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EUROPEAN UNION



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# Copernicus4regionsmagazine

2026

# News from the Copernicus4regions initiative



*“This magazine is designed to serve as a vital resource for keeping the Copernicus4regions community informed and up-to-date. Each edition will deliver comprehensive updates and insights tailored to the community’s needs.”*

The year 2025 has been particularly dynamic for Copernicus4Regions, with two standout activities clearly demonstrating the impact of Copernicus on Europe’s regions and the growing maturity of its user community. First, the new Call for User Stories invited regions to share high-impact examples of how Copernicus supports policy objectives, fosters innovation, and addresses pressing challenges – from climate adaptation to water management. This edition collected 38 compelling stories, showcasing the diversity, relevance, and increasing sophistication of Copernicus applications across Europe. Second, the Copernicus4Regions Breakfast Debate, hosted by Member of the European Parliament Andrea Wechsler at the European Parliament in December 2025, provided a valuable opportunity for public users to engage directly with Members of the European Parliament. The debate highlighted concrete examples of Copernicus in action, underlined its value for regional governance, and reinforced the importance of sustained political dialogue in transforming satellite data into tangible benefits for citizens.

Throughout 2025, Copernicus4Regions strengthened its political outreach by moving beyond general awareness-raising towards structured engagement with regional decision-makers and embedding concrete user cases directly into policy discussions at European level. More regional politicians recognise the strategic value of space for European society and engage actively in space related legislative procedures. Importantly, to ensure effective territorial uptake of Copernicus services, the CoR explicitly advocated reinforced EU support instruments, including an expanded Copernicus4Regions initiative – a strong political acknowledgement of its role as a bridge between space services and regional decision-making within the European space ecosystem.

Building on this momentum, in 2026 Copernicus4Regions aims to further enhance structured cooperation with the Committee of the Regions and the European Parliament, bringing tangible regional use cases into ongoing European policy debates. The objective is to ensure that concrete Copernicus applications continue to inform legislative discussions and funding priorities. Additional visibility actions, including potential exhibition formats linked to policy events, are also being explored to further anchor Copernicus4Regions within the European institutional landscape.

**Roya Ayazi**

*NEREUS General Secretary*



# C4R meets the European Parliament



A key objective of the Copernicus4regions initiative is to enhance community building amongst Copernicus users, service providers, politicians and staff of the European Parliament and regional/local administrations. Particularly, the initiative aims at raising awareness among European and regional politicians about the regional/local uses of Copernicus but also, on the other side, to make users aware about the often complex work of the regulators that may also look at Copernicus as a tool in support to better policy making. Outreach and awareness efforts toward the European Parliament are significant to integrate Copernicus into policy debates beyond the space sector. Bringing illustrative and tangible user experiences to the Parliament showcased regional empowerment through the use of Copernicus, a joint European infrastructure allowing data access to all European citizens and companies.



MEP Andrea Wechsler (EPP) welcoming the audience at the Copernicus4regions breakfast.

The outcomes of the Call for Articles were showcased during the Copernicus4regions Breakfast Debate, held on 4 December 2025 at the European Parliament. Hosted by MEP Andrea Wechsler (EPP) and co-organised by the European Commission, ESA, and NEREUS, the debate was a unique occasion for users to communicate directly with European policymakers.

Public authorities and Copernicus users shared concrete examples of how satellite data improves policies and benefits citizens, demonstrating the tangible value of Copernicus services across Europe.

As host, MEP Andrea Wechsler emphasised the critical role of regions in fostering innovation, supporting value chains, and ensuring that Europe's space investments translate into tangible societal benefits, underlining Copernicus's contribution to Europe's strategic autonomy and sustainability goals.

## Users in action: new stories, stronger impact

The debate featured three new user stories, illustrating how Copernicus is applied across regions:

Thomas Wolf (LUBW, Institute for Lake Research, Baden-Württemberg) showcased how satellite data supports lake monitoring and protection, enhancing compliance with EU frameworks such as the Water Framework Directive.



