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# European Arctic Policy: Interests of the Non-Arctic States and the EU

Maria Lagutina, Natalia Eremina, Sébastien Gadat

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Corresponding Author	Family Name	<b>Lagutina</b>
	Particle	
	Given Name	<b>Maria L.</b>
	Suffix	
	Division	International Relations
	Organization	St. Petersburg State University
	Address	Saint Petersburg, Russia
	Email	m.lagutina@spbu.ru

---

Author	Family Name	<b>Eremina</b>
	Particle	
	Given Name	<b>Natalia V.</b>
	Suffix	
	Division	Department of European Studies
	Organization	St. Petersburg State University
Address	Saint Petersburg, Russia	

---

Author	Family Name	<b>Gadal</b>
--------	-------------	--------------

---

Particle

Given Name **Sébastien**

Suffix

SG 1

Organization North-Eastern Federal University [Aix-Marseille University, CNRS UMR 7300 ESPAN](#)

SG 2

Address Yakutsk, Russia [Aix-en-Provence, France](#)

Email [sebastien.gadal@univ-amu.fr](mailto:sebastien.gadal@univ-amu.fr)

[szh.gadal@s-vfu.ru](mailto:szh.gadal@s-vfu.ru)

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Abstract

The European non-Arctic states – the UK, Germany, France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland – are mostly experienced Arctic explorers. From the very beginning their attention to the Arctic was driven, firstly, by an interest in finding the shortest trade routes from Europe to Asia and, secondly, by scientific research. At the end of the twentieth century, the participation of European non-Arctic countries in Arctic governance began to be institutionalized – this group of countries received the status of observers in the AC. The range of their interests in the region has expanded significantly: from scientific research to security issues. Most of these European countries are the members of the European Union (EU) and provide the idea of including the EU to the Arctic governance system. The national roadmaps of the EU Arctic member states and observers are mainly

driven by the EU Arctic policy framework. This chapter provides an analysis of strategic documents and a summary of the main common interests of the non-Arctic European states and the EU in the region and their activities in the Arctic.

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Keywords (separated by '-') Non-Arctic European states - Arctic Council - Observers - The European Union - The UK - Germany - France - Italy - Spain - Poland - The Netherlands - Switzerland

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# 1 European Arctic Policy

## Interests of Non-Arctic States and the EU

2 Maria L. Lagutina, Natalia V. Eremina, and Sébastien Gadal

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M. L. Lagutina (✉)

International Relations, St. Petersburg State University, Saint Petersburg, Russia

e-mail: [m.lagutina@spbu.ru](mailto:m.lagutina@spbu.ru)

N. V. Eremina

Department of European Studies, St. Petersburg State University, Saint Petersburg, Russia

S. Gadal

North-Eastern Federal University, Yakutsk, Russia

Aix-Marseille University, CNRS UMR 7300 ESPACE

e-mail: [sebastien.gadal@univ-amu.fr](mailto:sebastien.gadal@univ-amu.fr); [szh.gadal@s-vfu.ru](mailto:szh.gadal@s-vfu.ru)

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### 27 **Keywords**

28 Non-Arctic European states · Arctic Council · Observers · The European Union ·  
29 The UK · Germany · France · Italy · Spain · Poland · The Netherlands ·  
30 Switzerland

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## 31 **Introduction**

32 Nowadays, in the modern globalizing environment not only the traditional Arctic  
33 countries, but also a range of the non-Arctic nations (e.g., China, Singapore,  
34 Germany, France, Italy) and international institutions (e.g., the EU, NATO) are  
35 manifesting their interest in the Arctic. First and foremost, the non-Arctic countries  
36 are anxious about the climate changes in this region and their impact on the globe in  
37 general. Apart from that, they are interested in the development of scientific coop-  
38 eration on the Arctic issues and an unrestrained access to the Arctic mineral riches  
39 and transport arteries, economic cooperation in the region. At present, this group of  
40 countries is striving to gain a foothold in the leading Arctic regional structure – the  
41 Arctic Council (AC), to influence the decision-making process in Arctic affairs.

42 Almost all European non-Arctic observer countries at the AC – the UK, Germany,  
43 France, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, and Switzerland – have some historical  
44 experience of working in the Arctic. Among the non-Arctic European observer  
45 countries, only Spain has no tradition of Arctic exploring, Spain's attention was  
46 paid to the Antarctic mainly. Thus, Spanish interest in the Arctic is dictated by  
47 current events and challenges. The European countries (e.g., the UK, the Nether-  
48 lands, Italy) equipped expeditions to the Arctic region to explore new sea routes,  
49 new lands, and open new opportunities for trade. If the development of the Arctic  
50 territories before the nineteenth century was mainly associated with the development  
51 of fishery and trade, then after the nineteenth century, the importance of the region  
52 from a military point of view increased significantly, and a steady scientific interest  
53 in it was indicated. This land was perceived by European travelers as Terra Incog-  
54 nita, which had its secrets. And the laurels of the pioneers have always attracted  
55 ambitious travelers. In addition, in the nineteenth century, technical capabilities  
56 based on developed shipbuilding appeared, which contributed to the scientific  
57 research of the region. At the same time, the role of the North in general and the  
58 Arctic in particular as a region associated with ensuring the security of many states  
59 increased first during the First and then the Second World War. All these events have  
60 best confirmed that the Arctic should remain a territory of dialogue. It should be  
61 noted that the historical experience of participation in the development of the Arctic  
62 and contribution to Arctic scientific research played an important role in obtaining  
63 observer status in the Arctic Council by European non-Arctic countries.

64 Today, among the European non-Arctic states are six EU member states (France,  
65 Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy) and two non-EU members (the  
66 UK and Switzerland). The European nations obtained observer status in several  
67 stages: Germany, the Netherlands, Poland, and the UK joined the AC in Iqaluit  
68 Ministerial meeting, 1998; France obtained observer status in Barrow Ministerial  
69 meeting, 2000; Spain got the observer status in Salekhard Ministerial meeting, 2006;  
70 Italy joined as an observer to the AC in Kiruna Ministerial meeting, 2013; and,  
71 finally, Switzerland became an observer to the AC in Fairbanks Ministerial meeting,  
72 2017. On the one hand, it is an acknowledgment of the achievements of these  
73 countries in exploring the Arctic, and, on the other hand, it is their new responsibil-  
74 ity, envisaging the ever-increasing activity in the region.

75 The observer application of the European Union to the Arctic Council was  
76 rejected several times. Meanwhile, in 2013 at the ministerial meeting of the AC in  
77 Kiruna an agreement was reached, which allows the EU to work within the AC on  
78 conditions similar to the observers (Mann, 2021). Besides that, the EU, with three  
79 Arctic states, and six non-Arctic state's observers is de facto a player with the  
80 standards and regulations in addition to the Science's Polar budget of 76,1 million  
81 euros (European Polar Board, 2021), and the other EU research and national states  
82 budgets. Science is one of the main drivers of the EU polar policy and the European  
83 states with the sustainable exploitation of the natural resources: fishery, mines,  
84 tourism, oil, and gas.

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## 85 **Interests of European Non-Arctic States in the Arctic**

86 Even though many European non-Arctic observer countries have been present in the  
87 Arctic for a long time (For example, British historians have proven their country's  
88 presence in the Arctic since the sixteenth century; Dutch fishermen and sailors began  
89 to enter the Arctic expanses in the sixteenth century as well; France began scientific  
90 research in the Arctic already in the eighteenth century in the field of terrestrial and  
91 marine ecosystems, anthropology, and ethnography; the Italians began their advance  
92 into the Arctic only at the end of the nineteenth century; it was in the second half of  
93 the nineteenth century that Germany began its active advance into the Arctic; Poland  
94 established its formal connection to the Arctic in 1931 by ratification of the Svalbard  
95 Treaty; the first Swiss expeditions to the Arctic were organized in Greenland 1909  
96 and 1912–1913. Besides, all these countries are the parties of the Svalbard Treaty:  
97 the Netherlands (1920), the UK (1923), France and Italy (1924), Germany, Spain,  
98 and Switzerland (1925), and, finally, Poland (1931).), they began to publish their  
99 strategies only in 2013. Among European countries, which gained observer status to  
100 the AC, by now only Switzerland and Poland have not issued an Arctic strategy  
101 document with national priorities for the Arctic region. For the first time, the UK has  
102 clearly stated its position on the Arctic in 2013 in "Adapting to Change: UK policy  
103 towards the Arctic" and in 2018, the UK published an updated version of its Arctic  
104 strategy "Beyond the Ice: UK Policy towards the Arctic." The interests of Germany  
105 in the Arctic are reflected in the document "Guidelines of the Germany Arctic

106 policy,” which was developed in 2013 and 2019. In 2015, the Ministry of Foreign  
107 Affairs of the Italian Republic published on its website the document “Towards an  
108 Italian Strategy for the Arctic. National priorities.” In 2016, France adopted its  
109 *National Arctic Exploration Programme*, which sets out the country’s basic interests  
110 in the region and delineates the principal trends and priorities of its Arctic policies in  
111 the coming years. In the case of Spain and the Netherlands, these countries have their  
112 Polar strategies, which lays out their interests in both polar regions – the Arctic and  
113 the Antarctic: in 2016, Spain published “Guidelines for a Spanish Polar Strategy”  
114 and the Netherlands issued “Nederlandse Polaire Strategie 2016-2020,” which was  
115 republished in 2020 as “The Netherlands’ Polar Strategy 2021-2025. Prepared for  
116 Change.” Let us look in detail their Arctic strategies.

