POLICY SCAN

A quarterly publication of the WGIC Policy Development & Advocacy Committee

Geospatial Policy Scan

Edition 3, Q4 2026. Volume 1, Issue 3.

The quarter location data got harder to collect, sell and obtain. 90 developments across seven regions.

Read it. Cite it. Shape what comes next.

World Geospatial Industry Council
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Q4 2026

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This edition covers developments dated June 20 to September 28, 2026, with selected carry-over context and two September 30 additions. An interactive web edition with a searchable tracker is published at wgicouncil.org.

Policy status checked through September 30, 2026. Statuses and dates in this PDF reflect that check. The web edition's countdowns update automatically from the reader's date.

90	7	25	4
Developments	Regions	High-impact items	Upcoming events

Executive summary

Three findings from 90 developments across seven regions this quarter.

1. **Control of location data is being divided, not simply tightened.** Courts and regulators limited how it is collected and obtained, US states and the FTC restricted its sale, and the EU gave users a right of access to the data their products generate.[9,10,67,68,11,12,13,4]
2. **EU digital obligations are now live.** AI Act transparency duties, Cyber Resilience Act reporting and Data Act access by design apply from August and September, often to the same geospatial products.[24,3,4]
3. **Drone and space rules are moving in different directions.** Security measures tighten in the United States while Europe eases airspace access; space licensing is being reformed in the US and regularized in the UK, UAE and Saudi Arabia.[14,17,19,21,22,23]

What to do next. Check whether Article 50[24] or CRA reporting[3] apply to products already on the market, and whether Data Act access by design[4] applies to connected products you place on the EU market after September 12, 2026 (general Data Act access rights have applied since September 2025), and use the consultations closing in October and November: Saudi CST satellite regulations (October 18)[23], Brazil ANPD sanctions procedure (October 26)[47] and the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) anonymization guidelines (October 30)[36]. See the compliance clock

This edition tracks 90 policy, regulatory and standards developments across seven regions, dated June 20 to September 28, 2026, with selected carry-over context and two September 30 additions. Twenty-one are already in force or applying, 34 are classified as laws, regulations or executive actions, and 25 are rated high impact.

Five forces define the quarter. Control of location data is being divided rather than simply tightened. Drone rules are pulling in two directions, with security measures tightening in the United States while Europe eases some airspace access. Space policy combines US licensing reform, the UK's strategic and licensing plans, and UAE regularization of existing licensing requirements. EU digital obligations under the AI Act, the Data Act and the Cyber Resilience Act are now live. And data protection law is spreading and hardening well beyond Europe.

Maps themselves were contested this quarter: the UN General Assembly encouraged equal-area projections[7], a US executive order renamed Lake Ontario on federal maps[69], Cambodia and Thailand opened UNCLOS conciliation over conflicting boundary charts[40], and the Philippines deposited its chart of Bajo de Masinloc with the UN[70].

Three spotlights look more closely at location data, drones and space licensing. The compliance clock and watch list set out what falls due next, and several consultations that close in October and November are open to industry input.

Five themes shaping Q4

Location-data rights are shifting.

Limits on collection, limits on sale, and new user access rights, all in one quarter.

Regulators and courts are limiting how location data is collected, retained and obtained by government[9,10,67,68]; the FTC and US states are restricting its onward sale[11,12,13]; and the EU now requires connected products to give users access to the data they generate[4]. See Spotlight 1.

Drone rules pull in two directions.

Security tightens in the United States while Europe opens airspace.

US tariffs, counter-drone powers and proposed limits over fixed sites tighten security[14,15,16], while Europe eases access through U-space and airport-zone changes[17,18]. See Spotlight 2.

Space licensing rules are changing.

US licensing reform, a UK strategy, UAE regularization and a Saudi consultation.

The FCC adopted a new Part 100 licensing framework[19] and, on September 30, rules opening more than 1,000 MHz for satellite services [20]; the UK published a Space Strategy with licensing plans[21]; the UAE gave operators 90 days to obtain licenses under its existing space law [22]; and Saudi Arabia is consulting on satellite filings and earth stations [23]. See Spotlight 3.

EU digital obligations are live.

AI Act transparency, CRA reporting and Data Act access by design now apply.

AI Act Article 50 transparency duties apply from August 2, subject to a transition to December 2 for marking by generative systems already on the market[24,1], Cyber Resilience Act reporting from September 11[3] and Data Act access by design from September 12[4], often touching the same geospatial products.

Data protection is hardening worldwide.

Revenue-based fines and new rules from Vietnam to Ecuador.

Vietnam introduced revenue-based sanctions for specified unlawful transfers[25], Indonesia promulgated its implementing regulation[26], South Korea allowed fines of up to 10% of revenue in aggravated cases [27], Ecuador prohibited mass, indiscriminate biometric identification in public spaces, subject to an express statutory exception requiring justification and safeguards[28], and El Salvador's Assembly approved reforms, with publication pending[29].

Spotlight 1

The quarter location data got harder to collect, sell and obtain

Geospatial policy increasingly concerns the conditions under which location data can be collected, accessed, shared and commercialized. Those conditions shape product design and business models, not just compliance paperwork. This spotlight reads one quarter of developments; it is not a full treatment of location privacy, which is broader and more contested than any single edition can show.

Once location data exists, who is entitled to collect it, keep it, obtain it, sell it, and have access to it? Three strands in the tracker answer in different ways, and together show policy moving in two directions at once.

For most of the past decade, location-data regulation read as a list: a privacy law here, a consent rule there, an enforcement action somewhere else. This quarter the pieces fit together into something more useful. Across the EU and the United States, courts, regulators and legislatures acted on the same underlying question: once location data exists, who is entitled to collect it, keep it, obtain it, sell it, and have access to it?

Three strands in the tracker answer that question in different ways. Taken one at a time they look like routine privacy measures. Taken together, they show policy moving in two directions at once.

