

European Union with all its member states is pleased to be invited to participate on Forum for 21st century. The issues of Arctic international legal regime as well as other matters definitely belong to the range of interests of European Union. We consider ourselves obliged to cooperate with international community on preserving this part of the world with its unique biodiversity and specific environment.

Arctic belongs to the agenda of European Union due to the fact that three of Arctic states are members of the EU, namely Kingdom of Denmark, Finland and Sweden. Further, European Union has status of ad-hoc observer in Arctic Council. We maintain close cooperation with concerned area on several topics.

Finland is one of Arctic countries with a natural interest in Arctic affairs. In particular, Arctic issues concern Finland's northern regions and population. Finland has played an important role in presenting initiatives on Arctic issues and is a party to most organizations and treaties concerning Arctic and northern regions.

The Arctic region has considerable economic potential that can be of benefit to Finland. The increase in maritime traffic in the Arctic Ocean and exploitation of natural resources in the region are an opportunity for Finnish expertise.

In an equal partnership between the three parts of the Danish Realm, Denmark, Greenland and Faroe Islands, the Kingdom will work overall for a peaceful, secure and safe Arctic with self-sustaining growth and development, with respect for the Arctic's fragile climate, environment and nature in close cooperation with international partners.

The Kingdom's Arctic strategy forms the basis of Danish cooperation with international partners on the Arctic and Arctic issues. The premise of this strategy stems internationally from the Arctic Council Declaration and the Ilulissat Declaration of 2008, in which the coastal states of the Arctic Ocean committed themselves politically to giving negotiation and cooperation pride of place in handling disputes, challenges and opportunities in the Arctic, and thus hopefully once and for all dispelling the myth of a race to the North Pole.

In European Union the issue of environmental sustainability stands in the centre of interest and designates the approach towards other fields and we similarly support human rights and strive for development of humankind. Pursuant to these values, European Union as a signatory of several documents confirms its appeal to resolve the situation satisfactory and beneficially for all involved. European Union having regard to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), United Nations General Assembly Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and other strategic EU documents submits its position on following:

- Research and Climate and Environmental Change

European Union emphasizes the urgent need to prevent negative consequences of climate change and global warming on fragile Arctic environment by reinforcement of current research capacities. We suggest establishment of European Arctic Information Centre to accumulate knowledge and human resources and to create a platform for international cooperation on Arctic environment protection. European Union further appeals to its partners for legally binding agreement to cover the life-cycle mercury use.

- Population and Indigenous People

European Union values the rights of indigenous people not only in its member states, whereas also in the Arctic region, in particular through the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). Indigenous communities of this region are also recipients of financial support from numerous funding programmes provided by European Union. We affirm the commitment to maintain close cooperation with indigenous people in the Arctic region in the future.

- Geopolitical division and resources management

Arctic region serves as an example of beneficial international cooperation. Member states of the Arctic Council together with observing states and international organisations collaborate on its administration accordingly to international documents and treaties. We suggest maintaining the current status as most appropriate and leading towards sustainable development in the region. European Union understands the growing role of raw materials in world economy and is aware of inconsiderable potential of reserves in Arctic region. Nevertheless, specific characteristics on this unique and fragile region require profound research to ensure safety of nature rather than economic advantages.

- Law of the Sea and Arctic waterways

European Union welcomes the possibility of maritime transport in Arctic region beneficial for international trade between Europe and Asia. We are able to contribute to the safety maritime transport by furnishing our partner with satellite system needed to maritime surveillance, traffic monitoring and search and rescue capabilities. We condition technical

support upon the maritime regime of international waters along the Arctic Sea Route in accordance with indispensable restrictions for environmental safety.

The European Union is very honoured and thankful to have the opportunity to express the opinion on the issues of Arctic international legal regime and hopes it help to find the appropriate solution of this acute problem.