

Space Law of Saudi Arabia

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Abstract

Saudi Arabia's decision to withdraw from the 1979 Moon Agreement made the news. Official reasons for this move are yet to be revealed, but the Kingdom already announced its ambitious target: to return to outer space four decades after the first Saudi astronaut's flight, and reach the top five spacefaring states.

The first national space policy of KSA is taking shape based on Saudi Vision 2030 aiming to transform the nation into "a pioneering and successful global model of excellence, on all fronts".¹ The nascent space sector, in its turn, positions itself as a "key contributor to Saudi Arabia's growth and prosperity and as an enabler of future generations, to benefit humankind".² The clear trend to support private space activities, as well as the need to comply with the Kingdom's international commitments (including under the Artemis Accords) require due domestic regulation which is expected to emerge soon.

1. Introduction

The present work provides an overview of the ongoing drafting of the first space law of Saudi Arabia, as well as a series of ensuing regulations, the first national space policy/strategy, and additional, non-legally instruments (including guidelines, standards, etc.). Selected key elements present in the available draft instruments are compared with the relevant provisions of UN space treaties binding upon KSA. Special emphasis is given to the regulatory approach by the Kingdom to the most pertinent problems of space activities, including space sustainability, mitigation and remediation of space debris, use of space resources, protection of the dark and quiet skies.

Given the specificity of the topic, the fact that the Saudi space legislation is taking shape simultaneously with the writing of this paper, as well as the lack of doctrinal views on this development due to its novelty, the majority of sources comprise draft laws and regulations published online by competent Saudi authorities. Additional material to reveal the general political context

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1 Vision 2030 Overview, <https://www.vision2030.gov.sa/media/cofh1nmf/vision-2030-overview.pdf>, (accessed 04.10.23).

2 Prince Sultan bin Salman Chairs 2nd Saudi Space Commission's Meeting, 22 April 2020, <https://www.defaiya.com/news/Regional%20News/KSA/2020/04/22/prince-sultan-bin-salman-chairs-2nd-saudi-space-commission-s-meeting>, (accessed 04.10.23).

for the ongoing regulatory process included mainly official statements made on behalf of KSA by authorized representatives of the state. Selected papers by well-known experts in the field of space law were addressed to showcase the varying subjective approaches to detecting the reasons for certain decisions made by Saudi Arabia having direct relevance to its international obligations.

2. Saudi Space Journey Begins

As early as in the 8th century CE the dream of space began taking shape through the advancements in Middle Eastern astronomy.³ However, for the hundreds of years that followed this journey was confined to theory.

The first Saudi national to perform a space travel was prince Sultan bin Salman Al Saud who also happened to be the first Muslim, the first person of Arabic heritage, as well as the first royal family member to go into outer space.⁴ After the historic flight of prince Salman on board the space shuttle Discovery in 1985, it took almost four decades for the Kingdom to revive the interest in human space travel. Nevertheless, the memorable journey of a Saudi royal to outer space spurred research and development (R&D) in the space sector.

At the same time – more precisely, from 2000 till 2021 – seventeen space objects, mainly communications satellites, were launched into outer space for Saudi Arabia by foreign partners.⁵ The first Saudi-made communications satellite SGS-1 reached the orbit in 2019.

The previous year – 2018 – was marked with the birth of the modern Saudi space industry. In December 2018, the Saudi Space Commission was established with the aim to accelerate economic diversification, enhance research and development, and raise private sector participation in the global space industry.⁶ Since then, the Kingdom has been heavily investing in the development of its state-funded space program, with a special focus on the advanced space-related education of the young Saudis.

3 Astronomical Innovation in the Islamic World, <https://www.loc.gov/collections/finding-our-place-in-the-cosmos-with-carl-sagan/articles-and-essays/modeling-the-cosmos/astronomical-innovation-in-the-islamic-world>, (accessed 05.10.23); M. Sardar, *Astronomy and Astrology in the Medieval Islamic World*, August 2011, https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/astr/hd_astr.htm, (accessed 05.10.23).

4 Sultan ibn Salman Al Saud, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Sultan-ibn-Salman-Al-Saud>, (accessed 04.10.23).

