

31 May 2021

English only

**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space
Legal Subcommittee
Sixtieth session**

Vienna, 31 May–11 June 2021

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

The present document was prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of information received from Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications

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

Intersputnik International Organization of Space Communications

[Original: English]

[2 April 2021]

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.317](#).



development of the international communications system via satellites. As of 2021, Intersputnik unites twenty-six member countries¹ and twenty-five signatories.²

A. Summary of 2020 activities

According to Intersputnik's internal plan for 2020, the organization was supposed to take part in numerous events and activities relating to space law, but most of them were either postponed indefinitely or cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some events and activities transitioned to online platforms, and experts of the organization did contribute to their work.

Owing 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. In this regard, in September–November 2020, experts of the organization took part in a series of webinars on satellite telecommunications organized by the Radiocommunication Bureau of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU). On a regional level, similar aspects have been discussed within the framework of the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC) in late 2020. In October 2020, Intersputnik took part in the CyberSpace Edition of the 71st International Astronautical Congress organized by the International Astronautical Federation (IAF) with support from the International Institute of Space Law (IISL), the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA), and the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC). An online lecture on radio frequency spectrum and the ITU was given in November 2020 as part of the Strategic Space Law Course organized by McGill University in Montreal, Canada. In December 2020, Intersputnik's representatives took part in a webinar series co-organized by the Institute of Air and Space Law (IASL) of McGill University and the International Association for the Advancement of Space Safety (IAASS), the 15th Annual IISL Eilene M. Galloway Memorial Symposium on Critical Issues in Space Law entirely devoted to space and the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the IAA/AAS SciTech Forum 2020 Cyber Edition co-sponsored by RUDN University (Moscow, Russian Federation).

For the purpose of enhancing human capacity-building in the field of satellite telecommunications, starting from 2017 Intersputnik has been arranging workshops called NATSATTEL. These events are usually held during annual sessions of the

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 People's Democratic 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 Production Unitary Enterprise "Precise Electromechanics Factory" (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); FidusCrypt – USG GmbH and Romantis 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, Innovations and Aerospace Industry of the Republic of Kazakhstan; State Service for Digital Development under the Government 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); Ministry of Post and Telecommunications of the Lao People's Democratic Republic; 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" (Russian Federation); National Radiocommunications Company S.A. (Romania); Syrian Telecommunications Establishment (Syrian Arab Republic); DaKom 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.

Intersputnik governing bodies and are aimed at discussing issues related to the development of national satellite systems in the Intersputnik member countries, the general situation on the market, and new technologies in this area. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, NATSATTEL was held online and attracted participants from twenty States. During the workshop, they discussed the use of geostationary systems and non-geostationary systems in low earth orbit, frequency coordination of satellite systems with 5G networks, and IoT technologies.

B. Intersputnik Development Programme

In 2018, Intersputnik's governing bodies approved a Programme for the Development of Business in the Field of Space Communications. Initially, the purpose of this Programme was to expand and deepen cooperation between Intersputnik and its member countries by granting financial support to their local companies operating in the field of space communications. The first tender under the Programme was held in 2019 and won by a satellite telecommunications company from Mongolia that received an interest-free loan from Intersputnik for the upgrading of a VSAT satellite network.

The experience of the first tender and the feedback received from various stakeholders showed that companies from nations other than the Intersputnik member countries were also interested in the Programme. In this regard, and with a view to increasing the effectiveness and appeal of the Programme, in late 2020 Intersputnik's governing bodies approved a new version of the Programme, which made participation in tenders open to companies incorporated in any State provided that they either operated in an Intersputnik member country or used or planned to use the Intersputnik international satellite telecommunications system.

The updated Programme provides benefits to companies which are Intersputnik signatories. For instance, while an ordinary winner of a tender can receive a loan in the amount of up to 750,000 US dollars, for an Intersputnik signatory the maximum sum is increased to 1,000,000 US dollars.

The second tender under the Programme was announced in December 2020. The effective requirements for applicants and their documents, as well as the tender procedure are available on the website of the organization.³

C. Intersputnik's 50th Anniversary

Established on 15 November 1971, Intersputnik is celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2021. Over the past half century, Intersputnik's membership has increased from nine countries founders from the Eastern block to twenty-six countries from almost all regions of the world.

Intersputnik has become well-known at the international level and is represented at main professional forums related to its activity, including, on the global scale, the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) where it enjoys permanent observer status. Cooperation was established by Intersputnik with the major players in the field of satellite telecommunications. Already in 1983, Intersputnik signed an agreement on cooperation with the ITU Secretary-General. Later, similar agreements were concluded with intergovernmental satellite telecommunications organizations, including the European Telecommunications Satellite Organization (EUTELSAT), the International Mobile Satellite Organization (IMSO), and the International Telecommunications Satellite Organization (ITSO). Intersputnik takes part in regional telecommunications organizations such as the Regional Commonwealth in the Field of Communications (RCC), and holds

³ Please note that the Intersputnik website has been transferred from the domain ".com" to the domain ".int".

membership in non-governmental organizations, including the International Astronautical Federation (IAF).

One of the most significant moments in Intersputnik's history is the acceptance by the organization, in 2018, of the rights and obligations under the United Nations treaties on outer space, specifically, the Rescue Agreement of 1968, the Registration Convention of 1972, and the Liability Convention of 1975. Furthermore, Intersputnik also became the first, and still remains the only, international organization that accepted the obligation to comply with the Outer Space Treaty of 1967 and the responsibility for compliance with this treaty in accordance with its Article VI.

Similarly to other intergovernmental satellite telecommunications organizations, at the turn of the century, Intersputnik underwent the procedure of reorganization. However, in contrast to such other organizations, the reform of Intersputnik did not result in making its satellite system a separate commercial entity. Therefore, Intersputnik still keeps its unique status – it is an international organization aimed at promoting cooperation in the field of space communications and at the same time a satellite operator carrying out commercial exploitation of its system. The uniqueness of Intersputnik is also confirmed by the fact that neither its member countries nor signatories finance the organization. On the contrary, every year Intersputnik pays dividends to its signatories out of profits made from the provision of satellite telecommunications services to customers in the member countries and other States. In addition, through Intersputnik's 100 per cent Russian subsidiary Isatel LLC, customers of the organizations can make use of full-scale turnkey solutions in the field of satellite communications.

In 2021, Intersputnik celebrates its first half century of successful operation on both avenues of its activity and is dedicated to continue working hard for the benefit of its member countries and the development of satellite telecommunications.

D. Plans for 2021

Taking into account the COVID-19 pandemic-related consequences, Intersputnik continues working in the field of space law in 2021, having switched to a predominantly online format. Experts of the organization keep contributing to the development and application of space law on international and national levels, including by participating in expert projects, conferences, and university lectures. Some offline endeavours are still being planned. The International and Legal Service of Intersputnik has already made up a schedule of educational internships for students from Russian universities for the summer of 2021. Options for offline internships for specialists from other Intersputnik member countries are under consideration and can be put into effect later in 2021.

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.
