



ARCTIC FUTURES SYMPOSIUM 2023

SUMMARY REPORT

Tuesday, November 28th



WELCOME FROM THE ORGANISERS

- **Nicolas Van Hoecke** (Managing Director, International Polar Foundation)
- **Alain Hubert** (Founder and President, International Polar Foundation)

The 14th edition of the Arctic Futures Symposium was introduced by **Nicolas Van Hoecke**. Welcoming all partners, participants, speakers, and moderators, he paved the way for two days of insightful speeches, presentations, discussions, and Q&As.

Alain Hubert launched the first day of the Symposium, welcoming everyone via satellite link from the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica, the first zero-emission polar research station. Thanking all speakers, moderators, and partner organisations, he emphasised the pertinence and wide-ranging impact of this event for the Arctic region, its stakeholders, and inhabitants.



OPENING KEYNOTES

- **Maria Varteressian** (State Secretary of Norway)
- **Helena Köning** (Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Issues, European External Action Service)
- **Charlina Vitcheva** (Director General, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries)
- **Hjalmar Dahl** (President, Inuit Circumpolar Council, Greenland)

The first keynote speaker of the day was **Maria Varteressian**. As the State Secretary of Norway, Ms Varteressian addressed the Arctic's significance, acknowledging its varied perceptions among different individuals. For some, it represents an exotic landscape affected by climate change, while for others, it's home to a significant population. She highlighted the interconnectedness of global issues like climate change, emphasizing that what affects the rest of the world also impacts the Arctic, particularly its oceans, which are facing various environmental challenges.

She discussed the challenges faced by Arctic communities due to changing climates and the resultant uncertainties, shaping the region's politics and emphasizing the impact of geopolitics on Arctic collaboration. Ms Varteressian stressed the critical role of the Arctic Council as a platform for organized collaboration on Arctic issues, highlighting its significance amid geopolitical turmoil. Despite the evolving global interest in the Arctic, she underscored the importance of established structures like the Arctic Council in ensuring sustainable management of resources for the Arctic's future. Finally, she emphasized Norway's commitment, along with the Arctic community, to preserve and develop the Arctic for the well-being of its inhabitants and the planet.

The second keynote speaker, **Helena Köning**, Deputy Secretary General for Economic and Global Issues, European External Action Service, conveyed a foreign policy perspective on the Arctic.

Addressing the global impact of the Russian war against Ukraine, she emphasized the changing geopolitical dynamics, including repercussions in the Arctic, which is set to experience significant transformations due to global complexities and climate change. Anticipating shifts in Arctic economies, demographics, and industries, particularly in sectors like shipping and

resource extraction, the EU aims to reinforce its engagement in the region and stresses the need for cross-border cooperation to tackle common challenges.

Ms Köning underscored the acute threat of climate change to the Arctic, urging sustainable development to benefit local communities and aligning with EU Green Deal objectives, while also recognizing the region's growing global importance due to its accessible resources. Acknowledging increased military activities, Ms Köning reiterated the EU's commitment to a safe, prosperous, and peaceful Arctic, emphasizing collaborative efforts with various stakeholders to address the region's evolving challenges.

In conclusion, she emphasized the need for collective attention to the Arctic's changing landscape and stressed the significance of sustainable measures to address the challenges ahead.

The third keynote speaker, **Charlina Vitcheva** DG MARE Director General, outlined the EU's comprehensive vision and commitments concerning the Arctic:

Acknowledging the profound changes driven by climate change, geoeconomics, geopolitics, and security in the Arctic, the EU updated its Arctic policy in response to the present reality of climate impacts. Despite geopolitical tensions and economic competition, the EU prioritizes climate change as the most acute threat facing both the Arctic and the global community. The EU envisions the Arctic as a region of dialogue, cooperation, peace, and stability, striving to address multifaceted challenges while promoting prosperity, wellbeing, diversity, and inclusivity in the area. The EU's commitment to the Arctic stems not only from the membership of three EU Arctic States but also from the belief that a safe, stable, and prosperous Arctic is beneficial and essential for the planet. Specific actions include substantial support for the Saami Council, funding for Greenland's education and green growth sectors, and the establishment of the EU-funded Arctic Urban and Regional Cooperation network for 15 Arctic cities.

