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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
on the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the
Arctic Region and the First Northern Dimension
Parliamentary Forum**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Brussels, Belgium
February 25 - 26, 2009**

Report

Mr. James Bezan, led a Canadian delegation of two to the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (the Standing Committee) held in Brussels, Belgium, 25 November 2009. The meeting of the Standing Committee was held in conjunction with the First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum, 25 - 26 February, 2009. The other delegate was the Honourable Larry Bagnell. Accompanying the delegation was Mr. Tim Williams from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of Parliament as advisor to the delegation.

The Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region is a parliamentary body comprising delegations appointed by the national parliaments of the Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the United States of America) and the European Parliament. The conference also includes Permanent Participants representing Indigenous peoples, as well as observers. The conference meets every two years. The Eighth Conference was held in Fairbanks, Alaska, U.S.A., 12-14 August 2008.¹

Between conferences, Arctic parliamentary cooperation is carried on by the Standing Committee, which started its activities in 1994. The Conference and Standing Committee take initiatives to further Arctic cooperation, and act, in particular, as a parliamentary forum for issues relevant to the work of the Arctic Council. The Standing Committee takes part in the work of the Council as an observer.²

The Northern Dimension

The Northern Dimension of European Union policy was established in the late 1990s as a European Union (EU) policy intended to deal with issues concerning western Russia, as well as to increase general cooperation among the EU, Iceland and Norway. It has since become a multilateral, equal partnership among the EU, Iceland, Norway and Russia. Canada and the United States are observers to the partnership.

The Northern Dimension remains focused on EU relations with western Russia, as it is “a regional expression of the four EU/Russia Common Spaces³ with participation of Norway and Iceland.”⁴ It has six priority areas for cooperation: economic cooperation; freedom, security and justice; external security; research, education and culture; environment, nuclear safety and natural resources; and social welfare and health.

In February 2007, a parliamentary conference on the Northern Dimension decided that a parliamentary forum for the Northern Dimension should be held every two years to

¹ The Conference report is available at: <http://www.arcticparl.org/announcements.aspx?id=3319>

² Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, <http://www.arcticparl.org/>

³ In May 2003, the EU and Russia agreed to reinforce their cooperation by creating, in the long term, and on the basis of common values and shared interests, four “common spaces” in the framework of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. These are as follows: The Common Economic Space, covering economic issues and the environment; The Common Space of Freedom, Security and Justice; The Common Space of External Security, including crisis management and non-proliferation; The Common Space of Research and Education, including cultural aspects.

⁴ European Commission, External Relations, *The Northern Dimension*, “Overview,” http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/north_dim/index.htm

discuss issues of common concern and examine the evolution of the Northern Dimension policy. The First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum was held in the European Parliament, Brussels, Belgium on 25 -26 of February. The Standing Committee and Canada both participated in the Forum.

MEETING SUMMARY

The Arctic Council

Following adoption of the minutes from the previous meeting (Östersund, Sweden, 5 November, 2008) and the Agenda, the Standing Committee was given a presentation by Ms Elisabeth Walaas, State Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway regarding preparations for the Arctic Council ministerial meeting in Tromsø 28-29 April, 2009. Norway is the chair of the Arctic Council from 2006-2008 after which Denmark and Sweden will have the chair until 2012. The three chairs decided on common objectives for their Arctic Council chairmanships.⁵

Norway's priorities for the Arctic Council have been: integrated resource management; climate change; and improving the Arctic Council's effectiveness and efficiency.⁶

Some of the final assessments performed by the Arctic Council working groups ready to be presented at the Ministerial Meeting (termed "deliverables" by Senior Arctic Official of the Arctic Council) include (working group of the Arctic Council responsible in parentheses):

- The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment, (Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME));
- Vulnerability and Adaptation to Climate Change in the Arctic (VACCA), (Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG));
- Energy Report to Ministers, (Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG)); and
- SAON – Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks, (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP)).

The State Secretary described why the Arctic Council is essential and that it should be strengthened to meet new challenges. In particular she stated how climate change is increasing the importance of the Arctic region to the world, and therefore the reasons why the Arctic Council is also increasingly important. This includes both the ecological and social effects of climate change in the Arctic, such as changes in sea ice and biodiversity upon which local peoples depend, but also the effects of a warming Arctic on the global climate itself.

Regarding a response to these changes, the State Secretary stated that the only way to maintain the Arctic as it is known today is to mitigate emissions. To this end she

⁵ Arctic Council, "Norwegian, Danish, Swedish common objectives for their Arctic Council chairmanships 2006-2012," http://arctic-council.org/article/2007/11/common_priorities

⁶ Arctic Council, "Norwegian chairmanship," http://arctic-council.org/article/2007/11/norwegian_programme

emphasized that the Arctic Council ministerial declaration should send a strong message to the 15th Conference of the Parties (CoP15) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to be held in Copenhagen, 7-18 December, 2009. In order to stress this message, particularly with respect to the changes in sea ice, a conference entitled “Melting Ice – Regional Dramas, Global Wake-Up Call,” hosted by Norwegian minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Støre, and former Vice-President Al Gore, is to be held in conjunction with the April ministerial meeting,.

Several of the deliverables for the Arctic Council ministerial meeting deal with significant issues in the Arctic such as the requirement for increased safety, search and rescue due to increased marine transportation potential and suggested guidelines for oil and gas exploration. A scientific report on the Greenland Ice Sheet from the Snow, Water, Ice and Permafrost in the Arctic (SWIPA, being performed by AMAP) should be ready for CoP 15 and SWIPA should be a major deliverable under the Danish chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

The State Secretary stated that the international legal framework was already in place for dealing with the changes that are taking place in the Arctic. The problem was in a lack of implementation rather than a lack of rules. There is a need to refocus on wise, sound and sustainable policies. The only forum for the Arctic is the Arctic Council. It is also a forum where indigenous peoples could participate on an equal footing. The fact that many non-Arctic countries are becoming interested in the Arctic Council and requesting observer status should be seen in a positive light as an asset.

The Arctic Council should also be streamlined to better translate the valuable knowledge that it has gained into guidelines generated by other bodies, including the International Maritime Organisation.

The State Secretary finished by reiterating the importance of the Arctic Council sending a strong message to COP 15 on the Arctic, particularly the changes in sea ice.

Discussion arose on strengthening the Arctic Council, the contribution of indigenous peoples, the international legal regime and possible linkages between the work of the Council and the Northern Dimension.

