



**Studia i Materiały. Miscellanea Oeconomicae**  
Rok 18, Nr 2/2014  
Wydział Zarządzania i Administracji  
Uniwersytetu Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach

**The Arctic and Nordic  
Countries in the World of Economy and Politics**

**Tomasz Młynarski<sup>1</sup>**

**THE EUROPEAN UNION  
WITH RESPECT TO THE ARCTIC.  
CLIMATE AND ENERGY ASPECTS  
IN THE ARCTIC POLICY  
OF SELECTED MEMBER STATES**

**Geo-political Implications of Climate Changes in the High North vs.  
the Problem of Legitimising EU Presence in the Arctic Region**

The progressing melting of ice in the Arctic region resulting from climate change has given rise to new geo-political conditions on a global scale. The prospect of new sea passages connecting Europe and Asia (Northwest Passage and Northeast Passage) and the estimated huge reserves of strategic resources under the Arctic Sea have made the great powers focus their political interests around the region of the North Pole. The region's situation is additionally complicated by the unclear international legal status of the seabed (*terra nullius* or joint heritage of humanity), which has given rise to a dispute regarding freedom of navigation characteristic for international waters of high sea. Along with a forecast growth in the economic importance of the region (resources and transportation), the Arctic has become an object of an increased interest for the European Union, which is looking for new sources and possibilities of diversification of resource supplies.

The European Union, as a non-Arctic entity, encountered a problem of economic and political justification for its involvement in the area outside its borders. The Community's stance with respect to the Arctic relies on the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) of 1982 and Denmark's, Finland's and Sweden's membership in the Arctic Council. This allows the EU to

---

<sup>1</sup> Tomasz Młynarski, Ph.D. hab., professor at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland.

justify that member states and associated states (Iceland) constitute half of the members of the Arctic Council, which is the most important forum for international cooperation in the region<sup>2</sup>. Furthermore, in 2012, five countries had the status of permanent observers in the Arctic Council, all of them being EU member states: Germany, Spain, France, the Netherlands, Poland and Great Britain. The fact that all permanent observers are EU members strengthens the justification of the European Commission's application to the Arctic Council, submitted at the end of 2008 to grant it the rights of "permanent observer."<sup>3</sup>

The EU is trying to balance the absence of geographic premises for participating in the problems of the Arctic region by spending hundreds of millions of euro on polar studies and becoming involved in the region by, e.g., integrating the issues of the Arctic with its policies: maritime, climate, environmental, energy and neighbourhood policy (within the scope of the Northern Dimension). The special significance of the Arctic for the EU was additionally emphasised by the visit of Catherine Ashton, High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission in the Arctic (cities of Rovaniemi, Kiruna and the Svalbard archipelago), in March 2012<sup>4</sup>.

### **Evolution of the EU's Involvement in the Arctic Region**

The Arctic policy of the European Union has evolved along with the increasing economic significance of the region and the political development of events shaping the future of areas around the North Pole.

The first signal of the EU's policy was the document of the High Representative Javier Solana and the European Commission, *Climate Change and International Security*, addressed to the European Council on March 14, 2008, which indicated that the melting of the ice cover will most probably result in uncovering new transport passages and international trade routes as well as facilitating extraction of minerals in the Arctic<sup>5</sup>. Simultaneously, climate change creates new geo-strategic conditions that multiply threats, such as conflicts with respect to resources, border disputes and tensions related to supply of energy, which has consequences for the "stability of the international situation and European security interests."

---

<sup>2</sup> Iceland unexpectedly suspended accession negotiations with the European Union at the end of January 2013.

<sup>3</sup> The Canadian government was in favour of rejecting the EU application in April 2009 on account of the Community's ban on the import of seal products. The EU application was submitted once again in 2011.

<sup>4</sup> *Catherine Ashton to visit northern Finland, Sweden and Norway to highlight importance of an enhanced EU policy towards the Arctic*, Brussels 5 March 2012 A 99/12.

<sup>5</sup> *Climate Change and International Security*, document of the High Representative and the European Commission addressed to the European Council, S113/08, 14.03. 2008

On October 9, 2008, the European Parliament adopted a resolution on management of the Arctic region. The resolution obliges the European Commission to include energy policy and security policy in the Arctic Region within its schedule of work<sup>6</sup>.

