

Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

The European Union

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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/
Defense industry and space:	https://ec.europa.eu/info/departments/defence-industry-and-space_en
For Earth Observation (Copernicus):	https://www.copernicus.eu/en
For navigation (Galileo, Egnos):	https://www.gsa.europa.eu/search/node/arctic

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Observer Report

Please describe in no more than two pages your state's 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. Please detail any 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, which is maintained, 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 has decided to update its Arctic policy during 2021.

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 Directorates-General (DG) of the European Commission and/or EU agencies, currently primarily from the Joint Research Centre (DG JRC), DG Research and Innovation (DG RTD), and DG for Environment (DG ENV). At the level of SAOs, the External Action Service and DG for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (DG MARE) represent to the EU.

Working Groups

AMAP - Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme:

DG JRC attends the annual AMAP meetings; 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 runs for 3 years. The Secretariat of AMAP is the implementing organisation.

CAFF - Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna:

- DG JRC participates in the steering committee of the ARCTIC Fire project under the CAFF WG.

EPPR – Emergency Prevention Preparedness and Response:

DG JRC participates in the Circumpolar Fire project (JRC offered support to wildfire monitoring in the Arctic through the Global Wildfire Information System (GWIS)) and has begun to attend EPPR Working Group meetings.

PAME - Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment:

- 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.
- DG JRC participates in the Expert Group developing the Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter in the Arctic (ML-RAP).

SDWG - Sustainable Development Working Group:

- DG JRC attends SDWG meetings and provides expertise on resilience, renewable energy and the water energy food nexus to past and ongoing SDWG projects.
- 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:**

EU (EEAS, DG MARE) participated in the SAO Marine Mechanism (SMM) sessions in the fall of 2020 including by giving a presentation (DG ENV) in the thematic session on Ecosystem-Based Management.

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.

Other observers

The EU is engaged in Arctic Council work also through OSPAR (the Convention for the protection of the northeast Atlantic marine environment and itself an observer to the Arctic Council) to which EU is a Contracting Party (represented by DG ENV).

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's 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.

AMAP sits on the steering committee and is a beneficiary of EU-PolarNet, a project funded by Horizon 2020 (EU Framework programme for research and innovation). The project started in 2015 and was completed in 2020. It is foreseen to followed-up by EU PolarNet 2 and cooperation with AMAP is foreseen to continue.

DG JRC would like to provide expertise to the SDWG Arctic Demography Index project (led by Russia).

DG RTD is interested in being associated with work under the Science Agreement, eg as follow-up work under/after the former Scientific Cooperation Task Force.

DG MOVE and DG MARE are interested in exploring further aspects of work under PAME and its sub-structures.

If applicable, please describe in no more than one page your state's 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 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 directly Arctic matters in parts of their work, e.g. IMO, OSPAR Commission and UNEP. Most recently, in 2019 in Umeå, the EU organised the EU Arctic Forum with our annual Arctic Stakeholders Forum and the annual Arctic Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue. 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 (the Saami) especially through the Interreg Nord programme.

The EU (lead: DG Mare) concluded with nine other parties the multilateral agreement to prevent unregulated high seas fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean. The EU hosted a science meeting in 2020 ahead of the expected entry into force. Entry into force will be a major achievement. DG JRC attends the expert meetings on fishing stocks in the Central Arctic Ocean (FISCAO).

Following the EU (lead: DG RTD) co-hosting with Finland and Germany of the Second Arctic Science Ministerial in 2018 (www.arcticsscienceministerial.org), the EU looks forward to and will participate at the Third Arctic Science Ministerial co-hosted by Iceland and Japan (postponed to May 2021 due to covid-related restrictions). DG JRC is supporting the development of the ASM3 programme by contributing to preparatory sessions (on synergies of EU space programmes contributing to an improved connectivity in the Arctic, and societal benefits of observing systems for the Arctic), by participating in online discussions on the ASM3 Research Community Workshop, by attending the webinar series co-organized by the ASM3 organisers and the European Polar Board.

The EU Research and Innovation Framework Programme 'Horizon 2020' invested over €75 million in Arctic research for 2019-2020. Within this package, supporting Arctic observations, including satellites technology, continue to be a key element. INTERACT proposed by the network of field stations situated in all eight Arctic countries, aims to build capacity for identifying, understanding, predicting and responding to diverse environmental changes throughout the wide environmental and land-use envelopes of the Arctic. CAPARDUS aims to develop guidelines, standards and best practices related to exploitation of new technologies and utilization of data to support sustainable development in the Arctic. One project has just been selected in December 2020 for supporting the implementation of GEOSS (Global Earth Observing System of Systems) in the Arctic in collaboration with Copernicus, while two other newly selected projects will look at Polar climate: understanding the polar processes in a global context in the Arctic and Antarctic Regions. EU Earth observation programmes are providing new, powerful observation coverage and operational services in the Arctic (Copernicus and Galileo).

DG DEFIS is overseeing the work of a Polar Expert Working Group – collecting user needs and requirements for Earth Observation from various Arctic stakeholders as a basis for developing future missions and services relevant for the Polar regions and providing data and processed information to end-users and in kind supporting the fight against climate change.