

Space Law Essay Competition 2023

The NPOC Space Law Austria launches the second Essay Competition on pertinent issues in space law. Students at Austrian universities are invited to submit academic texts in English on one of the following topics:

- **Legal aspects of active debris removal**
- **The legal status of humans in outer space**
- **The rise of large satellite constellations and its challenges for international and national space law**

The authors of the three best essays will receive financial support by the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), through the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), to participate in the **Young Lawyers' Symposium** and the **Practitioners' Forum**, organised by the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL) in autumn 2023 in Paris. In addition, the author of the best essay will receive financial support for his/her participation in the **International Astronautical Congress (IAC)**, which will be held from October 2 to October 6, 2023 in Baku.

Participation is open to all students at Austrian universities interested in space law and in enlarging their international profile.

Exchange students at the University of Vienna, in particular incoming Erasmus students, can get additional ECTS credits for the course "General legal issues of the use of outer space technologies" (030518 KU).

Submissions should be sent to n poc.space.law@univie.ac.at until **1 March 2023**. The essay should be between 25000 characters (2 ECTS) and 36000 characters (3 ECTS).

For further questions, please contact:

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- **Legal aspects of active debris removal**

The problem of space debris is increasing. According to the “Kessler- Syndrome”, at a certain amount of space debris, collisions may have a cascading effect and cause serious obstacles for future missions in space. As a possible solution, active debris removal (ADR) programmes and projects are being developed, such as the eDeorbit-Mission by the European Space Agency. However, conducting ADR missions also involves legal issues that must be taken into account. These include ownership rights, liability, responsibility, intellectual property rights, and even questions of international peace and security.

- **The legal status of humans in outer space**

In addition to the traditional role of humans as astronauts, space activities increasingly envisage the involvement of humans in outer space or on celestial bodies. These include private spaceflight participants and plans for permanent human presence on the Moon or on Mars. The rights and obligations of humans involved in such activities are not yet clearly defined. While there are certain legal frameworks in place, such as the Agreement on the Rescue and Return of Astronauts and the Return of Space Objects and the rules governing the International Space Station, many legal questions still need to be resolved.

- **The rise of large satellite constellations and its challenges for international and national space law**

Satellite constellations are able to provide a variety of useful services, such as internet access, other telecommunication services, navigation, or Earth observation. Due to the growing need for such services, in particular in remote areas as well as in areas of conflict or disaster, the number of satellite constellations increases. This leads to a variety of problems in outer space, which need to be legally assessed, such as liability and responsibility for harmful interference or damage, as well as questions of prevention. It should be assessed to what extent the existing legal framework needs further development and improvement.

The descriptions above aim to provide a condensed overview of the relevant issues concerned. They are not intended to limit the content of students' submissions in any way. Students are encouraged to approach their chosen topic also from other angles. As with any piece of legal writing, thorough research is paramount. We suggest these books and articles as a starting point:

- Anette Fröhlich (ed), *Space Security and Legal Aspects of Active Debris Removal* (Springer 2019)
- Irmgard Marboe, 'Living in the Moon Village – Ethical and Legal Questions' (2019) *Acta Astronautica* 177
- Aslan Abashidze, Irina Chernykh, Maria Mednikova 'Satellite constellations: International Legal and Technical Aspects' (2022) *Acta Astronautica* 176-185

Style sheet

Submissions should be written in Times New Roman 12pt. The **Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA)** should be used.

As a quick overview, we have compiled a style sheet for types of sources that are frequently needed in essays on international space law. Students are welcome to use other types of legal sources not mentioned below and can refer to <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola> for a comprehensive guide on citation rules.

Treaties

Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (opened for signature 27 January 1967, entered into force 10 October 1967) 610 UNTS 205 (OST)

International cases and decisions

Corfu Channel Case (UK v Albania) (Merits) [1949] ICJ Rep 4

North Sea Continental Shelf Cases (Germany v Denmark; Germany v Netherlands) (Merits) [1969] ICJ Rep 3

United Nations Documents

Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, UNGA Res 1962 (XVIII) (13 Dec 1963) UN Doc A/AC.105/572/Rev 1

Books

Malcolm N Shaw, *International Law* (9th edn, CUP 2021)

Contributions to edited books

Fabio Tronchetti, 'Legal Aspects of Satellite Remote Sensing' in Frans von der Dunk (ed), *Handbook of Space Law* (Elgar 2015)

Journal articles

Steven Freeland, 'For better or for worse? The use of "soft law" within the international legal regulation of outer space' (2011) 36 *Annals Air & Space L* 409

Please note that **footnotes** count towards the required **count of characters**.