It was noted that, while indigenous people have made a valuable contribution to the work of the Council, this could be improved with better funding to support their participation. A Canadian delegate noted that he was in agreement with the support for the current international regime governing the Arctic. One improvement in response to climate change would be to create a new category of “environmental refugees,” an effort that he was working on in Canada.

The Chair of the Standing Committee noted that the statement of the Eighth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Fairbanks, Alaska, U.S.A., 12-14 August 2008, included a paragraph in support of a greater role for the Arctic Council stating that the Conference:

Is convinced that the political role of the Arctic Council should be enhanced given the many challenges facing the region, particularly by ensuring more regular ministerial meetings with all participants, no less than once a year, and to ensure its full

engagement with other international bodies working on the same issues, particularly the United Nations (Paragraph 37).⁷

The Chair concluded by saying that there should be deeper involvement of the Ministers at the Council, and that meeting once a year instead of the current two years would be valuable.

Report on the Development of the IPY-Project “Sustaining Arctic Observing Network” (SAON)

A report on the Sustaining Arctic Observing Network (SAON) was to be given at the previous Standing Committee meeting in Östersund Sweden but was postponed as the recommendations of the SAON Initiating Group had not been finalised.

In the last Ministerial Declaration of the Arctic Council the Ministers agreed to:

Urge all the Member countries to maintain and extend long term monitoring of change in all parts of the Arctic, and request AMAP [Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program] to cooperate with other AC Working Groups, IASC and other partners in efforts to create a coordinated Arctic observing network, that meets identified societal needs⁸

As the Standing Committee heard from Mr. Lars Otto Reiersen, Executive Secretary of AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program), this decision had developed based on the realization that obtaining reliable data on various Arctic Council assessments had been difficult and that there was therefore the need for open and transparent access to data on the Arctic.

The Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks Initiating Group (SAON-IG) was subsequently formed in January 2007, and consists of 13 international organizations representing the Arctic Council, Arctic residents, the Arctic research community and operational and funding agencies. The group facilitated three international workshops and two regional meetings that were broadly attended by representatives of the science community, operational agencies and indigenous peoples.⁹

Some examples of current monitoring efforts were described and included the use of the ice breaker Amundsen, which had a good strategy to go to coastal villages to deliver medical services and at the same time obtain samples for analysis. The station at Alert, Canada was also mentioned for being the longest running Arctic atmospheric monitoring station for atmospheric mercury and persistent organic pollutants. Mr. Reiersen then described how many observing stations were cut back, though some refurbishment is now occurring.

The Initiating group recommendations were then described. Chief among these is the recommendation for the establishment of an Arctic Observing Forum (AOF) within the Arctic Council:

⁷ Statement from the 8th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Fairbanks, the United States of America, 12-14 August 2008, http://www.arcticparl.org/_res/site/file/8th%20Conferencstatement.pdf

⁸ Arctic Council, “Salekhard Declaration,” 26 October 2006, Salekhard, Russia

⁹ Report of the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks Initiating Group, “Observing the Arctic,” December 2008, http://www.arcticobserving.org/images/stories/saon_report_final_web.pdf

the Arctic Council and partners are encouraged to establish an Arctic Observing Forum (AOF), with adequate resources and defined roles for the Arctic Indigenous Peoples, to facilitate Arctic observing, and related data and information management services. The AOF shall address issues that transcend individual Arctic observing systems and national capabilities.

Draft terms of reference for the AOF were also published.¹⁰

During the ensuing discussion the head of the Canadian delegation expressed concern for future funding of Arctic observing systems after the end of the International Polar Year and asked if there was going to be any carry-forward of projects. The presenter replied that some Canadian and Norwegian projects had started late and therefore would continue for a while, but had no information on whether individual governments would continue to support IPY projects.

Presentation of the Development of an Arctic Policy in the European Union

Two recent documents speak to the evolving Arctic policy of the European Union. The first is the European Parliament Resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic Governance and the other the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council the European Union and the Arctic Region (17 November 2008). The Standing Committee was given a presentation on both of these documents.

European Parliament Resolution of 9 October 2008 on Arctic Governance

Ms Bilyana Raeva, MEP, gave a presentation on the European Parliament Resolution.

She began by describing some of the history of European Parliamentary interest in the Arctic which included involvement in the Northern Dimension since 2001 and seven other resolutions touching on health, safety of transport, environment and climate change and energy resources. The resolution itself was the work of three years and was supported by all Parliamentary groups.

The overall aim of the resolution was to maintain the Arctic as a low-tension region and to encourage prudent management. The resolution also supported a new international treaty based on The Antarctic Treaty.¹¹

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council the European Union and the Arctic Region

Mr. Janos Herman, Principal Adviser, Deputy Political Director of for Regional Policy, Directorate-General for External Relations, then gave a presentation on the European Commission Communication.

Mr. Herman began by the origins of the communication in the realisation that the Arctic was important to the European Union and vice versa particularly in light of the rapid changes happening in the Arctic. The EU has been developing policies of global scope

¹⁰Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks Initiating Group SAON - Arctic Observing Forum: *Draft* Terms of Reference http://www.arcticobserving.org/images/stories/aof_tor_draft_january.pdf

¹¹ See: Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research, Antarctic Treaty, The Antarctic Treaty System: an introduction, <http://www.scar.org/treaty/>

with relevance to the Arctic such as those on climate change and maritime policy that have a direct bearing on the Arctic and there was a need for an overarching policy.

The communication had three objectives:

- Protecting and preserving the Arctic in unison with its population;
- Promoting sustainable use of resources; and
- Contributing to enhance Arctic multilateral governance.

A delicate balance was sought on two aspects of the Communication: resource exploitation and the environment; and the legal regime. Exploitation is going to take place no matter what and it must therefore be a priority to make such exploitation sustainable.

With respect to the legal regime Mr. Herman acknowledged the recommendations of the EP Resolution, but explained that the Commission Communication states that the current legal regime is sufficient but that it could be adjusted to the rapid changes occurring in the Arctic and that the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea in particular could be implemented in a more efficient manner. There must be a contribution of the EU to the institutions of governance, particularly the Arctic Council.

Within the EU, the Northern Dimension policy is the main forum for Arctic policies in the EU. The Arctic policy would be more circumpolar, and therefore would have to be coordinated with Northern Dimension activities. An example given was that the Northern Dimension Partnership on the Environment could be used to promote projects with Arctic relevance.

The communication had support from Norway and Iceland, was under discussion at the time of the Standing Committee meeting and he expected the conclusions to be adopted by the European Council by early fall 2009.

