



EARSC Statement

Update of the EU maritime security strategy and its action plan

The European Association of Remote Sensing Companies ([EARSC](https://www.earsc.org)) is a trade association based in Brussels, representing the European downstream services sector. EARSC counts more than 135 members across 25 countries of Europe.

Maritime safety and security is a critical matter in the European Union (EU) political agenda as challenges and threats in the maritime domain have been steadily increasing over the past few years. EARSC welcomes the initiative of updating the EU Maritime Security Strategy to upscale the EU's response in a new geopolitical context and address the new challenges.

An accurate and real-time monitoring of oceans and seas is crucial to provide relevant organizations, governments and agencies with reliable information and tools to support decision-making and contributing to more efficient marine operations and further development of the Blue economy¹. High-resolution satellite imagery is critical for ocean monitoring, providing insights into ecosystems and marine life for the fishing industry, measuring temperatures (essential for weather forecasting, for example), or monitoring shipping lanes and locating vessels.

Space technologies, such as remote sensing capabilities are a key asset for an enhanced maritime security. Owing to the rapid increase in global shipping traffic during recent years, there is growing need for constant innovation in the field of maritime surveillance. The combination of emerging ICT technologies, in-situ observations, evolving satellite derived data and services and processing capabilities are providing an unprecedented capability to observe,

¹ According to the 2018 Annual Economic Report on EU Blue Economy, it comprises all the economic activities related to oceans, seas and coasts, that cover of established sectors (eg.: Aquaculture, fisheries, coastal tourism, maritime transport, etc.) and Earth Observation can be a game changer

understand, and anticipate marine events that can have an impact on maritime safety and security.

The Copernicus programme² gives a unique set of observations from Sentinel satellites and commercial missions, which provide unmatched spatial and temporal coverage with different sensors and resolutions. Through more regularity in the imaging, the nature and frequency of activity can be ascertained and responded to promptly. The Sentinel missions support marine monitoring by providing timely, continuous and independent data on the behaviour, use, and health of the oceans and the associated coastal zones. The [Copernicus Maritime Surveillance Service](#) supports improved monitoring of activities at sea and data can be immediately ingested by the relevant users into their operational systems.

By providing routine, cost effective, wide area surveillance over all maritime zones, satellite-derived data and services support in the most timely and effective manner maritime safety and security operations such as: improving navigation risk modelling and shipping routes, vessel identification and location (shape, dimension and route); tracking objects at sea; monitoring marine pollution such as oil spill detection ; accident and disaster response; search and rescue operations as well as maritime border and fisheries control and law enforcement.

Remote sensing capabilities for monitoring the state of oceans and seas play a key role in maritime safety and security. Satellite data provides maritime intelligence remotely, reducing the necessity for location-based surveillance and giving insights on the movement of vessels in hard-to-reach areas at sea.

Consequently, EARSC believes that should specify that Earth Observation data and added-value services are operational solutions, which shall be used for the development of an enhanced EU maritime security strategy.

EARSC remains at your disposal to work together on this objective.

² Copernicus is the European Union's Earth observation programme coordinated and managed for the European Commission by the European Union Agency for the Space Programme in partnership with the European Space Agency, the EU Member States (www.copernicus.eu)