Moreover, the EU is dedicated to regional development, allocating significant funds for sustainable development projects and fostering dialogue through events like the EU Arctic Forum and Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue. The EU is a steadfast partner in Arctic cooperation and research, with significant financial investment in Arctic research initiatives under Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe. Environmental protection and sustainability are key objectives, evident in the EU's involvement in agreements like the Central Arctic Ocean Fisheries Agreement and the Agreement on marine Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction.

Vitcheva concluded by emphasizing the EU's commitment to supporting positive transformations in the Arctic, ensuring benefits for Arctic communities, and preserving the region's unique ecosystems and cultures for a sustainable planet.

The fourth speaker of the day was **Hjalmar Dahl**, Vice-Chair of the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) and President of ICC Greenland, an organisation founded in 1977 with the purpose of strengthening the unity of the Inuit, promoting their rights, and representing them in the international arena.

During his speech, Mr. Dahl emphasized the critical need to safeguard the Arctic Council's structure, emphasizing the indispensable role of Arctic indigenous peoples within its framework. Dahl advocated for equitable representation within the Council, specifically addressing the issue of Indigenous voting rights.

Highlighting the essential value of integrating Indigenous Knowledge, he urged its comprehensive inclusion in Arctic research efforts. Mr. Dahl underscored the urgent necessity for Indigenous-led approaches to uplift living standards across the Arctic. He asserted that any robust Arctic strategy must encompass the perspectives and insights of Arctic indigenous peoples. Reiterating ICC's staunch commitment to a peaceful Arctic, he urged policymakers to incorporate this principle into their decision-making. Advocating for the integration of the UN Declaration on Indigenous Rights in Arctic policies, he particularly emphasized the significance of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) concerning development projects.

Lastly, he emphasized the importance of inclusive decision-making processes involving all stakeholders, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Policies devised without the involvement of Indigenous communities significantly diminish effectiveness for all parties involved.



PANEL 1: MANAGING THE CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING ARCTIC

- **Moderator:**

- **Jan-Gunnar Winther** (Pro-rector research and development, UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

- **Speakers:**

- **Morten Høglund** (Norway's Ambassador for the Arctic; Chair of the Senior Arctic Officials of the Arctic Council)
- **Petteri Vuorimäki** (Senior Arctic Official; Ambassador, Arctic Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland)
- **Anna Hamrell** (Senior Advisor for Arctic Affairs, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Sweden)
- **Mads Frederiksen** (Director, Arctic Economic Council)
- **Corine Wood-Donnelly** (Associate Professor of International Relations and the High North, Nord University; Scientific Coordinator, JUSTNORTH project)

Professor Jan-Gunnar Winther steered the discourse to the heart of the challenges of Arctic governance, exploring the intricacies surrounding the role of the Arctic Council amidst evolving geopolitical landscapes and environmental uncertainties.

Ambassador Morten Høglund's contribution was characterized by a profound understanding of the geopolitical dynamics shaping Arctic governance. His emphasis on the need to adapt in the face of global change resonated strongly and underscored the need for the Arctic Council to evolve its strategies while maintaining its long-term vision. Ambassador Høglund's insights highlighted the delicate balance between geopolitical imperatives and the Arctic Council's mandate and underscored the need for pragmatic responses to new challenges.

Ambassador Petteri Vuorimäki brought a holistic perspective to the discussion, arguing for a balanced approach that goes beyond traditional security paradigms. He emphasized the interconnectedness of security, climate change and sustainable development, and called for the need for a differentiated policy framework. Ambassador Vuorimäki's nuanced plea for recognizing the Arctic as both a geopolitical arena and a place where people live and work resonated throughout the discussion with stakeholders working to promote resilience in the midst of geopolitical change.

