

Canada - Europe  
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire  
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**Report of the  
Canadian Parliamentary Delegation of the  
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association  
to the  
Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians  
of the Arctic Region  
Kiruna, Sweden  
August 2-4, 2006**

Mr. Bob Mills led a delegation of four parliamentarians to the Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Kiruna, Sweden, August 2 to 4, 2006.

# Report

## Introduction

Mr. Bob Mills led a delegation of four parliamentarians to the Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region in Kiruna, Sweden, 2 to 4 August 2006. The delegation consisted of members from the House of Commons and included Mr. Larry Bagnell, Mr. Yvon Lévesque, and Mr. Bradley Trost. The delegation was assisted by Mr. Phillipe Méla, secretary to the delegation, and advisor Tim Williams from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of Parliament. Two meetings of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (SCPAR)<sup>(1)</sup> were held in association with the Conference at which Canada was represented by the head of the delegation, Mr. Bob Mills.

The first conference of Arctic parliamentarians was held in 1993 in Iceland, and SCPAR was established the following year. Conferences have been held in a different Arctic country every two years since the second conference in Yellowknife in 1996, the same year that the eight-nation Arctic Council was established at a Ministerial meeting in Ottawa. The Arctic Council also gives standing to representatives of international indigenous associations and elected bodies. Currently six of these bodies have “Permanent Participant” status in the Council, which meets at the ministerial level every two years. SCPAR has observer status with the Arctic Council. A primary role of the parliamentary group has been to advance the Council’s work, particularly on sustainable development issues. Representatives of indigenous Permanent Participants have the same status within SCPAR as they have in the Council.

The Seventh Conference was hosted by the Swedish Parliament and it was held in the mining town of Kiruna, located at latitude 67° 49’ 19” north of the equator. The Conference was attended by thirty three elected representatives from seven of the eight member states of the Arctic Council and three from the European Parliament as well as approximately 80 observers, invited guests, and representatives from conference and international secretariats and the press.

The United States did not send a delegation to the Conference, although there was an American official in attendance. The United States’ absence was noted by several delegates in statements made at the Conference, and some of these delegates suggested that more efforts should be made to encourage U.S. participation in the future. The Conference received and accepted an invitation from the United States to host the Eighth Conference in the State of Alaska, guaranteeing that this will occur.

As in previous years, the Conference focused on major themes that were introduced by addresses from keynote speakers. However, the seventh Conference allowed for greater dialogue and debate than previous conferences by shortening the addresses to allow greater time for interventions by conference participants.

The three themes chosen for the conference were:

- The International Polar Year;

- Innovation in the Arctic Governance: The possibilities and limitations of a binding legal regime for the Arctic; and,
- The Opening of the Arctic Sea Route: economic/commercial opportunities and environmental/cultural challenges.

In addition, the opening ceremony was followed by a discussion of Arctic Cooperation including progress reports from the Arctic Council and SCPAR as well as a special report on information and communication technology (ICT) in the Arctic. This report provides a brief overview of the Conference proceedings.

## **Conference proceedings**

### **A. Opening Statements**

The Conference was opened with traditional Sami music and dance followed by welcoming statements from the Speaker of the Swedish Parliament, the Chairman of the Swedish Sami Parliament and by the Swedish representative on SCPAR. The opening statements were followed by a discussion of arctic cooperation.

#### **1. Arctic Cooperation**

Ambassador Alexander Ignatief submitted an update of the activities and direction of the Arctic Council, which has been under the chairmanship of Russia for the last two years. Policy guidance in the Arctic Council is carried out by five expert working groups and the ambassador highlighted the work of each group. In particular he stressed their work on:

- Identifying and dealing with ecological “hot-spots” in the Russian part of the Barents region;
- Plans to deal with the effects of climate change and marine and land-based development on the marine environment;
- The selection of 12 indicator areas to be monitored in order to help stem biodiversity loss;
- The implications and possibilities for follow-up to the Arctic Human Development Report; and,
- Enhancing the security of marine transport and improving emergency response in the light of increasing use of natural resources and tourism in the Arctic.

In addition he discussed the Arctic Councils efforts to follow up on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment and support the International Polar Year.

