

**AUSTRIA, Item 13**

**Sixty-first Session  
of the Legal Subcommittee  
of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space  
Statement by Mr. Thomas Loidl, Austria  
29 March 2022**

**Agenda item 13**

**General Exchange of Views on the legal Aspects of Space Traffic management**

Madame Chair,

The use of space has become vital for our daily lives. At the same time, the increase in space activities, the progressive congestion of the outer space environment as well as the multiplication and diversification of actors in the space arena are increasingly becoming a challenge for the safe and sustainable conduct of space activities.

The safety and sustainability of the utilization of outer space for all peaceful uses needs to be ensured in the future. This is all the more relevant against the background of new initiatives, such as large satellite constellations. Austria therefore believes that new rules and standards on space traffic management are needed.

Existing international space law already contains provisions that are of relevance for the management of space traffic. This includes principles set forth in the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, such as the principle of non-appropriation of outer space and the use of outer space for peaceful purposes only. Moreover, the regimes on liability and registration contained in the respective Conventions of 1972 and 1975 are also relevant in the context of space traffic management. Of importance in this regard are also the international regulations of the ITU regarding the allocation of radio frequencies and satellite orbits, which are essential to allow a conduct of space activities free from harmful interference.

A number of issues related to space traffic management are covered by non-binding international instruments, such as the UNCOPUOS Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines adopted in 2007 or UNGA Resolution 62/101 of 2007 on enhancing the practice of States and international intergovernmental organisations in registering space objects. The agreement in 2018 on Guidelines on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space is also a positive development in this regard.

However, for an effective management of space traffic gaps in the international regulatory frameworks and initiatives will have to be filled. A multilateral, comprehensive approach is essential to enhance the safety and sustainability of the use of outer space.

The work of the recently established Working Group on Long-term Sustainability (LTS) under the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee is in our view a good basis in order to progress towards an international governance regime in the field of Space Traffic Management.

The Working Group will now start its important discussions and Austria stands ready to support the efforts of the Working Group on the following topics:

- Identification and study of challenges, as well as possible new guidelines for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities;
- Experiences, practices and lessons learned from voluntary implementation of the adopted guidelines and recommendations for their further practical implementation;
- Capacity-building and awareness-raising activities, including those related to improving international cooperation, taking into particular consideration the requirements of emerging space nations and developing countries, and
- Recommendations on future activities and work.

We hope to see progress in these areas and clarification of these and related aspects of governance in the area of Space Traffic Management.

On this occasion, Austria would also like to refer to the efforts of the European Union in contributing to a Space Traffic Management. Recently, the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy published its communication on “An EU Approach for Space Traffic Management”. The aim of this document is to contribute to the long-term viability of space activities by ensuring that space remains a safe and secure environment.

Let me conclude by reiterating, that Austria fully supports efforts with regard to Space Traffic Management within the framework of COPUOS and its Subcommittees leading to a multilateral approach in the framework of the UN.