His repeated emphasis on interdisciplinary collaboration served as a powerful reminder of its indispensable role in shaping an effective governance framework in the Arctic. His remarks on the importance of interaction between civil society, academia, business and diplomacy underscored the transformative potential of collaborative partnerships. Vuorimäki's insights were a common thread throughout the discussion and underscored the need for inclusive approaches that harness diverse expertise to address the myriad challenges facing the Arctic.

Anna Hamrell's explanation of Sweden's sustainable development initiatives provided a compelling case study for effective Arctic governance. Her presentation on advances in green technology and the strategic action plan for sustainable development highlighted Sweden's commitment to balancing economic growth with environmental responsibility. Ms. Hamrell's insights underscored the central role of innovation and collaborative partnerships in promoting sustainable development in the Arctic and offered valuable lessons for stakeholders grappling with similar challenges.

Mads Frederiksen's discourse on sustainable business practices in the Arctic highlighted the intersection of economic imperatives and environmental protection. His recognition of foreign interest in the Arctic's potential underscored the delicate balance required to capitalize on economic potential while protecting fragile ecosystems. Frederiksen's emphasis on the role of the Arctic Economic Council in fostering dialogue between business and diplomacy underscored the transformative potential of private sector engagement in the Arctic.

Professor Corine Wood-Donnelly underscored the transformative potential of inclusive governance models. Her articulation of the need to integrate social, environmental and political considerations underscored the holistic approach required to address the complex challenges facing the Arctic. Professor Wood-Donnelly's emphasis on the integration of indigenous

knowledge highlighted the invaluable insights that different perspectives bring to Arctic governance and signaled a paradigm shift towards more inclusive decision-making processes.

Overall, the panelists' contributions underscored the need for collaborative, inclusive approaches to Arctic governance and emphasized the need for adaptability, sustainability and interdisciplinary collaboration in addressing the complex challenges in the region.



PANEL 2: AVENUES OF ARCTIC COOPERATION

- **Moderator:**
 - **Anu Fredrikson** (Executive Director, Arctic Frontiers)

- **Speakers:**
 - **Jeannette Menzies** (Ambassador of Canada to Iceland)
 - **Clara Ganslandt** (Special Envoy for Arctic Matters, European External Action Service)
 - **Piotr Rakowski** (Senior Advisor for Arctic Policy, Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs)
 - **Elle Merete Omma** (Head of Saami Council EU Unit)
 - **Mika Riipi** (County Governor, Regional Council of Lapland, Finland)

Anu Fredrikson, Executive Director of Arctic Frontiers, emphasized the need to restore collaboration amidst changing dynamics as she moderated the panel

Jeannette Menzies provided reflections on Canada's engagement with the Nordic Prime Ministers' meetings and identified opportunities for cooperation beyond the Arctic Council. Her emphasis on bilateral milestones underscored the importance of building robust partnerships amidst evolving geopolitical landscapes. She reiterated the importance of community and indigenous peoples' engagement in policy discussions on the Arctic. Her advocacy for initiatives such as the Arctic Mayors Forum emphasized the transformative potential of grassroots participation.

Clara Ganslandt outlined the EU's realignment in response to geopolitical imperatives, emphasizing ongoing efforts to address climate change and sustainable development. Her explanation of the extensive EU funding for Arctic research underlined the EU's commitment to promoting innovation and cooperation in the region. She reiterated the EU's turn to local efforts through initiatives such as the Arctic Urban and Regional Cooperation (AURC) project. Her emphasis on participation at the city level also signaled the EU's interest in engaging with local communities.

Ambassador Piotr Rakowski outlined Poland's strategic approach to Arctic cooperation, which encompasses scientific, political and economic dimensions. His speech highlighted Poland's evolving role in Arctic affairs and signaled a commitment to multi-faceted engagement. He addressed the evolution of the Warsaw Format and explained its potential importance in a changing geopolitical landscape. His insights underscored Poland's proactive stance in managing Arctic cooperation dynamics. Mr. Rakowski emphasized the missed opportunities in sharing expertise as part of broader Arctic cooperation. His call for increased collaboration between foreign ministries of Arctic and non-Arctic countries underlined the need for a holistic approach to Arctic policy.

