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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

to wind up the debate on the statement by the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy

pursuant to Rule 110(2) of the Rules of Procedure

on the EU strategy for the Arctic
(2013/2595(RSP))

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**European Parliament resolution on the EU strategy for the Arctic
(2013/2595(RSP))**

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous reports and resolutions on the Arctic, notably its Report on ‘A sustainable EU policy for the High North’, in January 2011¹, and the Joint Parliamentary Committee Report on Arctic Policy in October 2013,
- having regard to the joint communication of the Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 26 June 2012 entitled ‘Developing a European Union policy towards the Arctic region: progress since 2008 and next steps’ (JOIN(2012)0019), and to the accompanying staff working documents entitled ‘Inventory of activities in the framework of developing a European Union Arctic Policy’ (SWD(2012)0182) and ‘Space and the Arctic’ (SWD(2012)0183),
- having regard to the EU-Greenland Partnership 2007-2013 and to the Fisheries Partnership Agreement between the EU and Greenland, which entered into force on 1 January 2013 and is valid for a period of 3 years,
- having regard to the EU’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme for the years 2014 to 2020,
- having regard to the Arctic Council chairmanship programme, the Nordic Council of Ministers Arctic Cooperation Programme and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) programme,
- having regard to the Rio+20 commitments to start negotiations on an implementing agreement under UNCLOS on the protection of biodiversity in areas beyond national jurisdiction,
- having regard to the new and updated national strategies and policy papers concerning Arctic issues from Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Greenland, Norway, Russia, the USA, Canada and the UK, respectively,
- having regard to the statements adopted at the Second Northern Dimension Parliamentary Forum in February 2011 in Tromsø,
- having regard to the joint statement of the third ministerial meeting of the renewed Northern Dimension, held in Brussels on 18 February 2013,
- having regard to the respective conference statements of the 9th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Brussels from 13 to 15 September 2010, and of the 10th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, held in Akureyri from 5 to 7 September 2012,

¹ OJ C 136 E, 11.5.2012, p. 71.

- having regard to the World Trade Organisation panel report of 25 November 2013 entitled ‘European Communities – measures prohibiting the importation and marketing of seal products’, chapter 1.3.5 (setting out the preliminary ruling issued on 29 January 2013),
 - having regard to the judgments of the Court of Justice of the European Union of 3 October 2013 in Case C-583/11P, and of 25 April 2013 in Case T-526/10 concerning the application for annulment of Commission Regulation (EU) No 737/2010 of 10 August 2010 laying down detailed rules for the implementation of Regulation (EC) 1007/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council on trade in seal products¹,
 - having regard to Directive 2013/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 June 2013 on safety of offshore oil and gas operations and amending Directive 2004/35/EC²,
 - having regard to its resolution of 5 February 2014 on a 2030 framework for climate and energy policies³,
 - having regard to the outcome of the Cancun climate conference (COP16), including the agreement that emissions should be limited to avoid a rise in global average temperature of more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels,
 - having regard to Rule 110(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas the joint communication of the Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 26 June 2012 constitutes a further step in responding to Parliament’s call for the formulation of a coherent EU Arctic policy;
- B. whereas Parliament has been an active participant in the work of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, through its Delegation for relations with Switzerland and Norway and to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee;
- C. whereas Denmark, Finland and Sweden are Arctic countries and both Finland and Sweden are partially located within the Arctic Circle; whereas the EU’s only indigenous people, the Sami people, live in the Arctic regions of Finland and Sweden as well as in Norway and Russia;
- D. whereas Norway, as a reliable partner, is associated with the EU through the EEA and the Schengen Agreement;
- E. whereas there has been longstanding EU engagement in the Arctic by way of its involvement in the common Northern Dimension policy with Russia, Norway and Iceland (including the Arctic Window), in the Barents cooperation and - in particular - in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council, and on account of

¹ OJ L 216, 17.8.2010, p. 1.

² OJ L 178, 28.6.2013, p. 66.

