



European Union

**United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)
61st Session of the Scientific and Technical
Subcommittee (STSC)**

Vienna, 29 January–9 February 2024

**Item 5 – Space for sustainable development: technology and its applications,
including the United Nations Programme of Space Applications**

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.

The EU and its Member States are actively engaged in promoting the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis for all, for present and future generations. As outlined in our general statement and in the EU contribution to the UN Secretary General's report on the implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures in space, activities carried out under the EU Space Programme benefit third countries in international cooperation.

We believe that space science, applications and technologies have a great potential to help us tackle major global challenges such as climate change, disaster management, food security, environmental protection, efficient management of natural resources and transport development. They also boost the competitiveness of industry well beyond the space sector, thereby contributing to job creation and socio-economic development in almost all economic areas worldwide. In this respect, we look forward to continuing our work on the Space2030 Agenda and its implementation plan with a view to mobilising space for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and its Sustainable Development Goals and targets. The UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS), its subcommittees and various working groups have consistently and decisively helped achieving these goals; EU Member States will continue to support this work.

The EU is deeply attached to the work of COPUOS and its mandate, and is concerned about the current difficulties multilateral cooperation is facing.

Regarding the draft resolution entitled "Space Science and Technology for Promoting Peace" which has been submitted for the consideration of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee under this agenda item, we fail to understand a clear aim and purpose, and most importantly any added value.

We are of the view that the draft resolution:

- takes up topics that are already being dealt with very thoroughly by COPUOS and the General Assembly;
- contains several paragraphs that recall a wide range of principles and challenges loosely related to each other and already put forward by existing consensual documents. It duplicates the content of the existing consensus UNGA resolutions, in particular the annual omnibus resolution entitled "International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space", the UNGA Resolution 73/6 entitled "Fiftieth anniversary of the first United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space: space as a driver of sustainable development" and the UNGA Resolution 76/3 entitled "The Space2030 Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development";
- incorporates in some paragraphs ambiguous concepts or wording not entirely aligned with the existing outer space law, and if necessary, should be deliberated within the Legal Subcommittee (LSC);
- includes paragraphs that refer to issues belonging to the UNGA First Committee and that could be addressed in the upcoming Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) on norms of responsible behaviours;
- and, in addition, the draft resolution also inappropriately anticipates the results of ongoing work processes, in particular the mid-term review of the Space2030 Agenda in the COPUOS Main Committee, the Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (WG-LTS) at the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, and various agenda items at the Legal Subcommittee.

Against this background, the EU and its Member States cannot support operative paragraphs, such as OP1, OP5, OP6, OP7, and consequently OP10.

Concerning OP8, we do not see merit in singling out one of the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty, as all articles of the Outer Space Treaty should be considered as equally valuable and binding and to be complied with in good faith by all States Parties.

Most challenges arising from the use of space by emerging space-faring nations are already addressed by this Subcommittee and COPUOS Legal Subcommittee, within the Working Group on LTS, and within the Working Group on Space Resources. If the sponsor of the tabled draft resolution wishes to discuss space science and technologies for peace, they can do so in the aforementioned venues.

If the main goal of the proponent of this draft resolution is purely political and aims at preventing international support to Ukraine, which has a legitimate right to defend its sovereignty and territorial integrity in accordance with the UN Charter, then we are unable to endorse it.

Moreover, many space systems, space technology and services could not have been developed without the valuable contributions of private companies to

technology development. The Space2030 Agenda therefore correctly recognises that space capabilities both by the governmental actors as well as by the private sector are instrumental in bringing the benefits of space to everyone, everywhere.

Therefore, the EU and its Member States cannot support this draft resolution in its current form. In the present circumstances, we consider that this discussion is merely distracting us from more pressing issues relevant to the COPUOS agenda.

Thank you, Chair.