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A New European Security Architecture?

Arctic Meltdown and EU Security: Challenges and Opportunities

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INTRODUCTION

Due to climate change, the polar ice caps are melting at an alarming rate. The ice levels are now at the lowest covering a much smaller area than 30 years ago and it is predicted that, if melting progresses at the current rate, the Arctic will be free of ice all year round by 2030. This change has brought attention of both Arctic and non-Arctic states. The untapped oil, gas and mineral resources like gold, silver, iron and diamonds situated in the Arctic region and the opening up new sea routes for trade like the North-West Passage and the North-East Passage are quickly changing the geo-strategic importance of this region which in turn can potentially affect international stability including European security interests. While some see a northern Cold War in the making, others see new areas for constructive cooperation. The Arctic question has brought together hitherto exclusive and sometimes contradictory areas like trade, energy security, sovereignty and the fight against climate change.

The Arctic region has now been considered as the new ‘Northern Frontier’ for the neighboring states. Though the melting of ice caps has evoked world wide concern, but for the ‘big players’ of the region like Russia, Canada, Denmark, Norway and the US, it is however a great opportunity to claim the sovereignty over Arctic. In August 2007, during an expedition by a Russian Arktika submarine, a Russian flag was planted on the seabed of the North Pole which created alarm among other nations eyeing Arctic resources as well. The US termed it as a ‘land grab’ while the Russia has plans to send warships to patrol Arctic waters. Strategic objectives in turn have increased military activities in the region by Russia, Canada, the US and Denmark. Apart from the Arctic states, some global heavyweights having no or minimal geographical relations to the region like the EU, China and Japan and a number of non-state actors like NGOs, corporations, indigenous people and local authorities are also now involved in the Arctic affairs. But it is interesting to note that that all the players want to deal with Arctic issue under the existing legal frameworks rather than creating a new one. Though very late to wake up to the new realities at the Arctic front, the EU leaders are gradually recognising climate change as a fundamental challenge and preparing for greater coordination of the EU foreign and security policies and institutions. Addressing climate change related threats are an important part of EU’s preventive security policy. The Arctic has been identified as one of the vulnerable regions which can directly or indirectly threaten European security. But it can be observed that on a number of occasions, EU has been
sidelined by the other ‘big players’ on the Arctic front undermining its strategic interests.

Ecological change in the Arctic arising from the combined effects of climate change and development will have significant regional and global consequences. Some of them are already visible. Will this intertwined issue lead to cooperation or conflict among nations? The EU has to play a key role not only to secure its geo-strategic interests but also to safeguard the fragile eco-system of the Arctic.
CLIMATE CHANGE AND SECURITY

The earth’s system has demonstratively changed on both global and regional scales since the pre-industrial era, and there is stronger evidence that most of the changes observed over the last 50 years are attributable to human activities.\(^1\) More specifically, the causes are complex which includes local (e.g. local pollution; use of natural resources), regional (e.g. land use/eutrophication; air pollution) and global drivers (e.g. climate change, long-range transport of persistent organic pollutants; global resource demands)\(^2\).

Though some argue that the dynamics of interaction (mostly in the form of conflicts) over natural resources shared by at least two countries are driven by scarcity of whether resources in question are renewable or non-renewable\(^3\), the Neo-Malthusians model taking a more general view suggests that population pressure and high resource consumption lead to resource depletion and scarcity which in turn increase competition and eventually leads to full fledged armed conflicts.\(^4\)

The ‘securitisation of climate change’ which is more visible today was perhaps first pointed out by El-Hinnawi in 1985 linking climate change with conflict.\(^5\) Similarly, Homer-Dixon pointed out that environmental degradation causes and exacerbates armed conflicts as diverse as war, terrorism, diplomatic and even trade disputes.\(^6\) In the 1990s, climate change evolved as a non-traditional security concern with NATO observing that, “security and stability have political, economic, social and environmental elements as well as the indispensable defence dimension”.\(^7\)