1. Limits on collection and use

Commercial processing, government access and collection in public space are all under scrutiny, through different mechanisms: data protection law, constitutional search rules, and executive and congressional oversight of license plate readers.[9,10,67,68]

On September 21 the Irish Data Protection Commission announced a €403 million fine on Google Ireland over the processing of location data through Web & App Activity, Location History and Location Accuracy, covering 2018 to 2020. The DPC found failures of lawfulness and fairness, transparency, accountability and retention, and ordered Google to bring its processing into compliance within six months. The full decision is still to be published.

Three months earlier, on June 29, the US Supreme Court held in Chatrie v. United States that police obtaining a person's Google Location History is a Fourth Amendment search, and that even two hours of such data counts. The Court did not decide whether the geofence warrant in the case was valid; it sent that question back to the lower court.

Collection in public space came under the same scrutiny. On September 16 Missouri's Governor ordered state agencies and state-funded police using automated license plate readers to delete captured images within 30 days unless tied to an active investigation, a life-safety emergency or a court order, to log every query against a case number or a specific law-enforcement justification, to keep vendors from selling or commercializing the data, and to keep facial recognition out of ALPR systems.[67] In Washington, the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Crime and Counterterrorism opened an investigation into Flock Safety on August 26, asking how its networked, searchable camera database is retained, shared and secured, and held a hearing on September 23; Flock's written response agreed that a federal framework is needed.[68]

See the entries: Irish DPC fine on Google (source ↗) · Chatrie v. United States (source ↗) · Missouri EO 26-18 (source ↗) · Senate investigation of Flock (source ↗)

2. Control over sharing and sale

Possessing location data does not automatically confer an unrestricted right to commercialize it, and the limits now differ from state to state.[11,12,13,34]

On June 25 a US federal court entered a stipulated order resolving the FTC's case against location-data broker Kochava. For ten years, Kochava and its subsidiary may not sell, license, share or disclose location data tied to sensitive places such as medical facilities, religious organizations, schools and shelters, unless a consumer with a direct relationship has given express consent for a service they asked for. The order also requires a sensitive-location program and checks that suppliers obtained consent.

States moved from notice-and-opt-out towards limits on sale. Virginia's prohibition on selling consumers' precise geolocation data took effect on July 1. Connecticut's Public Act 26-64 provides that no controller or third party shall sell a consumer's precise geolocation data, defined as location within 1,750 feet, with effect from October 1 (after this edition's September 30 status check). California vetoed AB 1542's proposed restrictions this quarter: on September 27 the Governor vetoed the bill, which would have restricted the sale and sharing of sensitive personal information, a category that includes precise geolocation. Other California privacy and data-broker obligations remain in place.

See the entries: FTC v. Kochava (source ↗) · Virginia SB 338 (source ↗) · Connecticut PA 26-64 (source ↗) · California AB 1542 (source ↗)

3. Access built into products

Firms must consider users' access rights when designing devices and data services, not after they ship.[4]

Connected products and related services placed on the EU market after September 12, 2026 must be designed so that the data they generate, including relevant metadata, is accessible to the user by default, and directly accessible where relevant and technically feasible (EU Data Act, Articles 3(1) and 50). For GNSS receivers, trackers, connected drones and agricultural sensors, location is often part of that data.

See the entry: EU Data Act access by design (source ↗)

Users of a connected product, whether individuals or organizations, gain a right to access the data it generates. Intermediaries face tighter limits on selling location data, and government access is subject to constitutional limits. Where the data is personal data, access and onward use still require a valid legal basis.[4,11,10]

The useful point is not that location data is becoming more regulated. It is that policy is restricting who may obtain and trade location data, while strengthening connected-product users' rights to access the data they generate. The Data Act expands what the user can obtain from a product. Kochava's order and the state sale limits restrict what intermediaries can do with the same kind of data. Chatrie makes government access to location data subject to Fourth Amendment requirements.

France's data protection authority illustrates the fault line in a single sector. Its recommendation on connected vehicles, published on June 30, states that under French law consent is required for most uses of vehicle location data other than a service the user has expressly requested. Under the Data Act, the user of the same connected vehicle, whether a driver or a fleet operator, has a right to access the data it generates; that user is not necessarily the person the data describes, and other uses of any personal data in it must satisfy the applicable legal requirements. Access is widening for product users; everyone else still needs a lawful basis.[5,4]

A prior question sits underneath all of this: when is aggregated or de-identified location data still personal data? The European Data Protection Board's draft guidelines on anonymization, open for comment until October 30, set out three criteria to be assessed in context. They are a draft, but they could shape how mobility and location datasets are designed.[36]

- **Map where your location data comes from.** The Kochava order requires supplier consent checks. Firms that buy or enrich location data should be able to show how consent was obtained upstream.[11]
- **Treat retention as a design choice.** Retention was one of the failures the DPC identified. Default retention periods for location histories deserve the same scrutiny as collection.[9]
- **Plan for state-by-state sale rules in the US.** Virginia limits "sale" to exchanges for money; Connecticut's ban also binds third parties. Scope varies by state, and California vetoed AB 1542's proposed restrictions; other California obligations remain in place. A single national approach is not yet available.[12,13,34]

Spotlights 2 and 3

Spotlight 2

Drone rules pull in two directions

For survey and inspection operators, US equipment costs are rising and site restrictions could tighten, while European airspace access is becoming more structured.

In the United States, the quarter's drone measures were mostly about security and supply. Section 232 tariffs took effect on September 3, with a 100% duty on drones over 25 kg, thermal-imaging drones and docks, and 25% on smaller drones[14]. An interim final rule extended counter-drone detection and mitigation authority to state and local law enforcement[15], and the FAA proposed restrictions over fixed sites that could affect mapping and inspection flights [16]. Part 108, the rule that would create the first routine pathway for flights beyond visual line of sight, has been under White House review since July 10[5].

Europe moved the other way on access. Austria amended its Aviation Act to enable U-space[17]; the Netherlands announced that, from November 26, drone pilots will no longer need to contact air traffic control in designated parts of the zones around five civil airports[18]; and the UK CAA published an airspace concept for scaled beyond-visual-line-of-sight operations[66]. Brazil and Türkiye also revised their rules on airspace access and pilot authorization[32,44].

Spotlight 3

Space policy: licensing reform, strategy and regularization

Operators with payloads or ground segments in several countries should check license terms, grace periods and consultation deadlines country by country.

