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SPACE ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION AND GOVERNANCE AS TOOLS TO IMPROVE
DOMESTIC LEGISLATION AND ENHANCE COMPLIANCE OF DEBRIS MITIGATION
GUIDELINES BY NEW SPACE ACTORS

Abstract

The development of space activities is recent and the awareness towards the risks posed by space debris is even more recent, with less than 50 years. Until 2021 there is no binding instrument in international law to define space debris and address a specific regime. The non-binding instruments, such as guidelines, have been fulfilling this gap and becoming the basis to develop national legislation and perhaps a future Treaty. Even though the acknowledgment of the debris mitigation guidelines produced by IADC and COPUOS have shown the adherence of international society, still far from its full compliance. Both of the guidelines have the status of soft law and are been vital to change the behavior of new space actors in order to mitigate space debris. But as long as they are non-binding in international law and the competition to become market share leaders are increasing, some actors haven't been adopting the necessary measure to ensure the best practices towards debris mitigation. The information, education and capacity-building provided by the integrated approach of the media, NGOs, government and COPUOS is a key element to change the behavior and perception of new space actors towards the implementation of debris mitigation measures and adoption of private standards, i.e., ISO 24113:2019. The development of national policy to enforces the adoption of the above-mentioned measures and standards can increase the compliance and the new space actors can also aggregate intangible assets to its valuation in order to justify the extra costs. This article proposes that the space environmental education and the integrated governance actions may increase the compliance of debris mitigation measures and private standards by new space actors.