



**REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

INTERNATIONAL LAW DIRECTORATE

COPUOS, 63rd session of the Legal Subcommittee: 2024

Statement by the Republic of Bulgaria under Agenda Item 4 „General exchange of views”

Chair, distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I would like to begin by congratulating you, Prof. Ripol-Carulla, on your election as Chair of the Legal Subcommittee and to assure you of our full support and cooperation. We would also like to convey our support to the new Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini, and to express our gratitude to UNOOSA and the Secretariat for the assistance and excellent preparation of this session.

Chair,

Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the EU under this agenda item and would like to make the following remarks in its national capacity.

My delegation underlines the fundamental role of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, together with the other core UN Treaties on outer space, and the principles enshrined therein, and firmly believes that each Member State should fully respect and comply with all their provisions in its outer space activities. In particular, we highlight the vital importance of compliance with Article IV of the Outer Space Treaty, which obliges 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 therefore support the initiative of Japan and the United States on a UN Security Council Resolution on this matter.

Bulgaria, recognizes the unique nature of the Legal Subcommittee as the primary forum for exchanging views on the legal aspects of space activities and for promoting international cooperation in this regard. My country will continue to be fully engaged in the work of COPUOS and its two Subcommittees, as well as in the working groups that have been established with the aim to further deepen the discussions on issues of particular importance. We welcome the recent developments in the work of the COPUOS Working Group on Legal Aspects of Outer Space Resources Activities as well as the valuable contribution of the International Conference on Outer Space Resources held on the first day of this session.

We use the opportunity to express our satisfaction of the inclusion of a single item in the agenda of the next session of the Scientific and Technical

Subcommittee for the period 2025-2029 under the title *“Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations: addressing emerging issues and challenges”*. The topic is of a significant importance for the Bulgarian astronomical community, given the long tradition of astronomical observations in the optical range and the presence on Bulgarian territory of the largest astronomical observatory in South-Eastern Europe - the National Astronomical Observatory "Rozhen". In this regard, I would like to recall the launched project for the construction of a radio astronomy station, which will be the only one in the region and is part of the pan-European project International Telescope LOFAR.

Chair,

Bulgaria supports initiatives to build a more peaceful and collaborative future for space. In this regard, I would like to share that on 9 November 2023 Bulgaria signed the Artemis Accords, a non – legally binding set of principles for global cooperation in space that provides a clear guidance for implementation of obligations under the Outer Space Treaty. We believe that the Artemis Accords play a significant role in space cooperation and diplomacy.

My country remains committed to the international cooperation, coordination, and information sharing on space issues as one of the key factors for implementation of successful projects proposals and future development of the Bulgarian Space sector. In this regard, we are engaging directly with the activities of the European Space Agency as a cooperating state, as well as with the EU Space Programme Agency.

In the framework of the cooperation with ESA, so far more than 47 Bulgarian projects have been implemented, providing solutions in the areas of urban air quality reporting, positioning of floating objects in the marine environment, building models for the development of microbial waste degradation, space food modules for crews, monitoring agricultural and forest areas, design of a monitoring system for large hydropower reservoirs /dams/, energy systems from nanosatellites, ground-based observations of agricultural and forest areas.

In conclusion, in order to more successfully implement Bulgaria's priorities in the space policy, at a national level we have established an Interinstitutional Working Group with the leading role of the Ministry of Innovation and Growth to develop a strategic space policy document, including a Working Group tasked with establishing a Bulgarian Space Agency.

Thank you!