

Statement by Germany

Agenda item 12 – General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management

Honorable Mister Chair, distinguished delegates,

as we have heard in many previous statements during this session and in the past, there is broad agreement that the ever-increasing number of objects launched into outer space necessitates action. We need rules to ensure that space activities are conducted in a manner that avoids collisions and ensures that all States can freely use and explore outer space without discrimination of any kind, on a basis of equality. Thus, Germany's new Space Strategy identifies Space Traffic Management as one of its key projects and states that "within the framework of the UN, we call for the establishment of an international STM system."

The "general exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management" is on the agenda of this Subcommittee since 2016. And of course, it was very valuable, however, concrete steps remain to be taken. In the meantime, the STSC has successfully developed and agreed upon by consensus 21 LTS Guidelines, which together with the COPUOS space debris guidelines can serve as Building Blocks for future STM.

The pace of consensus-based decision-making, the ability of COPUOS to develop new rules as well as its continued relevance are increasingly challenged. Recently, other actors also argue they are better suited to provide governance. **Germany does not agree with this!** Germany considers the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to be **the** competent body in the UN system to regulate space. The place to discuss and elaborate the governance of humankind's activities in outer space is here in Vienna! But we will not be able to retain the role of the Committee if we do not deliver on our mandate. We have to act and prove that we not only have the mandate, but also the expertise, the capacity and the will to deliver.

Germany remains committed to what we have stated in previous years: the objective of a comprehensive and global space traffic management can only be achieved on

the basis of multilateral consensus and – eventually – international law. International agreement is required on different levels, ranging from the development of technical and operational standards over guidelines encouraging and showcasing best practices of more sustainable uses of outer space, to the long-term objective of establishing a dedicated international space traffic management regime. And let us be clear: If COPUOS does not progress on this topic, others will.

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we need to ignite a substantial debate about the future governance of space traffic. Therefore, Germany proposes to establish, through this Subcommittee, a Study Group to study perspectives of space traffic management, for – as appropriate and upon discretion by delegations – further reflection by all Member States of this Subcommittee. Allow us to flag, that in the 2016 COPUOS report and against the background of strengthening the Committee at the occasion of UNISPACE+50, it was already *agreed*, that we should “study perspectives of space traffic management” (UN Doc. A/71/20, para.296. 2. lit. c).

Such a Study Group could gather a number of governmental experts appointed by the honorable Chair of this distinguished Subcommittee, in close coordination with the regional groups, on the basis of fair and equitable geographical representation, gender equality, as well as ensuring equal representation of space faring and emerging space faring nations as well as developing countries. Its task could be to deliver a report to this Subcommittee with a view to promoting common understandings of the benefits and possible scope of a future international space traffic management at the level of the United Nations. Neither shall any approach to the topic be precluded nor shall the result prejudice the discussions to be held within the Subcommittee in accordance with its established rules and procedures, especially the consensus principle. This approach ensures multilateral discussions and broad geographical representation. We are convinced that such a Study Group can be the booster to carry us past the general discussion.

Honorable Mister Chair, distinguished delegates,

we are aware that this is a new approach. But the task ahead is not easy, so please, let us accept that challenge and take up the responsibility that this Committee bears. Let us prove that the Vienna spirit is alive! Let us prove that this Committee can

provide the international space governance solutions necessary for space sustainability!

Thank you for your kind attention.