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**Copernicus, a major European cooperation programme:
from the early concept to operational services**
***Copernicus, un programme majeur de coopération européenne :
du concept initial aux services opérationnels***

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The Copernicus programme (known previously as GMES - Global Monitoring for Environment and Security) is a major European undertaking for the continuous monitoring the Earth system. Copernicus is one of the two pillars, together with the Galileo programme, of the cooperation between the European Union (EU), the European Space Agency (ESA) and their Member States.

Copernicus objectives are to generate reliable and up-to-date information from Earth observation satellite data and in situ observations to serve EU Environment and Security Policies. Operational Copernicus services are addressing six thematic domains namely land, marine, atmosphere, climate change, emergency management and security. They support a wide range of applications as well as the development of innovative value-added products resulting in new business opportunities.

The presentation will describe the implementation evolution of Copernicus from the initial proposal in May 1998 till now, including the space component, the operational services available and the agreed governance for the management of this ambitious programme.