The FCC adopted a Space Modernization Order on July 22 that replaces Part 25 licensing with a new Part 100, with longer license terms and reduced bonding for most operators[19]. On September 30, just after the window, the FCC adopted rules opening more than 1,000 MHz in the 12.7 GHz and 42 GHz bands for satellite services, with further proposals on Ku-, Ka- and D-band spectrum; the text of the order had not been released at editorial close[20]. The Office of Space Commerce is piloting a voluntary mission authorization framework for novel in-space activities[55].

Elsewhere, the UK's Space Strategy commits £7.8 billion to 2030, including £8 million for the EO DataHub, and plans "collect once" orbital licensing[21]. The UAE Space Agency gave entities operating in its space sector 90 days from July 27 to obtain licenses under its existing Decree-Law 46/2023[22], and Saudi Arabia's CST is consulting on satellite filing and earth-station rules until October 18[23].

WGIC Perspective

What this quarter's developments mean for the geospatial industry.

- **Location data is now a product-design question.** Consent checks on suppliers, retention defaults and user access to device data are being decided in how products are built. Geospatial firms should treat them as design requirements, not only compliance paperwork.
- **Trust depends on practice, not only design.** Privacy is increasingly marketed as a feature while the terms that govern data use sit in the small print. Users want to know how their location data is used, kept and deleted. Geospatial firms should make sure what they say about privacy matches what their products and contracts actually do.
- **Fragmented rules carry a real cost.** US state-by-state limits on selling location data, and diverging national data laws elsewhere, raise the cost of operating across borders. The industry benefits from interoperable approaches and consistent definitions of precise location data.
- **Engage before rules are final.** Several consultations close in October and November, including the European Data Protection Board (EDPB) anonymization guidelines. Industry input is most useful while texts are still drafts, and standards bodies are a practical place to contribute.
- **Operators need predictable licensing.** Drone and space rules are moving in different directions: security measures are tightening in the United States while Europe eases some airspace access. Survey, inspection and Earth observation operators need clear, timely licensing to plan investment.
- **Readiness is uneven.** Our small reader polls suggest some organizations are unsure whether new rules such as the AI Act apply to them. WGIC plans to keep asking the same question each quarter to track how readiness changes.

The compliance clock

What falls due next, in date order. This list was generated on October 16, 2026; policy status was checked through September 30, 2026.



Each dot is a dated item; orange dots fall within 90 days of October 16, 2026, the date this edition was generated, which the dashed line marks. Dates that have already passed are not listed; the web edition keeps them under "Dates already passed".

Oct 18, 2026

Consultation closes Comments due on Saudi CST satellite filing and earth-station regulations Saudi CST consultation on satellite filings and earth stations www.cst.gov.sa ↗

Oct 19, 2026

Event or milestone TSA requests due for BVLOS security roundtables (Federal Register notice 2026-18124) public-inspection.federalregister.gov ↗

Oct 22, 2026

Consultation closes New Zealand Landonline terms consultation closes (5 pm NZDT) New Zealand: Landonline accounts may not power third-party search services www.linz.govt.nz ↗

Oct 26, 2026

Consultation closes Brazil ANPD consultation on sanctioning procedure closes Brazil ANPD consultation on sanctioning procedure www.gov.br ↗

Oct 30, 2026

Consultation closes EDPB anonymization guidelines consultation closes EDPB draft guidelines on anonymization www.edpb.europa.eu ↗

Nov 2, 2026

Requirement begins Updated Landonline terms scheduled to take effect in New Zealand, subject to consultation and notified changes New Zealand: Landonline accounts may not power third-party search services www.linz.govt.nz ↗

Qualification: subject to consultation and notified changes

Nov 13, 2026

Consultation closes IHO vote on S-101 Edition 2.1.0 closes IHO vote on S-101 ENC Edition 2.1.0 iho.int ↗

Nov 13, 2026

Consultation closes EDPB fining guidelines consultation closes EDPB guidelines on imposing GDPR fines www.edpb.europa.eu ↗

Nov 16, 2026

Event or milestone Nominations due for the US National Geospatial Advisory Committee (DOI call for nominations, Federal Register 2026-18985) www.federalregister.gov ↗

Nov 26, 2026

Requirement begins Netherlands: new drone zones around five airports apply Netherlands eases drone access around five airports www.rijksoverheid.nl ↗

Dec 1, 2026

Requirement begins Chile's Personal Data Protection Law (Ley 21.719) due to take effect, unless a pending bill moves it to Dec 1, 2027 Chile: bill to delay data protection law to Dec 2027 www.economia.gob.cl ↗

Qualification: unless a pending bill moves it to Dec 1

Dec 2, 2026

Requirement begins New AI Act prohibitions apply AI Act Article 50 transparency guidelines; obligations apply digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu ↗

Dec 2, 2026

Requirement begins AI Act Article 50(2): marking deadline for legacy generative systems Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 (AI "Digital Omnibus") in force eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Dec 30, 2026

Requirement begins EU Deforestation Regulation applies to large and medium operators EU Deforestation Regulation: scope and Information System acts eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Jan 1, 2027

Requirement begins California AB 883 takes effect: data brokers must check the DROP platform every 30 days (standard date for non-urgency statutes) California Delete Act: data brokers must process DROP deletion requests leginfo.legislature.ca.gov ↗

Qualification: (standard date for non-urgency statutes)

Jan 1, 2027

Requirement begins Beijing surveying and geographic information regulations take effect Beijing Regulations on Surveying, Mapping and Geographic Information www.bjrd.gov.cn ↗

Jan 1, 2027

Requirement begins Connecticut data broker registration begins Connecticut PA 26-64: consumer privacy act www.cga.ct.gov ↗

Jan 1, 2027

Requirement begins Remaining Lithuanian geodesy amendments apply Lithuania amends its Law on Geodesy and Cartography am.lrv.lt ↗

Jan 12, 2027

Requirement begins EU Data Act: ban on cloud-switching charges applies EU Data Act: access by design for new connected products eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Jan 16, 2027

