

Space Law Essay Competition

The NPOC Space Law Austria launches an essay competition on pertinent issues in the area of space law. Participants are invited to write a text in English on one of the following topics:

- **Returning to the Moon: A close examination of the Artemis Accords**
- **Space Law and environmental protection**
- **The legality of utilizing nuclear devices for planetary defence**

The authors of the three best submissions will receive financial support by the Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology (BMK), through the Austrian Research Promotion Agency (FFG), to participate in the **Young Lawyers' Symposium** and the **Practitioners' Forum**, organised by the European Centre for Space Law (ECSL). In addition, the author of the best essay will receive financial support for his/her participation in the **International Astronautical Congress (IAC)**, which will be held from 14 to 18 October 2024 in Milan.

Participation is open to all students at Austrian universities who are interested in space law and in enlarging their international profile.

Exchange students at the University of Vienna, in particular incoming Erasmus students, can get additional ECTS credits for the course "General legal issues of the use of outer space technologies" (030518 KU). In addition, the paper can be used as a core for diploma seminar papers/Bachelor theses under the supervision of Prof. Irmgard Marboe.

Submissions should be sent to npocspace.law@univie.ac.at until 31 January 2024. The essay should be between 25000 characters (2 ECTS) and 36000 characters (3 ECTS).

For further questions, please contact:

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- **Returning to the Moon: A close examination of the Artemis Accords**

In recent years, humanity has witnessed an exciting resurgence in space exploration efforts, with ambitions to return to the Moon and pave the way for future missions to Mars and beyond. In this context, the Artemis Accords, which aim to establish a set of legal principles and guidelines for nations and organizations participating in lunar exploration missions, have emerged as a new legal framework for international cooperation in outer space activities. However, for many reasons the Accords have been the subject of fierce debates, with some scholars worrying that the accords could present an effort to regulate outside the realm of UNCOPUOS's authority.

- **Space Law and environmental protection**

The vast expanse of outer space holds both the promise of exploration and the peril of environmental degradation. Space law serves as the cornerstone for regulating human activities beyond Earth's atmosphere, and the imperative of environmental protection in the cosmos cannot be overlooked. In their essays, students could assess whether the current legal framework is equipped to deal with the environmental challenges that are connected with humanity's advancements in the field of space exploration and commercialization. How can space law ensure the long-term sustainability of space faring efforts?

- **The legality of utilizing nuclear devices for planetary defence**

In an era characterized by unprecedented advancements in space exploration and growing concerns about the potential impact of celestial objects colliding with Earth, the notion of employing nuclear devices for planetary defense has become a subject of both scientific inquiry and intense legal debate. Can the use of Nuclear Explosive Device be justified under international law for example, when it serves to alter the trajectory of an incoming asteroid?

These descriptions aim to provide a condensed overview of the relevant issues concerned. They are not intended to limit the content of students' submissions in any way. Students are encouraged to approach their chosen topic as they see fit. As with any piece of legal writing, thorough research is paramount. We suggest these books and articles as a starting point:

- Rossana Deplano, 'The Artemis Accords – Evolution or Revolution in International Space Law' (2021) 72/3 International & Comparative Law Quarterly
- Lotta Viikari, *The Environmental Element in Space Law* (Brill/Martinus Nijhoff 2008)
- Irmgard Marboe (ed), *Legal Aspects of Planetary Defence* (Brill/Martinus Nijhoff 2021)

Style sheet

Students are expected to use the **Oxford University Standard for the Citation of Legal Authorities (OSCOLA)** for their Essays. As a quick overview, we have compiled a style sheet for types of sources that are frequently needed for essays on international space law. Students are welcome to use other types of legal sources not mentioned below and can refer to <https://www.law.ox.ac.uk/oscola> for a comprehensive guide on citation rules.

Treaties

Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies (opened for signature 27 January 1967, entered into force 10 October 1967) 610 UNTS 205 (OST)

International cases and decisions

Corfu Channel Case (UK v Albania) (Merits) [1949] ICJ Rep 4

North Sea Continental Shelf Cases (Germany v Denmark; Germany v Netherlands) (Merits) [1969] ICJ Rep 3

United Nations Documents

Declaration of Legal Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, UNGA Res 1962 (XVIII) (13 Dec 1963) UN Doc A/AC.105/572/Rev 1

Books

Malcolm N Shaw, *International Law* (9th edn, CUP 2021)

Contributions to edited books

Fabio Tronchetti, 'Legal Aspects of Satellite Remote Sensing' in Frans von der Dunk (ed), *Handbook of Space Law* (Elgar 2015)

Journal articles

Steven Freeland, 'For better or for worse? The use of "soft law" within the international legal regulation of outer space' (2011) 36 *Annals Air & Space L* 409

Please note that footnotes **count towards the required count of characters**.