



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From:	Presidency
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Draft Council conclusions on "Fair and Sustainable Use of Space"

Delegations will find attached a Presidency draft on 'Fair and Sustainable use of Space' with a view to the Space Working Party meeting of 28 March 2023.

Changes compared to doc. 6635/23 are marked in **bold underline** and ~~strikethrough~~.

Draft Council conclusions on ‘Fair and Sustainable use of Space’

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

RECALLING

- A. the Council conclusions on an ‘EU approach to space traffic management’ of 10 June 2022¹ proposing to use the working definition of Space Traffic Management (STM) from the Joint Communication of the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on ‘An EU Approach for Space Traffic Management – An EU contribution addressing a global challenge’² of 15 February 2022 as a basis for the ongoing work at EU level and the preparation of EU contributions to international discussions;
- B. the Presidency Report on STM of 4 November 2021³, as a milestone in the roadmap endorsed by the Council, emphasising the need to develop an EU STM approach, respecting Member States’ competences and their intention to remain in charge of the development, supervision, and enforcement of STM rules, in line with the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union;
- C. the EU Joint contribution on the implementation of the Guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space⁴;

¹ 10071/22.

² JOIN(2022) 4.

³ 13407/21 + COR1.

⁴ Document A/AC.105/C.1/2023/CRP.12 available at https://www.unoosa.org/res/oosadoc/data/documents/2023/aac_105c_12023crp/aac_105c_12023crp_12_0_html/AC105_C1_2023_CRP12E.pdf

1. RECOGNISES that space is a global commons, ~~open to~~ **free for** exploration and use by all states without any discrimination, on a basis of equality and in accordance with international law; and EMPHASISES the ~~inalienable~~ right to a free and peaceful use of and access to space for the benefit of all peoples, irrespective of the degree of their economic or scientific development; UNDERLINES that a fair and sustainable use of space should meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs;
2. ACKNOWLEDGES that space technology, data and services have become indispensable in the daily lives of Europeans and thus drivers for technological development and innovation, creating job **opportunities**, increasing European competitiveness, supporting the green **and digital** transition, safeguarding the EU and its citizens and enhancing EU resilience and security;
3. ACKNOWLEDGES that specific satellite orbits, particularly Low Earth Orbits (LEO), are rapidly becoming a congested and hazardous area due to the increasing amount of space debris and satellites, **including non-manoeuverable ones**, orbiting at very high speeds, thereby jeopardising **present and** future ~~generations'~~ possibilities to use and access space; RECALLS that the unprecedented number of objects in space is **rapidly growing and** posing a direct risk to safe and sustainable orbital traffic and space ~~activities~~**service operations**; UNDERLINES that, under the current conditions, future space activities will even further increase the amount of debris; and NOTES the importance of capabilities for **satellites and** space debris monitoring and collision avoidance, **and for enabling safe** access to and return from space;
- 3a. CALLING ON the Member States and the Commission to foster the development of mitigation measures in order to **minimise** ~~limit~~ future space debris and to promote **debris** remediation research activities in order to manage the existing amount of debris, **while enhancing European competitiveness**;

4. AFFIRMS that factors such as safety, security and sustainability are essential to achieve a ‘Fair and sustainable use of space’; REITERATES the potential and importance of an EU approach on STM, in line with the Council conclusions on an EU approach to STM; WELCOMES reinforcing capabilities through the contribution of the EU SST consortium and the newly-formed EU SST partnership, ~~as a component of~~ **in collaboration with** the EU ~~Space Programme Agency~~, and also initiatives such as collaborations on the global level aimed at ensuring a safe, secure and sustainable use of space;
5. ENCOURAGES the Commission, in close cooperation with ~~and based on the expertise of the~~ Member States, to explore requirements to ensure safe, secure and sustainable space ~~operations~~ **activities** to be followed by all satellite service providers offering services to the EU and its citizens, while ~~preserving~~ **enhancing** European competitiveness, **including through sharing of best practices among Member States and capacity building activities;**
- 5a. INVITES the Commission to ~~propose~~ **exchange views with the Member States and explore** incentive measures to encourage ~~companies~~ **satellite service providers** to use non-**legally** binding instruments developed at the national or international level to foster sustainable **use** of space;
6. ~~CONSIDERS that the current practice of “first come, first served” may create an inefficient and unjust use of space;~~ and INVITES the Member States and the Commission ~~to discuss how~~ to exchange best practices on launch licensing, safety procedures and on measures aiming to ensure a sustainable use of space under national space laws, in order to establish consistent approaches ~~within~~ **between** the EU ~~and its~~ Member States **including** with the help of the toolbox foreseen in the Joint Communication on ‘An EU Approach for Space Traffic Management – An EU contribution addressing a global challenge’;

7. ACKNOWLEDGES that the effects of light pollution and ~~radioelectric~~ **electromagnetic** interferences from satellite constellations must be taken into consideration and, ~~to the extent possible~~, mitigation measures put in place to ~~avoid potential~~ **minimise** negative impacts on astronomical **observations and** research worldwide;
- 7a. RECOGNISES the risk of space weather hazard for space infrastructure **and services and critical ground infrastructure**; and ENCOURAGES the Commission to further develop space weather services as provided for in the space regulation⁵, in cooperation with **Member States and** the European Space Agency;
8. UNDERLINES that frequencies are a ~~finite~~ **limited natural** resource and must be used rationally, efficiently and economically ~~on~~ **for space-based services and for space** activities ~~in space~~; and ENCOURAGES the Member States to manage the distribution of frequencies to ensure a fair and sustainable use of space, ~~to the benefit of the citizens of the Union~~;
9. CALLS UPON the Member States and the Commission to continue implementing the 21 voluntary guidelines for the Long-term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities; ENCOURAGES the Commission and the European External Action Service, **together with the Member States**, to ~~develop~~ **pursue** a concerted and coordinated approach on how to achieve effective implementation **of these guidelines** in order to reach a European approach that is sustainable in the long term; CONSIDERS in particular that the current requirement for the safe decommissioning of satellites 25 years after end-of-life should be **re-evaluated** ~~investigated and reviewed~~; and INVITES the Commission to put forward suggestions for requirements to be discussed by Member States in order to achieve sustainability and which the Member States could convey, ~~if relevant~~ **where applicable, to the relevant international fora** ~~Inter Agency Space Debris Coordination Committee~~;

⁵ Regulation (EU) 2021/696 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 April 2021 establishing the Union Space Programme and the European Union Agency for the Space Programme and repealing Regulations (EU) No 912/2010, (EU) No 1285/2013 and (EU) No 377/2014 and Decision No 541/2014/EU.

- 9a. ENCOURAGES the Commission to ~~proceed~~ **continue exploring the possibility of declaring** ~~to declare~~ EU acceptance of the rights and obligations under the relevant United Nations Treaties and Conventions on Outer Space, in particular the Rescue Agreement, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention;
10. INVITES the Commission and the Member States to strive for the global implementation of rules and guidelines which may result in a safe and sustainable use of space, in line with the work in the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space and its subcommittees; and RECOGNISES the need to further promote on a multilateral level the preservation of the safety, security and sustainability of space.
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