

International Astronautical Federation (IAF)



SYMPOSIUM

“Space - Indispensable on the Agenda of Policymakers, Public, and Nations”

**Tuesday, 11 February 2025
15:00 – 18:00 CET**

On the occasion of the 62nd Session of the Scientific and
Technical Subcommittee of the United Nations
Committee on the Peaceful Uses of
Outer Space

Space – Indispensable on the Agenda of Policymakers, Public, and Nations

Space has become integral to addressing global challenges and driving innovation. However, ensuring that policymakers, the public, and emerging countries are actively engaged in the space debate is crucial for fostering collaboration, securing support, and building a truly inclusive global space community. In essence, space embodies a global concern that intertwines politics, public interest, and national ambitions. Balancing space exploration with ethics and sustainability will determine how humanity navigates this vast frontier.

Today’s panels organized by the International Astronautical Federation will explore how to bridge gaps and engage diverse stakeholders in shaping the future of space.

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 11 February 2025

15:00 – 15:45

Master of Ceremony and Opening Remarks

- **Christian FEICHTINGER**, Executive Director, International Astronautical Federation (IAF)

Panel A - “How to Engage Political Decision-Makers in the Space Debate?”

In an era where space exploration is rapidly advancing, engaging leaders in the space debate is crucial for shaping policies, funding, and public interest. This panel will delve into best practices, experience and ideas to involve decision-makers in meaningful discussions about space.

Moderator:

- **Christian FEICHTINGER**, Executive Director, International Astronautical Federation (IAF)

Speakers:

- **Angelina BEKASOVA**, Head of Space Policy, Entrepreneurship Competitiveness Department, Ministry of Economics, Latvia
- **Orsolya FERENCZ**, Ministerial Commissioner for Space Research, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Hungary
- **Agnieszka ŁUKASZCZYK**, Founder and CEO, HiAltitude Consulting
- **Jacek JAŚKOWIAK**, Mayor of Poznań, Poland, IAC 2027 Host City
- **Heriberto SALDIVAR**, Head of Strategy Department, European Space Agency (ESA)
- **Zeynep YILDIZ**, Member of Parliament, Spokesperson for the Committee of Digital Platforms, Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

15:45 – 16:00 Break

16:00 – 16:45

Panel B - “How to Secure General Public Support for Space?”

The public plays a pivotal role in supporting space activities, from funding large-scale projects to advocating for international cooperation. This panel will discuss effective ways to engage the public through education, outreach, and storytelling to highlight space's tangible benefits.

Moderator:

- **Nikol KOLEVA**, Executive Director, Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC)

Speakers:

- **Pascale EHRENFREUND**, IAF Past President 2019-2022, President of COSPAR
- **Alper GEZERAVCI**, First Turkish Astronaut, Turkish Space Agency (TUA), Türkiye
- **Anil KUMAR**, IAF VP for Relations with International Organizations; Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), India
- **Eytan STIBBE**, Rakia Mission, AX-1 Astronaut, Israel

16:45 – 17:00 Break

17:00 – 17:45

Panel C - “How to Embrace Emerging Countries in the Global Space Endeavour?”

This panel will focus on integrating emerging countries into the global space ecosystem, emphasizing capacity building, knowledge sharing, and collaborative projects. By addressing challenges and opportunities, panelists aim to chart a path toward inclusive growth in the space sector.

Moderator:

- **Aarti HOLLA-MAINI**, Director, United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)

Speakers:

- **Michal BRICHTA**, IAF VP for Global Membership Development and Financial Matters; Director, Slovak Space Office, Industry Branch, Slovak Republic
- **Sergio MARCHISIO**, Professor, Sapienza University of Rome; Chairman, European Centre for Space Law (ECSL), IAF General Counsel, Italy
- **Asanda NTISANA**, Space & Stakeholder Liaison Specialist, South African National Space Agency (SANSA), South Africa
- **JORGE SKINNER-KLÉE ARENALES**, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Guatemala
- **Lisa VITARIS**, Interim CEO | Director, IAC 2025 Sydney Space Industry Association of Australia (SIAA), Australia

