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“BELT AND ROAD” SPACE INFORMATION CORRIDOR: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
FROM LEGAL PERSPECTIVES

Abstract

The grand project of “Belt and Road” Space Information Corridor proposed by China, which aims to integrate its space-based platforms for comprehensive space applications under the “Belt and Road” initiative, resonates with calls and recommendations of the United Nations conferences on the exploration and peaceful uses of outer space for increased international cooperation in space projects to address common challenges. This project is expected to translate the potentials of space technology for socioeconomic development into real benefits for billions of people along the belt and road region. The Chinese government has released guidelines in 2016 to identify the general goals and major tasks of the mega project.

As we celebrate legacy of the UNISPACE conferences this year, it’s beneficial to also focus on the ramifications of large scale space projects for governance of space activities on national, regional and international level. On the one hand, policy and legal aspects are important factors to be taken into account in project planning and implementation. On the other hand, the need to accommodate requirements of space projects could stimulate adjustment or innovation in space policies and regulations. The Space Information Corridor offers us a chance to explore such interaction between space project and space governance. Based on analysis of the relevant aspects of legal environment in countries along the Belt and Road, this paper thus attempts to examine opportunities and challenges faced with by the Corridor project from legal perspectives in furtherance of space governance objectives.