



**European Union**

**EU Statement on  
Agenda item 4: General exchange of views**

**66<sup>th</sup> Session of the  
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)  
United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)**

**Vienna, 31 May – 9 June 2023**

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Albania\*, Ukraine and Norway<sup>†</sup> align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to thank the COPUOS and the Subcommittee Chairs for their leadership and to recognise the preparatory work carried out by the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and its acting Director, Niklas Hedman. Over the past years, COPUOS and its Subcommittees have managed to advance dialogue and cooperation on outer space matters as well as on specific issues on their agenda, among them the implementation of the agreed guidelines for long-term sustainability of outer space activities, the legal aspects of space resource activities and the protection of dark and quiet skies.

Mr. Chair,

The EU and its Member States strongly support the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core, and a multilateral approach to international affairs, including cooperation on outer space issues. Gross violations of the UN Charter undermine the whole UN system and in this context, the EU continues to condemn, in the strongest terms, the Russian Federation's unprovoked, unjustified and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Our opposition remains to granting UN affiliation to a new Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education hosted in Russia.

We reiterate that COPUOS and its Subcommittees remain unique platforms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, the main multilateral platforms for the development of international space law, international norms, guidelines and best practices related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The

---

\* Candidate country Albania continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

<sup>†</sup> Norway is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

development of such instruments related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities should be distinct but complementary to the same approach relating to space threats, which are being considered in other fora within the UN system. COPUOS also has a fundamental role to play in enhancing transparency and confidence-building among States. Its important role for global space governance was recognised by the UN Secretary General in the report “Our Common Agenda” and is further illustrated by its growing membership.

International law, including the UN Charter, is applicable to outer space. The 1967 Outer Space Treaty and other UN treaties on outer space, as well as the guiding principles developed in the UN framework, constitute the cornerstone of global governance in outer space. The EU and its Member States stress the importance of conducting space activities in accordance therewith. As a responsible space actor, the EU continues to explore concrete ways in which the EU, in compliance with the applicable EU legal framework, could accept the rights and obligations contained in the appropriate UN treaties on outer space.

Outer space is a global commons, free for exploration and use by all States without any discrimination, on the basis of equality and in accordance with international law. We continue to actively promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space as well as access to outer space for future generations.

We continue to stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures, the need to foster responsible behaviour in the peaceful and free exploration and use of outer space. From this perspective, considering the parallel discussions on space security in the UN framework, we are of the opinion that a positive outcome of the Open Ended Working Group on reducing space threats and in this context the possible development of norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours in outer space would have positive consequences not only on security, but also on the safety and sustainability of outer space.

Mr. Chair,

The EU and its Member States appreciate the positive discussions within the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (WG-LTS) at the recent 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We consider that the WG-LTS should focus on the implementation of existing LTS guidelines while also addressing capacity building needs and progressively identifying new challenges, which could be translated in new guidelines.

Space traffic management (STM) and the mitigation of space debris remain among the key issues as recognised by the Council of the European Union in its 23 May Conclusions on the “Fair and Sustainable Use of Space”. Drawing on reinforced SST capabilities, our EU approach for operational STM foresees the possibility for cooperation with international partners in view of information sharing and building on regional contributions. Already since 2016, EU Space Surveillance & Tracking Support Framework has been providing collision avoidance services, which are now open to non-European users.

The EU and its Member States welcome the engaging discussions within the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities at the recent 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Legal Subcommittee. We believe that the WG should be able to reach agreement on the organisation of an international conference in accordance with the 2024 workplan. We thank all Member States for the constructive contributions in this respect and would like to thank Luxembourg and Belgium for their generous offer, expressed during the Legal Subcommittee in CRP.41.

Furthermore, the EU and its Member States recognise the importance of keeping the issue of dark and quiet skies on the STSC agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. There is broad cross-regional support to continue discussions and establish an Expert Group to develop practical solutions and address the unintended impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy.

Finally, the EU and its Member States welcome that outer space issues relevant to COPUOS work will feature prominently at the UN SDG Summit in 2023 and at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024. We recognise the need for the international community to come together and discuss ways and means to reinforce space governance in the interest of maintaining a sustainable outer space for the benefit of present and future generations. In this regard, we take note and consider the proposals of the High Level Advisory Board released on 18 April this year.

Taking everything into account, we would like to emphasize that all EU initiatives are developed in the spirit of international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space. We stand ready to collaborate further with all stakeholders to advance outer space issues relevant for COPUOS.

Finally, I would like to draw your attention to a side event organised by the EU and the Permanent Mission of Sweden on 7 June on the benefits of space technologies for accelerating the implementation of the SDGs, particularly climate action. We look forward to welcoming your Head of Delegation.

Thank you for your attention.