

Cover sheet

Full name of state or organization:

Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)

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Observer's website, if appropriate:

www.arcticparl.org

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Is your state or organization still interested in continuing 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.

To promote the cooperation between the Arctic nations, the Arctic Council and the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region have important roles, separately and together.

Elected by and representing the people of the Arctic countries, the Arctic parliamentarians have as their main focus the people living in the Arctic. This includes indigenous peoples. A strong political dialogue between the parliaments and the governments of the Arctic region is key to promote a sustainable development with prosperous Arctic societies, in which people can secure their livelihoods and live their lives.

The members of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR) work in their national parliaments to promote Arctic issues and raise awareness of what is happening in the Arctic and in the Arctic cooperation. The parliamentarians work to make the results of the Arctic cooperation known at a national level. Most members of SCPAR are elected from the Northern regions in their country, all of them share a passion and concern for the development in the Arctic.

In September 2014, the 11th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region took place in Whitehorse, Canada. The conference gathered large delegations from all the Arctic parliaments, representatives from the Arctic Council, permanent participants and observers to the Arctic cooperation. A Conference Statement directed to the governments of the Arctic countries and the Arctic Council was adopted.

Between the biennial conferences, the Standing Committee meets 3-4 times a year. The main tasks of the Standing Committee are to implement the conclusions from the Conference Statement and to prepare the next conference in cooperation with the host parliament. The SCPAR meetings rotate between the members. At the meetings of SCPAR, a governmental representative reports about Arctic policy of the government and the cooperation in the Arctic Council. This is an important venue for dialogue between governmental representatives and the parliamentarians. At the fall meeting of SCPAR in 2014, the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs presented the Arctic policy of Finland and the work of the Arctic Council. At the SCPAR meeting 10 March 2015 in Washington D.C., Special Representative for the Arctic, Admiral Papp, presented the plans for the upcoming Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Additional meetings of SCPAR have taken place in Reykjavik, Strasbourg and Stockholm. At the latest SCPAR meeting in Stockholm in March 2016, the

Deputy Minister of Environment presented the new Swedish Arctic Environmental Policy and the Swedish SAO presented the Arctic Strategy of Sweden and Swedish priorities in the Arctic cooperation.

In addition to the regular SCPAR meetings, the members of SCPAR follow-up and initiate Arctic meetings and debates at a national level with their respective governments and in their parliaments. Examples are the regular meetings between the Finnish SAO and the Arctic delegation in the Finnish parliament in advance of SAO-meetings, and the biannual meetings between the Norwegian minister of Foreign Affairs and the Arctic delegation in the Norwegian parliament to have a dialogue on Arctic issues.

The Secretary General of the Arctic parliamentary cooperation participates at the meetings of the Senior Arctic Officials and reports on the activities of the Arctic parliamentary cooperation. SCPAR has been represented at all SAO meetings the last two years.

SCPAR has been represented at several Working Group meetings and Task Force meetings, depending on the venue and the agenda for the meeting. However SCPAR does not have the capacity to attend all WG- and TF meetings.

The current Chair of SCPAR, Mr Eirik Sivertsen (MP Norway) has addressed several meetings around and about the Arctic. Examples from the last 6 months are the Nordic Council Session in Reykjavik, a side event at the COP 21 in Paris, the “Arctic Encounter” in Brussels and several meetings in Norway at different universities and open public meetings. In his speeches, Mr. Sivertsen has focused on economic development and local side-effects, climate change in the Arctic and closer Arctic cooperation in education and Arctic governance.

The member from Denmark/Greenland spoke at a major Arctic conference at the University of Aarhus, Denmark, in October 2015.

In 2016 the Arctic parliamentary cooperation has been giving presentations at Arctic Frontiers Plus and Arctic Frontiers in Tromsø. In the beginning of April 2016 SCPAR co-hosted “The Arctic Economic Development Forum” in Washington D.C. and the US member of the Committee Senator Lisa Murkowski had a prominent role at the event.

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 12th Conference of Parliamentarians will take place in Ulan Ude, the Russian Federation, in June 2016. The conference will address current Arctic issues and have representatives from the Arctic countries, the Arctic Council, the Permanent Participants and observers to the Arctic Council. In advance of the conference a roundtable on Arctic indigenous peoples will be organized. The Conference will adopt a Conference Statement which will be sent to the governments of the Arctic Region, the Arctic Council and the institutions of the European Union.

The Arctic parliamentary cooperation will continue to play a constructive and positive role in the Arctic cooperation. Hosting Arctic parliamentary meetings and active participation at other meetings strengthens the political debate on relevant Arctic issues. This way we will seek to continue developing the awareness of Arctic issues internationally, as well as at national and local levels. This will strengthen the legitimacy and underline the importance of the work in the Arctic cooperation.

The people living in the Arctic have always been the starting point for the Arctic parliamentary cooperation. Hence, important topics in the coming two years will be connected to climate change, Arctic stewardship, and sustainable economic development.

The observer status of SCPAR in the Arctic Council is an important part of this process. An open and good dialogue between the Arctic Council and SCPAR builds awareness and understanding of the development and opportunities in the Arctic region.

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.