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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation at the
Meeting of the Standing Committee of
Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Murmansk, Russia
18-20 September 2013**

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Ryan Leef, Member of Parliament, led a Canadian delegation of two to the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (the Standing Committee) held in Murmansk, Russia, 18-20 September 2013. The delegation also included Mr. Dennis Bevington, Member of Parliament. Ms. Shauna Troniak from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of Parliament attended as Advisor to the delegation.

The Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (the Conference) is a parliamentary body comprising delegations appointed by the national parliaments of the eight 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 Tenth Conference was held in Akureyri, Iceland, 5-7 September 2012. The Eleventh Conference will be held in Whitehorse, Yukon, 9-11 September 2014.

The Conference adopts a statement with recommendations to the Arctic Council (the Council) and to the governments of the Arctic states and the European Commission. The Standing Committee closely monitors how governments implement the Conference Statement, and take new initiatives to further Arctic cooperation¹

Between conferences, Arctic parliamentary cooperation is facilitated by the Standing Committee² which began 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 Council. The Standing Committee takes part in the work of the Council as an observer.³

MEETING SUMMARY

The agenda for the meeting and the minutes from the previous Standing Committee meeting held 3-5 June 2013 in Longyearbyen and Ny-Ålesund, Norway, were adopted.

1. Presentation of the Arctic Policy of the Russian Federation

Mr. Anton Vasiliev, Ambassador at Large for International Cooperation in the Arctic, presented the Russian perspective on international relations in the arctic region.

¹ See: Tenth Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Akureyri, Iceland, 5-7 September 2012, [Conference Statement](#).

² For more information on the membership of the Standing Committee, see Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, [Standing Committee](#).

³ Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, [Home](#).

Mr. Vasiliev highlighted that Russia was the first arctic state to issue, in 2008, a strategy for its arctic region.⁴ Similar to the strategies of other arctic states, he noted, the Russian policy prioritizes sovereignty, balance of economic and environmental concerns, support for indigenous peoples, and scientific research.

His main point, he stated, was that the interests of each arctic state can only be pursued through cooperation. On this front, the stability and predictability of relations in the arctic region is an example to the less stable regions of the world. As examples of this cooperation, he noted the 2010 demarcation agreement between Russian and Norwegian waters in the arctic, and the 2012 technical agreement between Denmark and Canada on their respective boundaries in the Lincoln Sea.

The *United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea* (UNCLOS)⁵, Mr. Vasiliev stated, provides an important legal framework for continued cooperation in the arctic. He noted, for example, that over 90% of natural resources are within the defined Exclusive Economic Zones of the coastal states. The 2008 *Ilulissat Declaration*⁶ also references the continued commitment of arctic coastal states to cooperation and to the UNCLOS framework.

Mr. Vasiliev noted the importance of international cooperation toward improving safety and security in the region. As examples of this cooperation, he cited the first two meetings of arctic chiefs of defense at Goose Bay, Newfoundland and Labrador, in 2012, and Ilulissat, Greenland, in 2013.

Mr. Vasiliev remarked that the role of the Arctic Council is expanding in reaction to changes in the world and the region. The second binding document under the auspices of the Arctic Council will, he stated, enhance the security of hydrocarbon development on the continental shelf. He also anticipated the first meeting of the Arctic Council business forum to improve cooperation on oil spill prevention, scientific research and limitations on short lived climate forcer (SLCF) emissions.

2. Social and economic development in the arctic region

Ms. Olga Shilkina, Head of the Unit for Strategies and Programs of Socio-Economic Development of Regions, Ministry of Economic Development, and Mr. Grigory Stratiy, Vice-Governor of the Murmansk Region, spoke about national and regional programs for social and economic development in the Russian arctic.

Ms. Shilkina noted that the 2008 arctic strategy is in its first phase of implementation. As part of this process of implementation, the Ministry of Regional Development led a tendering process to draft a law delimiting the boundaries of Russia's arctic zone. The law has now been drafted and is in the process of being approved. The draft law proposes the

⁴ Russian Federation, [Основа государственной политики Российской Федерации в Арктике на период до 2020 года и дальнейшую перспективу](#) [The Foundations of Russian Federation Policy in the Arctic until 2020 and Beyond], 2008. [Unofficial English translations of this document can be found [here](#) and [here](#).]

⁵ [United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea](#), 10 December 1982, 1833 UNTS 3, 21 ILM 1261 (entered into force 16 November 1994).

⁶ [The Ilulissat Declaration](#), 24 May 2008.

formal inclusion of several regions, including the Murmansk Region, into Russia's arctic zone.

