



European Union
EU Statement on
Agenda item 4: General exchange of views

67th Session of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

Vienna, 19 June – 28 June 2024

Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Albania, Ukraine, and Norway.

At the outset, I congratulate you on your election and assure you of our full cooperation. I would like to thank you and the Subcommittee and Working Group Chairs for your leadership and UNOOSA for its preparatory work. The EU will continue to strongly support and closely cooperate with UNOOSA Director Aarti Holla-Maini and her team.

Chair,

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) and its Subcommittees remain unique platforms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, as well as for the development of international space law, international norms, guidelines and best practices. The Committee also has a fundamental role to play to enhance transparency and build confidence. We must all make sure that COPUOS remains able to deliver.

The upcoming UN Summit of the Future in New York on 22-23 September provides a key opportunity to strengthen the role of UNOOSA and COPUOS. The EU and its Member States welcome that outer space issues relevant to COPUOS work feature prominently in the draft Pact for the Future. We recognise the need for the international community to come together and discuss ways and means to reinforce space governance. We now have an opportunity to define clear common objectives for our work, on issues such as space traffic management, space debris and space resources. Much is now at stake, for the Committee and for UNOOSA, and we all need to make an additional effort, in the best Vienna spirit.

The 1967 Outer Space Treaty and other UN treaties on outer space, accompanied by the guiding principles developed in the UN framework, constitute the cornerstone of the global governance in outer space. The EU and its Member States promote

responsible behaviours in outer space and recall the obligations under the Outer Space Treaty, in particular those comprised in Article IV that obligates States Parties not to place in orbit around the Earth any objects carrying nuclear weapons or any other kinds of weapons of mass destruction, install such weapons on celestial bodies, or station such weapons in outer space in any other manner. We call upon all States which have not yet done so to join the existing UN treaties on outer space, and faithfully implement them.

The exploration and use of outer space is the province of all humankind and outer space as a global common must remain free for exploration and use by all States without any discrimination, on a 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.

Chair,

The EU and its Member States remain committed to promoting the implementation of the SDGs and Space 2030 Agenda. The European Union Space Programme components, GALILEO and COPERNICUS, support the achievement of these goals by providing reliable monitoring data and information to international users on a full, free and open basis. These programmes help tackle challenges related to transport systems, renewable energy, food security, water management, climate change, environmental impact including health related ones. They also offer vital services for disaster management, civil security and rescue operations. In this context, the EU is providing significant support to through its Global Gateway strategy. Two regional Copernicus centres are being established in Panama and in Chile, and a national Copernicus data centre in the Philippines.

Space traffic management and the mitigation of space debris remain among the key issues for COPUOS. We value the ongoing discussions in the Working Group on Long-Term Sustainability on the implementation of Guidelines, capacity-building, and new challenges. We encourage all space faring nations to step up implementation of the 21 LTS Guidelines as well as the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines in order to ensure long-term orbital sustainability.

The EU's approach aims to contribute to space traffic management as a global endeavour, pairing existing regional capabilities and tools with an overall ambition for global cooperation and coordination with international partners, to share information and experience. On the operational side, since 2016, EU Space Surveillance & Tracking has been providing, inter alia, collision avoidance services to protect satellites, and is open to non-European users.

Chair,

The EU and its Member States also welcome the recent discussions within the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities. We thank Luxembourg and Belgium for having co-organised in March 2024, with UNOOSA, an expert meeting to collect input for the International Conference.

Furthermore, the EU welcomes the Lisbon Declaration on Outer Space prepared by the Portuguese Space Agency in the context of the Management and Sustainability of Outer Space Activities Conference that was co-organised with UNOOSA on 14-15 May 2024, in support of the Space Track of the Summit of the Future.

The EU and its Member States also commend Romania for its proposal to establish an action team to study a potential consultative mechanism for lunar activities during this COPUOS session.

Chair,

The EU and its Member States strongly support the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core, and the work of the United Nations and a multilateral approach to international affairs. Fundamental violations of the UN Charter undermine the entire UN system, including our efforts within COPUOS. In this context, the EU continues to condemn Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine and express condemnation of the DPRK's repeated launches using ballistic missile technology, including its attempted satellite launch that occurred on 27 May 2024. This constitutes a clear and flagrant violation of multiple UN Security Council Resolutions.

Considering everything, we want to emphasise that all EU initiatives are developed in the spirit of international cooperation for the peaceful use of outer space. We remain committed to collaborating with all stakeholders to advance outer space issues relevant to COPUOS.

Thank you for your attention.