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**Committee on the Peaceful
Uses of Outer Space**

Legal Subcommittee

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Item 5 of the provisional agenda*

**Information on the activities of international
intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations
relating to space law**

Activities of the European Centre for Space Law in 2015

Submission by the European Centre for Space Law

1. Background Information

1.1 Background

The European Centre for Space Law (ECSL) was established in 1989, on the initiative and under the auspices of the European Space Agency (ESA), with the support of experts in the field of space law. It functions under a Charter, last amended in October 2009, which defines its structure and objectives. The current Chairman of the ECSL is Professor Sergio Marchisio. The current Executive Secretary is Mr. Nicholas Puschman.

The overall objective of the ECSL is to promote the awareness and development of the legal framework pertaining to space activities. It aims to do this across disciplinary lines to improve both the technical understanding of those concerned with space law research and the legal understanding of those concerned with the production, use and operation of space technologies. The two major tools for reaching this goal are information exchange among interested stakeholders and the improvement and promotion of space law teaching. The ECSL's core activities are both industry-focused and academic-focused.

* A/AC.105/C.2/L.297.



1.2 Management

The ECSL has a flexible and open structure. The ECSL General Meeting, open to all members, meets every three years. The ECSL Board oversees and assists in the running of the Centre's activities. The Board members have significant experience in the field of space law and commit themselves to actively promote the ECSL's objectives at both national and international level. The current Board is mandated for the triennium 2016-2019.

The ECSL Executive Secretariat is responsible for the daily management of the Centre, liaising with members and promoting the growth of the Centre's activities.

1.3 Membership and International Network

ECSL membership runs annually and consistently numbers well over a hundred natural and legal persons (over 170 in 2015) from ESA Member States, associated States and other European countries. This includes student, professional, corporate and institutional members. The Centre brings together those with space law backgrounds and other interested parties: professionals from industry, lawyers, insurers, academics and student members all participate in order to encourage interdisciplinary exchange at all levels. Membership is a prerequisite for voting in the elections of the Board, attending events such as the Practitioners' Forum and accessing ECSL publications and on-site resources.

The ECSL has established a strong and growing network of National Points of Contact (NPOCs) in 14 ESA Member States which provide local support for ECSL activities and facilitate contact between members. The NPOCs are active in their own right in the field of space law and provide ECSL members with details of their activities. With new Member States in ESA, the ECSL remains keen to encourage the development of new NPOCs.

2. Summary of Activities in 2015

2.1 2015 ECSL Practitioners' Forum

The 2015 Practitioners' Forum took place on 27 March 2015 at ESA's headquarters in Paris, France. The Forum focused on the theme of space governance in Europe and the regulation of space activities. Several discussions were held on the framework of cooperation between ESA and European institutions such as the EU, delegation agreements, the role of the Court of Justice of the European Union and procurement matters. In addition to addressing the question of governance from an institutional perspective, the Forum also gave participants the opportunity to understand how governance is perceived from the point of view of both the manufacturing industry and satellite operators. Some 85 participants from various institutional, commercial and academic professions attended this Forum.

2.2 2015 European Round of the Manfred Lachs Space Law Moot Court Competition

The ECSL is the official regional organizer of the European Rounds of the Manfred Lachs Moot Court Competition. The 2015 European Rounds took place in Belgrade, Serbia at the Belgrade Union University.

The European arm of the competition continues to grow. The 2015 Rounds saw 14 teams, including several newcomers, fiercely competing for the title of European Champion and the chance to represent Europe in front of three sitting judges of the ICJ at the World Finals held during the 66th International Astronautical Congress in Jerusalem. The winning team was from the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The team went on to represent Europe in the World Finals.