Discussion started with comments of the Chair in support of the Commission's approach to governance.

The head of the Canadian delegation intervened by supporting the Chair's comments after which he commented forcefully on paragraph 2.2 of the Communication which refers to the discussions occurring in the European Community in support of a ban on the placing on the market, import, transit export of seal products. He saw it as hypocritical that the Commission would state that it wants to support indigenous peoples while at the same time seriously discussing a ban on seal products. Seals are valuable for food and the economic value of the harvest is in the vicinity of \$40 million. The idea of classifying seals products by who does the harvesting would be difficult leading to impact on all peoples. In addition, a ban on seal products might well lead to a ban on other animal products that are harvested by indigenous populations.

Mr Herman replied that these were difficult questions but that the Community was working with indigenous people of Greenland and Russia to develop a dialogue. The EU supports the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, but as well there was a very strong message from their constituents on animal welfare

including seals. The ban would only be on trade, not on hunting, which could happen anytime. The intent was to provide an exemption for products related to Inuit traditional subsistence and a derogation clause¹² so that if Canada could show that the hunt meets the expectations of the EU the products could be approved. He also stated that he hoped that a final decision would actually allow trade of indigenously harvested seal products since the draft ban had effectively killed the market in any case.

The member from Greenland commented that these were “impressive words” but that the whaling and sealing countries saw it as a race-based ban given that other indigenous peoples harvested alongside Inuit. She also mentioned the negative effects that the likely common policy of the EU on whaling would have on Greenland. She felt that the word “sustainability” was being abused by the EU and that feelings and propaganda would win out over the needs of indigenous and other peoples dependent on animal harvesting.

The member from the RAIPON (Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Siberia and Far East) commented on the relationship between indigenous peoples and the Northern Dimension, emphasizing the need for a special working group under the Northern Dimension to deal with indigenous peoples.

A member from the Russian Federation stated that indigenous rights are important to Russia particularly regarding customs and traditions. With respect to the legal regime, any changes had to respect decisions already adopted.

Ms Raeva noted that the European Parliament and Commission did not always agree. She stated that even a new regime would have to complement and not destroy the current balance. Humanitarian interests in particular need more attention. It would be helpful to have a body to implement UNCLOS in an impartial manner representing all interests.

Mr. Herman also downplayed the differences between the Parliament and the Commission. As an example, he suggested that the increased access to fisheries as a result of the diminishing sea ice might require a new agreement on fisheries. In response to the intervention of the member from Greenland he noted that the EU was just an observer at the International Whaling Commission and that the Commission had attempted to incorporate the Nordic Councils views on whaling to the maximum extent.

A member of the Russian Federation mentioned that he felt that the actions taken within the Northern Dimension by the EU made the partnership unbalanced.

DISCUSSION ON THE “RULES OF PROCEDURE” OF SCPAR

As requested by the Standing Committee at the previous meeting, a report regarding changes to the Rules of Procedure” produced by the Secretariat was tabled by the Chair. The report discussed to possible changes: the election of a vice chair and the increased participation of observers at the Standing Committee.

The Chair reminded the members that changes to the Rules of Procedure could only be finalized by the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR). It was

¹² Note however that the European Parliament’s Internal Market and Consumer Protection committee, which was examining the ban, voted on 2 March, 2009 to remove the derogation clause.

also noted that, since there were some countries not represented at the Standing Committee for this meeting, any decision by the Standing Committee should be put off until the next meeting.

There was general agreement that the election of a vice-chair would be a good idea. Regarding the participation of observers, it was noted that the Standing Committee should be kept small and efficient. To this end observers should be limited to those at the Arctic Council and/or the CPAR, and there should be limited acceptance of Non-Governmental Organizations. A member from the Russian Federation suggested that the number of observers be kept to the same number as participating members, namely eight.

Status of the Work of SCPAR

Delegates were invited to report on their country's work with respect to the Standing Committee. See the attached draft minutes (Appendix 1) for a summary of interventions.

The head of the Canadian delegation described recent activities of the Canadian Government. He noted that Canada's Health Minister, Leona Aglukkaq, represents Nunavut in Canada's western Arctic.

Steps being taken to assert Canada's sovereignty include:

- Arctic/Offshore patrol vessels to monitor and respond to incidents;
- Mandatory reporting for all vessels entering domestic internal waters; and
- On-going sea-bed mapping to support delimitation of Canada's Arctic continental shelf via UNCLOS.

Canada is also taking steps to strengthen economic development in the North. The Budget for 2009 included \$50 million to establish a new regional economic development agency for the North. The budget also stated that \$90 million was to be provided to Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) in support of the Strategic Investments in Northern Economic Development program. Social housing in the North will be supported with an additional \$200 million over two years. In order to facilitate the regulatory approval process for the Mackenzie gas pipeline \$37.6 million in 2009–10 will be provided to departments and agencies in support of environmental assessments, regulatory coordination, science, and Aboriginal consultations. Key existing research stations will be maintained or upgraded with up to \$85 million over the next two years.

In addition to these monetary investments, the Canadian government has introduced amendments to its *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act* to change the definition of Arctic waters from 100 to 200 nautical miles in order to extend the enforcement of the anti-pollution provisions of the Act.

Economic and social development is best facilitated by local governments with sufficient capacity and therefore ongoing transfer of federal responsibilities (devolution) to territorial governments will help realize the aspirations of northerners.

A Canadian Delegate also made an observation on a point of interest that the melting of Arctic ice could have profound effects on ocean currents. A guest speaker on this subject was requested.

Next Meeting

It was decided that the next meeting of the Standing Committee will be in Ilulissat, Greenland, 27 May, 2009. A program on climate change will be arranged for 28 May.

Any Other Business

The Committee took note of the US National Security and Homeland Security Presidential Directives on the subject of Arctic Region Policy, 9 January, 2009.¹³

FIRST NORTHERN DIMENSION PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

The First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum was held the afternoon of 25 February and the morning of 26 February, 2009. The Forum consisted of several speakers giving ten minute speeches on their perspectives on the Northern Dimension. Question and answer sessions followed groups of speakers.

Most interventions noted the need for increased cooperation in the circumpolar region and discussed the role that the Northern Dimension could play in this cooperation. The various efforts in the Arctic should avoid duplication and attempt to find synergies.

