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Author: Dr. Fabio Tronchetti  
Beihang University (BUAA), China, fabio.tronchetti@yahoo.com

REFORMING THE FCC LICENSING PROCEDURE: A POSITIVE STEP TOWARDS MEETING THE  
REGULATORY CHALLENGES CREATED BY MEGA-CONSTELLATIONS OF SATELLITES?

**Abstract**

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is the US Federal Agency in charge of authorizing the deployment and operations of mega-constellations of satellites. Among the companies that have received an authorization so far, Space X's Starlink is certainly the one that has gathered more attention due to the ambitious nature of its plans and the vast number of satellites (over 40000) that intends to launch in orbit. The authorization of Starlink's plans has been the object of widespread criticism based on the FCC's alleged failure to properly consider the detrimental impact that the proposed operations would have on the long-term sustainability of outer space, particularly in terms of the creation of space debris, the enhanced risk of collisions and the interference with space activities in general. This criticism has also led to concrete actions being taken against the FCC; for example, two of Starlink competitors have filed a case against the FCC in US courts, while NASA has sent a letter to the FCC highlighting various areas of concern associated with the authorization of Starlink activities. In order to address the flaws of the current FCC licensing procedure a process of revision of such a procedure is currently undergoing in the US Congress by means of two Bills that have been submitted at the beginning of 2022, respectively the Secure Space Act of 2022 and the Satellite and Telecommunications Streamlining Act of 2022. The purpose of the present paper is to assess whether these two Bills, if enacted into law, will be able to address the negative issues that have emerged in the process of authorization of mega-constellations of satellites and, thus, to provide better guarantees that this new frontier of space activities will not undermine the long-term sustainability of outer space.