Planetary Defence –
Legal Overview and Assessment


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Overview

• The Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG)
• The SMPAG Ad-Hoc Working Group on Legal Issues
• The Report of 2020
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The Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG)

Pursuant to General Assembly resolution 71/90 of 6 December 2016, UNOOSA acts as secretariat to SMPAG, which works on laying out the framework, timeline and options for initiating and executing space mission response activities, as well as promoting opportunities for international collaboration on research on technology and techniques for NEO deflection.

Both IAWN and SMPAG submit an annual report to COPUOS and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee under the agenda item on NEOs. In 2016, SMPAG also agreed to establish the SMPAG Ad Hoc Working Group on legal issues to address possible legal questions related to the work plan items of SMPAG.

The SMPAG Ad-Hoc Working Group on Legal Issues

Mandate of 2016:

• Describe the existing legal context, in particular international law, relevant to the work of SMPAG.

• Identify, formulate and prioritize relevant legal questions and issues requiring clarification.

• Where necessary, suggest possible ways forward to deal with legal questions and issues.

• Provide legal advice to SMPAG as required.
Contributors, legal experts

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The Report of 2020

Available at:
https://www.cosmos.esa.int/documents/336356/336472/SMPAG-RP-004_1_0_SMPAG_legal_report_2020-04-08.pdf

Presentation to STSC and excerpts of the Report:
A/AC.105/C.1/2021/CRP.10 (21 April 2021)
Contents of the Report of 2020

• Obligation to Inform and to Act
• Legality of Planetary Defence Methods
• Responsibility
• Liability
• Considerations for Decision Bodies
Conclusions

• **Existing international (space) law rules** are applicable to planetary defence activities

• **International coordination** is advisable to increase acceptance and diminish political concerns

• **Early preparation** is necessary to solve technical and legal issues

*Ad-hoc Working Group on Legal Issues to be continued*, terms and conditions are currently under consideration by SMPAG, new members are welcome. If interested, please contact SMPAG Chair, Detlef Koschny (Detlef.Koschny@esa.int) and Team Coordinator, Alissa J. Haddaji (alissa.haddaji@cfa.harvard.edu)
Thank you for your attention!

For more information see SMPAG homepage:

https://www.cosmos.esa.int/web/smpag