Requirement begins Indonesia Government Regulation 33/2026 takes effect (calculated from Article 225) Indonesia Government Regulation 33/2026 implementing the PDP Law ppid.dprd.jatengprov.go.id ↗

Qualification: (calculated from Article 225)

Feb 9, 2027

Requirement begins US Section 232 duties on drone components (Annex III) take effect Proclamation 11055: Section 232 tariffs on drones www.federalregister.gov ↗

Jun 30, 2027

Requirement begins EU Deforestation Regulation applies to remaining micro and small operators EU Deforestation Regulation: scope and Information System acts eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Jul 1, 2027

Requirement begins California: Delete Act provisions for elected officials and judges take effect California Delete Act: data brokers must process DROP deletion requests leginfo.legislature.ca.gov ↗

Jul 31, 2027

Requirement begins Türkiye: transition ends for existing drone license and permit holders Türkiye revised drone instruction (SHT-İHA) web.shgm.gov.tr ↗

Aug 2, 2027

Requirement begins Each EU Member State must have an operational AI regulatory sandbox Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 (AI "Digital Omnibus") in force eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Sep 24, 2027

Requirement begins Ecuador: 12-month period for existing biometric systems ends (calculated) Ecuador prohibits mass, indiscriminate biometric identification in public spaces (SPDP-SPD-2026-0039-R) spdp.gob.ec ↗

Qualification: (calculated)

Dec 2, 2027

Requirement begins AI Act high-risk obligations apply to Annex III systems Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 (AI "Digital Omnibus") in force eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Dec 11, 2027

Requirement begins EU Cyber Resilience Act main requirements apply EU Cyber Resilience Act: reporting obligations apply www.enisa.europa.eu ↗

Dec 30, 2027

Requirement begins EU Deforestation Regulation: newly added products come into scope EU Deforestation Regulation: scope and Information System acts eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Jan 1, 2028

Event or milestone California: first independent audits of data brokers California Delete Act: data brokers must process DROP deletion requests leginfo.legislature.ca.gov ↗

Aug 2, 2028

Requirement begins AI Act high-risk obligations apply to Annex I systems Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 (AI "Digital Omnibus") in force eur-lex.europa.eu ↗

Ecosystem & events: the Q4 2026 horizon

Oct 13 to 16, 2026, Panama City

UN-GGIM: Americas, 13th session[60]

Regional dialogue and technical cooperation on implementing UN-GGIM frameworks across the Americas.

Oct 19 to 23, 2026, Addis Ababa (hybrid)

UN-GGIM: Africa, 12th meeting[61]

Regional committee on geospatial information management in Africa.

Nov 3 to 6, 2026, Montevideo

SIRGAS Symposium 2026[62]

Annual meeting of the geocentric reference system for the Americas.

Nov 16 to 19, 2026, Jeddah

Third UN World Geospatial Information Congress[63]

The global geospatial community's main congress, held every four years.

The Q4 2026 developments: index

The 90 developments tracked this quarter, by domain. The full entry for each, with its geospatial relevance, key dates and official source, is in the web edition at wgicouncil.org/policy-scan/q4-2026/; each name below is a live link to it. High-impact entries are marked. The status date is the event recorded for that status (the closing date for open consultations). Policy status checked through September 30, 2026.

Privacy, location data and data rights 27

EDPB guidelines on imposing GDPR fines
EU · Consultation · closes Nov 13, 2026

EDPB draft guidelines on anonymization High
EU · Consultation · closes Oct 30, 2026

Brazil ANPD consultation on sanctioning procedure
Brazil · Consultation · closes Oct 26, 2026

Connecticut PA 26-64: consumer privacy act High
US (Connecticut) · Enacted · effective Oct 1, 2026

UK Information Commission replaces the Information Commissioner (SI 2026/1015)
United Kingdom · In force · Sep 30, 2026

California AB 1542 (sensitive personal information) vetoed
US (California) · Vetoed · Sep 27, 2026

Ecuador prohibits mass, indiscriminate biometric identification in public spaces (SPDP-SPD-2026-0039-R)
Ecuador · In force · Sep 24, 2026

Irish DPC fines Google €403m over location-data processing High
Ireland / EU · Enforcement · Sep 21, 2026

Australia Privacy Act reform: exposure draft (Tranche 2) High
Australia · Exposure draft · consultation closed Sep 18, 2026

El Salvador reforms its Personal Data Protection Law
El Salvador · Approved by Assembly · Sep 17, 2026 · publication pending

Missouri Executive Order 26-18: safeguards on automated license plate readers
US (Missouri) · In force · Sep 16, 2026

South Korea amended PIPA: conditional 10% fine ceiling
South Korea · In force · Sep 11, 2026

CJEU Advocate General opinion, C-661/24 (data retention)
EU / Belgium · Opinion · Sep 3, 2026

Chile: bill to delay data protection law to Dec 2027
Chile · Bill · Sep 1, 2026

US Senate subcommittee investigates Flock Safety's license plate reader network
United States · Investigation · Aug 26, 2026 · hearing Sep 23, 2026

Vietnam Decree 330/2026: sanctions for cybersecurity and personal data violations
Vietnam · In force · Aug 19, 2026

CalPrivacy order: LocateSmarter High
US (California) · Enforcement · Aug 11, 2026

CalPrivacy order: Cybba (geolocation data broker)
US (California) · Enforcement · Aug 10, 2026

California Delete Act: data brokers must process DROP deletion requests High
US (California) · In force · Aug 1, 2026 · AB 883 signed Sep 27, 2026

Japan amends its Act on the Protection of Personal Information (Act No. 56 of 2026)
Japan · Promulgated · Jul 17, 2026

Indonesia Government Regulation 33/2026 implementing the PDP Law
Indonesia · Promulgated · Jul 16, 2026 · in force Jan 16, 2027 (calculated)

Virginia SB 338: ban on selling precise geolocation data High
US (Virginia) · In force · Jul 1, 2026

Connecticut PA 25-113: CTDPA amendments
US (Connecticut) · In force · Jul 1, 2026

CNIL recommendation on connected-vehicle location data
France · Guidance · Jun 30, 2026

