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Uses of Outer Space**
Legal Subcommittee
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Item 4 of the provisional agenda*
**Information on the activities of international
intergovernmental and non-governmental
organizations relating to space law**

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Note by the Secretariat

I. Introduction

1. The present document was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information received from Intersputnik.

**II. Reply received from an international intergovernmental
organization**

Intersputnik

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[9 April 2019]

Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications

Established on 15 November 1971 under the Agreement on the Establishment of the Intersputnik International System and Organization of Space Communications, the Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications (Intersputnik) is an international intergovernmental satellite telecommunications organization headquartered in Moscow, Russian Federation. Intersputnik's mission is to ensure cooperation and coordination of efforts in the design, establishment, operation, and

* A/AC.105/C.2/L.308.



development of the international communications system via satellites. As of April 2019, Intersputnik unites twenty-six Member States¹ and twenty-four Signatories.²

A. Compliance with the United Nations treaties on outer space

On 20 June 2018, the Board and the Operations Committee of Intersputnik met in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, for a regular joint session where the Member States considered acceptance by Intersputnik of the rights and obligations under the United Nations treaties on outer space, in particular, the Agreement of 22 April 1968 on the Rescue of Astronauts, the Return of Astronauts and the Return of Objects Launched into Outer Space (Rescue Agreement), the Convention of 29 March 1972 on International Liability for Damage Caused by Space Objects (Liability Convention), and the Convention of 14 January 1975 on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space (Registration Convention).

The above United Nations treaties on outer space contain a mechanism that allows international organizations involved in space activities to accept the rights and obligations under these treaties, provided that certain requirements are met. One of the requirements is that the majority of an organization's Member States need to be parties to these treaties, as well as to the Treaty of 27 January 1967 on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (Outer Space Treaty). As soon as the majority condition was satisfied by Intersputnik, the question of the United Nations treaties on outer space was considered by the governing bodies of the organization.

The Board resolved that Intersputnik accept the rights and obligations under the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention, and the Registration Convention. Therefore, Intersputnik joined three international intergovernmental organizations, which had earlier made similar declarations, specifically, the European Space Agency (ESA), the European Organization for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT), and the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization (EUTELSAT).

Furthermore, the question of responsibility for compliance with the Outer Space Treaty was also reviewed by the Intersputnik Board. Article VI of the Outer Space Treaty states that when space activities are carried out by an international organization, responsibility for compliance with the Outer Space Treaty is borne both

¹ Republic of Azerbaijan, Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Bulgaria, Hungary, Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, Federal Republic of Germany, Georgia, Republic of India, Republic of Yemen, Republic of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Republic of Cuba, Lao Democratic People's Republic, Mongolia, Republic of Nicaragua, Republic of Poland, Russian Federation, Romania, Syrian Arab Republic, Federal Republic of Somalia, Republic of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, Czechia.

² "AZERCOSMOS" Open Joint-Stock Company (Republic of Azerbaijan); Ministry of Communications and Information Technology of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan; Republican Unitary Telecommunications Enterprise Beltelecom (Republic of Belarus); Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications of the Republic of Bulgaria; Bulgarian Telecommunications Company E.A.D. (Republic of Bulgaria); National Media and Infocommunications Authority (Hungary); Viet Nam Posts and Telecommunications Group (Socialist Republic of Viet Nam); Romantis GmbH and FidusCrypt GmbH (Federal Republic of Germany); Department of Space of the Government of the Republic of India; Department of Telecommunications of the Government of the Republic of India; Ministry of Digital Development, Defense and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan; State Committee of Information Technology and Communications of the Kyrgyz Republic; Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea; Cuban Telecommunications Company S.A. (ETECSA) (Republic of Cuba); Communications and Information Technology Authority of the Government of Mongolia; Orange Polska S.A. (Republic of Poland); Federal State Unitary Enterprise "Russian Satellite Communications Company"; National Radiocommunications Company S.A. (Romania); Syrian Telecommunications Establishment (Syrian Arab Republic); DalKom Somalia (Federal Republic of Somalia); Communication Service under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan; Ukrkosmos State Company (Ukraine); Ministry of Industry and Trade of Czechia.

by the international organization and by the States parties to the Outer Space Treaty participating in such organization. Yet, the Outer Space Treaty does not allow an international organization to become a party to the treaty, nor contains any mechanism for accepting rights and obligations, like the one that is set forth in the other four United Nations treaties on outer space. At the same time, the Outer Space Treaty establishes fundamental rules and principles of international space law.

