

Sixty-second Session
of the Legal Subcommittee
of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Agenda item 8

Capacity-building in space law

Statement by Mr. Philip Bittner, Austria

24 March 2023

Madam Chair,

Austria considers capacity building in space law as an important part of its engagement in outer space. It is convinced that any engagement in space activities should be combined with the respective legal knowledge necessary to meet the requirements of the long-term and responsible use of outer space. It is therefore evident that experts on space law are needed at the national level.

Education and capacity-building in space law serve to train the next generation of lawyers and of scientist and engineers. It can be done at various levels and in various forms. On the one hand, space law can be included in the curriculum of the law studies at universities. On the other hand, short-term educational events and project-oriented can provide capacity-building in space law, also for non-lawyers.

As regards the capacity-building in space law for law students at Austrian universities, space law forms part of the general course on public international law, which is a compulsory subject at all Law Faculties in Austria. In addition, the Law Faculties at the universities of Vienna, Graz, Linz and Salzburg offer specialized courses and seminars dedicated to space law.

Furthermore, the Austrian Federal Ministry for Climate Action supports the activities of the National Point of Contact for Space Law (NPOC) of the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL) at the University of Vienna, which coordinates space law-related activities with the Subpoints of Contact situated at the other universities in Austria.

The NPOC supports the activities of the ECSL by disseminating information of its activities and recruit participants from Austria for participation. These activities include the ECSL Summer Course on Space Law and Policy, the Young Lawyers Symposium, the Practitioners' Forum and the European Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition.

Madam Chair,

a recent and additional initiative in this context is the Space Law Essay Competition. It has evolved from the idea of the Young Lawyers Symposium to invite papers on space law related topics from students and give them the opportunity to present them in front of an international audience. At the national level, the NPOC Austria has organised a competition to motivate students to submit papers and to give them an additional possibility to receive funding for participation in space law activities outside of Austria. The award for the first place is financial support for participating in the International Astronautical Congress (IAC), the second and third place of ECSL activities either at the headquarters of ESA in Paris/France or of ESTEC in Noordwijk/the Netherlands. The first

round of the Essay Competition was concluded last year and resulted in three excellent papers. The three students accordingly participated in the IAC and ECSL activities in Paris in 2022.

This new activity in the area of space law in Austria will be the subject of a Technical Presentation on Friday, 24 March, in the afternoon.

In addition to capacity-building at Austrian universities and the activities of the NPOC Space Law Austria, short-term activities are organised by other educational institutions in Austria, such as the Science Academy of Lower Austria. Guest lectures by experts in space law are offered in technical studies at the University of Technology in Graz and the University of Applied Sciences in Wiener Neustadt. Their aim is to educate future scientists and engineers with respect to their needs in the area of space law.

In concluding, I would like to refer you to the website Austria-in-Space (<https://austria-in-space.at/en/space-law/>), which contains extensive information on Austrian space activities including in the field of space law.

Thank you!