

An overview of
SatCen activity

Annual Report 2025



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ANNUAL REPORT

2025

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*In modern
warfare,
space
provides
our eyes in
the sky...*

17th European Space Conference

Kaja Kallas

HR/VP

Foreword of the Director



Rear Admiral Louis Tillier

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 marked a turning point in Europe’s strategic landscape—a shift that continues to accelerate in 2025. As the President of the EU Council observed in February 2025, we now operate in a world defined by “disorder, paradox, nuance, and plurality, risks and threats, multipolarity, and uncertainty.” In this complex environment, European Commissioner for Defence and Space Andrius Kubilius has rightly underscored the urgency: “Without space, there will be no defence readiness.”

At the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen), as a Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) and Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) agency, we respond to this challenge with purpose. The demand for trusted, timely geospatial intelligence has never been greater. In 2025, we delivered a record 6,384 products to the 27 Member States and EU institutions—primarily the European Union External Action Service (EEAS)—reflecting the growing reliance on our unique geospatial intelligence (GEOINT) capability. This output is not just a number; it is a testament to the building of shared situational awareness, a cornerstone of unity in action across the CFSP and beyond.

Our products are disseminated to all EU bodies with a need to know and to every Member State, reinforcing not only operational awareness but also the emergence of a common strategic culture. If defence spending is an investment in Europe’s security, then investment in SatCen is an exceptionally efficient one, as the financial burden is collectively shared while benefits are enjoyed Union-wide.

The production priorities set by Member States were fully met, with 68% of output dedicated to intelligence services, EU missions and operations, and strategic partners—rising to 82% when including external action. Support to EU missions reached an all-time high: 19% of total production, up from just 4% in 2019.



We also deepened our integration across the Union's broader security and resilience framework. Support to the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex) doubled between 2019 and 2024, marking a decade of cooperation under the Copernicus Border Surveillance Service (CBSS).

Our contributions to external border management, humanitarian aid, internal security, and external action continue to expand, demonstrating SatCen's versatility and relevance.

SatCen continues to deliver a complete ecosystem dedicated to space, security, and defence, supporting Member States and EU institutions and equipping EU missions and operations headquarters with tools to exploit SatCen products effectively. SatCen also maintained its capacity to scale in line with Member State decisions. As High Representative Kaja Kallas noted at the European Defence Agency (EDA) conference in January 2026, "It is not only about how much we spend, but whether we spend it wisely and to maximum effect." SatCen embodies this principle: a collective investment with Union-wide benefits, delivered with precision and efficiency.

My deep appreciation goes to our Member States for their continued trust in SatCen as the EU's unique geospatial intelligence agency. Their clear mandate and steadfast support enabled the Centre to provide tailored and timely analysis in times of unprecedented uncertainty and crisis.

Finally, I extend my heartfelt thanks to all SatCen staff. Their dedication, professionalism, and determination to serve our users under the core democratic values of the EU remain the foundation of the Centre's effectiveness and credibility. Thank you for your unwavering service.

Security Challenges



Mission and Vision

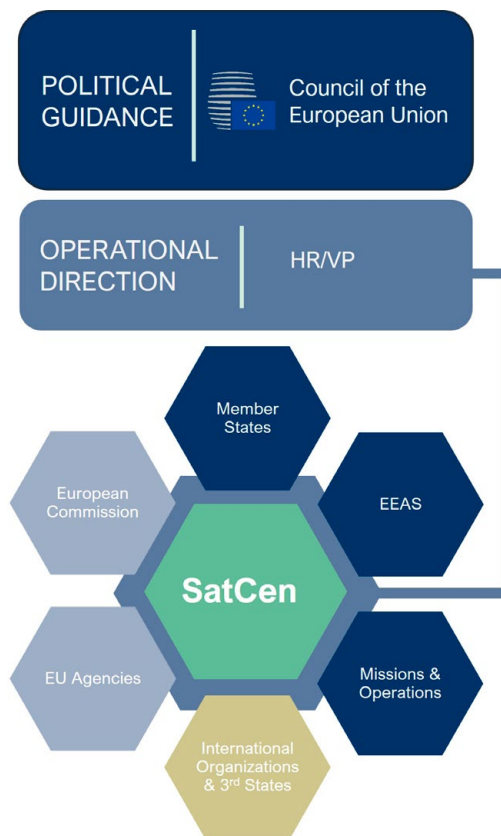
The European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen), established in 1992 and formally integrated into the EU in 2002, is Europe’s trusted eyes in the sky. As the EU’s central hub for advanced GEOINT, SatCen delivers user-driven, operational and tailor-made analysis services that provides timely, accurate situational awareness to support the CFSP and CSDP.

Under the governance of EU Member States, political oversight by the Political and Security Committee (PSC), and operational direction from the High Representative, SatCen strengthens Europe’s ability to act independently in security and defence. Its insights empower decision-makers with the independent, actionable intelligence needed in an increasingly complex and contested world, advancing European sovereignty and strategic autonomy.

SatCen supports EU institutions, Member States, and key international partners, including the United Nations and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). As the Entrusted Entity for the Copernicus Service in Support to EU External and Security Action (SESA), and through close cooperation with Frontex via the CBSS. Working alongside agencies like the EDA, and the European Space Agency (ESA), European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) or the European Fisheries Control Agency (EFCA), SatCen highlights its role as a mature and proven model of European cooperation, translating EU space capabilities into operational impact.

A team of highly skilled, dedicated professionals combining technical, operational, and analytical excellence, ensures the highest standards in geospatial intelligence. Born in the wake of the Gulf War, in response to the need for greater European strategic autonomy, SatCen has evolved over more than 30 years of operational heritage into a reliable, trusted, and proven EU agency. Today, it delivers critical insights and analysis that empower Europe to act independently, see further, and protect its interests in an increasingly complex world.

FIGURE 11
Variety of key users and partners



Navigating a new era of geopolitical instability

Even before Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine, SatCen was dedicated to enhancing the EU’s global situational awareness. However, the war in Europe, conflicts in the Middle East and Africa, and US-China competition now demand accelerated development to navigate this volatile landscape. In response, Member States, through the ministerial-level Board in August 2023 and various Board meetings in 2024, provided SatCen with a clear mandate to expand its operational scope, aligning with the EU’s steadily evolving ambitions in security and defence.

As the [EU White Paper for European defence -Readiness 2030](#) of 10 March 2025 highlights, the international order is undergoing changes of a magnitude not seen since 1945, with Europe at the epicentre of these shifts. As mentioned by Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission, during the 2025 State of the European Union address, the post-World War II and post-Cold War political equilibrium has been severely disrupted, and “battlelines for a new world order based on power are being drawn right now,” marking the end of Europe’s “geopolitical naïveté” as referred to by António Costa, President of the European Council.

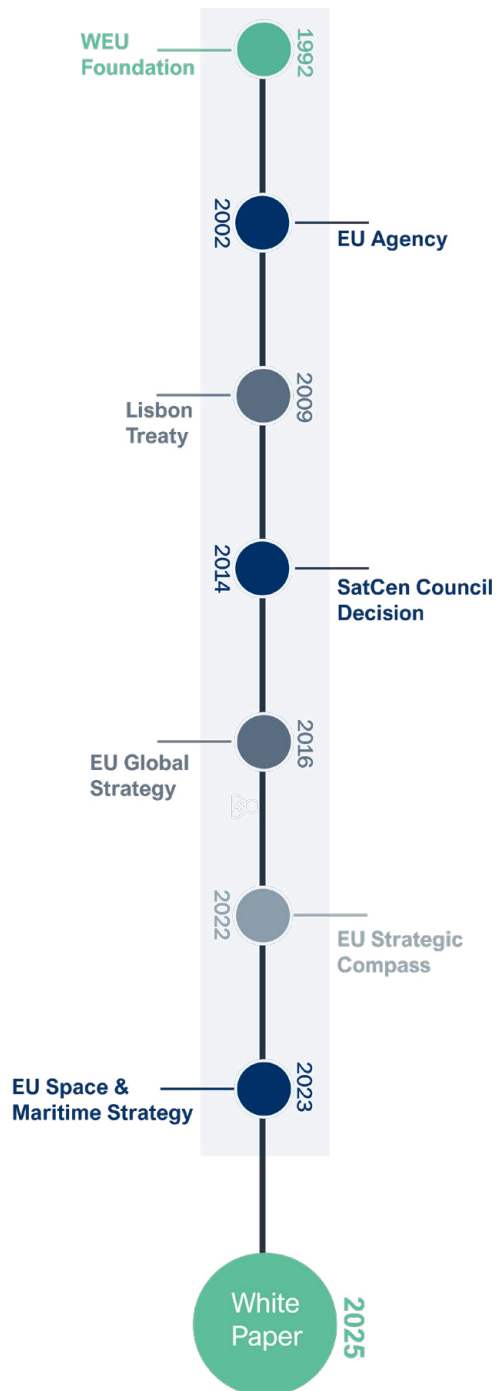
To meet this challenge, SatCen is diversifying its user base beyond traditional users. By fostering cross-sector collaboration, the Centre strengthens resource efficiency and the EU’s strategic resilience.

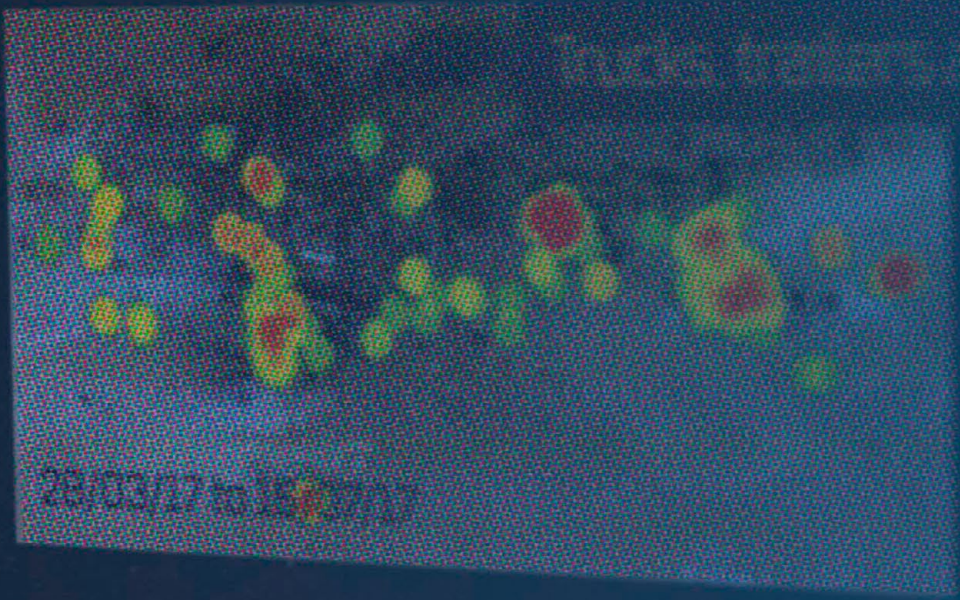


“Geopolitical naïveté is over.”

