

## **STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY**

The 67th session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

### **AGENDA ITEM 5: General exchange of views**

**Read by:** Sara Lucatello (Vice-President)

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Chair, distinguished delegates,

It is an honor and a privilege to address the 67th Session of UNCOPUOS on behalf of the European Astronomical Society (EAS) in my capacity as its vice-president.

Chair,

As it is the first time we take the floor, we wish to congratulate you, Mr Sedky, and the new bureau on your appointment, and express our appreciation for the excellent preparation for the meeting by the office of UNOOSA. We assure you, Chair, of our fullest cooperation during this session.

Chair,

The European Astronomical Society promotes and advances astronomy in Europe, supporting its more than 5,300 individual members in the undertaking of their professional activities. The EAS collaborates with 32 affiliated national societies and 30 organizational members: foundations, research institutions and entities that support the activities of the society. The society is also involved in capacity building endeavors, and regularly engages with European policy makers and funding agencies.

Chair,

I am pleased to report that the EAS annual meeting, the largest yearly astronomy-focused event in Europe, will take place in Padova, Italy in just one week. It will bring together

close to 2000 participants from all over the world: scientists working in all fields of astrophysics and space science, policy makers and public engagement specialists.

Chair,

Space activities are of great importance to the EAS. Astronomy is the oldest form of space exploration as humans have looked at objects and phenomena located in outer space since prehistoric times. Today, the ability to explore the Universe with both space telescopes and ground based facilities is crucial for the progress of our understanding of the cosmos, to investigate how our universe formed and evolved and ultimately how we, as a species, came about.

Chair,

The EAS, like many other astronomical organizations, has been observing with growing concern the rapid deployment of large numbers of satellites in Lower Earth Orbit. These objects are known to negatively impact observations made by both ground-based and space telescopes. Their proliferation threatens the access to dark and quiet skies, affecting not only the advancement of humanity's knowledge of the Universe but also our ability to track near earth objects and effectively contribute to planetary defense, which is critical to prevent events that could put the very existence of our species at risk.

Chair,

For a few years now, the astronomical community and astronomical organizations, including the EAS, have engaged extensively with space industry key players, COPUOS, ITU, the European Commission and national regulators, in an effort to work together towards technical solutions to mitigate negative effects of LEO satellites on astronomical activities and for the development of balanced regulations.

Chair,

The EAS is thankful to COPUOS delegations for their discussions within the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, for their recognition of the importance of the problem and for agreeing on the name and scope of an agenda item on the issue of Dark and Quiet Skies and Satellite Constellations. We also greatly appreciate the ongoing work of the Group of Friends for Dark and Quiet Skies. It is our belief that under the new agenda item delegations will have an appropriate forum to exchange their views and discuss constructive approaches to preserve the Dark and Quiet Skies.

Chair,

We also support the Conference Room Paper presented by the International Astronomical Union and several Permanent Observers on the Protection of Astronomy and Science on the Moon. The lunar surface hosts some of the most promising sites for next-generation high-performance astronomical instrumentation, whose extraordinary qualities might be threatened by planned and potential activities on the Moon.

Chair,

We wish to conclude our statement by saying that the EAS is fully committed to continued collaboration with COPUOS and its delegations in the path to devise innovative strategies aimed at the protection of the dark and quiet skies, for science and society, and for future generations.

Chair, distinguished delegates, thank you for your kind attention.