Further to the Ambassador’s comments the Swedish State Secretary for Foreign Affairs emphasized that, for the Arctic to prosper the problems it faces must be reconciled through cooperation, particularly with respect to climate change.

The report on the work of SCPAR was presented by its chair, Ms. Hill-Marta Solberg, and it emphasized that parliamentarians were obliged to focus on improving the human condition of life in the Arctic in addition to wildlife. She mentioned the success of the University of the Arctic and the need to fund it properly as well as the need for information and communication technology. She stressed that the parliamentarians present should work to represent the Arctic in their roles at home.

These reports were followed by a presentation by Bernard Funston, executive secretary of the Sustainable Development Working Group of the Arctic Council regarding the Information and Communication Technology Assessment that this group is undertaking. He introduced the topic by commenting on the effect of ICT in the world describing the concept that “the Earth is flat.” In essence this describes the fact that ICT connects people in space and time so that persons are in contact with each other at all times and that distant cities are made close neighbours. He stressed the need to approach the assessment from a human perspective and not just the infrastructure. Increasing the capacity to use ICT was just as important as actually building the systems.

A discussion followed in which delegates introduced a range of topics. One focus was on climate change with the indigenous people emphasizing the need for urgent action as their future was “melting under their feet.” Many people commented on the links between environmental and energy security and the need to find synergies between the two. There were a number of calls to follow-up on the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment.

In order to better respond to issues in general there were calls for a new and stronger role for SCPAR as well as a further widening of the mandate of the European Union’s Northern Dimensions Policy to include Canada and the United States. The chair of the Arctic Council will soon be Norway, and its representative outlined three priorities for the work of the Council under its chairmanship: cooperative management of the natural resources of the Arctic regions; climate change and the follow-up to the ACIA; and, an examination of the structure of the Arctic Council.

## **B. International Polar Year**

The International Polar Year is an effort to focus scientific and social research on the Arctic and Antarctic during the period from 2007 to March 2009. The Conference heard from Dr. David Carlson, Director of the IPY International Programme Office and from Professor Terry Callaghan of the Swedish Abisko Scientific Research Station.

Dr Carlson outlined the IPY and the need to care about the environment, be socially and culturally responsible and to care for the legacy of the IPY. He described how each project had urgent and significant themes that often overlapped between the Arctic and Antarctic regions. One important aspect of the projects would be to build partnerships and connections. A significant outcome of the IPY will be to bring the “polar message” to the world. He then outlined a number of projects describing the science as “dazzling.” The Abisko Station has 60 to 90 proposals and Professor Callaghan described some of the work that is undertaken there.

The discussion that followed was enthusiastically supportive of the IPY, in particular its human and social aspects. A Canadian stressed that aboriginal involvement was

absolutely necessary and Dr. Carlson outlined the efforts of the IPY in this area. Many interventions, however, noted that lack of funding was a serious issue. Of the 218 proposals only 10 to 20% have funding. The role of the University of the Arctic was stressed, but it too lacked funding. Dr. Carlson called this lack of funding the IPY's most important short term question and it was suggested that the delegates work in their parliaments to increase the profile of IPY.

### **C. Innovation in Arctic Governance**

The key question under this theme was whether or not a new binding regime was needed in the Arctic region. Ms. Diana Wallis, Member of the European Parliament and of SCPAR spoke in support of the need for a new binding legal regime. With access to the Arctic increasing greatly there was the possibility for "untrammelled exploitation." The current governance system was seen to be not working as there were too many organizations for consistent and meaningful cooperation and, in practice, states were flouting international law and increasingly coming into conflict. The fact that the Arctic is a sea surrounded by countries gives it a unique aspect that would have to be reflected in any governance structure. Ms. Wallis gave a passionate speech that concluded that a treaty was needed to "give the Arctic back its voice."

Ambassador Hans Corell on the other hand suggested that the time and energy needed to create a single comprehensive regime would be better spent identifying the threats and establishing facts to help build political support to improve existing regimes and to persuade countries that were not yet parties to accede to them. He pointed out that unlike the Antarctic which is land surrounded by sea, that the Arctic is a sea surrounded by land. Countries were already laying claim to the Arctic sea bed (under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) and it was highly unlikely that they would cede their rights to another treaty.

