



Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications

Agenda item 4 *'Information on the activities of international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations relating to space law'*

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Madam Chair,

I appreciate your giving me the opportunity to take the floor. Let me first congratulate you on your presiding over the current session and wish you every success in chairing the Legal Subcommittee.

We also thank the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and the Secretariat for the exceptional job they have been doing in the challenging conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Madam Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Intersputnik is an intergovernmental satellite telecommunications organization headquartered in Moscow. Established in 1971, Intersputnik is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Allow me to briefly describe major milestones relating to space law that mark this anniversary.

Over the past half century, Intersputnik's membership has increased from nine founder countries to twenty-six nations from all over the globe.¹ In the very near future, we will announce the accession of the twenty-seventh state to Intersputnik, which formally declared, earlier this year, its intention to join Intersputnik after the completion of domestic procedures.

During its 50-year history, Intersputnik has undergone a reorganization. At the turn of the century, participation in commercial space activities proved crucial. The reorganization, however, did not result in making the Intersputnik satellite system a separate entity. Today, Intersputnik keeps its unique status – it is, above all, an international organization aimed at promoting cooperation in the field of space communications and, at the same time, a satellite operator carrying out commercial exploitation of its space system. To support private space activities in its member states, Intersputnik launched a Programme for the Development of Business in the Field of Space Communications. The Programme serves to grant interest-free financial support to local companies on a tender basis.

In its capacity of an intergovernmental organization, Intersputnik participates in the main space-specific fora, including, on a global scale, the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer

¹ Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Bulgaria, Hungary, Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Federal Republic of Germany, Georgia, Republic of India, Republic of Yemen, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Cuba, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Mongolia, Republic of Nicaragua, Republic of Poland, Russian Federation, Romania, Syrian Arab Republic, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Czech Republic

Space where it has enjoyed permanent observer status since 1985. In 1983, Intersputnik signed an agreement on cooperation with the Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union and holds membership of its Radiocommunication Sector. Agreements on cooperation are in force with the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization, the International Mobile Satellite Organization, and the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization. Intersputnik is a member of non-governmental organizations, including the International Astronautical Federation, and cooperates with the International Institute of Space Law.

One of the major milestones in Intersputnik's history was the acceptance, in 2018, of the rights and obligations under the UN treaties on outer space, specifically, the Rescue Agreement, the Registration Convention, and the Liability Convention. Intersputnik also became the first international organization that unilaterally accepted the obligation to comply with the Outer Space Treaty and the responsibility for compliance with this treaty.

As is well known, Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty states that when space activities are carried out by an international organization, responsibility for compliance with the Outer Space Treaty is borne both by the international organization and by the states parties to said treaty and participating in such organization. Yet, the Outer Space Treaty neither allows an international organization to become a party thereto, nor contains any mechanism for accepting rights and obligations, like the one that is set forth in the other four UN treaties on outer space. At the same time, the Outer Space Treaty establishes fundamental rules and principles of international space law.

In this regard, Intersputnik member states resolved that the organization should unilaterally accept the obligation to comply with the Outer Space Treaty and the responsibility for compliance with the treaty in accordance with its Article VI. First, it was important to emphasize Intersputnik's commitment to the highest standards of conducting space activities. Secondly, it was considered reasonable that the organization should bear the same responsibility as its member states. Finally, the above was required to be in line with international law. A legal solution was supported by Intersputnik member states and is now available to the global community.

For more details on Intersputnik's activities related to space law, please refer to the relevant Conference Room Paper.²

Madam Chair,

This year, Intersputnik is celebrating its first half century of successful operation on both international and commercial avenues of its activity and is keen to continue working hard for the benefit of its member states and the development of satellite telecommunications in general.

I would like to conclude by reconfirming that Intersputnik is open to in-depth cooperation with all the Committee member states and observers.

Madam Chair, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful work during the current session.

² A/AC.105/C.2/2021/CRP.5, 31 May 2021