

ROADMAP			
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ADDITIONAL INFORMATION			
<p style="text-align: center;">This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and can be subject to change. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content and structure.</p>			

A. Context, Subsidiarity Check and Objectives

Context
<p>The two previous EU Communications on the Arctic - issued in 2008 and 2012 respectively - outlined the extent and depth of EU engagement in the Arctic at the time. It is clear from these policy documents that the EU is already a major player in the Arctic region. However, there is broad consensus that the time has come for the EU to put forward a forward-looking Arctic Policy that takes account of recent developments and sets out EU priorities towards the region for the foreseeable future.</p> <p>The European Parliament adopted a resolution on 12 March 2014 calling for the development of a coherent Arctic policy. Furthermore, on 12 May 2014 the Council (Foreign Affairs Council) adopted conclusions requesting the Commission and the HR/VP to "present proposals for the further development of an integrated and coherent EU Arctic policy". More broadly, the coming Joint Communication is considered timely also in light of the recently adopted UN Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>In the run-up to COP 21, the role of the Arctic in the climate change debate became much more prominent. Whereas in the past attention focused almost solely on the effects of climate change in the Arctic, the past couple of years have seen increased awareness that strong feedback loops are also turning the Arctic into a contributor to climate change. This was given extra political impetus by the high-profile GLACIER conference organised by the US in August 2015 where President Obama drew attention to the dual role of the Arctic in the climate change debate.</p> <p>The Arctic region has also become more prominent generally in international relations. The international community has increasingly turned its attention towards the region, with countries such as China, Japan, South Korea and India becoming observers at the Arctic Council. The EU needs to engage at multilateral level as well as bilaterally with the Arctic states and states with an emerging interest in the Arctic in tackling the key issues impacting the region.</p> <p>Several Member States have issued national Arctic policy documents in recent years. An EU policy towards the Arctic is important to ensure coherence with national policies and ensure that EU action in the region brings the greatest possible added value.</p> <p>During the last decade when all of these developments have unfolded, there have been important developments on the ground where climate change dynamics plays out more dramatically than in other parts of the world. The Arctic ice cover is melting and permafrost is thawing at faster rates than foreseen a decade ago. At the same time, the risks for biodiversity are becoming clearer eg for maritime biodiversity which creates food security risks beyond the region. Together these dynamics are changing the setting of the EU's Arctic policy requiring a sense of urgency and caution but also opening up new opportunities for economic development. The role of local residents including indigenous peoples is key in this context.</p> <p>The first Communication on the EU and the Arctic dates from 2008¹ and recognised the Arctic as a region of growing strategic importance. A follow-up Joint Communication in 2012² gave an overview of existing EU actions</p>

¹ COM(2008)763 final

² JOIN(2012)19 final

in the Arctic and ordering them along the lines of three overarching themes (knowledge, responsibility and engagement). The proposed initiative is relevant to a number of the Commission's overarching priorities for 2014-19, namely:

- *Promoting Europe as a stronger global actor*: many of the challenges impacting the Arctic can only be addressed through multilateral, regional and bilateral engagement. The EU is well placed to engage on Arctic issues on all of these levels.
- *A resilient Energy Union with a forward-looking climate change policy*: the Arctic can potentially make an important contribution to the EU's energy and raw materials diversification policy, while EU actions to mitigate the effects of climate change are important for the Arctic region.
- *A new boost for jobs, growth and investment*: The EU should promote and contribute to sustainable development in the Arctic and to the formulation and implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change in region,, in a way that takes account of the traditional livelihoods of those who live in the region, and tackle in a responsible way the impact of development on the fragile Arctic environment. With the proven ability of EU companies to operate in harsh climatic conditions, EU industry is well placed to take advantage of new commercial opportunities in ways which respect the natural environment and benefit local populations.

This initiative is relevant to a number of other existing EU policies including the, internal and external implementation of the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Integrated Maritime Policy³, the 7th Environmental Action Programme⁴, Sustainable Development Strategy⁵, the Climate & Energy package⁶, Horizon 2020⁷, the Maritime Security Strategy⁸, regional cooperation for the protection of the northeast Atlantic (OSPAR Convention), in line with the Marine Strategy Framework Directive⁹, and the EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2020¹⁰.

Issue

This initiative will set out a more coherent framework for the EU's constructive engagement in the Arctic.

