

# **Outer Space Activities & Environmental Protection**

## **Abstract**

This thesis aims at addressing various connecting factors between outer space activities and environmental protection. It examines the present legal regime of the outer space with particular regard to the environmental protection. The analysis of the most relevant space treaties is provided, reviewing the provisions concerning the protection of the environment, while addressing the emerging environmental issues. The significant role of international bodies is being emphasized, as well as the current challenges the regime of outer space is facing. Although the space-related activities offer an extensive tool to enhance environmental protection of Earth, the environment of space is nowadays being exposed to an imminent threat called space debris, which could prevent all possible future space activities if left unattended. The pollution of the space environment is at a critical level, and the international community is required to respond within a short time in the future. The introduction of mitigating efforts will no longer itself be effective without the addition of active employment of remediating measures, such as the active debris removal.

On the other hand, space activities already widely contribute to preserving the environment of Earth through, among other things, the monitoring of natural resources, greenhouse gases, temperature changes, and sea-level rise. The international environmental legal regime extensively benefits from space activities (earth observation, remote sensing, and disaster management) and is further analyzed in connection with the ability to fulfill the goals of sustainable development as set forth by states during multiple international conferences. Besides, most of the present environmental goals can be achieved through space, and therefore, it is necessary for the international community to face ecological challenges successfully as soon as possible.