



EUROPEAN SPACE POLICY INSTITUTE

**ESPI Statement at the 67th Annual Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of
Outer Space**

June 26th, 2024

Agenda Item 5

Presented by: Matija Rencelj, ESPI Research Manager

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen:

First, I would like to congratulate the elected Bureau for the year 2024, Sherif Sedky of Egypt as elected Chair; Juan Francisco Facetti of Paraguay as Vice-Chair; and Hassan Abas of Pakistan, as Second Vice-Chair and Rapporteur. Allow me to also express my appreciation to Ms. Ulpia-Elena Botezatu of Romania and Mr. Santiago Ripol Carulla of Spain, as Chairs of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee and Legal Subcommittee respectively and extend my sincere thanks to **all the staff of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs** and its Director, **Ms. Aarti Holla Maini**, for their outstanding preparation and organisation of this meeting.

The European Space Policy Institute is **the independent European think tank for space**. Our mission is to **promote European space policy on a global level by facilitating an active forum for the analysis and discussion of European needs**, capabilities and long-term prospects in space activities. Our activities cover a broad range of topics, including space economy, space security, space exploration and space diplomacy, among others.

In 2023, on the occasion of our 20th anniversary, celebrated at the Austrian Parliament here in Vienna, we published our vision, “ESPI 2040”, **space for peace, prosperity and future generations** under the maxim *“a strong Europe, partner to the world”*. ESPI 2040 proposes a 3-layer approach to space policy, including the (i) Foundation, (ii) Capability, and (iii) Policy Impact layers.



As the Research Manager of ESPI, I am dedicated to ensuring that ESPI continues to provide valuable contributions to the space community by **offering strategic insights and analyses**, particularly in addressing the challenges of our time like **climate change, geopolitical crises, space sustainability, and macroeconomic shocks**. Since publishing ESPI 2040 in September 2023, we have published **12 freely accessible public reports spanning diverse topics and formats** starting with **space security and private investment**, through civil society involvement, radio frequency spectrum governance, and patent filings for propulsion systems for space, to an analysis towards the recent EU parliamentary elections.

A central pillar of our mission, enshrined in our statutes, is also **fostering the education and training of young graduates and civil servants** interested in the development of space policy. We believe a workforce, equipped with innovative perspectives and a transversal understanding of the sector, is integral to a prosperous future of the sector. In this context, we'll hold our inaugural ESPI Summer Bootcamp at the European Forum Alpbach in August 2024.

Finally, with more than **100 unique engagements at events and with stakeholders** in Europe (e.g. the European Space Conference in Brussels), Africa (e.g. the NewSpace Africa Conference in Angola), the Middle East (e.g. the LEAP Conference in Saudi Arabia), the Asia-Pacific, and Latin and North America (e.g. Space Symposium in the Colorado Springs). In addition, we have reinitiated the tradition of **ESPI Evening events on the margins of UN COPUOS**, creating opportunities for fruitful and open discussions of the COPUOS community. Finally, our **annual Autumn Conference** will take place in Vienna on the 1st – 2nd October 2024, this year focusing on the role of space for security & defence.

Honourable Chair, distinguished delegates, I am delighted to note that, in pursuit of open and informed dialogue, and in support of our Policy Impact layer, we launched the **Vienna Space Diplomat (VSD)** initiative in 2023. VSD is an ESPI-led engagement platform designed specifically for the space diplomatic

community in Vienna. The VSD network brings together international policymakers, diplomats, and experts in a series of events aimed at advancing the role of space in a broader societal and economic context. The VSD offers a diverse range of engagement formats, including:

COPUOS Side Events: Gatherings taking place on the sidelines of UN COPUOS sessions, providing a platform for space policy experts, scholars, and industry leaders to address contemporary issues of space policy. Some of the topics we covered in 2024 are the outcomes of the ITU World Radio Conference (WRC), which ESPI attended in-person and supported the Austrian delegation, and the Inter-Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee (IADC) at its 30th anniversary in partnership with the UK Space Agency.

The VSD Annual Reception: A yearly networking event that attracts distinguished guest speakers, including high-level diplomats, fostering valuable connections and dialogue. Following Luxembourg in 2023, this year, the reception was co-hosted by the Swiss Permanent Mission. We would like to extend our gratitude to the Swiss Permanent Mission and its staff for its continuous support of the VSD.

VSD Forum: Throughout the year, the VSD hosts a series of interactive events with external expert speakers, promoting informed discussions and capacity building among members of the community. Earlier this year, we organised the first edition, focusing on space weather. I am pleased to announce that the second forum will be held on September 25th at ESPI premises, focusing on space debris mitigation. We warmly invite all interested delegations to attend this event.

Additionally, we host **Inter-Regional Space Policy Dialogues** between Europe and our partners in the Asia-Pacific, notably our long-standing and cherished partner – the APRSAF secretariat, and Latin America, this year co-facilitated by the Argentinian Permanent Mission and the National Commission on Space Activities (CONAE). Through these dialogues, we focus on different themes including approaches to space sustainability and the implementation of the LTS guidelines, the role of space applications in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals or public-private partnerships for space programmes.

By harnessing these diverse engagement formats, the Vienna Space Diplomat network serves as a catalyst for collaboration and knowledge exchange, thus pushing the boundaries of space diplomacy.

Yet, as mentioned, the VSD is just one angle of our engagement. We also foster strong relations with space agencies and ministries, the core of our membership, as well as our industry members and other esteemed international partners.

To this end, we were honoured to participate in the recent conference co-organised by the Portuguese Space Agency, and the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs in preparation for the **United Nations Summit of the Future**. We recognise the once-in-a-generation opportunity the Summit represents in defining future approaches to outer space governance. We look forward to **contributing towards informed discussions and decisions** at the Summit in New York with our analyses and expertise.

In conclusion, Honourable Chair and Distinguished Delegates, ESPI is committed to supporting the development of a resilient, sustainable, prosperous, and responsible space sector that will contribute to a better tomorrow. We believe that our new leadership, the establishment of the Vienna Space Diplomat Platform, and **our ever-increasing research and analysis activities will continue to contribute significantly to this goal.**

We look forward to engaging with the esteemed delegates of this Committee in our shared pursuit of a peaceful and prosperous future in outer space.

Thank you, Mr Chair.