

Germany, Item 15

UNCOPUOS Scientific and Technical Subcommittee

62nd Session, Vienna, 3–14 February 2025

Statement by Germany on

Agenda item 15: Dark and quiet skies, astronomy and large constellations

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

We welcome that we were able to agree last year on the establishment of this agenda item, and that for the next five years we have an opportunity to discuss the impacts of large satellite constellations on astronomy, among other issues. Germany has supported the efforts by Chile, Spain, the IAU and many others in the past to establish this agenda item, and we hope that we can put the next five years to good use.

To facilitate and enrich the discussions and the work under this item, Germany has joined the Group of Friends on Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society that was founded by Chile and Spain outside of the formal structures of the Committee. The group brings together national delegates and technical experts from various regional and organizational backgrounds, including experts from the Max-Planck-Institute for Radio Astronomy in Germany, to consider the challenges of large satellite constellations to astronomy.

As a preliminary result of this collaboration, the group has drafted a conference room paper that outlines general observations on the impacts to astronomy and possible mitigation strategies, and it offers initial ideas and suggestions to the Committee on steps that can be taken to improve the situation. The paper also highlights the challenges posed to radio astronomy by the growing amount of space objects and aims to make the Committee aware of this issue, while being mindful of the established

mandate and procedures of the International Telecommunication Union, ITU. Germany welcomes the conference room paper and invites other delegations to study the recommendations contained therein.

Madam Chair,

The outreach by the astronomical community over the past years here at COPUOS has managed to turn the attention of delegates to this important issue. Everybody understands what is meant by the term Dark and Quiet Skies nowadays, and knows what challenges astronomers are facing. The international nature of the Committee has also provided astronomers with a new opportunity to connect and collaborate. These are already very welcome results. The Group of Friends is a further tool to make progress in mitigating the challenges faced by the astronomical community. It is now up to COPUOS to take further steps on this issue and to consider how to address it under the new agenda item. We hope that by the end of these five years, we have produced valuable outcomes to support the coexistence between satellite operators and astronomers, and Germany is looking forward to support these efforts.