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Space Expectations: Involving the Public in Space Activities (2)

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SPACE EXPLORATION AND EXPLOITATION: TECHNICAL AND ECONOMICAL CAPABILITIES
VERSUS LEGAL AND POLITICAL REGULATIONS: THE CIVIL AVIATION PARADIGM

Abstract

The paper will evolve about the central idea that space exploration and exploitation will be mandatory to maintain a sustainable growth, from production of energy to exoresources exploitation. To do so mankind faces four major obstacles: the first one is the lack of adequate technical means to leave the gravitational well of Earth, and the rigors of space weather. The second one is the perception by the general public (and hence by the rulers of the world) of the enormous and often understood as excessive, costs of space activities, which has been a permanent legend since the beginning of the space era. The third is our space “corpus juris” with its central piece, the Outer Space Treaty, that by itself, and as it is understood today, is more an obstacle than a tool to facilitate space activities. The fourth is of course the different (although legitimate) space agendas of the space powers, without understanding that space exploration belongs to us all, and shall be done in such way.

The paper will explore this four points, giving floor to further discussions as to allow the general public in general, but obviously the political leaders too, to appreciate the complexity of space exploration and exploitation, and the need to have a private effort (not against, but in addition to the public one) to drive it, like it was in the XXth Century with aviation. Space activities will succeed only under an umbrella of affirmative, positive, legislation and in a economical ambiance that encourages its development.