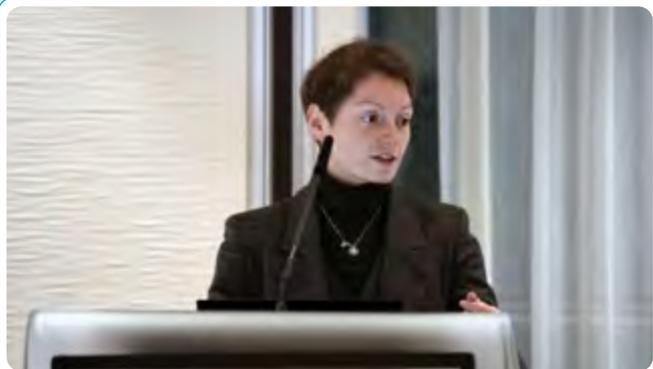
Thomas Wolf (LUBW, Institute for Lake Research, Baden-Württemberg)

Anna Huk and Michał Maciąg (Podkarpackie Region, Poland) demonstrated how Copernicus enables modern, sustainable agriculture, helping local authorities and farmers make informed decisions.



Anna Huk (Podkarpackie Region, Poland)

Aurore Delahayes (French Ministry of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forestry, and Sea) highlighted how Copernicus provides reliable, complementary information that traditional monitoring tools cannot deliver.



Aurore Delahayes (French Ministry of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forestry, and Sea)

These stories clearly demonstrate the concrete benefits of Copernicus for regional and local decision-making, showing how users are applying space-enabled services to tackle pressing societal challenges, and encouraging other regions to follow the same paradigm.

### Strong political support and dialogue

The debate brought together 10 Members of the European Parliament from across the political

spectrum, including Claire Fita (S&D), Elena Donazzan (ECR), Paulo do Nascimento Cabral (EPP), Michael Gahler (EPP), and Isabelle Le Callennec (EPP), confirming broad support for Copernicus. Elisabeth Hamdouch-Fuehrer (DG DEFIS, European Commission) and Pierre Potin (ESA) highlighted the programme's operational maturity, the continuity of Copernicus, and the development of the next-generation Sentinel satellites.

Regional perspectives were offered by Thierry Cotelle, President of NEREUS, and Tobias Gotthardt, Vice-President of NEREUS, who stressed the importance of integrating satellite-based services into public administration to deliver tangible benefits for citizens.

### A forum for impact

The event gathered around 100 participants, including representatives from the European Parliament, EU institutions, regional authorities, research organisations, industry, and space associations. The Breakfast Debate provided a valuable platform for users to share their work, exchange experiences, and reinforce collaboration across Europe's regions, highlighting the impact of Copernicus services on territories, citizens, and public policies.



From left to right: Elisabeth Hamdouch-Fuehrer (European Commission); Michał Maciąg (Podkarpackie Region, Poland); MEP Andrea Wechsler; Margarita Chryasaki (NEREUS); Thomas Wolf (LUBW – Institute for Lake Research, Baden-Württemberg); Thierry Cotelle, President of NEREUS; Roya Ayazi (NEREUS); Aurore Delahayes (French Ministry of Ecological Transition, Biodiversity, Forestry and the Sea); and Alessandra Tassa (European Space Agency).

# Views on Copernicus

## REGIONAL POLITICIANS



### Thierry Cotelle

*“When we discuss integrating Copernicus into the daily workflow of public administration, we are essentially talking about enabling better governance.”*

#### Main interests

Thierry Cotelle is integral to Occitanie's economic policies, driving the Regional Strategy for Employment, Sovereignty, and Ecological Change. This plan aims to boost innovation in key sectors, positioning Occitanie as a leading scientific hub. Cotelle also champions the regional space roadmap, reinforcing the region's leadership and supporting local companies in achieving excellence.

