



European Union

**EU Statement on
Agenda item 4: General Exchange of Views**

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

Vienna, 29 January - 9 February 2024

Madam 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, Ukraine, and Norway.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on your efficient chairmanship and to assure you of the EU's full support and cooperation. I would also like to warmly welcome the new UNOOSA Director, Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini and extend our best wishes for all her future endeavours. The EU looks forward to closely cooperating with her and her team.

The EU remains gravely concerned about the current international context affecting multilateral work. We strongly condemn the Democratic People's Republic of Korea's (DPRK) launch of a satellite using ballistic missile technology on 21 November. This represents a clear threat to international peace and security and constitutes a flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolutions that prohibit such launches.

The EU and its Member States strongly support the rules-based international order, with the United Nations at its core, and a multilateral approach to international affairs, including cooperation on outer space issues. Gross violations of the UN Charter undermine the whole UN system and in this context, we consider it highly cynical that Russia which has launched an unjustified and unprovoked full-scale aggression against its neighbour has proposed a draft Resolution aimed at "promoting peace", first during last year's General Assembly Fourth Committee session, and now at the COPUOS 61st STSC session. The acts perpetrated by the sponsor of this resolution are in complete contradiction with the purported objectives of the text. This approach also undermines the already agreed resolution on the Space2030 Agenda and the consensus-based approach of the Fourth Committee and COPUOS to which we are all attached.

We recall that recent initiatives such as addressing "Dark and Quiet Skies" within COPUOS and its subsidiary bodies have received wide support from all regions, with

the exception of one delegation. We recognise the importance of keeping the issue of dark and quiet skies on the agenda of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. There is broad cross-regional support to continue discussions and establish an Expert Group to develop practical solutions and address the unintended impacts of satellite constellations on astronomy.

Madam Chair,

Outer space is a global commons, free for exploration and use by all States without any discrimination, on the basis of equality and in accordance with international law. We continue to actively promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space as well as access to outer space for future generations.

The EU and its Member States underline that the space treaties developed in the UN framework constitute the cornerstone of global governance of outer space and that compliance with existing international law applicable to space must be ensured. Further, we stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures and the need to foster responsible conduct in the peaceful and free exploration and use of outer space in the framework of the United Nations for the benefit and in the interest of all countries. COPUOS has a fundamental role to play in enhancing the implementation of transparency and confidence-building among States.

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 guidelines, best practices, and transparency and confidence-building measures related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities. The development of such instruments related to the long-term sustainability of outer space activities should be distinct but complementary to the same approach relating to space threats, which are being considered in other fora within the UN system. 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 will continue to participate and actively contribute to the work of COPUOS and its Subsidiary Bodies, including their Working Groups. We appreciate the positive discussions carried out in the Working Group on the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (WG-LTS) under its able Chair, Mr. Umamaheswaran of India, on the implementation of the existing LTS guidelines, capacity building needs and new challenges.

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 accepted, in order to preserve the safe, secure and sustainable use of outer space in a peaceful manner for present and future generations.

Madam Chair,

Space traffic management (STM) remains one of the key issue as recognised by the Council of the European Union in its 23 May Conclusions on the “Fair and Sustainable Use of Space” and its 8 December Conclusions on the “Space traffic management: state of play”. Drawing on reinforced Space Surveillance and Tracking capabilities, our EU approach for operational STM foresees the possibility for cooperation with international partners in view of information sharing and interoperability. Already since 2016, EU Space Surveillance & Tracking has been providing collision avoidance services, which are now open to non-European users, alongside with fragmentation and re-entry analysis services. We consider that promoting regional approaches is a pragmatic, bottom-up way to build confidence and concrete STM solutions at global level.

We want to emphasize that all EU initiatives are developed in the spirit of international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space.

Madam Chair,

Last June, the UNOOSA, in partnership with the EU Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA) launched a report to present the benefits of the EU Space Programme components, such as Copernicus, Galileo, EGNOS and GOVSATCOM for the implementation of the “Space2030” Agenda. The report provides an overview of space applications that help tackle challenges related to food security, water management, climate change and environmental impacts, disaster management and renewable energy.

A concrete example is the funding support provided through the Global Gateway strategy, whereby the EU is establishing two regional Copernicus centres in Panama and in Chile and a national Copernicus data centre in the Philippines. These centres will use space data from Copernicus to enhance the resilience and reduce vulnerabilities to natural disasters and support climate adaptation, food security, and environmental protection.

The EU and its Member States stand ready to collaborate further with interested countries and other stakeholders to advance outer space issues relevant for COPUOS. We also look forward to contributing to the ongoing preparations of the Summit of the Future where safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities and their benefits for sustainable development should feature prominently.

Thank you, Madam Chair.