



CZECH REPUBLIC

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Outer Space Cluster**

Statement by

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Ministry of Foreign Affairs

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Thank you, Mr. Chair,

Czechia aligns itself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Nevertheless, I would like to add a few points in our national capacity.

Let me start with a historical excursion: three professionals of the former Czechoslovakia, Professor Kopal, Dr. Perek and Dr. Lála, renowned legal and technical experts, were at the cradle of truly multilateral cooperation in the space domain, when the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) was born and the Outer Space Treaty adopted in the 1960^s. These professionals then served, among others, as high-ranking officials of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), and, later on, I had the honour and privilege to collaborate with all of them.

The epoch we live in today is somewhat similar to that 60 years ago. It is revolutionary in the technological sense yet also in the participatory aspect: We are now capable to explore deep outer space, to place scientific objects onto asteroids, to fill-in the Earth orbit with satellites serving the everyday needs of ordinary citizens. Regretfully, we are not in a position to agree on norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours for the safe and secure way forward. Czechia thus expresses its deep disappointment over the lack of willingness of some states to adopt not only a substantive, but even a procedural report of the Open Ended Working Group [on reducing space threats through norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours - OEWG] established by UNGA resolution 76/231.

We appreciate the high level of constructive engagement of many participants who demonstrated, during the OEWG sessions under the able chairmanship of Hellmut Lagos Koller of Chile, their true resolve in finding acceptable solutions to the satisfaction of all concerned. Given the globally increasing security and socio-economic reliance on space assets, as well as the ever-increasing number of states, non-state and private entrepreneurial actors, and also new types of activities, interests and associated risks, the behavioural approach is – at this time – the most feasible and appropriate way to encompass all new developments. Otherwise, we run the risk of negotiating a new legal instrument that will only reflect a snapshot frozen in time. Czechia thus joins other Member States in the call for the continuation of the work of the OEWG in an open and inclusive manner. At the same time, a flexible, forward looking approach based on technology foresight is not in any way contradictory to the treaty-based approach. A political commitment based on commonly developed norms, rules and principles of responsible behaviours can lay ground for what may later become legally underpinned obligations.

In support of such an approach and to echo the statement made by the European Union on behalf of its Member States at the final session of the OEWG and reaffirmed here, at the UNGA First Committee, I am pleased to confirm that Czechia commits not to conduct

destructive direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing, as per last year's UNGA resolution 77/41.

We believe that this and similar commitments will contribute to the adoption of further measures to prevent an arms race in outer space and may pave the way to appropriate legally binding international norms in the long run. Let us build on the legacy of those, who were able 60 years ago, despite the Cold War and ruthless space exploration competition, to set up a framework we can still rely on but which we should now adapt and bolster.

Thank you, Chair.