



European Union

**EU Statement on
Agenda item 4: “General exchange of views”**

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

Vienna, 28 March-8 April 2022

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: Turkey[§], the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Norway*, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

At the outset, let me express our full solidarity with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The European Union condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, and undermines European and global security and stability. We demand that Russia immediately cease its military actions, unconditionally withdraw all forces and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders. We recall Article 2 (4) of the UN Charter, which prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State. This prohibition is a peremptory norm of international law that all States must abide by.

Madam Chair,

I congratulate you on your election as Chair of the Legal Subcommittee and assure you of our full support and cooperation. I would also like to express our

[§] Candidate Country

* Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Norway is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

appreciation to the outgoing Chair, Dr. Aoki Satsuko of Japan, for having skilfully guided our work under difficult circumstances over the past two years. Furthermore, I would not like to miss the opportunity to once more recognize the outstanding achievements of Dr. Simonetta Di Pippo. Under her leadership as Director of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), COPUOS membership increased to 100 Member States, space will be one of the seven high level tracks in the Summit of the Future in 2023, and more States than ever before can benefit of and access to space through UNOOSA's programmes and projects. I wish Dr. Di Pippo every success in her academic career.

The European Union and its Member States remain committed to actively contributing to the multilateral work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees, including their Working Groups. They are unique platforms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, including for the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and other transparency and confidence building measures related to the long-term sustainability of outer space affairs. We recognize the important role of UNOOSA in supporting this work.

The EU and its Member States believe that the 1967 Outer Space Treaty and the other UN treaties on outer space constitute the cornerstone of international space law and that compliance with existing international law must be ensured. This UN framework is complemented by space-related resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly. Consequently, COPUOS and its Subcommittees are the main forum for an inclusive dialogue on space law, space governance and space policy issues. As a responsible space actor, the European Union is exploring possible ways by which the EU could accept the rights and obligations contained in the relevant UN Treaties on Outer Space.

Madam Chair,

The Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) has proven its ability to deliver on its mandate. Last year's establishment of the Working Group on Space Resources and the swift agreement on its mandate, terms of reference and methods of work was a welcome achievement. It can now start a discussion on legal aspects related to space resources activities with the aim to ensure that these are conducted in a safe, sustainable and peaceful manner and in accordance with international law. We commend the Working Group's Chair and

Vice-Chair, Ambassador Misztal of Poland and Professor Freeland of Australia, for their leadership and we assure them of our full support and cooperation.

On the same vein, the EU and its Member States welcome the agreement on the terms of reference, methods of work and work plan of the Working Group on Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (WG-LTS) at the recent 59th session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee. We commend all Member States for their constructive approach and flexibility. We are looking forward to actively participating in the upcoming meetings and contributing to the substantive discussions with regard to the implementation of the 21 LTS guidelines, capacity building and new challenges.

Last year's agreement in COPUOS on the Space2030 Agenda and its Implementation plan and the subsequent adoption of UN General Assembly Resolution on the "Space2030" Agenda: space as a driver of sustainable development, was yet another great achievement and a testimony that multilateralism works in the space sector and produces results.

We consider that capacity building in space law and policy plays an important role in maintaining the rule of law with regard to space activities. To that effect, we welcome this year's symposium on "National laws and regulations to ensure space sustainability", to be organised by the International Institute of Space Law and the European Centre for Space Law on 5 April, during this LSC. We express our appreciation and support for UNOOSA's capacity building activities, especially with respect to new space actors and emerging space nations.

Madam Chair,

The European Union Space Programme for 2021-2027 will boost the EU space capabilities in the fields of navigation, Earth-observation, space situational awareness including Space Surveillance and Tracking, Space Weather and Near Earth Objects, and governmental satellite communication. The development of services to support space debris remediation operations and to enhance space debris mitigation is envisaged. The EU Space Programme components Galileo and Copernicus will continue to support implementing public policies and serve as key tools to support societal challenges. They benefit also third countries and contribute to the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Let me take this opportunity to inform you about latest developments concerning the EU space activities. On 15 February 2022, a new Joint Communication was

adopted on Space Traffic Management (STM). In this Joint Communication, the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy lay out a concrete EU STM approach along four avenues encompassing requirements, capabilities, regulatory and external engagement aspects, to pave the way for a possible multilateral STM approach in the framework of the UN.

The EU and its Member States welcome that outer space issues relevant to COPUOS feature so prominently in the UN Secretary-General's report "Our Common Agenda". We recognise the need for the international community to come together and discuss ways and means to reinforce space governance in the interest of maintaining a sustainable outer space for the benefit of present and future generations.

Thank you for your attention.