

1 - Editorial

Conquering space is not so easy as you can see from the cartoon below. You may recall that I made some sceptical remarks with respect to the Earlybird launch in the December 1997 Newsletter. And most of you will know by now that this launch also has ended in a complete failure. Starting off with the complete reorganisation taking place within the EarthWatch company, Wim Bakker gives a concise overview of the failures related to EO satellites over recent years in his contribution 'the earthworm catches the bird'. Nevertheless, there are many initiatives going on with respect to high resolution data acquisition and this will be the subject of the June 1998 Newsletter. We hope to provide you with relevant and in-depth answers to questions you never dared to ask. In chapter three we have two major contributions on data pricing and dissemination by HR Wallingford Ltd and GAF GmbH. It is followed by a small contribution on progressive ideas for the data policy for Landsat 7; one should realise, however, that the last words on the Landsat 7 data policy have not been said while launch is drawing near. With respect to data dissemination one should also read the CEO update which introduces the new INFEO architecture (replacing EWSE) and the CIProtocol for universal database query. You might also want to go back to the report on the 4th EEOS workshop that was reported in the December 1997 Newsletter. Finally, we are preparing for the annual meeting of EARSeL which this year will take place at ITC in The Netherlands. We have inserted the preliminary programme in this Newsletter for your information. It should be said that the organisation has succeeded in setting up an interesting programme with relevant keynote speakers. I can tell you that the weather is quite pleasant here in May - which you may experience during the outdoor lunches at ITC and the social events during the evening.

The Editor

2 - News from the Association and its Members

2.1 - EARSeL Bureau and Council Meetings - 15/16 January 1998

These regular January Bureau and Council meetings were attended by the Bureau, representatives of the sponsoring organisations and the national representatives of Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark/Iceland, Finland, Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Spain, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Apologies for absence were received from the representatives of Italy, Malta and Poland.

The Council meeting begins with each national representative bringing the Council up to date on the latest research being carried out in his or her country, recent meetings and announcements of future events. These reports always prove very useful and will be attached to the annual report of activities to be published soon after the General Assembly in Enschede.

The main points that were then discussed concerned the programme of activities of the Special Interest Groups for 1998, relations with other organisations and sponsorship of and participation in other meetings. EARSeL will be represented at all those mid-term symposia of ISPRS that relate to remote sensing and, in particular, will organise a session at the ECO BP'98 Symposium organised by Commission VII which is to be held 1-4 September in Budapest.

Concerning publications, it was decided to keep the electronic version of the Directory up to date via the EARSeL pages on the ESA/ESRIN server in Frascati and create links to the home pages of EARSeL member laboratories. It should soon be possible for the EARSeL Secretariat to update information appearing on these pages directly from Paris. The EARSeL pages can be browsed at : <http://earth1.esrin.esa.it/earsel>

Members and observers are requested to inform the Secretariat when changes occur in their addresses, telephone, fax, home pages, etc. The Proceedings of the Tallinn workshop are now being printed and the Advances in Remote Sensing Yearbook is also due for publication shortly.

Arrangements are now going ahead to organise the 1999 annual General Assembly and Symposium at the University of Valladolid in Spain. Prof. Casanova, who will be the local organiser, gave a detailed report to the Council on the facilities that will be available.

The Treasurer presented the financial statement of accounts for 1997 and presented the provisional budget for 1998 and these were approved. It was decided to maintain the same membership fees in 1998 as in 1997, that is 1700 FRF. for small laboratories and 2700 FRF. for larger institutions.

The next Council meetings will take place on 10th May 1998 in Enschede and on 15th January 1999 in Paris.

2.2 EARSeL 1998 General Assembly and Symposium

You are cordially invited to attend the 18th annual EARSeL symposium, which in 1998 is being organised jointly with the Netherlands Society for Earth Observation and Geo-Informatics and will be held at the International Institute for Aerospace Survey and Earth Sciences (ITC) in Enschede in The Netherlands from 11-15 May 1998.

Enschede is easily accessible by a regular, fast train service from Amsterdam's Schiphol Airport and the meeting will be held in the attractive new I.T.C. building that was recently inaugurated, which is close by the station. A block reservation has been made at the DISH Hotel in Enschede and other hotels in and around Enschede are available to suit all requirements.

