

**COPUOS, 62nd session of the Legal Subcommittee: 2023**

**Statement by Bulgaria under Agenda Item 3 „General exchange of views”**

Thank you Madam Chair!

Madam Chair, distinguished Delegates,

On behalf of the Bulgarian delegation, I wish to congratulate you, Madam Chair, on your second year of chairing the LSC and to express our gratitude to the Acting Director of the Office of Outer Space Affairs, Mr. Niklas Hedman, and the Secretariat for the excellent preparation of this session.

Republic of Bulgaria fully aligns itself with the statement made by the EU under this agenda item and I have the pleasure to make the following remarks in my national capacity.

As many delegations in this room, we are deeply concerned that a second consecutive LSC session is taking place against the background of the brutal war of aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine which Bulgaria condemns in the strongest possible terms as a gross violation of international law and the UN Charter.

Bulgaria is pleased to welcome Guatemala and Uzbekistan as the newest Members States of the Committee.

My delegation is of the view that the five UN Treaties, complimented by space-related UN resolutions, sets of principles and other related documents, constitute the cornerstone framework of the international space law by which the Member States should be guided in their space affairs.

Bulgaria recognizes the important role of the Legal Subcommittee as the main forum for the exchange of views on legal aspects of outer space activities and for fostering international cooperation in this regard.

Bulgaria welcomes the establishment of the Working Group on Legal Aspects of Space Resource Activities and the swift agreement on its mandate, terms of reference and methods of work.

My delegation supports the constructive discussions in the Working Group on Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities (WG-LTS) at the recent 60<sup>th</sup> session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee with regard to the implementation of the 21 LTS guidelines.

During the last STSC session, Bulgaria together with Spain, Chile, Slovakia, Dominican Republic and South Africa, has submitted under agenda item 17, a Conference Room Paper on the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies for science and society. We fully share the concern that the sun-reflected luminosity and their radio-frequency emissions have a serious impact on astronomical observations as well as on the pristine appearance of the night sky. We therefore find it important to explore the legal aspects of the

establishment of an expert group where all stakeholders can collaborate in studying and implementing all possible measures that can mitigate the negative impact of the constellations on astronomy and on the visibility of the pristine night sky.

Madam Chair, my country attaches great importance to the international cooperation, coordination, and information sharing on space issues. One of the key factors for successful projects proposals and future development of the Bulgarian Space sector is the International Cooperation. Therefore, Bulgaria has undertaken multiple actions at a national level to foster its cooperation with the European Space Agency.

In the end of 2020, Bulgaria launched a negotiation process to continue its cooperation with ESA. In this regard, on February 14, 2022, the Council of Ministers approved with Decision No. 71 the draft Agreement for a European Cooperating State between the Government of the Republic of Bulgaria and the European Space Agency, which was signed on 15 February 2022 between both parties in Toulouse, France.

The Agreement guarantees the continuation of joint work with ESA to develop the sustainability and competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises in the space sector, as well as to preserve the scientific potential, by expanding the activities and commitments of the parties.

On June 14, 2022, the Charter of the Plan for a European Cooperating State was signed in Noordwijk, the Netherlands. The Charter, as an integral part of the Agreement, makes possible the fulfilment of the clauses in it, including: financial participation, continuation of the implementation of current projects, conducting tender procedures, and increasing the commitments of the parties under the Agreement.

In addition, Bulgaria's participation in the Agreement provides access to ESA's Youth programs for masters and scholarship holders, as well as the opportunity to exchange mutual experts; scientific and technical information; data and goods of shared interest, in the field of space science, technology and applications.

Since the signing of the Agreement and its entry into force, more than 100 Bulgarian companies and scientific organizations have been registered in the ESA for participation in tender procedures. Eight Tender procedures were held, from which 130 project proposals were received and 43 projects were approved for implementation in the areas of Space science: Scientific research and applications, Telecommunications, Microgravity studies, Engineering and exploitation of the ground segment.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> of April 2023 the Ministry of Innovation and Growth of Bulgaria, which is our competent national authority on Space Policy, and the European Space Agency are organizing an Information Session on the opportunities for participation of Bulgarian companies and scientific organizations in the Ninth ESA Tender procedure for Bulgaria.

To conclude, Madam Chair, Bulgaria reiterates its commitment and support to work of this Subcommittee of COPUOS and we are looking forward to successful exchange during this session.

**Thank you for your attention.**

