

**Agenda Item 3: General exchange of views and introduction of reports submitted on national activities**

Dear Madam Chair,

As it would not be possible to hold a regular face-to-face session of the COPUOS Subcommittee at this time, allow me, on behalf of the Czech Delegation, to express our sincere appreciation to you and to the entire UNOOSA team for excellent work and tremendous efforts that allow us to arrange the 58<sup>th</sup> Session of the STSC in a hybrid form. And while this does mean some sacrifices had to be made, it serves well to remind us of the value of space technologies and applications. Because space is an excellent tool to help us adapt to a constantly changing environment.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Before continuing, our delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to COPUOS Community for its condolences on the loss of our highly respected colleague, associated professor Luboš Perek. Prof. Perek passed away on 17th SEP 2020 at the age of 101. He was one of the leading persons of not only Czech, but international astronomical community. He held the role of Director of Outer Space Affairs Division of the United Nations (1975-1980), his life was full of enthusiastic professionalism, he was the first who brought discussions on space debris to the global community, he played an important role in the protection of saturation of the Geostationary orbit and in many other areas. Prof. Perek was not only our respected colleague, but he was our friend and we will certainly miss his knowledge, expertise and willingness in our professional and personal lives.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Allow me to continue in my statement. Despite the global pandemic situation, the Czech Republic actively continues in the implementation of the National Space Plan 2020-2025. This document represents the strategy of the Czech Republic in further development of capacities and capabilities of its industry and academia in space activities, ensuring their competitiveness and maximising the return of public investments in space activities and related areas, with the goal to increase the well-being of our citizens.

The Czech Republic remains committed to international cooperation in outer space at all levels. Our memberships in the European Space Agency and the European Union remain the main pillars of the development of our space activities and participation in space projects.

Main interests of our national space activities are in the fields of Earth Observation, Navigation, Telecommunications, Launchers, Space Science and Exploration and Space Safety. The Czech government's financial contributions to space activities exceeded 60 million EUR in 2020.

Moreover, the European GNSS Agency (GSA), seated in Prague since 2012, will be transformed into a new EU Agency for the Space programme (EUSPA) in MID 2021. The City of Prague has confirmed its role not only as the centre of the European Global Navigation Satellite Systems, but Prague will soon become heart of EU Space activities.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, let me come back to the STSC agenda items:

The Czech Republic has always been mindful of the importance of the questions related to Space Debris, Space Weather and Near Earth Objects.

With respect to Space Debris, we would like to highlight that it is important for us to address all the related technical, as well as legal issues. We should examine this issue in connection to specific topics, especially within the Servicing of Space Vehicles orbiting the Earth, within the Active Debris Removal – where the Czech Republic is taking an active part in the ESA's ClearSpace-1 mission – or – within the Space Traffic Management, that represents a key element for ensuring safe and sustainable use of orbital regimes.

The Czech Republic stands ready to join common efforts in finding broadly acceptable solutions and will work tirelessly towards this goal. In this context, let us draw your attention to the international non-governmental scientist-led initiative for Peaceful Use of Lasers in Space ("PULS"). In reaction to the UNGA resolution 75/36, Reducing Space Threats Through Norms, Rules and Principles of Responsible Behaviours, the PULS initiative is submitting a report to the UNSG on the benefits of lasers for space applications and how this technology might be used responsibly in outer space. The report will serve as input for consideration by UN Member States. Dedicated expert conferences to discuss norms, rules and principles of responsible use of lasers in space will take place in Florence this May, and Prague this September. Event information, contacts and details about the PULS initiative can be found on [lasers4space.com](http://lasers4space.com).

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

With respect to Planetary Defence activities, it should be noted that the Czech Republic became the member of SMPAG in 2018. Moreover, the Czech Republic made significant investment in ESA's „HERA“ mission where the Czech Industry and Academia participate in the preparation of HERA mothership structure and in the HW and SW development for HERA's MILANI and JUVENTAS

cubesat probes. HERA mission will provide the community with new and extremely important scientific knowledge that will allow us to protect our fragile planet in the near future.

In addition to national research and monitoring of Space Weather events, the Czech Republic is also part of ESA's Space Weather mission dedicated to the L5 Lagrange point.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

Our delegation noted with satisfaction the preparatory work on the establishment of a new WG on the Long Term Sustainability of Outer Space activities (WG LTS 2.0). This working group, together with CRP19.rev.1, represents an important step forward that will help the community to implement existing guidelines and will allow us to continue to work on further ones. Joint and consensual approach on the composition of the bureau of the WG LTS 2.0 needs to be found in order to maximise benefits of such a working group. In this regard, we would like to thank the delegation of Switzerland and Japan for their flexibility shown during the LTS informal consultations.

Regarding the voluntary implementation of existing LTS guidelines, the Czech Republic is already preparing its new national space act that will be positively affected by actual LTS trends and principles.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic would also like to stress the importance of long-term protection of "Dark Skies". In this regard, the Czech Republic noted with satisfaction the CRP.17 containing the "Recommendations to Keep Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society".

We are of the view that the proposed "dark skies" recommendations, based on the outcomes of respective IAU workshop, should be carefully considered by COPUOS and its bodies.

Having in mind the spirit and scope of "Dark Skies" initiative and gradually evolving space environment including emerging deployment of megaconstellations – and reflecting good practice – one of the ways forward can be seen in discussing these recommendations within the framework of newly created Working Group on the LTS (so called LTS 2.0). This process will allow to review the recommendations and will help us to find consensual approach. We are also open to include the "protection of the Dark-Skies" in the agenda of the next STSC COPUOS session.

In addition, any possible legal implications for the area of space law could be assessed by the Legal Subcommittee of COPUOS.

In concluding, Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, the Czech delegation reiterates its strong support for the work and the mission of the UN COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

I thank you for your kind attention.