

European Union launches latest space regulation efforts

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An Ariane-5 rocket blasts off from the European space centre at Kourou, French Guiana in March 2012. Europe's rule-making bureaucracy is moving forward with plans to introduce some earthly order to the unruly heavens, unveiling its latest efforts to regulate outer space.

Europe's rule-making bureaucracy is moving forward with plans to introduce some earthly order to the unruly heavens, unveiling its latest efforts Wednesday to regulate outer space.

The European Union, which is leading a global initiative to introduce an international code of conduct for [spacecraft](#), presented the newest draft of its extra-terrestrial regulations.

A top concern is the ever-increasing field of [space debris](#) that orbits the earth. Spent [rocket fuel](#) tanks, disused space probes and a myriad of

other man-made objects circle the earth at great speeds, posing a risk to space shuttles and satellites.

"Space is a resource for all countries in the world, and those which do not yet have space activities will have them in the future," the EU said in a statement.

"Therefore, the EU considers (it) necessary to ensure greater security in [outer space](#)."

More than 110 representatives from 40 countries gathered in Vienna on Wednesday to discuss the latest draft of the EU's "International Code of Conduct for Outer Space Activities", first launched at the end of 2008.

The initiative is already backed by several space-faring nations, among them the United States, Japan and India.

According to an earlier draft of the text released in 2009, countries signing up to the code would pledge to maintain freedom of access and use of outer space "for peaceful purposes without interference, fully respecting the security, safety and integrity of space objects in [orbit](#)."

The EU hopes the code will be implemented next year, though it must be further debated at a broader meeting in New York in October.

The proposed code would be applicable to all outer space activities conducted by countries or non-governmental entities, and would lay down basic rules for visiting space, the EU said in its statement.

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