

**67th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space
(COPUOS), Vienna, 19 – 28 June 2024**

Agenda item 5: General exchange of views

Statement by Bulgaria

Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I would like to begin by congratulating Mr. Sherif Mohamed Sedky on the election as a Chair of this Committee. I would also like to convey my delegation's support to the Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini, and the Secretariat for the assistance and excellent preparation of this session. You can rely on our full support.

Chair,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the EU under this agenda item and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

COPUOS and its Subcommittees continue to serve as exceptional forums for global collaboration in the peaceful use of outer space and the formulation of international space law, norms, guidelines, and best practices. We consider the Committee pivotal in promoting transparency and fostering trust. It is imperative that we ensure COPUOS remains effective in its mission.

In this regard, the upcoming UN Summit of the Future presents a vital opportunity to bolster the role of UNOOSA and COPUOS. We would like to see the outer space issues relevant to COPUOS be prominently reflected in the draft Pact for the Future.

Responsible behavior in outer space is essential for successful space collaboration. States must adhere to the rules of the Outer Space Treaty, particularly those enshrined in Article IV, which obligates States Parties not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kind of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons of in outer space in any other manner. We urge all states to faithfully implement their obligations under the existing UN treaties and the relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Chair,

I would like to use this opportunity to highlight some key elements of the Bulgarian space policy.

Bulgaria has a 50-year long tradition in the field of space research and technology which successfully gained new momentum in the recent years.

Development of a competitive national space sector and strengthening the international cooperation, including accelerating Bulgaria's accession to the European Space Agency as an associate member, are our current major priorities. We have been working on setting those priorities in a National Space Policy Strategy with the goal to be adopted by the end of this year.

Our collaboration with the European Commission and the European Space Agency has brought important benefits in terms of strengthening our space technological and economic capacity and for implementing our ambition to increase the number of space entrepreneurs, new space companies and young people to benefit from the space programme and be involved in our space ecosystem.

Bulgaria has been actively participating in various initiatives and activities, related to space exploration and peaceful use of space, among others having the largest astronomical observatory in South-Eastern Europe: the National Astronomical Observatory "Rozhen". That was one of the reasons to fully support initiatives like "Dark and quiet skies" and we have welcomed its inclusion as a single item in the agenda of the next 5 sessions of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

In the recent years Bulgaria has been implementing successfully space projects in important areas such as production of space food and construction of space greenhouses, informational systems for monitoring of hydropower reservoirs, development of communication satellite terminals, software platforms for aggregation and data analysis from satellite, nanosatellite feeding systems, terrestrial surveillance of agricultural and forest areas, and many others. We are also very proud that one of the nine New Space companies selected to join the Copernicus programme as "Copernicus Contributing Mission" is a Bulgarian company.

Since the last COPUOS session Bulgaria has undertaken significant step in the international cooperation by joining the Artemis Accords set of principles in November 2023.

Last but not least, Bulgaria expresses its support for Romania's proposal for the establishment of an Action Team to explore the possibilities of establishing an international consultative mechanism on lunar activities within the framework of COPUOS. We believe that such an initiative will promote international partnerships as well as contribute to the development of safe, sustainable, and transparent lunar activities for peaceful purposes.

We look forward to substantial discussions in the forthcoming days.