Mr. Stratiy emphasized the business development potential of the Murmansk region. He noted first the mining potential of the Kola Peninsula, which has over 60 large reserves of natural resources including apatite, iron ore, nickel and mica. He noted the recent cooperation between the Murmansk Region and the Kola Science Centre⁷ on a project to develop new processing facilities for titanium dioxide and rare earth metals. The region has also produced millions of tons of fish products in recent years; fishing and fish farming of species including Atlantic salmon are developing in the region's ice-free waters. The Murmansk sea port is one of the ten largest ports in Russia and has a geostrategic location as a gateway to the oceans. The region is also, he noted, focused on developing rail and marine transportation infrastructure. In addition, the region envisions greater tourism development through, in particular, the development of nuclear icebreakers to lead tourists to the North Pole.

3. Environmental safety in the arctic region

Mr. Maksim Shingarkin, Vice-Chair of the State Duma Committee on Natural Resources, Environment and Ecology, discussed environmental aspects of arctic resource development. Mr. Shingarkin noted the increased risks of hydrocarbon development in the arctic region to the region's waters and other natural resources. Russian law, he stated, designates many protected areas around the country, but there is no specific law on environmental protection in the arctic region. He recommended that existing laws be updated to increase environmental regulation, and that international cooperation and the development of international instruments on environmental protection be developed. He suggested that a joint environmental regulation board could regulate development in the whole arctic according to common standards.

Mr. Fedor Schweitzer, First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of the Murmansk Region, provided the Standing Committee with information on projects to reduce environmental impact of development activities in the Murmansk region. Mr. Schweitzer noted the development of an air quality monitoring systems that is expected to include all industrial communities across the region by 2018. He noted that 600 sites have been identified as exhibiting accumulated environmental damage and that work is ongoing to address these sites. He also noted that approximately 9% of the Murmansk region, or 1.3 million hectares, is designated as protected areas. The most important international cooperation initiatives are in the realm of technical assistance to address environmental problems and enhance nuclear safety.

Mr. Alexander Glazov, Director of EcoCentre in Murmansk, discussed the development of oil spill response systems in the Murmansk region. Mr. Glazov noted current plans to develop such systems that include 10 organizations, including his company, to respond to oil spills in the region. Challenges in responding to oil spills include the fact that the government cannot provide all needed resources (e.g. icebreakers and other marine vessels), and those private entities who have additional resources face legal impediments

⁷ See Kola Science Centre, [Main Page](#), and University of the Arctic, [Kola Science Centre RAS](#).

in participating in response efforts (e.g. border crossings and customs formalities). He also noted that over 50 laws and regulations currently apply in this context, which could be streamlined. In the past 9 years, his group has responded to 22 oil spills in the Murmansk region. In addition, EcoCentre and the World Wildlife Fund have trained more than 300 volunteers to participate in response efforts.

4. Transport logistics and safety on the Northern sea route

Mr. Vladimir Platonov, the Murmansk Harbor Master, provided an overview of port facilities along the Northern sea route (NSR). The NSR is the shortest route between Western Russia and Asia; it begins at the Kara sea gate and extends eastward to the Bering Strait. This year, 1.3 million tons of cargo was transported through the NSR. The port of Murmansk is the world's largest port north of the Arctic Circle, and can handle ships weighing up to 300,000 tons. The port is home to Russia's fleet of nuclear powered icebreakers and functions as an important transshipment port for other ports along the NSR. He stated that Russia's arctic policy views the NSR as an integrated infrastructure project, part of which involves the development of the region's ports. In August 2013, the first of 10 planned marine rescue coordination centres was established; Murmansk expects its own marine rescue coordination centre to open in August 2014.

5. Cross-border cooperation

Ms. Elena Tikhonova, Acting Minister for Economic Development in Murmansk, discussed cooperation with Finland and Norway along their shared borders with Russia. Ms. Tikhonova emphasized Russia's long-standing cooperative relationships with Norway and Finland under bilateral and multilateral arrangements, including the Barents Euro-Arctic Council⁸ and the European Union (EU) "Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme".⁹ Legal frameworks for cross-border cooperation also include various bilateral arrangements, including an important 2010 agreement with Norway to facilitate visa-free border crossings for those who reside within 30 km of the border, for stays of up to 15 days. Actions in the border areas include infrastructure development projects and rehabilitation of decommissioned sites. An ongoing example of cross-border cooperation is the Agro Park Alakurtti, a planned agriculture and tourism park located on the border with Finland. Ms. Tikhonova also highlighted an important project to rehabilitate Andreeva Bay, an erstwhile nuclear fuel storage site.

6. Cooperation in education and research

Mr. Boris Kashin, Member of the State Duma, and Mr. Vladimir Masloboev, of the Kola Science Centre, discussed scientific cooperation in the Barents region.

⁸ Barents Euro-Arctic Council, [Home Page](#).

⁹ The EU European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI) funds various cross-border cooperation (CBC) initiatives that bring together EU member states and partner countries sharing a common border. See European Union, [European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument](#), and Kolarctic ENPI CBC Programme, [Home Page](#).

