

IISL COLLOQUIUM ON THE LAW OF OUTER SPACE (E7)
National space law and security – an update (5)

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STATE OF AND OPTIONS FOR UK SPACE SAFETY, SECURITY AND SUSTAINABILITY
ENGAGEMENT IN EUROPE POST-WITHDRAWAL FROM THE EU

Abstract

UK Space Policy and Law, including those relating to Space Safety, Security and Sustainability, are in transition.

Notably, the UK Government created a National Space Council in 2020, announced its intention to set up a Space Command by 2021, decided to invest in a satellite mega-constellation together with foreign investors, joined the Artemis Accords, and declared its intention to take practical steps to implement the Guidelines for the Long-Term Sustainability of Outer Space Activities of COPUOS. Furthermore, the Government is engaged in updating its policy documents, reportedly paying considerable attention to Defence, as well as establishing the regulations, including on safety, security and sustainability matters, necessary for the full implementation of the Space Industry Act 2018.

Naturally, in doing so, the Government also has to conform with international regulations, consider international collaboration and deal with the consequences of the UK's withdrawal from the European Union (EU). Such withdrawal on 31 December 2020 significantly affects the Government's development of policies, strategies and regulations dealing with space.

Aiming to promote an informed debate about the UK's involvement in Europe, this paper assesses the state of UK Space Policy and Law concerning Space Safety, Security and Sustainability as of summer 2021, as well as discusses the UK's reasonable safety, security and sustainability-oriented engagement options with the EU and within the European Space Agency. This includes an analysis of the relevant UK policy objectives and directions and general strategic approach, as well as the applicable UK and international regulations.