ANTÓNIO COSTA,
SEPTEMBER 2025 BLED STRATEGIC FORUM

FIGURE 1.2
Over 3 decades in service of Member States





Operational Highlights

2

Core Mission and Operational Focus

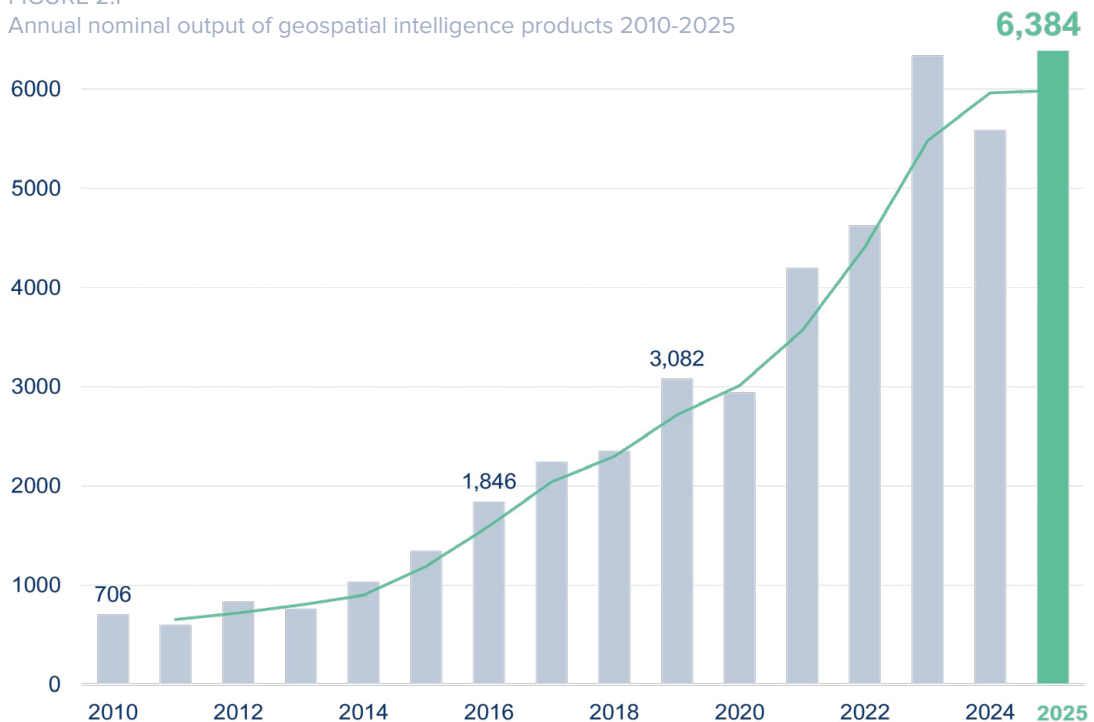
SatCen’s core mission is to provide timely, accurate and actionable GEOINT in support of the European Union’s CFSP and CSDP. Its main users, the Member States and the EEAS, define annual intelligence priorities through structured requirements that guide operational planning and resource allocation.

In 2025, a fast-evolving security environment required continuous adaptation. The war in Ukraine remained a central focus, while escalating tensions and conflicts in the Middle East and North Africa, including Gaza, Lebanon, Iran and Libya, demanded sustained analytical attention. These developments reinforced the importance of agile intelligence capabilities to support both situational awareness and strategic foresight.

Beyond CFSP/CSDP priorities, SatCen continued to play a key role in wider EU security initiatives. It maintained its operational contribution through SESA, supporting crisis monitoring and response at EU level. Collaboration with Frontex under the CBSS also remained a cornerstone activity, marking its tenth anniversary in 2025.

Overall, SatCen delivered a record 6,384 GEOINT products in 2025. This milestone reflects both the intensity of the global security environment and the increasing demand for its services, underlining the continued trust placed in the Centre by Member States and its user community.

FIGURE 2.1
Annual nominal output of geospatial intelligence products 2010-2025



Operational Priorities

1 CORE CFSP/CSDP TASKING

This included core tasking related to CFSP/CSDP, encompassing requests from the Council and High Representative, the EEAS, the Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity (SIAC), EU Member States, and EU missions and operations.

2 SUPPORT TO EU EXTERNAL ACTION

SatCen continued to provide geospatial intelligence in support of the EU's broader external action. It includes support to strategic partners and contributions through SESA, reinforcing the EU's global engagement and enabling coordinated responses to crises.

3 COLLABORATION IN OTHER UNION ACTIVITIES

SatCen collaborated with other Union activities such as CBSS, supporting Frontex in enhancing border security and situational awareness. As well as worked on the monitoring of the implementation of EU Law and security challenges facing the Union and its Member States.

CORE CFSP/CSDP TASKING

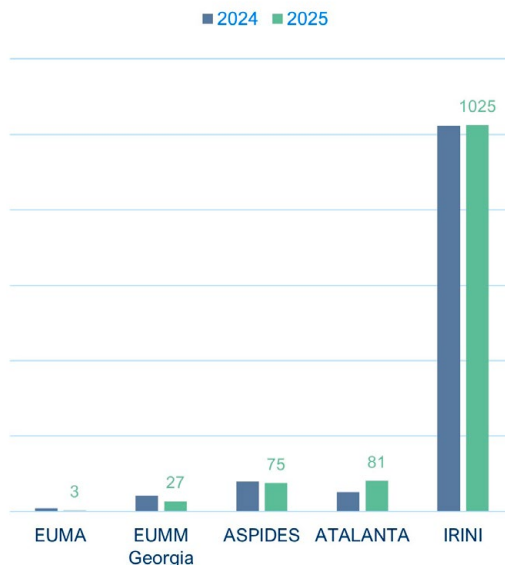
SatCen continued to play a key role in supporting the EU’s CFSP and CSDP by providing timely and reliable GEOINT to decision-makers. As a CFSP agency, it worked closely with Member States and SIAC, delivering critical analysis based on satellite imagery and collateral data. This GEOINT provided a unique and direct source of information for both the EU Military Staff (EUMS) and the Intelligence and Situation Centre (INTCEN), supporting responses to key political and security challenges.

SatCen’s analytical work covered a broad range of themes and regions, including security monitoring, military capability assessments, contingency planning, critical infrastructure surveillance, sanctions compliance, counter-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), maritime surveillance, and strategic foresight. It also supported the Crisis Response Centre (CRC) with rapid, up-to-date information during emergencies such as non-combatant evacuation operations, humanitarian assistance, and damage assessment.

SUPPORT TO EU MISSIONS AND OPERATIONS

SatCen further strengthened its support to EU missions and operations in 2025, maintaining a high level of production and operational relevance. Throughout the year, the Centre delivered a total of 1,211 geospatial intelligence products to EU missions and operations, reflecting sustained demand and evolving operational needs. The largest share of this support was dedicated to European Union Naval Force Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED) Operation IRINI, with 1,025 products delivered. Support to EUNAVFOR ATALANTA also remained strong, with 81 products delivered in 2025. This represents an increase of around 60% compared to 2024 and contributed to maritime security in the Indian Ocean, including the protection of World Food Programme vessels and other vulnerable shipping from piracy. In addition, SatCen sustained its support to EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, delivering 75 reports to enhance maritime situational awareness and vessel protection in a critical operational theatre.

FIGURE 2.2
Production for missions and operations



The Centre also continued to support the EUMM Georgia, delivering 27 detailed monitoring reports that enhanced situational awareness in a complex and sensitive environment, as well as providing products in support of the EUMA. These missions benefit from SatCen's long-standing expertise in monitoring borders, frontlines and administrative boundary lines, as well as broader security dynamics along international borders.

Overall, SatCen's contribution to EU missions and operations in 2025 demonstrated increased responsiveness, adaptability and operational maturity, closely aligned with shifting geopolitical priorities and reinforcing the EU's presence across key areas of strategic interest.

EVOLVING STRATEGIC DOMAINS

In 2025, comprehensive maritime monitoring activities continued in regions of strategic interest. The Centre leveraged space-based data and open-source information to enhance maritime situational awareness and facilitate information exchange between space-based assets and maritime surveillance systems, fully aligned with the EU Maritime Security Strategy (EUMSS) as well as with corresponding NATO priorities.



SUPPORT TO EU EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

SatCen continued to strengthen its working relations with international organisations, in line with the mandate of the PSC. The United Nations remained a key partner in this context. In addition, the OPCW also continued to benefit from SatCen’s specialised services under the framework of the agreed CFSP cooperation. These partnerships reflect SatCen’s ongoing commitment to building and consolidating strategic partnerships, fully aligned with the EU Strategic Compass.

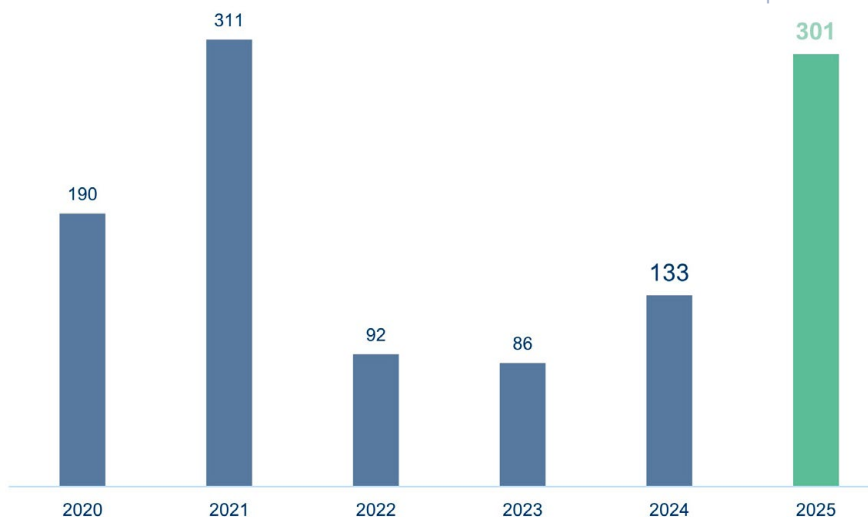
COPERNICUS SERVICE ON SUPPORT TO EU EXTERNAL AND SECURITY ACTIONS (SESA)

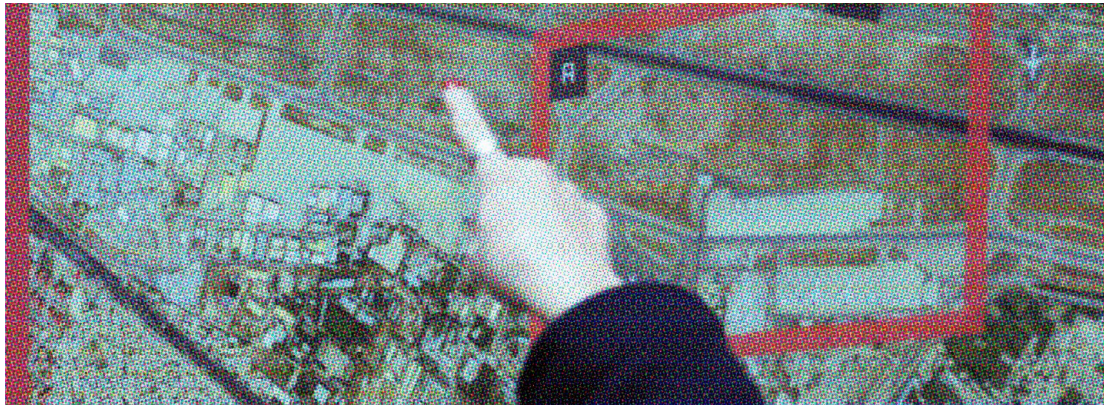
SatCen’s cooperation with the European Commission continued to deepen, particularly through its role as Entrusted Entity for Copernicus SESA. By providing accurate, timely and mission-specific geospatial products, SESA supports the EU’s external action and security objectives, including climate security, contingency planning, damage assessment, humanitarian assistance, evacuation operations, security challenges and monitoring the implementation of EU law.