Chatrie v. United States (Supreme Court) High
United States · Court ruling · Jun 29, 2026

FTC v. Kochava: stipulated order High
United States · Court order · Jun 25, 2026

Canada Bill C-36: Protecting Privacy and Consumer Data Act
Canada · Bill · tabled Jun 15, 2026, before the window

Drones and uncrewed aircraft 12

Netherlands eases drone access around five airports
Netherlands · Announced Sep 24 · applies Nov 26, 2026

California AB 2113: drones near ticketed events and amusement parks
US (California) · Enacted · Sep 20, 2026

Proclamation 11055: Section 232 tariffs on drones High
United States · In force · Sep 3, 2026

UK CAA consultations on UAS policy and traffic management
United Kingdom · Consultation · closed Aug 28, 2026

BIS rule easing drone export controls
United States · In force · Aug 13, 2026

FAA proposed rule on drone restrictions over fixed sites (Section 2209) High
United States · Proposed rule · comments closed Aug 5, 2026

Türkiye revised drone instruction (SHT-İHA)
Türkiye · In force · Jul 31, 2026

UK CAA airspace concept for scaled BVLOS (CAP3269)
United Kingdom · Published · Jul 30, 2026

FAA Part 108 (BVLOS) final rule under OIRA review High
United States · Under review · received Jul 10, 2026

Austria amends its Aviation Act to enable U-space
Austria · Passed Nationalrat · Jul 6, 2026

Counter-drone powers for state and local law enforcement
United States · Interim final rule · Jul 1, 2026

Brazil DECEA ICA 100-40: uncrewed aircraft and airspace access High
Brazil · In force · Jul 1, 2026

Standards and geospatial governance 10

IHO vote on S-101 ENC Edition 2.1.0
Global (IHO) · Vote · closes Nov 13, 2026

IHO adopts four S-100 Phase 2 specifications
Global (IHO) · Adopted · Sep 22, 2026

OGC LAZ 1.4 Community Standard
Global (OGC) · Published · Sep 3, 2026

UN-GGIM 16th session decisions High
Global (UN) · Decisions agreed · Aug 5–7 2026 (formal report pending)

UN-GGIM decision 16/106 on geodesy governance High
Global (UN) · Decision agreed · Aug 5–7 2026 (formal report pending)

UN-GGIM officers re-elected, including GEOSA President as Co-Chair
Saudi Arabia / Global · Elected · Aug 5–7 2026

ISO 19127:2026 Geodetic register (edition 2)
Global (ISO) · Published · Aug 3, 2026

NGAC meeting; NSRS modernization still pending
United States · Meeting · Aug 12–13 2026

GEOSA workshops on regulating land surveying
Saudi Arabia · Pre-consultation · Jul 23, 2026

NGA awards OGC five-year standards contract
United States · Award · Jul 16, 2026

AI governance 9

China AI Safety Governance Framework 3.0
China · Published · Sep 14, 2026

IGAD regional AI framework consultation
Horn of Africa · Consultation · Sep 4–5 2026

G20 Carolina Principles for Emerging Technologies
G20 · Adopted · Sep 2, 2026

Dubai RTA autonomous mobility milestone High
UAE · Program · Aug 19, 2026

Draft Kenya AI and Emerging Technologies Policy
Kenya · Consultation · closed Aug 4, 2026

AI Act Article 50 transparency guidelines; obligations apply High
EU · Applicable · Aug 2, 2026 · legacy marking transition to Dec 2, 2026

Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 (AI "Digital Omnibus") in force High
EU · In force · Jul 27, 2026

AI Act high-risk classification guidelines
EU · Consultation closed · Jul 23, 2026

Peru AI regulation (DS 115-2025-PCM): first private-sector phase
Peru · Phase 1 due · Sep 2026

Space and Earth observation 9

Saudi CST consultation on satellite filings and earth stations
Saudi Arabia · Consultation · closes Oct 18, 2026

Office of Space Commerce mission authorization pilot
United States · Consultation · EOI due Oct 5, 2026

FCC order opening satellite spectrum (FCC 26-65)
United States · Adopted · Sep 30, 2026 (status update after the window) · order text not yet released

International Space Summit, Paris: declarations
France / International · Declaration · Sep 9–10 2026

UK Space Strategy and Technical Delivery Annex High
United Kingdom · Published · Sep 8, 2026

EU Nature Restoration: draft national plans submitted
EU · Implementation · Sep 1, 2026

UAE Space Agency: 90-day grace period to obtain space licenses
UAE · Grace period from Jul 27, 2026

FCC Space Modernization Order: new Part 100 High
United States · Adopted · Jul 22, 2026 (released Jul 23)

NISAR: first public release of calibrated L-band SAR data High
United States / India · Release · Jul 20, 2026

Data access, sharing and infrastructure 7

New Zealand: Landonline accounts may not power third-party search services
New Zealand · Proposed · consultation to Oct 22 · scheduled Nov 2, 2026

EU Data Act: access by design for new connected products High
EU · Applies · Sep 12, 2026

HM Land Registry and Ordnance Survey data MoU
United Kingdom · Agreement · Aug 17, 2026

Pakistan: draft National Data Governance Policy
Pakistan · Draft · consultations concluded Aug 5, 2026

Lithuania amends its Law on Geodesy and Cartography
Lithuania · In force · Aug 1, 2026 (data access)

EU Deforestation Regulation: scope and Information System acts High
EU · Adopted · Jul 13, 2026

FCC proposal to modernize the Broadband Data Collection
United States · Consultation · Jun–Aug 2026

National SDI, surveying and cadastre 6

New Zealand: mandatory sales information for Landonline transfers
New Zealand · Enacted · applies Oct 1, 2026

Beijing Regulations on Surveying, Mapping and Geographic Information
China (Beijing) · Adopted · Sep 11, 2026 · in force Jan 1, 2027

Chile territorial-geospatial information policy and action plan
Chile · Launched · Sep 10, 2026

Ukraine: cadastre registration for former Kakhovka Reservoir lands (Res. 1085)
Ukraine · Adopted · Sep 3, 2026

