

EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE



Presentation on the Development of an International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities

**Seminar “Ensuring Asia-Pacific’s Secure and Sustainable Use of Space:
The role of norms of behaviour”
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 12 December 2012**

Good afternoon,
Dear colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to address such a distinguished audience, and from the outset let me thank the Governments of Japan for making this event possible and the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research for organising this seminar.

When I took up my post in Malaysia three years ago, I could not imagine that I would stand here in front of you and deliver a speech on Outer Space. This fact however illustrates the growing economic and political importance of the Asia-Pacific region. Countries also see space activities, the launching of satellites as the demonstration of their emerging economic strength and the testimony of their aspirations to become a developed nation. Our host, Malaysia is a good example for this transformation process.

Space is a resource for all countries in the world. The number of space faring nations is rapidly increasing. Consequently we need to build "rules of the road" in order avoid jam, collision and accident. The EU considers them necessary to ensure greater security in outer space and believes a pragmatic, broad based and inclusive process can assist in achieving this goal.

In June 2012, the EU announced a revised International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities, to which your governments might have already expressed support.

Today, I would like to speak briefly about the European Union's proposal for an international Code of Conduct for outer space activities. I am sure many of you are familiar with the initiative, and some of you have participated in previous meetings that have been convened to discuss the Code. We are heartened by Asia-Pacific participation in discussions and I am very glad to be able to provide a recap of the Code and an update on progress to this important Asia-Pacific forum.

1. Philosophy of our initiative and outline on the proposed timeline

The EU and its Member States have a longstanding position in favour of the enhancement of the multilateral framework concerning the preservation of a peaceful, safe and secure environment in outer space and its use on an equitable and mutually acceptable basis. Given the growing threats in space, the EU seeks **to CONTINUE to work** with all States to make progress on an initiative and framework document that:

- gives guidance on responsible behaviour in outer space, both civil and military
- addresses the needs of a wide range of States with varying levels of development
- encourages adherence to internationally accepted norms of behavior in space

It is important to stress that the Code initiative is complimentary to other space security initiatives such as the UN Group of governmental experts and Long-Term sustainability working group of COPUOS.

We have always stressed that the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the need to prevent outer space from becoming an area of conflict are essential conditions for the strengthening of strategic stability. The European Union is fully committed to strengthening the security of activities in outer space that contribute to the development and security of states. To this end, the EU aims at promoting

international cooperation in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes.

The EU is committed to the development and implementation of transparency and confidence-building measures, as a means to achieve enhanced safety and security in outer space. We are also particularly sensitive to the issue of the risks posed by space debris which are detrimental to present and future activities.

2. Presentation of the text and added-value.

The draft International Code of Conduct is guided by the following three principles:

- freedom for all to use outer space for peaceful purposes;
- preservation of the security and integrity of space objects in orbit;
- due consideration for the legitimate security and defence interests of States.

The Purpose and Scope of Code is to:

- o Enhance safety, security and sustainability of outer space activities
- o It Contributes to transparency and confidence building measures in outer space
- o And to stress again the Code IS NOT legally binding, BUT a voluntary framework

The added value of the draft Code of Conduct lies in three aspects.

- The first aspect is the all encompassing scope of the Code. While other existing instruments deal with specific aspects, this is the first time that a systematic approach has been adopted to cover all dimensions of space operations. Hence the Code complies with other treaties and commitments in space.

The EU considers that outer space activities are mostly dual use activities. The Code applies to civilian, as well as to military, operations in outer space. It is based on the established principles of non-harmful interference against space objects,

freedom of access to, exploration and use of outer space and utilisation of space objects for peaceful purposes without interference.

- The second aspect is the Code's focus on the preventive approach, based on a new understanding of the complex nature of the space activities and the uncertainties inherent in the management of such activities.

As an example, the ICOC encourages States to notify about activities in outer space that might affect other actors , including manoeuvres, launches and break ups. It emphasises sharing of information between States

- The third aspect is the dynamic nature of the Code, considering that the progress in implementing the Code will be monitored through the meetings of the Parties and that the Code will be revised and updated as necessary in light of the forthcoming developments. All Parties will collaborate in the fulfilment and implementation of the objectives and principles contained in the Code. If technical guidelines were necessary, this task should be fulfilled at the meetings of the Subscribing States.

Process:

Widespread input is of course key to progress on the Code and for a safer, more sustainable and more predictable space environment and we appreciate the comments and input that many States have already given since this process started in 2007. **The current draft, released in June 2012, reflects many of these inputs and we look forward to continuing to work with all States in further refining the draft.**

Whilst progress at the international level is always slow, The EU is pleased that we are currently in final negotiations with our partner Ukraine to finalise arrangements for an international multilateral experts meeting to discuss the code to which all States are invited. We hope to send invitations very shortly.

To sum up, the Code of Conduct for outer space activities provides a vehicle to develop a much needed international basis to improve the foundations of space security, regardless of whether it relates to the military, civil or commercial sectors.

In order to continue to reap the amazing benefits of space, the Code is a pragmatic near-term step in providing a basis for solving near-term problems that are arising in international space activities.

We believe that the ICOC will help to make sure that the Asia-Pacific region's growing engagement in space can continue to support the region in attaining its economic and developmental goals and the Code recognises the varying degrees of technological development of international space operating and space dependent States in Asia-Pacific.

As the fastest growing region in terms of space services and activities, Asia-Pacific's participation in space security and in a Code of Conduct is crucial to improved space security for all countries in the world.

We look forward to continued Asia-Pacific support and engagement in this initiative in upcoming meetings and on a regional and bilateral basis.

Thanks so much for your time and if you have any specific questions, I would be more than happy to connect you with our Experts in Brussels.

I thank you for your attention.