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Space law Developments in Asia-Pacific: Diverging national space legislation with regard to the applicability of space law to suborbital flights (4)

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KIWIS IN SPACE: NEW ZEALAND'S 'OUTER SPACE AND HIGH-ALTITUDE ACTIVITIES BILL'

Abstract

The number of countries with more or less comprehensive national space legislation addressing in particular the authorization and supervision of private space activities continues to grow, and several more countries are currently in the process of adding themselves to that list. One of the more recent ones amongst them is New Zealand, which has an extensive 'Outer Space and High-altitude Activities Bill' currently making its way through Parliament. The paper briefly recaps the general underlying international obligations, in particular as following from Articles VI, VII and VIII of the Outer Space Treaty, the Liability Convention and the Registration Convention, New Zealand being a party to the first two but not the third. It then proceeds to analyse the Bill from the above perspective. It will compare the legislation in statu nascendi as needed or helpful with other national space laws already pronounced on those issues, and in doing so will take New Zealand's policies in the field into consideration, including its relations with its neighbour Australia, which has a national space law in place since 1998. This will finally allow for some conclusions as to the contribution to the further development of (international and national) space law represented by these legislative efforts on the part of New Zealand.