

# EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment

Final Expert Workshop  
Synthesis Report  
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*The following report summarises the key insights that emerged at the EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment final expert workshop held in Brussels, Belgium on 18 November 2010. The final expert workshop was funded through the European Commission Directorate General for Environment under contract EuropeAid/128561/C/SER/Multi. More than 60 experts from government, indigenous peoples' organisations, environmental NGOs, industry, and academia participated in the workshop. The views expressed in this paper do not necessarily represent the official positions of any institutions or governments with which the participants are affiliated.*

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## EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment – Final expert workshop

The EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment final expert workshop, held on 18 November 2010 in Brussels, Belgium, brought together more than 60 decision makers and experts on EU policy with relevance to a set of environmental issue areas in the Arctic, including biodiversity, chemicals and transboundary pollution, climate change, energy, fisheries, forestry, tourism, transport, and Arctic indigenous and local livelihoods. The workshop provided a forum for Arctic stakeholders and decision makers to review the EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment project results and consider ways forward.

### Opening presentations

**R. Andreas Kraemer, Director of Ecologic Institute**, gave welcoming remarks to the workshop.

**Nicholas Hanley, Head of the International Relations and Enlargement Unit, DG Environment**, identified the EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment project as a next step in an ongoing policy process about the EU's interest in the Arctic. He discussed how the EU's policy could change vis a vis the Arctic, and what the EU can contribute to the international community. He noted that the Arctic is an indicator of broader global environmental changes and that many dimensions of Arctic environmental problems will require international activity, based in dialogue and agreement. In commissioning this project, the EU accepts that it shares some responsibility for the changes occurring in the Arctic and, in light of the project results, Mr. Hanley highlighted the need to bring in an Arctic dimension across EU policy areas. Mr. Hanley stressed that the EU's objective lies in striking a balance between the prioritised goal of preserving the Arctic and the need for sustainable resource development.

**Diana Wallis, Vice President of the European Parliament**, considered the EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment project an important scientific base for EU policy actions concerning the Arctic. Ms. Wallis emphasised the fact that while the EU is clearly an author of some of the problems in the Arctic, it is also the owner of some of the policy tools that can offer solutions. Moreover, the EU brings experience in developing policy tools in a transnational sphere. For example, while Europe is the largest contributor to black carbon emissions in the Arctic, it has developed policy tools to decrease other pollutants (e.g. SO<sub>x</sub>, NO<sub>x</sub>, and mercury) which can be applied to black carbon. Ms. Wallis said that EU tourists should be encouraged to visit the Arctic – to better understand and appreciate the region – but stipulated that more data is needed in this area to ensure the safety of the Arctic environment and tourists. She pointed out that since the EU is a large consumer and producer of energy, it must help ensure that Arctic oil and gas is obtained sustainably. To meet these policy goals, Ms. Wallis suggested that the EU keep its developing Arctic policy closely linked to the Northern Dimension, a well-established policy framework among the EU, Norway, Iceland and Russia. She emphasised that within these future policy efforts all EU institutions need to take much greater care of the dialogue and relationship with indigenous peoples.

**Greta Gunnarsdottir, Director General of the Directorate for International and Security Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Iceland**, first noted that the EU perspective given in the two previous statements was focused on the challenges of the High North, whereas Iceland is interested in the Arctic because of the opportunities it holds. Ms. Gunnarsdottir gave an overview of Iceland's policy priorities as identified by the Minister and indicated that a parliamentary resolution would probably be put forward before the end of the month. Some of Iceland's policy objectives to be included in its forthcoming Arctic policy are:



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1. Secure Iceland's position as a coastal state, on par with the US, Canada, Norway, Russia, and Greenland;
2. Advance and gather support for a definition of the High North which is not narrowly demarcated geographically, but rather from cultural, economic, and security perspectives;
3. Promote and strengthen the Arctic Council as the most important forum for circumpolar consultation, and as a forum for decision making, but without changing its composition; this includes engaging non-Arctic stakeholders, which requires coherent international understanding of Arctic issues, and supporting EU observer status in the Arctic Council, which will increase international relevance of the Arctic Council, particularly if additional observers are approved (e.g. China).
4. Stand firmly against the “Five-States” meetings, which undermine the Arctic Council and exclude many Arctic stakeholders;
5. Work towards ensuring that future Arctic disagreements are resolved based on the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS);
6. Support and contribute to international agreements on surveillance, search and rescue (which needs immediate attention in light of recent Arctic tourism and transport development – Ms. Gunnarsdottir highlighted that it currently appears that it's only a matter of time before a disaster happens in one of these sectors) and pollution prevention, while protecting Iceland's interests in oil and gas exploitation;
7. Work against militarization of the High North, which Ms. Gunnarsdottir emphasised is not a lawless frontier nor untouched wilderness, and that Arctic states have agreed to settle disputes peacefully;
8. Support indigenous peoples' rights in the Arctic region.

Iceland envisions itself as a centre for maritime activities in the future and wants to shape its policy accordingly. This will entail cooperation with the EU on Arctic issues, which is high on Iceland's agenda. Ms. Gunnarsdottir stated that Iceland welcomes the EU's interest in the Arctic, and that Iceland is also an important partner for the EU. She indicated that Iceland's accession to the EU will necessitate that the EU continue to take up Arctic issues. Iceland sees the “race” for opportunities in the Arctic as one way to establish cooperation among the Arctic states and other stakeholders. However, as Ms. Gunnarsdottir highlighted, cooperation should be based on direct dialogue.

## Presentation of project results

**Sandra Cavalieri, Arctic Program Coordinator, Ecologic Institute**, briefly described an overview of the EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment (AFPA) project and its methodology, the policy context in which it was formulated, and a brief introduction to the project results, presented in nine issue areas (biodiversity, chemicals and transboundary pollution, climate change, energy, fisheries, forestry, tourism, transport, and Arctic indigenous and local livelihoods). Ms. Cavalieri pointed out that the purpose of the expert workshop was to ensure that the many policy options described in the report are appropriate and implementable in the view of the wide variety of stakeholders present.

**Martin Bruckner, Researcher, Sustainable Europe Research Institute**, described the quantitative results of the EU's Arctic footprint analysis. The methodology for the footprint analysis, which is novel in its approach for measuring the environmental impact of one geographic region on another, was based on quantifying key indicators for EU impact in the Arctic in each of the nine issue areas. The indicators were based both on impacts originating



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in the EU through consumption and production (e.g. transboundary pollution, carbon emissions), as well as impacts originating in the Arctic due to EU consumption (e.g. hydrocarbon recovery, tourism). The EU's footprint for each indicator was measured as a percentage of global contribution. The EU's footprint was largest for the areas of chemicals, climate change and energy, with Europe being the largest contributor of black carbon pollution in the Arctic and a major consumer of infrastructure-intensive Arctic goods.

**Annika Nilsson, Senior Research Fellow, Stockholm Environment Institute**, presented the results of the EU policy effectiveness analysis, which assessed the ability of existing EU policies to address new and emerging Arctic challenges in all nine issue areas. Notably, Dr. Nilsson highlighted that EU biodiversity policies largely do not account for climate change, and new policies will need to address future ecosystem changes and protection of ecosystems that may move or transform. She discussed how the EU has played a leading role in pushing the knowledge base and policy on certain persistent organic pollutants (POPs), such as brominated flame retardants (BFRs). The main challenge for reducing mercury emissions, which become concentrated in the Arctic environment, is to establish a global reduction agreement, negotiations for which has recently started under the UN Environment Programme. The EU can seek to encourage progress under these negotiations, since it has been able to reduce its own mercury emissions rather effectively. The inability of the EU to control how its imported energy is extracted and produced is an important issue to address which largely impacts its Arctic footprint. Regarding the transport sector, the EU has managed to enact legislation which may improve the safety of the shipping fleet and thereby contribute to safer Arctic shipping.