Another step in developing a European Union policy towards the Arctic region was adopting, on November 20, 2008, a communication of the EC, *The European Union and the Arctic Region*, determining the scope of Community's activities in the region. The document presents the geographic ties between the EU and the region and commences with a statement that "The European Union is inextricably linked to the Arctic region by a unique combination of history, geography, economy and scientific achievements". The Commission presents proposals of activities in three areas: protection of environment and climate change, sustainable use of resources and strengthening of multilateral management of the Arctic. In the third part of the communication, we can read that in the longer perspective "Arctic resources could contribute to enhancing the EU's security of supply concerning energy and raw materials in general"<sup>7</sup>.

On December 8, 2008, the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) accepted the conclusions regarding the European Union and the Arctic region<sup>8</sup>; whereas on December 8, 2009, it approved conclusions with respect to the Arctic<sup>9</sup>, where the Council accepted, with satisfaction, the obligations and efforts of the Arctic states regarding preparation of joint methods and best practices for minimising the negative impact on the environment resulting from the exploitation of natural resources in the Arctic.

Since the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Arctic affairs have formed a part of the work agenda of all major EU institutions. On January 20, 2011, the European Parliament adopted a resolution entitled *Sustainable EU Policy for the High North*, in which it states that the retreat of sea ice and potential application of new technologies will probably lead to the exploration of natural resources, mainly gas, crude oil and other minerals<sup>10</sup>. Thence, it recommends that interested parties undertake activities aimed at implementing safety measures and environmental protection standards in the process of research and exploration of deposits.

A joint communication of the Commission and the High Representative of June 26, 2012 has had special significance in the development of the EU's Arctic policy to date. It presents arguments in favour of increasing the EU's involvement in

---

<sup>6</sup> *Arctic governance P6\_TA (2008)0474 Resolution of the European Parliament of October 9, 2008 on governance of the Arctic region (2010/C 9 E/07)*, Official Journal of the EU, C 9 E/41, 15.01.2010.

<sup>7</sup> *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council the EU and the Arctic Region*, COM (2008) 763, Brussels, 20.11.2008, p. 6.

<sup>8</sup> *Council Conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic Region*, 2914th Foreign Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels 8.12.2008; *Draft Council conclusions and the Arctic Region*, 4 December 2008, 16826/08.

<sup>9</sup> *Council conclusions on Arctic issues*, 2985th Foreign Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels, 8.12.2009.

<sup>10</sup> *A sustainable EU policy for the High North*, Official Journal of the EU, C 136 E/71, 11.5.2012.

issues regarding the Arctic.<sup>11</sup> The main goals of the EU's activities for the Arctic include:

- fighting climate change and research on the natural environment of the Arctic;
- investing in sustainable development in the North;
- reducing uncertainties regarding future development and monitoring changes in the Arctic region;
- shipping and maritime safety.

The EC bases its concept of involvement in the region on three pillars: **knowledge** (scientific studies), **responsibility** (economic development in the Arctic relying on sustainable use of resources and expert knowledge regarding the natural environment) along with **engagement** and dialogue with the countries of the Arctic region, indigenous peoples and other partners.

The document emphasises that the Arctic states and the EU are jointly interested in ensuring sustainable use of the natural resources of the Arctic – on land, at sea and on and below the sea bed. The document states: “The EU will work with Arctic partners and private partners to develop environmentally friendly, low-risk technologies that could be used by extraction industries (...) the EU (...) has an interest in the resource development policy in the Arctic states (...) As a priority, within the scope of the external pillar of the Raw Materials Strategy, the EU will actively pursue a raw materials diplomacy with relevant Arctic states with a view to securing access to raw materials, notably through strategic partnerships and policy dialogue”<sup>12</sup>.

According to the document, in exploration and commercial extraction of Arctic resources, the EU will join forces with partners from the private sector. This declaration is a very bold and controversial step on the part of European institutions, bearing in mind the Community's commitments to the protection of the environment and biological diversity.

### **Motives for the EU's Engagement in the Arctic Region and Divergent Interests of Member States**

The European Union considers itself “an Arctic entity”, and its policy with respect to the Arctic relies on the following elements:<sup>13</sup>

- ensuring protection and preservation of Arctic resources along with its inhabitants with respect to the progressing effects of climate change, including their potential impact on fishing;
- promoting sustainable use of natural resources;

---

<sup>11</sup> Joint communication to the European Parliament and the Council *Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: progress since 2008 and next steps*, Brussels, 26.6.2012, JOIN(2012) 19 final.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 9-10.

