

Germany, Item 13

UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee
61st Session 28 March – 8 April 2022, Vienna

Statement by Germany

Agenda item 13 – General exchange of views on the legal aspects of space traffic management

Honorable Madam Chair/Mr. Chairman, distinguished delegates,

according to UNOOSA's online index, the number of space object registrations with a total number of 1.024 objects until May 2021 has almost reached the total amount of 2020 in only five months, illustrating the rapidly growing traffic in outer space.

STM as a coherent set of technical and regulatory provisions is a precondition for safe access into outer space, safe operations in outer space as well as safe return from outer space to Earth. Germany is convinced that effective space traffic management contributes to the protection of operational space systems, ensures the viability of private and public investments in space and plays an important role for a sustainable space environment. Internationally accepted rules of the road are also a prerequisite for an effective international liability regime. Thus, STM concerns all space-faring nations as well as international organizations, civil society, and commercial actors.

This objective can only be achieved **on the basis of international law, multilateral consensus and international cooperation**. International agreement is required on different levels, ranging from the development of technical and operational standards over norms of responsible behaviour in outer space, to the long-term objective of establishing a dedicated international and binding space traffic management regime. In this sense, we particularly welcome the UN Secretary General's Report "**Our Common Agenda**" and his intention to seek high-level political agreement on a global regime to coordinate and govern space traffic. We look forward to actively engaging in the preparation of this process here at COPUOS.

International STM should be composed of elements, such as:

- specific rules for the efficient use of the different orbital regions (LEO, MEO, GEO) as limited natural resources;
- requirements for the protection of the space environment, e.g. through space debris mitigation;
- safety regulations for removal, re-entry and in-orbit operations, incl. methods for communication and collision avoidance.

Effective and sustainable STM can, however, only be guaranteed through process legitimacy. All relevant stakeholders should be involved at a global level, as guaranteed by the UN.

At COPUOS, first building blocks have already been agreed to in form of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainable Use of Outer Space. We remain confident that further impetus will derive from the new LTS Working Group, which recently agreed to its terms of reference and work plan.

We are aware that mutual transparency and confidence building through constant dialogue and collaboration are a prerequisite to international space traffic management. To prepare and facilitate this dialogue, Germany together with other European Member States is actively involved in EU SST to provide services for collision avoidance, fragmentation analysis and reentry analysis. Furthermore, we raised STM as a topic during the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in 2020. The EU process involved hearings with academia, civil society, industry, and other stakeholders, including a mapping exercise of current regulatory frameworks in Europe discussed in a dedicated European conference and a Consultation Platform as a long-term platform for exchanges and preparatory basis for the recently published Joint Communication on Space Traffic Management. It sets forth a concrete EU STM approach along four avenues encompassing requirements, capabilities, regulatory and external engagements aspects. We are convinced that the findings on the EU level can provide excellent **input for the further work on an international approach to STM** and for defining Europe's contribution to global efforts towards STM.

We look forward to continue sharing our experiences and lessons learnt from this cooperation with the international community.

Honorable Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

we are convinced of the need for a **coherent global approach, based on the UN space treaties, and in the long-term developed at the UN level, which could be underpinned by regional contributions to share the STM burden**, in order to ensure that all space actors play by the same rules and enjoy the benefits of space in the long-term. Thus, Germany is actively contributing to the development of space traffic management at different levels. We look forward to continuing our multilateral dialogue on the related legal aspects under this single issue agenda item.

Thank you for your kind attention.