#### Core relevant service

- NEREUS President
- Regional Councillor since 2016
- previously President of the regional agency for renewable energies (AREC)
- First Vice President for the Commission “Economy, Employment, Re-industrialisation” since 2021
- Member of the thematic commissions “Climate Emergency” and “Water and Risk Prevention”

**Political Party** Groupe Socialistes et Citoyens d'Occitanie  
**Region/Country** Occitanie/France



### Tobias Gotthardt

*“Copernicus4regions is a fantastic initiative that showcases inspiring user stories of earth observation data across Europe. It highlights a wide range of opportunities, demonstrating how satellite data can be used to monitor crops, support the energy transition by assessing renewable energy potential, track afforestation, and map air quality. This collection enables regions throughout Europe to learn from each other and maximise the benefits of space data.”*

#### Main interests

Vice Minister Tobias Gotthardt plays a key role in shaping Bavaria's energy, economic, and regional development policies, with a strong focus on energy security, industrial competitiveness, and the energy transition. His work aims to strengthen Bavaria's position within the European energy and economic landscape by aligning regional priorities with EU policy frameworks, supporting innovation, resilient energy infrastructure, and sustainable growth.

#### Core relevant service

- NEREUS Vice-President
- Vice Minister, Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs, Regional Development and Energy
- Member of the Bavarian State Government (since 2023)
- Member of the Bavarian State Parliament (since 2018)
- Former Chairman, European Affairs Committee, Bavarian State Parliament
- Spokesperson for Federal and European Affairs, Free Voters parliamentary group
- Deputy Member, European Committee of the Regions (since 2019)

**Political Party** Free Voters (Freie Wähler)  
**Region/Country** Bavaria/Germany



## Marshal Władysław Ortyl

*“I see the Copernicus4regions initiative as key in providing European regions with evidence-based knowledge and sharing of experiences, or adaptation of good practices in the context of common challenges faced by the regions.”*

### Main interests

Władysław Ortyl plays a key role in shaping Podkarpackie’s innovation-driven development strategy, with a strong focus on aerospace, advanced manufacturing, and regional competitiveness. With his engineering background in aircraft design and long-standing experience in European regional governance, he actively promotes the integration of space and high-technology sectors into regional economic policy. At European level, through his work in the Committee of the Regions and leadership within the COTER Commission, he advocates for strong cohesion policy, territorial development, and enhanced cooperation among regions, including macro-regional strategies such as the Carpathian area. His engagement reinforces the role of regions as strategic actors in Europe’s technological sovereignty and sustainable growth agenda.

### Core relevant service

- Vice-President of NEREUS
- Marshal of the Podkarpackie Region (since 2013)
- Engineer specialised in aircraft design (Rzeszów University of Technology)
- Member of the European Committee of the Regions
- Coordinator of the COTER Commission and member of the ENVE Commission
- Chair of the Carpathians Interregional Group
- Former Senator of the Republic of Poland
- Former Secretary of State at the Ministry of Regional Development
- Vice-President of the Union of Provinces of the Republic of Poland

**Political Party** Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość)

**Region/Country** Podkarpackie/Poland



## Marina Silvestri

*“The Copernicus4regions initiative is a masterpiece showcasing how Copernicus data addresses regional challenges and fostering a wider community of users. It is very important to increase the number of use cases, which are inspirational for other local administrations.”*

### Main interests

Marina Silvestri focuses on innovation-driven regional development, with strong expertise in technology transfer, research valorisation, and talent attraction. Her work supports sustainable economic growth by connecting research, higher education, labour policies, and industry, strengthening the international competitiveness and attractiveness of the Emilia-Romagna region. She is particularly engaged in fostering innovation ecosystems, knowledge development, and strategic participation in European research and innovation programmes, including Horizon Europe.