5 UNOOSA Online Index of Objects Launched into Outer Space, Saudi Arabia, <https://t.ly/Twkc9>, (accessed 04.10.23).

6 Saudi Space Commission, <https://t.ly/BezB8>, (accessed 04.10.23).

3. New Space Strategy of Saudi Arabia

Saudi Vision 2030 lays the foundation for the growth and modernization of the key strategic sectors of KSA. The document highlights the new strategic course: from dependence on oil exports towards innovative economic diversification and sustainable future. The space sector is undoubtedly high on the tip-priority list: the inauguration in November 2022 of the Supreme Space Council, chaired by Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, underscored the “strategic importance of the space sector [of Saudi Arabia], which represents the next trillion global economy and the main engine to stimulate innovation and inspire future generations”.⁷

The first national space strategy of KSA has not been published yet. Nevertheless, recent statements of high-ranking Saudi officials already outline the scale of the Kingdom’s ambitious. For instance, in November 2022, Acting CEO of the Saudi Space Commission Dr. Mohammed bin Saud Altamimi in his speech opening the International Forum on Connecting the World from the Skies named the key priorities for the national space sector:

development and sustainable expansion of non-terrestrial networks (NTN);
 international cooperation;
 creation of well-crafted regulations based on public-private collaborative efforts;
 harmonization of standards;
 maximized use of green energy;
 minimizing of space debris;
 reduction of light pollution to preserve the dark skies;
 ensure fair access to space for the global community to benefit from its potential.⁸

In addition, the Saudi Space Agency (SSA) listed on its public website its objectives which include:

implementing, developing, and localizing space science and technology;
 supporting the peaceful uses of space industries and technologies;
 providing the best global applications and practices in the fields of satellites and exploratory missions;

7 Supreme Space Council to act as main engine to stimulate innovation, inspire future generations, 1 November 2022, <https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/626574#:~:text=RIYADH%20%E2%80%94%20The%20decision%20of%20the,to%20a%20state%20of%20the>, (accessed 04.10.23).

8 Livestreaming | First Day of the International “Connecting the World from the Skies” Forum, 8 November 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3X77aVn-wyE>, (accessed 04.10.23).

enhancing the Kingdom's position to be a leading regional and international center in the field of space science and technology; adopting expertise and knowledge related to science and applied space research for civil purposes.⁹

By mobilizing its vast resources, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is determined to become one of the top five spacefaring nations in the coming few years.¹⁰

4. Saudi Space Governance

Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, in his capacity as head of the Saudi Supreme Space Council, exercises overall governance and control over the Kingdom's space sector.

The nascent space industry of Saudi Arabia is led by two key public actors: the Communications, Space and Technology Commission (CST) and the Saudi Space Agency (SSA). The mandate of both entities in the area of space activities was finetuned in 2023 in order to meet the Kingdom's growing demand in various space applications.

Other influential players in the space area include the King Abdulaziz City of Science and Technology (KACST), Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT), Research Development and Innovation Authority (RDIA), Saudi Data and AI Authority (SDAIA), as well as Digital Government Authority (DGA).

4.1. Supreme Space Council

The establishment in November 2022 of the Saudi Supreme Council chaired by the Crown Prince underlined the strategic role the space sector plays in KSA.

The Council is expected to have a decisive voice in approving space strategies, policies, programs and plans, monitor their implementation in line with the interests of other sectors and the Kingdom as a whole.

It is noteworthy that the Council members represent a whole variety of public bodies whose mandates are relevant to space activities. The respective state authorities are responsible respectively for communications and technology, foreign affairs, finance, industry and mineral resources, intelligence, state security, civil aviation, as well as R&D and innovation.¹¹

⁹ About Agency, <https://ssa.gov.sa/en/about-agency/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

¹⁰ Supra note 8.

¹¹ Supreme Space Council to act as main engine to stimulate innovation, inspire future generations, 1 November 2022, <https://saudigazette.com.sa/article/626574>, (accessed 05.10.23).

4.2. Saudi Space Agency

SSA, formerly known as the Saudi Space Commission, was empowered, *inter alia*, to develop:

- national space strategy;
- plans, policies, programs and requirements for the national space infrastructure;
- satellite systems;
- spacecraft launch technology;
- space science and exploration missions;
- national cadres in the field of space science.¹²

By decision of the Council of Ministers, in 2023 the Saudi Space Commission was transformed into SSA with the aim to concentrate its work on innovative industry, as well as space science and exploration. SSA will align its objectives with Saudi Vision 2030 with the ultimate goal to improve the quality of life, create a better, safer and profitable environment for KSA nationals, public entities and businesses.¹³

The new mandate of SSA encompasses the following tasks:

- Leading the Saudi space sector by preparing space-related policies, programs and plans, first of all the national space strategy, and closely monitoring their implementation;
- Working to implement and manage strategic programs and projects and support national initiatives of high value;
- Enabling the space sector through financial support, human capital development and infrastructure, as well as private sector participation and coordination with government, private agencies and academic institutions;
- Encouraging the national space sector to promote the development of technologies and contribute to the diversification and sustainability of the Kingdom's economy;
- Enhancing national security by using space infrastructure and technologies to protect citizens from natural disasters and other natural phenomena;
- Organizing and developing satellite-related systems, including satellites for space agency services and information about the Earth's surface and environment;
- Organizing and developing global navigation satellite systems for positioning, movements and time;

12 Charter for the Saudi Space Commission, adopted by Council of Ministers Resolution No. (209) dated 25/4/1440H.

13 *Supra* note 9.

Developing spacecraft launch technologies and related services;
 Enhancing space security through space monitoring and tracking, space debris monitoring, early warning and, other related activities;
 Establishing requirements for the development and implementation of the space sector infrastructure and operation, including earth stations, spacecraft and semi-orbital flights;
 Organizing and developing all matters related to space science and exploration missions;
 Managing and financing R&D programs;
 Developing, nurturing and supporting national talents in the field of space science and technology;
 Cooperating with related government and private agencies in other countries, as well as international organizations, all in accordance with the regular procedures;
 Enhancing international cooperation through increasing the participation of the government, the private sector, academia and research facilities in international space networks, in a manner that enhances the Kingdom's regional and global participation;
 Representing the Kingdom in related international forums and events.¹⁴

The two key flagship programs currently implemented by SSA are the Human Space Flight program (HSF) and Saudi Space Accelerator Program. HSF aims to train and prepare Saudi astronauts for short and long-term space missions. The primary focus of HSF is on physical science, human health, biology, biotechnology, biopharma, Earth science, in-space manufacturing, technology development, as well as the fostering of international cooperation of Saudi Arabia.¹⁵ The first graduates of this program – Rayyanah Barnawi and Ali Alqarni – performed their spaceflight to the International Space Station (ISS) in May 2023. On board the ISS, the astronauts successfully carried out a series of 14 national scientific experiments including human physiology, cell biology, and technology development in a microgravity environment (three of the experiments were conducted to raise educational awareness).¹⁶ The Saudi Space Accelerator Program, announced in 2023, “aims to empower local entrepreneurs in the space sector by boosting their involvement in achieving the Kingdom's 2030 goals, supporting their

14 Frequently Asked Questions: What are the tasks and responsibilities of the Saudi Space Agency? <https://ssa.gov.sa/en/faq/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

15 Saudi Astronauts, <https://ssa.gov.sa/en/saudi-astronauts/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

16 Saudi Arabia Launches Scientific Space Mission with First Saudi Female Astronaut and Saudi Male Astronaut from ISS in Florida, 22 May 2023, <https://ssa.gov.sa/en/news/saudi-arabia-launches-scientific-space-mission-with-first-saudi-female-astronaut-and-saudi-male-astronaut-from-iss-in-florida/>, (accessed 05.10.23); Saudi astronauts successfully launch toward Space Station, 21 May 2023, <https://www.arabnews.com/node/2307396/saudi-arabia>, (accessed 05.10.23).

experiences in space technologies, and preparing a supportive environment for startups according to the best international practices”.¹⁷

4.3. Communications, Space and Technology Commission

Until recently CST was in charge of frequency spectrum and NTN management and produced a series of relevant regulations.¹⁸ However, in 2023 the Council of Ministers added the space domain to the mandate of CST. Following this shift, the rebranded SSA transferred to CST its own regulatory competencies.

As a result, CST is now responsible for regulating the communications, technology and space sectors aiming to “protect consumers, promote investment and safeguard competition in order to ensure reliable communications services and innovative digital technologies”.¹⁹

In August 2023, CST launched public consultations regarding Space Data Regulations Platform and Application Document for Obtaining a Permit to provide Space Data Platform Services. The aim of the said documents is to establish the regulatory environment for the space sector, attract investment to contribute to the growth of the GDP, as well as to increase the effectiveness of space data governance. The main focus is on collecting and processing space data, and promoting space-related products.²⁰

The newly acquired regulatory powers of CST also presumably include the development of the licensing regime for Saudi space activities and registration of Saudi spacecraft launched into outer space. As it was mentioned above, to date KSA has 17 satellites launched, according to the data provided by the UNOOSA Online Index of Objects Launched into Outer Space.²¹ None of these space objects, however, were officially registered with the United Nations.