Colombia IGAC cadastral model 2026–2035
Colombia · Launched · Aug 5, 2026

Mexico: INEGI technical norm on the Geostatistical Framework
Mexico · In force · Jun 26, 2026

Cybersecurity of geospatial systems 5

UK Cyber Security and Resilience Bill
United Kingdom · Bill · Lords report Oct 26, 2026

EU Cyber Resilience Act: reporting obligations apply
EU · Applies · Sep 11, 2026

China: network data security risk assessment measures High
China · In force · Aug 20, 2026

Senegal's Assembly adopts critical information infrastructure and digital security bill
Senegal · Adopted by Assembly · Aug 20, 2026 · promulgation pending

Germany amends its critical-infrastructure act (KRITIS-Dachgesetz)
Germany · In force · Jul 29, 2026

Boundaries, names and representation 5

UN General Assembly "Correct the Map" resolution
Global (UN) · Adopted · Sep 4, 2026

US executive order renames Lake Ontario "Lake America" (EO 14422)
United States · Signed · Aug 27, 2026

Gulf naming dispute over regional maps
Iraq / Iran · Diplomatic · Aug 26, 2026

Philippines deposits chart of Bajo de Masinloc baselines with the United Nations
Philippines · Deposited · Jul 29, 2026 · UN notification Aug 18, 2026

Cambodia–Thailand boundary: UNCLOS conciliation opens High
Cambodia / Thailand · Proceedings · Sep 14–16 2026

This edition by the numbers



developments in force or applying



high-impact



engaging AI directly



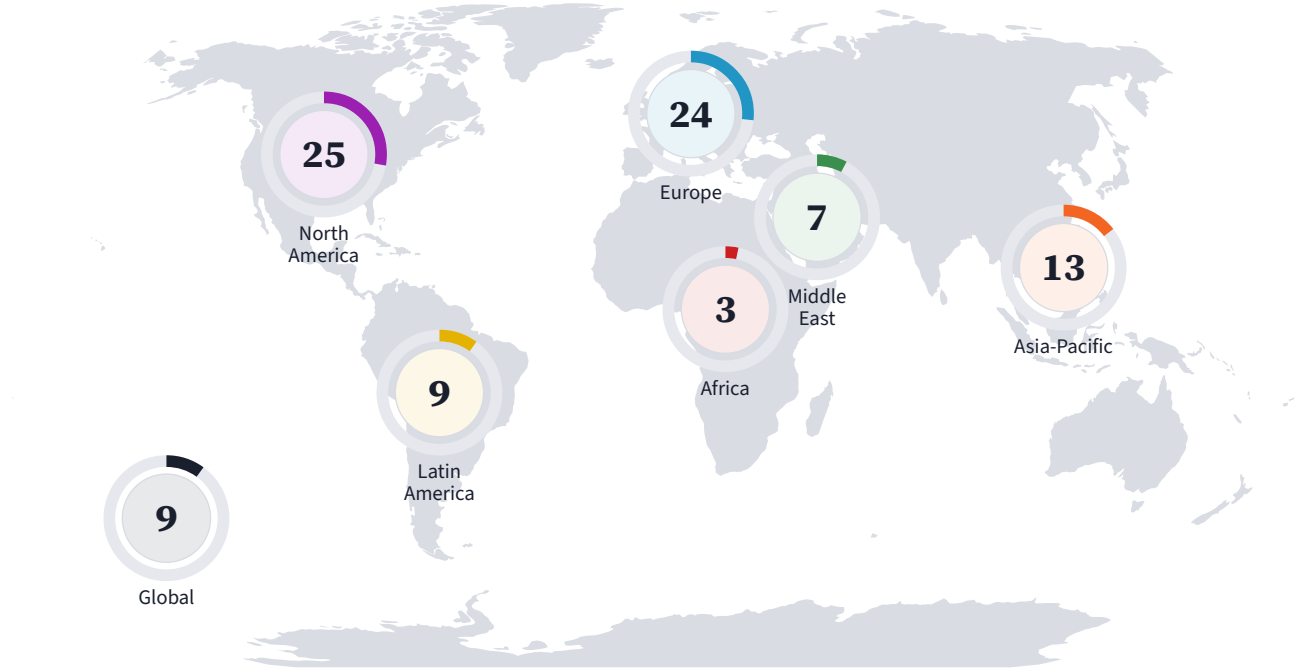
classified as laws, regulations or executive actions (manuscript classification)

"in force or applying" counts entries whose tracker status, as checked on September 30, begins In force, Applies or Applicable, plus the one interim final rule, which has legal effect from its effective date. "Engaging AI directly" counts the nine AI-governance entries plus two entries in other domains with AI-specific provisions (Canada Bill C-36 and the EDPB anonymization guidelines). "Laws, regulations or executive actions" is an instrument classification by the editors and includes some measures not yet in force. Impact ratings (high, medium, low) are assigned by the editor on three criteria: whether the measure is binding, how broadly it applies to geospatial or Earth observation organizations, and whether it carries a deadline or enforcement step within about twelve months. AI tools supported the initial classification; every rating was reviewed by the editor.

The quarter in four views

Where the 90 developments sit: by region, instrument, lifecycle stage and domain.
The instrument view is the editor's classification.

By region



Europe 24 · North America 25 · Asia-Pacific 13 · Latin America 9 · Global 9 · Middle East 7 · Africa 3

All regions

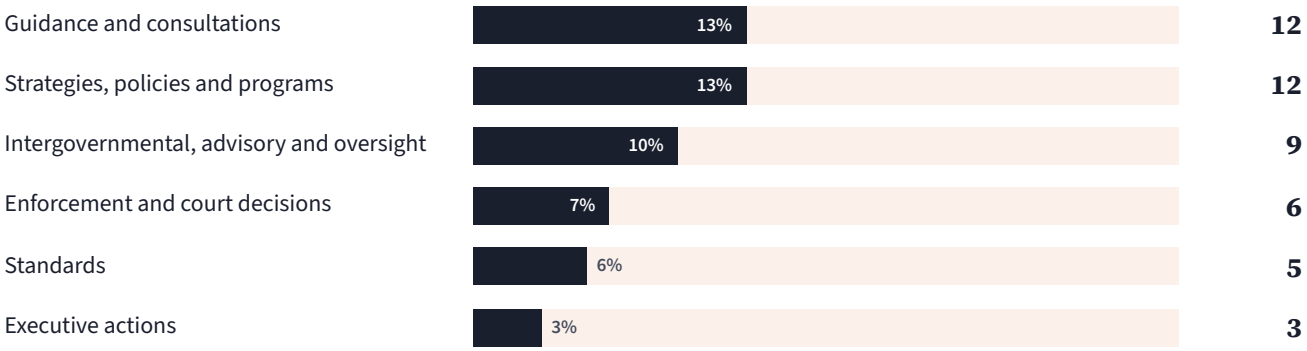
North America and Europe account for most developments this quarter (25 and 24 of 90), followed by Asia-Pacific (13). Global and intergovernmental items (9) are shown separately.