³ Texts adopted, P7_TA(2014)0094.

the implications of its strategic partnerships with Canada, the United States and Russia, along with its participation as an active ad hoc observer in the Arctic Council in recent years;

- F. whereas the decision of the Arctic Council in Kiruna to ‘affirmatively receive’ the EU’s application for observership status is interpreted in different ways as to what extent the EU is granted this status as an observer to the Arctic Council (AC);
- G. whereas the EU and its Member States make a major contribution to research in the Arctic and whereas EU programmes, including the new Horizon 2020 framework programme, support major research projects in the region, benefiting not least the peoples and economies of the Arctic countries;
- H. whereas only 20% of global fossil fuel reserves can be exploited by 2050 in order to keep the average temperature increase below two degrees Celsius;
- I. whereas it is estimated that about one fifth of the world’s undiscovered hydrocarbon resources are located in the Arctic region, but more extensive research is needed to establish more accurately how much economically recoverable gas and oil there is to be found, taking into account the need for the environmentally sound and safe exploration and extraction of these reserves;
- J. whereas climate change and the melting of the sea ice pose major threats to the Arctic and ecosystems and biodiversity worldwide;
- K. whereas as much as 40 % of this area, which was until recently permanently covered by sea ice, is now clear for part of the year;
- L. whereas the pristine waters that were once covered with ice are probably the only waters in the world that have never been fished and, for this reason, contain valuable cold water corals and still undiscovered ecosystems;
- M. whereas the Greenland ice sheet is melting at a speed three times faster than in the 1990s and contributing to rising sea levels;
- N. whereas in 2012 more than 2 000 scientists from 67 countries called for a moratorium on commercial fishing in the Arctic until more research has been completed;
- O. whereas Arctic states have sovereignty and jurisdiction over their land and waters, and the rights of the people of the Arctic to pursue the sustainable use of their natural resources must be respected;
- P. whereas the Arctic is surrounded by international waters and citizens and governments throughout the world, including the European Union, have a responsibility to better protect the Arctic;
- Q. whereas there are no technologies currently available to adequately clean up oil spills in icy conditions;
- R. whereas the carriage and use of heavy fuel oils is prohibited by the IMO in the waters

surrounding the Antarctic;

- S. whereas the growing interest in the Arctic region shown by non-Arctic actors, such as China, Japan, India and other countries, their allocation of funding to polar research and, not least, the confirmation of South Korea, China, Japan, India and Singapore as observers to the Arctic Council, indicate an increasing global geopolitical interest in the Arctic;

The EU and the Arctic

1. Recalls the adoption of its resolution of 20 January 2011 on a sustainable EU policy for the High North, and welcomes the joint communication of the Commission and of the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy of 26 June 2012; reaffirms its position that, with three EU Member States – Denmark, Finland and Sweden – being Arctic states and Norway and Iceland being part of the EEA and the Schengen area, the EU has a legitimate interest by virtue of its rights and obligations under international law, its commitment to environmental, climate and other policies and its funding, research activities and economic interests, including in the areas of shipping and the development of natural resources; recalls, moreover, that the EU has large Arctic land areas in Finland and Sweden, inhabited by the only indigenous population group in the EU, the Sami;
2. Takes note of the Arctic Council's Kiruna Declaration of May 2013 and of its decision on observer status for the EU and other state entities, and urges the Commission to follow up on remaining issues with Canada and duly to inform Parliament of that process;
3. Supports the Commission's work on achieving the status of a permanent observer in the Arctic Council, but nonetheless calls on the EU to pursue actively the objectives of the EU's Arctic Strategy through all relevant international organisations, pending full approval of its observer status;
4. Regards the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) as an important hub for cooperation between Denmark, Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the Commission; notes the work of the BEAC in the fields of health and social issues, education and research, energy, culture and tourism; notes the advisory role of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) within the BEAC;
5. Draws attention to the contributions the EU is making to research and development and the engagement of economic actors registered and active under EU law in the Arctic region;
6. Asks the Commission to put forward proposals as to how the Galileo project or projects such as Global Monitoring for Environment and Security, which may have an impact on the Arctic, can be developed to enable safer and faster navigation in Arctic waters, thus investing in the safety and accessibility of the North-East Passage in particular, with a view to contributing to better predictability of ice movements, better mapping of the Arctic seabed and an understanding of the main geodynamic processes in the area;

