

# Arctic Strategies Round-up 2017

Author: Vincent-Gregor Schulze

*Commissioned by the German Arctic Office at the Alfred Wegener Institute,  
Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research.*

Due to climate change and the resulting decline of sea ice in the Arctic, the political, economic and social importance of the region is growing. The Arctic Ocean, which is nowadays still covered by a changing ice layer all year around, is the center of the region, which is generally defined by the Arctic Circle. An ice-free Arctic not only means a massive environmental change in the region and on the global level, but also a fundamental political rearrangement of the High North. The consequences of the “Arctic Change” are touching various policy fields including aspects regarding the environment, economy and international security. Hence, it became a cross-cutting task of international politics. Today, these changes are no longer limited to the Arctic Ocean, but have aroused desires and concerns at the same time all around the world. Thus, many states have published specific Arctic Strategies and implemented them into their foreign and domestic policies. As there are sometimes similar, but also opposing interests, motives and occasions to engage in the Arctic.

This Policy Paper provides an overview and an introduction to the Arctic Strategies of the member and observer states of the Arctic Council. The paper was commissioned in partnership with the German Arctic Office. The German Arctic Office at the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research serves as an information and cooperation platform for German stakeholders invested in Arctic science, politics and industry. It enhances the visibility of Germany’s engagement in the Arctic on a national and international level. The paper does not represent an opinion of the German Arctic Office, but is a contribution for the scientific discussion about political developments in the Arctic.

## **Table of contents:**

Table Index  
Table Arctic Strategies Round-up

## **Annex**

Summary Arctic Strategies Arctic Council Member Countries  
Summary Arctic Strategies Arctic Council Permanent Participants  
Summary Arctic Strategies Arctic Council Observer Countries  
Summary Arctic Strategy European Union  
About the Author and Citation

# Arctic Strategies

## Table Index



This topic has high priority: It is a guideline and the center of the Arctic Policy. Necessary financial as well as further resources are provided to work on specific projects, initiatives and political programs.



This topic has medium priority: It is part of the Arctic Policy and the government is aware of new developments. Specific projects, initiatives and political programs are prepared in the long-term perspective. If required, a stronger engagement is envisaged.



This topic has low priority: It is an indirect part of the Arctic Policy and the government recognizes its relevance. If requested, new developments will be followed, but a stronger engagement is not envisaged.



This topic has no relevance for the Arctic Policy.

<b>Research</b>	Establishment of scientific networks, international cooperation and expansion of research funding. The focus of interdisciplinary polar research are the climatic changes in the Arctic, but sociocultural developments are investigated too.
<b>Environment</b>	All measures at national and international level to reduce greenhouse gases, preserve biodiversity and protect the Arctic Ocean from pollution. Also, the designation of protected areas, building networks of particularly sensitive regions in the Arctic and working towards global agreements are part of the environmental protection.
<b>Technology &amp; Innovation</b>	Promotion of the development of technologies, businesses and business models. Focal points are the digitization and communication technologies. Furthermore, the development of specific Arctic services, e.g. big-data-management, will be promoted.
<b>Education</b>	Access of the local population to education, e.g. through modern communication technologies and distance learning. Build-up training and study programs and start Arctic education in schools and universities.
<b>Regional Development</b>	Increasing social, cultural and political living standards in rural areas. Strengthening local self-administration.
<b>International Law</b>	Conflicts and conflicting interests should be settled based on international law in force. To guarantee a stable, safe and peaceful Arctic, the development of international law is being pursued. This includes the strengthening of existing institutions, the creation of new rules and the enhancement of the Law of the Sea. Special attention is given to the Arctic Council.
<b>Indigenous Peoples</b>	Secure and strengthen the rights of the indigenous population in the Arctic through participation in political decision-making. Improving the standard of living with investments in education, better labor market accession and the preservation of the traditional way of life.

