

# CBSS Special Session: Agenda, list of participants and SAOC's Statement - Agenda item 12

2003-03

Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Iceland

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COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES  
Committee of Senior Officials  
**Special Session on the Northern Dimension Action Plan for 2004-2006**  
**Brussels, 6-7 March 2003**

**AGENDA**

Thursday, 6 March 2003

10.00-10.30: Opening statements by CSO Chairman Ambassador Tauno Pesola and by Mr. Anthony Cary, Head of Commissioner Patten's Cabinet. Introductory remarks by the chairmen of the respective senior officials groups of the Arctic Council, Barents Euro Arctic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

10.30-12.30: Input regarding chapter 4.1. of the Guidelines for a New Action Plan (GNAP/**Economy, Business and Infrastructure** - CBSS/FINLAND)

*12.30-14.00: Buffet lunch hosted by the Commission*

14.00-15.30: Input regarding chapter 4.2. of the Guidelines for a New Action Plan (GNAP/**Human Resources, Education, Scientific Research and Health**-CBSS/GERMANY)

*15.30-15.45: Coffee break*

15.45-17.15: Input regarding chapter 4.3. of the Guidelines for a New Action Plan (GNAP/**Environment, Nuclear Safety and Natural Resources**-CBSS/LATVIA)

17.15-18.00: **Monitoring and coordination mechanisms for implementation of the NDAP-COM)**

*Dinner for invited guests hosted by the Commission.*

Friday, 7 March 2003

*08.30-09.00: Regular CSO Session (in case of need).*

09.00-10.30: Input regarding chapter 4.4. of the Guidelines for a New Action Plan (GNAP/**Cross-Border Cooperation and Regional Development**-CBSS/RUSSIA)

*10.30-11.00: Coffee break*

11.00-12.30: Input regarding chapter 4.5. of the Guidelines for a New Action Plan (GNAP/**Justice and Home Affairs**- CBSS/POLAND)

12.30-13.00: Cross-cutting themes. CBSS Input regarding chapters 5.1. & 5.2. (GNAP/**Kaliningrad and the Arctic**-COM)

13.00-13.30: Concluding remarks by CSO Chairman and senior COM official.

**CBSS-CSO Special Session  
Brussels 6-7 March 2003**

**Statements by the Chair of the SAOs  
Ambassador Gunnar Pálsson**

*Opening Statement*

I would like to thank the CBSS Chair for giving us, the other Chairs of Northern regional bodies, this opportunity to compare notes and exchange information on the different inputs to the new Northern Dimension Action Plan. In particular, we all stand to benefit from a discussion among ourselves and with the European Commission on ways to maximize the mutual advantage to be derived from working together on the development of the new Action Plan.

Each of the regional bodies in the North has distinctive features. The Arctic Council is first and foremost a forum for sustainable development, mandated to address all three of its main pillars; the environmental, social and economic. It involves national Governments, indigenous peoples, regional authorities, scientific experts and civil society. The Council is circumpolar in nature; it is the largest in geographical reach and includes the countries of North America, and Russia. Five of its eight members are not members of the European Union, however, three non-members, Iceland, Norway and Russia, are partner countries to the Northern Dimension.

The Arctic Council, as was clearly stated in the 2002 Ministerial declaration from Inari, is in favor of closer co-operation with the European Commission. The Council Chair participated in the Ministerial Conference on the Northern Dimension in Luxemburg in October and later provided written comments on the Arctic aspects of the guidelines. Most recently, the Council submitted its input to the process of drafting the new Action Plan in the form of an overview of Arctic Council priorities and activities.

This input document covers a wide range of Arctic Council priorities and activities. The Inari declaration provides the guidance and we have therefore structured our input on the basis of the political declaration and the current Arctic Council work plan. In order to facilitate your cross-referencing of areas of common concern between the European Commission and the Arctic Council, we have inserted, in our document, references to the Guidelines where the same or similar priorities are to be found, mainly regarding scientific research and the environment.

The document emphasizes various issues regarding the Arctic environment and environmental research, both ongoing and proposed. We underline monitoring, assessing and preventing pollution in the Arctic. Climate change is given special attention and so is biodiversity conservation, in addition to emergency preparedness and prevention.

In line with the areas of emphasis contained in the Icelandic Chairmanship Programme and as the general well-being of the region's residents and their living conditions move up the agenda., particular attention is paid to the human dimension of Arctic Council co-operation.

I note with satisfaction that the Guidelines we will discuss today emphasize the variety and richness of cooperation throughout the Northern Dimension and the importance of building on the division of labor and coordination among the existing bodies. It is also stated that the new Action Plan should give adequate responses to problems and challenges of the northernmost regions of the Northern Dimension area, particularly of the Arctic.