This partnership delivers clear added value through complementary funding streams, enhancing the overall impact of SatCen’s work and extending its reach across institutional stakeholders. In recent operations, the service delivered over 300 products of high complexity, in nature and analysis, reflecting sustained and growing demand for its support to an expanded user base.

Overall, SESA marked a milestone year, achieving its delivery targets, record-high production, and strong budget execution. The service is now well positioned for continued growth, with plans to further strengthen synergies and expand into emerging areas, including the climate-security nexus.

FIGURE 2.3
SESA nominal production 2020-2025





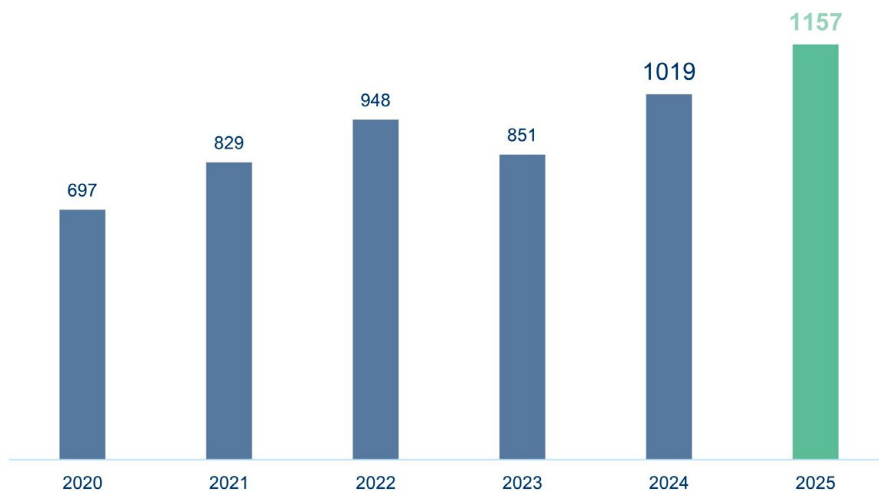
COPERNICUS BORDER SECURITY SERVICE (CBSS)

As part of the EU's efforts to strengthen border management and security, SatCen continued to play a central role in supporting CBSS in cooperation with Frontex. Through advanced GEOINT derived from satellite imagery, the service enhances EU situational awareness and supports operational responses to challenges at external borders, contributing to greater foresight, resilience and effectiveness.

Last year marked a milestone in this long-standing partnership, celebrating a decade of structured cooperation between SatCen and Frontex. Over this period, the collaboration has become a key pillar of the EU's external border management and security architecture.

Support to Frontex remains a major component of SatCen's annual production, accounting for approximately 18% of total output. In 2025, the service delivered 1,157 products, an increase of 13% compared to the previous year, setting a new production record and reflecting growing demand and operational efficiency.

FIGURE 2.4
CBSS nominal production 2020-2025



KEY TAKEAWAYS ON THE SYNERGIES CREATED THROUGH SATCEN

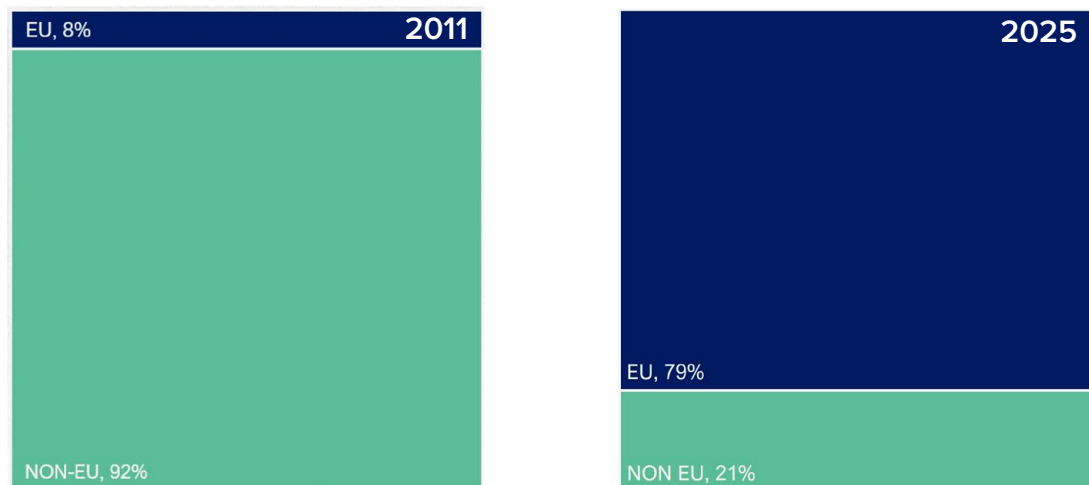
Synergies with Commission agencies continued to be explored, with ongoing administrative arrangements. While approval from SatCen’s Board remained pending, efforts to leverage Copernicus SESA for broader set of Union and Member State users persisted.

In summary, 2025 was a year of sustained performance, increased output, and strategic development, reinforcing SatCen’s role in enhancing the EU’s situational awareness, strategic foresight and resilience through satellite imagery analysis.

USE AND ACQUISITION OF SATELLITE DATA

Over the past decade, SatCen has progressively shifted its acquisition and use of satellite data toward predominantly relying on European space assets. In 2025, data consumption from EU providers remained consistently high at around 80%, a significant increase from 2011, when only 8% came from European providers. This evolution reflects the growing maturity of the space sector and its ability to meet the Centre’s data needs, while reinforcing European strategic autonomy.

FIGURE 2.5
Data expenditure (EU/non-EU sensors)



The core of SatCen’s analysis is currently supported by commercial private-sector providers, complemented by the Sentinel satellite constellation from the Copernicus Earth Observation component of the EU’s Space Programme and government satellites from EU Member States. Following the agreement signed with the Spanish Ministry of Defence at the beginning of 2024, which granted access to their national Earth Observation system (PAZ), SatCen is now expanding cooperation with other Member States, including France, Luxembourg, Germany, and Italy, and remains open to engaging with any EU Member State wishing to contribute capabilities or participate in similar arrangements. These diversified data sources ensure a resilient and robust supply, enabling high-precision geospatial analysis across a wide range of domains. The increased use of governmental sensors will contribute to strengthening the EU’s strategic autonomy while supporting the development of enhanced resolution and defence-related capacities. In parallel, the continued reliance on commercial sensors leverages service flexibility and fosters innovation driven by the emerging New Space ecosystem.

