

Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

The European Union

Date of submission:

3 December 2018

Observer's website, if appropriate:

External Action Service:	https://eeas.europa.eu/arctic-policy/eu-arctic-policy_en
Maritime Affairs and Fisheries:	http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs_fisheries/
Climate Action:	http://ec.europa.eu/clima/
Environment:	http://ec.europa.eu/environment/index_en.htm
Research & innovation:	http://ec.europa.eu/research/index.cfm
Joint Research Centre:	https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en
Mobility & transport:	http://ec.europa.eu/transport/home_en
Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs:	http://ec.europa.eu/growth/
European Environment Agency:	http://www.eea.europa.eu/

Information for appropriate contact person

Full name: Marie-Anne Coninx

Email: Marie-Anne.CONINSX@eeas.europa.eu

Telephone: +32 2 584 4180

Organization or department: European External Action Service

Job Title: Special adviser / Ambassador at Large for the Arctic

Full mailing address:

EEAS SCHU 03/355,
Rond Point Schuman 9A,
1046 Brussels,
Belgium

Is the European Union still interested in obtaining status as an Observer of the Arctic Council?

Yes No

Observer Report

Please describe in no more than 2 pages your state or organization's contributions to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years. Please highlight contributions to specific projects, such as through proposals, concept development, in-kind and financial support, and hosting of meetings. If applicable, please include mention of collaboration with Permanent Participants, such as project proposal endorsement and support.

The EU avails itself of this opportunity to update the Arctic Council on the EU's Arctic Policy and the EU's engagement in the work of the Arctic Council and subsidiary bodies. This report is submitted in line with the EU's application for observer status and the Arctic Council's decision to extend a standing invitation for the EU to attend its sessions at all levels.

Joint Communication on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic

On 27 April 2016, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy published the Joint Communication on an integrated EU policy for the Arctic. It has 3 main pillars: climate change/safeguarding the Arctic environment; promoting sustainable development in the region; and supporting international cooperation on Arctic issues. Science, research and innovation have a key role to play across these substantive areas. The EU is engaging with all Arctic partners including indigenous peoples.

While the Arctic states have primary responsibility for tackling issues within their territories, many of the issues affecting the Arctic region can be more effectively addressed through regional and multilateral cooperation. In many regional and multilateral fora the EU and its Member States are working together on data collection, setting objectives, negotiating agreements with international partners of relevance to the Arctic.

The EU's engagement in the Arctic Council

The EU is engaged in several Arctic Council Working Groups, Task Forces and Expert Groups. This work is being conducted by staff from several Directorate-Generals (DG) of the European Commission and EU agencies, currently including DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), DG for Climate Action (DG CLIMA), DG for Environment (DG ENV) and the European Environment Agency (EEA), DG for Research and Innovation (DG RTD), the Joint Research Centre (DG JRC), DG for Mobility and Transport (DG MOVE), Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship and SMEs (DG GROW) and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

Working Groups

AMAP - Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme:

DG JRC attends the annual AMAP meetings; it provides expertise to the ongoing assessments of Short Lived Climate Pollutants and on Mercury with its modelling work and attends the meetings of the associated expert groups.

- The EU-PolarNet initiative supports 22 European research institutions to develop an integrated EU Polar research programme and facilitates the coordination of data and infrastructure between all partner organisations. AMAP sits on the steering committee of this initiative and is a beneficiary of EU-PolarNet.

- The EU finances a project, through its Partnership Instrument, to contribute to developing collective responses to reduce black carbon emissions in the Arctic region and regions with impact on the Arctic (transboundary air pollution) and to the reinforcement of international cooperation on Arctic environment. The project started at the end of 2017 and will run for 3 years. The Secretariat of AMAP is the implementing organisation.

CAFF - Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna:

- EEA provided input to the Arctic Migratory Birds Initiative on bird populations gathered under the EU Birds Directive to support the work of this Initiative, and in particularly the European Flyway.

PAME - Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment:

- EEA has been participating and engaging in PAME meetings, including sharing European experiences at the Marine Protected Areas Science Workshop arranged by PAME.
- DG MOVE has been engaging in the work of the Shipping Expert Group.
- In the EU's Joint Communication from 2016 on an International ocean governance agenda for the future of our oceans, the European Commission (lead: DG MARE) outlines key issues related to the protection of the marine environment, proposing concrete actions to be undertaken, such as a strategy on plastics, addressing marine litter.