However, in recent years it has been identified as a ‘major threat’ to international security and stability and even regarded as ‘mother of all security problems’.\(^8\) Rapid environmental change not only brings new challenges to

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ecosystems, but also puts pressure on global governance, bilateral relations and available legal frameworks. The security threat posed by climate change has caught the world’s political imagination, generating a perceptible shift in the way that a growing number of decision-makers in the North and the South are talking about the subject.\(^9\) In a major shift in the approach to climate change and security discourse, UN Security Council for the first time took up issues of climate change, energy and security in its meeting in April 2007.\(^{10}\)

Climate change has been recognised as a ‘threat multiplier’ having the potential to sever the already established threats to security.\(^{11}\) It can increase the competition for scarce natural resources\(^{12}\), territorial loss and claim over new territories, militarization of strategic natural resources, distrust among nations thereby retarding regional and international cooperation and increased pressure on global governance. The Arctic issue with its complexity of simultaneous cooperation and tension has emerged as a major case study of climate change and security discourse. But international relations analyses of the Arctic have often been limited and narrow, using either a traditional geopolitical analysis, or regime theory, or state-based security analysis, without seeing the important interconnections and insights between these perspectives. However, recent developments in the Arctic have shown that changes in the physical environment, such as the rapid decline of sea ice, can have profound effects on the international political climate.\(^{13}\)

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\(^{13}\) See no. 2.
IMPORTANCE OF ARCTIC

The Arctic issue has assumed importance as it has brought a sea change in the political discourse which can be observed from a previous atmosphere of cooperation to one today in which geopolitics and security interests have become much more dominant.14 For millennia, Arctic has remained a natural barrier separating continents, climate systems and civilisations. Though the Arctic Ocean is the smallest of the world’s five oceans, but it has the widest continental shelf of all the oceans. Climate change is occurring more rapidly in Arctic than in the rest of the world15 mostly attributed to human emissions.16 The changes can be seen in the form of declining sea ice, melting glaciers, thawing permafrost, and changing landscape which in turn would unleash not only environmental catastrophe on the rest of the world but a furious power struggle to claim sovereignty of Arctic by competing regional governments.17

In a major breakthrough, recent estimates from the US Geological Survey18 indicate that about 30 percent of the remaining world reserves of natural gas and some 10 percent of the oil are in the Arctic region. According to the Survey, the area north of the Arctic Circle has an estimated 90 billion barrels of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil, 1,670 trillion cubic feet of technically recoverable natural gas, and 44 billion barrels of technically recoverable natural gas liquids in 25 geologically defined areas thought to have potential for petroleum...these resources account for about 22 percent of the undiscovered, technically recoverable resources in the world. About 84 percent of the estimated resources are expected to occur offshore.19

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18 To improve the understanding of the petroleum resources in Arctic area, the USGS is undertaking a multi-year research effort, termed the Circum-Arctic Resource Appraisal (CARA), to produce a comprehensive, unbiased probabilistic estimate of undiscovered petroleum resources in the high northern latitudes. This research effort is being conducted in collaboration with several U.S. and international entities. It is the first publicly available petroleum resource estimate of the entire area north of the Arctic Circle. The USGS is the only provider of publicly available estimates of undiscovered, technically recoverable oil and gas resources.
Apart from natural resources, the melting ice has opened new sea routes promising a sea change in the maritime transport. The North-West Passage (US and Canada) and the North-East Passage (Norway and Russia) will become important sea routes. The maritime routes connecting Tokyo with New York will be 4000 kilometers shorter by 2030 promising more commercial opportunities. This has made coastal states to struggle to control new maritime routes even though some argue that these straits are international.