Mika Riipi provided insights into Lapland's adaptation strategies following the closure of its borders with Russia, emphasizing the region's redefined role in Nordic collaboration and energy production. His reflections underlined the growing geopolitical importance of Lapland and its impact on Finland's connectivity in the High North. He reiterated the routine nature of regional collaboration and highlighted existing structures for cooperation such as the Northern Forum have been impacted by the current geopolitical situation. His reflections underlined the challenges in connecting with national capitals and pointed to the need for increased cooperation on a region-to-region level.

Elle Merete Omma emphasized the importance of analyzing the regional impact of international policies, especially in relation to indigenous communities. She emphasized the EU's support in translating policies to the Saami context and highlighted the need for an inclusive governance framework. She reiterated the need for holistic approaches to address common challenges, particularly in relation to climate crises. Her emphasis on working with indigenous peoples underscored the need for inclusive decision-making.

The panelists collectively recognized the importance of the Arctic Council while advocating for improvements in capacity-building and inclusivity. Their call for more effective implementation of knowledge at the regional level underscored the collective commitment to use existing structures for practical implementation in addressing common challenges in the Arctic.



PANEL 3: A SAFE AND SECURE ARCTIC

- **Moderator:**
 - **Marisol Maddox** (Senior Arctic Analyst, Wilson Center Polar Institute)

- **Speakers:**
 - **Samu Paukkunen** (Acting Director, Finnish Institute of International Affairs– may have NATO affiliation by the time of this conference)
 - **Hans Peder Kirkegaard** (Phd Student in Security Policy, University of Greenland)
 - **Tracy Smith** (Brigadier General, Air National Guard), Deputy Dean of the Ted Stevens Center School of Arctic and Climate Security Studies
 - **Isak Utsi** (Mayor of Arjeplog, Sweden)

Moderated by **Marisol Maddox**, the panel discussion addressed the multi-faceted implications of NATO enlargement, particularly with regard to Sweden's potential membership. Ms. Maddox led discussions on the evolving security landscape in the Arctic and the intersection of military and civilian investment in the region, the complexities surrounding NATO enlargement and its implications for international security.

Hans Peder Kirkegaard provided valuable insights into Greenland's interest in understanding NATO operations and emphasized the need to address non-military threats such as climate change and supply chain security. His remarks underlined the increasing importance of hybrid threats in shaping the security dialogue in Greenland.

Samu Paukkunen shed light on Finland's evolved stance on NATO membership, particularly in response to rising tensions with Russia. His analysis of the potential impact of the Nordic countries joining NATO offered valuable perspectives on regional security dynamics.

Tracy Smith reported on the Ted Stevens Center's strategic engagement with Arctic nations and argued for an increase in NATO funding to combat climate change in the region. Her proposal underlined the need to include climate security studies in NATO's strategic agenda.

Isak Utsi emphasized the need for small Arctic municipalities such as the one where he is mayor to be prepared for NATO membership and stressed the importance of sound local governance structures. His insights on the impact of investing in the Green Transition on labor movements resonated with the discussions on regional security dynamics.

Marisol Maddox revisited the importance of NATO enlargement to Arctic security, delving deeper into Sweden's potential NATO membership and Greenland's representation in the Danish NATO framework. She focused on holistic approaches to countering hybrid threats in the region.

Hans Peder Kirkegaard reiterated Greenland's interest in understanding NATO's responses to non-military threats and shed light on the evolving complexity of hybrid threats influencing the security discourse in the region.

Samu Paukkunen presented Finland's evolving stance on NATO membership and the regional implications of Russia's actions. His insights offered valuable perspectives for addressing security challenges in the Nordic region.

Tracy Smith highlighted the Ted Stevens Center's call for an increase in NATO resources to combat climate change in the Arctic. Her emphasis on strategic engagement with Arctic partners underscored the panel's commitment to promoting joint approaches to security challenges.

