

Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS)
Sixty-eighth session (25 June – 2 July 2025)

Agenda Item 4: “General Exchange of Views”

Observer: Committee on Space Research (COSPAR)

Statement by: Mr. Niklas HEDMAN, COSPAR General Counsel

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

We are excited to share news about the forthcoming 6th COSPAR Symposium, taking place in Nicosia, Cyprus, from 3-7 November 2025. This biennial event brings together the global space science community in a focused, collaborative setting. This year’s theme, “Space Exploration 2025: A Symposium on Humanity’s Challenges and Celestial Solutions,” sets the stage for an especially dynamic and engaging program.

Among the highlights of this year’s Symposium are the Special Space Education Sessions and Weekend. These initiatives are designed to engage students, young researchers, early-career professionals, and teachers in space science, promoting knowledge sharing and mentorship. Education and capacity-building in space research are critical for COSPAR’s strategy in promoting education and providing professional development opportunities for educators. Through hands-on workshops, lectures, grants to participate to our events and networking activities, COSPAR continues to heavily invest in the next generation of scientists and engineers, affirming our commitment to education, support to early career scientists and capacity-building across all regions.

In this context, we wish to highlight the project “EXPLORE” - *EXpeditionary Program for Learning Opportunities in analog space Exploration*. The EXPLORE first analog student mission is taking place this week, 23-27 June 2025, near Monsaraz, Portugal. The Austrian Space Forum is coordinating the project and leading this partnership with COSPAR; the training organization NUCLIO of Portugal; the educational institution Ellingermaniki Agogi, Athens, Greece; and BioSky, Lake Alqueva Observatory, Portugal.

EXPLORE is co-funded by the European Union Erasmus program and engages students in activities that simulate Moon or Mars environments, providing a hands-on experience of international space missions. The EXPLORE kit, specifically developed for this project, is designed to encourage students to embrace their inner explorer and embark on a simulated mission to Mars. The kit is being integrated into formal educational settings, empowering educators to deliver STEAM-related content through innovative methodologies. We would like to thank our partners of Austria, Portugal, Greece and the European Union for making this endeavor possible.

Mr. Chair, Distinguished Delegates,

I would finally like to call the attention of delegations that COSPAR together with IAA, IAU and MVA have prepared and issued for this present session of COPUOS CRP 23 on “Designation and preservation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on the Moon – report update” with additional information to the conference room paper submitted to STSC earlier this year. Also, COSPAR co-sponsors the updated CRP 28 on “Dark and Quiet Skies for Science and Society” to this session of COPUOS.

Thank you for your attention.