

Slide 1: The Arctic Ahead - Safe, Secure and Sustainable

Session II: How can the EU contribute to a peaceful and sustainable Arctic in 2026?

Tine Pars: How can research and science cooperation contribute to a peaceful and sustainable development in the Arctic?

Thank you the organizers for the opportunity for me to talk about how I see that EU can contribute to a peaceful and sustainable Arctic through research and science. Cultural diplomacy and science diplomacy has for many years played important roles for the stability and the peaceful development in the region. And it seemed this morning, from the presentations, that research cooperation still is seen as a major factor for peace.

I think we all have expect the region to play a bigger and bigger geostrategic role in the future, due to the economic interests rising from the new sailing routes and due to the resources in the region. The interest not only coming from the Arctic States themselves.

The governance of the Arctic is complicated. EU needs to understand the region, collaborate on important issues, respect the indigenous peoples ways of living, and support developments in accordance with the national strategies. I call it Arctic diplomacy and this morning another called it Arctic consensus.

I think the intercultural relations among the indigenous groups in the Arctic has high importance for the peaceful relations between the Arctic countries.

The Arctic Council uniquely involves indigenous peoples as permanent participants. Each of the Arctic states has developed their own versions of regional autonomy and of indigenous self-governance. Moreover, these non-sovereign entities involve in para-diplomacy and translocal governance structures.

It needs to be a central objective of the EU to support these unique structures and strengthen Arctic cooperation. Even when East-West tensions have re-surfaced in other parts of the world, the Arctic has - by and large - remained an oasis of peaceful cooperation.

From my perspective, science - particularly the social and human sciences - has an important role in keeping the Arctic a place for peaceful cooperation and inclusive governance, simply by helping us reflect on what it is that we do - and how we could do even better. Moreover, lessons in peace and inclusion, learned in the Arctic should be able to inspire elsewhere.

Just as the Arctic has in many ways been a peaceful and cooperative oasis, polar science has been an exemplar of cooperation. Simply because of the logistics involved in most climate science and the science involved in understanding the Arctic ecosystems, international cooperation has been mandatory. And in the Arctic, no nations have bailed out: Europeans, North Americans, Russians, Chinese - and even scientist from small, exotic countries - have joined hands on complex projects dispersed across the harsh Arctic landscape. In some areas

they rely on local assistants with local knowledge. In Greenland, more and more international projects hook up with our local scientists based at the University of Greenland and the Greenland Institute for Natural Resources.

The EU should have as a separate priority to support Polar science - because the knowledge it produces is important for our ability to solve global problems. Science Diplomacy is particularly efficient in the Arctic when it comes to building international cooperation, even when conflicts arise elsewhere.

Building bridges through science, addressing trans-national problems and challenges, and collaborating on research and also education are those tools that I think has the most long lasting effects for a peaceful region.

The EU is already involved in research cooperation and in programme development with Arctic stakeholders aimed at solving some of the most important problems we face in the Arctic, in Europe and Globally.

As it has been said, the Arctic is complicated. From super powers to small nations. Coming from a small nation myself, my concern is on how we cope with the huge international interest, how we participate and build capacity so we can take real part in decisions and policy making.

We in Greenland and other 'remote' communities in the Arctic need to develop innovative economies. EU can really play a role in supporting our socioeconomic development.

There are so many areas where EU could support important research:

Other research areas could be in: ICT, Innovation in the fishing industry, fishing management, building techniques in cold climates, infrastructure and logistics, extractive industries, cold climate bio economics, clean energy and not the least capacity building. A lot other research areas has already been mentioned.

About the energy sector: two days ago I heard on the news that oil prices are expected to keep on going down, and in 50 years, energy will "cost nothing". Greenland's endless hydro-electric power resources needs to be seriously considered, researched and developed. It could provide the EU with an alternative to depending on autocratic carbon pushers, and to provide the global ecosystems with relief from carbon-based economy.

The EU is preparing an Arctic communication.

The Danish Ministry for Science are now preparing a paper, based on stakeholder meetings, to the EU on research areas important for the development in the region.

The Danish Foreign Minister said this morning that there will be more focus on Arctic in Denmark's foreign policy.

I think the EU has so many possibilities to take part in a peaceful development in the Arctic. Innovation, Development of infrastructure and a long-term approach and investments are some of the tools....

Thank you!