

**Question for written answer E-003951/2022
to the Commission**

Rule 138

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Subject: Problems caused by the increasing number of satellites orbiting the Earth

The Starlink satellite constellation of the US company SpaceX has, since 2021, been working to provide high-speed internet access all over the world. Some 12 000 satellites are due to be launched and operational by 2025, eventually rising to 42 000. The US companies Amazon and OneWeb and the Chinese firm Hongyan also want to deploy satellite constellations, with the support of their governments. The Commission is involved in the programmes of the European Space Agency, which is developing, in particular, the European Data Relay System (EDRS) satellite constellation.

This surge in congestion in low Earth orbit poses serious problems for civilian and military operators, but also for scientists, notably astronomers. Starlink satellites could even triple the number of abandoned objects floating around the Earth. In eight years, the International Space Station has already been hit dozens of times by space junk and, according to NASA, there are already 20 000 pieces of debris orbiting the Earth.

What steps does the Commission intend to take to defend the interests of European countries in this regard, but also the 1967 UN Treaty, which enshrines space as the common heritage of mankind?

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