

Denmark

- Greenland
- Faroe Islands.

Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting. 9-10.10.2002.

Round Table Discussion 3 – **Roundtable Discussion on Future Perspectives.**

Greenland and Denmark have for quite some time now been campaigning for support for the concept of the Arctic Window, which was conceived during a conference on the EU Northern Dimension in Finland in 1999. We are glad that the concept was upheld in the declaration, which we are about to sign.

It is important to underline that the concept is born out of the Finnish contribution to EU policy by proposing the EU Northern Dimension initiative. We would like to commend Finland – not only for this important and visionary initiative – but also for Finland's, the Nordic countries' and others' support for this idea. The aim of the Arctic Window is to highlight Arctic priorities and to provide linkage between the EU and non-EU-countries in the Arctic such as Greenland, Canada and Alaska in fields of mutual problems and challenges.

We are convinced that the Northern Dimension has a great potential, both for the EU and for Russia and other Arctic regions, to share experiences towards the solution of common problems and to participate in the opportunities, which a northern-oriented partnership would offer.

What are we talking about? Development of trade and industry and telecommunications are two of the priority areas we have identified as important fields for cooperation. A third, connected priority is research relevant to Arctic conditions, such as ongoing research on the environmentally sound exploitation of mineral resources, as well as on cold-resistant materials and building methods.

The Arctic environment is a great asset, both for its intrinsic value and as a source for the harvest of living resources including marine living. Its conservation is naturally another priority. Its largely pristine state makes it unique for monitoring and studying pollution problems, as well as for the understanding of the processes governing climate change.

Through the already established channels of Arctic cooperation, the EU could add a further perspective to its relations not only with Russia and other Northern Dimension partners, but also with Canada and the United States. Denmark and Greenland will continue to promote and do what they can to facilitate the opening of the Arctic Window in the way it should be understood – i.e. promoting co-operation on issues of common interest.

Thank You