

IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)
Interactive Presentations - IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (IP)

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THE NEW-SPACE LAW: THE UAE SPACE LEGISLATION APPROACH TO ENABLE SPACE
PRIVATIZATION AND LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY

Abstract

Over the past few years, the space sector has experienced a renaissance of sorts, following the development and implementation of a range of remarkable technologies.

Small satellites are enabling all kinds of new research and applications; reusable launch systems are lowering access costs; sub-orbital flight technology has the potential to revolutionize travel; Big Data and IoT are increasingly relying on space-based infrastructure; and that is just naming a few of the latest revolutionary developments we are witnessing in the space sector.

Furthermore, space exploration is entering into a new era with the groundwork being laid for the utilization of space resources and the establishment of permanent colonies on the moon and Mars.

Such developments — and many others— have made space more accessible, more attractive, and increasingly commercially viable. It is, therefore, more and more government bodies, private organizations, as well as research and academic institutions are joining the space community.

On the flip side of such progress and development are the challenges such as growing orbital congestion, increasing space traffic, and space debris, and also lack of sufficient clarity in international space law on how to deal with various emerging activities.

The UAE firmly believes that in order to best sustain the growth in space industry and effectively respond to various changes in the space environment appropriate regulatory frameworks should be in place at both national and international levels

As per its mandate under the UAE federal decrees no. 1 of 2014, the UAE Space Agency has developed a National Space Law that was approved by the Federal National Council in 2019, and which caters for the national existing and planned space activities, while at the same time take into account the global trends in space industry.

In this paper, the Author intends to share the practical and very recent experience of the UAE in developing its National Space Law; in particular the approach and main outcomes from studies that contributed into crafting this important national legislation.

The paper also provides description of the Law main chapters, and most importantly will shed-light on how its Articles are defined to promote and create adequate balance between the following two main objectives:

- Attracting more commercialization, privatization and innovation in space, and - Supporting long-term sustainability for space activities