17:45 - 18:00 Closing Remarks

- **Christian FEICHTINGER**, Executive Director, International Astronautical Federation (IAF)

Organized by:

INTERNATIONAL ASTRONAUTICAL FEDERATION (IAF)
100 Avenue de Suffren, 75015
Paris, France

Phone: +33 (0)1 45 67 42 60

E-mail: info@iafastro.org

Website: www.iafastro.org

*Connecting @ll Space People
for a sustainable future* 

Annex to the Programme of the IAF Symposium

“Space – Indispensable on the Agenda of Policymakers, Public, and Nations”

Panel A – How to Engage Political Decision-Makers in the Space Debate?”

Moderator:



CHRISTIAN FEICHTINGER

Executive Director,
International Astronautical Federation (IAF)

Dr Feichtinger took up the post of IAF Executive Director on 1 January 2012. Before moving to the IAF, Feichtinger, who comes from Austria, spent three years as senior advisor on exploration at the European Space Agency (ESA). Prior to that, he was head of ESA's permanent mission in the Russian Federation, after having worked as the Agency's representative for human space flight and exploration in Moscow during 10 years.

Previous positions Feichtinger held include: flight operations support manager for the Euro-Russian EUROMIR-94 and 95 missions at the Russian mission control centre near Moscow; liaison officer to Russian organisations within the EUROMIR-94 and 95 mission management teams at the ESTEC technical centre in the Netherlands; and technical manager of the Soviet-Austrian AUSTROMIR project and follow-on missions.

Feichtinger holds a PhD in space experimentation from Graz University of Technology, Austria.

Panelists:



ANGELINA BEKASOVA

Senior Expert and Head of Space Policy
Entrepreneurship Competitiveness Department
Ministry of Economics, Latvia

Angelina Bekasova is a Senior Expert in Space and Innovation Policy at the Ministry of Economics of the Republic of Latvia and Director of International Relations and Industry Development at the Latvian Space Industry Association. Her mission is to inspire and help Latvia's deep-tech industries develop, transfer and internationalize their space capabilities. Angelina first entered the space sector in 2017, joining the European Commission's Earth Observation Unit, and later worked as a Science Communication and Management Consultant at SpaceTec Partners, an international space sector consultancy based in Brussels and Munich. Since 2020, Angelina has dedicated her work to the growth of Latvia's economy.



ORSOLYA FERENCZ

**Ministerial Commissioner,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary**

Dr. Orsolya Ferencz is an electrical engineer, space researcher, politician, and diplomat with a distinguished career in space policy and research. Since 2023, she has been a Member of the National Assembly of Hungary and, since 2020, has served as an Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary. From 2018 to 2024, she led the Hungarian Delegation to the European Space Agency (ESA) while serving as Ministerial Commissioner for Space Research at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of Hungary. Her contributions to space science extend to her research roles at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and Eötvös Loránd University, where she specialized in electromagnetic wave propagation, transient phenomena, remote sensing, and onboard electronic instruments.

Dr. Ferencz holds a Ph.D. from the Budapest University of Technology and Economics (BME) and has conducted research at the Institut für Hochfrequenztechnik und Elektronik (IHE) in Karlsruhe. In addition to her scientific work, she was an elected member of the Local Government of Józsefváros, Budapest, actively contributing to smart city initiatives.



HERIBERTO SALDIVAR

**Head of Strategy
European Space Agency (ESA)**

Heriberto Saldivar has been the Head of Strategy at the European Space Agency (ESA) since 2022. In this role, he spearheads the development of Europe's space strategy, placing a strong emphasis on the continent's prosperity, technological advancement, and the safety of its citizens through space initiatives.

Prior to his tenure at ESA, Heriberto served as the Managing Director and partner at Brinc, a venture capital accelerator. His role involved investing in and providing advisory services to a diverse portfolio of over 130 tech companies representing various nationalities.

He earned his Bachelor's in Mechatronics Engineering from the Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey. Early in his career, he served as a team leader at Procter & Gamble, focusing on new product development and enhancing production lines.

