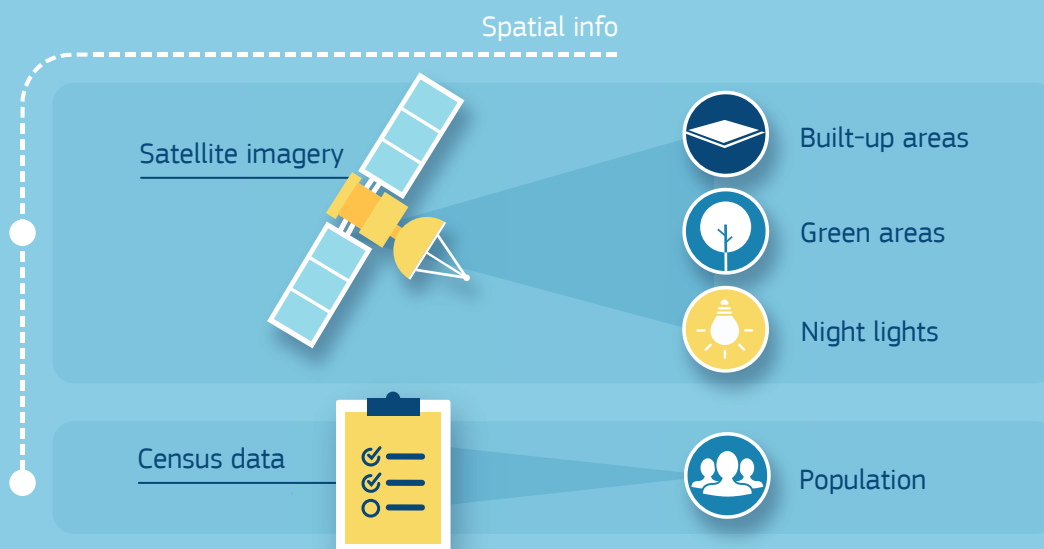European
Commission

Mapping human presence on Earth

The Global Human Settlements Layer (GHSL)

Framework of data and tools to improve our collective knowledge about the human presence on Earth

The most **complete**, **consistent**, **global**, **free** and **open** dataset on human settlements – from the village to the megacity

Spatial info

Satellite imagery

Built-up areas

Green areas

Night lights

Census data

Population

Joint
Research
Centre

What can it be used for?

To know where and how people live

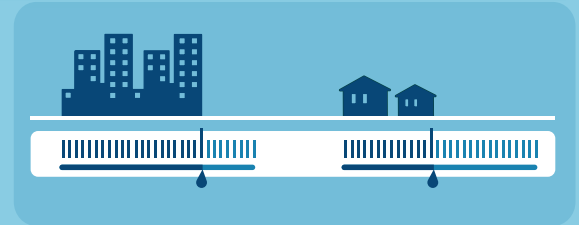**To map the growth of settlements over time**

To know the characteristics of settlements

To measure the size of settlements

How densely populated they are

How green they are

How exposed to disasters they are

Monitoring the implementation of international frameworks

Key findings

There are many more settlements than we think

Built up has globally increased by 150% since 1975

Urban areas occupy an area equal to half the size of Europe 28