<sup>13</sup> *Interests and roles of non-Arctic states in the Arctic*, seminar presented by the National Capital Branch of the Canadian International Council and the Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program, Ottawa, October 5, 2011, p. 7.

- contributing to better management in the Arctic by implementing relevant agreements, frameworks and legal principles;
- regulating maritime exploitation and fishing in the Arctic, which will not hinder the access of non-Arctic states.

The EU expressed these political goals in subsequent resolutions of the European Parliament, communications of the Council and applications of the Commission. An analysis of the EU postulates referring to the Arctic allows for distinguishing two categories of Brussels' engagement in the region: a combination of environmental protection aspirations and economic interests.

The EU emphasises its leading role in global efforts to counteract climate change in order to legitimise its engagement in the Arctic. Brussels has made counteracting the effects of climate change and scientific studies the main arguments for increasing its presence in the region. Solving environmental protection problems has become a specific “key” for participating in the issues of the Arctic, confirmed in subsequent EU documents regarding the region. However, the EU's interest in the Arctic is not only driven by environmental reasons, but primarily by economic ones, including energy; its presence in the region has strategic importance. With respect to the growing significance of the Arctic, EU member states are more and more motivated by the fear of losing control over regulating the right to free passage across the Arctic Ocean and the loss of benefits and marginalisation in the potential fight for resources.

The European Union, whose 90% of external trade exchange is conducted by sea, aims at securing transit routes and the legal aspects of navigation in the Arctic territories<sup>14</sup>. In April 2010, a study of this problem was published; in its conclusions, we can read that “An analysis of the global component of the legal regime for Arctic marine shipping reveals that this framework is not sufficiently tailored to the special nature and risks of marine shipping in the Arctic. (...) there are a range of disagreements on issues within the international law of the sea”<sup>15</sup>. The EU is in favour of multilateral regulation of marine shipping in the area of the Arctic; however, this is along with safeguarding liberty and the right of free passage.

The second motivator for the EU's strategic presence in the region is the huge potential of gas and crude oil deposits under the Arctic Sea. The EU is the largest importer of energy in the world, and the scale of import dependence in 2010 amounted to 52.7% (Denmark is the only member state with negative dependence growth)<sup>16</sup>. The objective of the EU is diversification of energy supplies and extending access to resources.

<sup>14</sup> *Developing a European Union Policy...*, *op.cit.*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> European Commission *Legal Aspects of Arctic Shipping*, No. FISH/2006/09 – LOT2, February 2010. The United States and several EU member states believe that the *Northwest Passage*, or at least some of its routes, is subject to the transit regime, whereas the stance of Canada and Russia is more inclined towards recognising the absolute power of coastal states on extensive coastal waters of the territorial sea in line with Art. 234 of the *Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*.

<sup>16</sup> *EU energy in figures*, Statistical Pocketbook 2012, EC 2012, p. 20.

### **Drivers and Brakemen of EU Arctic Policy: Problem of the Discrepancy of Interests of EU Member States**

The EU has vital interests in the Arctic region, and its activities are aimed at restraining and balancing Russian influence in the region, even though these aspects are not clearly listed in EU Arctic documents. Russia is the main player in the great struggle for power in the Polar Circle, and only a unified front of the remaining members and observers in the Arctic Council and the EU's involvement within the scope of the Northern Dimension may keep Russia's activities in the region "under control." A clash of national interests with community interests as well as the absence of a cohesive joint approach of individual member states reveal the limited efficiency of the impact of European institutions on Arctic issues<sup>17</sup>.

#### **Finland, Sweden**

Finland, which was the initiator of the *Northern Dimension*, is the most active member of the European Union as far as the Community's Arctic policy is concerned. Finland included a postulate of the EU's development in the region in its strategy - *Arctic 2010*, where it was stated that the country "welcomes the fact that the Union pays increasing attention to Arctic issues"<sup>18</sup>. Such a policy results from a drive to strengthen the EU's impact on safety issues in the Arctic, which supports Finland with respect to their Russian neighbour and secures its interests.

