

5.9.2016

10th United Nations Workshop on Space Law Contribution of Space Law and Policy to Space Governance and Space Security in the 21st Century

In 1999, the first United Nations Workshop on Space Law under UNOOSA's space law capacity-building programme has taken place in Vienna. Since then, a series of fruitful and successful workshops in different places has followed, namely in The Hague, Daejeon, Rio de Janeiro, Abuja, Kyiv, Tehran, Bangkok, Buenos Aires and Beijing. I'm very pleased now to welcome the 10th Workshop on Space Law in Vienna again. I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs and her able and dedicated team for the invaluable assistance, including in the preparation of this Workshop.

Austria is proud to be host country of UNOOSA and has a long tradition of supporting space activities in the framework of the United Nations. We are pleased to have hosted the three major UN Conferences on Outer Space held so far and we are looking forward to the 50th Anniversary of the first conference in 2018 to be marked by the 4th UN Conference on Outer Space "UNISPACE+50" which will take place again in Vienna. This 10th United Nations Workshop on Space Law will contribute to the preparations of the UNISPACE +50 conference, including its thematic priority on the legal regime of outer space and global governance.

Looking at the agenda for the week ahead of us, we will have the opportunity to discuss the legal regime governing the peaceful uses of outer space in various aspects. For instance, in the panel on international space law and policy development, space traffic management will be addressed, which we believe to be an issue of growing importance for all nations. The utilisation of outer space has become important not only in terms of technological progress but more generally for the economic and social development of our societies. At the same time, the increase of space activities, the progressive congestion of the space environment due to the growing number of objects in outer space and the diversification of actors in the space arena are progressively becoming challenges for the safe and sustainable conduct of space operations. These challenges require a multilateral response and need to be addressed at the international level. The Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space and its Subcommittees have a fundamental role in addressing these concerns.

In this context I would like to highlight the adoption of the first set of guidelines on the long-term sustainability of space activities in June 2016. It is a vibrant sign of the important role of COPUOS as the prime multilateral forum for the progressive development of international norms guiding the activities of States in outer space.

In this increasingly congested, competitive and contested environment Transparency and Confidence Building Measures can play an important

role to reduce mistrust among nations and enhance international cooperation. They can give guidance to space actors on how to carry out their activities in outer space in a way to promote the safety, security and sustainability of the space environment. This will enable us to protect outer space for future generations. Therefore I am looking forward with great interest to the discussions under that point in the agenda of this workshop.

Another essential point of discussion on the agenda of this workshop are Small satellites, as a rather new phenomenon in the area of space activities that have become more and more popular in recent years. Technological progress has made the development, launch and operation of small satellites increasingly affordable. Therefore, small satellites are creating plenty opportunities for new space actors to participate in the exploration and use of outer space. They are increasingly attractive for research and educational institutions, they provide new possibilities for local and small business start-ups and at the same time provide interesting opportunities to both developing and developed states in their engagement in space activities. In order to ensure the safe and responsible use of outer space in the future, it is therefore necessary to be aware of the need to include small satellite missions appropriately in the scope of application of national and international regulatory frameworks.

These are examples for very topical issues that will be addressed. Panels will further provide a broad perspective of space law and policy in addressing safety and security in space activities, international models and mechanisms for space cooperation and coordination, capacity building and current and future perspectives of space law and governance. I am confident that this week's discussions will give us a better understanding of the achievements made and the challenges ahead of us in the area of space law and policy. With the assistance of UNOOSA, we will also feed ideas and contributions into the development of the upcoming UNISPACE+50.

Let me again welcome you, friends and colleagues of the space community, to the 10th United Nations Workshop on Space Law in Vienna