

thinkWhere Map Portal for Open European Geographic Data Services Launched

Stirling, Scotland, 12 June 2019 – An online mapping portal designed to demonstrate the potential of a single access point to official European geospatial open data was launched at the Geospatial World Forum in Amsterdam. Developed by Scotland's thinkWhere, the user interface was also presented at the EuroGeographics Extraordinary General Assembly held in Leuven, Belgium. This was attended by delegates representing National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registry Authorities from 27 countries across geographical Europe.

thinkWhere developed the online solution as part of the Open European Location Services (Open ELS) project. Working with EuroGeographics, the thinkWhere interface uses metadata (data about data) provided by Europe's national mapping agencies, survey organisations and government land registries. The interface enables users to search, discover, acquire and licence open data and services.

Delegates at the EuroGeographics meeting were given a live demonstration of the interface, and were encouraged to try it for themselves by registering at <https://www.euro-geo-opendata.eu>. "The user interface is excellent and initial feedback from member organisations is very positive," commented Mick Cory, Secretary General and Executive Director, EuroGeographics. "It provides a valuable first step in realising economic and social benefits of high-value geospatial open data from our members, the National Mapping, Cadastral and Land Registration Authorities of Europe, and has been a key delivery of the project."

The Open ELS project follows the commonly used web services architecture 'publish-find-bind' with the work by thinkWhere forming the 'find and bind' element. A catalogue of published data and services was created from information from service and data providers. This included themes such as Open EuroGlobalMap Service, Open Regional Gazetteer Service, Open Cadastral Index Map Service and demonstrations of open web feature test services for addresses and buildings. This information was used together with existing European location services technical components and open source technologies, to develop the user interface.

Co-financed by the European Union Connecting Europe Facility, the Open ELS project concluded on 30 April 2019 after two years of work by the project partners. It aimed to maximise the use of authoritative geospatial information by providing certainty about what is free, and under what terms and conditions. In addition to the thinkWhere developed user interface, these included the identification of Open ELS use cases, an appraisal of the potential economic and social benefits of open data from authoritative sources and a policy and legal framework for Open ELS defining the use and re-use of data.

EuroGeographics is a not-for-profit membership organisation representing 63 organisations, such as Ordnance Surveys in the UK, the Federal Agency for Cartography and Geodesy in Germany, the Norwegian Mapping Agency and the General Directorate of Mapping in Turkey.

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Notes to Editors:

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thinkWhere provides an online platform for storing, sharing and using maps and geographic data. Utilising Open Source Geographic Information System (GIS) technologies, thinkWhere has developed cloud-based software applications and tools, backed by a wide range of Open GIS implementation, consultancy and training services.

Based in the historic city of Stirling, Scotland, with customers across the UK and worldwide, thinkWhere pioneered the development of web-based platforms for collaborative GIS products and services. The company has a 25 year proven track record of delivering solutions at local, regional and national levels in the UK public and commercial sectors.

For further information visit www.thinkwhere.com

The Open European Location Services project (Open ELS) is developing pan-European data services using authoritative geospatial information and an associated business model. Specifically the project aims to improve availability of geospatial information from public authorities for mapping, cadastre and land registries, with a focus on facilitating access to and encouraging up-take of pan European geospatial content.

EuroGeographics is coordinating the two-year initiative co-financed by the European Commission, and working with partners from member organisations in Norway, the Netherlands, Great Britain, Finland, Spain, Sweden, Poland and Germany. The Open ELS project is part of EuroGeographics vision for future European Location Services, a unique and powerful resource covering geographical Europe as well as the EU Member States.

For further information visit <https://openels.eu/>

Based in Brussels, EuroGeographics is an international not-for-profit organisation and the membership association for the European National Mapping, Cadastre and Land Registry Authorities. It currently brings together 63 members from 46 countries.

For further information visit <https://eurogeographics.org/>