

**UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee
62st Session 20 – 31 March 2023, Vienna**

Statement by Germany

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

Honorable Madam Chair, distinguished delegates,

as we have heard in many previous statements, there is broad agreement that the growing number of space objects and activities along with a growing threat through space debris requires urgent action. There is an equally broad consensus that Space Traffic Management is a necessary instrument to preserve a sustainable space environment and humankind's access thereto. Against this background, Germany welcomes the inclusion of Space Traffic Management as a high-level track in the Summit of the Future by the Secretary-General of the United Nations.

Indeed,

- we need specific rules for the efficient use of the different orbital regions LEO, MEO, GEO and discuss limitations in their respective capacities as the number of objects, especially in LEO, is rocketing upwards;
- we need requirements for the protection of the space environment, e.g. through space debris mitigation;
- and we need safety regulations for removal, re-entry and in-orbit operations, including methods for communication and collision avoidance.

The last years have seen an astounding range of global, regional and national initiatives concerning space traffic management, particularly including regulatory aspects. Just to name a few:

- The **European Union** has been very active in facilitating discussions between its Member States regarding a common European approach to space traffic management. In June 2022 the EU Council issued a joint communication concerning the “EU approach to space traffic management”, and in September the EU Parliament designated STM as a matter of strategic importance for the EU and called on the Commission to take according steps.

- Likewise, the **European Operations Framework (EOF)** community concluded its work on the creation of a handbook and guidelines for European stakeholders concerning on-orbit servicing. The activity is funded by the EU under Horizon 2020 as part of the PERASPERA Programme. The EOF work package is led and managed by the German Space Agency at DLR. It recently presented the results at the PERASPERA final meeting last week, covering technical, insurance, legal and regulatory aspects. The European Operations Framework will be presented to the European Commission in May.

All of these are highly commendable and – indeed – much needed. It is our view that the objective of a comprehensive and global space traffic management may only be achieved **on the basis of multilateral consensus and – eventually – international law**. International agreement is required on different levels, ranging from the development of **technical and operational standards** over guidelines encouraging and showcasing best practices of more sustainable use of outer space, to the long-term objective of establishing a **dedicated international space traffic management regime**. The LTS-Guidelines are a prime example of a non-legally binding mechanism to bridge the gap until an international regime is in place.

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all the aforementioned endeavours will provide great impetus for such a regime and may well serve as its **building blocks**. We are certain that further impulses will follow and stand ready to support them.

Thank you for your kind attention.