It is certainly our hope that by offering a closer look at the Arctic Council's priorities we can contribute to defining areas of reciprocal interest between the Arctic Council, the European Commission and the Northern regional bodies. We remain, of course, autonomous bodies, each pursuing its own mandated objectives. Nevertheless, wherever there are demonstrable benefits to be reaped from closer co-operation, the opportunity should not be missed.

## *Individual chapters*

### **10:30 - 12:30 Chapter 4.1.**

#### **GNAP/Economy, Business and Infrastructure**

Owing to the particular characteristics of the Arctic region, the vast geographic scope, the dispersal of communities and the relative remoteness of many of them, the Arctic Council emphasizes the significance of infrastructure, including aviation, marine and surface transport and modern telecommunications. The Arctic States have agreed to explore ways and means to expand Arctic aviation links and to strengthen marine transportation and telecommunication services in the Arctic region.

The Arctic Council also recognizes the usefulness of information and communication technology in circumpolar capacity-building efforts. I am pleased to inform you that the Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council will, in October 2003, host an international conference on Information and Communication Technology.

Under this agenda item, I would like to draw special attention to the need to bear in mind the significant impact climate change may have on infrastructure in the Arctic. In terms of roads and airfields and various other installations, the effect of climate change, especially in permafrost areas, is already apparent.

### **14:00 - 15:30 Chapter 4.2.**

#### **GNAP/Human Resources, Education, Scientific Research and Health**

Generally speaking, the Arctic States are strongly committed to improving human conditions in the Arctic and to promoting sustainable development as a basis for enhanced prosperity and well-being.

The Council encourages continued cooperation on health issues, including assessing the relationship between pollution and health, sharing information on the incidence of infectious diseases, evaluating telemedicine as a method of overcoming long distances and new initiatives to address the effects of domestic violence on women's health, the exchange of information on promoting healthier lifestyles, and the role of education and training in improving the health and well being of children and youth.

The Arctic Council has undertaken to produce an Arctic Human Development Report (ADHR), a comprehensive assessment of human conditions in the entire circumpolar region. It will be a scientifically based overview and assessment for the non-specialist, highlighting issues of particular concern for Arctic livelihoods and human well-being. The AHDR will identify problems and success stories as well as areas requiring further study, all with a view to building human and social capacity and enhancing community viability across the region. The AHDR will be presented to a Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council in 2004. One of the co-chairs of the report is designated by the University of the Arctic, which has an important role to play in educating residents of the North about their conditions and their potential.

The Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), has conducted two major assessments of the pollution status of the Arctic, documenting the sources, levels and trends, as well as the effects of a wide range of contaminants. The main conclusions of these assessments are that: "In comparison with most other areas of the world, the Arctic remains a clean environment. However, for some pollutants, combinations of different factors give rise to concern in certain ecosystems and for some human populations."

There are several recommendations, as regards human health, in those reports, including continuing the monitoring of human exposure to mercury, which constitutes an increasing threat in the Arctic, and other chemicals of concern, in order to help estimate risk, elaborate geographical trends, and begin to establish time trends of exposure.

The Arctic Council's project on the assessment of the consequences of climate variability and change, called the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), will examine present status and possible future impacts of climate change on the environment and its living resources, on human health, and social and economic activities, as well as possible adaptations and responses. The ACIA should be completed in 2004. The assessment will include policy recommendations that will address the need for international mechanisms to deal with climate change in a global context, as well as recommendations aimed at national governments and regional authorities.

### **15:45 - 17:15 Chapter 4.3.**

#### **GNAP/Environment, Nuclear Safety and Natural Resources**

Environmental issues, both in their research and pollution prevention aspects, have long been a preoccupation of the Arctic Council and will remain so. But our efforts are not limited to monitoring and prevention. As a direct follow-up of the AMAP monitoring and assessment work, the Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic (ACAP) was established to address sources identified by AMAP. The project entails several priority projects to reduce pollution in the Arctic, including projects on cleaner production and control/elimination of PCBs, obsolete pesticides and dioxins, all of which are priority pollutants under the Stockholm Convention.

The Arctic marine environment is of great importance, not only to the states of the region, but to the world as a whole. This is because of its rich natural resources, unique socio-cultural aspects, economic potential and its integral role in climatic processes. Pressures on the Arctic marine environment come from many different directions, including climate change and economic development. They come from shipping, dumping, offshore oil and gas development and land-based activities, all of which activities are increasing.