Sweden, similarly to Finland, does not have direct access to the Arctic Ocean, yet, on account of its geographic location, it is significantly active with respect to the High North. Sweden announced its first Arctic strategy at the beginning of 2011 and also voiced its support for the active role of the EU in the region. A document entitled "Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region" sets out the priorities, objectives and manners of meeting them<sup>19</sup>. Sweden, with satisfaction, supports the "gradual development of EU policy in Arctic issues." Among the main goals of cooperation in the Arctic, the document indicates "support for development of EU policy with respect to the Arctic and promotion of the EU as a proper partner for cooperation in issues regarding the Arctic." Sweden supports the application of the European Commission for obtaining the status of permanent observer in the Arctic Council.

---

<sup>17</sup> K. Keil, *The EU in the Arctic 'Game' - The Concert of Arctic Actors and the EU's Newcomer Role*, Paper for SGIR 7th Pan-European International Relations Conference, Stockholm 2010, p. 28.

<sup>18</sup> *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, p. 9, <http://www.geopoliticsnorth.org/images/stories/attachments/Finland.pdf>, web. January 05 2013

<sup>19</sup> *Sweden's strategy for the Arctic region 2011-2013*, <http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/18/61/74/9168f21a.pdf>, accessed on 10.01.2013.



## Germany

Germany has an observer status in the Arctic Council, yet it has not announced any official *Arctic Policy*. The department of defence, foreign affairs and environmental protection are responsible for Arctic policy. Germany also pursues Arctic policy via the EU and intensely invests in polar research programmes. The German government emphasises that climate changes will intensify the probability of political and security risks, which could influence European interests (conflict with respect to resources, shortages of food and legal disputes regarding borders)<sup>20</sup>.

Germany is particularly interested in being present in the region on account of the size of its trade fleet. The fact that German trading vessels were the first to sail the Northwest Passage is a clear proof to Berlin's interest in Arctic issues<sup>21</sup>. Approx. 90% of the external trade of Germany is transported via sea trade routes. Outside-European trade constitutes approx. 30% of German import and export, whereas trade with Asia accounts for 15% of export and 20% of import; thus the possibility of opening trade routes in the Arctic is of particular importance<sup>22</sup>. German policy with respect to the Arctic has to promote the following objectives<sup>23</sup>:

- freedom of scientific research;
- freedom of navigation (Germany has the third largest trade fleet in the world);
- access to new energy resources (Germany can boast of advanced technologies enabling extraction);
- guarantee for compliance with rigid environmental standards and in case of any damages to the environment, liability for their removal.

On account of the expected departure of Germany from nuclear energy, it seems probable that the import of gas and, therefore, the country's energy dependence will grow in the nearest future. Germany is also an important partner for Russian and Norwegian energy companies on account of know-how and technical possibilities for exploiting sea reserves in the Arctic. The RWE concern is involved in the Norwegian oil field Snohvir; Wintershall cooperates with Gazprom in extraction of gas from several oil fields in the region, whereas E.ON-Ruhgas is strongly involved in the Yuzhno-Russkoye gas field<sup>24</sup>. Similarly to other EU member states, Germany is also interested in storing nuclear waste in the Russian part of the Arctic.

---

<sup>20</sup> C. Major, S. Steinicke, *EU Member States' Perceptions of the Security Relevance of the High North*, Working Paper, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin 2011, p. 11.

<sup>21</sup> The Washington magazine "Foreign Policy" considered the most important unnoticed event of 2009 as the feat of two German trade vessels of Beluga, which sailed through the North-Eastern Passage from South Korea, along Siberia in the direction of Rotterdam.

<sup>22</sup> C. Major, S. Steinicke, *EU Member States...*, *op.cit.*, p. 8-9.

<sup>23</sup> *Interests and roles of non-Arctic states...*, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

<sup>24</sup> C. Major, S. Steinicke, *EU Member States...*, *op.cit.*, p. 8.

## France

The Arctic also opens up new economic possibilities for the non-Arctic France, which has ambitions and vital interest to be an active participant in this new geo-political space. French interests in the Arctic encompass<sup>25</sup>:

- problem of climate change and their results (including the interests of fishermen);
- issue of sea security;
- economic activity in the Arctic (e.g. oil concern *Total*);
- broader geo-political interests (militarisation aspect of the High North).