117 **The United Kingdom.** In 2013 the British government presented its multilateral  
118 Arctic strategy – “Adapting to change. UK policy towards the Arctic.” Since that  
119 time the United Kingdom has begun to show its interest in the North in four areas:  
120 security, politics, economy, and environment. This document pointed out that the  
121 UK considers NATO as the central link in building relations with the Five Arctic  
122 countries and that it is very important for the UK to maintain contacts with its allies  
123 in the region in the military-political context.

124 The Arctic is of interest to Great Britain in terms of resources, logistics in the  
125 event of the opening of the Northern Sea Route, and scientific research. The UK’s  
126 ability to confidently advance in these areas in the Arctic is based on the gigantic  
127 experience of military geographic research and powerful schools in the field of  
128 oceanology and polar geography. The unique experience of shipbuilding is also a  
129 UK asset. The accumulated knowledge creates a technological breakthrough oppor-  
130 tunity. The London location of the headquarters of many maritime organizations and  
131 Lloyd’s Register also works to support the UK’s Arctic positions. In addition, the  
132 UK is a Nordic country, and its geographic location also indicates the need for an  
133 Arctic policy. From the point of view of public opinion, the reason for the proximity  
134 to the Arctic is that the northern border of the economic (two hundred miles)  
135 economic zone of the Shetland Islands is located relatively close to the Arctic Circle.  
136 In general, the geographic location of Great Britain is beneficial from the point of  
137 view of developing its cooperation with members of the Arctic Council, primarily  
138 Norway, Denmark, and Iceland.

139 Moreover, it is this that allows the UK to become a possible part of the Northern  
140 Sea Route, as well as to talk about common tasks in preserving the environment in  
141 order to maintain its own fishing industry and climate, since marine ecosystems are  
142 interconnected. For the same reason, the country’s scientific presence in the Arctic  
143 should be highly appreciated.

144 The formation of the British Arctic agenda took place consistently and quickly.  
145 Thus, the first document of a framework nature “Adapting to Change,” dedicated to  
146 the Arctic, appeared in Britain in 2013. Then the country outlined some specific  
147 plans in the Arctic, primarily in terms of security, economics, politics, and the  
148 environment (Adapting to Change. UK politics towards Arctic 2013). In this docu-  
149 ment, the Arctic is indicated as a platform, the geopolitical potential of which will  
150 grow, and the British will be able to show their diplomatic, military, and scientific

151 potential there. A clearer positioning in the Arctic was also dictated by the interna-  
152 tional agenda, in which the region has already become the most important negoti-  
153 ating platform, whose role is constantly growing in many respects. In addition, the  
154 Arctic for Britain appears to be a zone that ensures the country's security, which was  
155 also noted in another document – the “Security Ordinance” of 2015. In 2015, the  
156 House of Lords published the first report on the Arctic, and exclusively in the context  
157 of security (Select Committee of the Arctic 2014–2015). And before that, in the 2014  
158 National Maritime Security Strategy, the British indicated that the Arctic Sea routes  
159 are unsafe because of Russia, for which it is proposed to jointly patrol the region with  
160 other countries (National Security Strategy and Strategic Defense and Security  
161 Review, 2015). This approach was reaffirmed in 2017 when a new British foreign  
162 policy strategy related to Brexit was presented. This circumstance forced the  
163 country's authorities to think over an independent strengthening of positions in  
164 Arctic without the EU within the framework of the Global Britain strategy.

165 In 2018, the UK justified its positions on the Arctic even more clearly and more  
166 specifically in the framework of the strategy report “Beyond the Ice. United King-  
167 dom Arctic Policy” (Beyond the Ice. UK policy towards the Arctic 2018). This  
168 strategy should reaffirm Britain's leadership in Arctic after Brexit. It states that since  
169 ecology is an international matter, the Arctic also requires cooperation not only of  
170 the Arctic, but also of non-Arctic states. In strategy, Britain calls itself a “Middle  
171 Arctic state” and a world leader in the Arctic. The mechanisms for strengthening the  
172 British presence in the Arctic are called intergovernmental meetings designed to  
173 ensure the appropriate representation of Britain in the Arctic Council and other  
174 Arctic organizations: “Although the UK is not an Arctic state, we are its nearest  
175 neighbor, with Lerwick in the Shetland Islands closer to the Arctic Circle than it is to  
176 London. We have always been a world leader in Polar affairs where British views  
177 have long held sway in the fields of polar science, exploration, diplomacy, business  
178 and environmental protection” (Beyond the Ice. UK policy towards the Arctic  
179 2018: 14).

180 The 2018 UK Arctic Policy Framework also presented science diplomacy as a  
181 tool for Britain to collaborate with other Arctic actors through the dedicated Scien-  
182 tific Council for Environmental Research (Natural Environment Research Council,  
183 NERC) (Eremina, 2021).

184 The UK is considered one of the leaders in Arctic research among non-Arctic  
185 states. About 9 percent of all scientific publications on Arctic issues belong to the  
186 British, primarily in the field of biological diversity, climate change processes in the  
187 Arctic, as well as changes in the state of ice. The country continues to focus on joint  
188 research on the Arctic climate with the Arctic states. For one, in the current period  
189 (from 2018 to 2022), the Changing Arctic Ocean program is being developed, with  
190 funding of £16 million. The country has a wide research network related to scientific  
191 research in both the Arctic and Antarctic NERC – the Natural Environment Research  
192 Council. Today it represents the UK's largest environmental science, education, and  
193 innovation institution (the Natural Environment Research Council 2021; Eremina,  
194 2019: 30–39).

195 At the same time the Arctic as an important region for security and defense was  
196 indicated for the UK. In 2018 a new “Defence Arctic Strategy” was announced. It  
197 considers British positions in the Arctic in the contest of different increasing  
198 opportunities and threats that demand close cooperation with NATO and Euro  
199 Atlantic allies to solve security threats in the region. So, it is not hard to see  
200 strengthening the security element in the country’s approaches to the Arctic  
201 (Defence Secretary announces new Defence Arctic Strategy 2018).

202 The British government has special structures dealing with Arctic issues. For  
203 example, the Polar Regions Department functions under the Foreign and Common-  
204 wealth Office. Also in White Hall, the so-called Arctic Network has been created,  
205 which organizes negotiations with the departments of climate, energy, business,  
206 transport, and defense. In addition, the Arctic and Antarctic Partnership is actively  
207 working, which is designed to develop strategies for Britain in these regions.

208 These documents and institutions allow the United Kingdom to develop full and  
209 varied ties not only with the Arctic countries but also with non-Arctic players. It is  
210 obvious that here the British are relying on the experience of interaction with many  
211 participants received in the EU. The UK was an active participant in European  
212 projects, among which EU-PolarNet stood out. Financing of such projects (before  
213 Britain left the EU) partially or completely came from the EU budget. However, after  
214 Brexit, the British are even more actively developing bilateral ties, relying on  
215 scientific diplomacy and defense cooperation (Eremina & Mezhevich, 2020).

216 The UK has always had its own, independent of the EU, relations with the states  
217 of the Arctic zone, based on bilateral and multilateral partnerships in the field of  
218 science and defense. In the context of Brexit, the United Kingdom is deprived of  
219 some resources for entering the Arctic, the main of which is financial and political  
220 interaction with the EU and its support. Therefore, Brexit will affect Britain’s  
221 capabilities. For example, this concerns difficult negotiations on fishing opportuni-  
222 ties in the Arctic Ocean. Brexit will also partly affect UK scientific cooperation with  
223 the Arctic states.