Europe	24	North America	25	Asia-Pacific	13
Latin America	9	Global	9	Middle East	7
Africa	3				

By instrument

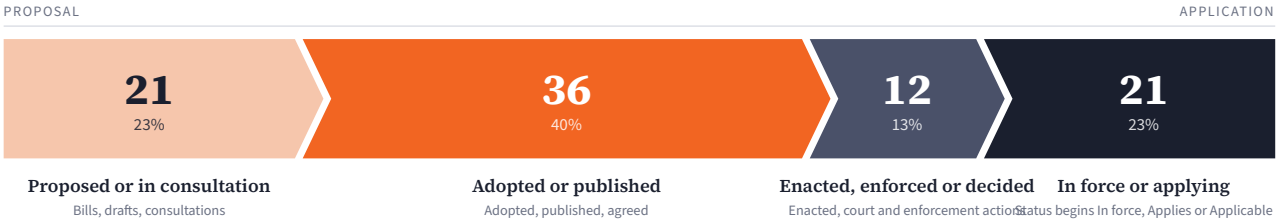
31 of 90 are laws or regulations already on the books. The other 59 are bills and drafts, guidance, strategies, intergovernmental decisions, court and enforcement actions, standards and executive actions.

Laws and regulations	34%	31
Bills and draft rules	13%	12



By lifecycle stage

Where the 90 developments sit, from proposal to application. Segment width is the share of the edition. **21 are in force or applying** (status begins In force, Applies or Applicable, or an interim final rule with legal effect); a further 12 are enacted, enforced or decided by a court.



By domain and impact

Privacy and location data is the largest domain (27) and carries the most high-impact items; drones, standards, AI and space each account for nine to twelve developments.

Domain	High	Medium	Low	All
Privacy & location data	9	13	5	27
Drones & UAS	4	7	1	12
Standards & governance	2	6	2	10
AI governance	3	2	4	9
Space & EO	3	6	·	9
Data access & sharing	2	2	3	7
SDI, surveying & cadastre	·	4	2	6
Cybersecurity	1	2	2	5

Domain	High	Medium	Low	All
Boundaries & names	1	4	·	5

From the Q3 edition	Where it stands now (Q4 2026)
EU AI Act	Regulation (EU) 2026/1744 in force since July 27. High-risk duties apply from Dec 2, 2027 (Annex III) and Aug 2, 2028 (Annex I); national sandboxes due Aug 2, 2027.[1]
EC high-risk classification guidelines	Consultation closed July 23; final guidelines not yet published.[2]
EU Cyber Resilience Act	Reporting obligations applied from September 11, with ENISA's single reporting platform live the same day.[3]
EU Data Act	Access-by-design obligation applies to connected products placed on the market after September 12.[4]
FAA Part 108 (BVLOS)	The final-rule package has been under review at the White House Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs since July 10; no final rule had appeared in the Federal Register as of September 25.[5]
INSPIRE	Council agreed its negotiating position on June 24, keeping data sharing between public authorities and minimum interoperability requirements; Parliament position pending.[6]
Map Africa	Followed by the UN General Assembly "Correct the Map" resolution on September 4.[7]
UN-GGIM / 3UNWGIC	16th session decisions adopted in August; the Third UN World Geospatial Information Congress takes place in Jeddah, November 16 to 19.[8]

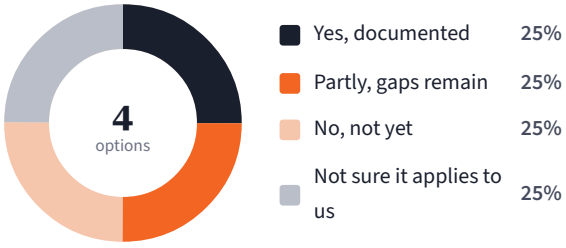
Reader poll signals

Two questions asked on WGIC's LinkedIn page this quarter.

Sample sizes are low, so results are treated as reader signals rather than measurements. Poll results reflect reader sentiment and sit outside the policy record.

If the AI Act applies to your products, could you evidence compliance tomorrow?

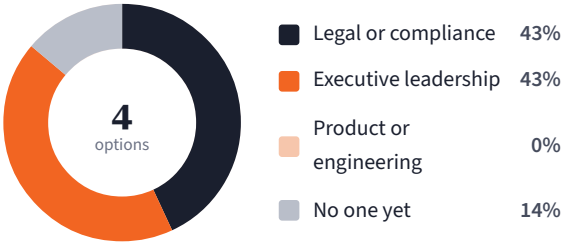
WGIC LinkedIn company page, open September 1 to 15, 2026; results as captured at close



With so few votes, an even split across all four answers tells us little on its own. The answer worth watching is the last: some respondents were not sure whether the AI Act applies to them at all, weeks after its transparency obligations became applicable. WGIC plans to ask the same question with the same four answers each quarter, so later editions can report a trend.

Who in your organization tracks geospatial regulation?

WGIC LinkedIn company page, opened late September 2026; results as captured at editorial close



Among those who voted, no one named product or engineering. That sits awkwardly with this edition's lead: access by design under the EU Data Act, retention limits and restrictions on selling location data are decided in how products are built, not only in how they are reviewed. Some respondents also said no one is tracking regulation yet.