During the discussion, Mr. Bob Mills, the head of the Canadian Delegation, made Canada's position clear in that it would not support a new binding regime for the Arctic as decisions regarding the Canadian Arctic territories should rest with the Canadian Parliament. He also noted that the Canadian government was committed to cooperation through the Arctic Council and was strongly supportive of the IPY.

A number of interveners remarked that the current regime was not working very well and that some kinds of change were urgently needed. Some were supportive of a new regime but others felt that an audit of the current system was needed before any changes. Article IX of UNCLOS (2) was mentioned as a possible avenue for greater cooperation in the Arctic Region. The wording of the final declaration included a call for an audit of the legal regime for the Arctic.

### **D. The Opening of the Arctic Sea Route**

The discussion regarding the Arctic Sea Route was chaired by Mr. Bob Mills, head of the Canadian Delegation. Mr. Sergey Kharyuchi, Chairman of Yamal-Nenets State Duma, introduced the topic. He felt that interest was growing in the Arctic as a transportation route, particularly the Russian Northern Sea Route, because of the possibility to exploit oil and gas as well as other natural resources, shorten transportation distances and to accelerate economic integration. Shipping safety

remains a significant concern, however with design and upgrade changes needed to vessels as well as training of crews and the putting in place of a unified security plan including emergency safety and rescue.

The Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment was then described by Dr. Lawson W. Brigham, Vice Chair of the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (the working group undertaking the assessment). The AMSA was requested as part of the Arctic Council's Arctic Marine Strategic Plan to examine the effects of plausible outcomes of changes in the Arctic sea ice.

Despite large interannual variability, continued sea ice reductions will likely lengthen the navigation season in all regions and increase marine access to the Arctic's natural resources. He noted that the Canadian archipelago will likely be one of the last places to clear. These changes represent both a challenge and an opportunity for governments and local Arctic communities. Of key significance are the effects of expanded marine activities on the cultures and well-being of Arctic populations, especially indigenous residents whose traditional way of life has been partially protected in the past by the very nature of the remote and extreme Arctic environment in which they live.<sup>(3)</sup>

Of key importance at this stage of the assessment is the need for baseline data regarding shipping in the Arctic.

## **Conclusion**

Delegates adopted a statement on the last day that reflected some of the discussions that occurred during the Conference (see appendix III). It called for financial support for research and monitoring, the IPY and the University of the Arctic. More generally it emphasized the need to acknowledge and integrate the rights and points of view of indigenous populations of the Arctic region in any decision making and to work in their home parliaments to advance the issues in the Arctic.

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Lorna Milne, Senator  
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

## **End notes**

- (1) See appendices for the Minutes
- (2) Enclosed Or Semi-Enclosed Seas.
- (3) Arctic Council, Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment, <http://www.pame.is/sidur/uploads/AMSA-Pamebaeklingur.pdf>.

### Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

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## The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

### Minutes from the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Venue: Kiruna

Date: 1 August 2006

**1. Adoption of the agenda**

The Committee adopted the proposed agenda for the meeting

**2. Approval of minutes from the meeting in kollekolle 19 may**

The minutes from Kollekolle was adopted by the Committee

**3. The seventh conference of parliamentarians from the arctic region**

Ms Hill-Marta Solberg guided the Committee through the program for the conference in Kiruna, and Mr. Runar Patriksson made some additional comments.

Ms. Solberg then presented the draft Conference Statement. The members of the Committee gave indications of where they wanted changes in the draft. The Chair asked the members to hand in the proposals in a written form before the first meeting in the Drafting Committee 2 August.

**4. Any other business**

There was no any other business

### Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

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## The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

### Minutes from the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

#### 1. Election of chair for the standing committee 2006-2008

Mr. Simo Rundgren suggested the re-election of Ms Hill-Marta Solberg as Chair for the Standing Committee. The nomination of Ms Solberg was endorsed by the members of the Committee. Ms Solberg was unanimously elected as Chair of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region 2006-2008.

#### 2. Secretariat

Ms Solberg announced that Stortinget was prepared to host the Secretariat of CPAR and proposed Mr Bjørn Willy Robstad as Secretary of the Committee. Mr Robstad was appointed as Secretary of the CPAR.

#### 3. Next meetings of the committee

The Committee will hold its next meeting in Brussels 21 or 22 November in Brussels in connection with a parliamentary forum on the Northern Dimension hosted by the European Parliament.

