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HIGH REPRESENTATIVE
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Adaptation strategies are needed to help Arctic inhabitants respond to the serious challenges

While the changes affecting the Arctic present opportunities for local communities, they also have the potential to increase tensions in the region, for example through competition for resources and increasing economic activity. International legal frameworks, such as the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, also cover the Arctic. It is now more important than ever to ensure that the Arctic remains a zone of peace, prosperity and constructive international cooperation.

further damage if increased activity is not properly managed. It is in this context that the EU is seeking to advance the agenda on ocean governance. The need for a solid framework for sound stewardship is particularly high in the Arctic: large parts of the high seas areas beyond national jurisdiction are currently not covered by specific arrangements for managing economic activities, nor is there sufficient scientific knowledge about the sea basin. Much work therefore lies ahead to protect the Arctic high seas in view of climatic changes and increasing human activity in the region.

Against this background, several Member States have issued national Arctic policy frameworks in recent years[11]

1. CLIMATE CHANGE AND SAFEGUARDING THE ARCTIC ENVIRONMENT

The issues

Climate change poses a significant risk. Its effects are tangible in the Arctic, with the summer sea ice having decreased by more than 40 % since 1979[12.] Delicate Arctic ecosystems are under threat and the livelihoods of indigenous peoples are being directly affected by climate change. In one of the coldest parts of the world, the thawing permafrost is causing land to subside, depleting habitats and damaging infrastructure as it does so, with potential losses estimated in hundreds of billions of euros[13]. Rising temperatures contribute to the melting of the Greenlandic ice sheet, adding to rising sea levels, and play a role in changing precipitation patterns in the northern hemisphere.

Managing these developments requires closer and more integrated cooperation on climate adaptation in the Arctic as well as reducing greenhouse gases.

According to the
permafrost temperatures have increased in most regions since the early 1980s[14]. Greenhouse gases are escaping the permafrost and entering the atmosphere at an increasing rate. The thawing permafrost has the potential to release carbon dioxide and methane - equivalent to
-made rising s

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The EU is expected to maintain its current funding levels for Arctic research (around EUR 200 million in the past decade) under the Horizon 2020 programme (2014-2020). The EU has already committed **EUR 40 million under the 2016-2017 work programme** to Arctic-related research. This programme will focus on an integrated observation system, studying the

2050 compared with 1990 levels. The 2030 commitment will be achieved by implementing

EU has also committed itself to spend 20 % of the EU budget on climate-related objectives.

As climate change is a circumpolar challenge, the EU is ready to work with the Arctic states, indigenous peoples and relevant Arctic regional and multilateral fora to share experience, expertise and information on **climate change, impacts, adaptation and resilience**, with a view to developing an ambitious climate adaptation agenda for the Arctic region.

The EU should work with regions in the Arctic to draw up appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures that take account of the local circumstances and special nature of the Arctic regions. It can do this partly through the **European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF)**[18]

has an increasingly important role to play in connecting people and businesses, and meeting the educational, health, linguistic and cultural needs of Arctic communities.

The European part of the Arctic also has significant potential to support growth in the rest of Europe.

Policy Response

2.1 Support for sustainable innovation

The EU should support the **deployment of innovative technologies** in the Arctic. These technologies could be applied to a wide range of activities such as the development of advanced materials capable of working in extreme conditions in the Arctic winter that could stimulate investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions. Such technologies have the potential to bring broad social and economic benefits within and beyond the Arctic. In addition to Horizon 2020, the ESIF programmes provide funding for research and innovation activities in the European part of the Arctic.

2.2 European Arctic stakeholder forum

Consultations by the Commission and the European External Action Service suggest that the European Arctic is suffering from underinvestment. Recognising the need to work closely with national, regional and local authorities in the European Arctic, the Commission will set up a European Arctic stakeholder forum with the aim of enhancing collaboration and coordination between different EU funding programmes.

This temporary forum should bring together EU institutions, Member States, and regional and local authorities to contribute to identifying **key investment and research priorities** for EU funds in the region. The process will also be open to Norway and Iceland under the European Economic Area Agreement, as well as to Greenland under the EU-Greenland Joint Declaration. This work, chaired by the European Commission, is to be completed before the end of 2017.

Complementary to the forum, the Interreg Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme will lead a pilot activity aiming at bringing together **a network of managing authorities and stakeholders** from various regional development programmes in the European part of the Arctic. It is to facilitate the exchange of information, plan and coordinate calls for proposals and monitor the impact of programmes on the region. The new collaborative network will also be open to participation by relevant national and international financing instruments. Based on the extensive work and experience of the programmes, the network feeds into the work of the stakeholder f

The EU's integrated Arctic policy is therefore consistent with the Investment Plan for Europe, which offers a range of ways to encourage investment in the Arctic region to benefit citizens and businesses both above and below the Arctic Circle.

In view of **transport links**, the northern part of Finland, Sweden and Norway belongs to the traIw5kte01 0 0 1 70.82- Tm[tra)5ow tm[Iw58.061 0 0 1 70.8217(for)63(nve-3(we N60(c)4(itworke)4n pa)(P

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with maritime security threats resulting from the opening of the North East passage[32]. The EU should also support international efforts to implement the International Polar Code covering shipping-related matters relevant to navigation in Arctic waters, including enhanced Search and Rescue. The Polar Code is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2017.

While Satellite AIS (Automatic Identification System) provides coverage for the Artic, there are challenges in ensuring and directing Search and Rescue units in case of a ship in need of assistance, due to the remoteness, difficult navigation due to ice and the less dense maritime traffic in the area. The European Coast Guard Functions Forum (ECGFF) should collaborate closely with the newly established **Arctic Coast Guard Forum** (ACGF)**,** which could play an important role in fostering safe, secure and environmentally responsible maritime activity in the Arctic.

3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ON ARCTIC ISSUES

The issues

The challenges affecting the Arctic, and the solutions required to address them, require a joined-up response at regional and international level. Wider geopolitical dynamics may add further complexity to the changes affecting the region. The EU has a strong interest in seeing that the Arctic remains a zone of constructive international cooperation where complex issues are addressed through negotiated solutions, and where common platforms can be established in response to emerging risks. Science, in particular, can be used as a catalyst to support a common understanding, enabling jointly agreed solutions to be reached and foster peaceful cooperation. As a global leader in science, the European Union should be ready to engage

It is also important to ensure that appropriate measures are in place for effective stewardship of the Arctic Ocean to ensure environmental protection, peaceful cooperation and dispute settlement, respect for international law and the sustainable use of marine resources. Maritime security is also of increasing importance. In June 2014, the European Council adopted a Maritime Security Strategy for the global maritime domain.[33] The stra

3.4 Fisheries management

The EU should welcome the recent declaration signed by five Arctic coastal states on **Arctic fisheries**[37]

hydrographic offices, research institutions and civil society organisations, would not need to re-survey areas that had already been surveyed, but for which the data have up to now been inaccessible. It would cost them less to process existing data. Research in security matters covering Arctic dual-use resources and exchanges of best practices in this field should be strengthened.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

European Commission and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy invite the views of the European Parliament and Council of the EU. The EU will keep this policy under review in light of developments.

2. As part of its strategic commitment to the Arctic, the EU should engage with the region on these three priority areas:

climate change and safeguarding the Arctic environment;

promoting sustainable development in the region;

supporting international cooperation on Arctic issues.

3. The EU needs to ensure that the necessary coordination structures are in place at EU level to meet the challenges ahead. The Council could consider establishing a Working Party on Arctic Matters and Northern Cooperation and the European Parliament could similarly consider establishing a delegation on Arctic Matters and Northern Cooperation.