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NEW PLACES TO EXPLORE: SPACE TOURISM LAW



SPACE TOURISM FROM PAST TO PRESENT

For many years, tourism industry has been an important economic source for states and individuals. The rapid increase of technological developments and scientific explorations offered by humanity, has led to changes in the tourism industry as well. Without a doubt, explorations in outer space should be mentioned to give an example to these explorations. With the increase of space travels after World War II, space tourism has become an important subject to be discussed. Briefly, space tourism is the travel of individuals in outer space by space shuttle for a fee.

To mention the phases of space tourism that have taken place until today; the idea of space tourism dates back to 1970's, after numerous space trips in the 1960's, space tourism idea has been brought up by the U.S. President Richard Nixon. As an important step was taken to realize the idea of space tourism, the non-governmental astronauts were also allowed to travel in outer space in 1980's. In 2001, an American citizen, Dennis Tito has made a space trip to the International Space Station with the 20 million dollar worth ticket that he bought from the Russian space tourism company MirCorp. During his trip, Dennis Tito stayed in the International Space Station for 7 days and made history as the first person to buy a space travel ticket. During the 8-year period until 2009, 6 separate individuals have travelled to outer space with 7 different space travels. As a result of these trips, space tourism has become a point of interest by wealthy investors and numerous space tourism corporations have been established through this period.

With the recent developments, space tourism has always become part of the global agenda. Space tourism is expected to become an important economic activity by keeping its development over the next 10 years as well. This is because, with the space travel realized by SpaceX, which was also the focus of media, astronauts have been sent to outer space for the first time by a private corporation. This development caught a lot of attention as an important milestone in space tourism. The opportunity of private companies to carry out space travels, which have been carried out by states since the World War II, the beginning date of the space explorations, has drawn the interest of many investors.

SPACE TOURISM IN LEGAL WORLD

Considering that space tourism presents itself with rapid developments, space tourism is expected to find its place in the future legal regulations. One of the issues that should be considered as a priority is the liability regime. Which parties will be liable for all kinds of accidents and damages that may occur before, during and after space trip is a subject that needs to be determined in terms of both domestic and international law. Undoubtedly, in the face of the foreseeable and objective danger posed by space trips, the passenger's liability is expected to be stricter in this context than the general regulations of the transportation law. In this context, the legal framework of the risks that private companies must undertake in order to carry out space trip should be drawn up by the states first.

In addition to the liability issue, another aspect is the question of whether the passengers receive a special training before participating to a space trip. Astronauts undergo an intensive training program of 2 years on average before making space trip. In this case, the fact that people who buy tickets for space trip can travel in space without any training can pose a threat for both themselves and the trip as a whole. Therefore, the requirement of providing training to passengers in a specific context prior to space trip would be positive for passengers and the safety of the space trip.

Another important issue is making it obligatory for passengers to pass the necessary health tests to prevent the possible health problems that the passengers could suffer while traveling outer space. In order to minimize the risk that may be experienced at this point, it may be useful to envisage certain health criteria for the passengers who will travel in space with the legal regulations. Due to the damages that may arise as a result of participation in space travel by individuals whose health conditions are not suitable, the liability of the carrier may arise.

With the increasing interest in space tourism in recent times, it can be stated that the next 10 years will be full of action for space tourism. Along with these developments, new legal regulations will inevitably have to be made and detailed studies will have to be carried out in this field. Through taking measures against possible future damages of the space tourism by legal regulations, the safety of the travels to be carried out can be ensured for both passengers and companies.



Answers. Not theories.

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