Heriberto earned a master's degree in aerospace engineering from the National Cheng Kung University, where he contributed to an international scramjet (supersonic engine) research project in collaboration between Europe and Taiwan. He later received the prestigious Hong Kong PhD Fellowship Scheme, joining the PolyU High-Speed Thermo-fluid and MAV/UAV Laboratory, where he conducted cutting-edge research in high-speed aerodynamics.



AGNIESZKA LUKASZCZYK

Founder and CEO
hiAltitude Consulting

Dr. Agnieszka Lukaszczyk is the founder and CEO of hiAltitude Consulting. Former Vice President for Government Affairs at Planet, she has held influential roles at the European Commission and the Secure World Foundation. Dr. Lukaszczyk chairs the Sustainability Task Force at the IAF and is an advocate for the next generation of space leaders. She holds a PhD in Space Security and has authored numerous works on space policy and sustainability.



JACEK JAŚKOWIAK

Mayor of Poznań, IAC 2027 Host City
Poland

Jacek Jaśkowiak graduated from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań with a degree in law and administration. In 1988, he received a six-month GFPS scholarship at Bielefeld University (Germany). Additionally, he completed a postgraduate course in accounting and taxation at WSB University in Poznań. From 1990 to 1997, he worked for private enterprises established in Poland at that time; among others, he was responsible for setting-up VW and Audi dealership network. From 1997 to 2014, he ran his own company, operating under the name Jaśkowiak LLC (accounting office and due diligence of business entities for sale). He was also a member of the International Ski Federation (FIS) Ski Cross World Cup Committee and the organiser of FIS Cross-Country World Cup in Szklarska Poręba in 2012 and 2014.



ZEYNEP YILDIZ

Member of Parliament,
Spokesperson for the Committee of Digital Platforms,
Grand National Assembly of Türkiye

Born in Ankara, attended TED Ankara College and graduated from Bilkent University Faculty of Law. She specialized in energy, informatization, and space law. She held various positions in the AK Party and was elected as an MP in the 2018 and 2023 elections. Her work focuses on digitalization, personal data protection, education, youth employment, rural development, and space-related policies. She is also active in international parliamentary organizations alongside her duties in the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye.

Panel B – “How to Secure General Public Support for Space?”

Moderator:



NIKOL KOLEVA

Executive Director

Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC)

Nikol Koleva is a seasoned young professional currently serving as the Executive Director of the Space Generation Advisory Council (SGAC). She leads efforts to expand outreach and engagement with space agencies, industry, academia, and UNOOSA, creating global opportunities for young professionals. Her background blends psychology and space, including research on the Overview Effect with NASA astronauts, zero-gravity studies on grounding techniques for microgravity, and VR research to replicate the Overview Effect. Previously, she was External Relations Manager at WSWA.

Panelists:



PASCALE EHRENFREUND

IAF Past President 2019-2022

President, COSPAR

Prof. Pascale Ehrenfreund obtained degrees in Astronomy and Biology at the University of Vienna. She was appointed as a Fellow of the European Space Agency (ESA) at the Leiden Observatory in the Netherlands, upon completion of her doctoral studies. Between 2001 and 2005, Pascale Ehrenfreund held a professorship in Astrobiology at the University of Amsterdam and the University of Leiden, where she remains a Visiting Professor today. In addition, between 2005 and 2008 she was a Distinguished Visiting Scientist at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, USA. Since three decades she contributed as Principal Investigator, Co-Investigator and Teamleader to ESA and NASA astronomy and planetary missions as well as experiments in low Earth orbit and on the International Space Station. In 2008 Pascale Ehrenfreund obtained a Master of Arts in Management and Leadership. Since then, she has been Professor of Space Policy and International Affairs at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University. She was the President of the Austrian Science Fund (2013-2015) and the Chair of the Executive Board of the German Aerospace Center (DLR) between 2015-2020. The asteroid “9826 Ehrenfreund 2114 T-3” bears her name.

