

ARCTIC FUTURES SYMPOSIUM 2014

Press release on the Arctic Futures Symposium “The Arctic, its peoples, and its economies” 14 – 15 October 2014, Brussels - Belgium

The International Polar Foundation and its partners have successfully organised the fifth Arctic Futures Symposium on October 14-15 in the European Quarter in Brussels, Belgium. The symposium focused on economic development for the people of the North, a theme in line with the priorities of the Canadian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

Each year, the Arctic Futures Symposium provides a forum for various Arctic stakeholders and high-profile policymakers to conduct well-informed discussions on key topics facing this increasingly important region of the world. It promotes open and constructive dialogue allowing issues to be dealt with before they become critical. In his opening words, Alain Hubert, president of IPF, stressed that despite the remoteness of the Arctic it plays an increasingly important role in Europe.

Arctic politics

During a roundtable discussion including diplomatic representatives from the Arctic Council nations the need to strengthen the Arctic council by increasing cooperation was mentioned and Norway expressed strong support for the confirmation of the EU observer status in the Arctic Council.

Arctic security

This was followed by a discussion focusing on security perspectives and challenges in the Arctic. Maritime emergency, preparedness and response were discussed as well and the ongoing work on the Polar Code, which is now not likely to enter into force until the end of 2016. Speakers also referred to security in terms of protecting values, identity and the environment in the Arctic.

Science supporting policymaking

The Arctic environment is under multiple stresses from changing land-use which will be exacerbated by climate change. Experts presented recent research of a changing Arctic and its impact on human health with proven links with contaminants in the Arctic food web; local husbandry with the loss of pastures affecting the reindeer herders. The EU Arctic Information Centre advocated “*a balanced picture instead of a dramatic findings to support long-term policies*”.

Jean-Pascal Van Ypersele, IPCC Vice-chair and Professor of climate sciences, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium contributed to the conference with a clear message from the IPCC, showing that the Arctic is very vulnerable to climate change. He suggested that for a sustainable Arctic future we should keep below a 2 degree warming, which is technologically and economically feasible, but the longer we wait the more difficult it will be.

Arctic Indigenous people and the European Parliament

A highly anticipated session between representatives of indigenous Arctic communities and members of the European Parliament kicked off the second day.

Åsa Larsson Blind, Vice President of the Saami council highlighted the right of development on own terms. *“We already have our own successful, sustainable societies with our own economies that have lasted through millennia and we have the intention to outlast also the oil-age”*. To continue to develop the Saami society there is a need for permanent representation in Brussels to have a continuous dialogue with EU policy makers and influence EU Arctic policy.

Bob Van Dijken, Arctic Athabaskan Council representative, taught us that richest research results are obtained when time is taken to build relations with the communities. Member of European Parliament Jens Nilsson assured us that the European Parliament gives great importance to the involvement of indigenous people in the resolution of the EP on Arctic issues. Dialogue, respect and responsibility are important for local capacity building.

Economy in the Arctic

Despite the difficult weather conditions, the Arctic region is an area of economic activities and international cooperation with fishery, ICT, (sustainable) energy, transport as well as local economies. The Barents Euro-Arctic Agreement, now over 20 years old, is the basis for the good economic cooperation in the Barents region and facilitates good relations with Russia.

The economy in the Barents region is a collaborative effort between Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Russia. *“Economic cooperation in the Barents Region is the way forward to good relations with Russia”*, said Rune Rafaelsen, Secretary-General, Norwegian Barents Secretariat. *“Good dialogue with Russia must be maintained and strengthened”* told Bente Haug, Deputy Chair, Finnmark County Council us.

The other regions (Nunavut, Siberia, Greenland) have major constraints due to their size and face massive expense in providing infrastructure. Roads and railroads are difficult to build, and this hampers development efforts.

