



## **EU Statement**

### **76<sup>th</sup> UN General Assembly, Fourth Committee, Agenda item 53: International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space United Nations, New York October 2021**

This statement is delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia, align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States thank and congratulate the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space – COPUOS and its Chair, Dr. Piso, as well as the Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) and its Director, Ms. Di Pippo, for their excellent work.

The EU and its Member States strongly support a multilateral approach to international affairs including with regard to cooperation on outer space issues, in particular in the context of the United Nations. We reiterate that COPUOS and its Subcommittees are unique platforms for international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space, including on the development of international space law, international norms and standards, guidelines, best practices, and other transparency and confidence building measures regulating space activities. We also recognise the important role of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs in supporting the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees. In this regard the European Union and its Member States welcome that outer space issues feature so prominently on the UNSG’s Report “Our Common Agenda” and stand ready to collaborate with all stakeholders to advance outer space issues relevant for COPUOS.

The EU and its Member States believe that the space treaties developed in the UN framework constitute the cornerstone of international space law. This UN framework is complemented by other space relevant documents and resolutions adopted by the UN General Assembly. As a responsible space actor, the

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\* *The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.*

European Union is considering taking steps towards the acceptance of the rights and obligations contained in the relevant UN treaties on outer space.

We continue to promote the preservation of a safe, secure and sustainable space environment and the peaceful use of outer space. We continue to stress the importance of transparency and confidence-building measures, the need to ensure responsible behaviour in outer space, and the need to strengthen commitments to avoid potentially harmful interference with the peaceful exploration and use of outer space.

We underline the need to foster increased international cooperation, sustainability of space activities, and to preserve access to outer space.

The EU and its Member States further reaffirm their strong satisfaction that COPUOS, and consequently the UN General Assembly, adopted the preamble and the 21 Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space activities and that a five-year Working Group on the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities has been established under the Scientific and Technical Sub-Committee (WG-LTS) and the Chairmanship of Mr. Umamaheswaran. This will facilitate the sharing of information, experience, good practices and lessons learnt from the implementation of the adopted guidelines, help to raise awareness and capacity-building, and address new challenges for the long-term sustainability of outer space activities, such as mega-constellations. We are confident that the Group can finalise its mandate, methods of work and work plan and start its important work in addressing challenges in outer space, including the concrete implementation of the 21 Guidelines.

The EU and its Member States are equally satisfied with the agreement reached in COPUOS on the Space 2030 Agenda and Implementation plan and look forward for its adoption by this Committee and further exchanges on its implementation. We believe that space science, applications and technologies have great potential to help address major challenges of our time and realize the global agendas. Space technologies contribute to combatting COVID-19 and play a crucial role in the economic recovery after the pandemic and in tackling the global climate crisis.

The EU and its Member States also welcome the establishment of the new Working Group on Space Resources and the agreement on its mandate, methods of work and terms of reference. We remain committed to actively contributing to the work of COPUOS and its Subcommittees.

The European Union and its Member States, together with the European Space Agency (ESA), and the European space industry, have developed strong and unique space capacities in Europe, which benefit all countries. Among the EU space flagship programmes, **Copernicus** is the most advanced Earth observation system in the world. It helps save lives at sea, improves our response to natural disasters,

and allows farmers to manage their crops better. **Galileo**, the EU's global navigation satellite system, provides highly accurate global positioning and timing for autonomous and connected cars, railways, aviation and other sectors. **EGNOS**, provides safe critical navigation services to aviation, maritime and land-based users throughout the EU. These programmes are instrumental in addressing and mitigating the impact of the global COVID crisis<sup>1</sup> and they contribute to the implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

We use this opportunity to inform about latest developments concerning the EU space activities. In April this year, the European Union adopted a new Space Programme, with a budget of 14.8 billion EUR for the years 2021-27. The new Space Programme improves and brings together existing EU programmes such as Copernicus, Galileo and EGNOS under one umbrella. It also introduces new components, such as the **Space and Situational Awareness (SSA)** component to monitor space hazards and to show the commitment towards long-term space sustainability, or the new **Governmental Satellite Communication (GOVSATCOM)** initiative to provide national authorities with access to secure satellite communications. It will support a European 'New Space' paradigm, with the adoption of a more user-centered approach, and with innovative SMEs, scale-ups, start-ups, small mid-caps and knowledge institutions, fostering increased technological autonomy as well as the procurement and aggregation of reliable and cost-effective launch solutions.

Regarding SSA, we would like to highlight two other relevant developments:

- Since 2016, through the Space Surveillance and Tracking framework, EU-SST, a Consortium of EU Member States has been providing 24/7 services on Collision avoidance, Re-entry analysis and Fragmentation analysis to European users. These services contribute to ensuring safety and sustainability in space. EU-SST is now evolving from a framework into a fully-fledged programme as part of the SSA component of the new EU Space Programme and will extend its services to users beyond Europe. The upcoming EU SST Partnership will also develop activities in preparation of future space safety services, in the realm of space debris mitigation and remediation.
- In terms of development of space weather services, the EU is collaborating with ESA to select essential space weather services to be provided by industry and academia as a first set of operational space weather services. Space weather forecasting will enable industries and user groups to become more resilient and mitigate the impact of all levels of space weather-related geophysical events. Ionosphere forecasting can help mitigate the impact of significant space weather-related geophysical events on the final performance of specific GNSS-based applications, but potentially to other space applications and satellite communications as well. The EU funded Ionosphere Prediction Service (IPS) is an example of preparatory work that has already set up the base for such services.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.copernicus.eu/en/coronavirus>

The EU Space Programme will provide an important contribution to the European Green Deal, which sets an ambitious strategy to transition to a sustainable economy, by addressing broader political priorities, such as fighting climate change, a transition to a low-carbon economy, smart mobility and digital economy. It will contribute to the development of a space economy by offering openly and freely available data for further development in a variety of space applications, and by enhancing uptake of space services, inter alia through the promotion of capacity building across the European Union, with a particular focus on EU Member States with emerging space capabilities.

Furthermore, the new EU Space Programme Regulation establishes the **EU Agency for the Space Programme (EUSPA)** that replaces and expands the European Agency for Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GSA).

At the same time, the EU programmes for research and innovation and financial investment, respectively **Horizon Europe** and **InvestEU**, will support space research and space technology innovation and promote the use of financial instruments. These objectives will be pursued in a mutually supportive and coherent approach with ESA and national space programmes in Europe.

To conclude we would like to emphasize that all EU initiatives are developed in a similar spirit of international cooperation for the peaceful uses of outer space.