**Sandra Cavalieri** then presented the three scenarios developed through an expert workshop in April 2010 and by the project team which outline a range of possible futures for the EU's impact in the Arctic. The scenarios were based on four interacting variables (level of EU economic growth, level of EU efficiency in resource use, rate of climate change in the Arctic and efficacy of international management of Arctic challenges). Through the scenarios the project team devised 'long term policy considerations' which are relevant to policy makers across all three possible futures. These policy considerations include utilising ecosystem-based management, assisting in Arctic climate adaptation efforts, continuing climate mitigation efforts in the EU and globally, and continuing to reduce pollution from a wide variety of sources.

**Nikolas Sellheim, Researcher, Arctic Centre at University of Lapland**, completed the discussion of project results by presenting the array of short term policy options available to the EU to address its environmental footprint in the Arctic. Some of the more notable policy options included extending the Natura 2000 network to include Arctic habitats, developing cooperation between the EU's REACH program and the Arctic Council Working Groups, supporting strong provisions in the developing mandatory IMO Polar Code, and strengthening of the Northern Dimension policy, as well as cooperation with Russia on energy and environmental issues. Many short term policy options were discussed at the workshop, yet these were only a sampling of the number and depth of policy options presented in the full AFPA report.

## Question & Answer Session

Following the presentation of the AFPA report, the workshop participants had an opportunity to provide feedback and ask questions of the project team. The feedback and questioning largely centred around identifying omissions or lack of emphasis on various topics that individuals deemed worthy of more attention. The feedback applied in many instances only to the summary report because many workshop participants had not yet had the opportunity to read the full AFPA report. The comments included:



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- There is a need for more discussion of the opportunity for rare earth minerals extraction in the Arctic, particularly Greenland, and how this can support renewable energy development.
- In response to the discussion of a lack of regulatory framework for developing Arctic fisheries, one participant pointed out that there should be mention that the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) currently applies to the area where new Arctic fisheries are expected. With climate change, fish migration patterns will change and there will be a need to address this. He noted there is nothing about shared fish stocks in international agreements and that Regional Fisheries Management Organisations (RFMOs) protect biodiversity and so their cross-sectoral applications should be highlighted (e.g. MOUs with OSPAR and IMO). He also stressed that the priorities of utilisation and protection of fish stocks should not compete but should rather be addressed in an integrated way.
- There is concern that the EU might in its conservation efforts become less of a market for Arctic goods. The EU must be careful in how it approaches Arctic environmental policies or it will be criticised for hindering the sustainable regional development of the Arctic. There was also concern that, at least in the summary report, there is less of a focus on sustainable development and more on limiting environmental impacts, which can be troubling to Arctic regions hoping to develop economically.
- It is good that the EU is thinking along the lines of how to reduce its environmental impacts in the Arctic; perhaps it will encourage Arctic states and other stakeholders to carry out similar analyses of their Arctic footprints.
- Several audience members noted the Arctic Indigenous and Local Livelihoods section of the summary report lacked discussion on the need for improving quality of life of people in the North. They highlighted that the North is still developing, and that it is important to take this “time warp” into account and not limit efforts to improve quality of life through new regulation. For example, the EU can support research to feed into future assessment processes to complement existing research for the Arctic Human Development Report, which up to now does not include quantitative data.
- There was concern that the report did not analyse the impact of EU trade policies on the Arctic, such as EU regulation on seal product imports.
- It is important to recognize the wide variation in the Arctic region between rural areas and highly developed industrial areas. Therefore there is need for a variety of regional policy measures.
- It was emphasised that the AFPA report was only step one in understanding the EU’s environmental footprint in the Arctic. For example, other countries need to be consulted about the policy options. The implications of the most significant challenges and the need for new policies need to be analysed.
- Several audience members inquired about the policy option of establishing an indigenous peoples’ office in Brussels. They wanted to know which indigenous groups would be prioritised for getting a desk in such an office and where the funding for supporting the delegates would come from.
- The report was criticised for not discussing the geopolitical implications of the issue areas. Furthermore, policy options are not proposed to address such geopolitical challenges.
- There was discussion about the need for more specific guidance on the enhancement or expansion of the Northern Dimension policy. How should the Northern Dimension evolve, especially with regard to Canada and the US?