224 Thus, the United Kingdom is a leader in Arctic research, the most important  
225 partner of the Arctic states in matters of security. The Security Agenda is becoming  
226 the most important for Britain after Brexit to maintain and deepen cooperation with  
227 the European Arctic states. Therefore, the interaction of the northern countries  
228 thanks to the NATO platform is important for the British in the development of  
229 cooperation in the Arctic. At the same time, Britain also relies on the diplomatic  
230 dimension and scientific partnership with all states, not only members of the Arctic  
231 Council, interested in the development of the Arctic.

232 **Germany.** Germany is one of the most active non-Arctic observer countries in the  
233 Arctic, which has a range of different interests in the region: from environmental  
234 protection and scientific research to the access of German companies to Arctic  
235 resources.

236 In 2011, the German government began to develop the main directions of the state  
237 Arctic policy. As a result, in 2013 the Federal Government adopted the document  
238 “Guidelines of the Germany Arctic policy,” where for the first time the main goals  
239 and objectives of the Arctic policy of Germany were defined. It is important to note

240 that the main provisions of this document have been coordinated with the relevant  
241 EU's provisions (Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines, 2019). The key principles of  
242 the German Arctic policy were fixed in the document: freedom of scientific research;  
243 freedom of navigation; compliance with environmental standards; and responsibility  
244 for any environmental damage ("the polluter pays" principle).

245 Germany, as an observer state, formally supports the international principles of  
246 cooperation in the Arctic, but at the same time consistently advocates a shift from the  
247 narrowly national approach of the Arctic states to Arctic cooperation and promotes  
248 the idea of expanding the international development of the region.

249 Today several departments are involved in the implementation of the German  
250 Arctic policy: Federal Foreign Office, Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and  
251 Energy, Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear  
252 Safety, Federal Ministry of Education and Research, etc. Each ministry is responsi-  
253 ble for the respective components of Germany's Arctic policy.

254 In 2019 the Cabinet adopted the new Arctic policy guidelines (Germany's Arctic  
255 Policy Guidelines, 2019) that is the first at interministerial level, and "bring together  
256 the Arctic policies of the different ministries and set out the German Government's  
257 strategic goals in the Arctic" (Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines, 2019).  
258 According to the document Germany's current Arctic policy has six priorities:  
259 climate and environmental protection, international cooperation, security policy,  
260 science and research, sustainable development, and the involvement of the local  
261 and indigenous population in the Arctic. The main aims of the German Arctic policy  
262 are:

- 263 (a) Germany wants to work toward worldwide climate and environmental protection  
264 in line with the Paris Climate Agreement.
- 265 (b) The German Government is calling for the deployment of environmentally-  
266 friendly technology as well as the application of the highest environmental  
267 standards and the designation of protected areas to preserve biodiversity in the  
268 Arctic.
- 269 (c) The interests of the indigenous population as well as the safeguarding of their  
270 rights to freedom, good health, and self-determination in their habitat should be  
271 strengthened.
- 272 (d) Germany is committed to free and responsible research in order to learn more  
273 about the Arctic.
- 274 (e) For the future of the Arctic, close and rules-based cooperation with other  
275 countries within a strengthened international legal framework is necessary.  
276 Germany is therefore working in the Arctic Council as well as within the EU  
277 and NATO to protect the Arctic as a largely conflict-free region (Germany is  
278 taking on more responsibility for the Arctic, 2019).

279 Like several other non-Arctic European states (e.g., France and Italy), Germany  
280 fully supports the active role of the EU in Arctic cooperation and acts as a kind of  
281 link between the EU and the Arctic countries. So, in 2008, Germany was among

282 those countries that supported the EU in its desire to apply for an application for  
283 observer status in the Arctic Council.

284 The Federal Government supports multilateral cooperation, particularly in the  
285 Arctic Council, where Germany is represented by its experts in all working groups.  
286 In addition, it is important to note the participation of Germany in the work of  
287 Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), EU Arctic Forum, International Maritime  
288 Organization (IMO), etc.

289 The basis of the Arctic policy of Germany should rightfully be considered its  
290 polar scientific research. So, during 2000–2019 there was an increase in funding for  
291 Arctic research in Germany: for example, funding for the activities of the leading  
292 German research institute – the Institute for Polar and Marine Scientific Research  
293 named after Alfred Wagner (AWI) in the specified period increased from 60 million  
294 euros to 140 million euros (Kotov, 2021: 50). This institute has a rich material and  
295 technical base, including the research vessel *Polarstern* and two Arctic stations  
296 (jointly with the French on Svalbard and with the Russians on Samoilovsky Island).  
297 In addition, it is important to mention the Federal Office for Geological Sciences and  
298 Natural Resources (BGR) and its affiliated German Raw Materials Agency (DERA).  
299 Germany is very active in international scientific cooperation in the Arctic and  
300 develops partnerships both with the Arctic (mostly with Russia, Norway, and  
301 Canada) and non-Arctic countries (e.g., China, France, and Great Britain).

302 Regarding energy cooperation in the Arctic, Germany has a very modest poten-  
303 tial. So, in Germany, there is only one large oil and gas company operating on an  
304 international scale – Wintershall (Vyatkin, 2015), which focused on the development  
305 of offshore fields in Norway.

306 However, Germany has the world's largest container fleet and the third largest  
307 merchant fleet (Auswärtiges Amt, 2013) that determines its interest in participating  
308 in the development of the Arctic transport corridors.

309 It is interesting to note the position of Germany regarding the militarization of the  
310 region, which has a controversial character: formally Germany proclaims the demil-  
311 itarization of the region (Germany's Arctic Policy Guidelines, 2019), but in practice  
312 it actively participates in the implementation of various Arctic projects of NATO and  
313 officially supports NATO's participation in Arctic affairs.

314 Thus, the primary objective of Germany's current policy in the Arctic is focused  
315 on solving the problems of the consequences of climate change in the Arctic and  
316 protecting the environment of the region and its sustainable development. At the  
317 same time, it is obvious that the resources for the growth of Germany's influence in  
318 Arctic affairs are limited: scientific research and new technologies. The economic  
319 position of Germany in the region is very modest at this stage, but in the perspective  
320 of climatic changes in the Arctic, new opportunities for Germany may open to  
321 participate in the commercial development of the region's natural resources and its  
322 transport routes. One should also consider the high degree of German influence on  
323 the European Union and its Arctic policy.

324 **Italy.** After receiving the observer status in the AC, the Italian Ministry of Foreign  
325 Affairs (*Farnesina*) was actively involved in the Arctic affairs. At the end of 2015,  
326 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Italian Republic published a first version of

327 Italy's Strategy for the Arctic "Towards an Italian strategy for the Arctic – National  
328 Guidelines" (Verso una strategia italiana per l'Artico, 2015). The text contains  
329 historical background and purpose of the modern Italy's presence in the Arctic.  
330 According to the document, the Italian activities in the Arctic are in the so-called  
331 "five dimensions": political, environmental, social-humanitarian (human), research,  
332 and economic. This document can be considered an attempt to formulate the  
333 strategic interests of the Republic in the Arctic in the future. According to this  
334 document modern Italian activities in the Arctic are realized at several levels:  
335 international, national, and informal.

336 At this stage Italy aims at strengthening its position in the Arctic Council. Italy  
337 participates in the work of the Arctic Council at all levels: from the Task forces to  
338 Working groups, where it has an opportunity to make its significant contribution to  
339 the development of various areas of cooperation.

340 In the document mentioned above special attention is paid to the key role of the  
341 European Union in the field of protection of the Arctic environment and sustainable  
342 development. Italy sees itself as the "conductor" of European interests in the region  
343 (Caruso, 2014). Italy has been granted the observer status of the AC while the  
344 European Union was denied it. But like other European countries-observers – EU  
345 members (e.g., France, Germany), Italy has consistently advocated the importance of  
346 the EU involvement in solving urgent problems of the Arctic region and supports the  
347 idea of giving the observer status to the EU.

348 Italy, as a member of the AC, is ready to develop bilateral cooperation with the  
349 Arctic states in various fields: from scientific cooperation to economic cooperation.  
350 Italy's key partners in the region are Norway and Russia. Besides Italy has  
351 established informal relations with the Saami Council. Italy holds regular informal  
352 consultations with other non-Arctic countries (e.g., China) on topical issues of  
353 development of the region.

