

Long-term sustainability of outer space activities

Austria attaches great importance to the outcome of the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities. We highly welcome the adoption of 21 Guidelines and the preamble which we believe constitutes a major success and achievement of this Subcommittee and the Committee. They address issues of crucial relevance to enhance the safe and sustainable conduct of space activities in the future.

As mentioned in our general statement, Austria began its evaluation of the 21 guidelines on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities last year. This process is led by the newly named *Ministry for Climate action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology*, which handles space affairs in Austria. Our space experts are currently discussing the status of implementation with all relevant actors in Austria.

Already in 2011, Austria enacted its *Outer Space Act*. Its aim is not only to fulfil Austria's international obligations deriving from all UN space treaties, but also the sustainable use of outer space. In particular, space debris mitigation is an important condition to obtain a license in Austria. The *Austrian registry for space objects* currently includes three satellites. The last one, *Pegasus*, was licensed in 2017 by the *Ministry for Climate action*, which is also responsible for the supervision of space activities.

Austria will continue to support and promote the long-term sustainability of outer space. It is our aim to create knowledge and to promote discussions about the guidelines. We recently published the website *austria-in-space.at*, to provide an overview of the Austrian space sector and to share information. We will also continue our traditional *UN/Austria Symposium* in Graz and will host the *World Space Forum* every other year to facilitate discussions about ongoing key topics such as long-term sustainability.

Austria highly welcomes the establishment of a working group 2.0 to further address the topic of long-term sustainability at a multilateral level in this Subcommittee. In our view it is necessary to adequately tackle this issue at the international level to achieve tangible solutions and practical guidance for current and emerging challenges posed in this context.

We fully support the agreement by the Committee on a framework for the working group including three main areas of work: 1) Identifying and studying challenges and considering possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities; 2) Sharing experiences, practices and lessons learned from the national implementation of the adopted guidelines; and 3) Raising awareness and building capacity, in particular among emerging space nations and developing countries. We believe that this constitutes a balanced and comprehensive approach to the structuring of our future work in the working group, which allows addressing both, the implementation of existing guidelines and the consideration of new challenges. In addition, we believe that it is important to address scientific and technical questions as well as legal aspects related to the safety and sustainability of space activities in the working group. We therefore also support possibilities for a close exchange with the Legal Subcommittee in this regard.

We hope that, to guide our work in this regard, a bureau can be established quickly from the various nominations of highly qualified people by aiming at an equitable and balanced regional representation. Furthermore we hope that terms of reference, methods of work and a work plan of the working group can be adopted swiftly during this session, in order to start with the substantive work and in-depth discussions as soon as possible.

Allow me to emphasise that the Austrian delegation will continue to strongly support the efforts of the working group and we look forward to present our initial national observations regarding the adopted guidelines.