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Plenary sitting

5.3.2014

B7-0230/2014

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU strategy for the Arctic
(2013/2595(RSP))

**Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Pat the Cope Gallagher, Graham Watson,
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on behalf of the ALDE Group

B7-0230/2014

**European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy for the Arctic
(2013/2595(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Arctic, including its latest resolution of 20 January 2011 on a sustainable EU policy for the High North¹,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 26 June 2012 entitled ‘Developing a European Union policy towards the Arctic region: progress since 2008 and next steps’ (JOIN(2012)0019), and to the Commission communication of 20 November 2008 entitled ‘The European Union and the Arctic region’ (COM(2008)0763),
- having regard to the Preparatory Action ‘Strategic environmental impact assessment of the development of the Arctic’,
- having regard to the opinion of the European Economic and Social Committee of 2013 on EU Arctic policy,
- having regard to national Arctic strategies and policy papers concerning the Arctic from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Greenland, Norway, Russia, the US and Canada, and also from the UK and Germany,
- having regard to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council priorities for 2013 to 2015 under the Finnish chairmanship,
- having regard to the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR) statement of September 2013 and to the 10th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Akureyri in 2012,
- having regard to the Arctic Council programme for 2013 to 2015 under the Canadian chairmanship,
- having regard to the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic programme for 2012 to 2014,
- having regard to the joint statement of the 3rd ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension, held in Brussels in 2013,
- having regard to the statements adopted at the Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum in Arkhangelsk in 2013, in Tromsø in 2011 and in Brussels in 2009,
- having regard to its legislative resolution of 5 February 2014 on the draft Council decision on relations between the European Union on the one hand, and Greenland and

¹ OJ C 136 E, 11.5.2012, p. 71.

the Kingdom of Denmark on the other¹,

- having regard to the European Economic Area Joint Parliamentary Committee report of 28 October 2013 on Arctic policy,
 - having regard to the EU’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the Arctic region, and particularly the European Arctic, is an area of growing strategic importance to the EU and vice versa;
 - B. whereas climate change is altering the fragile Arctic environment, and whereas the EU is a leading actor in global climate policy;
 - C. whereas the Arctic is rich in natural resources, supports diverse livelihoods and industries and is becoming increasingly popular as a tourist destination; whereas the EU is a major consumer of resources, goods and services originating in the Arctic region;
 - D. whereas the Member States Denmark, Finland and Sweden are Arctic countries; whereas the EU’s only indigenous people, the Sami people, live in Finland and Sweden as well as in Norway and Russia;
 - E. whereas the European Arctic and sub-Arctic is a diverse area ranging from modern cities and advanced industries to sparsely populated regions and rural areas;
 - F. whereas the melting ice and new shipping routes are making Arctic resources more accessible, and whereas this will increase investment and infrastructure in the region; whereas the Arctic is attracting greater interest in the US and Russia, and among non-Arctic countries such as China, which describes itself as a ‘near-Arctic state’;
 - G. whereas there is longstanding EU engagement in the Arctic, particularly through its involvement in the Northern Dimension policy, in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and in the Barents cooperation and as an active ad hoc observer in the Arctic Council;
 - H. whereas the EU and its Member States make an important contribution to research in the Arctic and whereas EU programmes, including the new Horizon 2020 framework programme, support research projects in the region, benefiting Arctic communities;
1. Calls for a coherent and united EU policy on the Arctic and for an Arctic strategy with a particular focus on the European Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, their people, the development of livelihoods, industries and jobs, and environmental protection; believes that this strategic choice is integral in ensuring legitimacy and local support for the EU’s Arctic engagement;
 2. Highlights the economic opportunities and the variety of industries in the European Arctic and sub-Arctic regions, in particular tourism, maritime industry and shipping, renewable energy, environmental technology and cleantech, gas and oil, offshore

¹ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0075.

industry, forestry and wood-based industries, mining, transport services and communications, information technology and e-solutions, fishing and aquaculture, and agriculture and traditional livelihoods such as reindeer herding; recognises their impact and importance both in the region and in Europe as a whole;

