

Cover sheet

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Republic of Poland

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Observer's website, if appropriate:

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Is your state or organization still interested in continuing as an Observer of the Arctic Council?

X 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.

In the last two years, Poland continued its involvement with selected working groups and monitored activities of other subsidiary bodies to identify projects and programs, where Polish institutions and experts could make best contributions to the work of the Arctic Council. Given the expertise and resources, the currently ongoing undertakings provided less opportunities for engagement compared to the previous years.

Polish observer activity centered on two working groups – Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment Working Group (PAME) and Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG) as well as on the Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (SCTF) and the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane (EGBCM).

The involvement within the PAME working group focused on the Shipping Expert Group and was primarily related to three activities: Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment II (A) (AMSA) – Linking with International Organizations (AMAROK PAME 01), Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment I (A) (AMSA) - Linking with International Organizations (AMAROK PAME 02) and AMSA implementation progress report (AMAROK PAME 14). Polish delegate participated in the joint PAME and AMAP meeting on 15-18 September 2014 in Whitehorse, Canada and the joint PAME/AMAP/ACAP/CAFF meeting on 15-17 September 2015 in Tromsø, Norway. In the case of the first activity mentioned above, Polish contributions concerned linking the work of PAME with the ongoing negotiations on the Polar Code within IMO and related expert events such as the conference on Sustainable Arctic Shipping and Safe Marine Operations and an accompanying workshop on Arctic Ice Regime, both held in London in March 2014. The second project refers to joint effort of PAME/Arctic Council, IMO and the World Maritime University to convene an International Conference on Safe and Sustainable Shipping in a Changing Arctic Environment (ShipArc 2015) on 25-28 August 2015 in Malmö, Sweden. Polish delegate to PAME gave a presentation on the importance of the Arctic Council/PAME's work on shipping for broader cooperative mechanisms in the region. With reference to the third project, Poland was active in providing relevant information in relation to activities outside the Arctic Council that the other PAME members were not able to attend, but could be of importance for AMSA implementation (e.g. Arctic Ice Regime Workshop in London).

Poland's representative attended also the SDWG Meeting in Chena Hot Springs on 1-2 October 2015 to foster and facilitate cooperation on climate change adaptation between SDWG and the Expert Group on Sustainable Development of the Council of the Baltic Sea States. On 11-12 March 2016 in Barrow, Alaska, a Polish participant attended the second SDWG meeting under the U.S. Chairmanship on behalf of the International Arctic Science Committee.

Before 8th meeting of the SCTF in Arlington, USA (4-5 March 2016), Poland submitted a non-paper supporting previous statement on the draft Agreement on enhancing international Arctic scientific cooperation, presented by three AC Observer States at the 7th meeting of the SCTF in Reykjavik (December 2015), and outlining those aspects of the negotiated draft Agreement which raised some concerns among the observers, in particular relating to equal treatment of scientists conducting research activities in the Arctic. During the meeting itself, Polish participant underlined the necessity not only to maintain the consistency of the draft Agreement with international law already in force but also to not impacting adversely scientific activities in the Arctic, mainly in Svalbard where Polish scientific infrastructure already exists.

Poland actively participated in the first meeting of the Expert Group on Black Carbon and Methane on 27-28 January 2016 in Reykjavik, Iceland. It also submitted in September 2015 a national report as contribution to "Enhanced Black Carbon and Methane Emissions Reductions— an Arctic Council Framework for Action". Summary of black carbon emissions, announced in the above-mentioned report for 2016, will be prepared in February 2017, according to the Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution reporting cycle. Its submission in 2016 was not possible due to time-consuming verification of emission indicators for different types of activities and processes, on the basis of which the inventory is conducted.

Last but not least, on 3-5 November 2015 in Helsinki, Finland, Polish representative took part in the Barents region workshop of the Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA), in particular in its part relating to "Chapter 3: General description of the region - status and trends".

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.