One concrete discussion occurred regarding whether or not the European Union should have a dedicated budget line to the Northern Dimension. Currently there is no such dedicated funding. The Commission was opposed to this, explaining that there is an attempt to reduce the number of budget lines and that having a dedicated budget line might put limits on the flow of money to the Northern Dimension.

The possibility of transforming the Northern Dimension Forum into a new international organization for the Arctic, similar to a parliament, was also discussed. This idea was not received well, with some saying that there was a need for concrete action now, rather than getting bogged down in negotiating a new constitution and rules. It was suggested that the Forum could become a gathering point, open to all players such as scientists and financiers, so that it could have greater impacts outside the Forum.

A final report will be produced and when ready will be available at the Arctic Parliamentarians website.¹⁴

Canada participated actively in all aspects of the Forum. The head of the Canadian delegation gave a speech (see Appendix 2) which was aimed at aiding the discussion on the Northern Dimension by describing Canada's federal government activities occurring in the Canadian Arctic.

In addition a Canadian delegate also made an intervention during the discussions. He noted that he was opposition critic for the north, and represented the Yukon which had fourteen different First Nations. The delegate made a number of points. He generally approved of the draft statement, particularly as an historical background document.¹⁵

¹³ Available at <http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nspd/nspd-66.htm>

¹⁴ <http://www.arcticparl.org/reports.aspx>

¹⁵ Note that many of the introductory paragraphs in the Draft statement were removed by the drafting committee.

Support was given to the idea that the Northern Dimension activities must be coordinated with the EU's arctic policy. He supported the current legal regime for the Arctic as opposed to producing a new treaty or agreement as well as the concept that the North should remain a non-military region. In addition he noted that climate change could bring security issues to the north. The incorporation of circumpolar Indigenous Traditional Knowledge into decision making was very important.

A draft declaration was distributed in advance of the Forum and a drafting committee was assigned with the task of debating changes and presenting a final draft to the Plenary for approval. The final statement is attached as Appendix 3. A significant paragraph from the statement calls for "reports on the implementation of the partnerships within the Northern Dimension, to be presented at the next Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum." The fulfillment of this request to the Northern Dimension partners will help parliamentarians at the Forum better understand the concrete steps that are being taken within the Northern Dimension.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. James Bezan, M.P.
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

APPENDIX



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION
THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC
REGION

MEETING IN BRUSSELS

25 FEBRUARY 2009

9 am – 12.30 pm

Venue: ASP Building A 3 E 3

Draft minutes

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

APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES FROM THE SCPAR-MEETING IN ÖSTERSUND 5 NOVEMBER 2008

Decision:

The minutes from the SCPAR-meeting in Østersund were approved and the agenda with the proposed order of agenda items was adopted.

2. THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE ARCTIC COUNCIL MINISTERIAL MEETING IN TROMSØ 28-29 APRIL 2009

State Secretary Elisabeth Walaas informed the Committee about the developments of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and the preparations for the Ministerial meeting in Tromsø 29 April 2009.

Ms Walaas started by pointing out that the sense of Arctic as a remote and distant region is about to change. Climate change also changes the Arctic, and the Arctic change influence the rest of the world.

The changes we see are of physical, ecological, social and economic character. The changes especially influence the indigenous peoples living in the Arctic and have devastating consequences for polar bears.

How are we to deal with the changes and challenges? The long term answer is mitigation and to reduce CO2 emissions. The future of the Arctic is very dependent of a

need a successful CoP 15 in December this year. There are plans to give substantial input to CoP 15 about the consequences of climate change in the Arctic. The day in advance of the ministerial meeting the 28 April in Tromsø, there will be a seminar on the melting ice: "Melting Ice – Regional Dramas, Global Wake-Up Call". The seminar will be hosted by the Norwegian minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Støre, and former Vice-President Al Gore. A message on melting ice will go from this seminar to CoP 15.

Ms Walass underlined the need to deal with the short term consequences of climate change.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, UNCLOS, provides an adequate legal framework as it also applies to the Arctic Ocean. This was confirmed in the Ilulissat – declaration, by the five coastal states, as it underlines the need implement current legislation in a better way instead of creating a new legal framework.

The Arctic Council is the only circumpolar forum for intergovernmental cooperation.

Norway the current chair, Denmark and Sweden are to follow. A common platform has been established which include an AC secretariat in Tromsø for the three chairmanships.

Climate change, integrated resource management, and the efficiency of the Arctic Council have been the main priorities under the Norwegian Chairmanship. Among the issues which result will addressed at the Ministerial meeting are:

1. The Arctic Council has undertaken a lot of projects to look at the issues of climate change, and their implications. A major project focuses on status/consequences of the retreat of the sea ice, the melting of the Greenland ice-sheet and the reductions of the permafrost and snow cover. These are all major Arctic developments that also have global consequences.
2. The newly revised guidelines for Arctic oil and gas exploration, recalls existing obligations and define certain minimum procedures and standards, leaving it to the states concerned to go beyond if required.
3. Increased maritime transportation in the High North requires strengthen maritime safety measures and oil spill prevention, preparedness and control. Several Arctic Council projects address these issues.
4. The Arctic Council has just finalized a comprehensive study on oil and gas activities in the Arctic, including an executive summary with a number of recommendations.
5. The Council is also about to finalize a report on best practices in ocean management in the Arctic.
6. Let me also mention the need to strengthen the need within the Council to strengthen the co-operation on search and rescue. Russia and the US have taken important initiatives which will be considered.

There are also efforts to make the Arctic Council more political. Finally there is a project on the political heritage of the International Polar Year – to use the information for more political work and cooperation.

In order to keep and strengthen the Arctic Council as the relevant forum for political cooperation in the circumpolar North, there is ongoing work to better involve the increasing number of observers to the Arctic Council in the work of the Council.

The increase in number of observers is an asset and Norway welcomes the increased interest in the work of the Arctic Council.

Ms Walaas wanted to get the observers more active role of the observers in the Working Groups under the Arctic Council and different projects. The question of the role of the observers to the Arctic Council will also be discussed at the ministerial meeting in Tromsø.

Ms Solberg pointed out that much of the work in the Arctic Council well reflects the work done in the parliamentary cooperation.

When the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment was presented in 2004, they did not foresee the rapid changes which are actually about to happen. The changes take place at a much quicker pace. Ms Solberg also expressed satisfaction concerning the work to get the political level in the Arctic Council to meet more frequent.

Several members of the Committee further underlined the importance of implementing the existing legal framework relevant for the Arctic instead of creating new.

Mr. Bagnell informed about the discussion in Canada of creating a new category of refugees, climate refugees.

