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EXPERT INITIATIVE ON ARTICLE XI OF THE OUTER SPACE TREATY

Call for participation
20 January 2026

Dear Members of IISL,

We invite expressions of interest to join a new IISL venture: an **IISL Expert Initiative on Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty (OST)**. The goal is to compile a contribution to the 2026 Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) Legal Subcommittee's (LSC) *Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five UN Treaties on Outer Space (WG TRE)*, tailored to the WG's work on Article XI OST. The provision concerns international cooperation on the peaceful uses of outer space and the sharing of information on activities in outer space.

IISL members are invited to join two meetings of the IISL Expert Initiative with the goal of drafting a Conference Room Paper (CRP) to be considered for submission to the forthcoming 65th LSC session in 2026. The working language of the LSC Working Group is English, so the CRP will be drafted in English. The exercise is a call for expert contribution as well as a capacity building exercise: any text drafted through this proposal would first proceed to review by the IISL Directorate of Studies (DoS) and then be subject to IISL Board approval before submission or publication. Please note that if the exercise does culminate in presentation of a CRP, the work will be credited to the IISL and not to specific individuals.

The format of the IISL Expert Initiative is gathering of inputs from the collective of our members, providing an opportunity to gather our collective knowledge and input on the topic. The meetings will be held on the dates mentioned below (on two Saturdays, always at 13 h Paris time in order to best meet the needs of different time zones). The Expert Initiative is not a formal IISL Working Group, but an initiative from IISL which provides an interesting experience and exposure on preparing formal contributions at LSC level.

To be considered for participation, we kindly ask for an expression of interest so the meeting links can be shared among participants as well as consultation of the documents of the LSC WG TRE as listed below ahead of the two meetings (more information below).

Background to the submission and work of WG TRE

IISL as a permanent observer to COPUOS and its Subcommittees may submit its contributions to the 65th LSC session of 2026, including the meetings of the WG TRE during this session.

LSC's WG TRE has taken up the "exchange of views on the implementation of Article XI OST" and several key papers have outlined current challenges, possible reporting structures and questions for States and permanent observers to the Committee.

Listed relevant documents:

- *Report of the Chair of the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Treaties on Outer Space (A/AC.105/C.2/2025/TRE/L.1)* (English [here](#); available in all six official UN languages on the [LSC 2025 session page](#). The document is also attached as an annex to the 2025 LSC Report: English [here](#) and in all six official UN languages on the [LSC 2025 session page](#)) including the Working Group's workplan until 2027;
- *Implementation of article XI of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, and article IV of the Convention on Registration of Objects Launched into Outer Space – Background paper by the Secretariat (A/AC.105/C.2/L.338)* (English [here](#) and in all six official UN languages [here](#));
- *Non Paper submitted by Belgium: [Contribution by Belgium to the Discussion on the Implementation of Article XI of the 1967 United Nations Treaty on Outer Space in the Working Group on the Status and Application of the Five United Nations Outer Space Treaties of the Legal Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space](#)*;
- *Non-Paper Submitted by the Chair of the Working Group: [First Ideas for a Template on Article XI Outer Space Treaty](#)*; and
- *Submissions under Article XI of the Outer Space Treaty*: see [here](#) a collection of documents submitted and hosted on the website of the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs.

Aims of the IISL Expert Initiative on Article XI OST

Building on the momentum of the work of WG TRE, this new IISL Expert Initiative aims to conduct an examination of how Article XI OST is interpreted and implemented today and how the international community may improve transparency and information-sharing practices in light of the ongoing work in COPUOS, especially within LSC's WG TRE. The current work plan of this Expert Initiative at IISL is limited to the period of early 2026, ahead of the LSC session. In order to facilitate discussions, the meetings will follow a pre-determined schedule of topics, to be distributed to participants ahead of both meetings. This is a new venture, and any potential learnings from this initiative may serve future IISL endeavours in terms of working method and platform for member engagement.