An expression of strategic interest in the region was the appointment of Michael Rocard, in March 2009, as ambassador of the Arctic and the Antarctic<sup>26</sup>. Rocard, who was for freedom of navigation in the Northern Passage, recognised the right of coastal states to exploit mineral resources, yet emphasised that the future of the Arctic was an international issue on account of the threat of potential damage from extraction activities<sup>27</sup>. The effects of diminishing biodiversity would concern all people – he said: “We would like the Arctic Council to take these issues into account and reflect them in the decision-making process. France and Europe are ready to help, and our financial potential may be useful for the necessary infrastructure”<sup>28</sup>.

France’s economic interests are extensive (communication, transport, fishing, mining industry, export of renewable energy technologies). The French government has extensive strategic interests in placing French energy companies in the Arctic, where the country may become an important exporter of key technologies for extraction of natural resources in the region<sup>29</sup>. *GDF Suez* and *Total* are present and aim for increasing their presence in the Northern Sea. *GDF Suez E&P Norge* has been active in Norway since 2001 (exploration, exploitation, transport of crude oil and gas in the Norwegian Continental Shelf). In 2001, *GDF* acquired shares in the Njord gas field (20%); it also holds 20% shares in the crude oil extraction project “Hyme.” In 2003, *GDF Suez E&P Norge* acquired 30% shares in the Gjøa gas field in the Northern Sea.<sup>30</sup> Concerns *Total E&P Norge* (25%) and *GDF Suez E&P Norge* (12%) are also shareholders of three licenses for extraction of gas from the Snøhvit bed in the Barents Sea. In total, *GDF Suez E&P*

---

<sup>25</sup> *Interests and roles of non-Arctic states...*, *op.cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>26</sup> Rocard nommé ambassadeur de France en Arctique, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 18.03.2009.

<sup>27</sup> J. –M. Collin, *Arctique, La France prend position*, *La revue géopolitique online*, September 26 2010, <http://www.diploweb.com/Arctique-la-France-prend-position.html>, web. January 20 2013.

<sup>28</sup> Discours de Michel Rocard, ambassadeur de France chargé des négociations internationales relatives aux pôles Arctique et Antarctique, 9.11.2010, <http://www.ambafrance-ru.org/Discours-de-Michel-Rocard>, accessed on 15.01.2013.

<sup>29</sup> C. Major, S. Steinicke, *EU Member States’ Perceptions of Security...*, *op.cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>30</sup> Gjøa, [www.gdfsuezep.no/en/About-us/Activities/Gjoa](http://www.gdfsuezep.no/en/About-us/Activities/Gjoa), web. September 22 2012.



Norge holds over forty exploration and extraction licenses (mainly natural gas) in the Barents Sea, the Northern Sea and the Norwegian Sea<sup>31</sup>.

France is aware of the growing threat stemming from intensified marine traffic and potential leakages from tankers or wells. The significance of environmental safety in the Arctic has been emphasised a number of times. Therefore, France is for protection and separation of special environmental zones, which would also encompass fishing. Art. 2 of the *Grenelle* environmental act (2009) states that: “The Arctic region plays a key role in the global balance of the planet’s climate; France will support the creation of an international scientific observatory of the Arctic.”<sup>32</sup> Furthermore, for the purpose of environmental protection, via proper international authorities, France will aim for adjustment of international provisions enabling greater access to exploration of the Arctic Ocean. Ambassador Rocard critically reacted to the rejection of the EC’s application for observer status and lobbied for adoption of a treaty guaranteeing protection of the natural environment of the region<sup>33</sup>.

### Great Britain

Great Britain has an observer status in the Arctic Council. The British government decided not to publish a superior Arctic policy, but the Ministry of Defence prepared a strategy for the Arctic, which was approved by the Defence Council in December 2008. It confirmed that safety in the Arctic is also a military issue<sup>34</sup>. The United Kingdom’s objectives in the Arctic include<sup>35</sup>:

- new navigation routes;
- new sources of crude oil, gas, minerals and fishing;
- possibility of exerting an impact on the international arena;
- scientific studies on climate change and their impact on fauna.