Mr. Baer underlined the role of the Permanent Participants in the Arctic Council where they participate at an almost equal footing. He pointed at the need of funding the activities, but that it had worked reasonably well so far.

The Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment is a very important deliverable for the Ministerial meeting and the contact with IMO will be crucial in the implementation of the assessment.

In order to keep the Arctic Council the most important arena of cooperation on Arctic issues, it has to be relevant and continue to create and deliver high quality science and knowledge about Arctic issues. We should also use the knowledge in other international forums. This will in time lead to higher political relevance to the Arctic Council.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information provided by State Secretary Elisabeth Walaas.

3. REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IPY-PROJECT “SUSTAINING ARCTIC OBSERVERING NETWORK” (SAON)

Mr. Lars Otto Reiersen, Executive Secretary of AMAP (Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program) introduced SAON to the Committee.

SAON is about how to secure the network created under the IPY to continue to get data on the development in the Arctic.

A set of 5 recommendations have been proposed and among these is a proposal to establish an Arctic Observing Forum. There is a need for better coordination of the

different observing activities, both nationally and internationally. National interagency groups should be established.

The Arctic Council and the Arctic Council member states need to take the lead.

Mr. Reiersen further welcome the observers to the Arctic Council to be a part of the SAON – project. A draft Terms of Reference is drafted and will be on the agenda for the ministerial meeting in April.

Everyone is welcome to take part in the Arctic Observing Forum and the Arctic Council and IASC (International Arctic Science Committee) will call the first meeting.

On question from the Committee Mr. Reiersen was unsure if there were any money left from the International Polar Year for future projects, but some of the IPY-projects will continue through this year. The end of the IPY is being marked today (25 February 2009) in Geneva.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information

4. PRESENTATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ARCTIC POLICY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

Ms Bilyana Raeva, MEP, introduced the work done by the European Parliament on the development of an Arctic Policy in the EU. In the development of the Northern Dimension the European Parliament has been passed several resolutions to influence the development.

The resolution from the European Parliament last October on Arctic Governance reflects well the issues, the discussions and the statement from the Arctic parliamentary conference in Fairbanks.

Indigenous peoples, fisheries, maritime issues and the need for an international treaty to protect the Arctic are among the topics in the resolution. The resolution was supported by all party groups in the parliament.

The Arctic region is a priority area for the parliament. European Neighborhood policy is the platform for cooperation with countries outside of the EU. The Arctic cooperation needs to include countries outside the Arctic as they are influencing the Arctic and also very influenced by what is taking place in the Arctic.

The European Parliament encourages the Commission to become observers in the Arctic Council, and to establish an Arctic desk in the Commission.

Mr. Janos Herman Principal Adviser of DG RELEX for Regional Policy, presented the Communication from the Commission on the Arctic. He opened by stating that the Arctic is important for the EU and the EU is important for the Arctic.

EU has developed a number of global policies influencing the Arctic, for instance on energy, maritime, climate. The aim is to take all this and develop a document for a comprehensive Arctic policy and better coordinate the EU relevant Arctic policies.

The overarching aim of the Arctic policy is to protect the environment.

The three headlines in the policy are:

- Indigenous peoples
- Sustainable use of resources
- Multilateral governance

According to Mr. Herman there are two delicate balances:

1. Exploitation vs. conservation

The proposal from the Commission aims at exploiting the resources in a sustainable way.

2. New treaties vs. existing regulation

The Commission will focus on implementing the existing regulations first, but also look at the possibilities for adjusting the existing set of international regulations. The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) will be the legal base, and there is a need to see how it can be better implemented.

This is slightly different position from the position of the European Parliament.

Security aspects in developing an Arctic policy are also relevant as a consequence of climate change.

The Northern Dimension will be important and the main framework in the European Arctic. The Arctic policy will be circumpolar and we will need to bring the Arctic into the Northern Dimension.

The Commission will be an observer to the Arctic Council and contribute to the work. The EU as a whole is today the world's largest contributor to Arctic science and research.

Finally Mr. Herman informed that the Communication is now being discussed and by fall the Council will adopt new and more detailed conclusions. By the last part of this year the Commission will start implementing the recommendations.

After the intervention of Mr. Herman, several members of the Committee raised the issue of seal hunting and the proposal to ban seal products in the European Union. The members from Denmark and Canada pointed at the importance seal hunt and sale of seal products for the indigenous peoples and other northerners. A ban on seal products in the European Union could have devastating effects for these people. There is a lack of understanding of sustainability in the EU regarding these matters.

Mr. Herman pointed out the many special rules for indigenous peoples living on the territory of EU and the exemption from the proposed ban of seal products for subsistence hunt.

However, many EU citizens support animal welfare, especially the seals. The EU will need to find the balance between subsistence hunt and the selling of these products and views of the supporters of animal welfare. The Commission has tried to take the

views of Greenland into account, especially on seals and whales. They are still looking at this and try to mitigate the views.

Mr. Baer was glad the Commission supported the UN declaration on indigenous peoples. He expressed hope that EU will support traditional subsistence also in the future.

Mr. Sulyandziga underlined the need to create bodies in the Commission to deal with Northern Dimension issues and especially indigenous peoples issues.

Regarding the disagreement between the European Parliament and the Commission on the need of a new treaty for the Arctic, Ms Raeva pointed out that parliaments from time to time disagrees with governments and that the discussion will continue. Mr. Herman used fisheries as an example where there is a need to complement the existing regime. New areas which were previously covered by ice needs to be covered by agreements.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information.

3. PREPARATIONS FOR THE FIRST PARLIAMENTARY FORUM FOR THE NORTHERN DIMENSION

Mr. Henrik Olsen presented an updated program for the first Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum.

Ms. Raeva will chair the drafting committee.

Decision:

The Committee took note of the information and appointed Mr. Nikolaev to represent the Committee in the Drafting Committee.

4. DISCUSSION ON THE “RULES OF PROCEDURE” OF SCPAR

Ms. Solberg presented the report prepared by the Secretary General and the process so far.

The members of the Committee generally supported the idea of electing a Vice-Chair of the Committee.

With regards to involvement of the observers in the Arctic parliamentary cooperation, some members voiced their opinion in favor of limiting the number of new observers participating at the meeting of SCPAR. The total number of observers should not exceed the number of members of SCPAR, and its important to keep the SCPAR-meeting relatively small.

Decision:

The Committee continues the discussion at the next meeting.