However in view of the economic downturn, more intense power struggle to control the resources are unlikely in near future as these resources are very costly and environmentally dangerous to extract. Even development of the massive Russian Shtokman gas reserves has been postponed. But ultimately, energy security concerns will reignite the demand for Arctic oil and gas development and big players will not spare any effort to develop new engineering techniques to cope with the situation.
Figure 1.: Heinrich Böll Foundation, EU Regional Office, Brussels
ARCTIC GOVERNANCE

Up to World War I, state influence on Arctic politics was quite visible which was further increased during World War II with strategic military presence. Cold War power rivalry of two superpowers also had an impact on the Arctic politics. During this period, indigenous people tried to assert their position by organizing themselves across national frontiers - establishing the Saami Council in 1956 and organizing the Inuit Circumpolar Conference in 1977, though their efforts had little impact on Arctic politics.

In the 1980s, scholars talked about the advent of “Age of the Arctic”. Soviet President Gorbachev’s famous Murmansk speech in 1987 proclaiming the Arctic as a zone of peace changed the strategic scenario and formalised the new spirit of cooperation with enhanced efforts from Norway, Finland and Canada. All these efforts culminated with formalisation of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) in 1991 followed by creation of the Arctic Council in 1996 as a ‘soft law’ regional multi-stakeholder institution with eight Arctic states (Canada, Russia, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Sweden, Finland and the US), six permanent Participating Parties (indigenous peoples’ organizations), and observers. Though major focus of the Council was scientific assessments but in course of time it became a major player in international environmental politics. Apart from Arctic Council, the other group which is trying to dominate the Arctic scene is the ‘Arctic Five’ comprising Arctic littoral states - Canada, Denmark, Norway, Russia, and the US.

The UN Convention of the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS) 1994, ensured state control over the Arctic Ocean and right to exclusive economic zones 200 nautical miles out to sea. This period also saw emergence of sub-regional groupings like Barents-Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), Arctic parliamentarians and sub-regional governments like Northern Forum and scientific cooperation like International Arctic Science Committee (IASC), Northern Research Forum. Though differences persisted, international cooperation and promotion of sustainable development with emphasis on moral responsibilities for the environment and indigenous people’s rights became the approach of the players. However, this approach began to change as

21 Roderick Kefferpütz and Daniia Bochkarev, Expanding the EU’s Institutional Capacities in the Arctic Region, (Brussels: Heinrich Böll Foundation, EU Regional Office, 2008)
noticeable in the differences over Arctic Climate Impact Assessment, where US policies were at odd with most other international actors in the Arctic.24

In view of absence of any exclusive international treaty governing Arctic affairs, the primary mechanism for inter-governmental co-operation is the Arctic Council which basically advises and carries out research but has no mandate on political and military affairs and most importantly it lacks enforcement mechanism. On the other hand, the Arctic Five adopted the Ilulissat Declaration on 28 May, 2008 committing themselves for the protection and preservation of the fragile marine environment of the Arctic and declared that, “(there is) no need to develop a new comprehensive international legal regime to govern the Arctic Ocean”.25 They want to resolve all disputes within UNCLOS framework though an important player like US is yet to ratify it.26 But at the same time, all the five members are re-mapping the Arctic seabed and submitting their proposals to UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (CLCS) with an expectation that their claims on extended continental shelves would be accepted. Though managing Arctic has become a costly affair, but the issue has now gone beyond the national strategic considerations to national pride for many. At sub-regional level, governments are playing important role, but it would be Arctic Council or the Arctic Five who will call the shot. With a potential conflict of interests with Arctic Council, Canada hosted a summit for the Arctic Five on 29 March, 2010.

THE NEW ‘GREAT GAME’ IN ARCTIC

For centuries, Arctic region received little attention for the simple reason that it was too hostile an environment to merit any attention. But due to climate change, it suddenly receiving wide attention and creating unexpected and complex new challenges. This new development has raised concerns that it would eventually lead to a ‘cold war’ and trigger a new ‘Great Game’ among players in the region and beyond to compete for who rules ‘No Man’s Sea’ surrounding the North Pole. It may not get the fate of its polar opposite - Antarctica which was demilitarized and dedicated to science because of its strategic insignificance.