- The initiative reflects the increasing and changing role of the Arctic in the debate on climate change. The need for both mitigation and adaptation efforts has strongly come to the fore in the Arctic. The EU has an important role to play on both counts.
- The Arctic environment, including its unique biodiversity, is under increasing pressure. Opportunities for exploiting natural resources and for maritime transport entail significant threats that need to be addressed by EU and international policies. International and regional cooperation is necessary for ensuring protection of the Arctic environment.
- The public consultation as well as the regional workshops that have been organised pointed out that there are many different funding programmes operating in the European Arctic, involving many actors and levels of government. There was a clear demand from stakeholders for the EU to take action to encourage and stimulate more collaboration, both in the preparation phase (bringing people together for discussing joint investment priorities) as well as in the implementation phase (ensuring a free flow of information on plans and projects). This initiative will respond to these issues.
- Both these consultation efforts, as well as recent reports (such as the Lipponen report¹¹) suggest that the European Arctic is suffering from underinvestment. By bringing a more coherent policy focus to the region and by engaging national and regional actors to collaborate more in setting investment priorities, this initiative can help in setting the framework to tackle this issue, for which the European Fund for Strategic Investments is well suited.
- This initiative will also align the EU's Arctic policy more fully with some of the Commission's overarching

³ COM(2007)574 final

⁴ Decision No 1386/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 November 2013 on a General Union Environment Action Programme to 2020 'Living well, within the limits of our planet'

⁵ COM(2009) 400

⁶ COM(2014) 15

⁷ REGULATION (EU) No 1290/2013 OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 11 December 2013 laying down the rules for participation and dissemination in "Horizon 2020 - the Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2014-2020)" and repealing Regulation (EC) No 1906/2006

⁸ JOIN(2014)9 final

⁹ 2008/56/EC

¹⁰ Communication from the Commission: Our life insurance, our natural capital: an EU biodiversity strategy to 2020 (COM(2011) 244)

¹¹ "A Strategic Vision for the North. Finland's prospects for economic growth in the Arctic region" by Paavo Lipponen

priorities for 2014-2019.

At the time of the 2012 Joint Communication, the EU's status in the Arctic was complicated by disagreement over the EU's regime on trade in seal products. Following a WTO ruling, this has now been addressed.. It is another step towards implementation of the Kiruna Declaration and full implementation of the EU's observer status in the Arctic Council.

While the future of the Arctic concerns all EU Member States, some Member States will be more concerned than others. Most notably the three EU Member States that are also members of the Arctic Council (Denmark, Finland and Sweden) as well as seven Member States who are observers to the Arctic Council (Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, Spain, Poland and the Netherlands).

The initiative is also relevant to relations with the European Economic Area Members Norway and Iceland.

The initiative has an explicit external dimension notably as regards the other three Arctic states: Canada, Russia and the USA, but also emerging Arctic players (such as China, Japan, Korea, Singapore and India).

The initiative will be of interest to a range of other stakeholders, including Arctic regional governments, local communities and indigenous peoples, civil society/academia and the business community.

Subsidiarity check

On Arctic policy, the EU has added value to the actions of the Member States in the Arctic. EU funding programmes play an important role in the development and protection of the Arctic region – notably Horizon 2020, and the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme.

It is to be noted that the Arctic is a cross-cutting policy area, touching upon environment, climate change, energy, research, transport, raw materials, the conservation of marine biological resources and fisheries. Some are shared or even concern exclusive EU competences (fisheries), but all have a direct bearing on the Arctic. EU funding programmes play an important role in the development and protection of the Arctic region – notably through the European Structural and Investment Funds, cross-border and regional funding programmes and Horizon 2020.

As regards relations with the Arctic Council, the EU is obliged under article 220 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the EU to maintain appropriate forms of cooperation with international organisations. The EU is also active in terms of regional cooperation, notably via the Northern Dimension policy framework and membership of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

EU action will support work of the Member States and will be targeted in areas where the EU has clear competence and will bring added value. .

Main policy objectives

The overarching objective of this initiative is to set out the framework for the EU's Arctic policy in the coming years. Moving beyond the achievements noted since the 2008 and 2012 Communications, this initiative should aim to:

- Make the EU's policy towards the Arctic more coherent, channelling and interlinking the various resources at its disposal for the sustainable development of the region for the benefit of the Arctic states as well as the local and indigenous populations living in the region. The initiative should contribute to creating jobs and growth in the region while safeguarding the Arctic's natural environment. Use of existing EU policy instruments, such as the European Fund for Strategic Investments can stimulate more investment in the European Arctic.
- Make EU action more targeted towards sustainable development in the Arctic, which would entail building, sharing and promoting knowledge on the Arctic, industrial expertise and the sustainable exploration of resources and economic opportunities in the Arctic with the Arctic partners.
- Engage in structured dialogue and cooperation with Arctic states and other Arctic players, as well as key stakeholders such as indigenous peoples, on key issues impacting the region, in line with the existing legal and cooperation framework for the Arctic region.
- Give further focus and impetus to the EU's research efforts in the Arctic.
- Contribute to the protection of the Arctic marine and coastal environment.
- Contribute to the formulation and implementation of adaptation and mitigation strategies for climate change in the Arctic region, taking account of the outcome of the UNFCCC COP21 negotiations in Paris in December

2015.

