



CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY !

**Statement by Ambassador Barbara Žvokelj,
Permanent Representative of Slovenia to the International Organisations in Vienna,
at the 66th Session of the Committee of the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space,
Agenda Item 4: General exchange of views**

(Vienna, 4 June 2023)

Mr. Chairperson,

In addition to what has been said on behalf of the European Union, including condemning in the strongest possible terms Russia's unjustified and unlawful war of Russia against Ukraine, I would like to make a few short comments in my national capacity.

Mr. Chairperson,

There has been a steady growth of the Slovenian space sector in the past years. Space-related activities in the industry, research institutions, as well as in the Government have markedly increased. This has led to an enhanced bilateral, as well as multilateral cooperation. Slovenia for instance reaffirmed stronger engagement in the European Space Agency (ESA) in terms of increased funds for the Agency as well as enrolment in additional optional programs.

Mr. Chairperson,

In 2023, Slovenia registered the three satellites it is operating. Two of them are dedicated to Earth observation, and have proven to be of practical use. NEMO HD, with its near real-time video feed, has been of great help in fighting forest fires, and is being used to provide data relevant for water-management. The latest Slovenian satellite - Trisat-R, remains one of the few nano satellites successfully operating in the Medium Earth Orbit (MEO). In addition to this another satellite from the Trisat family is planned to be launched in the near future.

Slovenia's aspiration to become a full member of ESA and an even more diligent space player has led to the drafting of our first national space strategy. Just recently the public discussion phase of the adoption process concluded and the strategy is envisaged to enter into force by the end of this year. We are very pleased that the strategy is building on the comparative advantages of our space sector, especially in the fields of earth observation and space exploration, and is putting an emphasis on sustainable development, inclusive digitalisation, green transition and environmental protection. These remain at the heart of the Slovenian approach in the field of outer space affairs and in COPUOS.

At the same time, safe and sustainable use of space is a priority to my country. International cooperation is key in this field, and my country is ready to do its part. In national terms, the Slovenian Space Activities Act enshrined the LTS (Long-term Sustainability) Guidelines in our national legislation. This is connected to the fact that the extraordinary expansion of space-related activities across the globe is making the implementation of the LTS Guidelines implementation more important than ever.

Mr. Chairperson,

The growth of space economy and the advent of mega constellations compel us to reflect on their impacts on climate and environment and as matter of fact – the night sky. My delegation believes that we should continue with deliberations on the issue of dark and quiet skies and recognizes the need for a dedicated Expert Group on this topic.

Finally, Mr Chairperson, regarding the organisation of an international conference on space resources next year, we thank Luxemburg and Belgium for their offer and support it. More generally, my delegation welcomes the work of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities, we are adamant that it is essential to approach this important topic multilaterally through this distinguished Committee.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.