The Russian flag planting episode brought a new episode to the emerging great game in Arctic. The countries with strategic interests in the Arctic are on a gold rush to claim their share of Arctic territory. Some other powers like EU and China have also shown interest though their entry have been systematically discouraged along with indigenous peoples, NGOs and other stake-holders. At a time of sharply rising commodity prices, there is a strong temptation for all the big players to cut a deal among themselves and start drilling of Arctic resources.

The interest in the Arctic affairs is quite visible in the policies by several countries like Russia’s new Arctic policy adopted by the Russian Security Council in 2008 and statements from US and Canada. In 2007, Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced his government’s plans to build “two new military facilities in the Arctic to boost Canada’s sovereign claim over the North-West Passage and signal its long-term commitment to the North”. Norway has also tightened its claim over the Svalbard islands. Some non-Arctic Council members like the EU are interested in Arctic mostly because of energy security. China is interested because of the ice-free Arctic transport route which will connect it to European and North American markets. Commercial actors like energy and mining companies have shown great interest so also NGOs like WWF who have proposed new regimes to

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30 T. Pedersen, “Norway’s Rule on Svalbard: Tightening the Grip on the Arctic Islands”, Polar Record 45, pp. 147-152.
32 L. Jakobson, China Prepares for Ice-Free Arctic, (Stockholm: SIPRI, 2010).
protect Arctic’s fragile environment. Apart from territorial claims, development of effective codes of conduct for shipping in view of Arctic’s fragile conditions, evolving regulations for the conduct of offshore oil and gas drilling and production and preserving indigenous people’s rights and their historic claims, multi-level governance and collaboration among regional, national, and international bodies for sustainable development are some of the emerging issues which figure prominently in the Arctic discourse.

Norway was perhaps the first country to show interest in Arctic much because of the fact that its oil fields in the South are running dry and the North provides a viable option to maintain petroleum production. However, the security dimension has been complicated due to the unresolved maritime border issues between Norway and Russia and Russia’s military activism in the Arctic. Russia is already in a process to transform its Arctic maritime and land possessions into an asset to support its economy. After the flag planting episode, which was regarded as an act of land grab, the Russians claimed that the Lomonosov Ridge, running north from Siberia, was an extension of the Siberian continental shelf legitimizing their claim on Arctic sea bed as required by the UNCLOS. According to the Russian Arctic strategy, the utilisation of the North-East Passage as a transport route is among Russia's strategic priorities. But in view of possible confrontations, it considers Arctic as the new ‘fourth’ frontline also.

The US has some real commercial interests in the area. It considers the North-West Passage as an international strait which is at odds with Canadian viewpoint which considers it as its internal waters. The Bush Administration had issued a Presidential Directive on Arctic Region Policy, which was carried forward by his successor Obama Administration, highlighting the importance of cooperation with Russia and underlining the environmental security and sustainable development in the Arctic. The 2009 US Arctic Regional Policy calls for safeguarding US security interests as the most important goal. US Senate’s ratification of the Law of the Sea is essential in showing US commitment to international law, especially as the treaty is supported by business, the military, and the White House.

About 40% of Canada’s total geographical area is in the Arctic. Successive Canadian governments have been claiming sovereignty over the Arctic territories and waters for decades. Though it does not have a strong military capacity, but it is trying to make its presence felt in the Arctic. In 2000, the Northern Dimension of Canadian Foreign Policy called for socially and
environmentally sustainable way of using Arctic resources. It has been reported that in conformity with UN’s maritime law agreement, Canada will formally claim approximately 1.8 million square kilometers of Arctic Ocean bed in 2013. Besides a border dispute with the US in the Beaufort Sea, which presumably holds reserves of oil and gas, the main point of contention is the legal status of sensitive North-West Passage. Greenland (Denmark) which is possibly the world’s first Inuit state, indigenous communities are in favour of resource exploitation, reason being high revenue. Greenland and Iceland have a huge strategic interest as they control vital trans-Atlantic shipping lanes.