354 At the national level, according to the document, the government of Italy intends  
355 to continue to support Italian research centers working on Arctic projects. In 2018,  
356 the Arctic Research Program for the three-year period 2018–2020 was approved, the  
357 financing of which was for the first time provided for by the state budget of the  
358 Republic. Italy's leading centers for Arctic scientific research are National Research  
359 Council of Italy (*Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR)*), the National Institute of  
360 geophysics and volcano studies (*Istituto Nazionale di Geologia e Vulcanologia*  
361 (*INGV*)), the National Institute of oceanography and marine geophysics (*Istituto*  
362 *Nazionale di Oceanografia e Geofisica Sperimentale (OGS)*), the National mete-  
363 orological institute (*Istituto Nazionale di Ricerca Meteorologica (INRIM)*), the National  
364 Institute of astrophysics (*Istituto Nazionale di Astrofisica (INAF)*), and Italy's Uni-  
365 versities (e.g., *l'Università di Roma La Sapienza*) (Novello, 2014).

366 Italy pays particular attention to involvement in the Arctic Economic Council,  
367 established in 2013. For Italy it is a good opportunity to deepen business contacts  
368 with other Arctic players. In this context it is interesting to mention such Italian  
369 initiative as the "Arctic table" ("*Tavolo Artico*"), which at the national level repre-  
370 sents a number of informal events to exchange views with representatives of Italian  
371 business and civil society. As an Italian expert M. Tornetta remarks, "ENI has

372 become the first foreign stakeholder in the Norwegian part of the Arctic, this  
373 company develops there Italy's first offshore project 'Goliat', which is set to enter  
374 the operational stage soon" (Torretto, 2014: 16). Nowadays ENI is implementing  
375 projects in the three Arctic regions – in Norway (the Barents Sea), Russia (Yamal),  
376 and in Alaska. ENI features one of the largest Italian companies to valiantly carry out  
377 projects in environment protection and education (The Climate Challenge in the  
378 Arctic, 2013). Many Italian companies following suit of ENI, the biggest Italian  
379 energy company, are ever more manifesting their interest in the Arctic: for instance,  
380 BECROMAL, Magma Energy Italia, Valvitalia, Telespazio, and others. Most of the  
381 mentioned companies develop oil and gas fields, and high technologies.

382 After all, Italy is one of the crucial maritime powers, by virtue whereof it has  
383 formidable experience both in navigation and shipbuilding. It is interesting to  
384 underline that the Italian Navy has been actively involved in major research projects  
385 since 2017 (e.g., the "High North" program).

386 To conclude, at this stage, the primary objective of Italy's policy in the Arctic  
387 boils down to gain a foothold in the Arctic Council and region in general through the  
388 active engagement of Italy in multilateral and bilateral Arctic cooperation. Italy  
389 considers the EU must have an increasingly important role in the Arctic cooperation.  
390 Undoubtedly, Italy takes a holistic approach to its Arctic diplomacy, successfully  
391 combining the rich history and available modern scientific and technological  
392 potentials.

393 **France.** Following the example of the other European Union and European  
394 member states of the Arctic Council, French policy follows the main lines defined  
395 in the framework of the EEAS (EU Arctic Policy, 2021).

396 *In June 2016, France adopted its National Roadmap for the Arctic (Le grand défi*  
397 *de l'arctique, 2016), which sets out the country's basic interests in the region and*  
398 *delineates the principal trends and priorities of its Arctic policies in the coming*  
399 *years.* The Roadmap defines France as a polar state and a leading Arctic actor. The  
400 idea has been supported by politicians over the last few years, most of all by the  
401 academic community. The Roadmap for France's action in the Arctic is based on a  
402 threefold geographical, cultural, environmental, and economic logic. The Arctic  
403 regions are located between 2500 and 5000 km from the French coast, "which, for  
404 a maritime power like France, which has the second-largest maritime domain in the  
405 world, remains relatively close. The Arctic Ocean thus appears as the natural  
406 extension of the North Atlantic, which bathes the western coastline" (Le grand  
407 défi de l'arctique, 2016). Thus, France's geographical distance from the Arctic is  
408 not considered a serious obstacle to its participation in Arctic affairs (Gadal, 2015).  
409 Moreover, for France, the Arctic is an "environmentally sensitive area" where  
410 "national interests should be determined while taking common interests and a  
411 sustainable development policy into account" (Le grand défi de l'arctique, 2016).

412 The National Roadmap comprises seven sections that consistently describe the  
413 principal tenets of France's long-term Arctic strategy (academic research and coop-  
414 eration; economic opportunities and cooperation; defense and security issues; pro-  
415 tecting Arctic marine life; the French presence at international Arctic forums; the EU  
416 and the Arctic; national and common interests in the Arctic) and practical

417 recommendations on implementing the strategy. The National Roadmap states that  
418 France has a broad range of interests in the Arctic, which cover various areas from  
419 research and economy to politics and defense, and France intends to support them.

420 However, it should be noted several important points in the French “road map”:  
421 promoting the interests of the European Union in the region; like other European  
422 non-Arctic states, France cares greatly about its status as an Arctic actor, which is  
423 legitimized by its participation in the Arctic Council; and the most interesting point  
424 is that France, unlike most European non-Arctic states, pays particular attention in its  
425 strategy to the issues of defense and security and intends to participate actively in this  
426 area of Arctic cooperation; finally, France calls for active Arctic participation by  
427 countries outside the polar zone: China, Poland, South Korea, Singapore, and other  
428 possible consumers of Arctic resources. Thus, Paris views the Arctic as an area of  
429 both national and global interests (Lagutina, 2016).

430 France’s Arctic policy is based on priorities in order of importance:

- 431 (a) The research and scientific cooperation. This involves both national and bilateral  
432 research programs between states, as well as those of the European Union.
- 433 (b) The economic cooperation with energy, mining and fishing resources, tourism,  
434 infrastructure, and perhaps in the future, Europe-Asia maritime exchanges  
435 (North sea roads) if the questions of economic profitability and free circulation  
436 in the Arctic Ocean (open ocean on the model of the Mediterranean for example)  
437 are resolved.
- 438 (c) The defense through its commitments within NATO and the EU, and the  
439 protection of its national interests.
- 440 (d) The contribution to the protection of the environment and biodiversity.
- 441 (e) The European Union and the Arctic policy support.

442 French Total is the leading foreign company in Norway, a country that will  
443 provide 36 percent of France’s gas consumption in 2019, ahead of Russia with  
444 20 percent. France is the second-largest importer of Norwegian salmon behind  
445 Poland, with the Carrefour group controlling a significant portion of exports. In  
446 Russia, the Yamal Peninsula will account for 25 percent of the Federation’s GDP in  
447 2020 with the exploitation of gas; gas extraction could not be done without the  
448 technical and technological assistance of Total which it is dependent on.

449 Unlike in Great Britain or the Russian Federation, French diplomacy and econ-  
450 omy are dissociated. The economic interests of French industrial groups do not  
451 merge with those of diplomacy and the state.

452 The scientific and academic cooperation is particularly intense with Canada,  
453 Scandinavian countries, and Finland, through bilateral cooperation and the  
454 European Union with common scientific bases, especially in Norway, Sweden  
455 (joint space reception bases of CNES – *the Centre national des études spatiales* –  
456 for example), and Canada, weak with the Russian Federation. The Institute Paul-  
457 Emile Victor (IPEV) ensures the scientific coordination of French scientific and  
458 academic activities with the Ministry of Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE). It  
459 remains that the coordination of scientific and academic activity, beyond the

460 common scientific infrastructure shared with Canada, the USA, Germany, the  
461 European Union, and the Scandinavian countries, paradoxically often remains  
462 unclear in terms of the scientific “task force” by a large number of academics and  
463 researchers involved in Arctic studies. It is, as for Germany, imposing and surpassing  
464 that of the Scandinavian countries. This partial lack of visibility is partly due to the  
465 policy of autonomy implemented at the end of the 2000s by the universities and  
466 research units, which depend for the most part on the CNRS (*Centre national de la*  
467 *recherche scientifique*). The state and the MEAE no longer have direct control over  
468 these units.

469 In addition, academics and researchers have developed their networks and pro-  
470 grams of academic and scientific cooperation, which do not necessarily go through  
471 the IPEV, the CNRS, or the MEAE services which must ensure their follow-up.  
472 Although very significant, the French academic and scientific presence sometimes  
473 appears fragmented, atomized, especially in the Russian Federation where it is in any  
474 case still insignificant, even more so than in Germany. Driven by funding and  
475 research programs, it is part of the definition of the objectives of the Arctic policy  
476 of the European Union and ensures the presence of France in the Arctic.