FIGURE 2.6
Diversified data sources

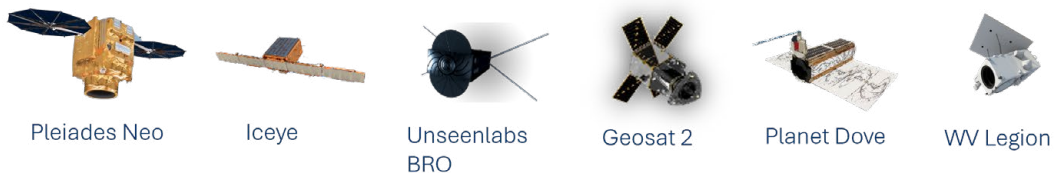
EU Sensors



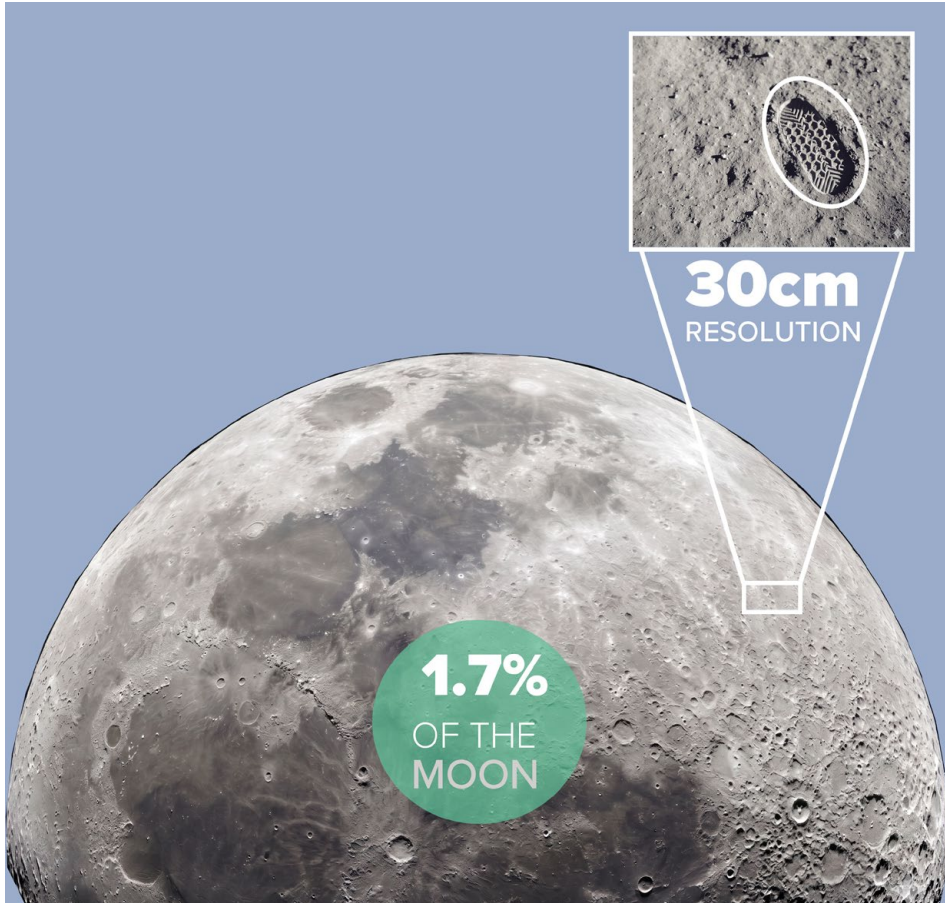
Governmental Sensors



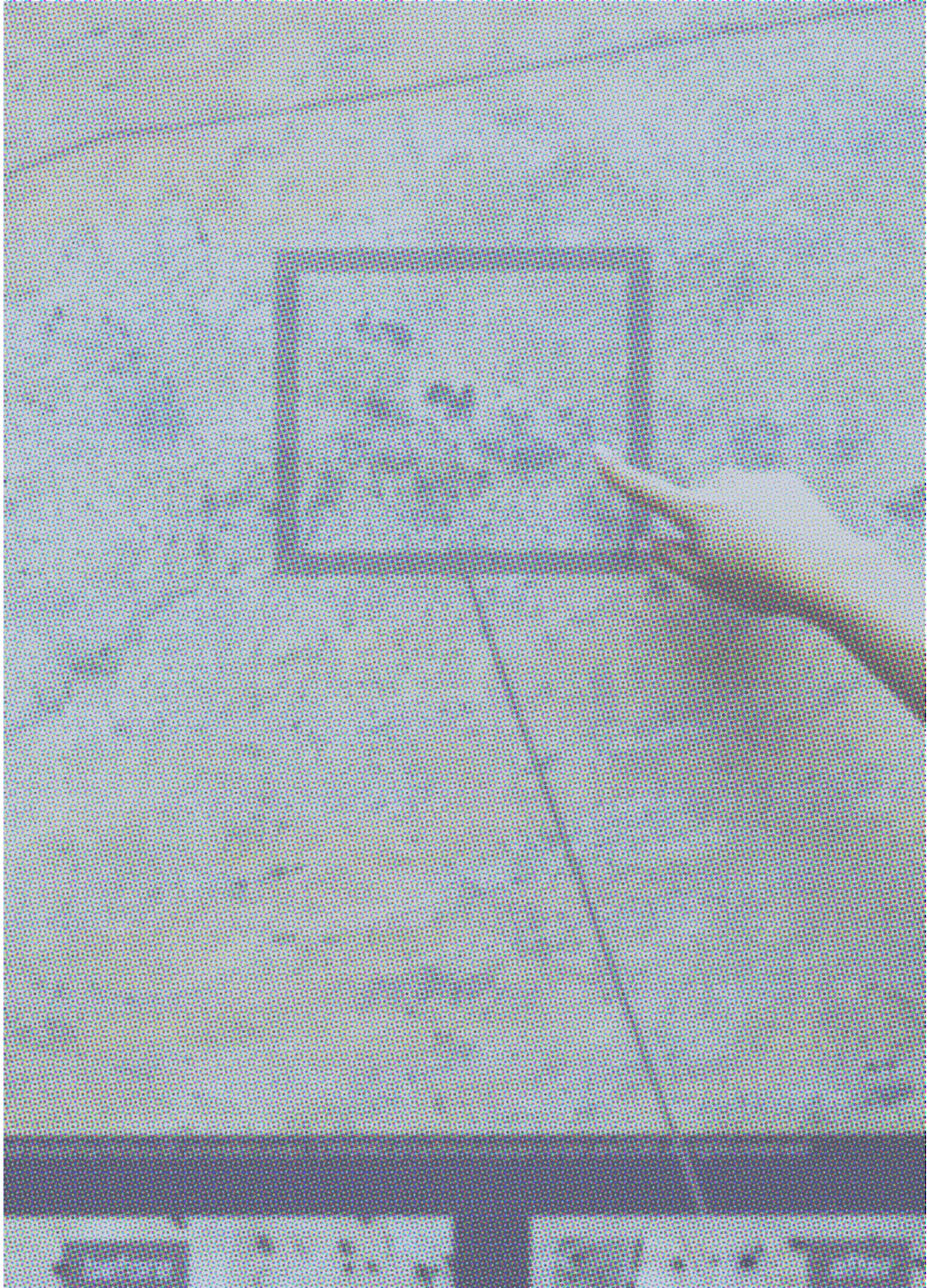
Commercial Sensors



SatCen continuously reviews its data acquisition approach to maintain an optimal balance between commercial and governmental sources. In parallel, the Centre continued to work on the implementation of the Pilot European Earth Observation Governmental Service (EOGS).



In 2025, expenditure on commercial data for core tasking represented a significant share of SatCen's overall budget. This investment enabled the acquisition of 6,383 satellite images, covering approximately 640,000 km²—an area equivalent to about 1,7% of the Moon's surface. To illustrate the level of detail, the resolution of the commercial Earth Observation satellites used by SatCen is approximately 30 cm, about the size of a footprint left on the moon.





Secure IT Services

3

Operational Projects

DIGITAL PLATFORM AS A STRATEGIC ASSET

The deployment of the Digital Platform within Member States' intelligence services and Operational Headquarters (OHQs) progressed throughout 2025. Access to the Digital Platform is done through the EU Operational Wide Area Network (EU OPS WAN) as the operational classified network. All OHQs engaged in current EU operations — namely the Operations ATALANTA, ASPIDES, and IRINI — are now fully connected, through EU OPS WAN, and utilise the platform to access SatCen's classified products. By November 2025, the number of unique users with 24/7 access to the Centre's classified services had reached 200.

The platform has become the preferred distribution mechanism for governmental satellite imagery from one Member State under the Joint Framework Agreement, with two additional Member States currently evaluating its secure infrastructure and

operational simplicity for potential integration. Furthermore, several EU initiatives are leveraging the platform as a critical enabler for their operational success.

COMMERCIAL IMAGERY CATALOGUE

In response to requests from Member States, SatCen developed a remote-access application to query the inventories of major commercial satellite imagery providers in real time, enhancing operational responsiveness.



Support Projects

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)

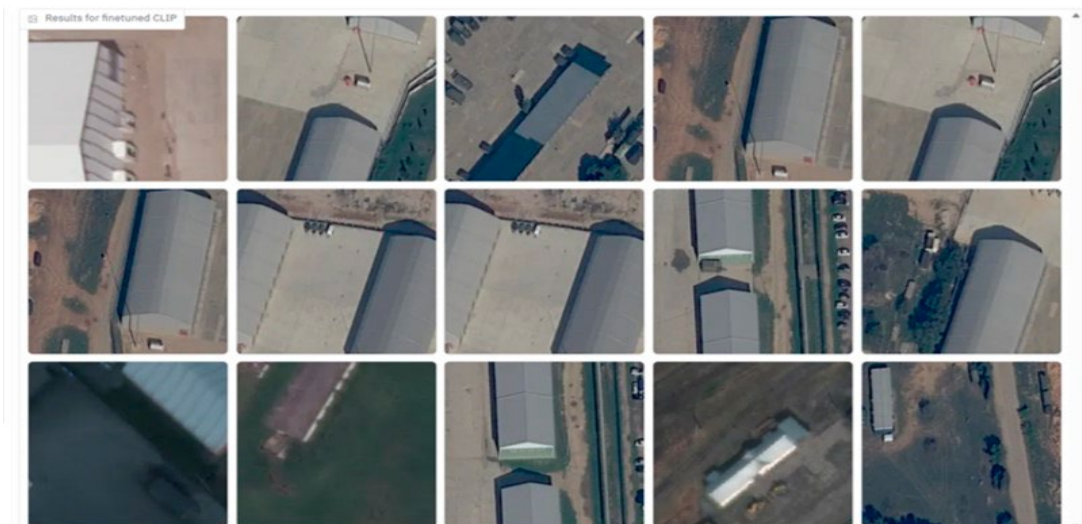
Following the establishment of the AI Factory in 2024, SatCen accelerated its AI development and deployment in 2025. The year marked a significant shift toward semantic AI — capable of interpreting the general content of imagery and documents — moving beyond basic object detection.

RECRUITMENT PROCESS ENHANCEMENT

SatCen has experienced a substantial increase in recruitment procedures over the past five years, paralleled by a rise in institutional attractiveness. The number of candidates per recruitment cycle has doubled compared to levels observed four years ago.

To address growing demands and streamline operations, SatCen initiated a full overhaul of its decade-old recruitment management system. A new end-to-end digital recruitment platform has been developed and is scheduled for deployment in the first quarter of 2026. This system aims to reduce internal administrative burden, minimise processing delays, and improve the candidate experience.

FIGURE 3.1.
Artificial Intelligence similarity search for “aircraft hangar”





Capability Enhancement

4

Development of Space, Security and Defence Capabilities

DEVELOPING OPERATIONAL INTER-INSTITUTIONAL COOPERATION

In 2025, SatCen continued its close cooperation with the European Commission. The cooperation relies predominantly on the frame of the Copernicus component of the EU Space Programme, the Centre being the entrusted entity for the provision of the Copernicus SESA service and having a service level agreement (SLA) with Frontex in the framework of the CBSS. In terms of research and innovation (R&I), SatCen contributed to the consolidation of the strategic research agenda for the Copernicus Security Service.

In parallel, the Centre participated in key actions related to research, innovation and development, within EU frameworks such as the European Defence Fund and Horizon Europe, with the overarching goal of improving the operational capabilities of SatCen.

COPERNICUS SESA

During 2025, the Copernicus SESA Service further strengthened its activities related to user uptake, operational guidance, and consolidation of service use. Building on previous years, SatCen focused on reinforcing cooperation with users through structured outreach, dedicated guidance on activation procedures, and continuous technical and operational support. These efforts contributed to the consolidation of a stable user base and to sustained levels of tasking and production throughout the year.

User uptake activities intensified during the reporting period, with the organisation of 29 structured Info Sessions complemented by follow-up meetings and tailored support.

The reedition of the Hovering Horizon, a bimonthly magazine with each issue presenting a curated selection of recent trends and developments in Earth Observation relevant to security and EU external action, was initiated in 2025. The first issue, End-to-End constellations in Member States – For a stronger and more autonomous Europe, was published to the magazine’s subscribers in October.



Regarding training and outreach, the organisation of the Second Copernicus SESA User Workshop in December 2025 in Brussels was a major milestone, gathering more than 90 participants from Member States, EEAS, the European Commission and EU agencies, and other stakeholders. The workshop reinforced user engagement, enabled exchanges on operational needs, and supported the alignment of service development with evolving user requirements. In addition, Copernicus SESA continued to expand its visibility through participation in major institutional and thematic events, including the Living Planet Symposium 2025 and other relevant EU fora.