#### 4. Invitations to the committee

Mr Kuupik Kleist is representing the SCPAR at the Session of the West-Nordic Council 18-23 August in Torshavn.

Mr Sigurður Kári Kristiansson and Ms Diana Wallis will represent the SCPAR Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference 3-5 September in Reykjavik.

#### 5. Any other business

There was no any other business.



### Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

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## The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

### Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Kiruna, Sweden, 2-4 august 2006

#### Conference statement

We, the elected representatives of Canada, Denmark/Greenland, the European Parliament, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, and Sweden,

Meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, on 2-4 August 2006, to discuss shared responsibilities and opportunities related to the Arctic region,

Recalling the Conference Statements from the six previous Conferences of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region held in the period 1993 – 2004

#### A. Noting

1. The consequences of climate change which are becoming more visible and greatly influencing the living conditions of human beings, especially the indigenous peoples, as well as the region's flora and fauna;
2. That climate change makes the Arctic more accessible to human activities such as exploitation of resources and increased shipping activities;
3. The international environmental cooperation which has taken place concerning sustainable development, climate change and biodiversity;
4. The cultural diversity in the Arctic represented by more than 40 distinct peoples, cultures and languages;
5. The steps being taken within the European Parliament to host a Northern Dimension Parliamentary Conference to increase coordination between the existing regional organisations in Arctic region;
6. That the eco-system in the Arctic is vulnerable to pollution, over-exploitation and developmental strains and is under pressure;

#### B. Taking into account

1. The Declaration and Policy document from the Arctic Council meeting in Reykjavik 24 November 2004;

2. That the United Nations has designated the period from 2005-2014 as the Decade of Education for Sustainable Development;
3. The Joint Communiqué from the 10<sup>th</sup> Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in November 2005;
4. The Statement from the first meeting of Ministers of Culture of the Arctic Council member states in January 2006;
5. The fundamental rights of the Arctic Indigenous Peoples expressed in International Law;
6. The planning of the International Polar Year, 2007/2008, and the significance and potential it holds for the development of Arctic science, and the provision of information that may be useful in policymaking;
7. The work towards developing a framework document and a policy declaration for the Northern Dimension Policy;
8. The Draft Nordic Sami Convention submitted in November 2005 by the Expert Group appointed by the Governments and the Sami Parliaments of Finland, Norway and Sweden which is now being reviewed on a national level;
9. The draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples adopted by the UN Human Rights Council;

**C. Ask governments in the arctic region and the institutions of the European Union to**

1. Use the attention and debate following the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) to raise a strong Arctic message on climate change on the international agenda, underlining the role of the Arctic as an early warning sign for global climate change;
2. Make sure that concrete policy proposals are made on how to follow up the ACIA Policy Document from the Arctic Council meeting in Reykjavik, November 2004, and initiate a continuous follow up with reports at regular intervals (5 – 10 years);
3. Ensure financial resources to generate monitoring and research stations/platforms that can secure observations of climate change and the effect of pollution;
4. Strengthen the adaptive capacities of the Arctic residents as mentioned in a political statement by the Arctic states at the COP 11 meeting in Montreal, and to promote research, exchange of experiences and good practices, to develop strategies needed to support Arctic residents in their efforts to sustain their health, culture, economic life and general well being;
5. Retain and intensify efforts to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and other greenhouse gases and strengthen the multilateral environmental agreements relevant to the Arctic;

