

## Slovakia, Item 4: General Exchange of views

### 61<sup>st</sup> Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (29 January – 9 February 2024)

Madam Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

At the outset, allow me to welcome the new UNOOSA Director, Ms. Aarti Holla-Maini and extend our best wishes for all her future endeavours. We also commend the vision of the UNOOSA director, the SPACE4SDGs, and the necessity to protect space for all. We do believe that space matters in all our efforts – collecting data, providing services, climate change and environmental issues, disaster strikes, humanitarian assistance and much more in our daily lives to advance sustainable development.

The Slovak Republic would also like to thank you, Madam Chair, and the UNOOSA team for the excellent preparations of this session.

Madam Chair,

Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union and in our national capacity I would like to present recent accomplishments in the field of international cooperation.

**The Astronomical Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences** is representing Slovakia in two large European projects.

First, the *European Solar Telescope* will contribute to investigations of the harmful effects of solar activity on space and ground assets, including communication technologies, navigation systems, power distribution systems, data transmission systems as well as the Earth's environment and society.

Second, the Solar Activity Monitor Network (SAMNet), is a planned international network of ground-based solar telescope stations dedicated to continuously monitoring the Sun. The main objective of the network is to provide observational data for advanced space weather research, forecasts, and warnings. One of the SAMNet sentinels will be located at the observatory at the top of the peak in the High Tatra Mountains.

**The Institute of Experimental Physics of the Slovak Academy of Sciences** contributed with its work to the ongoing European Space Agency (ESA) mission JUICE (launched to Jupiter in 2023, target in 2031). The institute cooperated with international partners on the construction of the ACM anti-coincidence detector for the Particle Environment Package science suite.

The Institute is also working with the Italian Institute "*Politecnico di Torino*" to enhance the reliability and timeliness of ESA Vigil mission predictions through Machine Learning approach; and with the Institute of Atmospheric Physics of the Czech Academy of Sciences to install the Doppler sounding system for research of ionospheric disturbances in Eastern Slovakia.

Measurements from Slovakia contribute now to the network for monitoring of the ionosphere over the Czech Republic, Belgium, France, Argentina, and some others.

The Institute and its observatory at Lomnický štít peak have become a member of a consortium of high-altitude observatories in Europe - VAO (Virtual Alpine Observatory). The main goal of its observational program is continuous monitoring of cosmic rays.

In March 2023, **the ESA Day in Slovakia** celebrated the Associate Membership of the Slovak Republic in ESA. Its aim was to raise awareness about European space ambitions; and to inform decision-makers, media and the public about ESA activities and Slovak involvement in space activities in general. On this occasion two former astronauts, Mr. Jean-Pierre Haigneré and Mr. Ivan Bella, the first Slovak citizen on the orbit, met after 24 years.

In May 2023, **The Industry Branch of the Slovak Space Office** organized the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of its flagship space industry conference “**Emerging Space**” focused on emerging space ecosystems, their growth, and their contribution to the global space community.

In November 2023, the “*Satellite-based Services for Disaster Risk Management*” workshop took place to highlight the potential of satellite applications in disaster risk management, to discuss local challenges related to natural hazards and how local entities can use European space infrastructure to improve preparedness, to strengthen prevention, optimize response, innovate recovery, and boost resilience.

Finally, we would like to emphasize the importance of the **protection of dark and quiet skies and its huge merit for the STSC**. We believe that COPUOS members should consider the impact of light pollution from communication satellite constellations in Low Earth Orbit (LEO) on astronomical observations and take adequate measures to mitigate their consequences.

That’s why my delegation has been co-sponsoring the CRP on the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society since the 58<sup>th</sup> session of the STSC till now. We encourage all delegations to support the exchange of views on DQS as a single-item agenda of the STSC sessions.

Madam Chair, distinguished delegates, thank you for your attention.