- Formulate an EU position on emerging issues in the Arctic such as Arctic fisheries.
- Support Member States in their activities in the Arctic.

B. Option Mapping

OPTION 1: No action.

This would be unsatisfactory as this would mean there would not be an adapted framework for a more coherent EU approach towards the Arctic in the light of the aforementioned changes. This would also substantially limit the EU's scope for responding to stakeholders' demands for fostering more collaboration and stimulating more coherence between EU policies.

OPTION 2: Listing EU initiatives

Listing EU initiatives would probably have little impact. A simple list does not carry the necessary authority to implement changes and steer policies and rally them behind the EU's strategic interests in the region. This course of action would therefore most likely be ineffective.

OPTION 3: Joint Communication setting out the framework for the EU's Arctic policy, linking the application of different policies to the EU's strategic interests.

A new Joint Communication would carry the necessary political weight to allow the Commission to bring together different policy areas and encourage other stakeholders to collaborate more closely. It would also give a strong signal to the EU's internal and external stakeholders that the EU is committed to the Arctic and remains engaged and ready to take its responsibilities vis-à-vis this region. This is expected to improve effectiveness of EU funding in the Arctic and have an impact on relations with third countries.

No legislative or "soft law" instruments are currently being considered. Neither implementation arrangements nor transposition requirements by Member States are expected.

Proportionality check

No new policies are being developed. The initiative will look at how existing EU policies and instruments in relation to the Arctic can be better integrated. The initiative links up with the Integrated Maritime Policy and other existing EU policies in strategic areas, such as energy, transport, environment, research, climate change and fisheries. The initiative will also strengthen the Arctic dimension in the EU's political dialogue with its strategic partners.

All options respect the proportionality principle and are complementary to the action of Member States.

C. Data collection and Better Regulation instruments

Data collection

The inter-service group on the Arctic regularly monitors progress in relation to the proposals of the 2008 and 2012 Communications.

Available data will be used:

a. Joint staff working document "The inventory of activities in the framework of developing a European Union Arctic Policy" SWD (2012) 182¹²

b. The 'Strategic Assessment of Development of the Arctic: Assessment Conducted for the European Union'¹³ report considers the trends and developments taking place in the European Arctic today. The implications of Arctic changes for the European Union as well as the role of EU policies and actions in the Arctic are examined.

c. European Arctic Initiatives Compendium¹⁴. The European Arctic Initiatives compendium presents flagship initiatives undertaken by the European Union in Arctic regions, as well as initiatives undertaken by Member

¹² http://eeas.europa.eu/arctic_region/docs/swd_2012_182.pdf

¹³ <http://www.arcticinfo.eu/en/sada>

States and actors operating within Member States. Furthermore, it includes initiatives by European states such as Norway and Iceland, as well as territories such as Greenland, which are highly relevant in the context of the European Arctic, and in many cases strongly linked to the EU, for example, the European Research Area.
Consultation approach
<p>Between 1 September and 2 December 2014, the Commission organised a public consultation¹⁵ on EU funding in the Arctic. The results pointed to the need for better alignment and more focused use of EU programmes in the region, and the setting of joint investment priorities.</p> <p>Three thematic stakeholder workshops were held in the region in the first half of 2015. In addition, the European External Action Service organised a two-day seminar on the EU's Arctic policy on 1-2 June 2015 in Brussels which brought together policy makers, civil society, NGO representatives, and members of the academic and business community. These events sought feedback from stakeholders regarding the existing EU Arctic policy and how it could be refined.</p>
Will an Implementation plan be established?
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Will an impact assessment be carried out for this initiative and/or possible follow-up initiatives?
An impact assessment will not be necessary given that this Joint Communication will not lead to any direct impacts and will have no legislative implications. Any follow-up measure will be subject to the Commission's better regulation requirements.

¹⁴ <http://www.arcticinfo.eu/images/pdf/Compendium.pdf>

¹⁵ http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/maritimeaffairs_fisheries/consultations/arctic-eu-funding/index_en.htm