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LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE NOTION "SPACE RESOURCES"

Abstract

Activities on the use and exploration of space resources are in the agenda of the international community nowadays. More and more States make statements about willingness to start, to be enrolled or to realize programs on the Moon or Mars exploration. The high-profile U.S. Artemis Accords is one of the examples of such a process. Despite the numerous and active discussion of this near future resources' utilization, there are many legal lacunas. International legal regime of the exploration and use of space resources is not established. Only 22 States are the participants to the Moon Agreement 1979 without the presence of the space faring nations (Russia, USA, China, India etc.) Work of the Legal Subcommittee of the UN COPUOS due to the pandemic of COVID-19 is slowly and discussion of the item's agenda "General exchange of views on potential legal models for activities in the exploration, exploitation and utilization of space resources" has not been successful yet. The initiatives of the international non-governmental organizations are useful but are not obliged for the key actors of the space activities. Bearing in mind these and other aspects the aim of this paper is to fulfill comprehensive analysis of the start point in this process – analysis of the term "space resource", which could be enshrined in the future international treaty or another soft law document drafting under the umbrella of the United Nations.