

UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

Legal Subcommittee Sixty-first Session

Vienna, 28 March - 8 April 2022

Statement of the Delegation of Romania

Agenda item 4: General exchange of views

Distinguished delegates,

Madam chairperson, let me congratulate you for your appointment as Chair of this Subcommittee and to transmit to you the support of my delegation for a successful accomplishment of your mandate.

We would also express our appreciation to the former Chair Madame Setsuko Aoki and to the former director of the Office, Mrs. Simonetta Di Pippo, for her role in the achievements of the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA). I assure the Acting OOSA Director, Mr. Niklas Hedman of the full support of my delegation.

My delegation aligns with the statement of the European Union.

The unprovoked and unjustified Russian military aggression against Ukraine, a sovereign and independent state, has put in question the peaceful intentions of Russian space activities. Under these circumstances, we stand with Ukraine in questioning the affiliation of the regional center referred to in UN General Assembly resolution 76/76.

Romania, as a Member State of the European Union (EU) and the European Space Agency (ESA), is participating to their programmes and applications. Romania is also a country having its own space agency - ROSA - and is developing its own space programme according to the national strategy and in concordance and complementarity with other international programs.

Presently, the national strategy of Romania is built around the concept of 3S (Three S's): the first S means Science and technology (including exploration), the second S is represented by Services (including access to space) and the third S comes from Security.

Madame Chair,

My country is convinced that a legally clear environment for space activities is needed for future space developments. And I will mention that the opinion of

each country might contribute to this frame due to the global effects of any space undertaking.

I am pleased to report that earlier this month Romania has become the 16th country to sign the Artemis Accords initiated by NASA, in a ceremony on March 1st at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Bucharest, affirming its commitment to a common set of principles for cooperation in the civil exploration and use of the Moon, Mars, Comets and Asteroids for peaceful purposes. The Artemis Accords reinforce and implement the 1967 Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, Including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, otherwise known as the Outer Space Treaty.

(Item 8) Romania is preparing a national law for space activities, in accordance with the UN Principles in the international law and with the specific regulations of the European Union and the European Space Agency rules. This legal frame will include also specific issues related to space traffic management, launch activities and critical space infrastructures. The internal process is advanced and it will be completed soon.

(Item 10) - The activities of COPUOS and its subcommittees are important for Romania. Regarding the future role of the Committee, as my delegations mentioned in most of its statements, the role of the Committee should be compliant with the global space developments in all areas including security. The Committee should regain its adequate role in a world where space became a distinct and solid area of human activity.

Regarding the methods of work, they should provide flexibility to adapt to the fast developing technical, political and commercial aspects of outer space activities, but also the resilience against external factors impeding its activities, as the current pandemics. We suggest the consideration of developing inter-sessional substantial activities, with the possible support of the member states represented in the Bureau.

Regarding space debris mitigation and remediation measures (item 11), we appreciate the guidelines established by the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space working group and support the continuation of the activity of the group. In particular, we suggest that the subcommittee should take into consideration the new developments in active debris removal which can be space-based and ground based, and therefore having different legal frames.

Regarding Space Traffic Management (item 13), the fast increase of the number and mass of satellites which are utilized mostly for commercial purposes is suggesting the need to move the specific weight of monitoring costs from governments to the commercial entities involved. Moreover, the accuracy of this monitoring set should be increased due to the number of objects on each orbit category and also the the mass of the object and the re-entry regime should be considered. It is obvious that those operations might quickly become

a service to be provided on a commercial basis and specific international regulations should be established.

Connected to the area of Space Traffic Management we can see the concept of the criticality of space infrastructures. It is proved that the malfunctioning of space infrastructures supporting e.g., telecommunications, positioning, navigation, timing, Earth observation can produce important societal and economic damages. Some countries, as Romania, included space systems in the legal frames of critical infrastructures.

We welcome the UN General Assembly decision to convene this year at Geneva an open-ended working group for reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviors.

Regarding Space Resources (item 15), my delegation supported the establishment of a dedicated working group and we congratulate Prof. Andrej Mitzal and Prof. Steven Freeland for their appointment as Chair and Vice of the Working Group and we reaffirm our support for the Working Paper on the Endorsement of the Work Plan of the Working Group on space resources and proposals for a dedicated International Space Resources Conference under the auspices of the United Nations .

We can mention the role of the International Academy of Astronautics (IAA) in developing scientific and legal studies and study groups on topics connected with the agenda, as Space Traffic Management, Space Critical Infrastructures, Space Resources.

Thank you, distinguished delegates, for your attention.