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English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**
Legal Subcommittee
Fifty-first session
Vienna, 19-30 March 2012

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

Note by the Secretariat

The present conference room paper contains information received by the Secretariat from the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL).

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II. Replies received from international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations

European Centre for Space Law

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A. Background information

The European Centre for Space Law (ECSL) was established in 1989, on the initiative and under the auspices of the European Space Agency (ESA), with the support of a number of pioneers in the field. It functions under a charter, amended in October 2009, which defines its missions, structure and objectives. The current Chairman of ECSL is Sergio Marchisio, of Sapienza University (Rome).

The main objective of ECSL is to build up and spread, in Europe and elsewhere, an understanding of the legal framework relevant to space activities. Information exchange among interested stakeholders and improving and promoting the teaching of space law are the two major tools for reaching that goal.

A flexible and open structure

ECSL has a flexible and open structure. The Centre brings together mainly professionals, lawyers, academics and students and encourages interdisciplinary exchanges. The ECSL General Assembly, open to all members, meets every three years and elects the ECSL Board which functions are to oversee and assist in the running of the activities. The Executive Secretariat is in charge of the management and growth of the Centre's activities.

Management

Members of the ECSL Board, which is responsible for the management of the Centre, are elected by the General Assembly for a period of three years. Board members have outstanding backgrounds and experience in space law and commit themselves to actively promoting the objectives of ECSL at the national and international levels.

Membership and network

Membership, open to natural or legal persons from ESA members or associated States, is a prerequisite for voting at the triennial General Assembly and receiving ECSL publications, such as the ECSL Newsletter and the Summer Course Proceedings. ECSL has international membership and a network of National points of contact (NPOCs), which have been set up in more than 10 ESA Member States in order to facilitate contacts among members and the organization of activities.

Summary of 2011 activities

2011 ECSL Practitioners' Forum

The 2011 Practitioners' Forum took place on 18 March, 2011 at ESA Headquarters in Paris and focused on the theme "Manned Spaceflight Safety Issues: Legal & Policy Aspects". Plans about leisure travel beyond Earth — the so-called space tourism — require extraordinary efforts. The Forum discussed the legal rules and policies to be put in place in order improve the safety of manned spaceflight.

2011 European Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition

The ECSL set up, as the official regional organizer, the European Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition, in cooperation with the Faculty of Law of the University of Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, in April 2011. Eight universities and nine teams composed of twenty-two students participated in this competition. The University of Saint Petersburg, Russian Federation, winner of the European Round, represented Europe at the World Final of the Competition, which took place during the 62nd International Astronautical Congress in Cape Town, South Africa, in October 2011. Florida State University from the United States of America won the Final, which was judged by three members of the International Court of Justice.

The 20th ECSL Summer Course on Space Law and Policy

The Twentieth edition of the ECSL Summer Course on Space Law and Policy was organized from 29 August to 2 September 2011 in cooperation with the Faculty of Law of the University of Rijeka, Croatia. There were 40 students coming from 15 countries of different parts of the world. The students followed lectures on space law and policy issues given by speakers either academicians or practitioners specialized in the space field. The Course was completed by an interactive work on a case study dealing with international space cooperation.

2011 Workshops and conferences

The ECSL and the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) jointly organized in 2011 a Symposium on: "A new look on the delimitation of airspace and outer space" during the 50th session of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee (LSC). The event was coordinated by Tanja Masson-Zwaan, President of IISL, and Sergio Marchisio, the ECSL Chairman. The Subcommittee noted with appreciation in its Report that the Symposium had constituted a valuable contribution to its work, in particular to the Working Group on the Definition and Delimitation of Outer Space (presentations and details can be found on the website of the Office for Outer Space Affairs (www.oosa.unvienna.org/oosa/en/COPUOS/Legal/2011/symposium.html)).

B. Documentation and publications

(a) Legal database

The ECSL Legal Database, updated in 2011, can be consulted via the ECSL homepage (www.esa.int/SPECIALS/ECSL/index.html). It contains an extensive bibliography on space law as well as legal texts relating to ESA, the United Nations

and other international and national institutions involved in the development of space activities. The ECSL website site is also intended to promote the work carried out by the ECSL national points of contact, space law institutes, universities, research centres, the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and other organizations, as well as national space agencies, in order to create a network among all institutions, educational centres and research facilities working in the area of space law. The ECSL legal database contains also a large bibliography which intends to be a useful tool for students and practitioners.

(b) Space law teaching in Europe

The booklet “Space law teaching in Europe” is an ECSL initiative, first issued in 1991 and revised in 1993. The booklet includes a list of space law teaching institutions, universities and educational centres in Europe. It also provides detailed information on teaching staff, credits, tuition fees and the duration of the different courses, together with illustrations of the institutions listed. The fifth edition will be published in 2012.

(c) Newsletter

The ECSL newsletter features articles on legal issues and others topics of interest to the space community, as well as on the ECSL activities. All the newsletters are available on the ECSL website. The next newsletter No. 39 will be published in March 2012.

(d) Book on “The Astronauts and Rescue Agreement: Lessons Learned”

In 2011 the ECSL published, with the support of the European Space Agency, the book titled “The Astronauts and Rescue Agreement: Lessons Learned”, available for sale on the ESA Publications website at the Spacebooks online (“ESA Sponsored Publications”).

The Book collects articles from eminent experts and marks the 40th anniversary of the 1968 on the Rescue of Astronauts Agreement, drawn up under the auspices of the United Nations. The book assesses the adequacy of that Agreement to meet new developments.

C. Major events and projects planned for 2012

Board meetings

The last Board was held on 25 November 2011 and the next meeting is scheduled at ESA Headquarters in Paris on 14 March 2012.

2012 Practitioner’s Forum

The annual edition of the Practitioner’s Forum will be held on 16 March 2012, at ESA HQ and will deal with: “Insurance of Satellite Activities from the Cradle to the Grave — Legal aspects”.

The 2012 IISL-ECSL Symposium at the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee

The 2012 IISL-ECSL Symposium will be held during the 51st session of the COPUOS Legal Subcommittee (LSC), focussing on the topic of “Transfer of ownership of space objects: Issues of responsibility, liability and registration”.

European Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Moot Court Competition

The 2012 edition will be held from 26-27 April 2012, the venue is yet to be decided. The World Semi Finals and Finals of the Competition will take place in Naples, Italy, in October 2012, during the 63rd International Astronautical Federation’s Congress.

Summer Course on Space Law and Policy, 2012

The Twenty-first ECSL Summer Course will be held in September 2012, from 27 August to 8 September 2012.
