can play; but we will follow the developments closely.

Global Cooperation

During the past 1-2 years EuroGOOS has increased its working relations with the “global” GOOS primarily through the GOOS Regional Alliances but also to the IOC GOOS office (see Secretary General’s report).

I feel it is an important step in the right direction that we engage ourselves and take responsibility to support the development of the global setup. We have a lot to contribute because the European system is a rather advanced system, but we also have a lot to gain and learn from the other regional systems and we certainly have a strong interest in cooperation with other regional alliances and nations on matters relating specifically to the Atlantic - and Arctic Ocean. We must remember that operational oceanography is, like meteorology, a global discipline, which requires a strong global cooperation for a proper execution.

Projects

Because of our new organisational status, EuroGOOS has become an attractive partner in project applications and the office has the past months been rather active in several project application to EU, which is a positive development!! We have, however; also, here to be selective taking into account the limited personnel resources we have available, unless we want to enter into a discussion of increasing the staff. In the selection process, the guidelines for engagement in project applications worked out last year have been quite instrumental.

EuroGOOS office

The EuroGOOS office facilities at BELSPO, Brussels are now well established and they form a good platform for our future activities.

Unfortunately, we have been facing the fact that the medical operation and subsequent recovery of the Secretary General has taken longer than expected having the effect that he has not been able to leave Athens for several months. It has however not prevented Kostas Nittis from working hard and dedicated for EuroGOOS and I am extremely grateful and full of admiration for the work he has managed to carry out in the shadow of severe health conditions. It is my sincere hope he soon will recover fully, so that we all can benefit from his presence in Brussels and enjoy his pleasant company and strong engagement for EuroGOOS.



Since the last annual meeting the negotiations with SMHI on secondment of Patrick Gorrige has turned in a positive direction, so that a new contract between SMHI and EuroGOOS now is in place. I am very grateful to SMHI for their understanding and positive cooperation in this matter and I am certainly very happy that we can continue to have Patrick Gorrige on board EuroGOOS.

Finally I would like to thank Yota Antoniou for her very good and professional contribution to EuroGOOS - most of the time holding the fort alone in the Brussels office, and for her always positive and very helpful attitude.