Isak Utsi emphasized the need for strong local communities in addressing potential situations that require host country support. His comments on communication and knowledge sharing between actors underlined the panel's focus on collective action and regional governance coherence.

Overall, the panelists' insights underscored the complexity of NATO enlargement and its implications for Arctic security. Their discussions emphasized the need for holistic approaches, collective action and coherent regional governance strategies to effectively address the evolving security challenges in the Arctic.

Wednesday, November 29th



OPENING KEYNOTES

- **Dag Rune Olsen** (Rector, UiT The Arctic University of Norway)

As the Rector of UiT The Arctic University of Norway, **Dag Rune Olsen** highlighted the critical issues faced by the Arctic, acknowledging the region's robustness and the challenges posed by climate change. He discussed the concerning rise in Arctic temperatures, emphasizing the potential tipping point in sea ice and the profound consequences for ecosystems.

Professor Olsen underscored the significance of data from Russia in climate research and discussed the integration of land-based and satellite observations to compensate for missing data. He stressed the need for both climate research and focused adaptation strategies due to the irreversible nature of some climate impacts.

Additionally, Professor Olsen highlighted the necessity of sustainable regional development, circular economies, and cross-sectoral collaboration across national borders in the Arctic. He emphasized the importance of healthcare, technology, and education tailored to the region's unique needs.

Regarding geopolitical tensions, he urged for a deeper understanding of the complexities in the Arctic's political landscape and reminded everyone to respect the rights of indigenous peoples. He highlighted the role of universities in providing scientific knowledge, advising policymakers, engaging in science diplomacy, and attracting young talent to foster sustainable development in the Arctic.



PANEL 1: CULTIVATING ARCTIC COMMUNITIES

- **Moderator:**
 - **Patti Bruns** (Secretary General, Arctic Mayors Forum)

- **Speakers:**
 - **Kristen Tanche** (Regional Director of Health & Wellness, Dehcho First Nations, Alumni of the Jane Glassco Northern Fellowship, Canada)
 - **Brynjar Andersen Saus** (Project Leader, UiT The Arctic University of Norway)
 - **Bjarni í Liða** (Risk Officer, Bank Nordik)
 - **Mirja Vehkaperä** (Chair of the City Board/Member of the EU Committee of Regions)
 - **Päivi Ekdahl** (Development Director, Regional Council of Lapland)

Moderated by **Patti Bruns**, this session addressed the critical issue of attracting and retaining residents in the Arctic. Patti introduced the panelists and outlined the structure of the session, which included insights from Arctic Policy Hackathon participants and further discussion on recommendations for retaining Arctic residents.

Kristen Tanche provided insights from the Arctic Policy Hackathon and emphasized the central role of cultural preservation and access to health care in retaining Arctic residents. She advocated for promoting diversity and inclusion through youth-led initiatives and securing sustainable funding for holistic community services.

Brynjar Andersen Saus discussed the importance of cultural identity and collaboration in creating an attractive and future-oriented Arctic for current and future residents. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining and building the infrastructure that people in the Arctic need for day-to-day basis, while emphasising the unique aspects that make the Arctic a unique place to live.

Mirja Vehkaperä emphasized the importance of youth involvement in Arctic governance and referred to initiatives in Oslo aimed at promoting youth participation in political discourse. She emphasized the need for international cooperation and knowledge sharing between Arctic stakeholders to effectively address common challenges. Mirja's insights underscored the need for inclusive governance structures that incorporate youth perspectives in shaping the future of the Arctic.

Representing Bank Nordic, **Bjarni i Liða** discussed the central role of financial institutions in promoting financial stability and inclusion in the Arctic. He explored how banking services can make it easier for people in the Arctic to achieve financial security and thereby influence decision-making processes. He also provided personal insights into the practical considerations of financial stability and decision-making in the Arctic context, drawing on experiences in the Faroe Islands.

