



European Economic Area  
Consultative Committee  
Comité consultatif  
de l'Espace Économique Européen  
Beratender Ausschuss  
des Europäischen Wirtschaftsraums

**E U R O P E A N E C O N O M I C A R E A**  
**C O N S U L T A T I V E C O M M I T T E E**

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**RESOLUTION AND REPORT**

**on the opportunities and challenges in a changing Arctic region**

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## RESOLUTION

### on the opportunities and challenges in a changing Arctic region

The Consultative Committee of the European Economic Area (EEA CC):

- A. Having regard to the Joint Communication of the European Commission and the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy on Developing an EU Policy towards the Arctic Region<sup>1</sup>,
- B. Having regard to the 2013 Opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) on EU Arctic policy to address globally emerging interests in the region – a view from civil society<sup>2</sup>,
- C. Having regard to the Arctic Council's Kiruna Declaration of 15 May 2013<sup>3</sup>,
- D. Recalling its own 2006 Resolution on the Future of the Northern Dimension Policy<sup>4</sup>,
  - 1. emphasises the importance of the ongoing changes in the Arctic region due to climate change and its economic, social, political and environmental consequences;
  - 2. stresses that the environmental and economic changes occurring in the Arctic will have an impact on people's living conditions not only in the Arctic region but also in other parts of the world;
  - 3. welcomes the increased focus on the new opportunities and challenges in the Arctic, and stresses the importance of cooperation at all levels, including the social partners and civil society;
  - 4. underlines the huge economic potential for the region and Europe as a whole, with easier access to abundant energy and raw material resources and new maritime transport routes as a result of the melting sea ice;
  - 5. notes that the prospects of economic development and new business opportunities in the Arctic open up great possibilities for the labour market in terms of creation of growth and jobs, and stresses that this is of particular interest to Europe in a period of severe economic crisis;
  - 6. underlines the importance of developing infrastructure and technology adapted to the harsh climate and conditions in the Arctic, including also social infrastructure in a scarcely populated area, and recommends that Connecting Europe Facility, TEN-T should be extended to the Arctic;

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<sup>1</sup> [http://eeas.europa.eu/arctic\\_region/docs/](http://eeas.europa.eu/arctic_region/docs/)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.eesc.europa.eu/?i=portal.en.rex-opinions.26809>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/document-archive/category/5-declarations>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.efta.int/advisory-bodies/reports-resolutions-opinions/cc-resolutions/cc-resolutions-eng>

7. emphasises that economic development in the Arctic is accompanied by risks and challenges, notably of a social and environmental nature, and the aim must be to strive for sustainable development in the region;
8. stresses the relevance of continued cooperation in scientific research and of EU's funding mechanisms and programmes in the region;
9. notes that the creation of a favourable business environment ensuring good and safe working conditions is vital for healthy and sustainable development, and that the social partners must play a key role in achieving this;
10. stresses the importance of guaranteeing sustainable living conditions for indigenous people as well as respecting and preserving their cultural heritage and traditional livelihood;
11. calls for increased social dialogue on Arctic issues and broader involvement of civil society, as well as more transparency and public information on Arctic matters;
12. recommends that each Arctic country should involve key civil society partners in its Arctic work, and that these should be given a stronger advisory role in the Arctic Council and the BEAC on issues concerning civil society;
13. takes note of the Arctic States' respective strategies for development of the Arctic region, and underlines the importance of coherent governance in the region;
14. stresses the importance of all Arctic States being treated equally, and expresses its opinion that Arctic cooperation should be based on international agreements<sup>5</sup>;
15. welcomes the intentions to strengthen the position of the Arctic Council<sup>6</sup> and notes that the Council should have a mandate to operate as the key international forum for promoting and solving Arctic issues. The EEA CC agrees that the EU should have a strong role in the Arctic Council;
16. proposes the organisation of a summit under the *aegis* of the Arctic Council, to allow key players in the Arctic, including the social partners and civil society, to discuss the future of the region and to seek a common understanding of the principles of cooperation in the Arctic;

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<sup>5</sup> Including the United Nations, the International Maritime Organization, the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Labour Organization

<sup>6</sup> See the Conclusions from the Arctic Ministerial meeting, Kiruna, May 2013

17. calls for strengthened EU participation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), and for a strengthened commitment from all partners to the Barents Cooperation;
18. calls on the members of the Nordic Council of Ministers to strengthen their cooperation on Arctic issues, and to take the lead in the larger cooperation on Arctic affairs;
19. calls on the EEA States to upgrade Arctic issues on the EEA agenda.

