

Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century is an international nongovernmental organization summoning the conference, where the world authorities are dealing with the different problems important for the international community and are trying to find mutually suitable solutions. In 2014 the Forum will negotiate in its Security and Economic sections.

The Economic Section has been mandated with the matters of the Arctic and its future use and division. Therefore the Forum would like to invite the representatives of the concerned states, namely China, Canada, Norway, Russian Federation, USA, and European Union to discuss the issue.

Geographically, the Arctic is regarded as the region around the North Pole, whose southern boundary is consistent with the isotherm line of +10°C average temperature in July. The surface covers the whole Arctic Ocean, the border parts of the Atlantic and the Pacific Ocean and the territory incorporates many islands. Restricted definition defines the Arctic as an area stretching north of the Arctic Circle, its area is more than 21 million km<sup>2</sup> and consists mainly of the ice-covered ocean.

Unlike the Antarctic, Arctic is not an international area and its international legal regime is not defined. Under the international law, the whole territory of Arctic is currently divided among 5 Arctic states, Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russian Federation and USA according to so called orbicular triangles. On the governance of Arctic are marginally involved also Finland, Sweden and Iceland. International legal status of the Arctic, however, does not rely on a single contract basis, we can rather talk about more international regimes. The main problem areas, such as territorial claims on land and seabed, water use, environmental protection and status of indigenous peoples, are treated individually. The current division of the Arctic is agreed upon in the bilateral agreements between the Arctic states. In 1996 on the basis of Ottawa Declaration these states established an intergovernmental forum, Arctic Council, for promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among them, with the involvement of the Arctic Indigenous communities and inhabitants on common Arctic issues. The above-mentioned 8 countries that participate in the government of the Arctic are also permanent members of the Arctic Council, along with other observers, among whom are particularly China and other Asian countries interesting, that only recently acquired their position. Direct impact on the governance of Arctic has also the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) from 1982, under which the Arctic countries are trying to make claim for extension of their continental shelf, that enlarge their Exclusive economic zones. Different agreements have been signed, for example Agreement on Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue in the Arctic signed in May 2011, the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic signed in May 2013 or The Nuuk Declaration which is focused on the protection of indigenous peoples of northern polar regions.

Today, especially due to the global climate change, the geopolitical and economical importance of Arctic is growing. It is believed, that in the coming decades the glacier in the Arctic should be melted, what reveals the possibility of using new waterways in the Arctic Ocean and offers the opportunity of easier extraction of mineral resources, which are very abundant in this area. Not only had the Arctic states confirmed their interest by developing their own Arctic strategies, but also a number of other states had showed their increasing interest in participating in Arctic issues, as they have applied for the positions of observers in the Arctic Council.

In order to provide the international community with a satisfying solution suitable for all parties involved, Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century calls on its members to discuss the following questions:

- **Research, Climate and Environmental Change**

The Arctic is considered as a region of the world where climate change is most evident. The international community is interested in understanding of the processes that are driving the climate change in the Arctic, as well as in knowing the exact time, when the ice in the Arctic should be completely melted. Nowadays, the research of the Arctic is not sufficient, we don't exactly know, how much mineral resources are hidden here or what kind of species are living here. For obtaining the best data to adapt to the climate change, more cooperation between the major players on the climate change should be enabled. We have to clarify whether to favor economic potential or environmental concerns, because by global warming and glaciers melting there is a significant change in the Arctic ecosystem, what is the greatest threat to the organisms living here. It is important to make a joint effort to explore the diversity of fauna and flora in this area and to contribute to its preservation.

- **Population and indigenous people**

In the Arctic we can find permanent population of about 4 million people. After the significant colonization the indigenous people constitute only around 10%, among them we can find tribes of Inuit people, living in the northern parts of Alaska, Canada and Greenland, the Sami people inhabiting northern Scandinavia and ethnic groups living in the north of Russia (e.g. Chukchi, Evenks, Nenets etc.). The specific problem that will be escalated by climate change and its consequences in the form of intensification of economic, transport, respectively tourist activities in the Arctic, is a question of the status of indigenous peoples. Their traditional way of life is threatened not only by natural influences, but also by the potential expansion of the mining materials, construction of ports and tourist centers. In the interest of the international community is also the development of the infrastructure, which is important not only for the indigenous population but also in the context of the growing tourism in the Arctic.

- **Geopolitical division and resource management**

Probably the most important issue in the context of global warming and the melting of glaciers in the Arctic is slow accessibility to the vast amount of mineral resources, located in this area. Currently the Arctic is divided among 5 Arctic states, but because of the growing possibility of commercial use of this area in the future, more and more states are developing their demands in the Arctic, stating the current division is not equitable. They are calling for creation of new international legal regime of Arctic, maintaining the position that the Arctic belongs to all the people around the world as no nation has sovereignty over it. Equally important to the future is the question of the definition of fishing rights, since there are a large number of world reserves, which may be particularly relevant for populous countries to secure livelihood.

- **Law of the Sea and Arctic waterways**

Global climate change and the predictions of ice-free Arctic are making real the possibility of using of the Arctic Sea route, also called as North Sea route. The Northwest passage goes north of Canada, the Northeast passage extends along the coast of Russia. This intensification of transport use would shorten the shipping routes of many countries, what would not only cut travel distance, but even the costs. On the other hand, time and money savings mean

ecological burden on the environment in the area of new shipping routes and other risks associated with the transportation. It is necessary to evaluate the claims of the states about their sovereignty over the waters, or possibly the identification of those waters as international waters.

Forum for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century hereby expresses his great desire to resolve all the issues of concern and under all circumstances will attempt to avoid conflicts in this area and will try to meet the requirements of all stakeholders.