FIGURE 4.1
SatCen Deputy Director Jorge Farré providing opening remarks at the SESA User Workshop, 4-5 December 2025



Regarding Copernicus SESA service evolution, progress in strategic initiatives continued, including contributions to the Strategic Research Agenda for Copernicus Security Services and participation in relevant Horizon Europe projects. Significant efforts were dedicated to the consolidation and upgrade of the GeohuB platform and to the evaluation of emerging data providers under the ESA CCM Cat-1 initiative, supporting the long-term technical sustainability and innovation capacity of the service.

SUPPORT TO FRONTEX FOR CBSS

In 2025, the 10th anniversary of the cooperation between the Centre and Frontex marked a milestone and was celebrated in the format of an enlarged bilateral meeting on 2 July in Warsaw, Poland. Over the past decade, this collaboration has been a key EU effort to strengthen the European integrated border management, enhance situational awareness and respond to evolving challenges. During this decade, SatCen provided Frontex with over 7,400 products and related services.

These contributions played a pivotal role in supporting Frontex and Member States in preventing and combating irregular migration and cross-border crime.

During 2025, SatCen successfully deployed the Electronic Tasking Tool (ETT), which has been managing all requests since 1 April.

The SLA for CBSS includes R&I, focusing on monitoring and R&I activities in the geospatial intelligence areas relevant to European integrated border management, including the use of advanced border control technology, innovative and key enabling technologies, secure satellite communications and new data acquisition and processing systems. In addition, periodic contact between Frontex and SatCen enabled the exploration and implementation of initiatives of common interest, like thermal imagery monitoring, drone data acquisition and new methods for maritime surveillance.



FIGURE 4.2
SatCen Director Louis Tillier and Mr. Hans Leijtens, Frontex Executive Director celebrating 10 years of cooperation, 18 September 2025

COOPERATION WITH EUROPEAN AGENCIES AND PROJECTS



EUROPEAN DEFENCE
AGENCY (EDA)

The EDA and SatCen jointly formulated the annual EDA - SatCen Roadmap for Cooperation, which includes the participation of SatCen in the EDA Capability Expert Group Space Services SBEO and CapTech Space fora, engaging with Member States' Ministries of Defence and the EU space industry.

Ad hoc projects such as the Digital Twin Earth for Defence and Security (DTE4DS) and the continuation of GISMO/ GeohuB, MARSUR, and GEONAW were carried out during 2025, as well as the definition of AIDRA (Artificial Intelligence In-Orbit Data Processing Assessment), an initiative related to testing satellite AI on board capabilities.



SatCen and EFCA worked closely to formalise their cooperation through the development of an Administrative Arrangement, finalising the content in 2025. The signature of the agreement, planned for early 2026, will mark an important milestone in the partnership. In addition, EFCA continued to act as a requesting party for Copernicus SESA in support to the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP).

Cooperation with EMSA in 2025 focused mainly on SatCen's contribution to the Common Information Sharing Environment (CISE) and possible future information exchange between CISE and the Maritime Surveillance Project (MARSUR), reinforcing civil-military cooperation. The Centre also continued discussions with DG MOVE, initiated in 2023, on access to Integrated Maritime Services (IMS) data, and cooperated with EMSA in the framework of Copernicus.





THE MARITIME SURVEILLANCE PROJECT (MARSUR)

Following the bilateral agreement between SatCen and EDA for MARSUR III in March 2024, the project was bolstered in 2025 by two Seconded National Experts (SNEs) funded by contributing Member States. SatCen delivered the MARSUR Concept of Operations (CONOPS), establishing a robust operational framework, and initiated the drafting of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to provide tactical guidance for operators. Beyond operational support, SatCen assumed the role as Chair of the Technical Advisory Board and hosted critical User Acceptance Tests (UAT). Ultimately, MARSUR is designed to enable seamless exchange of maritime surveillance data among key stakeholders, including CSDP Missions and Operations, significantly enhancing Maritime Situational Awareness (MSA).



The ESA-SatCen Administrative arrangement signed in 2024 had established the base for a long-term cooperation between the two entities on access to data and related technologies, including pilot projects and the collaboration in the organisation of large initiatives such as the Big Data from Space conference, held in Riga in October 2025 together with the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC).

The GEO continued its activities in line with the strategic objectives, including the UN Sustainable Development Agenda, the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement, with SatCen leading the Space and Security Convenor for the GEO Work Programme 2025+, aimed at fostering synergies between cross-domain initiatives with a security focus and actively participating to EuroGEO initiatives, including the European High-Level Working Group.

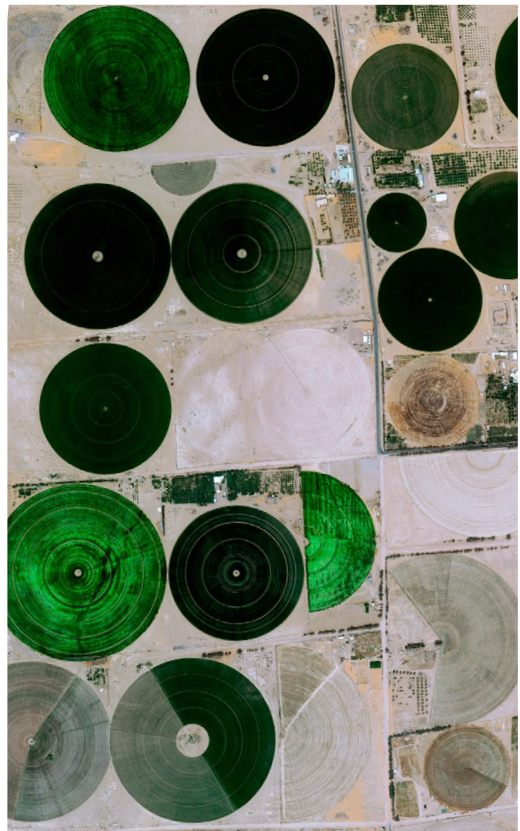


IMPROVING AND ENLARGING ACCESS TO DATA

The future possible EOGS will provide an autonomous European capability, contributing to the Union's objective of delivering a reliable, resilient and continuously available situational awareness service. In this context, the ongoing Common Hub for Governmental Imagery (CoHGI) initiative and the Space-based Persistent Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance ISR for Defence and Europe Reinforcement (SPIDER) project contribute in a complementary manner, leveraging SatCen's operational capabilities. CoHGI will facilitate the exchange of classified governmental imagery at European level between Member States and EU entities, thereby enhancing data availability and interoperability. In parallel, SPIDER aims at supporting the federation of existing and upcoming European assets, in view of their integration within a future EOGS, to enable more coordinated access to Earth Observation data.

COMMON HUB FOR GOVERNMENTAL IMAGERY (COHGI)

SatCen reasserted its commitment to contribute to European security and defence initiatives through collaborative efforts, namely through its involvement in the CoHGI initiative. This initiative aims to establish a common hub to facilitate the exchange of governmental imagery catalogues at European level between Member States and SatCen to enhance its capabilities to fulfil its core mission. The Centre's secure operational infrastructure for data and product management plays a key role as a foundational technology for the CoHGI project. Synergies among CoHGI, the SPIDER project, and the EOGS initiative demonstrate how CoHGI is functionally supporting a possible future EOGS implementation in the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF).



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SPACE-BASED PERSISTENT ISR FOR DEFENCE AND EUROPE REINFORCEMENT (SPIDER) PROJECT

Under the European Defence Fund (EDF), the SPIDER project successfully achieved the System Requirements Review and the 1st Preliminary Design Review milestones in 2025. Its overarching goal is to implement a space-based EO system-of-systems (SoS) to improve current Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance ISR capabilities for security and defence, especially in terms of access to satellite data, short revisit periods and high reactivity, including autonomous re-tasking (i.e. 'Tip and Cue'). The EDF SPIDER project aims to constitute one of the building blocks of the future EOGS, as its federation layer, and advanced significantly during 2025.

The project advanced significantly during 2025 in the design of its core building blocks: the federation layer and the potential EO systems, with a strong focus on security needs.

EARTH OBSERVATION GOVERNMENTAL SERVICE (EOGS)

The mid-term (2024-2028) activities focused on implementing the Pilot EOGS. In this context, during 2025, SatCen's work focused on a broad set of activities supporting the implementation of the pilot. The initial phase focused on identifying key needs and gaps, with the objective of strengthening the EU's strategic autonomy.

From an operational perspective, relevant use cases (UC) were identified in consultation with Member States, leading to the selection of two priority applications.

Throughout the year, SatCen maintained close coordination with key initiatives and stakeholders, including the EDF SPIDER project, CoHGI, the Joint Framework Arrangement (JFA), Member States and other relevant partners, ensuring alignment and complementarity with ongoing European defence and security activities.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION (R&I)

R&I activities are continuously improving operational capabilities in an era of rapid technological innovation, by implementing specific actions to maximise value for users. These efforts focused on improving user experience, expanding data access, integrating advanced technologies, refining data processing workflows, and addressing emerging security challenges. The approach ensured comprehensive coverage of the entire EO value chain, from data acquisition to analysis and delivery.

EXTENSION OF SERVICE OFFER AND USER EXPERIENCE

In 2025, SatCen's R&I activities focused on enhancing how users access and benefit from its services, improving both timeliness and ease of information use. This included a shift from product-based delivery to a more flexible, service-oriented approach, while laying the groundwork for future early warning and foresight capabilities.

Key initiatives supported the transition towards platform-based access to SatCen's products and services, notably through the further development and deployment of geospatial data management platforms, including GeohuB and GEO-DAMP, across several EU Operational Headquarters. At the same time, projects such as SDGs-EYES and CENTAUR successfully demonstrated proof-of-concept thematic services.

Progress was also made on establishing the Climate and Environment Security Data and Analysis Hub (CESDA) at SatCen. Designed as a single access point, CESDA will enhance situational awareness on climate and environmental issues and support more informed planning and decision-making.

By strengthening evidence-based analysis

and foresight, it will contribute to a deeper understanding of the links between environmental change and security, helping stakeholders address emerging challenges that increasingly affect the safety and resilience of societies.

ENLARGEMENT OF THE EXPLOITABLE DATA CATALOGUE

Expanding access to diverse data sources remained a key priority for SatCen, enabling the development of new products and the enhancement of existing services. This included greater use of space-based data, airborne Earth Observation sensors providing very high-resolution (VHR) imagery, and complementary non-space data sources.

Efforts focused on leveraging governmental satellite data, multi-sensor constellations, and services that improve data accessibility. Projects such as PERIVALLON, which integrates Automatic Identification System (AIS) and drone data for maritime surveillance, and GEONAW, addressing threats to Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) systems, played an important role in advancing these capabilities and broadening the range of actionable insights available to users.