In October 2002, the Arctic Council decided to develop a strategic plan for the protection of the Arctic marine environment. One of its Working Groups, responsible for the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), has been mandated to develop this plan over the next two years, led by two of the member countries, Iceland and Canada. The plan will be developed through an open consultative process,

involving all relevant stakeholders in order to ensure that the Arctic region has an integrated ocean position within the international oceans agenda. In this way, the Arctic Council hopes to make a significant contribution to the follow-up of the WSSD 2002 Plan of Implementation.

The Global Programme of Action (GPA) aims to prevent the degradation of the marine environment from land-based activities by assisting States to take actions individually and jointly. Therefore, the initial phase of the Arctic Council's Regional Programme of Action (RPA) has focused on strategies and measures for the short-term to address urgent pollution problems in the Arctic marine environment stemming from land-based activities. The implementation and further elaboration of the Russian Federation's National Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment is an important component of the implementation of the regional action program.

Also, the Arctic Council intends to continue civilian cooperation with Russia to enhance the safety of nuclear power installations and nuclear waste sites.

Circumpolar cooperation on Arctic flora and fauna is aimed at promoting the conservation of biodiversity and unfragmented habitats and promoting the sustainable use of natural resources. Effective conservation of many circumpolar species and other natural resources requires close cooperation with non-arctic states. The Arctic Council recognizes the need for enhanced monitoring of biodiversity at the circumpolar level, fully utilizing traditional knowledge, to detect the impacts of global change on biodiversity and to enable Arctic communities to effectively respond and adapt to those changes. .

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**COUNCIL OF THE BALTIC SEA STATES**  
Special Session of the Committee of Senior Officials  
Brussels, 6-7 March 2003  
List of Registered Participants

**CBSS Presidency/Finland**

Amb. Tauno PESOLA, CSO Chairman  
Ms. Marja-Liisa KILJUNEN, CSO member

**Denmark**

Ms. Jane JØRGENSEN, CSO member  
Mr. Lars GRØNBJERG, Head of Section, MFA

**Estonia**

Ms. Kristi KARELSOHN, CSO member

**Germany**

Mr. Konrad ARZ von STRAUSSBURG, CSO member  
Mr. Ralf LORIG, assistant Desk Officer, MFA  
Mr. Günther ACHULZ, BSSSC-Antenna/Hanse Office, Brussels

**Iceland**

Amb. Sveinn BJÖRNSSON, CSO member

**Latvia**

Mr. Maris KLISANS, CSO member  
Mr. Valdis BISTERS, MFA  
Mr. Maris ZVAIGZNE, MFA  
Mr. Roberts GREGORS, MFA

**Lithuania**

Amb. Edvardas BORISOVAS, CSO member  
Ms. Lina PECIULYTE, 2<sup>nd</sup> Secretary, Lithuanian Mission to the EU

**Norway**

Mr. Bjarte ERDAL, CSO member  
Mr. Stanislaw CIOS, MFA

**Russian Federation**

Mr. Viktor I. TATARINTSEV, CSO member  
Mr. Petr PLIKHIN, Counsellor, MFA  
Mr. Dimitri POLYANSKIY, 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary, Russian Mission to the EU

**Sweden**

Amb. Thomas PALME, CSO member  
Mr. Christer PERSSON, Director, MFA

**European Commission**

Mr. Alistair, MacDONALD, RELEX  
Mr. Giuseppe BUSINI, RELEX

**CBSS Secretariat**

Amb. Hannu HALINEN, Director  
Amb. Alar OLLJUM, Deputy-Director  
Mr. Philipp SAPRYKIN, Senior Advisor  
Ms. Tina TINDE, Senior Advisor  
Mr. Didrik de SCHAETZEN, Intern

**INVITED GUESTS****Arctic Council**

Amb. Gunnar PÁLSSON, Chairman of the Senior Arctic Officials  
Ms. Bryndís KJARTANSDÓTTIR, AC Secretariat, MFA of Iceland

**Barents Euro-Arctic Council**

Amb. Helena ÖDMARK, Chairman of the Committee of Senior Officials  
Mr. Sigbjörn ERIKSEN, Chairman of the Regional Committee of the Barents  
Euro-Arctic Regional Council  
Mr. Ulf SAVBÄCK, BEAC Secretariat, MFA of Sweden

**Nordic Council of Ministers**

Mr. Christer ELM, Director, MFA of Sweden  
Mr. Helmer BROBERG, Head of Section, MFA of Sweden  
Mr. Thomas Alslev CHRISTENSE, Head of Department, NCM Secretariat

**Italy**

Ms. Alessandra TOGNONATO, MFA