

**UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee
60th Session 31 May – 11 June 2021, Vienna**

Statement by Germany

Agenda item 10 – General exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures, taking into account the work of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

Honorable Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

measures to mitigate and remediate space debris lie at the heart of preserving access to outer space and ensuring its free use for all humankind. With the significant increase of objects launched into outer space, 1.263 alone in 2020, and in light of the proposed satellite constellations comprising hundreds or even thousands of space objects, the international community must develop clear legal guidance for the purpose of minimizing by number and mass the non-functional space objects left behind in earth orbit.

Therefore, we emphasize once again the significance of the space debris mitigation guidelines of COPUOS and the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee. We call upon all space actors to adhere to these guidelines and to effectively increase the rate of compliance. We welcome the increased awareness among state and non-state actors for their respective responsibilities – as is displayed in various governmental and non-governmental fora. We will have to monitor closely whether the resulting non-legally binding guidelines and best practice suffice to ensure inter alia effective end-of-mission disposal and safe re-entries – and thus to safeguard the long-term sustainable use of outer space. Otherwise, further legally binding instruments may have to be developed.

As we embark on the development of techniques to actively remove non-functional or non-maneuverable space objects, we should also begin to discuss legal aspects of active debris removal.¹ Sharing best practices and developing international guidelines for such activities would also serve international transparency and confidence building.

With this, we would like to thank you for your kind attention.

¹ ESA-Mission ADRIOS, DEU hat bei der Ministerratskonferenz 2019 16,79% gezeichnet und stellt damit den drittgrößten Anteil.