EXPLORATION OF ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES

SatCen continued to monitor and assess rapidly evolving technologies for accessing and exploiting satellite-based services, focusing on those nearing operational maturity. Particular emphasis was placed on artificial intelligence, with progress in areas such as neural compression embeddings (e.g. EMBED2SCALE) and the application of knowledge graphs (e.g. ENEXA).

At the same time, joint initiatives with EDA enabled more integrated and forward-looking developments. Building on established projects such as GeohuB, Matrix Evolution and GEONAW-III, these efforts also advanced strategic activities of shared interest. Notably, the DTE4DS study was completed in September, identifying priority use cases and outlining a roadmap towards a Minimum Viable Product. In parallel, AIDRA progressed through its final discussion phase, paving the way for its planned launch in 2026 and exploring the operational benefits of deploying AI capabilities directly in orbit.

ENHANCEMENT OF DATA-RELATED PROCESSES

SatCen strengthened data-related processes through Research and Innovation actions aimed at developing pre-operational solutions across the data management chain and supporting service delivery.

A key example is the ATLANTIS project, completed in September, where SatCen contributed DInSAR-based analysis to large-scale decision support systems for the management and protection of cross-border critical transport infrastructure.

EVOLUTION OF APPLICATION AREAS

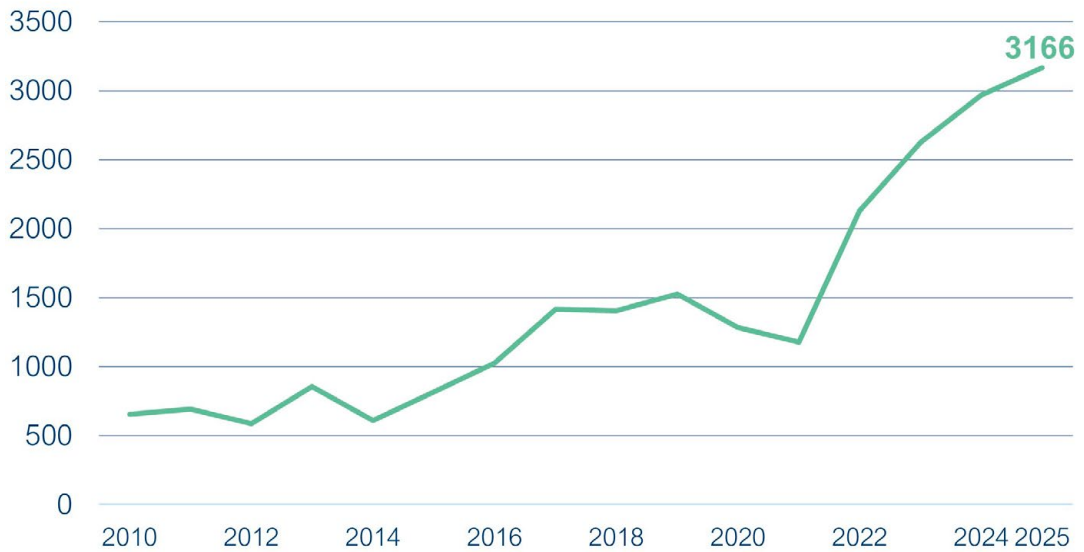
Security challenges are increasingly dynamic, driven by geopolitical instability and global environmental pressures. In this context, SatCen continued to adapt its R&I activities to emerging needs and policy priorities. Building on work initiated in 2023 and 2024, and with several major projects concluded in 2025 such as CENTAUR, SDGs-EYES and RITHMS, SatCen further advanced its capabilities in support of the EU Maritime Security Strategy, climate security, environmental compliance, and the protection of cultural heritage.

TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2025, SatCen’s Training Unit continued to strengthen the knowledge and expertise of both its staff and personnel from Member States. Training activities covered key areas such as GEOINT, Imagery Intelligence (IMINT), Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR), nuclear fuel cycles, and data processing.

These specialised courses enabled users to better formulate requests and effectively interpret SatCen services, fostering closer alignment between providers and users. By promoting a shared analytical approach across the EU security community, the programme enhanced interoperability, strengthened collaboration, and contributed to the development of a common intelligence culture. In this context, SatCen further consolidated its role as a knowledge hub for Member States and users, supporting the continuous exchange of expertise and best practices in GEOINT.

FIGURE 4.3
Number of attendees x days to SatCen training courses



TRAINING PORTFOLIO



Imagery Intelligence
Fundamentals



Port Installations &
Waterborne Activity



Geospatial Intelligence



Airfields & Aerial Activity



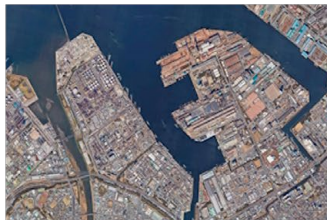
Military Installations &
Ground Activity



Air Defence Systems



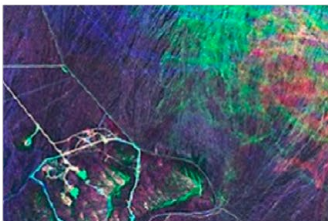
Power Installations



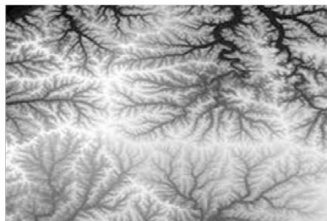
Industrial Installations



NFC & Nuclear Weapons
Related Facilities



Sar Imagery Processing &
Analysis




Digital Imagery & Data
Processing



In-situ Courses



 **SATCEN**

Effective Resource Management

5

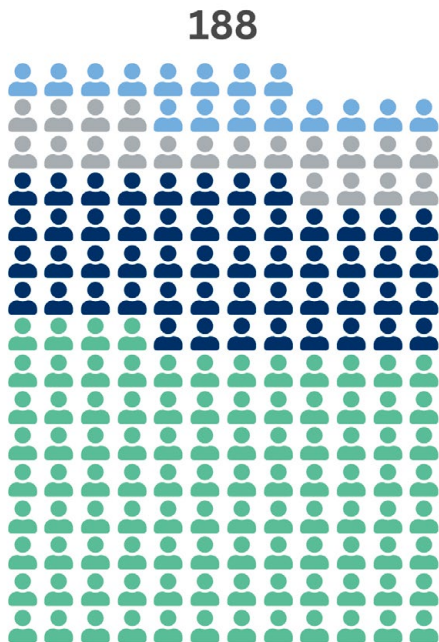
Human Resource Development

At the end of 2025, SatCen employed 152 highly skilled and dedicated staff members, including 100 in permanent roles and 52 in temporary positions. In addition, the number of SNEs increased from 15 to 20, with nine Member States participating in the programme.

Throughout the year, SatCen also hosted 16 trainees, contributing to capacity building and knowledge exchange.

FIGURE 5.1
Composition of SatCen staff - by type of post

- ▲ Permanent
- ▲ Temporary
- ▲ SNE
- ▲ Trainees



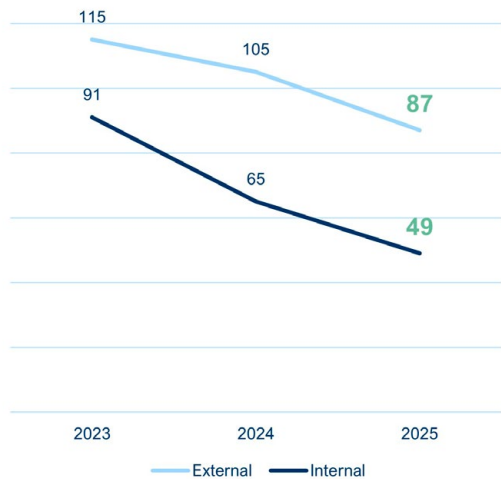
RECRUITMENT FOCUS

In 2025, SatCen experienced a significant increase in recruitment activity and staff turnover. The HR team managed a record 56 selection procedures covering staff, short-term replacements and trainees, more than doubling the volume handled in 2022. In parallel, the team supported the onboarding and offboarding of 20 SNEs and managed three retirements.

EFFICIENCY GAINS

Despite this growth in workload, recruitment timelines were substantially reduced. The average time-to-recruit decreased from 130 to 49 days for internal positions and from 145 to 87 days for external candidates. These improvements were achieved through targeted additional resources and a comprehensive revision of internal rules and procedures, alongside the introduction of more efficient workflows and updated IT tools. As a result, SatCen is now better equipped to scale its staff management, recruitment and administrative functions in the years ahead.

FIGURE 5.2
Time of recruitment (in days)



ATTRACTING THE RIGHT TALENT

With growing staffing needs, attracting the right talent became a key priority in 2025. Beyond increasing and streamlining recruitment, SatCen stepped up its outreach efforts to position itself as a modern and attractive employer at the intersection of security, defence and space.

To support this objective, the HR and Communication teams jointly organised the first SatCen Open Days in February and November, engaging students and young professionals. Participation in career fairs in Brussels, Lund and Berlin, the expansion of partnerships with university faculties across Member States, and targeted online and social media campaigns particularly aimed at under-represented groups significantly broadened the talent pool.

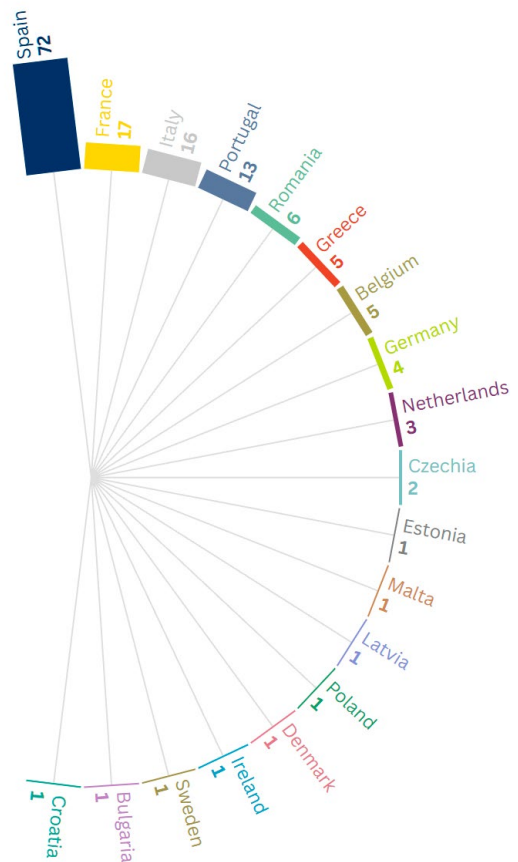
DIVERSITY: GEOGRAPHY AND GENDER

Diversity efforts throughout the past years delivered clear results. The average number of candidates per vacancy doubled or tripled, depending on the profile, while the geographical diversity of applicants increased markedly. The number of represented Member States rose from an average of 4–6 in 2022 to 15–20 in 2025. At the same time, female participation grew substantially, with the number of female candidates rising from under 500 in 2024 to over 1,300 in 2025, reflecting continued progress towards a more diverse and inclusive workforce.

