

Slovakia, Item 4

Sixty-fourth session of Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

(25 August-3 September 2021)

Pre-recorded Statement of State Secretary of the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic

Mr. Ľudovít PAULIS

Agenda Item 4: General Exchange of Views

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

The Delegation of the Slovak Republic is pleased to welcome you as Chair of this COPUOS session and would like to thank Director Ms. Simonetta di Pippo and the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) for the efforts in managing the challenges imposed by the pandemic and for the excellent work they have done while preparing this session under these difficult circumstances.

At the outset, let me assure you that Slovakia is fully aligned with the statement delivered by the European Union. In our national capacity, we would like to take this opportunity to recognize the importance and special role of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. We consider COPUOS and its Subcommittees as unique platforms for international cooperation and reiterate their unique position as the only fora in the United Nations for the promotion of peaceful use of outer space and the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and other transparency and confidence building measures regulating space activities. We also recognize the important role of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs in supporting the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

Slovakia would like to share with you the progress and developments in the field of space activities we have made recently, as an emerging spacefaring country.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Slovak republic was one of the co-sponsors of the Conference Room Paper (CRP n. 17) during the Fifty-eighth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee titled “Recommendations to Keep Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society”, submitted by Chile, Ethiopia, Jordan, Slovakia, Spain and the International Astronomical Union.

We would like to add some comments on our national capacity to this topic. In Slovakia we have a long astronomical tradition with a focus on ground-based optical observations. This type of observations is essential for Slovakia to acquire scientifically relevant data of space objects. We are aware of the advantages that new space-bound technologies can bring to society, but we also understand the challenges they can cause to ground-based astronomy and the negative impact they can have on the night sky.

Slovakia also supported, along with Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece and Spain the establishment of the new Working Group on Space Resources. We consider it important to develop a multilateral international dialogue on legal aspects of space resources activities and to develop principles and practical measures for space resources activities. We consider the creation of such a Working Group on Space Resources as a relevant manner to do so in order to promote sustainable exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources. We are of the opinion that space resources activities should be realised in a safe, sustainable and peaceful manner, for the benefit and in the interests of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and in accordance with the international law.

The Slovak Republic is well aware of the importance of ensuring the sustainable implementation of space activities over a long-term period. Slovakia is a party to four of the five United Nations Treaties on outer space. Slovakia uses this opportunity to confirm its commitment to perform its space activities in a responsible, peaceful and sustainable manner.

Slovakia considers itself as an emerging spacefaring country, with a long-term tradition in space scientific and technical research, that is currently developing its space ecosystem and space industrial base. The “Act on Regulation of Outer Space activities in the Slovak Republic” is under preparation.

In this context we are developing our national space infrastructure and our national regulatory framework. **The Conceptual framework of Space activities in the Slovak Republic** was prepared by the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic in cooperation with relevant ministries and stakeholders. This document was presented on the meeting of *The Government Council for Science, Technology and Innovation of the Slovak Republic* in June 2019. The main aim of this material was to serve as a basis for the future Strategy of Space Activities in the Slovak Republic.

Further, Slovakia has reached two important achievements at the 70th edition of the **International Astronautical Congress** in October 2019 in Washington D.C. **The Faculty of Aeronautics of the Technical University in Košice** became a member of the *International Astronautical Federation* as the very first Slovak institution, and a cosmic engineer Dr. **Ján Baláž** from the *Institute of Experimental Physics of Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice* became a member of the **International Academy of Astronautics**. A big success was also achieved by an international team comprised of the Faculty of Aeronautics of the Technical University in Košice, the Slovak University of Technology, Slovak Organisation for Space Activities and two Slovak companies Spacemanic and Needronix whose GRBAlpha CubeSat project ranked second in an international competition by the **International Astronautical Federation** and GK Launch Services company.

GRBAlpha is the second Slovak nanosatellite that was launched into orbit on the 22nd of March 2021 onboard of the launcher Sojuz-2.1 **of the company GK Launch Services** from the Baikonur Cosmodrome. “GRB”Alpha stands for Gamma Ray Burst detection, and it is an international project of scientific and technical cooperation between Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Japan.

This activity strengthened cross-sectorial collaboration between academia, industrial actors and university students involved in the project preparation. **The launch of the second Slovak nanosatellite** raised awareness of the space activities among the public and increased interest in space. 

The Slovak Republic is cooperating with the European Space Agency (ESA) since 2010 and since 2015 is a European cooperating state within the program PECS.  The **Slovak Space Office** was established on the 1st of January 2021 and is composed of two parts, the Space Policy Department established at the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sports **of the Slovak Republic** and the Space Industry Department established **on the 1st of May 2021** at the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency (SARIO).

This composition clearly shows, that Slovakia perceives space not only as an important domain of research and exploration, but also as one of the key pillars of modern economy. **We understand, that today in the new space era, it is necessary to support the space sector not only through public funding, but also through a variety of non-financial tools, including sector-entry consultancy, business mentoring, local networking, or international partnership matchmaking for companies and researchers. That is why the Slovak Space Office plays an**

active role in these areas and it also works on several systematic projects, such as space hackathons, space business incubator, or the annual Emerging Space conference for which you are all cordially invited this November.

We understand, that this kind of comprehensive support for the growth of the ecosystem is especially important in the emerging space countries. Therefore, we have decided to hold an online side-event during this COPUOS session titled Space ecosystem building in emerging space countries that will take place on the 2nd of September 2021 from 13:30 to 14:30. It will be an online roundtable focused on supporting emerging space countries in sharing valuable information and experience regarding scaling up their national space ecosystems for the benefits of their society and economy. If you find this topic interesting, do not hesitate to join us and our partners from the European Space Policy Institute. You can find more detailed information about the event on the COPUOS webpage, or reach out directly to our delegation.

Let me conclude by reiterating the importance Slovakia attaches to strengthening the role of the Committee and the Office for Outer Space Affairs as a unique platform for international cooperation fostering the peaceful uses of outer space and promoting sustainability of space activities. We look forward to a productive session of COPUOS, even as it is conducted in this extraordinary hybrid format.

Thank you for your attention.