## **REPORT**

### **on the opportunities and challenges in a changing Arctic region**

#### **I. INTRODUCTION**

1. The Arctic region is currently undergoing profound change. The warming of the Arctic climate has major environmental, socio-economic and geopolitical consequences, and the Arctic is moving further up the international agenda. The melting of the Arctic sea ice affects weather conditions and produces environmental changes around the world. At the same time, it also has an impact on the global economy. Easier access to the abundant natural resources in the Arctic region (oil, gas, minerals, etc) and the opening of new shipping routes (Northern Sea Route and Northwest Passage) are consequences of global warming providing opportunities for extensive economic activity in the Arctic, increasing the attractiveness of the region.

2. The region is expected to become one of the most dynamic economic areas in Europe and one of the key regions in the global economy. However, this situation presents major economic, social, political and environmental challenges that need to be tackled in order to ensure sustainable development in the Arctic.

3. The European Economic Area is already in the Arctic geographically, economically and politically, and cooperation and involvement in Arctic affairs at EEA level has crucial relevance for the EEA States:

- Five of the eight Arctic States (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) are EEA Member States and key partners in Arctic cooperation;
- The three other Arctic States – Canada, Russia and the United States – are major powers with whom the European Union already has close cooperation;
- The EU is geographically in the Arctic through its Member States Denmark (Greenland), Finland and Sweden;
- Iceland, Norway and the EU are key partners in the Northern Dimension Policy, which includes also an “Arctic Window”;
- The EU is engaged in Arctic cooperation through its participation in the Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and has invested a considerable amount in research, cooperation and regional activities in the Arctic.

## II. SOCIAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES IN THE ARCTIC

4. Global warming is significant and rapid in the Arctic. It is causing the ice sheet to melt and the permafrost to thaw, which in turn is speeding up the greenhouse gas effect worldwide, partly due to release of methane gas.

5. By September 2012 the Arctic ice sheet had shrunk by a record amount. Ground ice is melting rapidly and being replaced by thin ice that lasts a year. In summer 2008, the Arctic Ocean was 65% ice-free and large parts of the ice sheet are expected to melt in the next few decades. The greenhouse gas effect is causing extreme weather conditions to increase, shifts in wind and ocean currents, rising sea levels, increasing incidence of prolonged drought, and heavy rain and snowfalls in different parts of the world. Melting ice, particularly in the Antarctic and Greenland, may cause sea levels to rise by one to two metres.

6. The environmental conditions in the Arctic are unique, and its ecosystem is fragile and vulnerable. Efforts to improve the management of environmental changes and prevent man-made environmental disasters resulting from economic activity (oil spills, etc) are a key priority in regional cooperation.

7. These changes are impacting the living conditions of residents in the Arctic and in the neighbouring regions. Contrary to Antarctica, the Arctic is populated by around four million people, half a million of whom belong to indigenous peoples. Changing weather and environmental conditions, economic opportunities and growing geopolitical and security interests are also affecting people's lives elsewhere in Europe and around the world.



Source: European External Action Service (EEAS)

[http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/eu\\_russia/fields\\_cooperation/regional\\_issues/arctic\\_coop/index\\_en.htm](http://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/russia/eu_russia/fields_cooperation/regional_issues/arctic_coop/index_en.htm)

### III. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

#### *Huge economic potential in the Arctic region*

8. The Arctic could develop into a key region for the world economy due to its energy and raw material resources and its new potential maritime transport routes. The region is of major economic importance to the local population and to Europe as a whole.

9. The Arctic region could play a role as a global energy supplier in a world where energy demand is soaring. Energy is a permanent political and security factor, and energy security is the new dimension of world politics that will reintroduce the northern reaches of Europe to the global political, military and economic scene. Investments and entrepreneurship, including the processing industry and rural entrepreneurship, should be encouraged in different ways, through initiatives like Arctic Startup<sup>7</sup> and training. The focus should be on the improvement of technology adapted to harsh Arctic conditions, especially offshore deep-sea drilling; mining and maritime industries; design and building of ships and machinery; and port, dockyard and transportation technology.