As a result, SatCen staff now represents 21 Member States, up from 17 in 2022, and its female workforce increased by 2%, remaining above the security, defence and space

industry average of 20-22% (depending on the study).

FIGURE 5.3
Composition of SatCen staff by nationality



Staff Well-being and Diversity & Inclusion also remained an important work strand in 2025. Highlights include the first ever mental-health survey amongst staff, a number of trainings for all staff on bystander intervention, unconscious bias, and the prevention of burn-out, while senior management benefitted from a dedicated training on giving feedback.



International Women's Day at SatCen

Communication

In 2025, SatCen's communication efforts continued to strengthen the Centre's mission by increasing visibility of its role in supporting informed EU decision-making in security and defence, and by reinforcing its reputation as a trusted, operationally proven agency critical to advancing EU strategic autonomy. A secondary focus was on attracting talent to meet the Centre's growing human resource requirements.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

SatCen maintained structured engagement with key actors and partners across the EU space, security and defence community and beyond. Outreach activities strengthened awareness of the Centre's operational capabilities and output, as well as its research and development activities, not least in cutting-edge IT tools, services and infrastructure.

At a more political level, SatCen contributed its expertise to major security and policy fora and continued its regular briefings to key institutional decision-making bodies, including the PSC, the EU Military Committee and the European Parliament's Committee on Security and Defence (SEDE).

The Centre also hosted several high-level visits, including ministers from Slovenia, Slovakia, Lithuania, Ireland, and France, as well as the Operation Commander of EUNAVFOR ASPIDES, underscoring the operational relevance of SatCen's support to Member States, the EU and its missions and operations.

At the level of institutional cooperation, SatCen marked 10 years of partnership with Frontex and participated in EFCA's 20th anniversary, reaffirming long standing inter agency collaboration.

SUPPORT TO HUMAN RESOURCES

To support its increased recruitment needs, the Centre organised its first two SatCen Open Days, aimed in particular at students and young professionals with IT, geospatial sciences, and security and defence profiles. These live streamed sessions presented the Centre’s mission, career opportunities, and operational activities. Additionally, other outreach activities on social media and with partner organisations greatly contributed to the perception of SatCen as a modern, high-value employer as well as to a considerable increase of quality applications for the Centre’s vacancies.

GENERAL AND SPECIALISED MEDIA

Digital communication remained a primary vector for outreach, contributing to visibility, recruitment and institutional transparency. SatCen’s online and social media channels promoted the Centre’s mission, expertise and career pathways to both expert and general audiences.

Engagement with specialised media ensured accurate representation of SatCen’s work, including in the [VORTEX magazine](#), the [Hellenic Space Journal](#), the Handbook of Space Security and the [European Military Committee \(EUMC\) Military Magazine](#). Broader outreach was supported through interviews by the SatCen Director, amongst others on Spain’s prime-time TVE Informe Semanal and the [“Watch This Space”](#) podcast.

General Services

As SatCen’s staff and IT needs grow, modernising and updating the facilities is essential to address rising security demands. The organisation’s operational success and user trust depend on these efforts.

In 2025, several key areas of the facilities were reorganised, modernised, and expanded to enhance functionality, operability, safety, and capacity to accommodate the increasing number of personnel.

Internal Audit

The Internal Auditor supported the delivery of SatCen’s mandate and efforts to improve the Centre’s efficiency. Work began with mapping controls and providing methodological advice, in line with the established timeline and best practice.

Legal, Procurement and Registry

LEGAL AND PROCUREMENT

The Legal Office has prepared and published the policy on the “Use of e-Communications Systems” at SatCen. Additionally, the rules regarding public access to European Union Satellite Centre documents were updated and implemented on 18 February 2025.

The Centre launched twenty-eight procedures for a total amount of EUR 9.5 million in 2025.

An updated version of the SatCen Public Procurement Manual, reflecting new thresholds for high-value contracts, changes in the e-procurement tools used by the Centre, and an updated complaints procedure, was issued and published on the website.

DATA PROTECTION

During 2025, the Data Protection Officer (DPO) delivered awareness training sessions on generative AI systems and on the AI Act, as well as induction training sessions on data protection at SatCen as part of the onboarding of newcomers.

REGISTRY

In 2025, the registry managed 3,220 documents across classified and unclassified networks, maintaining a consistent trend with previous years.



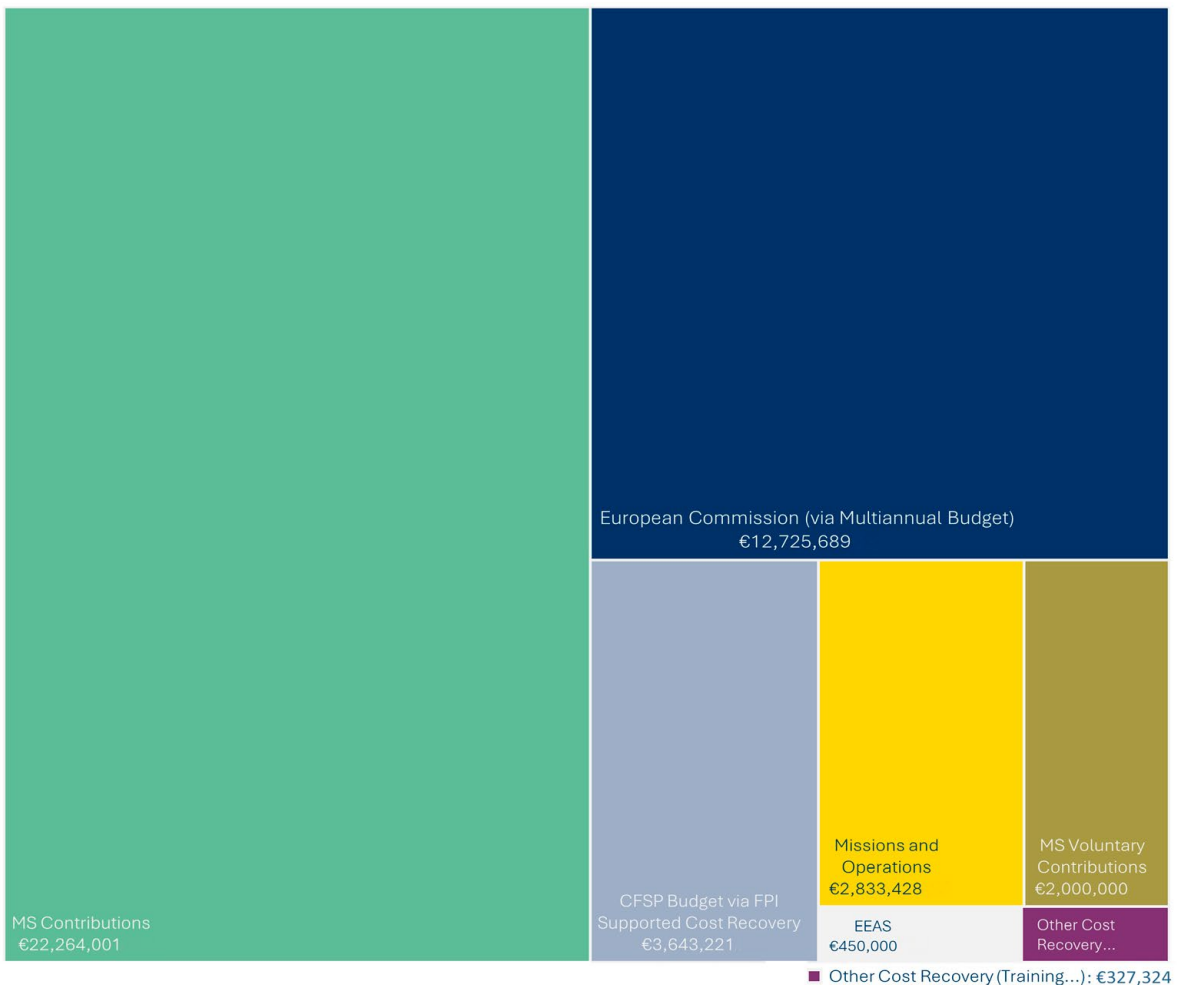
Financial Management

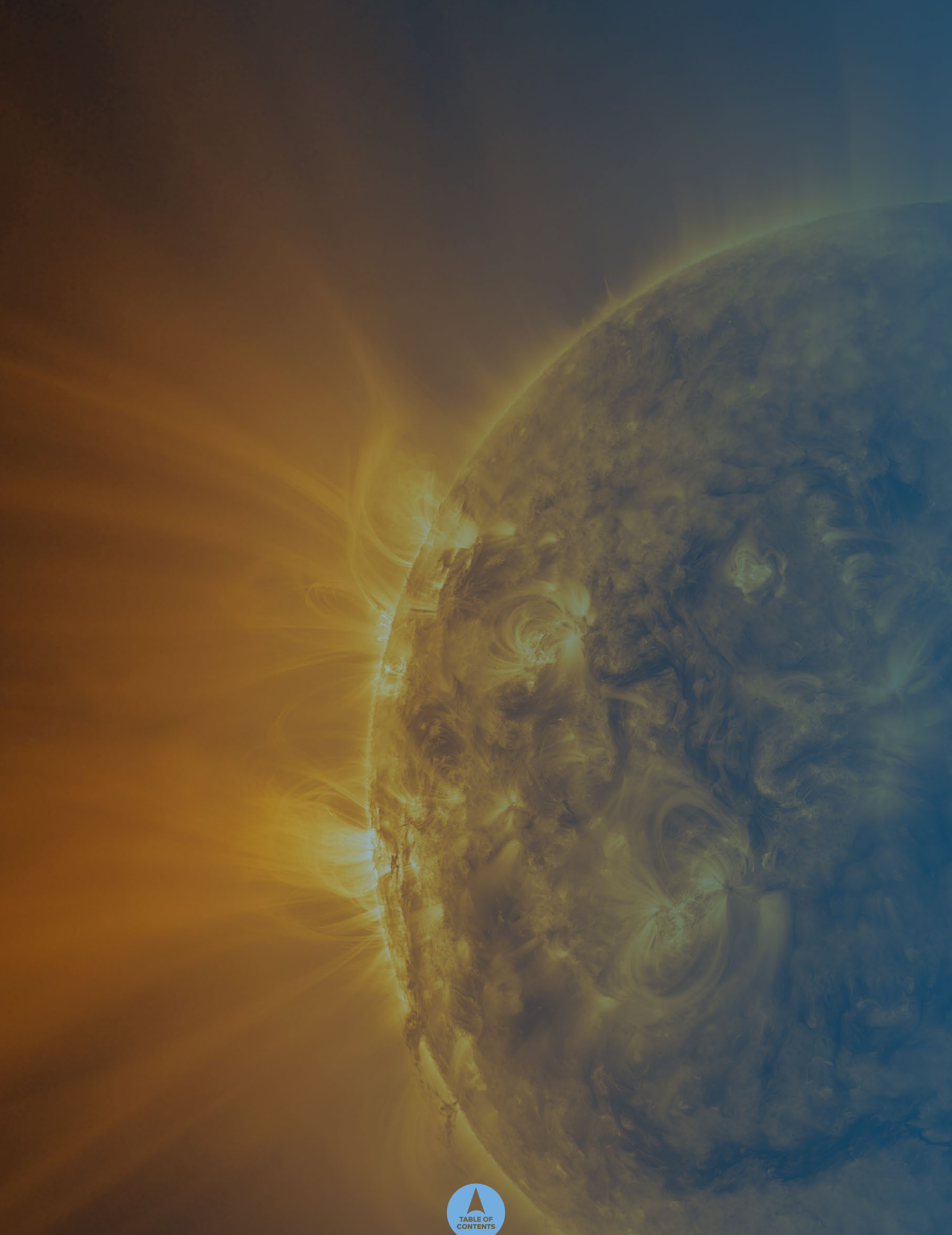
SatCen’s 2025 financial outlook projected an 11.38% increase in expenditure, an 8.19% rise in income, and a combined 13.90% increase in Member State contributions to the General and Pensions Budgets. This increase aligns with the SatCen Work Programme 2025 and the Development Plan (DP) 2025–2029, presented to the Board on 4 July 2024, as well as the Baseline Augmented Development Plan (BADP) endorsed in 2021.

