
Note



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Grønlands Repræsentation i Bruxelles
Greenland Representation in Bruxelles

To: The EU Commission
CC:
From: Government of Greenland, Greenland Date: October 8th 2009
Representation

Issue: **Main areas of concern in the Commission Communication on “EU and the Arctic”.**

Introduction

This note outlines main areas of concern for Greenland about the Commissions Communication of “EU and the Arctic”. Greenland appreciates the dialogue with the Commission on the issue and also with the European Presidency. Greenland hopes that the European Union holds a genuine interest and commitment in having a dialogue on matters pertaining to a region far from the EU but with close historical relationships, especially through Denmark’s Arctic Window Greenland.

Greenland comments

- Greenland welcomes a greater interest by the EU for the Arctic. It is apparent to Greenland that the EUs developing interest for the Arctic has maritime roots and is accelerated by climate change and its possibilities.
- Taking into account the wide range of topics with an impact on Arctic populations dealt with in the Communication, the specific inclusion of references to the principles of self-determination of peoples, human rights and fundamental freedoms as well as the principles of sustainable development would be welcomed.

DIALOGUE, MARINE MAMMALS

- Greenland appreciates the dialogue with the Commission on the Communication and welcomes further dialogue and cooperation in general with the EU.
- Greenland would like to emphasize a need for extended dialogue and understanding from the EU when it comes to matters concerning the Arctic and ways of life, specifically on issues related to marine mammals or fisheries.
- Greenland notes that recent Commission initiatives regarding whales and seals are unhelpful and counterproductive in this regard.
- Greenland also notes the initiative taken by the Commission concerning Council regulation on custom duties for fisheries products which Greenland finds both counterproductive and in principle is neglecting the existing regulation and development cooperation.

ARCTIC COUNCIL

- Greenland welcomes the application for permanent observer status in the Arctic Council for the European Commission. The aim is to contribute to the work and development of the

Council and make the EU informed and aware of the effects that decisions have for Arctic countries.

- The European Commission's active participation in Arctic Council matters should help to provide for a more reasoned approach to Arctic issues, such as the importance of traditional lifestyles, marine mammals and human development issues.
- Greenland finds the EU interest in the Arctic region interesting. However the main objective for the EU should be to give input via existing Arctic Cooperation and secure financial tools to cover such enhanced and expanding EU-Arctic cooperation.

CLIMATE CHANGE, ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

- The Arctic is the region that is experiencing the effects of climate change the most. The EU should take into consideration Greenland's need for economic development and emissions taking into account the heavy burden with regard to adaptation that Greenland has to go through. Greenland finds that the Arctic region needs special consideration when the EU develops its position for the COP 15 to be held in Copenhagen in 2009.
- Greenland welcomes the Commission's concern for the effects of climate change on the Arctic, it should however be noted that climate change is only one out of many environmental threats facing Arctic populations. Most importantly the serious effects of transboundary pollutants including emissions, heavy metals and POP's originating in the EU on Arctic human health need to be noted.
- On the basis of the conference report "Common Concern for the Arctic" published by the Nordic Council of Ministers it is clear that the EU is strong in the areas of research, environment and climate. In this respect Greenland finds it relevant to make a reference to the human and social dimension of sustainable development. The Arctic States, Countries and Peoples have conducted much valuable work in safeguarding the environment. The EU programmes can be a relevant tool to cooperate closer in terms of research however relevant guidance and application methods are requested.
- Greenland also wants to encourage enhanced cooperation between OCTs and the Commission and the 4 EU member states to the benefit and positioning of all 3 parties in the global engagement towards minimizing the effects of climate change.

TRANSPORT AND ENERGY

- Greenland appreciates the interest from the side of the EU to the fact that the sea ice is melting giving possibilities for new transport routes and access to potential hydrocarbon developments. Greenland would also like the European Commission to note the substantial potential for renewable energy resources available in the Arctic, including hydroelectricity.
- Regarding transport, the potential for collaboration with the EU on improved Arctic maritime surveillance by polar-orbiting satellite systems and on providing more affordable circumpolar civil aviation should be further explored.
- The EU should also look closer into the changing security situation in the Arctic and the need for increased cooperation among the stakeholders in the Arctic to prevent any conflict for arising in the future. The EU should look into how it can develop cooperation regarding SAR in the Arctic

RESPECT FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

- Greenland takes into consideration that the EU wants to establish a presence of the EU in the Arctic. In this regard Greenland wants to state that such a presence should be with the prior consent and acceptance of the Nations in the Arctic and the peoples living in the Arctic. An access to the Arctic should be a positive situation respecting the Arctic customs and decisions.
- Greenland notes that no reference is made to the UN declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples whereby rights of self-determination and other inalienable rights are defined and recognized. The rights of Arctic indigenous peoples should in Greenland's view be recognized as a cross-cutting issue throughout the Communication.

COOPERATION

- Greenland takes note of the reference to the Annual Action Programmes for Greenland for the period 2007-2013 whereby a financial assistance is given up to 25 million EUR per year to support the education and vocational training sector and 15,8 million per year is devoted to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement. The cooperation is also evolving in the veterinary area and in terms of acceptance of Greenland in the Kimberley Process. It must also be noted that Greenland has asked for a renewal of a derogation to the rules of origin concerning prepared and preserved scrimps and prawns from Greenland
- Greenland takes note of the special relationship between the EU and its associated Overseas Countries and Territories, and welcomes the possibilities for cooperation with the EU in these matters. Participation in regional development programmes and special access to the EU markets are both examples of the value of cooperation with the EU in Greenland.
- Greenland is ready to work with the EU and other OCTs to renew the relationship also beyond 2013 by finding new ways of promoting close historical and economic links.
- Should the EU consider the possibilities of an Arctic Information Centre, Greenland can be a valuable partner.
- Greenland would like to stress that the future engagement of the EU in the Arctic area must include financial resources other than the resources in the existing Greenland EU cooperation.

INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE

- Greenland would like to state that the maritime areas are regulated by UNCLOS and with the case of the Arctic Ocean by principles stated in the Ilulissat Declaration from May 2008. Further cooperation to prevent pollution and protect environmental resources in the Arctic Council is welcomed, but should at the same time safeguard the rights of the Arctic peoples to the use of their own natural resources in a sustainable manner. Work in the IMO to make the "Arctic code" mandatory should also be supported and advanced.

NEXT STEPS

- Greenland refers to the political declaration from June 27th 2006 whereby Greenland and the EU have decided to strengthen the relationship on the basis of common interests with relevance to our people and with a long term perspective.