In an environment of clashing interests, recent activities of the players are really a matter of grave concern. It has been reported that Russia is erecting an Arctic Group of Forces while Canada is looking to purchase three icebreakers. The US has categorized Arctic as a realm of national security interest while Denmark is planning to form a fully dedicated military contingent for the Arctic. It shows that whatever said sovereignty will predominate military affairs while states would explore areas of cooperation.

EU AS AN ACTOR IN ARCTIC

The issue of Arctic has been dealt in the larger context of climate change where EU is already taking the lead.\(^{34}\) Europe is building the world's first competitive, energy-secure low-carbon economy. It has also committed itself to meet an ambitious target of 20 percent of total energy to come from renewable sources by 2020, a 20 percent reduction in total greenhouse gas emissions by 2020, 30 percent if other developed countries show similar ambition. It is also taking lead to broker a post-2012 global climate deal. The EU has also raised the security implications of climate change at international debates. In 2007, at the UN Security Council meeting, the UK steered a debate on the implication of climate change on peace and security.\(^{35}\)

The European Security Strategy 2003 recognized linkages between climate change and competition for natural resources. In June 2007, the High Representative and the European Commission in a joint report titled ‘Climate Change and International Security’, pointed out that climate change is not just a threat in itself - it is “a threat multiplier which exacerbates existing trends, tensions and instability” and addressing those threats are a part of EU’s preventive security policy.\(^{36}\) The report underlined the “potential consequences for international stability and European security interests” of Arctic development in view of changing geo-strategic dynamics and “potential conflicts over resources in Polar regions” due to resource fights which will ultimately challenge “Europe’s ability to effectively secure its trade and resource interests in the region and may put pressure on its relations with key partners”.\(^{37}\) This was followed by the European Parliament’s resolution on Arctic governance in October 2008. Further, believed to be the most important document released till date, the European Commission’s Communication entitled ‘The European Union and the Arctic Region’, released in November 2008, mentions that “European Union is inextricably linked to the Arctic region”.\(^{38}\) The report highlights EU policies towards

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\(^{37}\) Ibid.

environment, climate change, energy, research, transport, fisheries and also security with a concluding note that, “Arctic challenges and opportunities will have significant repercussions on the life of European citizens for generations to come”, which the EU has to respond to in a “coordinated and systemic manner”. In 2008, the Nordic Council of Ministers echoing the EU sentiments issued two reports, “The European Union and the Arctic – Policies and Actions” and “Nordic Strategy for the Arctic Climate and Environmental Pollutants”.

The EU moved the Arctic policy beyond the inner circle of the littoral states to the international arena. The EU’s growing interest has evoked mixed response from other stakeholders though it has already been recognized by scholars as one of the “influential political entities” in the Arctic affairs. Presently the EU acts as an external actor in relation to Arctic states and even to Greenland. The EU had applied for Permanent Observer of the Arctic Council, which was turned down in the Council’s Ministerial Meeting in Tromsø primarily because Canada’s insistence. However the Council will reconsider EU’s application before its 2011 meeting. Three full members of the Arctic Council - Denmark, Finland and Sweden are already members of the European Union and if Iceland joins in the near future, EU will have a greater foothold in the Arctic and it will be totally different from the current practice where the EU’s present institutional frameworks – BEAC and the Northern Dimension cooperate with Russia and non-EU Nordics on Arctic issues. Geographically Denmark (Greenland) is a littoral Arctic state but the growing autonomy of Greenland will minimize its influence. EU is also closely related to Norway and Iceland who are members of the European Economic Area (EEA). They along with Russia also share a common platform within the

