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AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON PLANETARY PROTECTION POLICIES

Abstract

COSPAR guidelines provide an international standard for planetary protection, but are not legally binding for any one nation. Therefore, it is the purview of individual nations to determine how to identify and implement planetary protection policies to meet the guidelines. The COSPAR Panel on Planetary Protection facilitates this process. With a number of nations planning missions to Mars during the 2020 launch window and proposing Mars sample return, it is increasingly necessary to understand how different space actors are approaching planetary protection policies. This study examines nations as case studies for planetary protection compliance, including the United States, Europe, Russia, China, Japan, and the United Arab Emirates. This report draws on a literature review and interviews with planetary protection experts, national representatives, and COSPAR representatives to compare planetary protection policies internationally and identify any proposed changes in the near future.