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CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SPACE DEBRIS RISK MITIGATION IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF A HUMAN EXPANSION INTO SPACE.

Abstract

The liability for damage caused by mancraft objects launched into space is a well-known topic, and its relevance for a safe access to space has been underlined for decades and commonly agreed on. In fact, it's crucial relevance was first enunciated in the Liability Convention and, subsequently, in all those legal and political interventions that over the years have outlined the discipline of liability for damage in space and the related prevention policies. A management of artifacts and space debris that is attentive to the safety of other objects in space and, to an even greater extent, of people and things on Earth, is in fact essential to ensure that the risk of accidents is reduced to an acceptable minimum. However, the recent impact of a rocket on the lunar surface invites us to broaden the horizon of reflection on this issue. This goes beyond even the necessary minimum protection to be ensured to celestial bodies as such (and, in the majority view, as the common heritage of humankind). If we put ourselves in the perspective in which in a few years there will be permanent bases on the Moon, in fact, it is evident that it is essential to expand the protection against impacts caused by objects or space debris beyond the terrestrial horizon. This is in order to make the protection already granted by the Liability Convention more effective and broad, and to let its set of rules be ready to respond to the needs that will derive from the future human expansion into space.