

# EU Legislation to (un)control dissemination of High Resolution Imagery

The EP held a stakeholder meeting on Wednesday to gather views on the High Resolution directive which the EC has proposed. The EP rapporteurs had called the meeting to get a better understanding of what the directive would mean for the industry.

I guess most people are aware but the EC looks to introduce legislation to regulate the internal market for the dissemination of high resolution imagery in Europe. Each Member State is required to introduce a law in the case that a satellite operator is based in their country. The law is intended to bring transparency to the process when there are security controls on the distribution of data.

EARSC position has always been quite neutral in that we do not see a strong benefit from the legislation. It is true that transparency may be useful as could a common understanding in all MS as to where the security threshold will apply. In this respect, if Digital Globe are able to distribute 25cm without security controls then we feel that EU operators should be given the same opportunity. However, we have not had any company come to us saying that they think it will improve their business; rather a few are concerned it could have negative consequences.

Overall, we have said that it could be useful provided that there is no additional cost, nor additional delays in company's ability to supply imagery and hence we consider this is more an issue for MS to discuss than industry since it touches on security issues. In general, from an industry perspective, we should like to remove as much legislation as possible to help companies do business. This can help if it sets the security limits lower and hence frees up imagery down to sub-metre resolutions to be disseminated freely (note NOT for free!!).

The MEP's seem to be generally in favour of the proposal based on their understanding / belief that it will open up the internal market. The EC are already convinced and it remains for the Council ie Member States to decide. Here there has been a strong division of opinion with UK, NL and others strongly opposed, Germany in favour and others asking for more information on the consequences (ie Impact Assessment).

From our perspective, we feel that there are more important issues to spend energy on. We support the process and are providing detailed comments to the EP on which to base their opinion. But let us quickly move on to address the question of how to enable the EU industry to capitalise on the public investments made into Copernicus.