Resources

- [The full program of Arctic Futures 2014](#)
- [For more info on the speakers](#)
- [Press kit and resources](#)
- The [speakers' presentations](#) will be available as of next week on SpeakerDeck

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List of speakers in alphabetical order

- Jens Andersen, CEO, Royal Arctic Line
- Heidi Andreassen, Project Manager, «Young, Innovative Entrepreneurs» and «Barents ICT-Cluster» projects
- Mikael Anzén, Deputy Director, Swedish Foreign Ministry
- Terry Audla, President, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
- Vladimir Barbin, Ambassador at Large, Senior Arctic Official of the Russian Federation
- Yngve Bergheim, Project Coordinator, Barents IT Cluster
- Eva Cecile Bonfeld-Jørgensen, Professor, Director of Centre for Arctic Health (CAH), Department of Public Health, Aarhus University
- Alan Bowman, Deputy Head of Mission, Mission of Canada to the European Union
- Ole Brøndum, Sales and Marketing Manager, Port of Aalborg
- Josep Casanovas, Administrator, Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport, European Commission
- Else Berit Eikeland, Norwegian Ambassador To The Arctic Council
- Caroline Emond, Delegate General of Québec
- Louis Fortier, Professor of marine biology, Université Laval; Director of ArcticNet
- Ivetta Gerasimchuk, Senior Researcher, International Institute for Sustainable Development
- Hannu Halinen, Ambassador, Arctic Affairs; Finnish Senior Arctic Official
- Rúni M. Hansen, Vice President and Head, Statoil's Arctic Unit
- Sanna Hast, Land Use Management Adviser, Finnish Reindeer Herders Association
- Bente Haug, Deputy Chair, Finnmark County Council
- Connie Hedegaard, European Commissioner on Climate Action
- Kjetil Haugeland Helvig, Vice President, Statoil ASA
- Gunhild Hoogensen Gjørsv, Professor of Social Sciences, University of Tromsø
- Alain Hubert, President, International Polar Foundation
- Franz Immler, European Commission, Head of Sector 'Climate Action' at EASME
- Thorsteinn Ingólfsson, Ambassador, Senior Arctic Official of Iceland
- Joan Nymand Larsen, Senior Scientist and Research Director, Stefansson Arctic Institute
- Åsa Larsson Blind, Vice President, Saami Council
- Thorkild Lauridsen, Director, Arctic Consensus
- Lou Naumovski, Vice President and General Director, Moscow Representative Office, Kinross Gold Corporation
- Frode Nilssen, Professor, Bodø Graduate School of Business, University of Nordland
- Jens Nilsson, MEP, Sweden; Member, Committee on Transport and Tourism
- Anne Ollila, Executive Director, Finnish Reindeer Herders Association
- Olav Orheim, Chairman, GRID-Arendal
- Andreas Østhagen, Coordinator, Security and Defence in Northern Europe program, Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies & The Arctic Institute

- Cecile Pelaudeix, Assistant Professor, Aarhus University, Denmark; Research Associate, PACTE-Sciences Po Grenoble, France
- Mikhail Pogodaev, Chair, Association of World Reindeer Herders
- Rune Rafaelsen, Secretary-General, Norwegian Barents Secretariat
- Thierry Rodon, Professor, Northern Sustainable Development Research Chair, Université Laval
- Elana Wilson Rowe, Senior Research Fellow, Russia and Eurasian Studies, Norwegian Institute of International Affairs
- Kate Sanderson, Director, Mission of the Faroe Islands to the EU
- David J. Scott
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- Executive Director, Canadian Polar Commission
- Per-Øivind Semb, Policy Officer, DG Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, European Commission
- Chris Shapardanov, Executive Director of Circumpolar Affairs, Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada
- Adam Stepien, Researcher, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Finland
- Mar Sveinbjornsson, Director, Port of Hafnarfjordur
- Bob Van Dijken, Arctic Athabaskan Council representative to the Arctic Council's Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)
- Jean-Pascal van Ypersele, IPCC Vice-chair, Professor of climate sciences, Université catholique de Louvain, Belgium
- Elisabetta Vignati, Head of Air and Climate Unit at European Commission Joint Research Centre
- Gunnar Wiegand, Director for Russia, Eastern Partnership, Central Asia, Regional Cooperation and OSCE, European External Action Service
- Lisbet Zilmer-Johns, Representative of Denmark to the Political and Security Committee of the EUScience supporting policymaking