Päivi Ekdahl provided valuable insights into the multifaceted aspects of Arctic development, drawing from her extensive experience in EU financing and regional governance. She emphasized a personal connection to Lapland, highlighting her continued residence in Rovaniemi and her dedication to its development. Ekdahl addressed prevalent generational perceptions regarding opportunities in the Arctic, noting a historical bias that discouraged individuals from pursuing careers in the region. While acknowledging a gradual shift in mindset, particularly among younger generations, She emphasized the persistent challenges, especially in remote communities where possibilities may seem limited.

The panelists offered a comprehensive exploration of the challenges and solutions to keeping residents in the Arctic, spanning cultural preservation, community engagement, financial stability, and youth empowerment. Their collective insights underscored the multi-faceted nature of the problem and advocated for collaborative efforts to effectively address it, emphasizing the need for inclusive governance structures and sustainable community development initiatives.



PRESENTATION OF LAURENCE TRAN ARCTIC FUTURES AWARD TO...

GOBMI!

The award was presented by IPF Managing Director **Nicolas Van Hoecke**, **Brigitte Trân-Loustau** from the Trân family, and Director of the Arctic Economic Council **Mads Frederiksen**.

This year's Laurence Trân Arctic Futures Award was given to Gobmi, a Saami clothing brand founded by two sisters **Hanna Moen Reinsnes** and **Live Moen Johannessen**. The Trân family presented the award to Anja Márjá Nystø Keskitalo from the Saami Council, who was present at the symposium and accepted the award on behalf of sisters who founded Gobmi.

Gobmi was selected as the winner out of 18 candidates who applied from Alaska, northern Canada, Greenland, northern Norway, northern Sweden, and northern Finland by a committee of experts with years of experience working with startups in the North American and European Arctic.

We are deeply honoured and humbled to receive this prestigious award," stated Hanna Moen Reinsnes, CEO and co-founder of Gobmi. "It acknowledges our dedication to marrying Saami traditions with modern style, and empowers us to further our journey in sustainable and culturally rich fashion."



PANEL 2: ARCTIC YOUTH: MEETING CHALLENGES AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

- **Moderator:**

Krista Perälä (Student and student advocate, University of Lapland)

- **Speakers:**

- **Kristian Iversen** (Chair, Bodø Youth Council; yoUNG2024)
- **Naja-Theresia Høegh** (OCT Youth; Intern at Greenland Representation in Copenhagen)
- **Jackson Blackwell** (Graduate Student, Princeton University's School of Public and International Affairs; Advisor, Arctic Encounter)
- **Vetle Bo Saga** (Political Advisor to the Mayor of Tromsø)

Moderated by **Krista Perälä**, this discussion focused on the central role of youth representation in Arctic decision-making processes. Krista Perälä emphasized the importance of including young voices in discussions about the future of the Arctic, both regionally and globally.

Kristian Iversen talked about the challenges facing youth in Bodø and highlighted efforts to combat youth migration through local initiatives.

Naja-Theresia Høegh highlighted the importance of recognizing indigenous knowledge and discussed efforts to combat discrimination and mental health issues among Greenlandic youth.

Jackson Blackwell discussed the specific challenges in the North American Arctic and advocated for youth involvement in decision-making through initiatives such as youth advisory councils.

Vetle Bo Saga acknowledged youth activism in Tromsø and emphasizes the active participation of young people in political bodies and highlights the importance of youth representation in politics.

Panelists emphasized the importance of Arctic youth coming together to tackle challenges, participate in policy making and advocate for their communities. Initiatives such as the Arctic Mayors Forum and youth leadership programs are examples of good practice.

There is a consensus on the need for inclusive decision-making processes that take into account the different perspectives of young people. Initiatives aimed at empowering youth and fostering collaboration are key.

Panelists discussed the growing interest of youth worldwide in Arctic affairs and emphasized cross-border exchange and collaboration. Inclusivity, accessibility and international support are highlighted as critical to youth engagement.

An audience participant announced plans for an Arctic Indigenous Youth Summit and highlighted international support and funding commitments. Panelists emphasized in their closing remarks that youth, compassion and genuine inclusion in decision-making processes are priorities.

