



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

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THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

**1.1.Minutes from the SCPAR meeting in Helsinki, November 24rd 2017**

**Meeting of the  
Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region**

1. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA AND THE PROPOSED ORDER OF AGENDA ITEMS

Enclosed:

1. Draft Program, SCPAR meeting in Helsinki, 24 November, 2017
2. Draft Agenda, SCPAR meeting in Helsinki, 24 November, 2017
- 2.1. Draft Annotated Agenda, SCPAR meeting in Helsinki, 24 November, 2017
3. Draft List of Participants, SCPAR meeting in Helsinki

The Committee adopted the Agenda and the proposed order of agenda items for the SCPAR meeting.

2. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE SCPAR MEETING IN REYKJAVIK, OCTOBER 12<sup>TH</sup>, 2017

Enclosed:

- 1.1. Draft Minutes from the SCPAR Meeting in Reykjavik, October 2017

The Committee approved the minutes from the SCPAR meeting in Reykjavik.

### 3. ARCTIC ECONOMIC COUNCIL (AEC) UPDATE AND THE FINNISH CHAIRMANSHIP OF THE ARCTIC COUNCIL 2017 – 19

Mr. Tero VAURASTE, Chair of AEC, President and CEO of Arctia Ltd. gave the Committee an update on the activities of the AEC. The most important issue facing Arctic business environment is the increasing barriers to trade. Mr. Vauraste suggested that the Committee would take under consideration how to lower the barriers and make business regulation more uniform in the Arctic area.

AEC's priorities for the future include lowering of trade barriers, maritime trade regulation and the energy needs in the Arctic. The AEC will also prioritise cooperation with the Arctic indigenous peoples and their businesses.

The independence of AEC from the Arctic Council was emphasised, though the two do share close working relations.

Mr. CHERNYSENKO inquired about the AEC's thoughts on the effects of the economic sanctions in the Arctic region.

Mr. Vauraste explained that from a purely trade-oriented perspective, restrictions in trade do not lead to optimal outcome.

Mr. SIVERTSEN asked 1) about the first steps that could be taken to lower trade barriers in the Arctic area; 2) about the communications technology needs from the point of view of Arctic businesses; 3) about the public-private partnerships in the energy sector; 4) about creation of framework rules for the business in the Arctic area.

Mr. Vauraste proposed that

- 1) A study be carried out about the biggest differences and problems Arctic countries face as to trade barriers and respective trade regimes;
- 2) Explained that the focus should be on the Arctic cable and the cross-Northern Pole cable, which should eventually be connected to local networks;
- 3) Told that PPPs, as well as international value chains in the energy sector are welcome and necessary since local ones are insufficient to satisfy the growing demand;
- 4) As to the business environment, the Arctic investment protocol would form a good base, and the Alaskan model is worth taking a look at.

Mr. Aleksii HÄRKÖNEN, Finland's Ambassador for Arctic Affairs, presented the Finnish priorities for its chairmanship in the Arctic Council.

Today the role of the chair is quite different from the past. On a positive note, the Arctic Council has expanded its activities and gained in importance since its foundation. There are also major challenges. Political tensions have increased, even if spill-over risk has not materialised to Arctic cooperation, which has remained constructive. Finland strives to strengthen and maintain constructive arctic cooperation.

The two themes of Finland's chairmanship are the implementation of the Paris Climate Accord, and sustainable development. As such, the chairmanship will focus on environmental protection, meteorological cooperation, development of communications infrastructure and education.

Asked about the possibility of an Arctic summit, Mr. Härkönen explained that it depends on two prerequisites: a permissive international situation for the summit, and an agenda that is conducive of a cooperative and constructive summit. Though a appropriate agenda could be constructed, the former requirement is not currently met.

#### 4. CONFERENCE AND THE STATEMENT FOR 16. – 19.9.2018

The Committee discussed the themes, scope and objectives for the 2018 conference statement.

The 2018 SCPAR conference will be held in Inari from 16. – 19.9.2018. Details of the programme should be ready by early 2018.

Mr. Sivertsen proposed that the statement should focus on forward-looking, concrete challenges, namely

1. Digital arctic and the fourth industrial revolution (cables, satellites and digitalization);
2. Climate change, with a focus on the changes it causes to the region, adaptation to those changes, as well as the thawing of permafrost.
3. Corporate social responsibility
4. Social well-being of the people living in the Arctic

Ms. KULMUNI expressed her support to the idea, considering that social, ecological and economic sustainability should be raised to the centre of the statement, as well as the possibilities of digitalisation and the digital infrastructure to the Arctic region. There should also be a focus on improvement of cooperation with the Arctic Council and respective national ministries.

Mr. Chernysenko also expressed support for Mr. Sivertsen's ideas, and proposed that interaction with Barents Euro-Arctic Council should be enhanced, and that the aspect of the indigenous peoples should be integrated to all activities.

Mr. GUDMUNDSSON proposed that the topics of social well-being, education, innovation, and the dissemination of knowledge should be included in the statement.

Ms. SANILA-AIKIO proposed climate change and its impact on indigenous people as themes for the statement. Also the theme of social well-being was welcomed

In conclusion, it was proposed that there would be a rapporteur for each of the four themes of the statement: 1) digital Arctic, 2) Preparing for and meeting the consequences of climate change; 3) Corporate responsibility in the Arctic region; 4) Social well-being.

As for increased cooperation with other relevant stakeholders, it was proposed that they would be invited to participate and their opinions would be heard during the drafting process.

## 5. SOCIAL MEDIA, NEXT STEPS

The Committee agreed to test use social media channels for SCPAR.

The Secretary-General of SCPAR bears the overall responsibility for the content creation, with the members of the Committee having a right to publish on the various channels under their own name.

The Secretary General will distribute relevant information received from the members to be distributed through the social media channels.

## 6. NEXT MEETING OF THE SCPAR

Next meeting of the Committee will be held in Kiruna, Sweden, in May 13-15. The participating members should arrive on Sunday 13, for an early start on Monday morning.

The Committee discussed if the European Parliament should be asked to host a meeting.

Ms. KULMUNI stated her support for an EP hosted meeting.

## 7. PROPOSAL FOR THE AC, SUMMERSCHOOL

Mr. GUDMUNDSSON presented the proposal to ask the Arctic Council to arrange a summer school on Arctic affairs.

It was proposed that the University of the Arctic, as well as other arctic educational institutes should be consulted in preparation of the contents for the summer school.

## 8. STATUS OF THE WORK OF SCPAR

The secretariat reported on the status of the work of SCPAR.

Mr. CHERNYSENKO informed the Committee on recent developments in the Russian arctic. The fifth draft of the federal law on the arctic development has been published. The new law provides a framework for the development of special economic zones, regulation for international investment, as well as for social and general development projects. New investments will also be introduced to develop the Russia's arctic districts.

The Faroe Islands will organise a conference on economic development, digital transformation and sustainable development in May 2018.

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

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