The main asset in the Polish activity in the Arctic is the Hornsund Station in Svalbard, which is part of global-impact excellency research programs and initiatives: Global Change Programme; European Biodiversity Flagship Site; Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System (SIOS) as well as PolarPOL – Multidisciplinary Laboratory for Polar Research. Almost 200 scientists from Poland and other countries visit Hornsund every year. The station permanently cooperates with 60 scientific institutions from Poland and abroad. Apart from that, Polish universities also run research stations or facilities in Svalbard: 1) Polar Station on Kaffiøyra coastal plain (Nicolas Copernicus University in Toruń); 2) Glacial Station “Baraniówka” on Werenskjold glacier (Wrocław University); 3) UAM Polar Station “Petunianbukta” on Petunia Bay (Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań); 4) UMCS Polar Station in Calypsobyen (Maria Skłodowska-Curie University in Lublin). Possible contribution of the scientific and monitoring capabilities of the mentioned facilities to the work of the AC's working and expert groups and task forces needs to be explored.

Based on the monitoring of activities of the ongoing and new projects, Poland intends to maintain and further strengthen its engagement with the subsidiary bodies of the Arctic Council it has been active with, primarily PAME, AMAP, SDWG and ACAP. The open-ended domestic process aimed at identifying institutions and expert individuals most competent to contribute to given projects is going on, including in the framework of the Polar Task Force, an inter-institutional forum on polar matters established at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 2011.

Poland would also like to engage in future activities of the Task Force on Arctic Marine Cooperation (TFAMC), to contribute to the outcome of its effort and to work together with other observers to support the Arctic States in devising the most appropriate cooperation mechanisms for the Arctic Ocean.

In contacts with Polish companies and scientific community active in the Arctic region, the Government of Poland will continue to indicate the necessity to respect Indigenous Peoples' rights, interests, culture and tradition. Polish scientific research, conducted among others in the facilities in Svalbard, facilitate better understanding of climate and environmental changes which are crucial for Indigenous Peoples' and Northern communities' way of life.

Poland also confirms its readiness to host meetings of the Arctic Council subsidiary bodies and/or seminars and workshops to be organized under the umbrella of the AC.

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.

Poland participates regularly in AC's SAO meetings, Arctic Frontiers conferences, Arctic Frontiers Plus meetings and conferences organized by AC Chairmanships (most recently GLACIER Conference on 30-31 August 2015 in Anchorage, USA).

On 8 April 2016 Poland hosted the fourth "Warsaw Format Meeting" (WFM), where the Observer state representatives meet with the Arctic state chairing the Arctic Council, for an exchange of views on items of mutual interest. Representatives of all twelve Observer states and the EU met with U.S. Chair of Senior Arctic Officials. In subsequent WFMs, presence of Permanent Participants would be welcome (like in the 2013 Warsaw Format Meeting).

In the last two years Poland participated actively in the Sustained Arctic Observing Networks (SAON). Polish representatives took part in all SAON Board meetings and contributed to the development of the SAON implementation plan and other activities. The national inventory of existing Arctic observational programs and platforms has been submitted to SAON and regularly updated. Polish experts participate in two SAON committees: Arctic Data Committee (ADC) and Committee on Observation and Networks (CON). Polish scientific community was also well represented at three Arctic Observing Summits (AOS2013, AOS2014 and recent AOS2016) which were co-organized by SAON.

"Synergy in diversity" has been the motto of the Polish presidency in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (July 2015-June 2016). Poland took up the challenge of seeking practical possibilities for improving regional synergy and coherence through applying a macro-regional perspective which allows to better identify and utilize the totality of the Northern Europe region's potential. One of the successful efforts was a joint meeting between the National Coordinators of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region, the CBSS Committee of Senior Officials, the CBSS expert group on Sustainable Development, representatives of Northern Dimension, EU, Nordic Council of Ministers, Barents Euro Arctic Council and the Arctic Council (via teleconference with the Chair of AC's SDWG) in October 2015 in Warsaw. The main topic was sustainable development – case study climate adaptation – new agenda of Sustainable Development for the Baltic Sea Region post 2015.

Poland organized on 24-26 August 2015 in Toruń 2nd International Conference "Polar Climate and Environmental Change in the Last Millennium" and co-organized a conference "1st Central European Polar Meeting" on 10-13 November 2015 in Vienna, Austria. Preparations for formulation of National Polar Strategy, as well as National Polar Research Program are underway. Poland actively participates in the work of International Arctic Science Committee, EU-PolarNet, European Polar Board/European Science Foundation and Forum of Arctic Research Operators.