10. The development of infrastructure should also be based on technology and know-how suited to the harsh conditions in the region. It is vital to create and interconnect a well-functioning infrastructure for transport by rail, road, air and sea, as well as energy transportation networks. The development of transportation routes from Greenland and the Barents region should be a priority. It is essential to improve without delay ports and maritime infrastructure in and to Greenland and land connections to key Arctic ports such as Narvik and Murmansk. Furthermore, it is necessary to develop an appropriate level of environmental and security preparedness in the Arctic and especially along the shipping routes. The huge distances and harsh conditions make it difficult to contain oil spills or rescue people at sea. A growing economic activity in the region will increase the need for such preparedness.

11. In the region, it is also important to develop population centres, the use of information technology in sparsely populated areas (e.g. distance schooling and e-healthcare) and tourism.

12. The EEA CC underlines that Arctic priorities should be well integrated into the Europe 2020 Strategy for Growth and relevant EU policies and programmes, such as Innovation Union and Horizon 2020. In particular, the Interreg and European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) Programmes are of great importance to the northern regions, and it is vital that these continue to reach the region effectively, by supporting the economy and societal activity and promoting cross-border cooperation. The different partnership projects of the Northern Dimension Policy are also important in this context.

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<sup>7</sup> [www.arcticstartup.com](http://www.arcticstartup.com)

***Easier access to abundant natural resources***

13. The Arctic region contains vast, untapped natural resources both in the ocean and on land. Climate change is expected to facilitate access to the region's hydrocarbons (oil and gas), fish, metals, minerals and forest resources. It is estimated that the shrinking of the ice sheet, coupled with the development and deployment of new technologies, will offer multiple opportunities to explore and extract oil and gas and other deep-sea raw material deposits.

14. First, a quarter of the world's identified gas deposits and 80% of Russia's identified natural gas deposits are in the Arctic. Furthermore, it is estimated that the Arctic region contains significant amounts of the world's undiscovered oil and gas deposits: 13% of oil deposits, 30% of gas deposits and 20% of liquid gas deposits.

15. The region also contains substantial untapped deposits of metals and minerals: 90% of the iron ore output for Europe and about 20% of the world's nickel output comes from the Arctic, mainly from the Barents region. For some decades there has been extensive mining in the region which can come to play a key role in securing the accessibility of minerals and metals for Europe. Extensive mapping of the region's mineral resources is crucial, and some countries have already come far in this endeavour. The aim must be sustainable excavation and use of the best available technology.

16. The Arctic also has significant amounts of renewable natural resources, like forests and fish. Around a quarter of the world's fish stocks are in the region, and rising water temperatures impact fish movements, thereby moving fishing activity further north to previously unexploited waters.

***Opening of new shipping routes***

17. The melting of the Arctic sea ice also opens up new maritime transport routes and represents great opportunities for the development of shipping in the area. As the ice sheet becomes increasingly fragile and atmospheric temperatures rise, there are growing opportunities to develop new international shipping routes between Europe, East Asia and America (the Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route), being significantly shorter than the existing sea routes through the Suez and Panama canals. This will both substantially cut costs and reduce carbon emissions. A major proportion of the world's ocean freight is carried on European vessels. The transportation of natural resources (minerals and energy) in the Arctic requires further development of maritime transportation logistics.

18. The Northwest Passage and the Northern Sea Route pass through the exclusive economic zones (EEZ) of Canada and Russia respectively. The conditions for international use of these routes are being considered by the Arctic States. The EEA CC notes that developing the Northern Sea Route and the Northwest Passage for international transportation should be a priority. The use of these routes should be facilitated given their vital importance to the development of both freight and passenger traffic in the region.

***More scientific research needed on the Arctic***

19. There is a need for more comprehensive and reliable data on climate change both in the Arctic and globally. There should be a continued and determined focus on scientific research and monitoring in relation to climate change and ecological, environmental and meteorological issues. Projects such as the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), the Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA) Assessment, the Ice2Sea Programme, the EU Arctic Footprint and Policy Assessment Project, as well as participation in the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON), are of vital importance. Established research and monitoring cooperation networks should be made more effective in order to deepen knowledge and enhance capacity.

20. So far, research has mainly focused on mitigating and managing climate change in different parts of the world, but climate change and its consequences already seem to have reached a tipping point beyond which they can hardly be halted. More emphasis is needed on research into preservation of the Arctic environment and sustainable management of natural resources, as well as adapting to the social and economic consequences of climate change.

