

TFOPP "2-pager" highlights report, 1st meeting 16-17 January 2014

Arctic Council
Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention
1st meeting, Oslo
January 16-17, 2014
Two pager submitted by the co-chairs

Ministers decided at the Kiruna Ministerial May 15th, 2013, to establish a Task Force on Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Prevention (TFOPP) related to marine oil spills in the Arctic. The mandate for the TFOPP is to work out an action plan, or other arrangements on oil pollution prevention in the Arctic. The outcome of the work should be finalized and subsequently presented to Ministers at the Ministerial meeting in Canada in May 2015.

The first round of negotiations took place in Oslo January 16 – 17. All member states, as well as permanent participant Aleut International Association, were present and participated actively at the meeting. In addition, permanent observers were present. Italy and Singapore, the EU, World Wide Fund (WWF) and Circumpolar Conservation Union (CCU) held presentations, but also representatives from France, Germany, China and Nordic Council, were present in Oslo. Representatives from the oil and gas industry, International Oil and Gas Producers Association, Gazprom, Rosneft and Statoil, also gave presentations on their oil spill prevention efforts in the Arctic. EPPR and PAME held presentations on their efforts in this area so far.

The first round of talks was carried out in a good atmosphere. The eight member states managed to identify a platform they all could agree upon on how to continue the negotiations to come.

They all agreed upon the need to strictly look upon preventive issues and to focus on enhanced cooperation between the Arctic Council member states in order identify challenges in Arctic operations and to bridge gap in existing measures. The participants also

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agreed upon that they, in this work, must attempt to avoid duplication of existing instruments or ongoing work in other forums, and to focus on the marine environment.

A matrix listing possible topics and issues for cooperation between the Arctic states was presented by Norway. Further, Russia presented a framework for an agreement on cooperation on marine oil pollution prevention in the Arctic.

The participants agreed that the matrix is a good starting point for the further discussions on possible areas for cooperation, and that an updated matrix, based on inputs from other delegation, will be discussed at the next Task Force meeting. The participants also agreed that Russia would present an updated version of their document at the next meeting.

The participants were challenged to clarify their national position concerning negotiation of an international binding agreement on oil pollution prevention in the Arctic before the next Task Force-meeting.

There was agreement on the need to keep industry informed and involved in the process going forward, and efforts will be made to organize an industry workshop at some point during the process.

The eight Arctic States agreed to work closely together in the months to come to achieve a constructive result and to meet again in March to continue the discussion, and subsequently in June as well as twice in fall.