477 To conclude, France positions itself as a global player aiming to promote the  
478 general interest of the Arctic, and those of the Arctic territories of the European  
479 Union countries. As such, it participates in the various international instances  
480 dealing with the Arctic and supports the entry of the European Union as a permanent  
481 member of the Arctic Council: the EU is de facto a key preeminent territorial,  
482 economic, scientific, political, and diplomatic actor, with three Arctic countries as  
483 permanent members of the Arctic Council, and six observer non-Arctic countries in  
484 addition to Great Britain and Switzerland, which have similar Arctic policies that  
485 overlap with those of the EU.

486 **Spain.** Despite the fact that Spain has also received an observer status in the AC,  
487 its policy in the Arctic is not active. However, there is obvious interest to the region  
488 due to the fact that Spain has historically been the largest maritime power. In  
489 addition, today Spain is the owner of the largest fishing fleet in the EU.

490 The concern about the effects of climate change and the need for energy resources  
491 have contributed to Spain’s interest in participating in the Arctic cooperation. Spain  
492 annually sends its expeditions to the Arctic in order to study the effects of the impact  
493 of climate change (Almazova-Ilyina et al., 2020: 2). In 2016, Spain published  
494 “Guidelines for a Spanish Polar Strategy,” where the strategic significance of Spain’s  
495 presence is substantiated not only in the Antarctic but also in the Arctic. As for the  
496 Arctic, first of all, the document notes the importance of Spain’s wide participation in  
497 Arctic international cooperation in various fields (e.g., scientific research, environ-  
498 mental protection, natural reserves, energy, industry, resources, polar technologies,  
499 bioprospecting, tourism, transport, fishery, and support for the lifestyles and cultures  
500 of the indigenous Arctic populations) and international organizations: first of all, in  
501 the AC, as well as in the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), of which  
502 Spain became a member in 2009, also Spain is an observer at the CBSS (Council of  
503 the Baltic Shore States). In 2011 the Spanish government appointed the Ambassador  
504 in charge of Arctic Affairs (Grinyaev et al., 2014: 24–25).

505 Besides that, among the priorities of Spain's policy in the Arctic are: "foster  
506 peacekeeping, environmental protection and security in the polar regions, as well as  
507 the development of scientific and technical polar research in the framework of  
508 international cooperation" (Guidelines for a Spanish Polar Strategy, 2016). A lot  
509 of attention in the document is paid to the development of polar scientific research in  
510 order to find solutions in the fight against the consequences of global climate change.  
511 For Arctic exploration, Spain has the "Hesperides" under the Spanish navy and the  
512 "Las Palmas" (Antyushina, 2016: 81). Research results are stored at National Polar  
513 Data Centers.

514 Special attention is paid to the important role of the EU in Arctic affairs and  
515 Spain's intention to actively participate in the implementation of the common  
516 European Arctic policy.

517 As for as the institutionalization of Spain's Arctic policy is concerned, the  
518 Spanish Polar Committee should be mentioned here. Polar research in Spain, in  
519 general, and in the Arctic, in particular, is based on the research platforms of Spanish  
520 universities, including the Polytechnic University of Madrid, University of Barcelo-  
521 lona, etc., and they are funded in part or in full by the EU.

522 At the level of bilateral relations, Spain actively cooperates with such Arctic  
523 countries as Canada, the USA, Norway, and Iceland; there is also an interest in  
524 cooperation with Russia in the field of securing safe energy supply. In the meantime,  
525 the main area of bilateral cooperation is joint research. Spain's interests in energy  
526 cooperation and tourism development at this stage are poorly realized in practice.

527 Thus, today Spain is difficult to define as an active player in Arctic cooperation,  
528 with the exception of Spain's participation in scientific cooperation. Nevertheless,  
529 the goals and objectives stated in the Arctic strategy published in 2016 suggest that  
530 in the future, the degree of Spain's participation in Arctic cooperation will increase in  
531 environmental security, energy, fishery, and tourism.

532 **The Netherlands.** As in the case of Spain, the Netherlands assumes that the  
533 country is the largest maritime power: "About 10 per cent of all Dutch maritime  
534 activities are related to the Arctic" (Factsheet, 2016).

535 The first document defining the polar strategy of the Netherlands was *Dutch*  
536 *Polar Strategy*, published in 2016. The post of Arctic Ambassador was created  
537 according to the Polar Strategy 2016–2020. In 2020, a new document was adopted  
538 – "The Netherlands' Polar Strategy 2021–2025. Prepared for Change." The Nether-  
539 lands also views the Arctic as part of its polar strategy, along with Antarctica, so the  
540 document addresses the country's priorities in the two polar regions. The text of the  
541 Strategy emphasizes that the Netherlands views both poles "as global public goods  
542 (also known as global commons)" due to the importance of the changes taking place  
543 in these regions. The Netherlands' polar policy, according to the texts of the  
544 Strategies 2016 and 2020, is based on "three key concepts: sustainability, interna-  
545 tional cooperation and scientific research." Based on this, the priority areas of the  
546 Dutch polar policy included "protect the ecosystems and environment of the polar  
547 regions, strengthen international cooperation and ensure that economic activity is  
548 sustainable" (The Netherlands' Polar Strategy 2021–2025).

549 The main motive for the Netherlands' participation in Arctic cooperation, as in  
550 the case of most non-Arctic countries, is climate change and its consequences for the  
551 entire planet, as well as new economic opportunities that are opening up as a result of  
552 melting ice and the current geopolitical situation in the region. Moreover, the text of  
553 Strategy 2020 notes that the situation with climate change has deteriorated signifi-  
554 cantly since the publication of the first Strategy of the Netherlands in 2016. In the  
555 Arctic, the main focus of the Danish authorities is on "the protection of human  
556 interests, the environment, and international security and stability" (The Nether-  
557 lands' Polar Strategy 2021–2025).

558 Along with the importance of ensuring environmental security in the region, the  
559 Netherlands' Strategy pays special attention to military security issues. The Nether-  
560 lands is concerned about a possible increase in tensions in the Arctic, caused by the  
561 global geopolitical situation. However, at the same time, they note the importance of  
562 establishing a direct dialogue between Russia and NATO on these issues in order to  
563 raise awareness of the intentions and actions of each other. At the same time, the  
564 activity of China in the Arctic causes some concern in the Netherlands.

565 The Netherlands tries to actively participate in Arctic cooperation both at the  
566 multilateral level, supporting the central role of the AC in Arctic affairs, and in the  
567 field of security in the region – supporting NATO, and bilaterally. As part of the  
568 development of bilateral relations, the Netherlands gives priority to cooperation with  
569 the European Arctic countries and the EU, which is regarded as an important player  
570 in the Arctic region. Then it is noted that "the EU is a *de facto* participant in all  
571 activities in which official observers like the Netherlands participate" and "The  
572 Netherlands is in favour of giving the EU official observer status at the Arctic  
573 Council."

574 The Netherlands is represented in the Arctic at the level of business companies as  
575 well (e.g., Van Oord, Tideway), whose interest is aimed at such areas as fishing,  
576 tourism, and resource extraction in the Arctic (the Netherlands has accumulated rich  
577 experience in deep-sea drilling and experience in dismantling old oil and gas  
578 platforms), prospects for using the NSR, the Northwest Passage and the Transpolar  
579 Sea Route. Knowledge institutions and NGOs are also involved in the implementa-  
580 tion of the polar policy, together with representatives of a number of ministries (the  
581 Ministry of Foreign Affairs which is the coordinator of the activity of other mini-  
582 stries, such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Climate Policy, the Ministry of  
583 Infrastructure and Water Management, the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food  
584 Quality, the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science)  
585 "have formed the Dutch Arctic Circle (DAC), which informally shares knowledge  
586 regarding Arctic activities." This network approach is seen as very promising for the  
587 Netherlands' participation in Arctic cooperation.

588 Summing up, it can be noted that the Netherlands has recently been very actively  
589 interested in the Arctic, and not only in such traditional areas as scientific research  
590 and ensuring the environmental security of the region, its sustainable development  
591 and governance, but also in the field of military security. The threat of increased  
592 tension in the region, a possible geopolitical conflict between Western countries and  
593 Russia, as well as China's activity in the region, cause serious concerns in the

594 Netherlands. This is mainly due to the fact that the Netherlands views the Arctic as a  
595 region whose development has global implications.