# Arctic Strategies

## Table Index

<b>Infrastructure</b>	Includes the expansion of the technical infrastructure such as energy supply, communication and financial services, but the social infrastructure such as educational and health institutions, authorities and cultural institutions as well.
<b>Transport</b>	Expansion of regional and transregional transport routes to link the region to other parts of the country. This includes roads, railways and local transport systems, but because of the great distances in the Arctic, air transport and the development of airports is crucial.
<b>Shipping</b>	Development of new shipping routes and the intensification of maritime traffic on the Northern Sea Routes as well as the Transpolar route. This includes the construction of icebreakers, the development of state-of-the-art marine technology and the expansion of the maritime infrastructure (ports, access roads, container terminals). Incentives for shipping companies to choose the Arctic sea route.
<b>Search and Rescue (SAR)</b>	Expansion of coastal guards and land-based rescue services. Build-up of SAR-systems such as lighthouses, beacons and modern satellite monitoring. Continuous monitoring of activities at sea by GPS positioning and airspace monitoring. Intensify cross-border SAR-activities and disaster prevention and management through regional agreements.
<b>Tourism</b>	Expansion of tourist facilities, accommodation and targeted marketing for Arctic destinations. Furthermore, the expansion of touristic infrastructure such as terminals for cruise ships as well as cycling/hiking trails and other tourist activities.
<b>Fisheries</b>	Exploration and exploitation of existing and new fishing grounds for marine resources. This includes both deep-sea fishing as well as aquaculture of fish and shellfish.
<b>Oil &amp; Gas</b>	Exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in the Arctic. Likewise, the expansion of the required off- and onshore infrastructure.
<b>Mining</b>	Mining of mineral resources. In particular rare earth elements, iron ore and precious metals.
<b>Military Presence</b>	To cover security issues such as sovereignty and free access to resources, the military presence in the region will be increased. This means both the relocation of troops and military material to the Arctic as well as the formation of specific Arctic forces and investments in the armed forces.

Denmark in the following order: Denmark, Greenland, the Faroe Islands

China, Poland and Singapore have not published a strategy paper. The information in the table refer to: Kopra: China's Arctic Interest / Łuszczuk: Poland's Policy towards the Arctic / Storey, Ian: The Arctic Novice. (See Appendix).

# Arctic Strategies

## Arctic Council Member States

	Research	Environment	Technology & Innovation	Education	Regional Development	International Law	Indigenous Peoples	Infrastructure	Transport	Shipping	SAR	Tourism	Fisheries	Oil&Gas	Mining	Military Presence
Canada	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▶	▲	▲	▲	▶	▲	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲
Denmark	▲	▲	▲	▶	▼	▲	▲	▼	▲	▶	▶	▼	▼	▶	▼	▲
Greenland	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▶	▲	▲	▲	▶	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▶
Faroe Islands	▲	▶	▲	▶	▼	▶	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▶	⊗	▶
Finland	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	▲	▼	▶	▲	▼	▼	▲	▼
Iceland	⊗	▶	▲	▶	▼	▲	▲	▼	▼	▶	▲	▲	▲	▼	⊗	▶
Norway	▲	▶	▲	▲	▶	▶	▼	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲
Russia	▲	▶	▲	▼	▼	▼	▶	▲	▶	▲	▶	▶	▲	▲	▲	▲
Sweden	▼	▲	▲	▲	▼	▲	▲	▶	▲	▼	▲	▲	▶	▶	▲	▼
USA	▲	▶	⊗	⊗	▼	▲	▶	▶	▲	▶	▲	⊗	▼	▲	▼	▶

# Arctic Strategies

## Arctic Council Observer States

	Research	Environment	Technology & Innovation	Education	Regional Development	International Law	Indigenous Peoples	Infrastructure	Transport	Shipping	SAR	Tourism	Fisheries	Oil & Gas	Mining	Military Presence
Germany	▲	▲	▲	▼	▼	▷	▼	▼	▼	▲	▲	▼	▼	▲	▲	▼
France	▲	▲	▲	▷	▼	▲	▼	▼	▼	▼	▲	▲	▲	▷	▲	▼
India	▷	▲	▼	▲	×	×	▷	×	×	×	×	×	×	▲	▼	×
Italy	▲	▲	▲	▲	×	×	×	▷	×	×	▷	▼	×	▷	×	×
Japan	▲	▷	▲	▷	×	▷	×	▷	▷	▲	▲	×	▷	▷	▷	×
The Netherlands	▲	▲	▲	×	×	▲	▼	×	×	▷	▲	×	▷	▷	▷	×
Peoples Republic of China	▲	▲	▼	×	▼	▼	▼	×	×	▲	▼	▼	▼	▲	▲	×
Poland	▲	▷	▼	×	▷	▷	▷	×	▷	▲	▷	×	▲	▷	▷	×
Republik of Korea	▲	▷	▲	▲	▼	▲	▼	▷	▼	▲	▲	×	▲	▷	▲	×
Singapore	▼	▼	▲	×	×	▲	×	×	×	▲	▼	×	×	×	×	×
Spain	▲	▲	▲	▲	×	▼	▷	▲	×	▲	▷	×	▲	▷	▷	×
Switzerland	▲	▷	▲	▲	×	▷	▼	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×	×
United Kingdom	▲	▷	▲	▷	▼	▷	▷	▼	×	▲	▼	▲	▷	▲	▷	▷