### Core relevant service

- Chair of the SANT Subcommittee on Public Health
- EREUS Board Member
- Executive Director, ART-ER – Attractiveness Research Territory (Emilia-Romagna Region)
- Vice President, Fondazione Ecosister
- Vice President, ABD – Big Data Association
- Former Head, European Resource Centre for Guidance (Italian Ministry of Labour / European Commission)
- Former Member, Scientific and Technical Committee of APRE
- Alternate to the national delegate, EIC and EIE Programme Committee Task Force, Horizon Europe 2021–2027 (appointed by MUR)

**Political Party**

**Region/Country** Emilia-Romagna/Italy



## MEP Andrea Wechsler

*“Copernicus really deserves our support to be a stable element of European space sovereignty.”*

### Main interests

MEP Andrea Wechsler’s parliamentary work focuses strongly on EU energy security, infrastructure resilience, and energy independence. Her recent activities highlight the strategic role of electricity grids, gas storage, and industrial energy policy in stabilising energy prices and strengthening the EU’s preparedness for crises. In parallel, she has contributed to discussions on climate-related disasters and EU emergency preparedness, linking energy infrastructure robustness to climate resilience and security of supply.

### Core relevant service

- Member of the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE)
- Member of the Delegation to the EU-Moldova Parliamentary Association Committee (D-MD)
- Member of the Delegation to the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly (DEPA)
- Substitute on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs (EMPL)
- Substitute on the Committee on the Environment, Climate and Food Safety (ENVI)
- Substitute in the Delegation for relations with the People’s Republic of China (D-CN)

**Political Party** European People’s Party (Christian Democrats)

**Region/Country** Baden-Württemberg/Germany



## MEP Claire Fita

*“Copernicus supports thousands of jobs in space and digital industry and in our region.”*

### Main interests

MEP Fita’s contributions to plenary debates include speeches delivered during the sessions and written declarations pertinent to plenary discussions on urgent actions to revive EU competitiveness and deepen the Single Market, improving EU preparedness following the DANA floods in Spain, taxation of large digital platforms, devastating wildfires in Southern Europe and strengthening EU aid to restore forests, the financial activities of the European Investment Bank (annual report 2024), and the European Semester for economic policy coordination.

Her main interests focus in particular on wildfires, climate resilience, EU emergency preparedness, economic governance, and the social dimension of competitiveness.

### Core relevant service

- Vice-Chair of the DACP Delegation to the OACPS–EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly
- Vice-Chair of the DPAC Delegation to the Pacific–EU Parliamentary Assembly
- Member of the ECON Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs
- Substitute Member of the AGRI Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development
- Member of the DARP Delegation for relations with the Arab Peninsula

**Political Party** Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats in the European Parliament

**Region/Country** Occitanie/France

# News from the Copernicus4regions User Stories

Building on the strong foundation laid by the 2018 publication “The Ever-Growing Use of Copernicus Across Europe’s Regions”, the Copernicus4Regions initiative launched a new Call for Articles at the end of 2024 with the objective to refresh and enrich the collection of 99 stories. The Call particularly encouraged stories authored by regional and local authorities characterized by a high level of maturity. 38 stories were received in response to the Call of which 15 were already published.

In order to facilitate the discoverability of the increasing number of user stories, we have updated our digital tools to make the process more user-friendly. A newly upgraded search engine is now available that allows advanced filtering by theme, region, maturity level, and relevant policies. The new interface makes it easier to discover the most relevant use cases, hear first-hand testimonials from the regions, and revisit event highlights where authors brought their cases to life!