2.3 The 24th ECSL Summer Course on Space Law and Policy

The 24th edition of the ECSL Summer Course on Space Law and Policy was organized in cooperation with the University of Caen-Normandy Law Faculty, France from 31st August to 11th September 2015. Thirty-eight students, including five young professionals, participated in the 2015 course, representing over 20 different nationalities. The participants attended seminars from over 35 distinguished speakers from academia, international organizations such as ESA, national space agencies such as CNES, DLR and ASI, the legal profession, the space industry and related sectors such as insurance, banking and finance. The participants also had the chance to attend a lecture given by ESA Astronaut Jean-François Clervoy. The course explored the fundamental issues of space law and policy with a focus on how these issues relate to the theme of smart city development. In groups, the participants worked on a project requiring them to think not only like space lawyers but also like social entrepreneurs and engineers. Their task was to present to ESA a project utilizing either an existing or new space system to be used for smart cities. The project required the participants to get to grips with the basic elements of space law, satellite communications, space policy, national policymaking, corporate financing and launch services. The projects were presented in the prestigious City Hall of Caen in front of a panel composed of representatives from industry and academia. The 2015 course also involved a number of events engaging the local space industry such as a welcome reception from Normandie AeroSpace, a Practitioners' Day and an event with the city's Deputy Mayor.

2.4 ECSL Student Essay Competition

In order to further promote knowledge of and interest in the law relating to space activities through the promotion of research activities, the ECSL Board decided to introduce a Student Essay Competition in 2014. Building on the success of this inaugural competition, the second competition opened for submissions in September 2015, centring on the theme of the current and possible future legal framework of non-orbital flights. The winning essay will be published on the ECSL website.

2.5 Symposia and Workshops in 2015

On 13th April 2015, the ECSL and the International Institute of Space Law (IISL) jointly organised a Symposium on "Space Traffic Management" on the first day of the 54th session of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Seven speakers were invited to share their thoughts and experiences with the Legal Subcommittee on a possible regime for space traffic management as well as how this could interface with domains such as space safety, frequency management and the governance of space activities.

The Symposium has become a long-standing tradition at the Legal Subcommittee having been held every year since the early 1990s. A full report and all the presentations can be found on both the ECSL and Office for Outer Space Affairs websites.

On 4 December 2015, the ECSL organized a legal and regulatory workshop in London, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland along with the United Kingdom NPOC and sponsors such as Bird & Bird LLP, the Satellite Finance Network and Access Partnership. The event was attended by over 75 representatives from banking and finance, insurance, law firms, national space agencies, international organizations, satellite operators, manufacturers and research institutions. The discussions explored challenges in the industry today such as third party liability insurance, the outcomes of the 2015 World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-15) and what these mean for satellite operators, liability for space activities, the regulation of debris and licensing regimes across Europe.

3. Documentation, Resources and Publications

3.1 ECSL Online Legal Database

The ECSL Legal Database is a highly valuable research resource and can be consulted online via the ECSL homepage (www.esa.int/ecsl). It provides quick and easy links to national and international space law texts with a section dedicated to the various United Nations legal instruments. In addition, there is an extensive space law bibliography organized thematically and a further bibliography, organized chronologically by decade, of key events that influenced space law. It also provides a comprehensive listing of space law journals and other space law institutions.

3.2 Space Law Teaching in Europe and Beyond

The booklet “Space Law Teaching in Europe” was an ECSL initiative first issued in 1991 and revised in 1993. The booklet included a list of space law teaching institutions, universities and educational centres in Europe. This database is now available and updated on the ECSL website and includes information on educational centres and research facilities working in the area of space law outside Europe. The ECSL welcomes additional or updated information from States participating in the Legal Subcommittee.

3.3 ECSL Archives

The ECSL maintains an archive of thousands of hard copy documents organized and catalogued at ESA’s headquarters in Paris, France. ECSL members may make an on-site consultation of documents contained in the archives upon special request to the Executive Secretary.

3.4 ECSL Newsletter

The ECSL newsletter is available online and features articles on recent ECSL and NPOC events, book reviews and other topics of interest to the space law community.

4. Major Events and Activities Planned for 2016

In addition to its long-standing successful activities as listed above, the ECSL will continue to develop its activities in 2016 with the introduction of the Young Lawyers' Symposium, an inaugural event aimed at young lawyers and students to present their research. The ECSL will also continue to collaborate with its NPOCs in promoting space law opportunities throughout Europe.

5. Concluding Remarks

The purposes and objectives of the ECSL are laid out in Article 2 of its Charter. Chief among these objectives is Article 2.2 which states that the ECSL shall purport to “promote knowledge of and interest in the law relating to space activities through the promotion of research activities including the dissemination of information and the organisation of workshops”. The ECSL remains a key player in Europe in promoting space law research and education, and providing important opportunities for stakeholders across the space sector — from students to academia and industry — to engage and exchange.