In this regard, the Intersputnik Board resolved that the organization unilaterally accept the obligation to comply with the Outer Space Treaty and the responsibility for compliance with the treaty in accordance with its Article VI. It should be emphasized that Intersputnik does not claim any rights under the Outer Space Treaty. These are only the obligation to conduct space activities in compliance with the Outer Space Treaty and the responsibility for compliance with the treaty that have been accepted. In adopting this decision Intersputnik was guided by the intention to underline the organization's commitment to the highest standards of carrying out space activities and to ensure, in an orderly legal manner, that Intersputnik bears the same responsibility for its space activities as the Member States of the organization.

Pursuant to the Board's decision, in July 2018 the Declaration on the Acceptance by the Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications of the Rights and Obligations under the United Nations Treaties on Outer Space was duly made and sent to the depositaries of the four United Nations treaties on outer space requesting them to take it into account when updating the status of international agreements relating to activities in outer space.³

As it was mentioned in the statement of the delegation of the Russian Federation, which is the depositary of three United Nations treaties on outer space including the Outer Space Treaty, Intersputnik became the first international intergovernmental organization which made such a declaration on voluntary acceptance of responsibility for compliance with the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty.

B. Intersputnik Development Program

At the regular joint session held in June 2018, the Intersputnik governing bodies approved a Program for the Development of Business in the Field of Space Communications in the Member States of the Organization. The purpose of this Program is to expand and deepen cooperation between Intersputnik and its Member States by granting financial support to companies incorporated in these States. The first tenders will be held already in April 2019, and bids will be accepted till the end of May 2019.⁴

C. Summary of 2018 activities

Since 1985, when Intersputnik was granted permanent observer status, it has been constantly participating in the work of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its Subcommittees. In April 2018 Intersputnik participated in the 57th session of the Legal Subcommittee and presented a report on its activities relating to space law. Within the framework of that session, experts of the organization also contributed to the work of the joint symposium of the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) and the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL) which was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the Rescue Agreement.

Cooperating with the above international non-governmental organizations, in August 2018 Intersputnik's representative took part in the ECSL Summer Course on Space

³ Full text of the declaration is available on the Intersputnik's website <http://intersputnik.com/intersputnik/about/>.

⁴ Detailed information on the Intersputnik Development Program is published on the website of the organization <http://intersputnik.com/development-program/>.

Law and Policy as a guest lecturer. In December 2018 Intersputnik co-organized the Second Annual All-Russian Meeting of IISL. In the course of the latter event, experts in the field of space law, cosmonautics, and other related sciences from different countries, as well as young Russian professionals, discussed a number of topical space law issues, including the governance of space resources, preservation of human heritage in outer space, and maintenance of space for peaceful purposes.

In September 2018 Intersputnik took part in the First United Nations Conference on Space Law and Policy held in Moscow, Russian Federation, co-sponsored by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and Russian State Space Corporation ROSCOSMOS. Intersputnik's representatives contributed to the discussions on capacity-building in space law during a dedicated panel.

As a member of the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) since 2015, in October 2018 Intersputnik took part in the 69th International Astronautical Congress co-sponsored by IAF, IISL, and the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA).

A major part of the activities related to human capacity-building in space law is carried out by Intersputnik in its host country. In April 2018 Intersputnik participated in the annual Blischenko Congress on Public International Law convened by Russia's Peoples' Friendship University (RUDN University). With the organizational support from Intersputnik, the Congress held a special session on international space law where all participants could exchange views on the topical legal issues of the exploration and use of outer space.

Intersputnik also cooperates with other Russian universities. Within the framework of such cooperation, Intersputnik supports Russian teams in the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition and accepts students for internships so they can gain useful knowledge and practical experience in the field of international space law. At the beginning of 2019, an internship with Intersputnik was for the first time done by international students from Belarus and Ukraine.

D. Engagement in the work of the International Telecommunication Union

Due to the nature of its core business, Intersputnik has always paid much attention to the efficiency of using the radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits. As a member of the Radiocommunication Sector of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), in 2018 Intersputnik took part in the Plenipotentiary Conference and meetings of other ITU working bodies, including those aimed at preparing the World Radiocommunication Conference to be held at the end of 2019.

On a regional level, similar aspects have been discussed within the framework of the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC) where Intersputnik enjoys observer status. In 2018 Intersputnik's legal and technical experts contributed to the activities of the RCC working bodies on radio-frequency spectrum and satellite orbits, satellite technologies, information society development, and international cooperation.

For the purpose of enhancing human capacity-building in the field of satellite telecommunications, Intersputnik annually arranges seminars called NATSATTEL for experts from the Member States of the organization. In the course of the seminar held in June 2018, Intersputnik experts discussed topical issues and new trends in satellite telecommunications and exchanged valuable practical experience with participants from various Intersputnik Member States.

E. Plans for 2019

Intersputnik intends to continue working in the field of space law in 2019, specifically, to contribute to its application and development on international, regional, and national levels.

Intersputnik avails itself of this opportunity to confirm its preparedness for in-depth cooperation with all States and international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations as well as regional and national organizations.