5. Regulation of Space Activities

Although the hierarchy of Saudi authorities in charge of space activities is still taking form, the development of national space legislation is already ongoing. As it was mentioned above, CST is the governmental body responsible for regulation of the Saudi space sector. These powers extend, *inter alia*, to the

17 Saudi Space Commission Launches 'The Saudi Space Accelerator Program', 26 October 2023, <https://ssa.gov.sa/en/news/acceleratorprogram/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

18 Frequency Spectrum Regulations, <https://www.cst.gov.sa/en/services/spectrum/Pages/FrequencySpectrumRegulations.aspx>, (accessed 05.10.23).

19 What is CST's role? <https://www.cst.gov.sa/en/Pages/FAQ.aspx>, (accessed 05.10.23).

20 CST seeks public consultation on Space Data Platform Regulations, Space Data Platform, 27 August 2023, <https://www.saudigazette.com.sa/article/635273/SAUDI-ARABIA/CST-seeks-public-consultation-on-Space-Data-Platform-Regulations-Space-Data-Platform>, (accessed 05.10.23).

21 *Supra* note 5.

authorization of a wide range of space activities, including commercial, and control of compliance of various actors with the applicable regulations. In November 2022, CST held public consultations regarding a draft Saudi space law (hereinafter – Draft Law).²² Since the law has not been adopted yet, its draft is assumedly being finalized. Once signed by the King of Saudi Arabia, the law is expected to give a comprehensive picture of the regulatory regime of space activities in KSA. Till then, it is interesting to have a high-level overview of the available draft.

5.1. Objectives of the Regulation

Article 2 of the Draft Law points at the main priorities of space regulations in Saudi Arabia. They include, *inter alia*, stable and sustainable development of the Kingdom, strengthening national security, advancement of Earth and space sciences, stimulating investment and private sector potential, pursuing international peace and security.

5.2. System of Regulations and the Authorized National Regulator

The Draft Law starts by listing the main terms and definitions, some of which – namely 'Implementing Regulations (Regulations)' and 'Commission' – highlight the important role of CST: the Commission will further enhance the national regulatory regime by issuing rules, directives, procedures, requirements and standards in order to implement the provisions of the basic law (Art. 1).

5.3. Spaces and Relevant Activities

Interestingly, the Draft Law introduces three categories of spaces:

- Airspace: any area beginning at mean sea level and reaching the maximum possible limit for air traffic control;
- Outer space: the area above the Earth's atmosphere;
- Space operations area: any area above eighty kilometres or more than the mean sea level (Art. 1).

The Draft Law further mentions four types of activities with relevance to these spaces:

- Space activities defined as space and sub-orbital operations;
- Space-related activities: space activities supporting flights and high-altitude activities;
- High-altitude activities: activities, operations and flights at an altitude higher than airspace and lower than space operations area;

²² Space Law: About Project, <https://istitlaa.ncc.gov.sa/en/Transportation/citc/SSL/Pages/default.aspx>, (accessed 05.10.23).

Space activities supporting flights: any flight in the airspace of the Kingdom which does not meet the definition of space activities and which can be described as a launch or re-entry activity and is intended to support space activities and relevant experiments and training (Art. 1).

It is also noteworthy that the term 'launch' also means attempted launch of a space object into outer space (Art. 1).

The basic terms 'space activities', 'space operations', 'sub-orbital operations', and 'space-related activities' are further explained and detailed in Article 4 of the Draft Law.

5.4. Space Objects and their Registration

The term 'space object' is defined in Article 1 of the Draft Law as an

object that a person makes, launches, or aims to launch into the space operations area or outer space, whether manned or unmanned, including the constituent parts thereof, its launch vehicle and the parts thereof, including those that do not reach the space operations area.

Some specific categories of space objects are mentioned (and some of them defined) in the Draft Law, including spacecraft, launch vehicle, satellite, satellite navigation systems.

The Draft Law stipulates that space objects are subject to registration in the National Register of Space Objects in the Kingdom as well as in the United Nations Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space (Art. 1). The Kingdom will register only the space objects in relation to which KSA is a launching state (Art. 20 para. 1). The Draft Law does not define the term 'launching state'.

5.5. Authorization

The Draft Law expressly prohibits operating a space object or performing any activities covered by the Draft Law without a licence. The document provides for two types of authorization: licensing and issuing permits (Art. 1, 6).

Licences, including experimental licences, are issued to persons in order to authorize them to perform the activities specified in the respective licence (Art. 1).

Permits, in their turn, can be obtained by persons “before starting any activity or work for which a license is required” (Art. 6).

