

## 2025 COPERNICUS4REGIONS Breakfast Debate at the European Parliament

The “Copernicus4regions Breakfast Debate” hosted by MEP Andrea WECHSLER, EPP Member of the European Parliament and co-organized by the European Commission, the European Space Agency and NEREUS on 4 December 2025 at the European Parliament. The event featured a policy debate that highlights how Public Administration use Copernicus and benefit their territories, citizens and public policies.

The event highlighted three new user stories, illustrating the growing use of Copernicus data across European regions. [Thomas Wolf](#) (LUBW, Institute for Lake Research, Baden-Württemberg) presented lake monitoring and protection using Copernicus data, stressing that EU support through the Water Framework Directive could greatly enhance their work. [Anna Huk and Michał Maciąg](#) (Podkarpackie Region, Poland) showed how Copernicus enables detailed insights to help regional authorities and local farmers achieve modern, sustainable agriculture. [Aurore Delahayes](#) (French Ministry of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forestry, and Sea) emphasized that Copernicus provides reliable information that traditional monitoring tools alone cannot deliver.

Furthermore, the debate highlighted how the use of Copernicus supports public policy priorities identified for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034), which marks a decade of reform as outlined in the European Commission’s proposal. The objective was to bring the tangible benefits of Copernicus to the forefront of European policymakers’ attention. In this context, the debate is of relevance to all stakeholders. Key participants shared their experiences and perspectives, engaging in exchanges with Members of the European Parliament and regional representatives on the concrete local and regional benefits delivered by the Copernicus programme.

The host of the event, MEP Andrea Wechsler (EPP), emphasized the vital role of regions in supporting value chains, innovative ecosystems, and fostering Copernicus uptake that translates space investment into tangible societal benefits. She underlined that Copernicus has the potential to strengthen Europe’s strategic autonomy in the context of the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (2028–2034).

The event attracted several Members of the European Parliament from various political parties, demonstrating the broad support for the Copernicus programme.

For example, MEP Claire Fita (S&D) stressed that Copernicus is a strategic instrument for addressing pressing challenges, such as water management, supporting evidence-based policymaking, and strengthening European sovereignty. In her region, Occitanie, Copernicus plays a tangible role in managing droughts, monitoring wildfires, and ultimately protecting lives. She noted that this underscores the need to further strengthen dialogue between ESA, the European Commission, and local and regional actors.

Other MEPs attended the event were Elena Donazzan (ECR), Paulo do Nascimento Cabral (EPP), Michael Gahler (EPP), Isabelle Le Callennec (EPP).

Elisabeth Hamdouch-Fuehrer, Deputy Head of Unit for Earth Observation at DG-DEFIS, underlined the Commission’s strong commitment through the EU Space Programme and its ambition for the next MFF. Copernicus, she noted, is a fully operational programme that delivers continuous data to users and has achieved new successful launches. She stressed that concrete use cases show how Copernicus improves lives, particularly through rapid mapping for regional

authorities in emergencies, security, and preparedness. She also referred to the Commission's proposal for a new governmental Earth-observation service and its intention to strengthen support for entrepreneurship and downstream space communities.

Thierry Cotelte, President of NEREUS and Regional Council Region Occitanie, underlined that integrating satellite-based services into public administration is fundamentally about improving governance. He argued that this is also a political and organisational challenge, requiring coordinated efforts to ensure all regions can benefit from Copernicus. Tobias Gotthardt, Vice Minister and State Secretary of the Bavarian State Government and Vice-President of NEREUS, stressed that space-based information directly contributes to citizens' lives and proposed using satellite data to obtain precise figures on land use in Germany to enable concrete decision-making.

Pierre Potin, Head of the Copernicus Space Office at the Directorate of Earth Observation Programmes of ESA, underlined the strategic role of Copernicus in supporting scientific research and flagship publications such as Copernicus4regions. He highlighted that ESA is currently developing the next generation of Sentinel satellites, supported by the €22 billion budget secured at the last ESA ministerial meeting. This includes upgraded Sentinel-2 and Sentinel-3 satellites as well as new expansion missions. He stressed that programme continuity is essential and expressed the expectation of continued support from the European Parliament.

The event gathered around 100 registered participants, including representatives from the European Parliament, relevant EU institutions, Brussels-based regional and national offices, space associations, industry, and research centres. It offered an important forum for stakeholders to exchange views and experiences, thereby reinforcing cooperation in support of Europe's regions and their citizens.