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39 Ibid
45 The major issue which made the Council (pushed by Canada) to reject application was reported disagreement between EU and Canada on banning of seal products.
46 On 17 June 2010 the European Council in Brussels approved the start of official accession negotiations with Iceland, which are expected to be relatively short given Iceland’s already close ties with the EU through the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and the European Economic Area (EEA). It has been said that Iceland could enter the Union as early as 2011.
framework of the ‘Northern Dimension Policy’, launched in 2005/2006 with an objective of cooperation in the European High North. EU, Russia and Norway also share another intergovernmental platform - the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). NATO flag also parades many EU member states along with big Arctic players like US and Canada who have already got observer status in the EU’s Northern Dimension Programme. The EU interest are best summed up by Balies: “EU citizens eat most of the fish caught in polar seas; EU companies have experience of oil and gas extraction that could be relevant and commercially competitive; EU shipping companies and shipbuilders look with even greater interest to Arctic openings because of their current lack of demand on other fronts; and the EU already spends hundreds of millions of Euros on Arctic-relevant research. Returning to the big questions of Arctic governance, the whole Union as a rich but vulnerable community with limited self-defence capacity has an interest in not letting the rush for the Arctic turn over-competitive and violent.”

It’s often argued that EU involvement in the Arctic is acceptable in view of its soft power image. It has to deal with a complex set of geo-political issues in the Arctic and a power game involving multiple actors like EU and non-EU Arctic states as well as institutions like NATO. Its abilities and competences in a number of policy areas would be beneficial to settle Arctic disputes. The overall EU policy objectives are basically focused on three areas: (i) the protection of the Arctic environment and its population; (ii) the promotion of sustainable exploitation of resources and (iii) the improvement of Arctic multilateral governance. Some of the major issues involved in EU’s approach are as follows:

1. Though major EU institutions agree on the importance environmental and maritime safety, strategic importance, multilateral governance and sustainable exploitation of Arctic resources, but differences are quite visible on the question of Arctic’s future institutional framework. The European Parliament favours inclusive Arctic governance in the form of an Arctic Treaty. It argues that UNCLOS is obsolete in view of new Arctic realities. Moreover, UNCLOS has lost teeth because of the delay in ratification by US Senate. This was highlighted when six groups of Parliamentarians in March 2009 tabled a resolution for an international treaty for the protection of the Arctic.

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50 European Parliament, “Joint Motion for a Resolution on the International Treaty for the Protection of the Arctic”, available at:
They argued that it will serve EU’s interest (especially in navigation and fisheries) most in contrast to the current law of the sea\(^{51}\) approach preferred by the five Arctic littoral states as well as the Arctic Council.\(^{52}\) However, in contrast to this, the Council of the European Union’s approach is very much in tune with the Commission’s Communication which recognises the importance of UNCLOS and Arctic Council, and issues related to freedom of navigation, the right of innocent passage and transit passage.

2. The EU policy documents have many contradictions – the most visible being energy security and climate change. In view of EU’s galloping energy needs, Arctic offers possibilities but mainly in non-renewable conventional energy resources like fossil fuels- oil and gas, which are main sources of CO2 emissions. This contradicts the climate change policy of EU which focuses on renewable energy and the fight against the causes of climate change.

3. It was during former Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Joe Borg’s tenure, that EU’s Arctic approach was conceptualized and formulated.\(^{53}\) The new Commission which took office in 2010 has not taken any concrete decisions on Arctic issues so far and the new Commissioner for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Maria Damanaki in her “Priorities for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries” speech delivered on 17 May 2010 did not even mention the Arctic.

4. EU rather seems to fit in the US, Norway\(^{54}\) and Denmark’s Arctic strategy while Russia and Canada\(^{55}\) seem to be less enthusiastic about a strong EU’s Arctic role.\(^{56}\) EU’s engagement also depends on how much interest its members will show in the Arctic affairs and channel resources accordingly in years to come. The Union’s 27 member states have quite different policy-interests which makes it impossible to speak in one voice internationally.\(^{57}\) Finland has accommodated EU’s Arctic policy development into its own national strategy paper whereas Sweden’s approach is not comprehensive.