596 **Poland.** Poland presents one more case of a non-Arctic country that received  
597 observer status in the AC largely due to its active participation in scientific research  
598 in the Arctic. The basis of current Polish policy in the Arctic is mainly based on the  
599 country's active scientific activities. Poland is represented in the Scientific Commit-  
600 tee on Antarctic Research, International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), the  
601 sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON), the European Polar Board, and  
602 the Svalbard Science Forum (Głowacki, 2021). The main priorities of Poland's  
603 polar scientific research in the Arctic and Antarctic are reflected in "Strategy for  
604 Polish Polar Research 2017–2027".

605 Since 2008, Poland has consistently formulated its position on the Arctic,  
606 outlining its main priorities in the region in 2008 and 2010 in the framework of  
607 the AC Deputy Ministers Meeting:

- 608 • Recognition of the key role of the AC in Arctic affairs and an active participation
- 609 of Polish experts in the working groups of the AC.
- 610 • Recognition of the international principles enshrined in the 1982 UN Convention
- 611 on the Law of the Sea.
- 612 • Supporting the principle of freedom of scientific research in the Arctic.
- 613 • Support for the policy of protecting the natural environment of the region and
- 614 minimizing the negative consequences of climate change.
- 615 • Support for harmonious cooperation between AC member states and observer
- 616 states (Łuszczuk, 2012).

617 In 2011, Poland announced four pillars of its Arctic policy:

- 618 1. Compliance with applicable legal and regulatory obligations and developing an
- 619 international framework of various agreements relating to the cooperation in the
- 620 Arctic in science and another fields
- 621 2. Active participation in the development of European policy toward the Arctic
- 622 3. Co-operation with the Arctic Council
- 623 4. Development of public diplomacy relating to the polar issues (Łuszczuk, 2012)

624 As we mentioned before, Poland has not issued an Arctic strategy document with  
625 national priorities for the Arctic region. However, the article "Poland's Policy  
626 towards the Arctic: Key Areas and Priority Actions" was published by the Polish  
627 Institute of International Affairs (PISM) in 2015, and in this paper, Poland's key  
628 interests in the region are outlined, but this article does not have the status of an  
629 official strategy. Thus, according to the document "from the polish standpoint, the  
630 key issue is active participation in regional cooperation institutions, the most signif-  
631 icant of which is the Arctic Council" (Poland's Policy towards the Arctic, 2015). One  
632 of the interesting initiatives of Poland in this regard is the organization of the  
633 so-called the Warsaw Format Meetings – meetings of non-Arctic observer countries  
634 of the AC and the country presiding in the AC, which are held twice a year. Thus,

635 Poland manifests itself as an active participant in the organization of Arctic cooperation.  
636 In addition to the AC, Poland is an observer in the Barents Euro-Arctic  
637 Council since 1993.

638 As far as the priority areas of Polish interests in Arctic cooperation is concerned,  
639 along with international scientific cooperation and scientific diplomacy, one should  
640 mention the protection of the Arctic environment and the fight against the conse-  
641 quences of climate change, the socioeconomic development of the region (formulation  
642 and implementation of the Go Arctic initiative), and participation in the  
643 extraction of Arctic resources (including energy), Poland is showing its interest in  
644 the development of the northern sea routes and fishing. In this regard, it is interesting  
645 to note that Poland defines itself as “a leading builder of ships suited to the difficult  
646 Arctic conditions” and “a major Baltic transshipment and destination port from the  
647 point of view of sea transit between Europe and Asia” (Poland’s Policy towards the  
648 Arctic, 2015). Polish experts note that Poland’s participation in Arctic affairs “should  
649 be seen through the prism of the Baltic Sea region <...> that is interconnected”  
650 (Graczyk, 2012: 143) with the arctic region. In other words, we have seen a clear  
651 expansion of Poland’s Arctic agenda in recent years, which indicates the country’s  
652 ambitions in the region.

653 It should be noted that Poland sees its Arctic policy in close connection with the  
654 EU’s interests and policies in the region: “Cooperation with the EU on Arctic matters  
655 could become an important aspect of Polish Arctic policy” (Poland’s Policy towards  
656 the Arctic, 2015). Thus, Poland, like other non-Arctic European observer countries,  
657 intends to promote the interests of the EU as a whole through its Arctic policy and  
658 strongly supports the idea of EU integration into the Arctic Governance system  
659 (Graczyk, 2012: 144, 147). Poland’s priority is also the development of cooperation  
660 with all European Observers in the AC, exchange of experience and good practices.  
661 As for as the Arctic countries are concerned, special attention is paid to countries  
662 such as Norway and Iceland.

663 One more important initiative of Poland is “to establish an inter-ministerial  
664 coordination framework cooperating with representatives from academic, business  
665 and non-governmental sectors with an Arctic agenda.” Although at this stage the  
666 economic activity of Poland is very limited, nevertheless, Polish companies are  
667 showing interest in participating in exploration works in the Barents Sea and  
668 Greenland. Mostly Polish companies (e.g., Emag, Fasing, Komag) are focused on  
669 equipment suppliers. In addition, Polish companies act as sub-contractors, for  
670 example, in the Norwegian project the Melkoya LNG plant.

671 As for the institutionalization of Polish policy in the Arctic, the following should  
672 be noted here: in 2006, a special position of Ambassador for Polar Affairs was set up  
673 (Graczyk, 2012: 144), and in 2012, a working group on polar issues was created  
674 under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Poland – Polar Task Force (*Grupa Robocza*  
675 *do spraw Polarnych przy Ministerstwie Spraw Zagranicznych*) (Arkticheskiye  
676 strategii: energetika, bezopasnost’, ekologiya i klimat 2020), which plays a coordi-  
677 nating role between all interested parties (representatives of official authorities,  
678 scientists, and public figures).

679 Thus, the Arctic policy of Poland is mainly determined by its scientific interests  
680 and the desire to develop its scientific diplomacy. In the submitted documents,  
681 Poland did not indicate its interests in such sensitive areas from the point of view  
682 of the Arctic countries as the sphere of military security or the economic activity in  
683 the region, thereby not creating grounds for concern on the part of the Arctic  
684 countries. At the same time, the Polish approach to Arctic cooperation can be  
685 characterized as practice-oriented, based on a realistic assessment of its potential  
686 in the region.

687 Finally, **Switzerland** is a very new actor in the Arctic, which, like many other  
688 non-Arctic countries, justifies its interest in the region with its scientific activities  
689 aimed at studying the impact of climate change, the consequences of ice melting, and  
690 the impact of these processes on the situation in the Swiss Alps. Drawing parallels  
691 between the Arctic and the Alps, the Swiss define their country as a “vertical Arctic”  
692 (Estermann, 2019). The main research center is the Swiss Polar Institute, established  
693 in 2016, which acts as a coordinator between government agencies and 15 research  
694 institutions involved in polar research (Todorov, 2018: 13).

695 As an observer country in the AC, Swiss researchers actively joined the work of  
696 three working groups – the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP),  
697 the Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME), and the Sustainable  
698 Development Working Group (SDWG), and also began to take an active part in  
699 the Warsaw Format meetings.

700 In 2019, the Swiss Head of the Sectoral Foreign Policies Division, Ambassador  
701 Stefan Estermann, during his plenary session at the Arctic Circle Assembly session,  
702 presented the first pillars of a Swiss Polar Policy:

- 703 1. Support Swiss Arctic research and education institutions
- 704 2. Promote international scientific cooperation
- 705 3. Leverage foundations and private sector capabilities
- 706 4. Engage in the international dialogue on the Arctic
- 707 5. Promote actions tackling environmental challenges
- 708 6. Show solidarity with indigenous peoples and inhabitants (Estermann, 2019)

709 Switzerland views the Arctic as a region of cooperation, free from any kind of  
710 confrontation, a region of multilateral cooperation and sustainable development.

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## 711 **EU in the Arctic: The International Dimension**

712 Almost all European observer countries in the AC consistently support the EU in its  
713 aspiration to actively participate in Arctic affairs and try to actively participate in  
714 European Arctic initiatives. It is the observer countries that are today a kind of  
715 conductors of the EU’s interests in the Arctic.

716 However, the EU is a newcomer to the Arctic region, therefore it acts cautiously,  
717 through the so-called “soft” power, which is based on the ideology of sustainable  
718 development and innovation. The concept of “Arctic region,” presented in various

719 EU documents, for example, in the *Communiqué of the European Commission 2008*,  
720 refers to the territories around the North Pole. These are the territories of the Arctic  
721 Ocean and eight countries – Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia,  
722 Sweden, and the USA (EU Arctic Policy, 2021: 6–15; European Parliament resolu-  
723 tion of 12 March 2014 on the EU strategy for the Arctic, 2014; European Parliament  
724 resolution of 16 March 2017 on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic  
725 2017: 156–169).