The following categories of licences are specifically mentioned and explained in the Draft Law:

- licenses for providing satellite communications services;
- licenses for manned space flight activities;

- licenses for Earth remote sensing and space monitoring activities, and space data operators;
- licenses for use of space nuclear power sources and dual-use goods;
- licenses for space resources;
- licenses for high-altitude activities (Art. 7-12).

CST is the licensing authority responsible also for further developing the relevant licensing regulations of KSA.

5.6. Damage and Liability

The term 'damage' is defined as “loss of life, personal injury or other damage to health or the environment; loss or damage of property of States, natural or juridical persons or of intergovernmental organizations, caused by space activity” (Art. 1).

According to Articles 16-17 of the Draft Law, liability for damage can be imposed either on the operator or on the Kingdom itself. Absolute liability and fault-based liability are prescribed for the operator depending on the place where the damage was inflicted, as well as the injured persons or damaged objects (Art. 16, 19). KSA binds itself with an obligation to compensate for damage caused to third parties, reserving at the same time its right of recourse against the operator of the damaging activity (Art. 17 para. 1). The lower and upper limits for the amount of the compensation will be established by further regulations. The victim is not entitled to double compensation (i.e. made both by the Kingdom and the liable operator) (Art. 17 para. 5).

5.7. Space Debris

Although the Draft Law gives the definition of term 'space debris' (“a space object that has no role or purpose, including the remains thereof, and the materials, waste, or fragments resulting therefrom in the outer space, Earth's orbit, or inside the Earth's atmosphere” (Art. 1)), the exact requirements and obligations relevant to space debris mitigation and reduction of its effects are to be determined by CST in future regulations (Art. 14).

5.8. Space Resources

Since natural resources traditionally play a significant role for Saudi Arabia, space resources are no exception. Article 1 of the Draft Law defines them as “any non-living resources present in the outer space, including minerals and water”. Satellite communications, orbital positions or uses of frequency bands are expressly excluded from the scope of this definition (Art. 11 para. 2).

As noted above, the use of space resources must be performed based to a respective licence (Art. 11). The Draft Law mentions some possible uses of space resources, including “extracting, exploiting, using, distributing, owning, buying and selling, transporting, storing, exporting and importing,

conducting experiments”, but the concrete rules are to be established by subsequent regulations.

5.9. Dark and Quiet Skies

Special emphasis is made in the Draft Law on 'astronomically-advantageous areas': “geographical area(s) identified and registered by [CST] and managed, protected and allocated in accordance with the provisions of the Law and Regulations, and [having] features that make it suitable for the advancement of astronomy and promotion of other related scientific efforts” (Art. 1).

CST is tasked to develop regulations to protect the above areas in coordination with the scientific, academic and research entities. The use of such protected areas is subject to licensing (Art. 13). In addition to legally binding regulations, CST may also develop technical standards for the use of such areas, classification and registry of the areas, astronomical activities, devices and equipment, and other procedures (*ibid.*, paras. 1, 4). Moreover, CST is mandated to allocate and monitor the spectrum for astronomy purposes and, in coordination with other competent state bodies, develop procedures and mechanisms for protection of the 'astronomically-advantageous areas' to preserve their ecosystems, as well as protect astronomical equipment used in those locations (*ibid.*, para. 5).

5.10. Other Provisions

The Draft Law also includes general rules regarding the safety of space activities, space data, protection of intellectual property rights, confidentiality of information, mandatory insurance, import and export of space-related goods, as well as separate chapters on investigation of accidents and incidents, control and inspection procedures, as well as on violations, penalties and grievance procedures.

6. International Commitments of Saudi Arabia

6.1. Participation in the UN Space Treaties

As of 20 January 2024, the Kingdom was a party to four out of five foundational UN space treaties: Outer Space Treaty, Rescue Agreement, Liability Convention, and Registration Convention.²³

Article 2 para. 4 of the Draft Law is noteworthy since it reiterates the commitment of Saudi Arabia to abide by international treaties governing space activities:

This Law aims to establish [the] following: ...contributing to the attainment of international peace and security in partnership with the

²³ UN Doc. A/AC.105/C.2/2023/CRP.3, Status of International Agreements relating to activities in outer space as at 1 January 2023, 20 March 2023.

international community in a manner that supports the commitment to implement the provisions of the international treaties and conventions related to the outer space to which the Kingdom is a party.

Though the Draft Law discussed above has not been adopted yet and most probably will undergo substantive changes before its adoption, the document reveals the general trend for Saudi Arabia to develop KSA's international obligations.

