



European Union
EU Statement at
60th Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (STSC)
United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)

Vienna, 6–17 February 2023

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Albania* and Ukraine*.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your efficient chairmanship and to ensure you of our continued support and cooperation. I would also like to thank the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) for the thorough preparations of this meeting.

The continuation of the Russian aggression against Ukraine obliges the EU to reiterate its condemnation in the strongest possible terms. What is applicable to the rules-based international order on earth, matters also in outer space. Against this background, we call upon UNOOSA to refrain from initiating any cooperation projects with the Russian Federation. The EU and its Member States do not support granting a UN affiliation to the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education hosted in Russia. This consistent position has been stated in Vienna and most recently in New York where the EU Member States dissociated themselves from the related paragraph in the UN General Assembly Resolution on international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

Mr. Chair,

The EU and its Member States promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and are strongly committed to safeguarding the long-term use of outer space for peaceful purposes, on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. We stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures and the need to ensure responsible behaviour in outer space in the framework of the United Nations for the benefit and in the interest of all countries.

As a firm believer in multilateralism, with the United Nations at its core, the EU and its Member States support COPUOS and its Subcommittees as unique platforms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, including on the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and other transparency and confidence-building measures

* Candidate Country Albania continues to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. We encourage all Member States to continue constructive and result-oriented efforts to advance the issues on the agenda of COPUOS and its Subcommittees. We recognize the important role of UNOOSA in supporting this work.

The EU and its Member States underline that the space treaties developed in the UN framework constitute the cornerstone of the global governance of outer space and that compliance with existing international law must be ensured. This UN framework is complemented by space-related resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly and, where appropriate, implemented by national space legislations.

Mr. Chair,

The EU and its Member States look forward to participating and actively contributing to the work of COPUOS and its Subsidiary Bodies, including their Working Groups. We welcome the progress made by the Working Group on the Long-term sustainability of outer space activities (WG-LTS). We commend WG's Chair, Mr. Umamaheswaran of India for his leadership and all colleagues for their constructive approach. We encourage all Member States, also developing countries and emerging space fairing nations, as well as permanent observers to participate actively in the upcoming discussions and to share their experience on the implementation of the 21 LTS Guidelines, capacity building and new challenges.

The European Union has submitted a joint contribution consisting of the contributions of the EU institutions and EU Member States, providing information on how they have implemented the LTS or what their plans are, taking into consideration the fast development of space activities at both European and national levels. We invite all UN Member States and other stakeholders to look into this document and we stand ready to provide additional information to all interested stakeholders.

The European Union is making a broader commitment to ensure the actual implementation of the principles contained in the LTS guidelines. In 2022, the EU committed to tackling the global challenge of Space Traffic Management (STM)¹ through developing capabilities, regulatory aspects and partnerships. Our EU approach for STM foresees multilateral engagement in the context of the United Nations, and bilaterally with international partners in view of interoperability and data-sharing, building on regional contributions. Our regional contribution will be based on the development of Space Situational Awareness (SSA) capabilities and the emergence of a private ecosystem that promotes and drives innovation in this field. The operational pillar of the EU STM approach is the EU Space Surveillance & Tracking (EU SST), which since 2016 and now, as part of the EU's Space Programme, has been providing operational 24/7 services for a growing community of users. This includes collision avoidance service for more than 300 satellites, and as well, re-entry and fragmentation services. The collision avoidance service is, as of

¹ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/56974/st10071-en22.pdf>

the first quarter of 2023, open to non-European users. Further SST services are envisaged, such as the development of activities in preparation of space debris mitigation and remediation. We are delighted to inform you that as of November 2022, the Partnership of Member States that implements EU SST for the EU grew from 7 to 15². Finally, from a regulatory point of view, the Union is working to promote the emergence of an EU STM Approach. This EU Approach will actively contribute to ongoing work strands on the long-term sustainability of outer space activities and future multilateral discussions on STM.

The EU and its Member States underline the importance of implementing the Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines of COPUOS. It is also in this context that we believe that UN Member States should implement the 21 LTS Guidelines in order to protect outer space from long-lived debris and ensure long-term orbital sustainability. We expect that all Member States avoid the creation of space debris, to the greatest extent possible as currently agreed, in order to preserve the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space in a peaceful manner for present and future generations.

Mr. Chair,

Space science, applications and technologies have a great potential to help address major challenges of our time particularly in tackling the global climate crisis, supporting economic recovery after the COVID-19 pandemic and achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). On 27 October in New York, the European Union, together with the European Space Agency (ESA) and UNOOSA, convened an event “Space for Sustainable Development on Earth” which explored the role of space technologies for achieving the SDGs. We look forward to continuing this discussion also here in view of the SDG Summit in September 2023. In this regard, the implementation of the “Space2030 Agenda: Space as a Driver of Sustainable Development” should be further advanced.

Finally, the EU and its Member States welcome that outer space issues relevant to COPUOS work will feature prominently at the UN Summit of the Future in 2024, following the UN Secretary-General’s report “Our Common Agenda”. We recognise the need for the international community to come together and discuss ways and means to reinforce space governance in the interest of maintaining a sustainable outer space for the benefit of present and future generations.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

² Austria, The Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, The Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain and Sweden