The Expert Initiative will:

- **Map and analyse** the current understanding of Article XI OST's requirement to inform the UN Secretary-General of the "nature, conduct, locations and results" of space activities.

- **Review and compare** the approaches suggested in the WG-TRE documents, including the Secretariat's background paper and the Chair's proposed reporting template (draft).
- **Assess State practice** – where information is provided, in what form, and how consistently – and identify gaps or ambiguities in implementation.
- **Develop ideas or options** for how Article XI OST reporting could become more coherent, useful and aligned with contemporary space activities (including commercial missions, rideshare launches, on-orbit operations, lunar activities, TCBMs, space security etc.).
- **Collect input to prepare a written contribution from IISL** to be submitted for the 2026 Legal Subcommittee and meetings of WG TRE during the session 2026.

As scheduled output of the Expert Initiative, a written contribution to the 2026 LSC cycle and WG TRE sessions is planned (last point in the list above). The information discussed in the two meetings serves to develop this written contribution, to be finalised in March 2026.

The planned meeting schedule is:

- **Saturday, 7 February 2026:** 13:00-14:30 h CET (Paris time)
- **Saturday, 28 February 2026:** 13:00-14:30 h CET

Kindly consider your availability for this schedule when considering your participation in the IISL Expert Initiative on Art. XI OST. Participating IISL members should be available to attend both meetings.

Who we're looking for

We invite applications from IISL members of all regions of the globe and all career stages with backgrounds in space law, policy, international law, transparency mechanisms, and/or regulatory practice. We aim for a global, inclusive and pluralistic participation and drafting process. Expertise in the respective topics of work and prior COPUOS experience is desired but not required. Kindly note the dates of the scheduled meetings when considering your participation.

IISL Copyright

The written output arising from the Expert Initiative, including any contributions made by participants, is governed by the IISL Copyright Policy. Copyright in the final written work remains with IISL and reflects the collective input of all participants. The output will be published under the name of IISL and will not attribute authorship to individual participants. Participants may state that they contributed to the work as part of the collective Expert Initiative, but may not claim individual authorship or ownership of the output. Participants will be acknowledged in IISL communications to members, such as on the website or in news items. The final written outcome of the Expert Initiative is submitted for editing and approval by the Board prior to submission at LSC level.

What participation involves

This IISL Expert Initiative is a unique opportunity to contribute to a (potential) formal IISL work product to be shared at international level. Members should be ready to agree to the IISL Copyright Policy, agree to working within the pre-defined structure of topics (pre-distributed agendas of the online meetings, oriented at the contents of the relevant WG TRE documents listed above) and be able to join the two virtual meetings. There will be a possibility to contribute

to research or drafting tasks in between and after the meetings and help shape the final submission. This is an intense short-time mandate that will focus on early 2026.

As this is an IISL Initiative and the submission of a written contribution will be subject to approval by DoS and the Board of Directors, at this stage no outcome can be promised. Primarily, the initiative aims to gather the collective knowledge of IISL membership on the topic and contribute to IISL's international cooperation through this new mechanism.

The methodology used by the IISL Expert Initiative will be mainly doctrinal: a review of relevant international and domestic legal regulation and policies, as well as the work of leading scholars. In addition, examination of State practice and the practice of international intergovernmental organisations on the topic will be undertaken.

How to express interest and participate

Please send:

- A short description of your **background** (250 words, can also be in CV or bio format);
- A short **statement of interest** (250 words) on why you'd like to join and what you would like to contribute; and
- Your **contact details** for the online meetings, including a preferred email address.

Please submit any inquiries and your expressions of interest by **5 February 2026** to the Coordinator of the new IISL Expert Initiative Dr. Scarlet O'Donnell at exp_articlexi@iisl.space.

We look forward to your participation and collaboration in this timely and significant undertaking.

Best wishes,

Scarlet O'Donnell