726 The very notion of “EU Arctic policy” raises questions, since the EU talks about  
727 its Arctic status solely thanks to the EU member Denmark, although the Arctic  
728 territory of Denmark – Greenland – is not part of the EU following the 1982  
729 referendum. The EU also proves its involvement in the Arctic through Finland and  
730 Sweden, which are members of the Arctic Council. At the same time, other European  
731 members of the Arctic Council with whom the EU actively cooperates in the region –  
732 Iceland and Norway – are not EU members. Based on these provisions, the organi-  
733 zational (institutional) activities of the EU in relation to the Arctic seem to be  
734 somewhat contradictory.

735 First of all, the EU does not have legal instruments for the implementation of full-  
736 scale initiatives, since it is not a member of the Arctic Council. Moreover, the EU’s  
737 interest in the Arctic was not received positively by other states adjoining the region,  
738 but rather caused some concern in the countries with Arctic status. Obviously, for the  
739 countries of the Arctic Council, the EU is an incomprehensible player with an  
740 unclear strategy.

741 However, the EU is a member of a number of organizations important for the  
742 development of the Arctic. Thus, the EU signed the UN Convention on the Law of  
743 the Sea and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. All EU member  
744 states have become members of the International Maritime Organization at the UN,  
745 and the European Commission has observer status there. In addition, the EU  
746 participates in other international organizations that periodically raise issues about  
747 the Arctic, for example, the International Civil Aviation Organization (Integrated  
748 Arctic Policy, 2016). The EU is also an ad hoc observer to the Arctic Council.  
749 Therefore, the issue of the Union’s participation in the Arctic agenda is nevertheless  
750 resolved through three EU members, members of the Arctic Council (Denmark,  
751 Finland, and Sweden), as well as other EU countries that act as permanent observers  
752 with it (France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain, and Poland).

753 It is obvious that the EU does not make large-scale claims to be involved in the  
754 Arctic agenda and relies on complicity in financing research, environmental pro-  
755 grams, and projects in the field of sustainable development. Within the framework of  
756 the Arctic Council, the EU participates in six groups on environmental pollution,  
757 environmental monitoring, conservation of flora and fauna, protection of the marine  
758 environment, prevention of emergencies, and sustainable development. Also, EU  
759 representatives are actively working in the framework of task groups of the Arctic  
760 Council, formed on specific issues for a certain period of time.

761 Thus, EU officials are part of the teams on Arctic maritime cooperation, telecom-  
762 munications infrastructure, and scientific cooperation (Joint communication to the

763 European Parliament and the Council. An integrated European Union policy for the  
764 Arctic Brussels 2016).

765 In the person of the European Commission, the EU also participates in the  
766 working groups of the Barents / Euro-Arctic Council, primarily in the Transport  
767 Committee, since this region is included in the EU transport zone. Within the  
768 framework of the Barents / Euro-Arctic Council, the EU is present at meetings of  
769 foreign ministers, as well as in working groups on economic cooperation, environ-  
770 ment, transport, forestry, tourism, education, and support for indigenous peoples.  
771 Also, EU representatives participate in the meetings of the Barents Regional Council,  
772 primarily in the groups on logistics, environment, and investments. Thus, the EU  
773 seeks to establish multilateral, regional, and sub-regional cooperation with many and  
774 different participants in the Arctic dialogue. At the same time, the EU is trying to  
775 interact not only with states but also with Arctic societies through programs on  
776 climate, sustainable development, research, etc. (International Cooperation on Arctic  
777 Matters, 2017).

778 Interaction with partners in the framework of the Arctic Dialogue on behalf of the  
779 EU is carried out by the External Action Service, as well as by a number of  
780 Directorates General of the EU Commission related to maritime, fishery, energy,  
781 and climate issues. The European Parliament has created a committee dealing with  
782 Arctic issues, which participates in the work of the International Standing Commit-  
783 tee of parliamentarians of the Arctic region. In addition, the EU has created its own  
784 programs to address issues on the Arctic agenda.

785 For example, the Northern Dimension is precisely the EU policy, which touches  
786 upon Arctic issues and the interests of many states with Arctic status – Russia,  
787 Norway, and Iceland. Within the framework of the Northern Dimension, issues  
788 related to the environment, transport, cultural development, intensification of eco-  
789 nomic development, and competitiveness of the Nordic countries are being  
790 addressed (1st panel session: High-Level Arctic event “A sustainable Arctic –  
791 innovative approaches”, 2018: 11–21). The Northern Dimension Program has  
792 played a positive role in cooperation between the EU and other Nordic states.  
793 However, this direction has not become a key one in the development of the Arctic  
794 and the EU’s Arctic policy. However, thanks to the joint programs of Russia and  
795 Finland, the EU continues to cooperate with Russia on many issues related to the  
796 Arctic region. For example, the EU and Russia are the main donors of the Northern  
797 Dimension Environmental Partnership Fund (Lipponen, 2015: 8–18; Perez &  
798 Yaneva, 2016: 441–449).

799 Another program affecting the EU’s Arctic direction is the Integrated Maritime  
800 Development Policy program. One of its goals is to develop clear EU interests in the  
801 Arctic (EU Arctic Policy, 2021). Its adoption coincided with the intensification of  
802 Russia’s activity, promoting its Arctic agenda. All this convinced the EU that it  
803 needed an Arctic policy. However, the EU remains mainly focused on environmental  
804 protection and sustainable development.

805 The Interreg program is an additional important tool for developing the Arctic  
806 agenda for the EU. For example, “the Gulf of Bothnia-Atlantic project,” funded  
807 within its framework, is aimed at cooperation between Sweden, Finland, and

808 Norway in the development of the Northern Sea Route, environmental protection,  
809 and the cultural heritage of the Arctic. Another Interreg project, “Sweden-Norway,”  
810 aims to strengthen the economic position of the northern territories. ~~Contributes to~~  
811 ~~the development of the Arctic agenda and~~ The project “Baltic Sea Region,” which AU4  
812 promotes the idea of integrated development of the territory, ~~since~~ the Baltic is seen  
813 by the EU as a gateway to the Arctic. Here we also mention the project “Northern  
814 Periphery and the Arctic,” which operated in the period 2014–2020 and contributed  
815 to the creation of sustainable growth in the northern and Arctic regions. One more  
816 project, “InterregNord,” is aimed at the integrated development of the northern  
817 regions. In addition, EU structural and investment funds, primarily the European  
818 Regional Development Fund, are involved in financing the Arctic and northern  
819 territories. To coordinate various EU programs in Northern Europe in 2017 the  
820 post of Ambassador-at-Large was established in relation to the Arctic. Undoubtedly,  
821 the gradual growth of EU projects in the northern, subarctic, and arctic territories  
822 demonstrates the steady evolution of both EU policy and its interests in this region.

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## 823 EU Versus the EU States: An Integrative Arctic Policy

824 The European Union’s Arctic policy is based on two axes: its policy that applies to  
825 the whole of the European Union and its specific policy linked to the Arctic. Carried  
826 by the common ideals (social democracy, economic liberalism, freedom, and envi-  
827 ronment) shared by the member countries, the policy carried out by the EU refrain  
828 from encroaching on the very sovereign rights of the EU Arctic states while  
829 providing answers and operational support to the human, economic, and territorial  
830 Arctic development problems of the latter at the local and regional levels.

831 The EU policy in the European Arctic regions is merged with the general policy  
832 conducted in the Union. However, it is subject to regional adjustments in response to  
833 human and development issues in the Arctic regions of Finland, Sweden, and  
834 Denmark, at the request of these three states. It is common to all EU member  
835 countries in economic, regulatory, developmental, social, human, political, ecolog-  
836 ical, etc. terms. For example, it has imposed on Finland and Sweden (but also on  
837 Norway, which did not vote to join the EU), the recognition of indigenous peoples  
838 such as the Sámi, with the implementation of ad hoc policies in terms of sustainable  
839 development at the regional and local levels, a certain degree of political self-  
840 government (diluted in Norway and Sweden by the membership of the Arctic  
841 peoples in the national political parties), and strict environmental standards for  
842 mining.

