

Conference on Disarmament
30 March 2023
Austrian Statement

Madame President,

As this is the first time during your presidency, that Austria is taking the floor, we would like to congratulate you on the assumption of the presidency of the Conference on Disarmament and wish you every success. Please be assured of Austria's full support.

Austria aligns herself with the statement delivered by the European Union. Please allow me to make the following remarks in a national capacity:

Madame President

Our modern societies and economies are heavily and increasingly reliant on space-based infrastructure and services. Access to space is also relevant to ensure the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Safeguarding the safe, responsible and peaceful use of outer space must therefore be of utmost priority for the international community.

Austria has always been committed to further strengthening the rules-based order, which applies to outer space, not the least to avoid conflict and confrontation in this domain. We also need to rebuild confidence and trust among space-actors, taking all possible actions to prevent misunderstanding and reduce the risk of escalation as much as possible.

Austria commends the United States for its initiative and commitment not to conduct destructive direct-ascent ASAT tests and all States who have already joined in. Austria, together with all EU Member States, supported UNGA Resolution 77/41.

Austria considers the risks and consequences associated with destructive direct-ascent ASAT tests as unacceptable. Firstly, the creation of space debris hinders space activities and reduces access to space. Secondly, possible threats or irresponsible behaviour regarding such tests could lead to escalation due to misunderstanding, misinterpretation or miscalculation.

Austria has also been a steadfast supporter of the work of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, including its Space Debris Mitigation Guidelines, as endorsed by UNGA Resolution 62/214.

In light of these considerations, **Austria commits not to conduct destructive, direct-ascent anti-satellite missile testing**. Austria has also never developed any capacities to do so.

Austria regards the initiative towards a global norm to ban direct ascending destructive anti-missile tests as one very concrete measure on the path to a more comprehensive set of norms and rules, including legally binding instruments, to ensure space security and safety for all. Austria remains committed to supporting all efforts to preserve the integrity and sustainability of outer space and to protecting space-based infrastructure and services.

I thank you