SDWG - Sustainable Development Working Group:

- DG JRC attends SDWG meetings. Together with EEA they participated in the Drafting Committee of the Arctic Resilience Action Framework (ARAF) now under the SDWG and currently provide expertise to the ongoing activities of both ARAF and the Arctic sustainable energy futures toolkit.
- EU 2014-2020 Northern Periphery and Arctic (NPA) Programme provides support and funding for projects to develop competitive and sustainable communities in the Arctic region, examples of which have been presented to the SDWG. A number of projects involving Arctic Partners are included in the current programme.
- DG MARE set up an Arctic Stakeholder Forum (ASF) to identify joint investment priorities for the coming years and to better streamline EU funding programmes for the Arctic region. To discuss the results of the ASF, DG MARE organised an Arctic Stakeholder conference in September 2018. The EU would be pleased to share the final results of this consultation (12/2017) with the SDWG.
- DG MARE continues to work on boosting the blue economy through targeted activities in relevant maritime economic sectors and would be pleased to share information and knowledge with the SDWG.

Task Forces

TFAMC - Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation:

- DG MARE has participated in TFAMC since its initiation and contributes its experience to the discussion. In addition, the 2016 Joint Communication on Ocean Governance addresses some of the key issues dealt by the Task Force, such as marine stewardship.

SCTF - Scientific Cooperation Task Force:

- DG RTD represents the EU at meetings of the SCTF (which did not meet in 2017-18).

TFICA - Task Force on Improved Connectivity in the Arctic:

- DG Grow participates in TFICA.

Expert Groups

EGBCM - Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane:

- At expert level, DG JRC has previously contributed to the Task Force on Methane and Black Carbon and continues to contribute to the EGBCM. The EEA has contributed through the annual updates of the EU MS GHG inventories, which includes methane.



If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's future plans for contributing to the work of the Arctic Council's Working Groups, Task Forces and/or Expert Groups. Please highlight intentions to contribute to specific projects and to collaborate with Permanent Participants.

Continuation of the aforementioned activity/contributions.

If applicable, please describe in no more than 1 page your state or organization's contributions to other aspects of the Arctic Council and its goals not covered by the previous sections since the time of your most recent report, or in the previous two years.

The EU's general engagement in Arctic-relevant issues (beyond the Arctic Council)

The EU also engages in other contexts focusing on Arctic matters, including the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Northern Dimension framework (ND). Moreover, the EU is engaging in a number of contexts which address Arctic matters as a part of general activities. This relates to a number of multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs), e.g. UNFCCC, CBD, Montreal Protocol and OSPAR. The EU is also engaged in a number of forums which touch upon Arctic matters in parts of their work, e.g. IMO, OSPAR Commission and UNEP. The EU organizes its own Indigenous Dialogue to exchange views and agree on areas for further cooperation, particularly in relation to sustainable development and human rights. Permanent Participants of the Arctic Council are invited to participate in this dialogue. The EU continues to provide funding for various initiatives to support indigenous peoples in the Arctic region (e.g. the Saami) especially through the Interreg Nord programme.

The EU successfully negotiated concluded with nine other countries a binding multilateral agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean. The Agreement creates a moratorium on commercial fishing in the Central Arctic Ocean, initially for 16 years after entry into force.

Together with Germany and Finland, the EU (lead: DG RTD) prepared and co-hosted the Second Arctic Science Ministerial (ASM2; Berlin on 25-26 Oct. 2018 (www.arcticsscienceministerial.org)). 25 Governments and the EU participated. They were joined by the representatives of the Indigenous Peoples' organisations, which are PPs to the Arctic Council, and by representatives from ten international organisations engaged in Arctic science.

The European Commission (lead: DG RTD) and the European Environment Agency (EEA) both have a seat on the board of the Sustained Arctic Observer Network (SAON), and EEA has a representative in SAON's sub-committee on Arctic Data (ADC).

The EU is providing finance for research and activities and supporting trans-national access to terrestrial research infrastructures and research icebreakers, which are of general relevance to the Arctic. Several DGs (e.g. DG MARE, DG MOVE, DG ENV etc.), as well as the EEA, use and promote scientific findings in their assessment products where Arctic aspects are addressed.

The EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme 'Horizon 2020' funded a €40 million Arctic research package for 2016-17. Within this package, Arctic observations are a key element. By now, 4 projects have been selected: a project to extend, improve, and unify Arctic observation systems, creating an integrated data access platform (INTAROS); two exploring the predictability of Arctic climate and its impact at lower latitudes to improve models and contribute to the design of appropriate observing systems and better climate services (APPLICATE/Blue Action); one aiming at determining the impact of thawing land, coast and subsea permafrost on both the global climate and humans in the Arctic.

Moreover, a new phase of an existing project to provide scientists with access to a network of research and observation stations across the whole Arctic (INTERACT) has been recently funded under Horizon 2020; and EU Earth observation programmes are providing new, powerful observation coverage and operational services in the Arctic (Copernicus and Galileo).). The EEA, in its role as coordinator of the in situ data across Copernicus services, is currently looking into the Arctic and Copernicus' (Space and Services) requirements for observational data.

In the climate change context, DG CLIMA has contributed actively to the '1,5 degree' report (from IPCC/8 Oct 2019) which stresses that 0,5 celcius warming over the next century could make all the difference when it comes to the probability of future ice-free summers in the Arctic. The EU has set ambitious climate and energy goals for 2030. In 2018 the EU raised our targets on renewables and energy efficiency, which will also allow the EU to achieve higher greenhouse gas emission reductions than the 40% target agreed by EU Heads of State and Government in 2014. In 2017, the EU, its Member States and the European Investment Bank together contributed €20,4 billion in public climate finance towards developing countries (roughly half of total global public climate finance). At COP 24 in Dec 2018, the EU is determined to conclude the negotiations on the "Paris Work Programme" to enable the Paris Agreement on Climate Change to be fully implemented and achieving global progress on curbing emissions.

The EU (lead: DG REGIO) runs INTERREG programmes to support regional development and international operation in the Euro-Arctic Region (focus on innovation, entrepreneurship, energy efficiency, natural and cultural assets, transport and common labour market). Two programmes are cross-border (Finland/Sweden/Norway) and two cover larger areas; one involves 11 countries around the Baltic Sea, whilst the NPA programme stretches from Western Russia to Eastern Canada passing by Fenno-Scandia, Ireland, Scotland, Faroe Islands, Iceland and Greenland.

EU Cohesion Policy significantly supports investments in the Arctic region, in particular through a strong emphasis on research and innovation, SME competitiveness and supporting the shift towards a low-carbon economy.

The EU is proposing a new Arctic research package for the years 2019-20. Future activities in this domain will address: Ice sheet/glacier dynamics and contributions to global sea-level change; changes in Arctic biodiversity and related impacts also on indigenous populations and local communities; sustainable opportunities in a changing Arctic, in a sustainable development perspective; development of Arctic Standards for technologies and services; Arctic observations; The role of Polar climate in the Earth System.

With regards to maritime aspects of the goals of the Arctic Council, since 2007 the EU's European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) has been delivering CleanSeaNet, a satellite-based oil spill detection service covering all European sea areas, as well as waters around Greenland (funded by Copernicus Maritime Surveillance Services). EMSA's other pollution response services (e.g. oil spill response vessels, dispersants, Equipment Assistance Service (EAS), information services in case of chemical incidents) can be requested by the EU and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) coastal Member States of the Arctic region. Also the lately developed RPAS services can be requested for extensive monitoring and surveillance.

The EU (lead: DG MARE) will develop a multi-resolution map of the entire seabed and overlying water column in seas and oceans around Europe by 2020 (will include Barents Sea from 2018).

The European Fisheries Control agency (EFCA) assists Member States in ensuring uniform and effective implementation of fisheries conservation and control measures. A specific framework for operational coordination of fisheries control activities has been developed for the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC) and the Northwest Atlantic Fisheries Organisation (NAFO), known as a joint deployment plan (JDP). The NAFO and NEAFC JDP are coordinated by EFCA (since 2007 for NAFO and 2008 for NEAFC). EFCA also contributes to studies that the European Space Agency (ESA) is conducting to determine user requirements for an Arctic satellite mission.

DG GROW is investigating the potential synergies between the various current (Galileo, EGNOS, Copernicus) and future (GOVSATCOM, Space Situational Awareness) space programmes for the Arctic. A breakout session was organised on this topic in the Arctic Circle Conference 2018 and a study by DG JRC is starting (to be completed mid-2019).