

# **Legal regime of arms control in relation to outer space**

## **Abstract**

The use of outer space began more than 60 years ago, and humanity is increasingly dependent on space infrastructure. The number of participants and space objects in outer space is constantly increasing. However, since the beginning space exploration has been connected to military activities in outer space. Paradoxically, it has helped economic development and keeping of international peace and stability in many ways. Nevertheless, some military activities, in particular the development and testing of anti-satellite systems and possible placement of weapons in outer space itself, are potentially destabilizing and threatening even the very existence of space infrastructure.

Space law, as a separate branch of the international law, has been evolving in particular since the 1950s. Among other things, legal norms governing armaments in relation to outer space have been adopted in this field. This work provides a basic overview of the development of space law as such and deals in more detail with individual concepts and specific provisions related to the regulation of armaments in outer space, including the so-called soft law, i.e. non-binding norms.

The fundamental question is whether the existing space law, including possible international customs, provides a sufficient legal framework for the regulation of space weapons. However, the wording of existing international legal norms sets only a comprehensive regulation and limitation of weapons of mass destruction in outer space and on celestial bodies. In relation to conventional weapons, existing regulation is insufficient.

Recently, several initiatives have been launched in international fora to remedy such a situation, either through a new international convention governing the placement of weapons in outer space and the use of force in space, or through soft law. This work provides a detailed overview and historical context of such initiatives, including analysis and evaluation of the resulting proposals for new legislation.

**Key words: space law, arms regulation, soft law**