## Arctic Council Member Countries

### Canada

Canada sees the Arctic mainly as an internal matter. Central points are therefore regional development, the expansion of transport infrastructure and the exploitation of Arctic resources. On the economic side, mining and the oil-and-gas industry are given special attention. Canada prioritizes the education of the local population to facilitate access to the labor market and promote social development. As a matter of urgency, Canada emphasizes its Arctic sovereignty and enhances its military presence in the region as well as SAR infrastructure. However, Canada supports the Arctic Council's diplomacy and intra-regional cooperation.

*Canada's Northern Strategy. Our North, Our Heritage, Our Future (2009)*

<http://www.northernstrategy.gc.ca/cns/cns.pdf>

---

### Denmark

The Arctic Strategy of Denmark formulates objectives for the entire Kingdom as well as its „independent nations“ Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The most important aim of the Danish Arctic Policy is the use of resources. A consequent expansion of the mining and oil-and-gas sector is being pursued in Greenland. Fishing is the most important resource for the Faroe Islands. Top priorities for Greenland are the socioeconomic development of the population, enhancement of healthcare and education as well as the improvement of the infrastructure. Denmark invests in research and education facilities and builds scientific networks. Denmark is also striving to promote the codification of Polar Law and supports the option of binding decision-making by the Arctic Council. However, Danish sovereignty is underlined by increasing military presence. For Greenland and the Faroe Islands, tourism, and the cruise industry in particular, is of increasing importance. Renewable energies are perceived as an Arctic resource and their expansion is being pursued in all parts of the Danish Realm.

*Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands: Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020 (2011)*

<http://um.dk/~media/UM/English-site/Documents/Politics-and-diplomacy/Greenland-and-The-Faroe-Islands/Arctic%20strategy.pdf?la=en>

---

### Finland

Finland is Chairman of the Arctic Council in the 2017-2019 period. Finland has no direct access to the Arctic Ocean and is seeking a role as a knowledge-based service provider. To this end, Finland invests heavily in research and development of technologies, services and new business models for the Arctic. Finland emphasizes its Northern expertise and innovative power in the fields of digitalization and distance learning. Mining, tourism, but also forestry and renewable energies are of decisive economic importance. Lapland's socioeconomic development has a high priority too. Finland supports a strong role of the European Union in the Arctic and supports the EU's application as an observer to the Arctic Council.

*Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013)*

<http://vnk.fi/documents/10616/334509/Arktinen+strategia+2013+en.pdf/6b6fb723-40ec-4c17-b286-5b5910fbecf4>

## Iceland

Iceland is mainly pursuing objectives of security and economic policy. Iceland is actively involved in the development and codification of international law to safeguard its own security. Regional institutions such as the Arctic Council and sub regional organizations as the West Nordic Council are to be strengthened. Iceland supports the demilitarization of the region and closer SAR cooperation as it is the smallest Arctic country. Economically, Iceland is primarily focused on fishing and tourism. In the long term, Iceland is going to develop itself into a hub for Arctic institutions, companies and research facilities. For this purpose, new conference buildings, accommodation and transport routes will be build.

*A Parliamentary Resolution on Iceland's Arctic Policy*

<https://www.mfa.is/media/nordurlandaskrifstofa/A-Parliamentary-Resolution-on-ICE-Arctic-Policy-approved-by-Althingi.pdf>

---

## Norway

The Arctic and its economic development is of highest priority for Norwegian foreign policy. In particular, the exploration and exploitation of oil and gas in the Barents Sea, fishing and tourism are of importance. Norway supports the development of innovative technologies and businesses – especially in the aerospace industry. With high investments in universities, research institutes and regional economic development, skilled workers are to be trained and should be tied to the labor market. Norway is striving for a close cooperation with its Nordic neighbors, but with Russia too. At the local level, cross-border projects will be intensified to increase cooperation with Russia.

