

# Statements from Rovaniemi 2018 Observer Special Session: Observer States

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**SAO PLENARY MEETING  
2 NOVEMBER 2018**

**FRENCH RESEARCH ON BIODIVERSITY IN THE ARCTIC**

**STATEMENT DELIVERED  
BY ANTOINE GOSSET, FIRST COUNSELLOR  
EMBASSY OF FRANCE TO FINLAND**

Through the Polar Institute Paul-Emile Victor, the National Center for Scientific Research and a network representing a community of more than 400 scientists, France's expertise in Earth and Life sciences provides a valuable input to a better understanding of scientific-related issues in the region.

Earlier in May this year, we submitted our report to present our contributions to the different Arctic Council's Working Groups. Among our priorities, I would like to specifically flag the following points:

- France is leading several long-term research monitoring programmes in the Arctic - mainly in Greenland and Svalbard - aiming at improving our common knowledge of the impact of environmental changes on the terrestrial and marine Arctic wildlife.
- A French research team coordinates the ARCTOX initiative, an international programme gathering researchers from 12 countries in order to track and understand the mercury contamination of Arctic seabirds and Arctic marine food webs and thereby highlight hotspots of pollution, which might

require a particular attention for the conservation of these sensitive species and their ecosystems.

- We also have a strong expertise in the study of the impact of emerging pollutants on the Arctic marine biodiversity.
- Arctic biodiversity is not only about the Arctic. Through the use of tracking technologies, various French research projects are meant to understand the threats faced by the Arctic wildlife also in regions affected by climate change and anthropogenic activities which could thus have high impact on it.

Let me recall that the French National Roadmap for the Arctic, adopted in June 2016, sets the protection of the marine environment as well as research and scientific cooperation as two of the French priorities in the Arctic and is thereby fully in line with Arctic Council objectives and the activities of working groups, in particular CAFF and AMAP.

Recently, we provided an expert on migratory birds to take part in the CAFF working group. This expert is an observer member of AMBI and coordinates the Belmont Forum project TAMANI, which aims at designing an improved network of long-term monitoring sites for Arctic vertebrates and involving local communities through participatory scientific programs. TAMANI also contributes to the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Plan (CBMP). This expert is part of the C-bird expert group of CAFF, the TAMANI project being the main French contribution to it.

Moreover, French scientists contribute to the AMAP works.

- A French expert on Arctic air pollution issues has been working in the Expert Group on Black Carbon and

tropospheric ozone since 2012 and is currently involved in the Short-Lived Climate Pollutants Expert group. This expert previously coordinated the PARCS project and now co-chairs the PACES initiative.

- Another French expert, on eco-toxicology, mercury and Arctic marine ecosystems, is coordinating the international network ARCTOX I already referred to. He has been participating in the AMAP working group meetings since November 2016.
- Several French programmes funded by the National Research Agency supplement the AMAP work.

To conclude, let me reaffirm that France remains fully committed to actively contributing to the different working groups and experts groups of the Arctic Council. Some of the ongoing projects led by French researchers will directly contribute to their activities while other initiatives will continue to be implemented in close cooperation with Arctic communities.