

Exploration of Other Destinations (5)
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THE LEGAL ISSUES OF THE USE OF THE LAGRANGE POINTS

Abstract

There are currently some space objects within the Lagrange points and, this number is going to increase as the space activities rise. Indeed, due to their physical characteristics these points have an increasing interest for the space community. In addition to the scientific space objects already placed into the Lagrange points (mostly for space observation), there are a few companies and researchers thinking to use them for commercial purposes. Among the different ideas there is their utilisation for space mining (by placing asteroids there in order to facilitate the extraction of the resources), for space transportation (as the gravity is lower than on the Moon or other celestial bodies), for a future space station, etc. However, the Lagrange points are limited in their numbers and in their capacity. Furthermore, even if they could possibly host all these projects, the promiscuity between the different space objects might cause interferences or frequency jamming. For these reasons, they have to be shared and used differently as the rest of outer space but still for the “common interest of Mankind”: do they have to be treated as resources (even though they are not material)? As a geostationary orbit (but without being a real orbit)? Do they need their own legal framework and who would be relevant for establishing it?...

This article aims to provide some legal considerations for the future use of the Lagrangian points.