

Forum for 21st Century

Statement of European Union to the 2nd Draft

All the member states and representatives of the European Union are pleased to be invited to the Forum for 21st Century concerning Arctic issues and to be hereby considered as one of the key stakeholders in this area. We appreciate the opportunity to participate on resolving problems in this specific area of the world. European Union clearly presents its interest to cooperate more tightly on Arctic issues as a member of Arctic Council, nevertheless we have not achieved the observer status by this international organization to this day.

The four topics described as more crucial to be discussed chosen by the Forum for 21st Century all belong to the wide agenda of European Union, as we are not only political or economical organization. European Union is a unique platform of cooperation providing development and better life conditions to people within its borders and in the whole world.

- **Research, Climate and Environmental Change**

European Union has already expressed its preparedness to cooperate on creation of a platform for international cooperation on researchers exploring Arctic and environmental change influencing it. We would like to suggest even more organized cooperation in newly established international governmental organisation coordinating researchers and information database. For more efficient work of researchers and prompt resolving of problems concerning climate change, European Union suggests minimal financial contribution based on gross domestic product for all states with member or observer status in Arctic Council.

European Union and especially our strategy for years 2010-2020 titled Europe 2020 expresses our commitment to reduce emissions and create more environmental friendly economy within its borders. We are prepared to confirm this commitment by signing binding international agreement regarding emissions and greenhouse gases reduction.

- **Population and Indigenous People**

Indigenous communities of the Arctic region are recipients of financial support from numerous funding programmes provided by European Union. The EU can have a positive impact on the development of the Arctic for the benefit of local communities and indigenous peoples. In the spirit of the Europe 2020 strategy, the Commission would be willing to discuss with relevant Member States on how the funding opportunities under the 2014-2020 multi-annual financial framework could contribute to this objective. It will be important to ensure that the programs financed by the EU are effective, accessible, and meet the development needs of local populations.

- **Geopolitical division and resource management**

Concerning geopolitical division, European Union recognizes no need to change current geopolitical division in Arctic. Changes may be possible, but in a period of 50 years, until the melt-down of ice, we would suggest maintaining current situation in Arctic area.

Natural resources located in this area are naturally interesting for member states of the European Union. However, we will always appreciate environmental issues and living conditions of flora, fauna and indigenous people living in Arctic region before our economic interests. European Union therefore suggests restriction of exploitation of natural resources in Arctic until we have provided thorough research of its impact on nature, climate and people living here.

- **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. The Commission and EU Member States are following developments in Arctic sea transport closely, including the traffic and frequency of merchant ships and cruise passenger vessels on the Northern Sea Route, the North-West Passage or Arctic waters in general, as well as any practices or requirements of coastal states with effects on international navigation. The EU, through the Commission and Member States, supports the development of a mandatory 'Polar Code' by the IMO.

The nature-based tourism is growing rapidly. The tourism sector has considerable potential for creating jobs and boosting economic growth. The EU will explore further potential for innovative economic activities, such as the further development of the sustainable tourism, including eco-tourism, and renewable energy sectors. EU regional as well as cross-border and transnational programs for covering the Arctic regions of the EU support several projects developing new approaches to tourism in the Arctic.

The European Union is very honored 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.

18.11.2013, Delegation of EU