21. It is essential to ensure a sustainable balance between environmental protection and economic activity in the Arctic because of the region's particularly fragile ecosystem. Activity in the region should comply with the highest international standards of sustainable development. Corporate social responsibility is highly important, in line with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises. Companies should operate with responsible caution, especially in places of a particular natural value or that are sacred to indigenous people, and there should be a requirement to carry out environmental impact assessments for forthcoming projects.

22. The Arctic Council has adopted a new agreement on avoiding oil spills, which should be fully implemented. The negotiations on the principles governing drilling should proceed, and the negotiations on the IMO's shipping code for the polar regions, the Polar Code, should be successfully concluded. Finally, it is important to make full use of satellite surveillance systems, such as the EU's Galileo system, with the objective of enhancing the navigation and safety of the Arctic shipping routes.

**IV. LABOUR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND SOCIAL CHALLENGES*****Ensuring socially sustainable development in the Arctic***

23. The prospects of economic development and business opportunities in the Arctic region open up great possibilities for the labour market in terms of creating growth and jobs in the region in the near future. This could be of particular interest to Europe, which is currently experiencing a severe economic crisis.

24. This development is, however, also accompanied by risks and challenges related to the labour market. A rapid economic growth and increase in the number of jobs in a remote area where major actors (such as China, the EU, Russia, the US, and the oil and

gas industry) have huge economic interests, could lead to unforeseen and undesired consequences, not only for the local community, but also for the local work life as a whole. The example of Greenland is an illustration of this. The local government wants to further develop the mining industries, but the potential number of new jobs far exceeds the size of the local workforce, even the entire population. Such rapid growth puts a strain on local communities, for example in the housing market. The risk of social dumping in the aftermath of a surge of new industries and the establishment of large international companies is tangible.

25. The prospects of economic development and job creation in the Arctic are important for the countries as a whole, as well as for the communities and people living in the Arctic region. But rapid growth in an area that is scarcely populated creates new challenges that need to be addressed. The development of new industries and jobs must go hand in hand with the creation of the necessary social infrastructure such as healthcare, schools, housing and culture. This is important in the perspective of developing sustainable and functioning local societies alongside a growing population and labour market.

26. Another challenge in the Arctic concerns the workforce. Many Arctic communities have major problems related to unemployment and outflux of people, but at the same time there is a growing need for a skilled workforce (oil-drilling, ports, etc) in these same areas. This creates an unbalance in the labour market that needs to be addressed. For these reasons, there will be increased immigration of workers to the region, raising issues such as sustainable immigration policy and administration, living conditions and social security, which need to be tackled by the Arctic States.

27. The EEA CC agrees that the goal of the Arctic policies must be to balance the need for new growth and jobs with the needs of the environment, the indigenous people, society and working life as a whole. The provision of good and safe working conditions is key to healthy and sustainable development, and the social partners must play a key role in achieving this. Furthermore, the EEA CC calls on national and local governments in the Arctic States to cooperate to ensure sustainable development that also includes a broader societal view in the development of the Arctic region.

### ***Increased involvement of social partners and civil society***

28. The environmental and economic changes occurring in the Arctic will impact on people's living conditions not only in the Arctic region but also in other parts of the world. The EU has noted that the Arctic offers both challenges and opportunities that will significantly affect the life of European citizens in future generations. In this context, the EEA CC calls for increased attention to the social dialogue on Arctic issues, as well as for more transparency and public information on Arctic matters.

29. There is an established dialogue with indigenous peoples and with different interest groups in the Arctic region. The aim is to ensure respect for and preservation of their cultural heritage and traditional livelihood. However, most people in the region belong to non-indigenous groups (around 90%), so dialogue should be extended to the population as a whole. Civil society needs to be broadly and regularly involved in Arctic work alongside indigenous peoples. Various stakeholders, including businesses,

employees and environmental groups, should be involved in both multilateral and EU/EEA activities relating to the Arctic. Dialogue, roundtable discussions and hearings should be arranged with various civil society groups.

30. The EEA CC agrees with the EESC's recommendation that civil society participation must be improved on several levels, both in the EU and in the EEA. Each Arctic country should involve key civil society partners in its Arctic work, and should be given a stronger advisory role in the Arctic Council and the BEAC on issues concerning civil society.

## V. KEY PLAYERS AND COOPERATION IN THE ARCTIC

### *Need for coherent governance of the Arctic region*

31. Each of the eight Arctic States has their own Arctic strategy<sup>8</sup>, and they have also forged bilateral relations with each other to protect and promote their common interests in the region. The different strategies stress the political and economic significance of the region for the respective country, while focusing on the region's potential in terms of energy, raw materials and development of transit routes. All of the Arctic States highlight the environmental challenges in the region related to climate change and the Arctic ecosystem, and the need to cooperate in order to develop sustainable governance of the region. The EEA CC underlines the importance of the different Arctic strategies being coherent with one another.