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- There was also some confusion over how the future scenarios were designed, particularly why there was no scenario with both high economic growth and high resource efficiency.

The project team was able to respond briefly to these questions and concerns. Dr. Nilsson indicated that the report highlights how the EU needs to do more to reduce its Arctic footprint and that the report was limited in its scope and depth as to how to achieve this. Mr. Sellheim mentioned that geopolitical issues were not mentioned in the report because the focus was solely on environmental impacts. Ms. Cavalieri further clarified that the scenarios were not meant to imply that high economic growth *could not* be accompanied by high resource efficiency, but rather that this was simply how the scenarios were designed to explore a broad range of possible futures.

## Panel 1: How to address Europe's impact on the Arctic – view from the Arctic

*Moderated by Nicholas Hanley, DG Environment*

Panel 1 focused on reactions to the AFPA report from the perspective of Arctic nations. Speakers drew attention to the long history of cooperation in the Arctic and existing governance structures. They also highlighted the fact that the Arctic is comprised of 8 different countries, representing a range of policies and opinions, and some stressed the need to ensure that conservation does not come at the expense of development.

**Inuuteq Holm Olsen, Deputy Minister, Greenland**, began by pointing out that Greenland has a longstanding relationship with the EU. He then cautioned against regarding the Arctic as a single entity, explaining that, for example, Greenland's position toward an EU tariff reduction on fisheries would be very different from Canada's. Mr. Olsen also noted that we are not "starting from scratch" in the Arctic and that, in the area of oil and gas activities for example, we are dealing with a range of policies and opinions. He encouraged a stocktaking of what already exists in terms of national procedures and standards with regard to the various issue areas at hand.

**Giles Norman, Canadian Centre for the Arctic**, applauded the effort and transparency of the Arctic footprint project and of the EU in its development of an Arctic policy. He recognised the AFPA report to be a look at what the EU can do in its own competence, which is precisely what it must do if it is interested in making a difference in the Arctic. Mr. Norman went on to note that the Arctic is fortunate that it has already has full governance and to stress the fact that Arctic states have long been aware that the Arctic requires some differential treatment. With regard to the AFPA report, he suggested distinguishing between what the EU wants to do to reduce its pressures on the Arctic and what it wants to change about how the Arctic goes about its business. He drew attention to the important role that personal communication plays in effective cooperation. In conclusion, Mr. Norman stated that the EU can play a significant role in global multilateral instruments, especially on mercury reduction and climate change mitigation. It is less clear how the EU will be involved in other "hot bed" issue areas such as energy and fisheries, which are regulated within the sovereign areas of the Arctic states.

**Sven-Roald Nystø, Former President, Norwegian Sámi Parliament**, stressed that conservation and development must go hand in hand in the Arctic and that the human dimension of policy is paramount. In light of this, he expressed his support of three policy options outlined in the AFPA report: setting up an indigenous peoples' office in Brussels, establishing an indigenous peoples' working group under the Northern Dimension, and integrating participatory mechanisms within biodiversity policy. He concluded by stating that



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where the EU can make a difference regarding indigenous peoples of the Arctic is in helping with capacity building and institution building. A good starting point would be the formation of a small and efficient task force – dealing first with only a selection of issues – to catalyse the establishment of the proposed Northern Dimension working group.