About the Scan

The Geospatial Policy Scan is a World Geospatial Industry Council (WGIC) initiative, produced quarterly by the WGIC Policy Development & Advocacy Committee. Each edition tracks the policy, regulatory and standards developments shaping the geospatial industry worldwide, so the geospatial community can anticipate change and act early.

Chair's note

The geospatial industry is entering a period in which policy is no longer simply a response to innovation. It is becoming a key force shaping how innovation occurs. Across governments, regulators, and international institutions, the perception of geospatial technologies is shifting. Location intelligence, Earth observation, spatial digital twins, AI-enabled analytics, autonomous systems, and space-based services are increasingly recognized as enablers of economic growth, national resilience, sustainability, and informed decision-making. Policy discussions that once took place at the periphery of our industry now sit at the center of national and international agendas.

For the global geospatial community, this brings both responsibility and opportunity. The responsibility lies in ensuring that technological advancement continues to earn public trust. As policymakers introduce new frameworks governing artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, privacy, digital infrastructure, and data sharing, our industry must demonstrate leadership in transparency, accountability, and ethical innovation. The opportunity lies in treating policy not as a compliance obligation but as a strategic consideration, one that shapes competitiveness, investment, market access, and long-term growth. Organizations that anticipate regulatory change, and contribute their expertise to shaping it, will be better positioned to thrive in an increasingly complex and interconnected world.

The range of developments covered in this quarter's Policy Scan illustrates how interconnected our operating environment has become. Decisions on AI governance, cyber resilience, location data, drones, satellites, and digital sovereignty are no longer isolated policy issues. Together, they are defining the conditions under which geospatial businesses will operate, invest, and grow.

At the World Geospatial Industry Council (WGIC), we believe that constructive engagement between industry, government, academia, and international organizations is essential to effective policy outcomes. Regulation works best when it is informed by practical experience, technical understanding, and a shared commitment to innovation that benefits society. Through our advocacy and policy leadership initiatives, WGIC remains committed to ensuring that the voice of the geospatial industry is represented in these conversations.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the committee members and contributors whose insights and commitment make this publication possible. Their efforts strengthen the industry's collective understanding of a rapidly evolving policy landscape and reinforce WGIC's mission to advance the global geospatial ecosystem through informed advocacy and collaboration.

Together, we have an opportunity to help shape policies that not only govern our industry but also enable its continued contribution to solving some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Prof. Dr. Zaffar Sadiq Mohamed-Ghouse
Chair, WGIC Policy Development & Advocacy Committee

Editor's note

For the first time, this edition introduces a thematic focus: the quarter location data got harder to collect, sell and obtain, and what that means for geospatial organizations. The quarter asked for it. The story was not new rules arriving but rules landing on data that organizations already hold: of the 90 developments tracked, 21 are already in force or applying and 34 are laws, regulations or executive actions, some of them not yet applying. The quarter answered that question from several directions at once. Ireland's regulator fined Google €403 million over location-data processing. The US Supreme Court held in Chatrie that obtaining Location History is a search under the Fourth Amendment. The Kochava order put a ten-year limit on selling sensitive-location data, Virginia's sale ban took effect on July 1 and Connecticut's on October 1, and the EU Data Act began requiring new connected products to give users access to the data they generate. Read together, these are not a privacy story. They decide who may collect, keep, obtain, sell and see location data, and they reach product design, supplier contracts and retention defaults directly.

Beyond location data, the quarter moved in two directions. Drone rules tightened on security in the United States while Europe opened airspace. Space licensing was reformed in the US and regularized in the UK, UAE and Saudi Arabia. EU obligations under the AI Act, the Cyber Resilience Act and the Data Act became live within weeks of each other, often for the same geospatial products. Data protection law hardened well beyond Europe, from Vietnam and South Korea to Ecuador and El Salvador. Several consultations close in October and November; that is where industry input still counts.

A note on method. AI tools supported research, drafting and the initial classification of entries. Every entry, date, status and source was verified by the editor against primary documents, and responsibility for the content rests with the editor. The Committee reviewed the full draft, and the edition is credited to it as a whole.

Use this edition to find what reaches you, and to act before the next deadline rather than after it.

Kuhelee Chandel

Editor, WGIC Policy Scan (Associate Director, Research, WGIC)

Leads for the next edition can be sent to info@wgicouncil.org with the jurisdiction, instrument, stage, key date and a primary source. Submissions are leads, not entries: every item is verified against a primary source before it enters the Scan.

AI Act
Regulation (EU) 2024/1689 on artificial intelligence, as amended by the Digital Omnibus on AI (Regulation (EU) 2026/1744)

ANPD
Autoridade Nacional de Proteção de Dados, Brazil's data protection authority

BVLOS
Beyond visual line of sight (drone operations)

CAA
Civil Aviation Authority (United Kingdom)

CNIL
Commission nationale de l'informatique et des libertés, France's data protection authority

CPPA / CalPrivacy
California Privacy Protection Agency

CRA
EU Cyber Resilience Act

CST
Communications, Space and Technology Commission, Saudi Arabia

DPC
Data Protection Commission, Ireland

DROP
Delete Request and Opt-out Platform, California

EDPB
European Data Protection Board

EO
Earth observation

FAA
Federal Aviation Administration, United States

FCC
Federal Communications Commission, United States

FTC
Federal Trade Commission, United States

GNSS
Global navigation satellite systems

IHO
International Hydrographic Organization

INSPIRE
EU Infrastructure for Spatial Information in Europe (Directive 2007/2/EC)

LGPD
Lei Geral de Proteção de Dados, Brazil's data protection law

LINZ
Land Information New Zealand

NUAR
National Underground Asset Register (United Kingdom)

OGC
Open Geospatial Consortium

OIRA
Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs, US White House

SDI
Spatial data infrastructure

SIRGAS
Sistema de Referencia Geocéntrico para las Américas

TSA
Transportation Security Administration, United States

UAS
Uncrewed aircraft systems (drones)

UN-GGIM
UN Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management

U-space
EU framework for managing drone traffic in designated airspace

3UNWGIC
Third UN World Geospatial Information Congress, Jeddah, November 16 to 19, 2026

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