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\(^{51}\) This is an obvious reference to issues like fishing - North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), transport – International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and general framework Arctic - Arctic Council and the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS).


\(^{55}\) Because EU does not support Canada’s claim on North West Passage nor very enthusiastic about Russia’s North East route.


Denmark’s approach has been proactive, but it sees its Arctic policy better positioned within the club of the Arctic littoral states than within the EU or even the Arctic Council. With an obvious reference to exclusive meetings of the Arctic littoral states (including Denmark) in Ilulissat 2008 and Chelsea 2010, EU had declared that it would not support arrangements which exclude any of the Arctic EU Member States or Arctic EEA and EFTA countries, which basically echoes dissatisfaction of Sweden, Finland and Iceland. On the Arctic issue, the Nordic interests are sometimes not compatible with the European High North approach.58

5. Though the overall EU’s views were suffused with constructive and high-principled intentions, but it is very careful to secure its own interests. For example, on the issue of North-West Passage, in line with US and complete disagreement with Canada, the EU speaks in favour of defending “the principle of freedom of navigation and the right of innocent passage in the newly opened routes and areas” with an obvious reference to safeguard European transport business. Also it called for equal Arctic opportunities for EU companies and promoting research innovation in oil and gas exploitation and avoiding discriminatory practices by any of the Arctic coastal states towards third countries’ merchant ships.59

59 See no. 44.
CONCLUSION

Multilateral cooperation in the Arctic has rough waters ahead. But, it is unlikely that differences over Arctic will snowball into major conflict in near future. Notwithstanding its multilateral approach, direct involvement of EU within the Arctic affairs is to be figured out including in the governance structures. For the time being, UNCLOS and the Arctic Council seem to be the best vehicles to deal with Arctic issues and to secure EU interests.

1. Arctic Council is more preferable than Arctic Five as a model for cooperation in view of its inclusive character as it gives a platform for interaction to stakeholders as diverse as Russian icebreaker captains, Alaskan oil prospectors, and Inuit whale hunters. With a permanent Arctic Council Secretariat and inclusive cooperation many challenges can be tackled effectively.  

2. The EU should insist to be taken onboard in the Arctic Council.

3. While evolving any legal framework or strengthening the existing framework, it is important for EU to work towards creating the Arctic as a zone of peace. Giving due care to needs and rights of indigenous communities can not be ignored. Also the further energy exploitation in the Arctic needs to be seen in the context of commitment to a low carbon future.

4. Greater coherence of EU approach is necessary. Positioning of Arctic issues within EU’s institutional structure and various policy formulations as well as the potential setting up institutional structures like an ‘Arctic High Representative’, common ‘Arctic working group’ among several DGs dealing with Arctic issues – Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Climate Change, Environment, Energy – could ensure a comprehensive EU Arctic Policy.

5. To become an effective player, it is important to strengthen the partnership agreements of the EU with other Arctic state (US, Canada) and non-state actors (NGOs, indigenous people) and organizations (NATO).

6. The EU must seize the opportunity to enhance mutual cooperation with Russia. The report that Norwegian companies are assisting Russia to establish a gas resource management infrastructure is a good example. Russia can be a challenging partner, but a partner nonetheless.

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61 Paal Sigurd Hilde, “Norway and the Arctic: The End of Dreams?”, available at http://www.atlantic-
6. The EU needs to enhance cooperation with the Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council, and the US Enhanced Partnership with Northern Europe.

While balancing its approach of safeguarding the Arctic environment at the same time allowing ‘sustainable’ resource exploitation, EU’s emergence in Arctic power game has brought a new dimension to the Polar politics. Problems and challenges on the one hand and tools and influence on the other render the Arctic a difficult test of ‘European maturity’.

[www.chathamhouse.org.uk/index/articles/view/Norway_and_the_Arctic:_The_End_of_Dreams%3F, accessed on 28 Oct. 2010.]