Beyond the strategic context, key planning factors in the 2025 budget included:

- The increasingly complex global security environment.
- Funding under the Administrative Arrangement with the European Peace Facility (EPF) for cost recovery related to EU operations (e.g., EUMM Georgia, EUNAVFOR ATALANTA Rota, IRINI, ASPIDES).
- Inflation and slow economic recovery post-pandemic.

FIGURE 5.4
SatCen funding 2025





Way Forward

6



Way Forward

In parallel to its intense operational activity, the Centre has devoted significant effort to preparing for rapidly evolving geopolitical and security conditions. This preparation extends beyond technical matters, particularly in the space and IT domains, to include broader structural challenges.

Whether in Ukraine or the Middle East, “attrition”, “war economy”, “massive strikes”, “multidomain operations”, “long-lasting war” and “AI-enabled warfare” are all outlining a new paradigm in security and defence directly impacting SatCen’s environment. Looking forward, we foresee three driving forces: first, security and defence must scale rapidly to deliver greater capacity and speed; second, increased data availability is essential, focusing on high-volume and near real-time; and third, “total defence”, supported by a comprehensive approach of intelligence, is no longer optional as societies must be prepared to sustain critical functions during conflict.

The first key lesson is already embedded in SatCen’s Development Plan 2025-2029: security and defence actors must be able to scale quickly and deliver at high volume and high speed. This imperative continues to guide SatCen’s organisational adjustments, from operational workflows to administrative processes. SatCen’s operational organisation, recruitment and IT developments are all done embedding an ability to further scale.

The second key-lesson is an extensive need for data to deliver thorough and fast IMINT-GEOINT. Amidst heightened global security challenges and increased demand for rapid intelligence, there is a growing need to leverage European space assets for defence and security. SatCen is prepared to provide its professional, flexible, plug-and-play capacity to support these requirements, under the political guidance of Member States, contributing to the Union’s strategic autonomy.

The third enduring lesson is that “total defence” is no longer optional. It has become a necessity to ensure societies can sustain essential functions not only during wartime, but also in peacetime, amid persistent hybrid threats. The complexity of crises already triggered the Integrated Approach at the heart of EU’s external action to better coordinate policies. More directly, hybrid attacks are assessed as a major threat to the EU and Member States. Through the diversity of its users from the security and defence fields, and the domains tackled by SatCen teams (from defence to security, from external action to law enforcement support, from state-power dynamics to emerging challenges as climate security), SatCen is already, and indirectly, supporting a comprehensive intelligence approach. In this multipolar and contested world, SatCen can bring to decision-makers different perspectives, as well as support Member State and SIAC integrated intelligence assessments that help prepare ourselves for today’s and tomorrow’s complexity of crises and war.

SatCen is a success, and a jewel, of the EU's CFSP and in particular its CSDP. It is embedded in its long-lasting roots, coming from the Western European Union back in 1992. The rapidly transforming international order, as highlighted in the EU White Paper of 10 March 2025, together with rapid technological change, has created a new paradigm. As stated, "Europe must do far more if it is to restore credible deterrence and deliver the security on which our prosperity depends". It requires SatCen to accelerate its evolution and support policymakers with our timely, accurate and comprehensive contribution to situational awareness. It can be done through the three lessons learned highlighted above. Shared knowledge and integrated operational assessments strengthen synergies across the EU institutions, with Member States, and directly contribute to Europe's strategic resilience. We are convinced that deeper cooperation within the European Union can deliver substantial added value. Our methods and tools are designed on that principle: working collectively and always under the political guidance of Member States, for the benefit and security of the Union and its citizens.

Rear Admiral Louis Tillier, SatCen Director

Annex 1: Abbreviations

AI	Artificial Intelligence	EDF	European Defence Fund
AIDRA	Artificial Intelligence In-Orbit Data Processing Assessment	EEAS	European External Action Service
AIS	Automatic Identification System	EFCA	European Fisheries Control Agency
ATLANTIS	Improved resilience of Critical Infra Against Large scale transNational and systemic risks	EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
BADP	Baseline Augmented Development Plan	ENEXA	Efficient Explainable Learning on Knowledge Graphs
CapTech	Capability Technology	EO	Earth Observation
CBSS	Copernicus Border Surveillance Service	EOGS	European Earth Observation Governmental Service
CCM	Copernicus Contributing Missions	EOW	EU Operational Network
CENTAUR	Copernicus Enhanced Tools for Anticipative response to climate change in the emergency and security domain	ESA	European Space Agency
CESDA	Climate and Environment Security Data and Analysis Hub	ETT	Electronic Tasking Tool
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy	EU	European Union
CoHGI	Common Hub for Governmental Imagery	EUMA	EU Mission in Armenia
CONOPS	Concept of Operations	EUMC	European Union Military Committee
CRC	Crisis Response Centre	EUMM	European Union Monitoring Mission
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy	EUMM Georgia	European Union Monitoring Mission in Georgia
DG	Directorate-General	EUMS	EU Military Staff
DInSAR	Differential Interferometric Synthetic Aperture Radar	EUMSS	EU Maritime Security Strategy
DP	Development Plan	EUNAVFOR	European Union Naval Force
DPO	Data Protection Officer	EUNAVFOR ASPIDES	European Union Naval Force Operation ASPIDES
DTE4DS	Digital Twin Earth for Defence and Security	EUNAVFOR ATALANTA	European Union Naval Force Operation ATALANTA
		EUNAVFOR MED IRINI	European Union Naval Force Mediterranean Operation IRINI
		EU OPS WAN	EU Operational Wide Area Network
		Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement

Frontex	European Border and Coast Guard Agency	PNT	Positioning, Navigation and Timing
GEO	Group on Earth Observations	PSC	Political and Security Committee
GEO-DAMP	Geospatial Data Management Platform	R&I	Research and Innovation
GEOINT	Geospatial Intelligence	RITHMS	Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security
GEONAW	Geospatial Navigation Warfare	SAR	Synthetic Aperture Radar
GISMO	Geospatial Information to Support Decision-Making in Operations	SatCen	European Union Satellite Centre
HR	Human Resources	SBEO	Space-Based Earth Observation
HR/VP	High Representative/Vice President	SDGs-EYES	Sustainable Development Goals Enhanced monitoring through the family of copernicus Services
IMINT	Imagery Intelligence	SEDE	Security and Defence
IMS	Integrated Maritime Services	SESA	Copernicus Service in Support to EU External and Security Action
INTCEN	Intelligence and Situation Centre	SIAC	Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity
ISR	Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance	SLA	Service Level Agreement
JFA	Joint Framework Arrangement	SNE	Seconded National Expert
MARSUR	Maritime Surveillance	SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
MFF	Multiannual Financial Framework	SoS	System-of-Systems
MS	Member State	SPIDER	Space-based Persistent ISR for Defence and Europe Reinforcement
MSA	Maritime Situational Awareness	UAT	User Acceptance Tests
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization	UC	Use Cases
NATO APSS	Alliance Persistent Surveillance from Space	UN	United Nations
OHQs	Operational Headquarters	USA	United States of America
OPCW	Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons	VHR	Very High-Resolution
PERIVALLON	Protecting the European territory from organised environmental crime through intelligent threat detection tools	WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

Annex 2: R&I Projects Overview

Project	Time Span	Framework
ENEXA Efficient Explainable Learning on Knowledge Graphs	October 2022 – September 2025	EC Horizon Europe
ATLANTIS Improved resilience of Critical Infra Against Large scale transNational and systemic risks	October 2022 – September 2025	EC Horizon Europe
SDGs-EYES SDG – Enhanced monitoring through the family of Copernicus Services	January 2023 – December 2025	EC Horizon Europe
SPIDER Space-based Persistent ISR for Defence and Europe Reinforcement	December 2023 – August 2026	EC EDF 2022
CENTAUR Proactive Automatic Imagery Intelligence powered by Artificial Intelligence exploiting European Space Assets	December 2022 – March 2026 (Extended)	EC Horizon Europe
RITHMS Research, Intelligence and Technology for Heritage and Market Security	October 2022 – October 2025	EC Horizon Europe
EURMARS An advanced surveillance platform to improve the European Multi Authority Border Security efficiency and cooperation	October 2022 – September 2025	EC Horizon Europe

Project	Time Span	Framework
RESIST Resilience Enhancement of Essential Infrastructures Safety and Telecommunications	October 2025 – March 2028	EC Horizon Europe
EMBED2SCALE Earth Observation & Weather Data Federation	January 2024 – December 2026	EC Horizon Europe
THEIA Enhancing Copernicus Security Services - EU governmental crisis management hub for forced population displacement	December 2024 – May 2027	EC Horizon Europe
AI4COPSEC Security enhancement through heterogeneous data fusion and improved AI/ML-powered Copernicus maritime and border surveillance services	December 2024 – November 2027	EC Horizon Europe
DTE4DS A Digital Twin of the Earth for Defence and Security: Landscape Study	December 2024 – May 2025	SatCen-EDA Joint Initiative
GEONAW-III	January 2025 – December 2025	SatCen-EDA Joint Initiative
GeohuB – Phase 5 Geospatial Information to Support Decision-Making in Operations	September 2023 – May 2025	SatCen - EDA Joint Initiative
PERIVALLON Protecting the European territory from organised environmental crime through intelligent threat detection tools	December 2022 – November 2025	EC Horizon Europe

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