7. Welcomes the identification of Ecologically and Biologically Significant Areas in the Arctic region under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as an important process in ensuring the effective conservation of Arctic biodiversity and stresses the importance of implementing an Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) approach in the coastal, marine and terrestrial environments of the Arctic, as highlighted by the Arctic Council EBM expert group;
8. Expresses concern that the implementation of the Search and Rescue Agreement and the Oil Spill Response Agreement by Arctic Council members only covers preparedness and response activities, fails to regulate the prevention of oil spills and has no provisions to ensure that operators bear full economic and environmental liability;
9. Calls for the active engagement of indigenous people, European bodies, civil society and businesses in the implementation process;
10. Highlights the need for active engagement by the EU in all relevant Arctic Council working groups or relevant regional or international organisations, such as the IMO, CBD and UNGA;
11. Takes note of the new Arctic strategies published recently by EU Member States – both by members of the Arctic Council like Finland, Denmark and Sweden and by observer states like Germany and the UK – and expresses its hope that updated strategies will lead not only to a more realistic understanding but also to concrete engagements in the Arctic, thereby highlighting the need to take common EU policies and programmes affecting the Arctic into account;
12. Takes note of the decision by Iceland's new government to suspend EU membership negotiations; regrets that neither side was able to find a solution regarding their contradictory views on some issues, despite close cultural bonds and Iceland having already implemented a significant amount of EU legislation as an EEA and Schengen member, thus missing the chance to closer integrate Iceland – even with special exemption clauses – given its geo-political and geo-economical strategic position for future generations;
13. Requests the Commission, in view of the aforementioned, to develop closer cooperation with Iceland in fields of common interest such as the development of maritime transport and renewable energy, making full use of existing instruments and encouraging research and business cooperation between European and Icelandic actors;
14. Takes note of the preparations for an Arctic Business Council to be attached to the Arctic Council in an advisory capacity and highlights the percentage of European businesses and institutes contributing to and investing in the Arctic; calls on businesses to respect the rights of indigenous peoples and to undertake investments in an environmentally and socially responsible manner;
15. Affirms its support for the establishment of the EU Arctic Information Centre, an Arctic-based network that aims to inform and connect Arctic and EU actors;
16. Asks the Commission, in view of the aforementioned facts and developments, to

develop and put forward a visionary and coherent strategy on the EU's engagement in the Arctic, making sure that EU and Member States' socioeconomic and environmental interests, as well as global biodiversity protection and climate change goals, are taken into account whenever policies affecting the Arctic are developed, changed or updated;

17. Asks the Commission to develop an Action Plan to define concrete steps for the coherent implementation of such a strategy and of existing Arctic-related policies and programmes, in order to ensure a coordinated approach when dealing with the Arctic region that is based on the precautionary principle and the ecosystem approach;
18. Draws attention to the fact that energy security is closely related to climate change; considers that energy security must be improved by reducing the EU's dependence on fossil fuels such as those imported from Russia via pipelines; recalls that these pipelines will become vulnerable to disruption by the melting of the permafrost, and highlights that the transformation of the Arctic represents one major effect of climate change on EU security; stresses the need to address this risk multiplier through a reinforced EU strategy for the Arctic, and through an enhanced policy of EU-generated renewable energies and energy efficiency that significantly reduces the Union's reliance on external sources and thereby improves its security position;
19. Believes that the impression formed by some observers of a so-called scramble for the Arctic, often symbolised by the planting of a Russian flag on the sea floor at the North Pole, does not contribute to fostering constructive understanding and cooperation in the region; stresses that the Arctic States have on several occasions declared their commitment to resolve possible conflicts of interests in accordance with the principles of international law; is concerned that the increasing deployment of military capabilities in the Arctic could potentially destabilise the region; urges the circumpolar nations not to build up military outposts or military-equipped scientific outposts;
20. Expresses its concern at the attempts in Greenland to extract uranium and calls for the Arctic to be declared a nuclear-free zone;

Sustainable Socio-Economic Development, Environmental Governance and Mitigating and Adapting to Climate change in the Arctic Region

21. Recalls its 2011 Resolution in stressing the global impact of changes in the Arctic region and the important role that the EU and other industrial powers will have to play alongside the circumpolar nations in reducing pollution in the Arctic region caused by an increase in activities there; points out that climate changes in the Arctic will have a major impact on coastal regions globally, including coastal regions in the European Union, and on climate-dependent sectors in Europe such as agriculture and fisheries, energy, reindeer herding, hunting, tourism and transport;
22. Recognises the responsibility of all government and citizens worldwide to protect the Arctic;
23. Recognises that the effects of the melting ice and rapidly increasing temperatures are not only a risk factor in displacing indigenous populations and thereby threatening the indigenous way of life, but are also creating opportunities for economic development in

the Arctic region; acknowledges the wishes of the inhabitants and governments of the Arctic region with sovereign rights and responsibilities to continue to pursue sustainable economic development while at the same time protecting the traditional sources of indigenous peoples' livelihoods and the very sensitive nature of Arctic ecosystems;