**Tatiana Saksina, WWF International Arctic Programme**, supported the AFPA report's conclusion that the EU should act as an international leader on issues of pollution, GHG emissions, and conservation. She noted especially the need for an ecosystem based approach in order to achieve sustainable development in the Arctic and encouraged the EU to share its examples. Ms. Saksina then outlined what WWF wants to see in terms of Arctic environmental stewardship: integrated ecosystem based management, use of marine spatial planning, a network of protected marine areas, strategic environmental assessment of any planned Arctic activity, a strengthened Arctic Council as an implementing body for these measures, reduced spread of invasive species, new regional fisheries management, an Arctic tourism association, support of indigenous peoples of a Polar Code and of the designation of PSSAs.

## Question & Answer Session

Following remarks from the panel speakers, comments and questions from the audience touched on a range of issues. Participants discussed the role of the Arctic Council, and whether it should take on a more normative role in addition to its current science and knowledge based work. The importance of the Arctic Council for indigenous peoples' representation was stressed. Several participants expressed interest in a "second edition" of the AFPA report, providing a study that encompasses the perspectives of each Arctic country. Attention turned again to the need for international agreements on straddling fish stocks. Some were of the opinion that we need more information before setting up a policy mechanism, while others firmly believed that a regulatory framework must be in place before allowing further development of fisheries, lest unhealthy competition arise over the same stocks.

Concern was also reiterated about the trade off between exploitation and conservation in the Arctic. Arctic countries appreciate the EU's good intentions, but want to be sure that its seriousness about environmental and safety responsibility doesn't come at the cost of important investment in the Arctic. In response, representatives from the European Commission underlined the responsibility of the EU to find ways to improve the flow of information in decision making processes and mentioned a future EU Arctic Information Centre as a promising option.

## Panel 2: Europe's impact on the Arctic – What the EU can do

*Moderated by Annika Nilsson, Stockholm Environment Institute*

Panel 2 identified the grounds for EU interest in the Arctic and highlighted the EU's concern for protecting and preserving the Arctic environment. It underlined the EU's responsibility for acting on Arctic issues and outlined the most important ways in which it should act.

**Fernando Garces de Los Fayos Tournan, DG External Relations**, recognised the three existing EU documents on the Arctic as a solid basis for an EU Arctic policy already in the making and found the AFPA report to be in line with these. Mr. Garces de Los Fayos Tournan noted that given its experience in promoting regional cooperation, the EU is well suited to the call for international action, which he sees as the primary message emerging from these documents. He also clarified that in keeping with the order in which they were originally listed, the Commission gives priority to the first of its three proposed main objectives for an EU policy on Arctic issues – namely, protecting and preserving the Arctic in





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unison with its population. He pointed to the 2007 Integrated Maritime Policy as having been an important starting point in developing an EU Arctic policy and sees it as playing an important role in the future. The issue of whether or not the EU will be granted permanent observer status to the Arctic Council is becoming too important; focus should be on contributing to the Arctic Council through its working groups. In conclusion, he acknowledged dialogue with indigenous peoples as extremely important, especially in the daily work of EU external relations.

**Steffen Weber, Chief Adviser on the Arctic Report, Head of Office, B. Schnieber-Jastram MEP**, provided an update on the development of an EU Parliament report on a sustainable EU policy for the High North, expected in January 2011 as the next step in the formulation of an EU Arctic policy. He explained that the two main aims of the report are 1) to re-establish trust among Arctic players by signalling that the EU understands the situation in the Arctic, and 2) to establish a clear list of priorities from the EU perspective. Mr. Weber outlined the reasons why the Antarctic model cannot simply be transposed for the Arctic region. He also outlined the many ways in which the EU is already an Arctic player despite the fact that it has no Arctic coastline. As an advisor on the forthcoming Parliament report and organizer of the EU Arctic Forum, Mr. Weber said he would include the results of the AFPA report in upcoming debates.