*Norway's Arctic Policy (2014)*

[https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/nord/nordkloden\\_en.pdf](https://www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/departementene/ud/vedlegg/nord/nordkloden_en.pdf)

---

## Russian Federation

Russia's Arctic Strategy has two major points: the establishment of Russia as the leading Arctic country and the full development of the economic potential of the Russian Arctic. To underline its sovereignty in the Arctic, Russia invests in the enhancement of its armed forces, border control and civil protection. Russia is seeking cooperation with other Arctic countries and the Arctic Council. Economically, Russia focuses on the exploitation of oil-and-gas, mineral resources and fishing. The development of shipping on the Northern Sea Route (Northeast Passage) has maximum importance. To this end, Russia is investing in marine infrastructure, up-to-date navigation and state-of-the-art monitoring. The income is to be used for the socioeconomic development of the local and indigenous population of the Russian Arctic.

*Russian Federation Policy for the Arctic to 2020 (2009)*

<http://www.arctis-search.com/Russian+Federation+Policy+for+the+Arctic+to+2020>.

## Sweden

Sweden has no access to the Arctic Ocean and therefore tries to establish itself as a supporting country by providing services, scientific research and public information. The development of innovative and sustainable technologies for Arctic resource management is promoted and specialists will be trained. In addition, Sweden intensifies its regional cooperation and represents Arctic-related issues in global policy forums. In economic terms, Sweden is particularly interested in the fields of mining, forestry and tourism. This is accompanied by the expansion of infrastructure and the improvement of the standard of living in Lapland.

*Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region (2011)*

<https://openaid.se/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Swedens-Strategy-for-the-Arctic-Region.pdf>

---

## United States of America

The Arctic Strategy of the US emphasizes national security in a particular way. This includes both military, environmental and energy policy measures. The use of oil-and-gas, mineral resources and securing of free trade has high priority for the US. Cooperation should be based on existing international institutions and codified international law. To assess the risks of the economic use of Arctic resources, the US are committed to international science cooperation and traditional knowledge of the indigenous population.

*National Strategy for the Arctic Region (2013)*

[https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nat\\_arctic\\_strategy.pdf](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/nat_arctic_strategy.pdf)

## Arctic Council Observer States

### France

Since 2000, France has been an observer to the Arctic Council and has supported its work through scientific expertise. France has a long tradition of polar research within the Arctic. Therefore, the promotion of interdisciplinary research, teaching and training is the main priority of France. Furthermore, the protection of the environment, especially the protection of maritime areas, is a guideline of the French Arctic Policy. Economic interests are formulated primarily in the field of mining and the cruise industry. As a member of NATO, France is committed to international law. France supports a strong role of the EU.

*The Great Challenge of the Arctic. National Roadmap for the Arctic (2016)*

[http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frna\\_-\\_eng\\_-\\_interne\\_-\\_prepa\\_-\\_17-06-pm-bd-pdf\\_cle02695b.pdf](http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/frna_-_eng_-_interne_-_prepa_-_17-06-pm-bd-pdf_cle02695b.pdf)

---

### Germany

Germany has held the observer status since 1998 and has raised its Arctic Strategy to the central point of German foreign policy. As Germany is an exporting country, it has strong interests in the development of mineral and energetic resources as well as free shipping. Furthermore, Germany sees great potential for national companies – especially in the sector environmental and marine technology. With bilateral

agreements and in international forums as well as the Arctic Council, Germany is striving for binding regulations for environmental protection and Arctic security. Germany offers its scientific expertise and outstanding experience in polar research to support the peaceful and sustainable development.

*Guidelines of the German Arctic policy. Assume responsibility, seize opportunities (2013)*

[http://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/International/Leitlinien-Arktispolitik.pdf?\\_\\_blob=publicationFile](http://www.bmel.de/SharedDocs/Downloads/EN/International/Leitlinien-Arktispolitik.pdf?__blob=publicationFile).

---

## India

India has its observer status to the Arctic Council since 2013. Focus is the study of climate change and its impact on Indian agriculture through changes in the monsoon. India maintains, in partnership with Norway, a research station on Svalbard and has a long tradition in Antarctic research as well. Economic interests are not very distinct and almost exclusively limited to the development of oil and gas in the Russian Arctic. With its commitment to the Arctic, India is striving for a stronger presence in international politics and thus follows the example of China.

