

# Space-Based Services Supporting Refugees

## *Legal Aspects*

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### 1. Introduction

Article III of the Outer Space Treaty<sup>1</sup> (OST) states that States Parties to the Treaty shall carry on activities in the use of outer space in the interest of maintaining international security and promoting international cooperation and understanding. During the drafting of the OST, this principle had a specific, East-West connotation. Today, in a changed geopolitical situation, the core message of this principle remains valid; however, the notion of "security" has acquired other connotations. Both international terrorism and the recent refugee crisis in Europe<sup>1</sup> have brought about numerous new perils, one of the most serious one being the danger to the lives of those who use all their efforts to reach Europe and to settle in a safer part of the world than their own.

In the last three years, Europe has experienced the greatest mass movement of people since the Second World War. More than one million refugees and migrants arrived in the European Union with the large majority of them fleeing from war and terror in Syria and other troubled countries. The EU has agreed on different measures to deal with the crisis that range from attempts to resolve its root-causes to the supporting people in need of humanitarian

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<sup>1</sup> Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, UNTS, vol. 610, No. 8843.