

**Committee on the Peaceful  
Uses of Outer Space**  
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## **Contribution by Belgium to the Discussion on the Implementation of Article XI of the 1967 United Nations Treaty on Outer Space in the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Outer Space Treaties of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space**

### **Non Paper Submitted by Belgium**

#### **Article XI UNOST**

*In order to promote international cooperation in the peaceful exploration and use of outer space, States Parties to the Treaty conducting activities in outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, agree to inform the Secretary-General of the United Nations as well as the public and the international scientific community, to the greatest extent feasible and practicable, of the nature, conduct, locations and results of such activities. On receiving the said information, the Secretary-General of the United Nations should be prepared to disseminate it immediately and effectively.*

**1.** Belgium's policy and practice with respect to information and data related to its national space activities is to ensure their optimal access by the general public.

Environmental dimension and safety aspects of space activities have been fully integrated in the Belgian space law and regulation. The process and the outcome of the authorization of a space activity, as well as its supervision, aim at guaranteeing transparency and the relevance of public information, in compliance with the legitimate rights and interests of citizens.

Every information and data available to the public is published on the national register for space objects and the repository of authorizations which are both openly accessible online ([www.belspo.be](http://www.belspo.be)).

**2.** In addition to the publication of information and data on national space activities in accordance with the Belgian space law and regulation, Belgium

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adamantly implements its obligations and commitments under international law, in particular the provisions of the 1975 United Nations Convention on the Registration of Objects launched into Outer Space, as well as the recommendations of General Assembly Resolution 62/101. It must be noted that, according to those two instruments, substantial information and data as featured in Art. XI of the 1967 United Nations Treaty on Outer Space (“Art. XI Outer Space Treaty”) are already communicated to the United Nations Secretary General. Furthermore, as a State party to the 1979 United Nations Agreement on the Moon, Belgium has the obligation to provide information, data, scientific results and findings, as provided in Art. 5 of the Agreement. Finally, as a general policy, the Belgian Government and competent authorities in Belgium foster the sharing of scientific results of public-(co)funded research and their availability for the global scientific community.

3. In this context, the implementation of Art. XI Outer Space Treaty must be understood as a complementary mechanism providing not only a legal basis but an official channel for States to communicate information on their national space activities. Belgium notes that Art. XI Outer Space Treaty has also provided a long-standing basis, together with General Assembly Resolution 1721 (XVI), for such communication from States to the United Nations Secretary General.

4. Belgium also takes into consideration the fact that Art. XI Outer Space Treaty was drafted and adopted in a context where space activities were *de facto* carried out by governmental entities. Although the provisions of the treaties must be interpreted and/or implemented in a manner that makes them effective with respect to the intention of the States parties, it cannot be discarded that some of the elements of information as mentioned in Art. XI Outer Space Treaty (namely the results of the activity) may not be the property of the Belgian government. That being said, it must be noted that Art. XI Outer Space Treaty may provide an appropriate basis for the notification of events affecting or impacting the conduct of the activity as authorized (e.g. malfunction, accidental destruction of the object, etc.).

5. It is the view of Belgium that the added value of Art. XI Outer Space Treaty, in the current state of information technology where information can be made globally available and updated in almost real time, lays in the establishment of an official channel for the collection and integrated processing of information and data from all States. This requires the necessity to translate those national information and data in a single agreed format (“technical language”) allowing to draw connections and to highlight relevant correspondences between the elements communicated.

6. To this extent, Belgium is not opposed to the development of practices and of a dedicated mechanism (template for notification, database, platform, etc.) to identify and collect on a voluntary basis information and data which are not included by States in their notifications under other provisions of the United Nations outer space treaties or under the recommendations of the relevant General Assembly resolutions.