24. Confirms its previous statements on the rights of indigenous people in general, and the Sami as the EU's only indigenous people in particular, and urges the Commission to further explore ways to ensure that their voice and experience are represented in EU policy-making processes;
25. Calls for the launch of an international debate on the environmental governance and better environmental protection of the Arctic, involving the Arctic coastal states, the international community, organisations representing indigenous peoples and civil society;
26. Stresses that the waters around the Arctic are international waters and calls for the establishment of a global sanctuary in waters outside the Exclusive Economic Zones of the Arctic coastal states to be agreed and respected by both Arctic and non-Arctic countries;
27. Underlines the major importance of the safety and security of new world trade routes through the sea in the Arctic, in particular for the economies of the EU and its Member States, given that these countries control 40 % of world commercial shipping; takes note of the work in the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) on finalising a mandatory Polar Code for shipping; emphasises that the EU and its Member States should actively uphold safe and environmentally responsible navigation, the freedom of the seas and the right to free passage through international waterways; encourages cooperation in both research and investment with a view to developing a robust and safe infrastructure for Arctic sea routes;
28. Calls in this context on the EU to promote strict limits on the use and carriage of heavy fuel oils in the Arctic, following similar restrictions in the waters around Antarctica;
29. Calls on the Commission, in the absence of adequate international measures, to put forward proposals on rules for vessels calling at EU ports subsequent to, or prior to, journeys through Arctic waters, with a view to prohibiting the use and carriage of heavy fuel oil;
30. Calls on the States in the region to ensure that any current transport routes – and those that may emerge in the future – are open to international shipping and to refrain from introducing any arbitrary unilateral obstacles, be they financial or administrative, that could hinder shipping in the Arctic, other than measures aimed at increasing security or protection of the environment;
31. Emphasises that the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) must have the necessary means to monitor and prevent pollution from maritime shipping as well as from oil and gas installations in the Arctic; stresses that IMO and EU environmental and safety rules must be respected in this area;

32. Expresses its strong concern regarding the rush for oil exploration and drilling in the Arctic without adequate standards being enforced, such as on the Gazprom Prirazlomnaya platform in the Russian EEZ, and regarding the licensing of areas in waters around Greenland and in other parts of the North Atlantic;
33. Calls on the EU to promote strict precautionary regulatory standards in the field of environmental protection and safety for oil exploration, prospection and production internationally; calls for a ban on oil drilling in the icy Arctic waters of the EU and the EEA and for promotion by the EU of comparable precautionary standards in the Arctic Council and for Arctic coastal states;
34. Supports the initiative by the five Arctic coastal states to agree interim precautionary measures to prevent any future commercial fisheries in the high seas of the central Arctic Ocean until the establishment of appropriate regulatory mechanisms and protection;
35. Emphasises the large energy savings potential in the EU's energy and transport systems and the opportunities available to decarbonise the EU economy and decrease dependency on the import of fossil fuels, including oil from Arctic sources;
36. Recalls the right of the people of the Arctic to determine their own livelihoods and recognises their wish for sustainable development of the region, and asks the Commission to report on which EU programmes could be used to support such long-term, balanced sustainable development, and to prepare measures with a view to making a more concrete contribution to fulfilling this desire;
37. Takes note of the priorities of the new government of Greenland which is pushing for development of the country, and asks the Commission to explore how EU programmes could contribute to the sustainable development of Greenland, and how to ensure that the bonds to Denmark and Europe as a whole can promote sustainable development that serves the long-term interests of both the people of Greenland and EU actors, particularly in the light of the dramatic increase in activities by non-European actors in Greenland; urges both the Commission and the Member States to take a strategic view of the future of Greenland and the sustainable and environmentally safe development of its resources, while ensuring that Europe's participation contributes properly to the sustainable development of Greenland;
38. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Vice-President/High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, the governments and parliaments of the Member States and the governments and parliaments of the Arctic region states.