

**EISC 10th of May 2021**  
**National Statement of the Austrian Parliament**

First of all, let me express my pleasure that we are meeting here today, despite the special situation we find ourselves in and its impact on the organisation of meetings.

Austria has some hidden champions in the space industry. Among other things, we are one of the leading nations in the areas of component construction for control computers for satellites, thermal insulation and light material tanks.

More than 100 organisations from business and research with over 1,000 employees are active in this area. The total turnover is around 125 M€ per year. Around 20 patents and more than 2,500 scientific publications show how innovative Austria is in this field.

Austrian space technology has been on board of all major ESA missions in recent years and is also involved in the construction of Ariane 6 and Vega launch systems.

Austria also enjoys an excellent reputation in the area of simulation research with the Austrian Space Forum. In October 2021, the Austrian Space Forum will conduct a Mars field simulation in the Negev Desert together with the Israel Space Agency. The space sector is highly valued in Austria's high-tech industry.

But Austria also has a lot to offer in the field of research. Since 2002, more than 750 projects with a total budget of 120 million euros have been funded under the Austrian Space Application Program. One third of these projects were followed by an ESA project. One of Austria's biggest strengths is Earth observation.

Our research helps to better predict natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes. This is possible because satellites transmit reliable pictures and accurate position determination, which is provided by the highly advanced equipment from RUAG Space Austria on all Sentinel satellites of the earth observation system Copernicus. Within the last decade, a new field of competence has emerged in Austria; the so-called nanosatellites. These are small satellites with a weight between 1 and 10 kg.

Currently, four small satellites are operated from Austria:

- Launched in 2013, TUGSAT-1 / BRITE-Austria and UniBRITE investigate the stellar structure and evolution of the brightest stars in the sky.
- PEGASUS is an Earth observation spacecraft developed and built by Austrian students and launched in 2017.

- OPS-SAT is a satellite that demonstrates the continuous improvement of mission control capabilities and illustrates what space technology can do. It was launched in 2019 under the leadership of the Graz University of Technology.

The increasing expertise in the field of nanosatellites here in Austria goes hand in hand with the adoption of the national space law in 2011. Furthermore Austria has ratified all five international space treaties. To implement the resulting obligations, Austria enacted the Outer Space Act in 2011, which was supplemented by the Outer Space Regulation in 2015. Austrian space legislation also takes into account the sustainability of outer space by requiring the operator to ensure the mitigation of space debris and contamination of the space environment.

On a global level, this development has led to the phenomenon of mega-constellations; new space systems consisting of hundreds to thousands of individual satellites. On the one hand these are an important opportunity for the space economy, but on the other hand this development is leading to growing tensions between the increasing diversity and the rapidly growing economic factor in space.

Some data to illustrate these effects: In 2019, around \$87 billion were invested in space activities by the public sector worldwide. In just a decade, the number of countries with satellites in orbit has increased from 50 in 2008 to 82 in 2018. In 2019, 489 satellites were launched, compared to an average of 110 satellites per year between 2000 and 2013. Last year we saw a launch rate of over 1000 launches.

This massive increase in operational satellites in orbit has a major impact on space activities. Space debris is a hot topic and affects all space applications, scientific missions, as well as commercial mega-constellations. Space Traffic Management and Coordination is an emerging topic on the global agendas.

In order to achieve a balance between the various uses, Austria is particularly committed to multilateralism in space. Together with the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs, Austria launched the World Space Forum in 2019 and this year's meeting of the World Space Forum will be from 6<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> December at the Vienna International Centre.

With this Forum we open the "UN door" for NGO's, industry representatives, young professionals, scientific institutions, government agencies and government representatives and politicians and create an open dialogue on a multilateral level. The topic of this year will be Space and climate action.

Furthermore, I may inform that we envisage to apply for the EISC Presidency in 2023. Once the necessary formal procedures in the Austrian Parliament are completed we would come up with an official application.

Austria has much to offer and we would like to actively contribute our ideas and expertise in the field of space in a leading role.