

54TH IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)
Environmental Aspects of Space Law and of Space Activities (4)

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THE ROLE OF COSPAR GUIDELINES IN INTERPRETING ARTICLE IX OST

Abstract

A detailed set of guidelines and recommendations aimed at avoiding biological contamination of the Moon, other celestial bodies and the Earth has been developed by COSPAR. This entity is a committee of the International Council for Science (ICSU), an international NGO, and consists of two kinds of Members: National Scientific Institutions, as defined by ICSU, and International Scientific Unions federated in ICSU which seek membership in COSPAR. These rules are broadly respected by space agencies but have a recommendatory, non-enforceable character. The paper analyses the role of these recommendatory rules in interpreting the provisions of the Outer Space Treaty, especially Article IX aimed at the protection of environment in outer space and on the Earth.