3. Stresses that the increasing use of the Arctic region's natural resources must be conducted in a way which respects and benefits the local population, both indigenous and non-indigenous, and takes full environmental responsibility for the fragile Arctic environment;
4. Calls on the Commission to pursue a robust climate policy with binding targets and actively to support France in its efforts to host a climate conference in Paris in 2015, bearing in mind that global decisions involving the US, China, Russia and other BRICS countries as well as the EU are necessary in order to combat climate change;
5. Calls on the Commission to establish a permanent regional dialogue with civil society in the Arctic region;
6. Appreciates the meetings held by the Commission with the six associations of circumpolar indigenous peoples that are recognised as permanent participants in the Arctic Council; asks the Commission to explore the possibility of providing funds for these associations to attend meetings of the UN bodies and other international gatherings in which they are already present, and of politically supporting their aspirations to be present in other international fora in which issues relating to indigenous peoples are addressed;
7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to focus on transport corridors such as roads, railways and maritime shipping with a view to maintaining and promoting cross-border links in the European Arctic and bringing goods from the Arctic to European markets; is of the opinion that as the EU develops its transport infrastructure (Connecting Europe Facility, TEN-T) further, the link to the European Arctic needs to be improved;
8. Stresses that reliable, high-capacity information networks and digital services are instrumental in boosting the economic activity and welfare of people in the Arctic, and that the adoption and utilisation of smart solutions drawing on advanced communications technology need to be promoted in all sectors;
9. Recognises the importance of continuous and sufficient funding for the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas in tackling permanent handicaps such as sparse population, harsh climate conditions and long distances;
10. Calls on the Commission to propose, and the budget authorities to establish, a budget line in the Partnership Instrument for issues connected with Arctic policy, and on the Commission to maximise effective interaction between the EU's internal and external programmes and projects relating to the Arctic and Sub-Arctic regions;
11. Reaffirms its support for, and urges the Commission to proceed with, the establishment of the EU Arctic Information Centre as a networked undertaking with a permanent

office in Rovaniemi, with reference to the Preparatory Action ‘Strategic environmental impact assessment of the development of the Arctic’, as supported by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy in their 2012 joint communication and implemented by the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland together with a network of European centres of excellence on the Arctic, with the goal of ensuring efficient access to Arctic information, dialogues at all levels and communication for the purpose of harnessing information and knowledge with a view to sustainability in the Arctic;

12. Expresses its support for the Arctic NGO Forum, which aims to provide a consistent means for NGOs concerned with environmental issues to get together and exchange ideas and perspectives;
13. Regards the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) as an important hub for cooperation between Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the EU; appreciates the BEAC’s work in the fields of the environment, health and social issues, education and research, energy, culture and tourism, indigenous peoples and SMEs; welcomes, in particular, the focus on young people under the Finnish chairmanship from 2013 to 2015;
14. Is of the opinion that the Northern Dimension policy based on regional cooperation and pragmatic partnerships serves as a successful model of stability, joint ownership and engagement, within the overall EU-Russia policy; takes the view that the Northern Dimension concept should be developed in the direction of an umbrella policy aimed at better coordinating different strands of cooperation in the Barents region;
15. Takes note of the Arctic Council’s Kiruna Declaration of May 2013 and its decision to ‘affirmatively receive’ the EU’s application for observer membership, and urges the Commission, the European External Action Service (EEAS) and Canada, as the chair of the Arctic Council, to resolve the remaining issues; urges the Commission and the EEAS duly to inform Parliament of that process;
16. Calls on the Commission, the EEAS and the Member States to encourage and actively promote the highest standards with regard to environmental safety in Arctic waters, and urges the EU and the EEA swiftly to implement Directive 2013/30/EU on the safety of offshore oil and gas operations; welcomes the implementation of the Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution, Preparedness and Response in the Arctic by the Arctic Council members and calls for the active engagement of European actors;
17. Welcomes the work being carried out within the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on finalising the mandatory Polar Code for shipping; encourages cooperation in both research and investment with a view to developing a robust and safe infrastructure for Arctic sea routes, and emphasises that the EU and its Member States should actively uphold the principles of freedom of navigation and innocent passage;
18. Takes note of the Government of Iceland’s initiative of ending its EU membership negotiations; asks the Commission and the EEAS to maintain good relations and develop closer cooperation with Iceland in fields of common interest such as the development of maritime transport, fishing, geothermal energy and the environment, making full use of existing instruments and encouraging Arctic cooperation between

EU-based and Icelandic actors;

19. Stresses the EU's strong relations with Greenland and the geostrategic importance of that territory; takes note of the priorities of the Government of Greenland, with a renewed emphasis on economic development and the exploitation of raw materials; asks the Commission and the EEAS to explore how the EU can contribute to and assist in the sustainable development of Greenland so that both environmental concerns and the need for economic development are taken into account;
20. Expresses its concern with regard to developments between the EU and the Coastal States concerning fishing quotas and hopes for their positive resolution, including in respect of future fishing issues, with a view to conserving targeted fish stocks and preventing the depletion of other species and damage to the marine environment;
21. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the governments and parliaments of the Arctic region states.