*India and the Arctic (2013)*

<http://mea.gov.in/in-focus-article.htm?21812/India+and+the+Arctic>.

---

## Italy

Italy has its observer status at the Arctic Council since 2013. Italy's main priority is the scientific exploration of the Arctic, which is based on the long tradition of Italian polar exploration. Accordingly, Italy is committed to the expansion of scientific cooperation and is investing in research and training on Arctic related issues. Primarily with a focus on climate protection and the preservation of the sensitive Arctic environment. To this end, Italy emphasizes its competence in the study of alpine, marine and volcanic landscapes. Economic interests are more subordinate and focusing on investments of Italian companies.

*Towards an Italian Strategy for the Arctic (2015)*

[http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica\\_estera/aree\\_geografiche/europa/artico](http://www.esteri.it/mae/en/politica_estera/aree_geografiche/europa/artico).

---

## Japan

Japan has its observer status at the Arctic Council since 2013. The main interests of Japan are the technology export, Arctic shipping and scientific cooperation. Japan invests in Greenlandic companies and provides expertise for fishing and mining companies. Japan also emphasizes its efforts in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development. The government provides national funding to enhance Arctic research at universities and other institutions. In addition, research stations and vessels are to be built for the use in the Arctic. Japan is particularly focused on a close partnership with Russia and the US.

*Outline of Japan's Arctic Policy (2015)*

[http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/kaiyou/arcticpolicy/jpn\\_arcticpolicy/Outline\\_Japans\\_Arctic\\_Policy\[ENG\].pdf](http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/singi/kaiyou/arcticpolicy/jpn_arcticpolicy/Outline_Japans_Arctic_Policy[ENG].pdf).

## The Netherlands

The Netherlands are observer at the Arctic Council since 1998. The Netherlands are endangered by climate change and the expected sea level rise. Thus, the Dutch government invests in research and development of climate-friendly technologies. Furthermore, the Netherlands are committed to seek binding international agreements and global standards for environmental protection in the Arctic. The Netherlands are seeing economic potential in oil and gas, fisheries and shipping. In all economic sectors, sustainable and climate-friendly development is at the top of the list. The Netherlands are supporting further developments of the Arctic Council and the application of the EU as an observer.

*Pole Position – NL 2.0. Strategy for the Netherlands Polar Programme 2016-2020 (2014)*

[https://www.nwo.nl/binaries/content/documents/nwo-en/common/documentation/application/alw/netherlands-polar-programme---strategy---pole-position---nl-2.0/UK\\_binnenwerk\\_Poolpositie-NL+2.0.pdf](https://www.nwo.nl/binaries/content/documents/nwo-en/common/documentation/application/alw/netherlands-polar-programme---strategy---pole-position---nl-2.0/UK_binnenwerk_Poolpositie-NL+2.0.pdf).

---

## Peoples Republic of China

China has its observer status to the Arctic Council since 2013, but has not published a specific Arctic Strategy yet. Nevertheless, as part of its foreign policy, China is paying increasing attention to the Arctic. China is going to be directly affected by the effects of climate change and is therefore investing in climate research. To this end, China is developing research vessels and research stations for use in the Arctic and Antarctic. China also pursues economic interests in the oil-and-gas sector and the exploration of resources (primarily rare earth elements). Special attention is paid to the development of Arctic shipping. With its commitment to the Arctic, China wants to strengthen its position as a global player in international politics.

*Kopra, Sanna: China's Arctic Interest, in: Heininen, Lassi (Ed.) Arctic Yearbook 2013, Akureyri 2013, S. 107-124.*  
[http://www.arcticyearbook.com/images/Articles\\_2013/KOPRA\\_AY13\\_FINAL.pdf](http://www.arcticyearbook.com/images/Articles_2013/KOPRA_AY13_FINAL.pdf).

---

## Poland

Although Poland is an observer to the Arctic Council since 1998, no strategy paper has been published yet. The focus of Polish Arctic Policy is to build-up scientific cooperation. Poland is financially and personnelwise involved in many international Arctic research programs. A high priority is given the national polar research. Poland maintains close ties with Norway, Iceland and Greenland to foster cooperation and Polish investments in the fishing and mining sector. Poland supports further developments of the Arctic Council and a strong role of the EU.

