

**Agenda Item 4: General exchange of views and introduction of reports submitted on national activities**

Dear Madam Chair,

On behalf of the Czech Delegation, let me express my warmest congratulations to you as being elected Chair of this subcommittee. I would also like to express thanks to the Secretariat for its excellent work in preparation of this session and my sincere appreciation to Ms. Pontsho Maruping, who skilfully guided the work of the past STSC. We would also like to welcome Dominican Republic, Rwanda and Singapore as new members of COPUOS.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Let me inform you that the last year marked series of important space achievements in the Czech Republic:

- 1) In October 2019, the government of the Czech Republic approved new National Space Plan 2020-2025 that represents the strategy of the Czech Republic in further development of capacities and capabilities of its industry and academia in the space activities ensuring their competitiveness and maximising the return of the public investment in space activities and related areas, to increase well-being of the citizens of the Czech Republic. It also represents the policy of the Czech Republic to play a highly visible role within the international community in peaceful uses of outer space and to increase influence of the Czech Republic on the European and global stage.
- 2) Following the recommendation of the National Space Plan, the Czech Republic significantly increased its commitments to the optional programmes of ESA at the ESA's Space19+ council at Ministerial Level, held in November in Spain, with our primary interest in Earth Observation, Navigation, Telecommunications, Launchers, Space Science and Exploration and Space Safety domains. The Czech commitment to space activities will exceed 60 million EUR in 2020.
- 3) As you may know, the European GNSS Agency (GSA) is seated in Prague since 2012. I am pleased to announce that EU Member States have decided that the GSA Agency will be transformed into a new EU Agency for the Space programme (EUSPA) in 2021. The City of Prague has confirmed its role not only as the centre of the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems, but Prague will soon become heart of EU Space activities.
- 4) The Czech Republic successfully celebrated second volume of Czech Space Week, held in November 2019 and consisting of more than 15 events organised in several cities across

the whole country with its main goal to present benefits of space activities to policy makers, stakeholders, industry and academia, young professionals, students and the general public, with its total reach of several thousand people.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, let me come back to the STSC agenda items:

The Czech Republic has always been mindful of the importance of the questions related to Space Debris, Space Weather and Near Earth Objects.

With respect to Space Debris, we would like to highlight that it is important for us to address all the related technical, as well as legal issues, in particular the emerging agendas. We should examine this issue in connection to specific topics such as Space Traffic Management, Active Debris Removal or Servicing of Space Vehicles orbiting the Earth. Similarly, questions related to the utilization of space resources need to be addressed in an active manner at this critical juncture, with various actors already developing technologies and preparing capabilities to enable these activities in a very near future.

The Czech Republic stands ready to join common efforts in finding generally acceptable solutions and will work tirelessly towards this goal. In this context, let us draw attention of this distinguished body to an initiative launched by a group of researchers aimed at opening a discussion on peaceful use of lasers in space. Very much in line with our position reaffirmed earlier let us declare that the Czech government believes such initiatives deserve our careful consideration. Obviously our future deliberations should be in accordance with international space law, Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities and resolutions on No first placement of weapons in outer space (A/C.1/74/L.59), Further practical measures for the prevention of an arms race in outer space (A/C.1/74/L.58/Rev.1) and Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities (A/C.1/74/L.60). We appreciate the basic approach of this initiative, namely to support international scientific cooperation on the development of laser technology for space for Space debris, NEOs, exploration of Celestial bodies to light-sailing. There are already some concrete steps envisaged by the researchers, namely, an international conference to be held in Mikulov, Czech Republic, in September 2020. The representatives of this initiative will address interested partners within the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of Space Mission Planning and Advisory Group (SMPAG). We hope that we revisit the issue also during the upcoming LSC and Plenary Session of COPUOS.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

With respect to Planetary Defence activities, it should be noted that the Czech Republic became the 19<sup>th</sup> member of SMPAG in 2018. Moreover, during the ESA's Space19+ Ministerial Conference

and in the view of supporting the European and international community in preparing an adequate response to a possible NEO threats, the Czech Republic made significant investment in ESA's Space Safety Cornerstone mission „HERA“ where the Czech Industry and Academia will participate in the preparation of HERA mothership structure and in the HW and SW development for HERA's APEX and JUVENTAS cubesat probes. We are extremely glad that the European HERA and U.S. DART missions, both part of AIDA initiative, will provide us with new and extremely important scientific knowledge that will allow us to protect our fragile planet in the near future.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Last year we witnessed a great success in approving the set of 21 LTS guidelines and finding agreement on the establishment of new WG on LTS. Despite this extremely important milestone, we have to bear in mind that outer space activities continue to develop and evolve at a rapid pace and we are just in the middle of the long journey to preserve seamless access to space for future generations.

The new WG on LTS will help the community to implement existing guidelines and will allow us to continue to work on further ones. Now, we have before us several constructive proposals on the methods of work of the new WG. We are of the view that joint and consensual approach needs to be found in order to maximise benefits of such a working group.

Regarding the voluntary implementation of existing LTS guidelines, I am glad to announce that the Czech Republic is already preparing its new national space act that will be positively affected by actual LTS trends and principles.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Concerning the outcomes of the UNISPACE+50, we highly welcome the “Space2030 agenda”. We place a great importance on the social, economic and environmental benefits of space technologies and applications and we are firmly convinced that space activities can provide a major contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In this context, we are looking forward to a dynamic and constructive discussion during the meetings of the respective Working Group.

The Czech Republic also attaches great importance to space-based education. At the national level, significant educational activities are being carried out by the very successful project of ESA's European Space Education Resources Office in the Czech Republic [ESERO], with its goal to enhance young people's literacy in Space science, technology, engineering and mathematics

subjects and attract them to future careers in these fields. The ESERO Czech Republic, founded in 2015, has already supported more than 12.000 teachers and 300.000 students through 29 newly developed space oriented educational programmes.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic remains committed to international cooperation in outer space at all levels. Our membership in the European Space Agency and the European Union remains the main pillars of the development of our space activities and participation in space projects. We continue to strongly support the space programmes and activities of both ESA and EU, which bring great benefit not only to the Czech Republic and European countries, but to people around the world. The Czech Republic also continues to expand its bilateral cooperation on space matters with countries across Europe and around the world.

In concluding, Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, the Czech delegation reiterates its strong support for the work and the mission of the UN COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

I thank you for your kind attention.