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Space debris mitigation: roles and limitation of soft laws

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ABSTRACT

For nearly fifty-nine years, State Governments and private actors have objects in orbit around Earth and other celestial bodies. The leftovers of dilapidated satellites, rockets, non functioning satellites and the junks ensuing from their collisions and explosions form a considerable portion of the debris in space. These non-functioning objects in actual fact threaten the space environment by their mere presence. Space junks on orbit around the earth poses the most severe modern risk to the use of space. For the long term sustainability and the continuous usages of the Outer space by State Governments and private actors, mitigation of debris in Outer Space is very essential. There are so many Guidelines that have been suggested to help in mitigating debris in space by major space faring countries, policy makers, United Nations and some space agencies to mention a few. These Guidelines and Code of Conducts are regarded as soft laws and they are expected to regulate the activities of humankind in the uses of Outer space. This paper will crucially analyse the various guidelines proposed for space debris mitigation. This paper is not an attempt to discuss every facet of the mitigation guidelines. It will rather look at the overview of the soft laws, its roles and some of the limitations of soft laws and projects the way forward.

Keywords: Space debris mitigation, roles, limitation, soft laws

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