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National space law developments with particular focus on the Middle East region (5)

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THE 2019 MEASURES ON THE PROMOTION OF A SYSTEMATIC AND ORDERLY
DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCIAL CARRIER ROCKETS: THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS A
COMPREHENSIVE REGULATION OF CHINESE PRIVATE SPACE ACTIVITIES**Abstract**

Over the past few years, the Chinese space program has experienced significant changes, most notably the emergence of an active and dynamic private space sector. Indeed, in a short period of time, over 100 privately backed space start-up companies have been established with the goal of providing various space-related activities and services. In this regard, the most noteworthy development has been the appearance of a number of companies willing to provide commercial space launch services, in particular the launch of small and micro satellites. The rapid growth of a domestic space sector has urged Chinese regulators to put in place an adequate and structured political and legal framework to govern it. The 2019 Measures on the Promotion of a Systematic and Orderly Development of Commercial Carrier Rockets represent the first, and most visible, step of this process, as they set out rules on the research, development and utilization of vehicles capable of conducting space activities, particularly the launch of payloads in outer space. In the light of these developments, the purpose of the present paper is to: a) describe the nature and characteristics of Chinese private space activities; b) give an overview of the political and legal framework that governs them; c) analyze the content, implications and expected impact of the 2019 Measures; d) envision future regulatory initiatives and related challenges.