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COMPARATIVE STUDY OF THE DEFINITION OF SPACE OBJECT IN NATIONAL SPACE LAWS
AND ITS POSSIBLE LEGAL EFFECT UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

Abstract

This paper provides a review of a study that analyzes those States that have implemented the term “space object” into their respective national legal systems and the legal effect it has under international law. This study surveys the national (space) laws of thirty-three (33) States. Each State has some space-faring experience, including either being a member State of a multilateral space agency, a partner to the International Space Station, launching humans, animals, or other objects into outer space, or have had another State launch objects into outer space for it. This review also provides a survey of which States in the sample are party to the first four space treaties and analyzes whether States have sufficiently implemented the treaties into their national law. From these data, the analysis will seek to so that the meaning of the term space object probably approaches the level of a customary norm of international law or possibly represents a general principle of law. Several legal metrics/tests are discussed and applied in an attempt to show divergence/convergence with public international space law obligations/duties with respect to the functional legal aspects of the term space object.