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SPACE DIPLOMACY: BRINGING SPACE EXPLORATION STAKEHOLDERS TOGETHER

Abstract

A quantum leap is under way in space as a domain of human activity. The global space economy has rapidly reached almost USD550 billion in size and is projected to grow to over USD1 trillion by the 2040s. There are hundreds of actors involved, from space agencies to private companies to start-ups. Over 70 countries have space programmes and 14 have launch capabilities. These developments have involved intense transnational and international co-operation and competition, across both the public and private sectors. With such rapid changes underway, this paper takes stock of how these developments impact current plans for future space missions. The authors build on theories of diplomacy to bring to light the various ways in which new space actors, scientists, astronauts, space enthusiasts and professional diplomats, among others, are shaping the formal and informal interactions underpinning complex plans to explore different destinations in space.