

STATEMENT BY THE EUROPEAN ASTRONOMICAL SOCIETY

The 61st session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space

AGENDA ITEM 4: General exchange of views

Read by: Sara Lucatello (Vice-President)

Chair, distinguished delegates,

It is an honor and a privilege to address the 61st Session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of UN COPUOS on behalf of the European Astronomical Society (EAS).

Chair,

As it is the first time we take the floor, we wish to congratulate you, Ms Botezatu on your appointment. I assure you, Chair, of our fullest cooperation during this session.

We also warmly welcome Ms Aarti Holla-Maini, the new UNOOSA director, to her position and extend best wishes for her work and for that of the new re-arranged office.

We would also like to express our appreciation for having been granted the position of permanent observer at COPUOS, and in particular wish to acknowledge the support we received in the process by the UNOOSA office and by Niklas Hedman during his tenure as acting Director.

Chair,

The European Astronomical Society promotes and advances astronomy in Europe, supporting its more than 5,000 individual members, in the undertaking of their professional activities. It organizes the EAS annual meetings, the largest yearly astronomy-focused meeting in Europe, which has been bringing together scientists working in all fields of astrophysics and space science, policy makers and public engagement specialists for over two decades.

Furthermore, in its endeavors, the EAS collaborates with 32 affiliated national societies and 30 organizational members: foundations, research institutions and entities that support

the activities of the society. We also support capacity building, through collaborations with organizations such as the African Astronomical Society. The EAS also regularly engages with European policy makers and funding agencies.

Chair,

Space activities are of great importance to the EAS. Astronomers are the original space explorers, having looked at objects and phenomena located in outer space since prehistoric times. Modern astronomy relies on space telescopes and ground based facilities to probe the universe in a wide range of wavelengths, from X rays to the radio spectrum.

Chair,

The EAS greatly appreciates the work undertaken by this subcommittee and UN COPUOS on the sustainable use of outer space and the discussion that is taking place on the preservation of Dark and Quiet Skies, for science and society. We appreciate the activities of the Group of Friends of Dark and Quiet Sky and we support the CRP presented by Chile, Spain and a number of Permanent Observers which proposes to establish an agenda item on this very topic. We are grateful to the delegations for the collaborative spirit they have put forward in the discussions on the title of the agenda item and we are confident that agreement will be reached also for the duration and scope. It is our belief that under this agenda item delegations will have an appropriate forum to exchange their views and discuss constructive approaches to preserve the Dark and Quiet Skies, protecting scientific research and cultural practices that rely on unfettered access to the night sky.

Chair,

We also support the CRP presented by the International Astronomical Union and a number of Permanent Observers on the Protection of Astronomy and Science on the Moon. The lunar surface hosts some of the most promising sites for a next generation high-performance astronomical instrumentation, whose extraordinary qualities might be threatened by some of the planned and potential activities on the surface of the Moon.

Chair

In conclusion, the EAS strongly emphasizes the need for innovative strategies to ensure space sustainability, with due regard to all space activities. This is crucial for advancing humanity while ensuring that future generations can explore pristine skies and engage in space exploration through astronomy.

Chair, distinguished delegates thank you for your kind attention.