### *Stronger role of the EU in the Arctic*

32. The EU's Arctic policy gained impetus in 2008, mainly at the initiative of the European Parliament<sup>9</sup>, which also adopted a resolution on the matter in 2011<sup>10</sup>. The European Commission has presented two communications<sup>11</sup> and the Council has adopted conclusions on the matter<sup>12</sup>. The current Arctic policy of the EU is based on three focal areas: knowledge, responsibility and engagement. The EU has a comprehensive approach to Arctic policy with three key objectives:

- Protecting the Arctic environment in cooperation with its population;
- Promoting the sustainable use of natural resources;
- Promoting international cooperation and international agreements.

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<sup>8</sup> Norway: [The High North: visions and strategies](#), 2011; Russia: [The Russian Federation's main state policy in the Arctic until 2020 and beyond](#), 2008; Canada: [Canada's Northern Strategy: Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future](#), 2009; Sweden: [The Arctic: Sweden's strategy for the region](#), 2012; United States: [US: Arctic Region Policy](#), 2009; Finland: [Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region](#), 2013; Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands: [Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011-2020](#), 2011; Iceland: <http://www.utanrikisraduneyti.is>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2008-0474&language=EN>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2011-0024+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN>

<sup>11</sup> [http://eas.europa.eu/arctic\\_region/docs/](http://eas.europa.eu/arctic_region/docs/)

<sup>12</sup> Council Conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic Region, 4 December 2008 and Council Conclusions on Arctic Issues, 8 December 2009.

33. Many existing EU programmes can also be applied to the Arctic region. Over the course of 2007-2013, the EU has invested around EUR 1.4 billion to promote sustainable development in the Arctic and neighbouring regions. Scientific research cooperation has taken priority: the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (2002-2006) included Arctic-related projects. In recent years, the EU has invested over EUR 200 million in Arctic-related research and is involved in many joint projects, mainly as part of its Seventh Framework Programme for Research (2007-2013). A number of projects have been carried out through programmes for regional cooperation: Interreg, European Territorial Cooperation (ETC) Programmes, Regional Aid Guidelines (RAG) and ENPI.

34. The Connecting Europe Facility and TEN-T do not, however, extend to the Arctic. The EEA CC recommends that these programmes also be extended to the continental areas of the Arctic.

### *Strengthening cooperation on Arctic matters*

35. Cooperation on issues concerning the Arctic region is built as far as possible on international agreements and within international forums.

36. One of the most important international agreements governing relations between the Arctic coastal states is the **1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)**. UNCLOS deals with the partition of ocean and sea areas between independent states and establishes the right to the 200 nautical mile EEZ<sup>13</sup>. The Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) facilitates the implementation of the UNCLOS in respect of the establishment of the outer limits of the continental shelf beyond 200 nautical miles.

37. Through the UNCLOS, the states bordering the Arctic Ocean have reached common understanding on the limits of their regional territorial waters and EEZ, as well as on possible extensions of their continental shelves. Efforts are being made to avoid territorial disputes in the region, and the Arctic coastal states agreed in 2008 on a joint declaration underlining the will to establish the EEZ in good spirit. The major part of the Arctic maritime territories is divided undisputedly between the coastal states, but some geographical points of contention remain unresolved. A delimitation agreement concerning the Barents Sea was reached between Norway and Russia in 2010 after forty years of border dispute<sup>14</sup>.

38. There is extensive cooperation within several forums on issues related to the Arctic region, both at regional and international level.

39. The **Arctic Council**<sup>15</sup> is the main forum for Arctic cooperation. Its members are the eight Arctic States, including the Faroe Islands and Greenland as dependencies of Denmark. In addition, 20 organisations and 12 non-Arctic countries have observer

<sup>13</sup> An EEZ is a sea area over which a state has sovereign rights over the exploration and use of marine resources. The exclusive economic zone stretches out to 200 nautical miles from the baselines from which the breadth of the state's territorial sea is measured

