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**LEGAL Aspects OF PLANETARY DEFENCE: Obligation to Inform and to Act, Liability, Responsibility, and INTERNATIONAL Decision-Making**

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***Keywords:*** *legal aspects of planetary defence, obligations to inform and to act, liability, responsibility, international decision-making*

##### ABSTRACT

In 2016, the Space Mission Planning Advisory Group (SMPAG) established the “Ad-hoc Working Group on Legal Issues” with the purpose of providing advice on legal aspects of planetary defence. The Working Group elaborated a report with a first analysis and assessment of the legal context as well as questions and issues arising with regard to the planning and conduct of planetary defence missions. The report entitled “Planetary Defence – Legal Overview and Assessment” was endorsed by SMPAG in 2020. The presentation will cover some of the main topics analysed in the report.

At the outset, the presentation will discuss whether, in the case where a Near-Earth Object (NEO) impact threat is detected, there exists an obligation of States under international law to inform other States about this threat. Subsequently, it will explore whether States are obliged to take action to mitigate this threat or to assist other States in this regard.

Furthermore, the presentation will address the question of liability of States for possible damage caused as a result of a planetary defence operation. Liability will be distinguished from problems of international responsibility of States for violations of international obligations, including treaties banning nuclear explosions in outer space and obligations of nuclear non-proliferation.

The presentation will also briefly explore what kind of processes and fora could be envisaged for taking decisions to conduct a planetary defence mission, including the United Nations Security Council and the United Nations General Assembly.

The analysis will be based on international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, as well as on some specialized fields of international law, such as international space law and international nuclear law.

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