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**Intervention of Dr Holger Krag, Space Safety Programme Manager, ESA**

Madame Chair,

Distinguished Delegates,

In my intervention before this subcommittee last year, I announced the establishment of ESA's Protect Accelerator, an ambitious initiative aiming to unite all relevant actors in Europe and beyond towards building the technologies and solutions enabling a safer and more sustainable space environment. In this context, ESA has been committing itself to a set of much more ambitious space debris requirements. At the end of last year, a new ESA standard became applicable and further ambitious steps are planned up to 2030 to fully roll out a zero debris approach that includes, among others, mandatory removal action in case of failed disposal after 2030. More information will be share in my technical presentation.

Taking a more ambitious approach has become a source of inspiration for a larger community. In response to this, ESA has facilitated the drafting of the Zero Debris Charter with dozens of pro-active entities worldwide, from all sizes and types: large operators, major satellite manufacturers, space agencies, intergovernmental organisations, emerging start-up companies, non-profit organisations, universities, insurance providers, etc.

The result is a daring vision on space debris mitigation and remediation, combining the highest level of ambition with the necessary pragmatism. The charter is fully in line with applicable law and practices, but aims at setting a new level of ambition. The Zero Debris Charter is composed primarily of five environmentally driven, measurable targets covering critical needs such as the avoidance of debris generation through collisions or accidental breakups, the improvement of the success rate of post-mission disposal, or the tracking of smaller and potentially lethal pieces of debris.

The Zero Debris Charter is a document of the space community, by the space community, for the space community. The Charter's signing is open to juridical persons, not individuals. Any entity willing to contribute, to the extent of its abilities and constraints, to the achievement of part or whole of one or all the targets is encouraged to register its intent to sign the Zero Debris Charter using the appropriate form on ESA's website.

ESA's teams are currently finalising the preparation of numerous events for the Zero Debris Community in 2024 including a high-level Zero Debris Future Symposium on 4 April at the European Space Operations Centre in Darmstadt, the Signing Ceremony of the Zero Debris Charter will all registered entities in mid-2024, and throughout the year, a series of technical workshops to translate the Zero Debris Charter's targets into a non-exhaustive list of needs and possible solutions in the form of the community-driven Zero Debris Technical Booklet. Please stay posted for relevant announcements on ESA's website.

Madame chair, distinguished delegates, let me close by restating ESA's strong commitment to lead by example and support the space community in Europe and beyond to embark on a collective path towards a safer and more sustainable space environment. I thank you very much for your attention.