6. Ensure openness to data and accessibility to geographical areas and research related data;
7. Carry out the Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment as outlined in the Arctic Marine Strategic Plan adopted by the Arctic Council of Ministers at the 4th Arctic Council meeting in November 2004;
8. Make sure that the ongoing Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment within the Arctic Council fully covers the Indigenous Peoples' past, present and projected future activities in the Arctic Seas;
9. Ensure that natural resources of the Arctic are exploited in a sustainable manner and to the benefit of the peoples living in the Arctic;
10. Call on the partners to the Northern Dimension, EU, Russia, Norway and Iceland, to agree on a clear cut, visible and dynamic Arctic policy, with a strong political commitment by all partners that should include the USA and Canada as observers, and establish Arctic partnerships within the Northern Dimension on energy and the marine environment;
11. Make concerted efforts to develop environmentally friendly technology for transport and economic activity in the Arctic to protect its vulnerable nature and the way of life for the Arctic peoples;
12. Promote and invest in research, development and deployment of alternative and low impact energy sources suitable to the Arctic region;
13. In light of the impact of climate change, and the increasing economic and human activity, initiate, as a matter of urgency, an audit of existing legal regimes that impact the Arctic and to continue the discussion about strengthening or adding to them where necessary;
14. Propose to the United Nations that the scope of the Annual Treaty Event in 2007, or at the earliest possible time, should be UN Treaties relevant to the Arctic;
15. Strengthen the dialogue, analyzes and take concrete measures regarding gender aspects in Arctic societies, especially men's changing role in society and female out-migration from rural areas;
16. Make sure the potential of the International Polar Year 2007/2008 is maximised through sufficient governmental financial support and use the findings of the Arctic Human Development Report as a tool to give the International Polar Year 2007/2008 a strong human dimension;
17. Use the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development to implement specific programs for Arctic education;
18. Take initiatives to ensure a coordinated and joint effort to analyse and make use of the results of the International Polar Year in policymaking;
19. Conduct under the auspices of the UN, by the end of IPY in 2008, an international conference "The Arctic – a region of global cooperation";

20. Promote the Arctic region and Arctic science, with a special focus on the young generation, to create a renewed curiosity and interest in Arctic science, and use the University of the Arctic as an important player in this process, and to hold in 2007 with the assistance of UNESCO an international conference on the role of the Universities situated in the Arctic with regard to the sustainable development of the Arctic Region;
21. Ensure the participation of the Arctic indigenous peoples and the use of their knowledge in the Arctic science;
22. Provide increased funding to the University of the Arctic to ensure its continuous success;
23. Implement the funding of the approved Project Support Instrument;
24. Carry out an assessment of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) as proposed by the Arctic ICT network;
25. Strengthen their cooperation regarding marine security, especially search and rescue matters;

**D. Ask the standing committee of parliamentarians of the arctic region to**

1. Continue the work, also at a national level, of promoting a strong social dimension in Arctic cooperation, as indicated in the Arctic Human Development Report, with a special focus on children and youth;
2. Actively follow the work of the planning and implementation of the International Polar Year 2007/2008;
3. Actively promote the Arctic region with regard to the new Northern Dimension policy;
4. Continue to promote the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in concrete projects as a tool for delivering services to Arctic citizens, such as telemedicine and education in local communities;
5. Ensure that there is adequate and continuous follow-up, in parliaments of Arctic countries as well as in international organisations and negotiations, of conclusions and recommendations that have implications for the Arctic regions and peoples;
6. Consider to review the Rules of Procedure for the Standing Committee before the next conference in 2008 in order to improve the working methods;
7. Work in their home parliaments to prepare a common concept for the development and control of environmental programs, programs of natural resources development, transport and energy networks which affect (or does not affect) to climate change and of preservation of Arctic nature for next generations of the Arctic peoples;

## **E. The conference**

1. Acknowledges the interest and presence of parliamentary observers and representatives from governments and non-government agencies at this Conference, and recognises their important role in relaying the messages and supporting the actions herein discussed;
2. Welcomes the forthcoming Norwegian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and looks forward to continued cooperation with the Arctic Council in 2006-2008;
3. Welcomes and accepts the kind invitation of the USA to host the Eighth Conference in 2008.

## Travel Costs

<b>NAME OF ASSOCIATION</b>	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region – Seventh Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Kiruna, Sweden
<b>DATES</b>	August 2-4, 2006
<b>NAMES OF SENATORS</b>	
<b>NAMES OF MEMBERS</b>	Mr. Bob Mills, MP Mr. Larry Bagnell, MP Mr. Yvon Lévesque, MP Mr. Bradley Trost, MP
<b>NAMES OF STAFF</b>	Mr. Philippe Méla Mr. Tim Williams
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b> (sometimes separated between ground and air)	<b>AIR</b> \$ 29,952.26 <b>GROUND</b> \$ 380.70
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	<b>\$ 4,948.82</b>
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	<b>\$ 1,982.56</b>
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>
<b>MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES</b>	<b>\$ 5.81</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 37,270.15</b>