**Vincent van Zeijst, Arctic Council representative for the Netherlands**, offered the perspective from the Netherlands – as an observer in the Arctic Council – on why the EU should play a role in the Arctic, what it can do and how. He argued that the EU should be involved in the Arctic because future changes in the Arctic environment will impact Europe, Europe's footprint in the Arctic gives it a certain responsibility, and because the problems in the Arctic require global efforts and the EU is a global frontrunner. The EU is a global entity and has policies for many other regions, as it also should for the Arctic region. Mr. van Zeijst also explained that action should come from both the EU and individual Member States, noting that EU action may be more efficient in terms of “economies of scale”. What the EU can do is 1) contribute to multilateral governance and sound rules in fora where the EU is represented, 2) contribute to scientific programs to fill information gaps, 3) fund concrete activities in the Arctic, and 4) translate guidelines produced by the Arctic Council into EU policies and recommendations, and thereby strengthen the Arctic Council from the outside. The EU can do these things by 1) being consistent in all its messages and policies and with the 8 Arctic states (admittedly a very difficult task), 2) supporting Sweden, Finland, and Denmark in acting as forerunners in creating Arctic policy, and 3) shifting focus from securing observer status in the Arctic Council and instead increasing its participation in the working groups of the Arctic Council.

**Nikolaj Bock, European Environment Agency**, reiterated that many of the drivers determining current Arctic trends are global, and therefore require international cooperation. For this reason, and because the EU is the origin of many of the companies operating in the Arctic, it is of legitimate interest to the Arctic states to involve the EU. Mr. Bock pointed out that with the right efforts, the Arctic's still relatively clean environmental condition could be preserved and he stressed that ensuring the resilience of Arctic ecosystems in the face of future pressures is key. The Arctic is not an unexplored area, but a lot about the Arctic is still unknown. Mr. Bock emphasised the need for the right information in order to devise the right strategies. He also mentioned the EEA's forthcoming State of the Environment in Europe report, which addresses the Arctic in various thematic sections and indicates where legislation is needed to shift negative trends.

**Svante Bodin, Former Director, Ministry of the Environment, Sweden and European Director, ICCI-International Cryosphere Climate Initiative**, supported the AFPA report's focus on environment, citing the fact that there is no overarching sustainable development strategy for the Arctic upon which the report could otherwise be based. He noted that one



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major challenge in the report is that data availability limited the selection of possible footprint indicators and that because of this we may be missing an important part of the picture in terms of other Arctic climate forcers. Mr. Bodin went on to look at climate change as the central issue at hand, determining what can and must be done in the Arctic context. A key challenge is how to deal with the obvious contradiction between the new opportunities for exploitation that climate change creates and the forcing effect that those activities then have on climate. This calls for a situation in which institutions with differentiated roles, responsibilities, and expertise work hand in hand in a more integrated approach to policy formulation. Mr. Bodin pointed to the reduction of black carbon emissions as an important issue on which the EU should take leading action, by supporting its inclusion in the Gothenburg Protocol; trying to get Russia on board; initiating a national emissions ceilings directive on black carbon; and by acting strongly in the IMO context to include black carbon from ships under emissions regulation. In conclusion, he argued that the Arctic nations are relatively rich countries and that rather than focusing on funding for adaptation the EU should contribute to the great need for Arctic research and related funding.

## Question & Answer Session

Time constraints limited discussion following the remarks by panellists. Comments briefly touched on the need to be sure that EU efforts to protect and preserve the Arctic are pursued *in unison with its population*, the increased role that remote observation and satellite monitoring might play in Arctic shipping and forestry activities, and the necessity for other Arctic nations to match EU efforts to reduce the emission of short lived climate forcers. R. Andreas Kraemer closed with three overarching messages emerging from the workshop:

- 1) Maintain focus on the benefits of new opportunities in the Arctic without increasing the negative aspects of the footprint;
- 2) gather data that will enable us, instead of seeing the Arctic as a single entity, to identify the regions, ecosystems, production systems, and groups of people affected in different ways in the Arctic, and
- 3) carry out further dialogue on an EU Arctic policy not only with Arctic states and communities, but also with the EU Member States.

