

Madame Chair, Distinguished Representatives,

Madame Chair,

As this is the first time my delegation is taking the floor in this session, I would like to take this opportunity and congratulate you on your appointment as Chair of the Legal Subcommittee and formulate our best wishes to fulfil your role as chair and be assured you can count on Portugal's full cooperation. We are certain that, under your leadership, the works of this Committee will be successful and we are looking forward to working with you and the rest of the Members and Observers of this Subcommittee. We also would like to thank UNOOSA, Madam Director Simonetta Di Pippo and all the staff for their excellent work in supporting the meeting and the ongoing works.

Madame Chair,

As you know, Portugal now holds the of the Presidency of the European Union Council. Therefore, Portugal is naturally aligned with the statement delivered earlier by the delegation of the European Union, but we would like to convey some other points in this Subcommittee.

Portugal already has a consistent space sector, anchored mainly in engineering. In 2018, the Government approved the National Space Strategy within a timeline of 10 years – named Portugal Space 2030 – that develops around three fundamental axes:

- To stimulate the exploitation of space data and space signals,
- To encourage the development, construction and operation of space equipment, systems, infrastructures and services
- And the continuous development of the national capacity through scientific research, innovation and education

The Portugal Space Strategy recognizes that many sectors can profit from space-based solutions, such as agriculture, fisheries, infrastructure, urban development, transportation, banking, defense and security, and even the public health sector and epidemic monitoring – such as we experienced in these last year -, amongst others.

It is in this context that Portugal advocates for the **Democratization of Space**, meaning the full integration of Space into the economy and society in a sustainable manner, both environmentally as well as economically, and therefore a growth of the national space sector beyond strict public sector funding, on which it has mostly relied thus far.

As instruments to execute this strategy, in 2019, Portugal created and put in place the Portuguese Space Agency and approved the first legal regime for space activities.

In relation to Portugal's **Space Law**, I recall the technical presentation made last Thursday on this topic, and I will just highlight the fact that the existence of a pre-qualification phase and of different types of licenses are, we believe, some of the most innovative aspects of the national legal space regime.

I also highlight the fact that Portugal has concluded the ratification process of both the Liability Convention and of the Registration Convention and can now fully assume its international responsibilities as a State with strong aspirations in space.

Madame Chair,

The **Portuguese Space Agency**, Portugal Space, was created with the ambition to be one of the most modern space agencies in the world. Portugal Space promotes the space sector, its ecosystem and value chain, acting as a business and development actor for research entities and industry, and coordinating the Portuguese representation in several international organizations and *fora*.

Portugal Space has the vision to become a global authority in the interactions between ocean, climate and space and has set up **four main challenges**: the development of a cooperative satellite constellation on the Atlantic, a better utilization of space data to inform public policies, integrated in a project named digital planet, the development of space connectivity, in a way that new technologies can provide for better and more secure communications, namely through quantum communication, and commercial space transportation. All in a manner that can boost space sciences and also be environmentally responsible.

Madam Chair,

Since 2019, the Portuguese Space Agency has organized several events related to space.

Highlighting just a few, we launched, last year, **EuRoC**, the first university rocket launch competition in Europe, that brought together 20 teams, and around 400 students. EuRoC seeks to stimulate engineering students to design, build and launch their own vehicles. The second edition is already in place and the *in-situ* competition will take place from the 11<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> of October of 2021. We hereby invite all of the distinguished representatives to come to Portugal and witness the second edition of the competition.

Regarding **capacity building**, amongst other initiatives, next year Portugal will host the Space Studies Program of the International Space University, an intense two-month professional development course for postgraduate students and professionals of all disciplines.

This week, a High-Level Ministerial Conference on **Europe-Africa Space Earth Observation high level forum** will take place and tomorrow the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of **New Space Atlantic Summit** will start, aimed at discussing the role of “New Space for People”, with a focus on Earth Observation and downstream applications – always with a focus on sustainability.

Therefore, it is with great attention that we are following the agenda points n.10 - general exchange of information and views on legal mechanisms relating to space debris mitigation and remediation measures - and n.13 -application of international law to small-satellite activities.

In fact, addressing **Space Safety** is also one of the priorities of Portugal. Worldwide, the public sector is expected to lead these efforts and take the necessary measures to facilitate prospects and create future markets associated, such as service provision and in-orbit servicing. Portugal already has companies operating in this growing field of concern. And as the **Geostationary Orbits** becomes increasingly crowded, it is essential to carefully manage and coordinate existing and new GEO satellites, as this resource should be carefully managed, assuring current needs and looking into the future, in a way that all generations can continue to use this space location. To accomplish this, we must seek coordination between all countries, with a view to guaranteeing that we can all benefit from space in a fair way.

Madam Chair,

In relation to **space resources**, Portugal also shares the concerns that were expressed by other distinguished representatives, namely those around the recognition of the increased interest in activities on celestial bodies.

Portugal considers that legal certainty and international cooperation are key to a peaceful and fruitful exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources, and that COPUOS is the adequate forum for these discussions and where consensus on this matter must be reached. Portugal therefore supports the creation - without further delay - of a Working Group on this topic, that can be based in the terms set forward in the Working Paper submitted by Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Finland, Germany, Greece, Slovakia and Spain – and which Portugal is also supporting – and taking into account the informal work in progress that has been developed during this session, under the moderator’s orientation.

Madam Chair,

I will conclude reaffirming Portugal’s full commitment towards COPUOS and the Legal Subcommittee in particular, aiming at a fruitful cooperation for a peaceful and a sustainable use of space for all.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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