*Łuszczuk, Michał et al.: Poland's Policy towards the Arctic: Key Areas and Priority Actions, (=PISM Policy Paper, Nr. 11), Warsaw 2015*

[https://www.pism.pl/files/?id\\_plik=19746](https://www.pism.pl/files/?id_plik=19746).

## Republic of Korea

The Republic of Korea has its observer status to the Arctic Council since 2013. The development of Arctic shipping and related industries are of paramount importance to the Republic of Korea. To this end, Korea invests in the development of marine technology, nautical science and land-based infrastructure. Korea also supports the expansion of domestic and Arctic ports. Korea has a strong interest in the exploration of rare earth elements and the intensification of Arctic fisheries to meet the domestic demand. Korea is expanding its research activities in the Arctic continuously and fosters the training of polar researchers.

*Arctic Policy of the Republic of Korea (2013)*

[http://library.arcticportal.org/1902/1/Arctic\\_Policy\\_of\\_the\\_Republic\\_of\\_Korea.pdf](http://library.arcticportal.org/1902/1/Arctic_Policy_of_the_Republic_of_Korea.pdf).

---

## Singapore

Singapore has its observer status to the Arctic Council since 2013 and follows almost exclusively its trade interests. Especially maritime industries and the export of high technology is important. In particular, technical expertise in the areas of shipbuilding, port management and SAR infrastructure are the basis for Singaporean investments. Singapore is heavily dependent on global shipping and is therefore seeking further codifications of the Law of the Sea. Singapore will be affected directly by the effects of climate change in the Arctic and therefore supports climate research in the working groups of the Arctic Council.

*Storey, Ian: The Arctic Novice: Singapore and the High North, in: Asia Policy, Nr. 18, 2014, S. 66-72.*

[http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia\\_policy/Free/05122017/AsiaPolicy18\\_PolarPursuitsRT\\_July2014.pdf](http://www.nbr.org/publications/asia_policy/Free/05122017/AsiaPolicy18_PolarPursuitsRT_July2014.pdf).

---

## Spain

Spain has its observer status to the Arctic Council since 2006 and emphasizes its long tradition in polar research. Accordingly, the focus of the Spanish Arctic Strategy is the further intensification of interdisciplinary research activities in the Arctic. The experience and competence from the long-term Antarctic research will be used for future research in the Arctic. Spain is committed to the extensive funding of Arctic research by the EU. As a decline in shipping in the Mediterranean is expected, Spain has indirect interests in the Northern Sea Routes. Spanish companies are therefore investing in Arctic ports. Spain sees the energy and mineral resources as an option for energy security across the EU.

*Guidelines for a Spanish Polar Strategy (2016)*

[http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/stfls/MICINN/Investigacion/FICHEROS/Comite\\_Polar\\_definitivo/Directrices\\_estrategia\\_polar\\_espanola.pdf](http://www.idi.mineco.gob.es/stfls/MICINN/Investigacion/FICHEROS/Comite_Polar_definitivo/Directrices_estrategia_polar_espanola.pdf).

---

## Switzerland

Switzerland has its observer status since 2017, making it the latest observer to the Arctic Council. Swiss interests and activities are almost exclusively limited to science. The Alps and the polar regions are very similar in many respects, why Swiss polar research has a long tradition and makes Switzerland one of the leading nations in glacier and snow research. Switzerland uses its alpine expertise for research in the Arctic – especially regarding to climate change. Switzerland is therefore primarily interested in international

science cooperation as well as deepening its own expertise. Switzerland also supports the peaceful and sustainable development of the Arctic.

*Swiss Polar Research. Pioneering Spirit, Passion and Excellence (2015)*

[https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/eda/en/documents/publications/Science/Schweizer\\_Polarforschung\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/content/dam/eda/en/documents/publications/Science/Schweizer_Polarforschung_EN.pdf).

---

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom has been an observer to the Arctic Council since 1998. Great Britain sees itself as a hub between the Arctic and the rest of the world. On the one hand regarding its maritime infrastructure, the insurance and financial industry and the international trade of Arctic resources in London. On the other hand, Great Britain emphasizes its technical and scientific expertise. Furthermore, the import of natural gas from Norway is central to the UK's energy supply. Arctic tourism is to develop in accordance with the principles of sustainability. Britain supports the activities of NATO and emphasizes the sovereignty of the Arctic coastal states based on existing international law.