Pascale Ehrenfreund, took up duty as IAF President at the IAC 2019 and announced her IAF Global Advocacy Agenda 2019 – 2022, focusing on supporting and facilitating global space governance, stimulating and propelling global space economy and influencing and fostering global space advocacy.



ALPER GEZERAVCI

First Turkish Astronaut

Turkish Space Agency Board Member

Turkish Space Command Coordination & Execution Director

F-16 & KC-135R Pilot

Alper Gezeravci graduated from the Electronics Engineering Department of the Air Force Academy in Istanbul and completed his master's degree at the US Air Force Institute of Technology.

Gezeravci, who served as a fighter pilot in the Turkish Air Force, has more than 17 years of flight experience in many aircraft including the T-41, SF-260, T-37, T-38, F-5, KC-135 and F-16 fighter jets. Alper served as a captain pilot in Turkish Airlines for 7 years.

Gezeravci became the first Turkish astronaut to go to space, the 275th astronaut to go to the International Space Station, and the 610th astronaut to reach space in human history. After successfully completing the space mission, he was assigned to the Turkish Space Command.

Interested in different sports, experienced in diving, sailing, rafting, and horseback riding.



ANIL KUMAR

IAF VP: Relations with International Organizations

Director, Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

Director, ISTRAC

Chief General Manager, Safe & Sustainable Space Operations Management

India

In 2022, established ISRO system for safe and sustainable space operations management IS4OM which was dedicated to the nation by Honourable central minister Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Earlier Director, Directorate of space situational awareness and management, in ISRO HQ and Head, Applied Mathematics Division, VSSC.

ISRO team leader Inter Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee IADC, two years Chair for IADC working group on mitigation, presently Chair of IADC (2023-2024).

Member International Academy of Astronautics.

Fellow Aeronautical Society of India.

Member ASI, SSI, ISSE.

ISRO representative at UNCOPUOS, IAA working group, IAF WG on STM etc.

Graduated Space Studies Program (2007) from International Space University. Master of Science, Master of Philosophy, both in Maths;

Master of Science and Ph D in Aerospace engineering from Indian Institute of Science Bangalore, India.



EYTAN STIBBE

**AX-1 Astronauts, Rakia Mission
Israel**

In April 2022, Eytan Stibbe was a crew member of the Ax-1 first commercial astronaut crew to the International Space Station together with former NASA astronaut Michael Lopez-Alegria, Larry Connor and Mark Pathy. Eytan created the Rakia Mission in space, which was assembled in collaboration between the Israeli private and public sectors, including educators, students, scientists and artists with the vision that space is for all. The Rakia Mission was first to apply impact metrics to a space mission.

Considering Eytan's background in the impact investment field, this was a natural path to take. As the founding partner of Vital Capital, he has been involved with investing in developing countries for over 30 years and is considered a driving force behind the Impact model for investment in infrastructure development. He has professional experience working across a variety of sectors, including rural and urban communities, education, air traffic control, healthcare and utilities. These large-scale business ventures, require deep understanding of the community needs and are guided by two principles: humanitarian objectives and economic stability.

Eytan Stibbe lives in Israel, is a member of the World Economic Forum, a governor and board member at several universities and NGOs and is dedicated to supporting the mission of the Israel Space Forum.

Panel C – “How to Embrace Emerging Countries in the Global Space Endeavor?”

Moderator:



AARTI HOLLA-MAINI

**Director
UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA)**

Ms. Holla-Maini brings over 25 years of experience in the space and satellite sector, working predominantly with international organizations and regulators. Prior to the United Nations, she held the post of Secretary-General of the Global Satellite Operators Association.

Ms. Holla-Maini is a recognized leader with a strong track record in forging public-private and cross-sector partnerships; high-level advocacy at the international level; strategic communication and managing diverse stakeholders. Under her leadership, Ms. Holla-Maini expanded the association from being a regional organization to a global one representing commercial satellite operators around the world.

Panelists:



MICHAL BRICHTA

IAF VP for Global Membership Development and Financial Matters
Director, Slovak Space Office, Industry Branch
Slovak Republic

Michal Brichta works as the Director of the Slovak Space Office - Industry Branch operating within the Slovak Investment and Trade Development Agency. He is also the Slovak Delegate to the Council of the European Space Agency and a Vice President of the International Astronautical Federation. He is an active supporter of the democratisation of space and the involvement of new players in the sector both on global and European levels.



