

54TH IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)
Nandasiri Jasentuliyana Keynote Lecture on Space Law & 3rd Young Scholars Session (1)

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SUB-ORBITAL SPACE FLIGHT IN EUROPE - FROM THE FAA TO EASA

Abstract

Sub-orbital space flights are increasingly becoming a reality all over the world. Now, after Virgin Galactic, a European based spaceline has been established. "Space Experience Curaçao" has wet-leased the XCOR Lynx to offer sub-orbital flights in the Caribbean. It is to be expected that more spacelines will be founded in the future. Although neither has officially flown tourists yet, more spacelines also means more rules and regulations for the safety of passengers. At the moment the only rules that exist for sub-orbital space flights are the FAA regulations which were mostly designed for the American market. EASA could be seen as the equivalent of the FAA in Europe. EASA's future approach for rules concerning spacelines is to adopt certification procedures for designers and operators of space vehicles before the first commercial flight. The certification will also include operations, flight crew and passenger licensing and continued airworthiness. This paper will illustrate the FAA regulations which control spaceflights in the USA and compare these regulations with existing and future EASA rules.