



Side event

Dark and quiet skies for science and society

Co-organised by the Permanent Mission of Spain and
the Permanent Mission of Chile

1 February 2024, from 6.15pm CET
Room M3 at the VIC



SKAO



While providing connectivity, Earth monitoring capabilities and improved space exploration, the rapid growth of the number of satellites deployed in LEO is also producing negative effects on astronomy and the view of the night sky.

Reflection of sunlight as well as radio emissions from satellites impact astronomical observatories, jeopardising our potential for scientific discoveries. The changing visual appearance of the sky also affects humanity's cultural heritage and environment.

To address this situation, the International Astronomical Union has created the Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky from Satellite Constellation Interference (IAU CPS). The CPS facilitates global coordination of efforts by the astronomical community in concert with observatories, space agencies, industry, regulators and other sectors to help mitigate the negative impact of satellite constellations on astronomy and humanity's enjoyment of the night sky. Several UN COPUOS permanent observers are involved in the Centre, which is co-hosted by the US National Science Foundation's NOIRLab and the intergovernmental SKA Observatory (SKAO), and includes participation from the European Southern Observatory and the European Astronomical Society.

Further reading

Relevant resources on the topic of satellite constellations and their impact on astronomy can be found on the IAU CPS website, including:

- Official position paper from the IAU CPS on the impact of satellite constellations on the dark and quiet sky
- Coordinated optical observations of the BlueWalker 3 satellite
- Detection of unintended radio emissions from Starlink satellites at low frequencies
- International scientific symposium dedicated to the issue of dark and quiet skies
- 'SatCons 101' – a series of educational videos on the topic of satellite constellations