5. STATUS OF THE WORK OF SCPAR

Juliane Henningsen, Denmark/Greenland

In Greenland, 2008 will be remembered under the sign of Self-Governance. After four years of negotiations, the Joint Danish –Greenlandic Commission on Self-Government finished its work. All political parties in Greenland and Denmark, except one, have signed the agreement.

In November the people in Greenland voted on the new law of Self-rule. Almost 72 percent of the electorate voted. 75.5 percent of the electorate voted 'yes', while 23.5 percent voted 'no'.

The new agreement entails that the people in Greenland is being recognised as a people in accordance with international law, the new Home rule-government will have a greater say over Greenlandic affairs, and Greenlandic becomes the official language of Greenland.

The constitution, foreign affairs, defence and security policy, the Supreme Court and currency and money policy will still be a matter for the Danish state.

The new agreement will be inaugurated on 21 June 2009 – on the National Day of Greenland.

Greenland is also going from having 18 municipalities to 4 big municipalities. Rationalising and reducing the municipal administrative system to 4 municipalities will result in the reduction of costs and in the improvement of services to the public.

This spring Denmark/ Greenland and the Faroe Islands will take on the chairmanship of the Arctic Council. The parliament of Denmark will be host of an Arctic conference 31 March where the Minister for Foreign Affairs Mr. Per Stig Møller will present the chairmanship program.

Finally Denmark will be hosting CoP 15 in December 2009.

Mr. James Bezan, Canada

Ms Leona Aglukkaq, an Inuit, was named the minister of health in the new Canadian Government.

With regards to sovereignty issues there will be stronger control in domestic waters through more frequent patrol and surveillance, and improved search and rescue. The mapping of the continental shelf will continue.

On economic and social development a new regional development agency will be established. The Northern Housing Trust will get 200 [million] Canadian Dollars in addition to the existing 300 [million]. Half of it will go to Nunavut.

Money has been provided to conduct a feasibility study to establish a new Arctic research station.

A new act to prevent pollution in Arctic waters and restrictions on dumping waste water the Arctic waters has been tabled in the parliament.

Mr. Kari Høygaard, President of the West-Nordic Council

The importance of education for unskilled workers will be theme of the West-Nordic Conference in Greenland in June. A representative of SCPAR invited to participate at the Conference.

The presidium of the West-Nordic Council met with a delegation from the European Parliament 24 February 2009, where the proposed banning of seal skin in the European Union was discussed. The West-Nordic Council finds this proposal unacceptable as seal hunt is an important part of the livelihood and culture of the Inuit people in Greenland.

Mr. Lars Anders Baer, President of the Saami Parliamentary Council

The process concerning the Nordic Saami Convention continues. There is currently a discussion to agree on the rules of procedure for the negotiations.

Negotiations have also started to establish a Saami parliament in Russia.

Finally there will be a Royal wedding in Sweden in 2010.

Mr. Karl V. Matthiasson, Iceland

In 2009 Iceland chairs the Nordic Council of Ministers and will initiate for a large number of cooperation projects during the Presidency, including a mapping exercise of the vulnerable areas of the North Atlantic, a coordinated effort to protect the marine ecosystems, and establishing an environmental contingency planning in the North Atlantic.

Cooperation with the Nordic Region's neighbours to the west is also a key priority for Iceland, with emphasis on the Arctic and climate research.

A new Icelandic Government of the Social Democratic Alliance and the Left-Green Movement took office on February 1st. Prime Minister Jóhanna Sigurdardóttir from the Social Democrats has announced that the new coalition will focus on restarting the economy and protecting the households. The new coalition will emphasize a responsible economic management.

The economic policy of the Government will be based on the programme already established by the authorities and the International Monetary Fund, IMF.

Election is set for 25 April 2009.

Mr. Pavel Sulyandziga, First Vice-President of RAIPON

The RAIPON congress will take place the 22 April 2009 and will address the situation of the indigenous peoples.

At the UN permanent forum for indigenous people in May, half a day will be used for a discussion of the relationship between the indigenous peoples in the Arctic and the governments in the Arctic Council cooperation.

Mrs. Irina Yarovaya, Russia

Representing Kamchatka, the support and protection of indigenous population is important.

There is a discussion about this at a federal and local level, and there are bodies established to protect the indigenous peoples in the North.

Development of the North is a priority of the Russian development and we need find the right balance of different aspects when developing the North.

In the strategy of Russian state policy until 2020, the Arctic is considered important.

Good to have meetings around the Arctic to get

Ms Hill-Marta Solberg, Norway

A white paper on Svalbard will be presented to the Norwegian parliament this spring.

6. NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Committee will be in Greenland, Ilulissat 27 May 2009.

A special program on climate change will be arranged for 28 May 2009.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee took note of the enclosed US Arctic Policy Directive from January 2009.

There was no other business.

APPENDIX II

Notes for an address by

Mr. James Bezan

Member of Parliament for Selkirk-Interlake

to

First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum

Brussels, Belgium

February 25-26, 2009

Check against delivery

Thank you for your kind introduction. It's an honour for me to participate in this important forum. I truly appreciate the opportunity to participate in this forum on behalf of the Parliament of Canada and wish to thank the Northern Dimension members for your ongoing interest and continued efforts on Arctic issues.

Although I am not from northern Canada, I have always had a connection and passion for the Canadian Northland. My grandfather, a Scottish immigrant, and my grandmother, worked as fur traders for 20 years for the Hudson Bay Company. Almost all of those 20 years were spent in the eastern Arctic where my mother was born and raised.

And, although my home province of Manitoba is south of 60 degrees latitude, the north part of the province is classified as sub-Arctic and is home to the declining Western Hudson Bay polar bear population. As Chair of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development in the Canadian House of Commons, one of the issues I am tackling this spring is the current situation for species at risk in Canada; and of course our committee will be reviewing the status of polar bears, caribou and other Arctic flora and fauna.

But today colleagues, I wish to talk about what's happening in Canada and assist in the debate and advancement of the Northern Dimension. I'd like to provide a brief overview of Canada's Northern Strategy and how our Government is implementing it. Canada's North is defined in our Constitution as the Territories lying above 60 degrees latitude. At more than four million square kilometres, it is nearly half the size of Europe. And while Aboriginal peoples have lived in the North for generations upon generations, more and more people from Southern Canada and the rest of the world are making the North their home.

