

Kingdom of the Netherlands – Agenda-item 13 General Exchange of views on the legal aspects of
Space Traffic Management
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Mme/Mr Chair, distinguished delegations

Mme/Mr Chair, thank you for giving me the floor.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands would like to take this opportunity again to express its support for the Long Term Sustainability Guidelines and, under this agenda item, in particular with respect to space traffic management. Space traffic management remains a topic that requires our urgent attention, and my Government continues to support the identification of the legal aspects of space traffic management.

The issue of space traffic management is closely connected with the notion of safe and sustainable use of outer space. Without the development of effective space traffic management, through regulation and monitoring, the use of outer space by future generation cannot be ensured. As my delegation has noted on previous occasions, the rules on responsibility related to space traffic management are not clear. This has resulted in a worrying absence of rules on priority. Recent incidents have demonstrated that a lack of communication between various space objects have caused some owners of such objects to change the course of the objects to avoid collision. This only underscores that the general increase of outer space activities, not only in terms of an increasing number of space objects, but also an increasing amount and diversity of participants in outer space activities, increases the urgency of regulation.

My delegation would like to inform the Subcommittee that the International Institute of Air and Space Law of Leiden University, the Netherlands, participates in a Horizon 2020 EU project on Space Traffic Management, named SPACEWAYS. The consortium contains 15 partners from industry, think tanks and research institutes from various EU member states. The goal of the SPACEWAYS project is to provide recommendations and guidelines to the European Commission on Space Traffic Management. To this end, the project will characterise and understand the current changing context of STM, especially its international and domestic dimensions. The Leiden Institute is in charge of the legal and regulatory work packages and is currently in the process of formulating its recommendations to the European Commission. The project will end in June 2022.

I thank you for your attention.