→ [BROWSE THROUGH THE COPERNICUS4REGIONS USER STORIES](#)

→ [DOWNLOAD THE 2018 PUBLICATION](#)

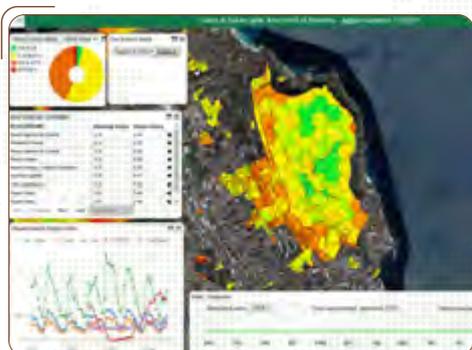
## Picks from the new user stories

### ENHANCING URBAN SUSTAINABILITY WITH COPERNICUS DATA: MONITORING URBAN GREEN SPACES

This study showcases how Palermo utilizes Earth observation data from Copernicus Sentinel satellites to improve the sustainability of urban green spaces. By monitoring vegetation health and optimizing irrigation, the city enhances environmental resilience and ensures better stewardship of its green areas.

Over the last two years, our Copernicus-based tool operated delivering up-to-date information on Palermo’s green areas supporting timely decision-making. *Giuseppina Liuzzo, Head of Environmental Policies, Palermo*

→ [GO TO LINK](#)



#### TheDashboard

This image is a screenshot of a dashboard developed for the Municipality of Palermo, designed to monitor the health of urban green areas using satellite data. The map displays vegetation stress levels, ranging from green (lowstress) to red (highstress). The dashboard includes tools such as the average stress index, a historical index viewer (NDVI, SAVI, LAI, STRESS, ANOMALY), a list of green areas requiring attention, and a time slider to view monthly data.

Thematic area



TERRITORIAL  
MANAGEMENT AND  
URBAN PLANNING

Region of Application



PALERMO

Sentinel mission used



S2

Copernicus Service used



-

Usage Maturity Level



4

## Picks from the new user stories

### SATELLITE DATA FOR THE CHARACTERIZATION OF URBAN AREAS

The service utilizes Sentinel-2 satellite data to distinguish between natural and artificial surfaces in Tuscany, providing a basis for identifying anthropic materials with the aim of supporting efficient land management and informed administrative actions in territorial planning.

Use of Sentinel-2 data improved both the quality and processing time of artificial surface identification, providing valuable support for sustainable urban planning.

*Iaria Tabarrani, Tuscany Region*

[→ GO TO LINK](#)



**Classification map of the urbanized territory of the city of Lucca (Italy) overlaid on an RGB orthophoto.** The semi-transparent red areas represent the "artificial surfaces" class. Copernicus Sentinel 2L-2A [2024]  
Credits: Tuscany Region – Regional Territorial Information Base, pursuant to Article 55 of Regional Law 65/2014.

Thematic area



**TERRITORIAL  
MANAGEMENT AND  
URBAN PLANNING**

Region of Application



**TUSCANY**

Sentinel mission used



**S2**

Copernicus Service used



-

Usage Maturity Level



**4**

## Picks from the new user stories

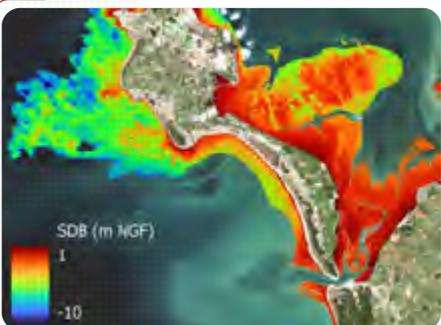
### INNOVATIVE, SCALABLE SATELLITE SOLUTIONS FOR NOIRMOUTIER'S COASTAL RESILIENCE

Mapping Noirmoutier's shallow waters is complex due to the dynamic nature of its sediments and frequent tidal exposure. By harnessing Copernicus imagery and deep learning, we deliver accurate bathymetry and habitat classification. This scalable, cost-effective solution supports informed decision-making for coastal management and policy.

This project is a key step toward sustainable coastal management, helping to track sediment shifts and strengthen the island's resilience.