843 It is also expressed through active politics at the regional level. In addition to  
844 active support for regional development policies in the Arctic (or not), these are  
845 reinforced by actions aimed at regional integration through intra-European (Finland-  
846 Sweden) and inter-European (with the Russian Federation – which has been  
847 excluded since 2014 – and Norway) cross-border cooperation, in particular through  
848 operational tools such as the Interreg programs. It is one of the common action levers  
849 of the policy conducted by the European Union to strengthen cooperation and

850 regional integration between the Arctic territories of the EU and their close  
851 neighbors.

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## 852 **Specificity of the General EU Arctic Policy**

853 The third lever of the European Arctic policy is the one for which the European  
854 External Action Service (EEAS) is mandated. As such, it is in many respects merged  
855 with the Arctic policies of the member states, whether they are permanent members  
856 or observers of the Arctic Council, for example – and vice versa: the Arctic policies  
857 of the member states involved in polar and sub-Arctic issues are merged with those  
858 of the EU and its diplomatic arm, the EEAS. The convergence of the actions carried  
859 out by the EU and the EU states (but also by the UK and Switzerland) can be broken  
860 down into two scientific and socio-territorial themes that respond to the primary  
861 concerns of the Arctic Council by promoting interregional and international coop-  
862 eration. The scientific and science-diplomacy instruments play a central role. In this  
863 respect, science (diplomacy) as an instrument for understanding the dynamics  
864 underway, societal and environmental issues, as well as in decision-making and  
865 cooperation, plays a key role. It relies on substantial European research budgets of  
866 several tens of millions of euros. The two priority research areas are common to all  
867 the issues addressed by the international scientific community and the EU member  
868 states involved in Arctic research:

- 869 (a) Climate change and sustainable development issues in the Arctic regions are at  
870 the heart of the EU’s scientific, academic, economic, and diplomatic policy. It  
871 aims to better understand the processes and climate dynamics underway to guide  
872 European policies and legislation in terms of environmental policies as a whole,  
873 and more specifically in terms of economic, territorial, and societal development  
874 of the Arctic regions. It responds to the commitments made by the EU to the  
875 United Nations in the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Develop-  
876 ment (The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2021): “The Climate  
877 Change and the Arctic Environment to protect the Arctic and global biodiversity  
878 as well the livelihoods of Arctic inhabitants. [. . .] The importance of the rela-  
879 tionship between climate change and the Arctic has become very prominent in  
880 recent decades. Understanding climate dynamics in the context of the fragile  
881 Arctic environment, helping to develop specific strategies to mitigate and adapt  
882 to climate change in the Arctic, and safeguarding the Arctic environment are part  
883 of the EU’s wider efforts to the Arctic. These efforts are directed at activities at  
884 lower latitudes and in the Arctic. Science, research and innovation will play a  
885 key role in deepening our knowledge base and informing EU policy about the  
886 complex relationship between climate change and the Arctic” (EU Arctic Policy,  
887 2021).
- 888 (b) Sustainable Development in the Arctic. “While the Arctic region is rich in  
889 resources both on land and in the seas, the Arctic faces several challenges due  
890 among other things to its sparse population, limited logistical networks, and

891 fragile environmental conditions. The inhabitants of the Arctic are familiar with  
892 these conditions – however harsh they may seem to people living in lower  
893 latitudes – and have socio-economic aspirations for sustainable development  
894 under Arctic conditions. The indigenous peoples who have lived in various parts  
895 of this vast region for millennia have specific traditional knowledge and across  
896 the Arctic region, several forms of traditional livelihoods have developed over  
897 the centuries, not least reindeer herding, fishing, and hunting. As modern life has  
898 increasingly taken hold in Arctic regions, other forms of economic activity and  
899 technologies have been added. These include public administration and educa-  
900 tion, more intensive fishing, maritime and shipping operations, resource extrac-  
901 tion, research activities, tourism, telecommunications etc.” (EU Arctic Policy,  
902 2021).

903 If the emphasis is placed on preserving the way of life of the autochthonous  
904 populations, which are characterized by important socioeconomic evolution dynam-  
905 ics, nothing or almost nothing is said about the central question of the exploitation of  
906 natural resources. They are at the center of the economic policies of the EU member  
907 states as much as the preservation of the environment, the sustainable development  
908 of local populations, and the issues related to climate change.

909 If we talk about financing EU projects related to the Arctic, we will not be able to  
910 give an exact figure, since not all of the projects are completely aimed exclusively at  
911 the Arctic region. For example, the projects of the Northern Dimension concern not  
912 only the Arctic territories but the whole European North. ~~Although it is within the~~  
913 ~~framework of the Northern Dimension that the bulk of programs with an arctic flavor~~  
914 ~~is being implemented.~~ Some research programs of the EU, as well as projects related  
915 to the life of the indigenous backgammon in the Arctic, are of a purely Arctic  
916 character.

917 If we talk about specific figures, we note that in the completed seven-year budget  
918 cycle from 2014 to 2020, it was for research work in the region that more than  
919 1 billion euros were allocated from the EU structural and investment funds. Basi-  
920 cally, these funds were implemented within the framework of the Northern Dimen-  
921 sion. It is interesting that for the program period 2014–2020. The EU has allocated  
922 15.4 billion euros for various projects of the Northern Dimension in general, not only  
923 of a scientific nature (Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme 2014–2020).  
924 During 2007–2013 the EU has also funded projects to support the indigenous  
925 peoples of the Arctic. For example, it allocated more than 1 billion euros for this  
926 task during the specified period, and taking into account co-financing from the states  
927 participating in the project (states participating in the Northern Dimension), the  
928 amount increased to 2 billion euros. However, after 2020, the financial capacity  
929 associated with the Arctic has been revised. Currently, the “close neighborhood”  
930 programs in Eastern Europe and North Africa are identified as priority funding. At  
931 present, the exact amount of funding for Arctic projects for the period from 2021 to  
932 2027 has not yet been indicated (Broczka & Broczka, 2018).

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**933 Conclusions**

934 To conclude, today all eight non-Arctic European countries have a wide set of  
935 interests in the Arctic cooperation (from scientific research and environmental safety  
936 to economic development, resource exploration, and security issues) and have taken  
937 an active role, although to a different degree, in Arctic affairs. This different degree  
938 of involvement of European observer countries is largely due to their historical  
939 experience of participation in the development of the Arctic, as well as their current  
940 potential (financial resources and technologies). Thus, among the most active par-  
941 ticipants in Arctic cooperation are the UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and France – a  
942 group of states which is interested not only in such traditional for non-Arctic states  
943 areas as scientific research, climate change, and environmental safety of the Arctic  
944 but also in the field of economic development of the region and military security that  
945 are more traditional spheres of the Arctic countries interests. These countries support  
946 the NATO’s participation in Arctic cooperation and consider NATO as the central  
947 link in building relations with the Five Arctic countries in the military-political  
948 context. This approach undoubtedly raises certain concerns in some Arctic countries.  
949 The second group of non-Arctic European states (Spain, Poland, Switzerland) pro-  
950 motes a “softer approach in their Arctic policy, preferring to continue to pay more  
951 attention to the development of scientific research in the region.

952 At the same time, it should be noted such a new format of cooperation as the  
953 so-called the Warsaw Format Meetings – meetings of non-Arctic observer countries  
954 of the AC and the country presiding in the AC. In the framework of these meetings  
955 the common positions of non-Arctic countries in relation to the Arctic are being  
956 agreed upon. It seems that non-Arctic countries try to form a community of  
957 non-Arctic countries within the system of Arctic governance. Here it is pertinent  
958 to note that non-Arctic European countries mainly view the Arctic as an area of both  
959 national and global interests and call for active Arctic participation by countries  
960 outside the polar zone and different non-state actors. The number one candidate for  
961 most non-Arctic European observers is the European Union.

962 Except for Great Britain and Switzerland, the strategies of all non-Arctic  
963 European observers note the leading role of the EU in Arctic affairs, they consis-  
964 tently advocate the importance of the EU involvement in solving urgent problems of  
965 the Arctic region and support the idea of giving the observer status to the  
966 EU. Although the EU is a newcomer to the Arctic region, therefore it acts cautiously,  
967 through the so-called “soft” power and the concept of “Arctic region” is presented in  
968 various EU documents since 2008. Despite the fact that the EU is not formally an  
969 observer in the Arctic Council, the EU, with three Arctic states, and six non-Arctic  
970 state’s observers, is de facto an Arctic player today.

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I've a double affiliation:

Aix-Marseille University, CNRS, ESPACE UMR 7300, Univ. Nice Sophia Antipolis, Avignon University, France, European Department of Ecology and Geography, Institute of Environment, North-Eastern Federal University, Republic of Sakha-Ya

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