



Permanent Mission of Italy  
International Organisations - Vienna

**59<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE  
SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBCOMMITTEE  
(STSC)**

**Statement by  
Ambassador Alessandro Cortese**

Item 4: general exchange of views

**Vienna, 7 February 2022**

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Mister Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, but I wish to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

First of all, let me congratulate you, Mister Chair, for presiding over this session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, and thank Director Di Pippo and all the staff of **the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs** for the excellent preparation of the meeting, despite - also this year - the very challenging circumstances.

Mister Chair,

Italy pays particular attention to the **long-term sustainability of outer space activities**, both as a Country with an intense space program and through its membership to the European Union, which is at the forefront of this commitment. We are looking forward to an agreement on the mandate, terms of reference and methods of work of the Working Group on Long Term Sustainability, in order to swiftly start the substantial discussions on how to ensure the implementation of the LTS Guidelines.

Italy continues to **actively contribute, through the support of its national experts, also to the other working groups (WG)** of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee, such as the WG on the use of nuclear power sources, as well as to the Expert Group on Space Weather (SWEG) and the International Asteroid Warning Network (IAWN).

And, about space and sustainable development, I personally had the honour to **co-chair the specific Working Group that worked on and allowed the adoption of the "Space2030" Agenda**. A very important UN document, in my views.

Mister Chair,

Italy's contribution to space science and exploration has been significant also in 2021, despite Covid.

Italy is proud to announce that **the second satellite of the second generation of the COSMO-SkyMed radar constellation has been successfully launched from Cape Canaveral, in the US, last week.** State-of-the-art among Earth observation systems based on the radar technology, it allows a significant extension of the possible applications: from safety and monitoring of territories to prevention and analysis of calamitous events due to natural or anthropic causes.

On 9 December 2021, **NASA launched, in collaboration with the Italian Space Agency (ASI), the Italian National Institute of Astrophysics and the National Institute of Nuclear Physics, the Imaging X-ray Polarimetry Explorer satellite (IXPE),** dedicated to measuring the polarization of X-rays from supernova remnants, supermassive black holes and other high-energy objects. Italy provided, for this advanced observatory, the polarization detectors, a significant contribution to the data analysis software and to the definition of the scientific observing program and its Broglio Space Center as the primary ground station for the mission.

**Italy has also contributed to the NASA first planetary defence mission called DART (Double Asteroid Redirection Test),** launched on 24 November 2021 with the objective to test a method to protect Earth in case of an asteroid impact threat. DART is expected to impact on the secondary asteroid Dimorphos of the double system Didymos in early October 2022.

The Italian contribution consists of a nanosatellite called LICIACube, which stands for “Light Italian Cubesat for Imaging of Asteroids”. It will separate from DART about 10 days before its impact on the asteroid and will fly-by the region to capture unique images of the impact’s effects. **LICIACube will be the first Italian spacecraft operating in Deep Space**, paving the way to future similar initiatives for space exploration.

Also concerning Near Earth Objects, the Italian Space Agency (ASI) delegation at the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) is currently leading the first SMPAG hypothetical threat exercise. **Prepared together with Politecnico di Milano, such exercise will simulate the inter-agency procedure to organise a coordinated response to an asteroid threat.** An invented albeit realistic scenario of impact threat will be run in 2022 with delegations and space agencies involved.

In 2021 Italy also worked to **raise the awareness of the general public** on the underestimated contribution of space technology to the every-day life and I believe this is a fundamental task for all of us.

To this end, our government established the **National Space Day to be held every year on 16 December**, anniversary of the launch of the first Italian satellite, in 1964. The 1st National Space day was launched last December, and the event touched all aspects of the contribution of the Italian space activities to the life of its citizens, including economic growth, wellness, sustainable development, civil protection and the inspiration produced by space exploration. The Permanent Representation of Italy **prepared for the occasion a short and crispy video on UNOOSA**, with the Director Di

Pippo and myself. Whoever is interested, can watch it on the Permanent Representation website.

Mister Chair,

Coming back to this session of the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee, I wish to announce that Italy will make **a technical presentation on the so-called “International Open Call”** that the Italian Space Agency launched in 2015, **to promote basic and applied research through the provision of data obtained from the Italian radar satellite constellation COSMO-SkyMed.** Such open call is addressed to the international scientific community and those interested may apply at any time by sending a project proposal through the dedicated page of the ASI website. I wish to warmly invite interested delegations to attend the technical presentation session on 16 February.

Let me conclude by saying that **this Open Call is proof of the Italian commitment to international cooperation** to advance the study, exploration, and use of outer space. Only a cooperative approach can ensure that space activities are conducted for peaceful purposes and for the sustainable development of the humankind. The **Committee** – of which **Italy is a founding member since 1959** -, its Subcommittees and the Office for Outer Space Affairs will continue to play a critical role for these goals, with a full support from Italy.

Thank you.