Canada's North defines us as a people and Canada has effectively exercised its exclusive authority over the Canadian Arctic for well over a century. The North, including islands lying within the Arctic Circle – what many call the far North – is a fundamental part of our Canadian identity. The Right Honourable Stephen Harper, our Prime Minister, described it this way in a speech last year:

We are a Northern country. The True North is our destiny – for our explorers, for our entrepreneurs, for our artists. To not embrace the promise of the True North, now, at the dawn of its ascendancy, would be to turn our backs on what it is to be Canadian.

Long the land of untapped potential, the North now stands poised to fulfill its true destiny.

The Northern economy is booming; numerous resource-development projects are underway and more are on the way. The tourism sector is also growing rapidly.

At the same time, Northerners face numerous unique challenges. The impacts of climate change are more evident in the far North than anywhere else on earth, for instance, and are accelerating. And work is still required to ensure infrastructure gaps are addressed, including access to affordable housing.

To realize the North's potential, while at the same time addressing challenges such as these, our Government has launched an integrated Northern Strategy and made a series of targeted investments to advance it.

The Northern Strategy has four pillars:

- Promoting northern social and economic development
- Improving and devolving northern governance so that Northerners have greater control over their destinies
- Protecting the North's environmental heritage; and
- Exercising Canada's Arctic sovereignty.

Canada has made a number of investments and is implementing initiatives that generate opportunities for Northerners and foster stronger, more sustainable communities.

Our Northern Regulatory Improvement Initiative will help resolve the complex approval process for development projects, to ensure new projects can get up and running quickly and efficiently. The \$500 million Mackenzie Gas Project Impacts Fund will address socio-economic challenges related to this massive and important project in the event that it proceeds.

Last month's federal budget – Canada's Economic Action Plan – committed an additional \$90 million dollars in a federal program that works with Northern communities to support strategic investments in Northern economic development. Budget 2009 also allocated \$50 million to a new regional development agency that will be dedicated to economic development and focused on the unique needs and aspirations of Northerners.

We've also just provided \$200 million to support renovation and the construction of new housing units; this is on top of our previous \$300 million Northern Housing Trust. And we have invested \$225 million to increase broadband access to under-served communities.

Money alone, of course, will not produce a balanced and sustainable approach to economic and social development. To achieve this goal — and to give Northerners a voice in decision-making — will necessarily require improved governance mechanisms, which is the second pillar of our integrated Northern Strategy.

Canada is a young country and the task of nation-building continues. As important as socio-economic growth and environmental protection, is the need to build strong Northern governments. There are two aspects to this in Canada: strengthening Aboriginal governance and building the capacity of territorial public governments. Canada continues to negotiate outstanding land claims and self-government agreements, and to advance the devolution of responsibilities to the territories.

Almost 6 years ago, for example, the Yukon became the first to achieve devolution. We are making progress towards the full devolution of responsibilities in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. Canada's commitment is to establish strong, responsible,

accountable Northern governments that contribute to a dynamic, secure Canadian federation.

Aboriginal communities across the North continue to acquire greater control over their affairs. Today, Aboriginal representatives sit on several land- and water-management boards that decide the fate of proposed projects in the North. This approach not only effectively integrates traditional knowledge and scientific data, but also helps protect the region's unique and vulnerable ecosystems.

As a global community, we must also respect traditional economic activities in the Arctic like fishing, hunting, trapping, the seal harvest, and the fur trade. These activities are done responsibly and are important sources of income, food, and culture for aboriginal peoples and other northerners.

To promote environmental protection, the third important pillar of our Northern Strategy, we have invested significantly in Arctic research. Budget 2009, for instance, committed \$2 million to conduct the feasibility study for a new world-class research station in Canada's High Arctic and \$85 million over the next two years to upgrade existing Arctic research facilities.

The Government of Canada is also in the process of toughening pollution laws. A Bill extending the enforcement zone of the *Arctic Waters Pollution Prevention Act*, which prohibits ships from dumping waste, from 100 to 200 nautical miles was recently tabled in the House of Commons. In addition, new regulations will require all ships entering our Arctic waters to report to Canadian authorities through NORDREG, the Arctic marine-traffic system.

The Government of Canada has also protected from development several large tracts of land in the North. In collaboration with the Deh Cho First Nation, we will significantly expand one of these areas: Nahanni National Park, UNESCO's first World Heritage site. Canada also plans to establish an Arctic Marine Protected Area to preserve Lancaster Sound in the high eastern Arctic.

The fourth pillar of Canada's Northern Strategy is sovereignty. Canada's Arctic sovereignty is longstanding, well established and based on historic title. In exercising Canadian sovereignty, our Government continues to take decisive steps.

Recent initiatives include investments in a new Polar class icebreaker and Arctic offshore/patrol vessels to improve Canada's Arctic-patrol capacity. In addition, we are in the process of mapping Canada's Arctic seabed to support our submission to the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

And of course, international cooperation remains key to achieving our Northern Strategy goals. Canadians have long been working with our Arctic neighbours and other international partners in many areas of shared interest and we will continue to do so. During the current International Polar Year, for instance, scientists from around the world are conducting dozens of projects in Canada's North. The Government of Canada committed \$156 million to enable Canadian participation in International Polar Year. This collaboration is just the latest in a long string of cooperative initiatives.

More than 25 years ago, for instance, Canada, Norway, Denmark, the United States and the Russian Federation signed an agreement to cooperatively manage polar bears

in the wild – the first agreement of its kind. Canada was also instrumental in the establishment of the Arctic Council.

The Arctic Council is the high-level intergovernmental forum that brings together the eight countries around the Arctic Circle and the six Indigenous Peoples groups to address common challenges and opportunities in the Circumpolar North.

Canada also shares information on polar-ice conditions with other members of the International Ice Charting Working Group. The exchange of information promotes cooperation and increases marine safety through accurate forecasting of sea ice and icebergs. The Canadian Ice Service also collaborates directly with the United States in the interests of marine safety.

Canada has a strong tradition of bilateral initiatives in the North. In 1990, Canada and the United States began a series of collaborative research projects. This cooperation led to Arctic Ocean crossings by the icebreakers St-Laurent and Polar Sea and numerous joint-research projects. In addition, Canada has collaborated with Japan since 1998 on climate research in the Western Arctic – a project that has generated valuable data on the changes underway in the Arctic Ocean.

More recently, Canada and the United Kingdom agreed to cooperate in polar research. Canada leads along with the United States and Finland in the development of a comprehensive Arctic Marine Shipping Assessment. The Assessment report, due to be delivered to Arctic Council Ministers in April, will provide valuable insight into the economic, environmental and socioeconomic trends of marine traffic in Arctic waters.

