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INTERNATIONAL SPACE SECURITY MECHANISMS: CURRENT STATUS AND ANALYSIS OF
THEIR LIMITATIONS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN SPACE

Abstract

This report analyses space security initiatives and mechanisms to date to inform future efforts with lessons learned from the past. It is the product of an almost 2-years long project carried out by an international team of students and young professionals of the SGAC Space Law and Policy Project Group. Throughout the project, the team has conducted two activities: a) researching and analyzing existing international space security mechanisms and b) interviewing space security experts to cover most of the world region for getting a complete perspective on the current status of affairs. These critical efforts will be presented for the first time in this report.

It begins by summarizing the different security mechanisms that have been drafted and presented to international fora for negotiations. These summaries are structured in terms of their historical and legal context, their content, the general reception by the international community and their outcome in the context of space security, including the main shortcomings and strengths in the prevention of an arms race in outer space.

The analysis of these mechanisms' applicability and limitations in the current climate of space security is supported by the results from a set of interviews with experts in the field, which aimed at covering diverse perspectives from different geographical backgrounds and fields of expertise. Several topics were discussed during these exchanges, with the overarching aim of understanding what aspects of space security remain unresolved despite the variety of approaches that have been used in the drafting of these mechanisms, and how nations can work towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space in this era of unprecedented technological advancements in space.

This paper will cover key topics, including current and future challenges of space security from legal and geopolitical perspectives, main points of contention, approaches that have shown positive results

towards the prevention of an arms race in outer space, and other relevant topics of today related to space security and safety, including the consequences of space debris and the interaction between space security and the rapidly growing commercial space sector. Finally, it attempts to provide a set of recommendations for a path to move space security forward through a widely accepted solution.