The discussion highlighted the critical role of youth engagement, empowerment and participation in effectively addressing Arctic challenges. Cross-border collaboration, inclusivity and genuine engagement with youth perspectives were cited as indispensable elements for promoting a sustainable and inclusive future in the Arctic.



PANEL 3: LEVERAGING ARCTIC RESOURCES FOR A JUST GREEN TRANSITION

- **Moderator:**

Mira Kleist (Senior Associate, Kaya)

- **Speakers:**

- **Kimmo Järvinen** (Head of EU Governmental Affairs, SSAB)
- **Riikka Aaltonen** (Project Manager, Regional Council of Lapland, Finland)
- **Karin Nutti Pilflykt** (Advisor, Forest Issues, Saami Council EU Unit)
- **Thomas Lauridsen** (Staff Economist, Greenland Ministry of Industry and Mineral Resources)

Mira Kleist began the session by introducing resources in the Arctic and the European Union's (EU) Green Transition plan. She highlighted the increasing availability of resources in the Arctic due to climate change, prompting a discussion on the environmental, social, and economic costs associated with accessing these resources.

Naaja H. Nathanielsen, Greenland's Minister of Natural Resources, started the session by giving a speech that supported tackling the climate crisis through the Green Transition, aligning with global ambitions to reduce emissions. She acknowledged the complexities and costs

associated with the Green Transition, emphasizing that these dilemmas and costs vary from country to country. Nathanielsen highlighted the need for changes in production and consumption patterns as part of the Green Transition, including alterations in subsidies and incentives. She discussed the potential social impacts of the Green Transition in Greenland, particularly the need for foreign workers, which may alter local communities and access to land for cultural activities. Nathanielsen emphasized the importance of stable funding and support for mining projects, especially in light of geopolitical tensions and uncertainties. She addressed the concept of the social license to operate, emphasizing the need for ongoing engagement with local communities and meaningful partnerships to ensure mutual benefits rather than mere formalities.

Kimmo Järvinen discussed SSAB's efforts to revolutionize steel production by transitioning to fossil-free methods, emphasizing the technological advancements and partnerships driving this initiative. He highlighted the positive social and environmental impacts of fossil-free steel production, including reduced emissions and improved air quality in surrounding communities. Järvinen acknowledged the challenges of cost competitiveness in fossil-free steel production, particularly in comparison to conventional methods. He underscored the importance of carbon pricing in supporting green initiatives and ensuring a level playing field for sustainable practices.

Riikka Aaltonen emphasized the significance of early engagement with local communities in mining projects. She suggested that companies should communicate with communities from the outset of exploration activities. This approach allows for transparency, feedback, and potential adjustments to project plans to mitigate negative impacts on local environments and livelihoods. Aaltonen stressed the importance of proactive engagement rather than reactive measures later in the project lifecycle.

Karin Nutti Pilflykt focused on the importance of inclusive decision-making processes and the recognition of indigenous rights, particularly in Green Transition projects such as wind farms. She highlighted the case of wind farm developments on traditional Sápmi lands, in Norway, where the Norwegian Supreme Court ruled that the projects violated Saami indigenous rights. Pilflykt underscored the need for projects to respect indigenous cultures, livelihoods, and rights, even in the pursuit of renewable energy goals.

Thomas Lauridsen discussed Greenland's approach to sustainable mining and its reliance on co-funding from the EU for projects. He outlined Greenland's commitment to responsible mineral extraction, including thorough environmental and social impact assessments. Lauridsen emphasized the need for partnerships with the EU to secure funding for mining projects, highlighting the mutual benefit of ensuring a stable supply of critical minerals for strategic sectors while adhering to sustainability principles.

Overall, the speakers collectively emphasized the importance of early community engagement, respect for indigenous rights, and sustainable practices in resource extraction initiatives. They highlighted the need for collaboration between stakeholders, including governments, industry, and local communities, to achieve sustainable outcomes in mining projects.