For instance, as to registration of space objects, the Draft Law requires a longer list of mandatory data to be submitted for the registration purposes than prescribed by the Registration Convention. More specifically, additional requirements include:

- information on the payload and equipment aboard space object, and any space nuclear power sources used in it;
- information on the manufacturer, owner, operator of space object, and estimated and operational lifetime of space object;
- launch vehicle provider, launch vehicle performance and specifications, and the carrier rocket;
- liability insurance;
- any other information requested by [CST] (Art. 20 para. 2).

Another noteworthy example of how the Saudi Draft Law takes one step ahead of the UN space treaties is the definition of damage which, in contrast to the Liability Convention, includes damage to the environment (Art. 1).

6.2. Withdrawal from the Moon Agreement

In October 2022, king Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud signed a Royal Decree No. 42 on the withdrawal of Saudi Arabia from the Moon Agreement in accordance with the procedure established by Article 20 of the treaty. Neither the Cabinet, nor the competent state bodies issued any official commentaries regarding this decision which will take effect on 5 January 2024. This was the first case of a state terminating its participation in a basic UN space treaty.

The joining by the Kingdom of the US-led voluntary Artemis Accords may be viewed as one of the reasons for the withdrawal. However, any suggestions and opinions in that and other regard²⁴ will remain subjective until an official commentary is available. What can be concluded with some degree of

²⁴ S.-M. Wedenig, J. Wright Nelson, *The Moon Agreement: Hanging by a Thread?* 26 January 2023, <https://www.mcgill.ca/iasl/article/moon-agreement-hanging-thread>, (accessed 05.10.23); R. J. Lee, *Saudi Arabia's Withdrawal from the Moon Agreement*, 2023, <https://anzsilperspective.com/saudi-arabias-withdrawal-from-the-moon-agreement/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

certainty is that continuing participation in the Moon agreement was no longer considered in conformity with the national interests of Saudi Arabia.

6.3. Multilateral and Bilateral Cooperation

Since 2001, Saudi Arabia is a member of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNCOPUOS).

The Kingdom's role was crucial when the Arab League established in 1976 the Arab Satellite Communications Organization (ARABSAT) with headquarters in Riyadh. In 1985-2023, ARABSAT launched its 15 satellites, but none of them were registered with the UN Register of Objects Launched into Outer Space.

In July 2023, the Saudi delegation participated in the G20 Space Economy Leaders' Meeting the idea of which was put forward by the Kingdom in 2020 when it held presidency of the Group. In his statement, the head of the KSA delegation Dr. Mohammed bin Saud Altamimi, underlined that “the Kingdom participates in promoting the cooperative goals of the meeting, in line with its commitment as a signatory to the Artemis Accords and its contributions to the practical implementation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty”. Dr. Altamimi also reaffirmed the determination of Saudi Arabia to “enhance space cooperation between countries to maximize the benefits of the space economy and the benefits of using space data in supporting sustainable development, food security and global health”.²⁵

As to bilateral cooperation in the space area, since the establishment of the Saudi Space Commission in 2018 the Kingdom has entered into cooperation agreements with China, France, Hungary, India, Italy, Japan, Russia, South Africa, the UK, the US, and the European Space Agency. One of the most prominent examples of bilateral space cooperation is the signing by KSA of the Artemis Accords. As noted in the previous paragraph, Saudi Arabia attaches a great importance to this cooperation project and the state's corresponding commitments, even though they are of a non-legally binding nature.²⁶

7. Conclusions

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has set highly ambitious goals for the national space sector (both public and private) and is currently developing the state's first national space strategy and a basic law governing space activities. Both tracks are pursued simultaneously and are expected to lead to tangible results in 2024. The draft laws and regulations available to the general public allow

²⁵ The Kingdom Participates in the G20 Space Economy Leaders' Meeting, 6 July 2023, <https://ssa.gov.sa/en/news/the-kingdom-participates-in-the-g20-space-economy-leaders-meeting/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

²⁶ Saudi Arabia joins the Artemis Accords, 18 July 2022, <https://spacewatch.global/2022/07/saudi-arabia-joins-the-artemis-accords/>, (accessed 05.10.23).

to access the approach by KSA to the interpretation and implementation of the fundamental rules and principles of international space law at the national level. The draft instruments provide the insights into further developments of the national space regulations of the Kingdom which assumedly are already taking place in order avoid an excessive time gap between the adoption of the framework law on space activities and its implementing regulations.