LISA VITARIS

Interim CEO | Director, IAC 2025 Sydney
Space Industry Association of Australia (SIAA)
Australia

Lisa is Interim CEO and Director, IAC 2025 Sydney at Space Industry Association of Australia.

Lisa was previously part of the Executive Leadership team and Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) and at two high growth companies. Her experience spans technology, telecommunications, financial services, automotive, and travel including brands such as amaysim (Optus), Tyro, CMC Markets, Hyundai, Tourism Tasmania, Volvo, and LG.

Lisa serves on the Board of Engineers Australia, Australia's national engineering body with 120,000+ members.



JORGE SKINNER-KLÉE ARENALES

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Guatemala

Prior to his latest appointment as Guatemala's Permanent Representative to the United Nations in September 2016, Mr. Skinner-Klee was his country's Ambassador to Belgium and Luxembourg, and Chief of Mission to the European Union from 2012. Between 2008 and 2012, he was the country's Permanent Representative to the Organization of American States.

Having joined the Guatemala Foreign Service in 1985, Mr. Skinner-Klee has held several other positions, including Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs in 2004. He also served as Ambassador to Honduras from 2003 to 2004, Belize from 2000 to 2003, Canada from 1998 to 2000 and Germany from 1993 to 1998. He was Legal Counsellor at the Embassy of Guatemala to the United States in 1987, while serving concurrently as Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Mr. Skinner-Klee holds a licentiate degree in juridical and social sciences from Rafael Landivar University in Guatemala, a master's degree in international law from Columbia University in New York, and a diploma in international relations from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C.



ASANDA NTISANA

Space & Stakeholder Liaison Specialist
South African National Space Agency (SANSA)
South Africa

Asanda is the Space & Stakeholder Liaison Specialist at the South African National Space Agency (SANSA) managing SANSA's stakeholders locally and abroad. She has recently been appointed as the Acting Managing Director: Earth Observations at SANSA.

She is South Africa's Assistant National Contact Point for the Space Thematic Areas under the Digital, Industry & Space theme of the European Union Framework Programme for Research Development and Innovation, Horizon Europe (HE). She is a member of the South African National Earth Observations and Space Secretariat (NEOSS) Strategic Advisory Committee that has been established by the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), to provide strategic guidance and high-level input on potential new or future areas of focus for the Secretariat, to support the needs of the Earth Observation and the space community in South Africa. Asanda is a member of the recently established IAF Inclusion, Diversity and Equity Administrative (IDEA) Committee that is aimed at promoting diversity within the Federation. With 15 years of international experience and government relations Asanda continues to contribute to the development of the South African space agenda. She has over 20 years of collective experience in the Space, Telecoms, and ICT Sector. She has a Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Mathematics; and is an alumna of the Institute of Space and Software Applications (ISSA) also known as Houwteq having majored in Data Networks. She enrolled at the UCT SpaceLab completing courses in Space Policy, Space & Society, Space Applications for Sustainable Development, Space Mission Design and Analysis and Space technology.



SERGIO MARCHISIO

IAF General Counsel
Professor, Sapienza University of Rome
Chairman, European Centre for Space Law (ECSL)
Italy

Sergio Marchisio is Professor of International Law and Space Law at Sapienza University of Rome. Chairman of the European Centre for Space Law at the European Space Agency (ECSL/ESA). Member of the Advisory Council of the European Space Policy Institute (ESPI). Member of Board of Directors of the International Institute for Space Law (IISL). In 2018-19, appointed Member of the UN Group of Governmental Experts on Practical Measures for the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (GGE on PAROS, UNGA Resolution 72/250).

Since 1997, Italian delegate to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) where he served as Chairman of the Legal Subcommittee (2004-2006), and Delegate to the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of the Outer Space Activities (LTS 2010-2018) where he acted as Co-chair of Expert Group D (Regulatory Frameworks).