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.regjeringen.no/en/dep/smk/press-center/Press-releases/2010/treaty.html?id=614254>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.arctic-council.org/index.php/en/>

status<sup>16</sup>, since China, India, Italy, Japan, Korea and Singapore were granted this status at the last ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council in Kiruna in May 2013<sup>17</sup>. At the same meeting, also the EU was de facto accepted as an observer. This development shows the increased interest in the region from states outside the region as the Arctic moves further up the international agenda. China in particular has strengthened its presence in the region in recent years and is aiming at establishing close relations with Arctic countries, especially with Greenland and Iceland. Furthermore, six indigenous peoples' organisations<sup>18</sup> have been granted the status of permanent participants with full consultation rights with regard to negotiations and decisions. The Arctic Council has concluded agreements on issues such as maritime search and rescue and oil spill avoidance. Efforts are currently being made to give the Council a more important role, with wider jurisdiction and more influence as an instrument of international cooperation.

40. The EEA CC welcomes the intentions to strengthen the position of the Arctic Council, and further notes that the Council should have a mandate to operate as the key international forum for promoting and solving Arctic issues. The EEA CC stresses the importance of all Arctic States being treated equally in future cooperation. Furthermore, it agrees that the EU should have a strong role in the Arctic Council, as this would allow the EU to contribute better to the work of the Council and enhance the influence of the Arctic Council.

41. The **Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)**<sup>19</sup> is a forum for intergovernmental cooperation on issues concerning the Barents Region, and its members are Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the European Commission. The vast Barents Region covers the northern regions of Norway, Sweden and Finland and North-West Russia. Among the current priorities of BEAC are transport and infrastructure, and it is preparing a transport plan for the Barents region which is in urgent need of improved infrastructure. BEAC hosts the **Barents Regional Council (BRC)** which includes the 13 sub-regions in the Barents region<sup>20</sup> and works to facilitate pragmatic interregional cross-border cooperation. The EEA CC calls for strengthened EU participation and a strengthened commitment by all relevant partners in BEAC and in BRC, which both play a key role in cross-border cooperation within the Barents region.

42. The **Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM)**<sup>21</sup> is also a forum for Arctic cooperation and has developed its own Arctic strategy. The five Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) have been members of the NCM since its foundation in 1971. Greenland, the Faroe Islands and Åland have increased their representation and position in the NCM and decisions taken in the NCM are binding also for these territories. The EEA CC calls on NCM members to strengthen

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<sup>16</sup> China, France, Germany, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, the Netherlands, Poland, Singapore, Spain and the United Kingdom

<sup>17</sup> See the Conclusions from the Arctic ministerial meeting, Kiruna, May 2013

<sup>18</sup> Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC), Aleut International Association (AIA), Gwich'in Council International (GCI), Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), Russia Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) and the Saami Council (SC)

<sup>19</sup> See BEAC's webpage: [http://www.beac.st/in\\_English/Barents\\_Euro-Arctic\\_Council.iw3](http://www.beac.st/in_English/Barents_Euro-Arctic_Council.iw3)

<sup>20</sup> Kainuu, Lapland and Oulu Region in Finland; Finnmark, Nordland and Troms in Norway; Norrbotten and Västerbotten in Sweden; Arkhangelsk, Karelia, Komi, Murmansk and Nenets in Russia

<sup>21</sup> See NCM's webpage: <http://www.norden.org/en/nordic-council-of-ministers>

their cooperation on Arctic issues, and to take the lead in the larger cooperation on Arctic affairs.

43. The **Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)**<sup>22</sup> is a political forum for regional and intergovernmental cooperation in the Baltic Sea Region. Its members are the 11 states in the region (Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, Russia and Sweden) and the European Commission.

44. Another forum for cooperation on Arctic matters is the **Northern Dimension (ND)**<sup>23</sup> which is a common policy of the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia, covering a large geographical area from north-west Russia in the east to Iceland and Greenland in the west. The US and Canada have observer status at ND meetings. Cooperation is based on four thematic partnerships on environment, health, transport and culture, and a separate “Arctic Window”. The Partnership on Transport and Logistics (NDPTL), under which a proposal for a regional transport network is currently being developed, is important in terms of Arctic cooperation. The Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) also plays a pivotal role in the Arctic, not least because it provided a framework for successfully cleaning up radioactive waste in the Kola Peninsula, which was started by Norway already in 1995.

45. Parliamentarians from the Arctic States (including the European Parliament) participate in all of the aforementioned cooperation forums, and they also cooperate regularly through the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR)<sup>24</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> See CBSS’s webpage: <http://www.cbss.org/>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.northerndimension.info/>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.arcticparl.org/>