The opening, plenary sessions on Monday 11th May will be held at the DISH Hotel. On this first day invited presentations by eminent speakers will cover the themes "Remote sensing for sustainable development; state of the art" and "Implementation strategies and cost-benefit analyses". The day will end with a panel discussion on "From science to operation, or how can scientists contribute to the implementation of remote sensing for operational management".

The sessions on Tuesday and Wednesday will be held in the I.T.C. building and themes to cover include :

- Land use and nature management
- Water quality and pollution monitoring
- Coastal zone management
- New airborne and spaceborne techniques
- Geomorphological hazards and floods
- New processing and analysing techniques
- Climate change and interaction with land use
- Sustainable development for developing countries

Thursday, 14th May will be devoted to two specialist workshops. The first will be organised by the ITC in co-operation with Commission VII-7 of ISPRS and will cover "Remote Sensing and GIS for non-renewable resources in developing countries", organised by T. Woldai and F. van der Meer. The NSEOG Workshop organised in co-operation with Commission VII-2 of the ISPRS will cover "Land use/land cover change: methods and applications".

There will be a publisher's display throughout the week and software workshops organised by leading software developers. Moreover a commercial exhibition will be organised to demonstrate the latest products and services in the field of GIS and image processing.

A social event will take place each evening, so that there will be numerous opportunities to make and renew valuable contacts.

Registration details may be obtained from the EARSeL Secretariat (fax: +33.1.45 56 73 61 or e-mail: earsel@meteo.fr).

2.3 Special Interest Group activities

The Data Fusion SIG held a well-attended meeting in June 1997 in Lyngby, will holding another meeting following the Workshop in Sophia Antipolis (F) at the end of January 1998 and will meet again in Enschede. The SIG on Remote Sensing and Forest fires (RSFF-SIG) will take advantage of the 3rd. International Conference on Forest Fire Research to be held in Coimbra (Portugal) next November (16-20), 1998, to organise a technical meeting on the Saturday 21st, just after the conference. This short meeting will be an opportunity to review the current state of research in remote sensing analysis of forest fires, bringing active experts on this topic to exchange ideas and promote collaboration.

The SIG on Forestry and Land Use met in Freiburg on 8/9 December 1997 and studied "Data Fusion and New Classification Algorithms". A report is being prepared. The group decided to contact the Data Fusion SIG in order to consider joint meetings in future.

The SIG on Imaging Spectroscopy will hold a Workshop at the University of Zurich (CH) from 6-8 October 1998. The deadline for Abstracts is 1st April 1998.

The SIG on Land Ice and Snow held a Workshop in Freiburg, Germany, in April 1997 and the report has been published. Several papers have been reviewed for inclusion in the EARSeL Yearbook 1997 on "Advances in Remote Sensing".

The SIG on Lidar Remote Sensing of Land and Sea held a Workshop in Tallinn, Estonia, in July 1997, which was very successful. The Proceedings should be published within the next three months. Several papers have been reviewed for inclusion in the "Advances" 1997 volume.

P. Gudmandsen stated that in view of the fact that sea ice monitoring has now become an operational tool, this SIG should be terminated. It was suggested that this success story offered an opportunity to prepare a CD-ROM demonstrating the techniques involved.

It was proposed that the convenors of the Special Interest Groups (SIGs) should be asked to consult their members to give their opinion about the usefulness of high resolution SAR data in their particular field. The scientific and political aspects of global change also need to be considered.

2.4. New EARSeL Member from Poland

The Remote Sensing of Environment Laboratory in Warsaw was founded already in 1962 to evaluate the application of remote sensing techniques for the protection of the environment. Current studies focus on :

- remote sensing applications for analysing the structure of mountainous environments,
- the application of integrated GIS and remote sensing methods for the evaluation of large scale, digital and geomorphological maps, and
- geoinformation systems for environmental management.

Master diploma projects cover a wide range of topics such as :

- application of satellite and aerial images for land use and environmental change studies of protected areas (national parks),
- comparison of environmental structure evaluated with the help of geoecology and remote sensing methods,
- application of remote sensing techniques for research of lead contaminated areas,
- application of photogrammetric and remote sensing methods for the analysis of urban structure.

With a teaching staff of seven, the laboratory co-operates with many institutions in Poland and throughout Eastern Europe, and by becoming a member of EARSeL would like to extend its co-operation with laboratories in Western Europe. EARSeL representatives are :

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