Dear colleagues,

The Annual Eilene M. Galloway Symposium on Critical Issues of Space Law is a landmark in the calendar of IISL. Together with the Symposium at the International Astronautical Congresses and the IISL/ECSL Symposium at the UNCOPUOS Legal Subcommittee, it is a flagship for discussing and promoting space law. The Symposium in D.C. has developed a distinct profile over the past decade, making it a highly significant event not only in the U.S. but for IISL as a global organisation as well. What is discussed at the Eilene Galloway Symposium in D.C. is heard and received by the whole space law community, united in IISL with members from 40 countries on all continents.

The Symposium stands out as the space law event with a distinct focus on space law at the conjunction of the government and commercial sectors. It is a laboratory for identifying critical issues at this conjunction and has during the past years led to an excellent exchange and search for practical solutions for challenges to the regulation of space activities. In this, the Symposium promoted the understanding that space law has played and will play further a key role in promoting economic and social development for all countries. Space law is indeed protecting space activities; space law enables safe and secure space activities; and space law makes equitable and fair progress possible. Space law rests on the principles enshrined in the Outer Space Treaty, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary next year. These are: freedom of use, peaceful uses, sharing of benefits, non-appropriation, state responsibility and liability, and international cooperation, to mention the most prominent ones.

Possibly of particular relevance for today's space activities are: the safeguarding of frequencies for space services such as science, all applications and operations, which are severely threatened and have to be preserved through appropriate regulation; the regulation of space debris mitigation and ultimately removal of space debris; the emergence of a space traffic management regime, guaranteeing safe space operations; the fair management of outer space resources. Since space applications have entered the everyday life of citizens and are critical infrastructures for governments, the orderly conduct of space activities should avoid disruptions and limit threats. While commercial space activities are spreading around the world, everybody should in the interest of orderly conduct, seek to avoid a situation characterised by flags of convenience.

The space policy and space diplomacy of the new U.S. Administration will certainly be a prominent topic for discussion at the present Symposium. When it comes to the international level, a focus may be put on the upcoming UNISPACE+50 event in 2018, which will provide the opportunity for thorough international deliberations on the status and the future of space law. Amongst them will be the issue of whether multilateral, legally binding, treaties or whether other methods of establishing norms and rules for activities in outer space are the best solution and the way to go.
The themes discussed at the Eilene Galloway Symposium are always of great relevance and significance. As I indicated, the Symposium has the function of measuring the temperature on key questions, and IISL is glad that this happens under the engagement of our members, providing the platform for the whole space law community - academics, government, practitioners - and beyond to shape the thinking and to incubate ideas for making space work.