*Qualid Rahmani, CCIN's Coastal Risk Protection Department*

[→ GO TO LINK](#)



**Satellite-Derived Bathymetry around Noirmoutier Island**  
2024 bathymetric map of Noirmoutier derived from a collection of Sentinel-2 Level-2A images acquired throughout the year. The method retrieves depths down to -8m NGF and highlights the seabed diversity: rocky and vegetated platforms, sandy and muddy intertidal zones with tidal channels, and dynamic sandbars. Areas not covered were affected by limiting environmental conditions (e.g., turbidity), preventing reliable depth retrieval. Bathymetry: derived from Copernicus Sentinel-2 data [2024], Level-2A, processed by ESA. Background image: Copernicus Sentinel-2 (08/08/2024), Level-2A, ESA

Thematic area



**TERRITORIAL  
MANAGEMENT AND  
URBAN PLANNING**

Region of Application



**PAYS-DE-LA-LOIRE**

Sentinel mission used



**S1  
S2  
S3**

Copernicus Service used



-

Usage Maturity Level



**5**

# What's more?

## A rigorous review process for high quality User Stories

With the objective to ensure a high-quality collection of testimonials, a rigorous peer-review process is implemented. A panel of leading European space experts, who volunteered to act as reviewers, is in charge of carefully assessing each submission against established publication criteria such as e.g. technical soundness, clarity, and clear engagement of public authorities. The process is managed by NEREUS with the support of Maciek Mysliwiec as the Community Manager.

The Copernicus4regions community continues to grow, strengthened by contributions from public authorities, SMEs, service providers, and the broader space ecosystem. As we prepare to showcase the next wave of stories, **we warmly thank all authors and reviewers who have helped make this edition a milestone for quality, collaboration, and outreach.**

**Do you wish to apply as a reviewer for the Copernicus4regions User Stories?  
Email to [mchrysaki.nereus@euregions4space.com](mailto:mchrysaki.nereus@euregions4space.com)**

## Meet the Copernicus4regions Reviewers

**Zoltan, Bartalis**, European Space Agency (ESA)  
**Benjamin, Beaumont**, Service Public Wallonie  
**Estefania, Blanch**, Institute of Space Studies of Catalonia  
**Stellios, Bolanos**, Planetek Hellas  
**Laura Giulia Maria, Candela**, ASI Italian Space Agency  
**Vasiliki, Charalampopoulou**, Geosystems Hellas SA  
**Jennifer, Grant**, European Environment Agency  
**Florence, Jonard**, Service Public Wallonie  
**Tanja, Kraus**, Deutsches Zentrum für Luft- und Raumfahrt (DLR)  
**Jonilda, Kushta**, European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF)  
**Eirini, Marinou**, Geosystems Hellas SA  
**Carlo, Masetto**, Regione del Veneto - Direzione Pianificazione Territoriale  
**Manuel, Mayr**, European Environment Agency  
**Phil, Monbet**, Pole Mer Bretagne Atlantique  
**Adrien, Pain**, CS Group  
**Nicola, Pergola**, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche  
**Dimitris, Poursandis**, Foundation for Research and Technology Hellas  
**Zoltan Shantoi**, ESA  
**Tina, Silovic**, Mercator Ocean International  
**François, Soulat**, CNES - Centre national d'études spatiales  
**Graham, Turnock**, Eurisy

# Outlook to the future

## Advanced datatelling for the Copernicus4regions User Stories

To enhance the navigability of the stories, we are transforming some of them into dynamic, immersive digital journeys by using the DEA Storytelling Service.

[Visit the Copernicus4regions stories on DEA](#)

## A new opportunity to showcase your user story

We are preparing a new Call for Copernicus4Regions User Stories, to be launched before the summer 2026. We look forward to receiving new, high-quality use cases showcasing concrete and impactful applications.

[Stay tuned: Call for articles](#)



Copernicus4regions is a joint initiative between the European Commission, the European Space Agency and the Network of European Regions Using Space Technologies (NEREUS): it is managed by NEREUS under a contract from the European Space Agency and funding from the European Union.

[www.copernicus.eu](http://www.copernicus.eu) | <https://sentinels.copernicus.eu>

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