

EU perspectives on the Arctic

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Overview

- The EU interest in the Arctic region
- The EU policy for the Arctic region
- EU supporting Arctic research



The European Union in the Arctic

- The EU *is* in the Arctic; some Member States are Arctic, others have long-standing presence
- It bears *responsibility* for changes in the North
- The EU is *affected* by processes in the Arctic
- It has the capacity and the means to *contribute* to Arctic cooperation
- Growing EU competence in sectors important for the Arctic
- The EU is already *doing* a lot; could do more and better



EU interest in the Arctic

- Common heritage and responsibility – world wide effects of melting ice and rising temperatures
- EU is champion for mitigation of climate change
- Fisheries Policy is Community competence
- Significant research spending
- EU is leading in clean and safe technologies – icebreakers, maritime engineering, polar technologies



The development of an EU Arctic Policy

- March 2008: Joint paper by the High Representative and the European Commission on Climate Change and Security
- October 2008: Resolution of the European Parliament
- November 2008: Communication of the European Commission on the EU and the Arctic Region
- December 2009: Council Conclusions



Main objectives of the EU's Arctic efforts

1. *Protecting and preserving* the Arctic in unison with its population
2. *Promoting* sustainable use of resources
3. *Contributing* to enhanced Arctic multilateral governance

WE RECOGNISE THE RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ARCTIC STATES. OUR OBJECTIVE IS COOPERATION WITH THEM.



Cooperation frameworks

- The Arctic Council

 - Active contribution by the European Commission in its working groups

 - Application for permanent observer status

- Regional cooperation in the European Arctic

 - Northern Dimension

 - Barents Euro-Arctic Council

 - Cross-border Cooperation programmes



Council Conclusions of December 2009 (II)

- Research and environment:
 - Increased support to monitoring, research, strategic environmental assessments
 - Efforts to protect Arctic ecosystems and biodiversity
 - Reducing emission of hazardous chemicals
 - Precautionary approach to new fishing
 - Support for IMO initiatives to protect Arctic marine environment and to increase maritime safety and security



The EU and Arctic Research

- EU's 7th Framework programme for research (2007-2013)
 - Has funded 46 projects and scholarships directly related to the Arctic
 - Approx. € 20 M a year



Some steps: creating infrastructure

- SIOS – integrating research facilities and monitoring platforms for improved output; EU support for preparatory structures under the present FP reaches € 4 M
- European Polar research icebreaker *Aurora Borealis*; preparatory phase - € 4.5 M
- Development and better use of space technology; GMES, Galileo, etc



Arctic Access – a new project

- Main objective: to assess the impacts of climate change on marine transportation, fisheries, marine mammals and the extraction of oil and gas in the Arctic Ocean.
- Also focusing on Arctic governance and strategic policy options.
- Will also engage in close cooperation with indigenous people and other key stakeholders by means of a Stakeholders/End-users Forum and an Advisory Board



Arctic Access – the basic facts

- Coordinated by the University Pierre et Marie Curie
- 27 institutions participating
- 9 European countries and the Russian Federation represented
- More than 80 researchers
- Project budget: € 11 M
- Project duration: 4 years (2011-2015)



The Arctic Tipping Points Project

- EC funding: € 4.9 M, 13 partners
- Duration: 36 months (started 01/02/2009)
- Co-ordinator: University of Tromsø, Norway
- Major aims of of ATP are:
 - To identify the elements of the Arctic marine ecosystem likely to show abrupt changes in response to climate change
 - To establish the levels of the corresponding climate drivers inducing the regime shift for these tipping elements;
 - To analyse the impacts of abrupt changes in the Arctic ecosystems for activities of strategic importance for the European Arctic



The “ice2sea” project

- Ice2sea: Estimating the future contribution of continental ice to sea-level rise
- EC funding: € 9.9 M, 24 partners
- Duration: 51 months (started 01/03/2009)
- Co-ordinator: British Antarctic Survey Cambridge, United Kingdom
- Major activities of ice2sea are:
 - Improved understanding of the key processes that control glacial systems (ice sheets and mountain glacier)
 - New methodologies for the prediction of global sea-level rise based on improved models
 - Updated assessments of the likely contribution of the cryosphere to sea-level rise over the next 200 years
 - A collective view of the likelihood of catastrophic sea-level rise, due collapse of either Greenland or Antarctic ice sheets.
 - A clearer view of uncertainties



The Way Forward

- End of 2011 – The European Commission will present a progress report
- Next spring Arctic Council members will present recommendations about observers
- Work for the next FP continue – goal is to maintain funding levels
- Discussions on global matters affecting the Arctic will gain momentum – climate change, safety of navigation, safety of economic activities, etc.

WE LOOK FORWARD TO CONTINUED GOOD COOPERATION WITH NORWAY ON ALL THESE MATTERS