PANEL 4: ARCTIC RENEWABLE ENERGY POWERING EUROPEAN GREEN INDUSTRY

- **Moderator:**

Mira Kleist (Senior Associate, Kaya)

- **Speakers:**

- **Sigrid Bjørnhaug Hammar** (Deputy Mayor of Tromsø)
- **Emily Holland** (Associate Professor, US Naval War College)
- **Fridtjof F. Unander** (Chief Economist, Aker Horizons)
- **Pigga Keskitalo** (University of Lapland, Member of the Saami Parliament in Finland)
- **Tanja Joonas** (Tanja Joonas (Senior Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland)

Moderated by **Mira Kleist**, Several key themes emerged in the discourse on the transition to renewable energy in the Arctic, reflecting a common effort towards sustainable energy development and inclusive decision-making processes.

Sigrid Bjørnhaug Hammar highlighted the important role of renewable energy for the European Green Transition. She emphasized local initiatives and investments in the development of green industries, referring specifically to Tromsø's leading role in sustainability and the plans for hydrogen and ammonia production.

Emily Holland provided insights into the geopolitical context of the energy transition, focusing on Europe's efforts to reduce dependence on Russian energy sources and secure critical raw material production chains. She highlighted the importance of strategic planning and investment in renewable energy infrastructure and international cooperation.

Fridtjof F. Unander explained the importance of hydrogen in achieving net zero emissions and spotlighted Northern Norway's expertise in hydrogen production. He highlighted the need to connect renewable energy and industrial development.

Tanja Joona highlighted the challenges of the Green Transition, especially the impact on Arctic communities. She advocated the importance of involving local communities in the decision-making processes.

Pigga Keskitalo focused on the challenges facing traditional Arctic livelihoods and the need to preserve indigenous cultures amid the impacts of climate change.

The broader conversation that emerged during the question and answer session included a discussion of the challenges of transitioning to green energy, concerns about ambitious clean technology targets, challenges of international cooperation, and calls for a just transition that benefits all stakeholders.

The discussions highlighted the need for sustainable energy development, the need to address the challenges of Arctic communities, and the importance of inclusivity and equity in decision-making processes for the Arctic projects. Through collaborative efforts and strategic planning, stakeholders aim to navigate the complexities of renewable energy transition while ensuring equitable outcomes for all involved parties.



SUMMARY AND CLOSING REMARKS

- **Marie-Anne Coninx** (Former EU Arctic Ambassador; Board Member, International Polar Foundation; Senior Fellow, Egmont Institute)

At the conclusion of the Arctic Futures Symposium 2023, **Marie-Anne Coninx** summarized the intensive two-day dialogue. She reiterated the conference's focus on a forward-looking Arctic amidst geopolitical turbulence and climate challenges. Key takeaways included the acute threat of climate change in the region and the importance of increased regional cooperation.

Ms Coninx highlighted the EU's strong engagement in Arctic affairs across various fields, with many panelists acknowledging the benefits of EU support. Emphasizing the inclusion and equal treatment of indigenous peoples emerged as a central message throughout the discussions.

Addressing the impact of geopolitical dynamics on the Arctic, Ms Coninx referred to the challenges posed by Russian aggression and stressed the importance of maintaining cooperation within the Arctic Council amid turbulent times.

The symposium explored avenues for cooperation, highlighting the need to enhance existing structures and engage with non-Arctic states for mutual benefit. Discussions also underscored the significance of security in the Arctic, particularly in light of geopolitical shifts and the evolving role of various nations, including China.

Ms Coninx highlighted the role of Arctic resources in driving a just and sustainable Green Transition, stressing the importance of responsible and inclusive resource utilization while transitioning towards renewable energy. The discussions recognized the potential and challenges associated with this transition, particularly in benefiting local communities and indigenous peoples.

Moreover, she stressed the importance of focusing on Arctic communities, particularly the youth, and there needs to be attractive living and working conditions in the region to attract people to live there.

She concluded by mentioning upcoming initiatives, including an Arctic youth dialogue organized by the European Union, and congratulated Tromsø as the European Youth Capital in 2026. She expressed gratitude to the organizers, participants, panelists, and wished everyone safe travels.