

# Arctic Joint Communication 2016

"An integrated EU policy for  
the Arctic"

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# Why do we need it?



The Joint Communication which we published on 27 April carries the title “an integrated EU policy for the Arctic”.

The Arctic States carry the primary responsibility for challenges and opportunities in their territories.

But many issues affecting the Arctic regions can be more effectively addressed through regional and multilateral cooperation.

Also, we affect the Arctic and the Arctic affects us (black carbon, rising temperatures and sea levels, shipping, fisheries, etc).

This why EU engagement is important.

# EU and the Arctic: geography and partners



3 EU Member States Denmark, Finland and Sweden are Arctic States; they expect the EU to engage in issues of key interest to them.

The two members of the European Economic Area, ie .Iceland and Norway are also Arctic States. They have also welcomed that the EU engages in the Arctic. Across these 5 States EU regulations matter.

The EU also has non-Arctic Member States who are following Arctic matters closely (eg. Germany, France, Netherlands, Italy, Poland, Spain, UK. These 7 are observers at the Arctic Council).

Summa summarum: The EU is an Arctic player and in the coming months and years we shall engage further.

# EU and the Arctic: geography and partners



Beyond, the European Arctic and EU Member States, we also cooperate with the Arctic States of Canada, Russia and the US.

Further beyond the Arctic, we also engage on Arctic issues with China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, Singapore. These 5 States are observers at the Arctic Council.

And we will engage with non-State partners including regional offices, indigenous peoples, civil society and business representatives and other international fora.

# 1) Climate change and safeguarding the environment



The EU and all other modern societies emit greenhouse gases; these contribute to warming up the atmosphere and that warming is causing accelerated melting of the Arctic ice cover.

Together with other dynamics, climate change is leading to more turbulent weather patterns and is suspected to lead also to increased sea levels threatening coastal areas in the EU.

The agreement reached at COP21 in Paris in Dec 2015 is an essential step to limit global greenhouse gas emissions. Clearly, a transition to a low-carbon economy is an important aspect of the work to achieve a limitation to the increase of global temperatures.

Currently, the EU internal legislative procedures aimed implementation of the COP21 Agreement is on-going.

## 2) Sustainable development



The coming transitions in the Arctic from climate change are likely to lead to considerable socio-economic transition as well. The livelihood of local communities and indigenous peoples is coming under pressure.

At the same time, the Arctic offers opportunities for green and for blue growth. Resources are plenty across many fields, but exploitation demands investments and a precautionary approach in the fragile Arctic environment. Harsh climate and long distances also justify financial support.

With increased accessibility, economic development across the region should be able to increase. The EU can contribute in some areas, e.g. science, research and innovation. We are also keen to support improved cooperation across programme with EU funding. This is what the Arctic Stakeholder Forum aims to achieve (see further below).

### 3) International cooperation



The Arctic is and should remain a zone of constructive cooperation. Our Joint Communication is very clear in stressing that the EU will contribute actively to this objective.

In an Arctic context and in regional fora such as the Arctic Council, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Dimension we have well-functioning working relations which allow us to address key issues with our partners (scientific cooperation, climate change, shipping, cross-border environment issues, etc).

# Arctic Stakeholder Forum – next steps



Next informal meeting of the Arctic Stakeholder Forum will take place in Brussels on 19 October.

At this occasion member states and regions are asked to discuss and decide on the process to follow in the coming months (consultation process, timing, coordination, report drafting, etc.).

A final report with recommendations about investment priorities for the European Arctic region is expected for end 2017. the report will serve as basis for the European Commission to prepare the next Multiannual Financial Framework programme.

The draft results of the work carried out will be presented during a high level event that will take place in Finland in June (date to be confirmed).