

Slovakia, Item 17

60th Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee (February 6 – 17, 2023)

Agenda Item 17: General exchange of views on dark and quiet skies for science and society

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

Slovak delegation has been co-sponsoring the CRP on the Protection of Dark and Quiet Skies for science and society since the 58th session of the STSC, as we see a huge merit in bringing this agenda to the attention of this subcommittee.

According to a new study, light pollution is brightening the night sky so quickly that the stars are practically disappearing from the eyes of observers. If this development continues at the current rate, in places where there are 250 stars tonight, only 100 will be visible there in 18 years.

Current CRP contains compiled mitigation measures of the effects caused by satellite constellations. We strongly support the idea of the maintenance of the single Agenda Item of the “General Exchange of views on Dark and Quiet Sky” for the next 61st STSC Session.

Moreover, the creation of an Expert Group with the task of monitoring the impact of the satellite constellations on astronomy and regularly reporting to the STSC on the matter is crucial.

Additionally, we would like to inform you that the Faculty of Mathematics, Physics and Informatics of the Comenius University is, in collaboration with the Slovak private sector and the Vienna University in Austria, investigating within the framework of the European Space Agency the negative effects that light pollution from artificial objects, such as satellites and space debris, could have on the quality of night sky and consequently on the data quality of the ground-based astronomical observatories and their performance.

The Slovak Astronomical Society, which has been representing the community of professional as well as amateur astronomers in Slovakia for over 60 years and has been very active in the field of light pollution protection, has become an affiliate member of the International Astronomical Union Centre for the Protection of the Dark and Quiet Sky from Satellite Constellation Interference and will support activities of this Centre in the field of public engagement in this matter.

Mr. Chair, distinguished delegates,

Thank you for your attention.