

Joanne Wheeler MBE



Managing Partner
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Summary

Joanne is one of the leading practitioners in the field of satellites, having worked at both the European Space Agency and Ofcom and for over 20 years in private practice, giving her an unparalleled understanding of the challenges facing the sector. She is qualified to practice as a solicitor within England, Wales and Scotland and is ranked as a Top Tier lawyer in legal directories for her satellite and communications work for over 20 years.

She specialises in communications, satellite and space regulatory and policy matters together with all forms of commercial contracts and PPPs. She has significant regulatory and commercial expertise, and a strong reputation in the satellite industry which culminated in her being awarded the title of Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to the space industry in 2017.

She won the Financial Times European Legal Innovator of the Year Award in 2014 for her work with the UK industry and Government in drafting and changing satellite related legislation. She was also nominated as lawyer of the year in the UK in 2017.

She has previously represented the UK at the UNCOPOUS Legal Subcommittee. She sits on the Executive Council of the UK industry body UKspace and the Space Sector Council.

She is Chair and co-founder of the Satellite Finance Network (www.satellitelifinancenetwork.org)

Over and Above

Relevant Work Experience

- Advised on, drafted and negotiated many satellite procurement contracts, launch service contracts, operations and control agreements, capacity agreements and in-orbit servicing agreements.
- Advised on complex licensing projects, including constellation licensing and in-orbit service licensing.
- Advised on satellite spectrum matters: filing procedures; access to spectrum; ground segment licensing; and European spectrum regulations.
- Advised on suborbital licences and regulations for HAPs and launch activities.
- Advised operators on space debris guidelines and near-conjunction issues.
- Drafted space laws, procedures and guidelines for several space agencies, governments and regulators in Europe and the Middle-East.
- Advised on the new UK Space Industry Act, changes in insurance premium tax and third party liability insurance for space operators.
- Worked as expert legal counsel in relation to two studies for the European Commission involving: (i) an analysis of the existing procurement schemes within the European space industry, and the existing and future regulatory framework; and (ii) an assessment and comparison of national space laws and licensing regimes in Europe and the US.
- Undertook comparative space law best practices studies and drafted procedures and guidelines regarding space law and suborbital regulation for a Middle-Eastern space agency.
- Conducted a review of the UAE Regulatory Framework for Space Services and drafted new regulations, including on spectrum filings.
- Drafted the Procedures for the Management of Satellite Filings, while at Ofcom (national spectrum regulator for the UK).
- Led the regulatory work for the UK Space Innovation and Growth Strategy and its "Restack" (a joint UK Government and industry project to prepare a strategic plan for the growth of the UK space industry to 2030).
- Advised a large international satellite operator on the licensing of aeronautical spectrum and the use of aeronautical terminals in 41 jurisdictions including the UK, Europe and beyond.

Honours, Publications and Presentations:

- Awarded an MBE in the Queen's New Year Honours List in January 2017 for services to the space sector.
- Won the individual Financial Times Legal Innovator of the Year award in 2014.
- Elected fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society and Royal Aeronautical Society.
- Columnist for international journals Satellite Finance and Via Satellite and writes around 16 other articles/ chapters of books per year.
- Frequent speaker (over 10 times a year) on various space law topics nationally and internationally.

Other Professional Activities:

- Chair and Founder of Satellite Finance Network (SFN).
- Co-Chair of LaunchUK Industry Group.
- Co-Chair Regulatory Advisory Group (joint Government and industry think tank in the UK).
- Previous Chair of Space Law Committee of the International Bar Association.
- Member of ISO/BSI Panel 9 (UK Section) on space systems and operations, Orbital Debris.
- Chair of the Steering Board, UK National Space Academy.
- Trustee of UK National Space Centre.
- Elected to the International Institute of Space Law.
- UK Point of Contact for the European Centre for Space Law.

Education and qualifications

- Diploma in Telecommunications, Queen Mary, University of London
- MSt in Law, Oxford University
- LL.M in Law and Economics, Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam, The Netherlands
- LL.B (Hons) and DipLP in Law, University of Aberdeen
- Admitted in England and Wales, 1998
- Admitted in Scotland, 1996



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