Canada has also been active on the diplomatic front, negotiating important international environmental instruments that address Arctic issues, such as the Stockholm Convention on persistent organic pollutants. I expect that many Forum delegates recognize and appreciate Canada's efforts to strengthen international conventions and protocols.

The future prosperity of Canada's North will be influenced by our capacity to work with our regional partners to develop a common strategy for the sustainable development of the circumpolar region. Within Canada and its entire Arctic region, there is recognition that future security and prosperity are closely connected with our ability to effectively manage northern issues. This is why we are taking a proactive stance in managing the issues, together with our northern communities.

Declaratory foreign policy is not enough to safeguard and promote Canadian interests and meet Canada's obligations. Our Northern Strategy reinforces the federal government's commitment to the North and to northern peoples. In circumpolar affairs, Canada has been regarded as an important player. Our Northern Strategy Policy demonstrates Canada's continuing commitment to maintaining this role.

As you can see, collaboration is a crucial feature of Canada's Northern Strategy. By working directly with partners in Canada, in particular Aboriginal peoples, and other Northerners, as well as working internationally, we are achieving our goal of fostering sustainable prosperity in Canada's North.

Finally, dear colleagues, although the Northern Dimension is a European policy, we look forward to cooperating with you. Only by working together as governments and parliamentarians can we make a difference and secure the future of the Arctic.

Thank you.

APPENDIX III



First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum

Final Statement

26 February 2009

Members of the European Parliament, of the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, of the Baltic Assembly, of the Nordic Council, of the West Nordic Council and of the network of Barents parliamentarians met in the European Parliament in Brussels on 25-26 February 2009 at the First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum to discuss the development of the Northern Dimension Policy in the Baltic Sea Region and in the Arctic Region and to coordinate the policies of the parliamentary bodies within the Northern Dimension region.

The First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum

A. having regard to the first ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension held in St Petersburg, 28 October 2008 where the ministers expressed their satisfaction with the level of cooperation between the Northern Dimension and the four Regional Councils in the North: the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Arctic Council;

B. having regard to the Northern Dimension Policy Framework Document and the Political Declaration on the Northern Dimension Policy approved on 24 November 2006, welcomes the updated, more permanent, high profile, and structured Northern Dimension Policy, based on the principles of co-ownership of the four equal partners (Iceland, Norway, Russia, and the EU), that came into force on 1 January 2007;

1. underlines the importance and value of parliamentarians from different countries to meet and discuss issues of common concern;
2. emphasizes that the Parliamentary Forum shall not take the shape of a new institution, but rather a recurrent place for representatives of the different parliamentary bodies in the north;
3. supports the overall aim of the Northern Dimension to provide a common framework for the promotion of dialogue and concrete cooperation, strengthening stability, well-being and intensified economic cooperation, promotion of economic integration and competitiveness and sustainable development in Northern Europe;
4. encourages the partners of the Northern Dimension to focus on issues of specific relevance in the North such as its fragile environment, public health and social issues, cultural and indigenous peoples issues;

5. is deeply concerned of the effect of climate change on sustainability of the lives of the indigenous people in the Arctic region, in terms of both the general environment and the natural habitat, and underlines that any international decisions relating to these issues must fully involve and take account of all peoples and nations of the Arctic;
6. recognizes the increased importance of the Baltic Sea Region;
7. encourages close coordination between the Baltic Sea Strategy and the new Northern Dimension. The Northern Dimension provides a joint overall framework for mutual cooperation on an equal basis between EU, Russia, Iceland and Norway. In order for the Baltic Sea Strategy to be efficient, it needs to be aligned with the Northern Dimension policy;
8. promotes coordination between intergovernmental actors and other stakeholders in the Baltic Sea Region, for the sake of environmental and financial efficiency, encouraging the evolution of a division of labour and responsibilities in accordance with their respective objectives and competencies;
9. underlines the need for coherent and targeted leadership in order to drive the issues of the Baltic Sea Region. The Baltic Sea Strategy could contribute to the Northern Dimension process by bolstering the vertical and horizontal dialogue between stakeholders and actors of the Region. A closer synchronization of the actors would strengthen both their individual and their combined impact. Cooperation in the Region should be strengthened by building networks, not institutions;
10. stresses the need to implement the HELCOM Baltic Sea Action Plan (BSAP) and supports the work of the BSAP Implementation Group;
11. highlights that more knowledge is needed about climate change, its consequences for society, and our preparedness and capabilities to adapt to change. More effective actions – by means of e.g. technology transfer, research and development, and vocational training – should be promoted in order to reduce pollution and emissions and to develop renewable energy, energy efficiency and energy savings in all sectors in the Baltic Sea Region;
12. supports action and investments by Northern Dimension participants, and the maritime industry, to put appropriate resources in place to provide for emergency response capabilities, search and rescue capabilities, and specific spill response capabilities, as the Oceans open to marine shipping, and to take preventive measures to avoid shipping accidents;
13. recommends to extend cooperation to reduce the vulnerability and improve the adaptability to the consequences of climate change, as well as to the enhancement of the capacity to prevent and manage adverse consequences of climate change (such as natural hazards and technological accidents);
14. underlines the need to coordinate and cooperate on strategies before the COP-15 in 2009 (Copenhagen) in order to provide consolidated support from the Baltic Sea Region and the Arctic Region to ambitious measures for the mitigation of man-made CO₂ emissions;

15. expresses satisfaction over the newly established Northern Dimension partnership on transport and logistics and underlines the importance of infrastructure in creating sustainable and prosperous societies;
16. underlines the importance of environmental considerations when developing the partnership on transport and logistics, using environmentally friendly technologies and solutions;
17. asks for reports on the implementation of the partnerships within the Northern Dimension, to be presented at the next Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum;
18. calls on the President of the European Parliament to forward this final statement to the speakers of the parliaments and to the governments of Iceland, Norway and Russia, to the institutions of the European Union and to the national parliaments of the European Union;
19. welcomes with gratitude the kind invitation of the Norwegian Parliament to host the Second Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum in 2011.

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region and the First Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum
DESTINATION	Brussels, Belgium
DATES	February 25-26, 2009
DELEGATION	
SENATE	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. James Bezan, M.P. Hon. Larry Bagnell, P.C., M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Timothy Williams, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 13,341.47
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 1,722.01
HOSPITALITY	\$
PER DIEMS	\$ 964.33
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 55.34
TOTAL	\$ 16,083.15