

Conclusions of the Participants of the Policy-Science-Interface Seminar: The role of the EU in Arctic Research



European Parliament, Brussels, May 24, 2011

The participants of the Meeting on a EU Policy Science Interface for the Arctic: organised by the **EU Arctic Forum (EUAF)**, in cooperation with the **University of the Arctic (UArctic)**, the **International Arctic Science Committee (IASC)** and the **International Arctic Social Sciences Association (IASSA)**, held in Brussels at the European Parliament on 24 May 2011, present these Conclusions:

1. The ongoing climatic transformation of the Arctic Region is of major importance, not only to the Arctic states and people living in the North, but also to the European Union and the rest of the globe. The rapid loss of sea ice, the potential for Greenland to contribute to the rise in global sea level, and the risk of additional greenhouse gas emission from degrading permafrost are just some of the issues that have global ramifications. Thus, the study of the Arctic, in particular in light of the priorities of the International Council for Science (ICSU) - Grand Challenges of Earth System Science for Global Sustainability (Forecasting, Observing, Confining, Responding, Innovating) - has never been more important.
2. Likewise, due to melting Arctic ice, and need to stable sources for resources, the EU and the rest of the world have become increasingly interested in the Arctic, in particular the potential to extract and develop new resources and the opening of maritime routes. There are 4 to 10 million people living in the Arctic, pending on where one sets the border, of which 10 percent are indigenous peoples. The inhabitants of the North live from and within the Arctic environment, and are the people whose way of life could benefit, or be put at risk by growing resource extraction. Thus, political, economical, social and legal issues are central to the changes taking place in the Arctic, which implies the equal importance of both the social and natural sciences in understanding these changes.
3. The EU is currently in the process of defining a EU Arctic Policy that approaches the questions of responsibilities and interests in the Arctic in a holistic way. Such a policy must be based on an all-inclusive, interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral input of state-of-the-art science. Improving the knowledge base by developing and furthering cutting-edge sciences that deal with Arctic issues must be given high priority, considering the rapid changes occurring in the Arctic and the global implications.

4. The EU has demonstrated capacity to organize joint research programs as well as targeted framework and regional funding initiatives. The EU should also utilize this comparative advantage in creating joint initiatives for Arctic research.

5. The Arctic science and education community needs to develop better avenues for communicating science to policy and decision makers. A science-policy-interface for the Arctic would better enable the EU to base the development and implementation of its Arctic Policy on solid, high quality science that truly reflects a holistic approach.