Mr. Kashin noted the important effect of the International Polar Year (IPY) in highlighting various areas of polar research including hydrometeorology, geography and geology of polar areas, and arctic ecosystems. Such research was, he stressed, continually relevant and in need of support. He noted various concerns in the scientific community, including the need for greater integration of scientific databases to facilitate information sharing. Mr. Kashin also expressed support for a pan-arctic agreement on scientific cooperation and a transarctic network of protected areas.

Mr. Masloboev stated that the Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences supports development in the Russian arctic through scientific research in a number of areas. The Centre, located in Apatity, has over 2000 persons engaged in research and development in areas including geology, mining, polar geophysics, biological resources and social development. A new interpretation of sovereignty, he stated, de-emphasizes military presence in favour of intellectual presence, and this includes the knowledge of indigenous communities in the arctic. He stated that sustainable development requires a balance of business profitability and competitiveness, social responsibility and ecological responsibility. To realize this, the region requires a workforce that is highly skilled and stable, socially adapted to life in the arctic, skilled in high tech industries, and focused on protection of the arctic environment. There is a need in general, he stated, to strengthen partnerships between universities and research institutions, and mining and other extractive industries.

7. Draft report on capacity building and economic development in the arctic

Members of the Standing Committee reviewed and provided comments on the third draft report on capacity building and economic development in the arctic. Members emphasized, among other things, that the report should elaborate on sustainability in a separate paragraph or chapter, and discuss the use of energy and energy efficiency as an important component of economic development. The Secretary General of the Standing Committee noted the comments undertook to provide another draft at its next meeting.

8. Conference in Whitehorse in September 2014

Mr. Leef provided an overview of preparations for the next Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, to be held in Whitehorse on 9-11 September 2014. He noted that preparations were well underway and that meetings had been held within the last few months to discuss specific operational and logistical matters, including meeting sites and excursion activities. He invited all members to address any questions regarding the conference to members of the Canadian delegation.

Members of the Standing Committee discussed the need to address at the Conference issues relating to sustainable infrastructure development, responsible arctic resource development, environmental standards, and indigenous governance and decision-making structures.

Mr. Hoglund invited all delegations to provide suggestions to the Secretary General for speakers for the Conference.

9. Election of Vice-Chair

The Standing Committee agreed to postpone the election of the Vice-Chair to its next meeting in Ottawa in February 2014.

10. Reports on activities of members

Members of the Standing Committee provided updates on matters in their respective countries.

Mr. Leef informed the Standing Committee that Minister Leona Aglukkaq, previously the Minister of Health, is now the Minister of the Environment. He stated that this new portfolio will dovetail with the environmental agenda at the Arctic Council, which Minister Aglukkaq currently chairs. The Prime Minister undertook his annual arctic tour this summer, along with the Ministers of the Environment, Natural Resources and Aboriginal Affairs. A significant development in his territory was the announcement of new investment in Yukon College to address the capacity gap in the mining industry. Mr. Leef also drew members' attention to his running tour of the Yukon this summer to raise awareness on diabetes and funds for research.

Mr. Bevington notified the Standing Committee of an upcoming report on living costs in the Canadian north. He stated that he will be contributing to the report, which is expected to be published this fall, and will present the report to the Standing Committee once released.

11. Other business

The Standing Committee adopted a statement regarding observer status for the European Union at the Arctic Council.

The Standing Committee agreed to establish two working groups to examine mechanisms for developing common environmental standards in the arctic region, and a board to examine development projects in the arctic region. The Russian State Duma agreed to initiate work and provide resources for a secretariat for the working groups. Members of the Russian delegation will prepare a memorandum to distribute to members who may be interested in joining the working groups.

Briefings in Murmansk

On 18 September, members of the Standing Committee toured the port of Murmansk and the Murmansk Oceanarium. On 19 September, members received a tour and briefing on board the decommissioned nuclear icebreaker "Lenin." At this briefing, the Standing Committee heard that the Northern Sea Route (NSR) was opened for navigation following Russia's ratification of UNCLOS in 1993. The first commercial voyage through the NSR was in 2009 when Beluga Shipping, a German company, sent two vessels from Vladivostok en route to Nigeria. Since then, a growing number of vessels from a variety of countries have gone through the NSR, with more activity expected in the coming years. There were four transit voyages in 2010, 34 in 2011, 46 in 2012, and 31 as of 17 September 2013. Almost 500,000 tons of cargo has transited through the NSR this year so

far, and authorities expect 10 million tons of cargo to pass through in the next three to five years.

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Ryan Leef, M.P.
Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
DESTINATION	Murmansk, Russia
DATES	18-20 September 2013
DELEGATION	
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Mr. Ryan Leef, M.P. Mr. Dennis Bevington, M.P.
STAFF	Ms. Shauna Troniak, Analyst
TRANSPORTATION	\$7,493.15
ACCOMMODATION	\$1,787.08
HOSPITALITY	\$0
PER DIEMS	\$493.87
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$0
MISCELLANEOUS / REGISTRATION FEES	\$156.99
TOTAL	\$9,931.09