*Adapting to Change. UK Policy towards the Arctic (2013)*

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/251216/Adapting\\_To\\_Change\\_UK\\_policy\\_towards\\_the\\_Arctic.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251216/Adapting_To_Change_UK_policy_towards_the_Arctic.pdf).

## Political Bodies without Observer Status

European Union (EU)

The European Union is not an observer at the Arctic Council, but strives for the observer status. The EU focuses on climate and environmental protection, sustainable development and international cooperation. To this end, the EU provides research funding and promotes scientific exchange. Research results should be incorporated into Arctic-related decision-making directly. The EU also supports regional development in the European Arctic through its structural funds, e.g. transport networks, digital infrastructure and innovative technologies. The EU actively represent the concerns of the European Arctic in international forums. The EU also supports the regulation of Arctic shipping and fishing through binding international law.

*An integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic (2016)*

[http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/arctic\\_region/docs/160427\\_joint-communication-an-integrated-european-union-policy-for-the-arctic\\_en.pdf](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/arctic_region/docs/160427_joint-communication-an-integrated-european-union-policy-for-the-arctic_en.pdf).

## Arctic Council Permanent Participants

Aleut International Association (AIA)

The Aleut International Association (AIA) is a non-profit organization based in Alaska. The AIA represents the interests of the Aleutians and focuses on environmental protection and the preservation of the

traditional Aleutian culture. The members of the AIA are both American and Russian Aleutians. The AIA represents about 18,000 people with a majority in the US.

---

#### Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC)

The Arctic Athabaskan Council (AAC) is the parent organization of indigenous Athabascans in Canada and the US. It primarily sees itself as a political organization and provides a platform for local and First Nation governments. The AAC strives for political influence and represents the interests of some 45,000 people in Alaska as well as the Canadian Northwest Territories and Yukon.

---

#### Gwich'in Council International (GCI)

The Gwich'in Council International (GCI) is a non-profit organization representing the interests of the Gwich'in people. The GCI sees itself as an association of interests and focuses on environmental, educational, cultural as well as socioeconomic issues. The GCI represents approximately 9,000 people in Alaska as well as the Canadian Northwest Territories and Yukon.

---

#### Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC)

The Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) is the parent organization of the Inuit and one of the largest indigenous interest groups in the world. The ICC is committed to greater political participation and international protection of the Inuit. The ICC is also involved in the development of strategies for environmental protection in the Arctic and the economic, cultural and social development of the Inuit. The ICC represents approximately 160,000 people in the US, Canada, Greenland (DK) and Chukotka (RU).

---

#### Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)

The Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON) is the parent organization of the indigenous peoples of the Russian Arctic. RAIPON represents their interests at the political level and is committed to issues of environmental protection, sociocultural development and education. RAIPON particularly emphasizes the right to indigenous self-determination. The association represents about 270,000 people in the Russian Arctic.

---

#### Saami Council (SC)

The Saami Council (SC) is a non-governmental organization representing the interests of the Saami, which are indigenous to Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The SC is particularly interested in political and social participation of the Saami. The SC advocates a stronger representation of the Saami in national authorities and parliaments. The council also supports the preservation of Sami languages and traditions as well as traditional reindeer herding. The SC represents about 140,000 people in Northern Europe.

## About the Author and Citation

Vincent-Gregor Schulze, M.A. is Political Scientist and works as freelance researcher and lecturer in Berlin. He already focused on Arctic Governance during his studies in Political Science and Cultural Studies at Friedrich-Schiller-University Jena and Leipzig University. He extended his Arctic expertise with studies abroad at the Universities in Tampere (Finland), Reykjavík (Iceland) and Aarhus (Denmark). He focuses on further political developments of the Arctic and the Nordic Countries. Furthermore, his main interests are the European Integration, the advancement of International Law and the politics of Small States.

Contact: [vg.schulze@polarconnection.org](mailto:vg.schulze@polarconnection.org)

Please use the following citation:

Schulze, Vincent-Gregor: Arctic Strategy Round-Up 2017

<http://www.arctic-office.de/en/in-focus/arctic-strategies-round-up/>

Accessed: October 2017