Great Britain depends more and more on import of fossil fuels. In the middle of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, British extraction of crude oil and gas in the Northern Sea reached its maximum level; thence, similarly to France, energy security is of key importance in the context of Arctic resources. British Petroleum exploits crude oil and gas deposits in Norwegian waters; furthermore, the concern failed in their attempts to tie up with Rosneft in 2011, which would have involved Arctic exploration. The government is mainly concerned about the security of sea trade routes. According to Liam Fox, the former British defence minister: “Due to the fact that 92% of British international trade of goods is transported by sea, we

---

<sup>31</sup> GDF SUEZ E&P Norge License Portfolio, [www.gdfsuezep.no](http://www.gdfsuezep.no).

<sup>32</sup> Loi no 2009-967 du 3 août 2009 de programmation relative à la mise en œuvre du *Grenelle de l’environnement* (1).

<sup>33</sup> *Un problème oublié : les pôles*, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-north-pole-in-peril/french>, web. January 20 2013.

<sup>34</sup> Minister for International Defence and Security, at the Joint NATO/Icelandic Government conference, Reykjavik, Iceland, on 29 January 2009, Ministry of Defence Archives, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, web. January 20 2013.

<sup>35</sup> *Interests and roles of non-Arctic states...*, *op.cit.*, p. 9.

have to maintain strong sea interest, becoming involved in the issues of Arctic security”<sup>36</sup>. British insurance sector’s interest in the region is more and more noticeable.

### **Denmark/ Greenland**

The EU’s attempt to become involved in the *Arctic governance* has met the resistance of the remaining players of the “Arctic 5” (A5), including an EU member state – Denmark, the main opponent of the EU Arctic policy. Denmark, the only EU member state that borders upon the Arctic (through Greenland), accepts a limited policy of the EU in Arctic issues (research, environmental protection). The Danish government adopted a state-centric stance and is more inclined to cooperation with the five Arctic coastal states. Denmark is involved in the issues of the Arctic outside the EU, partially even excluding European institutions and other member states (the divergence of Danish and community interests was confirmed by a conference in Ilulissat in Greenland between May 28 and 29, 2008, where representatives of five Arctic states signed a one-page declaration stating the need for solving the disputable issues via an agreement within the scope of the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf).

Denmark perceives the Arctic policy to be enclosed within the A5 club or the Arctic Council and not in the EU. The strong players, such as Russia, the United States and Canada, share Denmark’s approach, which, as a small country, is treated equally with other powers and not as one of the 27 EU member states. In the Danish strategy for the Arctic 2011 – 2020, the government emphasised that “We must seek to avoid further cases where the laws, traditions, cultures and needs of Arctic societies are neglected, as for example in the EU’s ban on the import of seal products”<sup>37</sup>.

For Denmark, Greenland’s policy poses a problem; Greenland is inhabited by only approx. 57,000 people, yet it more and more strongly attracts the greatest powers on account of the significant potential of natural resources (hydrocarbons, minerals, water), as well as from the point of view of the Arctic’s perspectives and its location within the centre of the “new border” of international relations<sup>38</sup>.

Greenland is experiencing, as never before, unprecedented interest in its territories from many powers. The historic visit of the President of South Korea, Lee Myung-Bak, in Greenland in 2012 without a stop in Denmark and without the presence of the Danish prime minister, who is responsible for foreign policy and security in Denmark, almost provided Greenland with the status of an independent

---

<sup>36</sup> Liam Fox: *The EU should only act when NATO cannot*, 11.02.2010, [http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/02/Liam\\_Fox\\_EU\\_should\\_only\\_act\\_when\\_NATO\\_cannot.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/02/Liam_Fox_EU_should_only_act_when_NATO_cannot.aspx), web. January 20 2013.

<sup>37</sup> *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*, <http://uk.nanoq.gl>, web. January 22 2013, p. 10.

<sup>38</sup> D. Degeorges, *The Arctic. A region of the future for the European Union and the world economy, European issues*, no 263, 8.01.2013, Foundation Robert Schuman, Policy Paper, p. 4.

state<sup>39</sup>. This can be explained by the fact that in 2010 Greenland became autonomous with respect to management of its own resources<sup>40</sup>. The growing significance of Greenland is confirmed by meetings of representatives of the United States, the EU, China and South Korea with the prime minister of Greenland<sup>41</sup>. Signing a letter of intent, whose purpose is establishing cooperation within the area of resources between the EU and Greenland during the visit of the deputy chairman of the EC, Antonio Tajani, in Greenland in 2012, raised hopes with respect to European plans for securing supplies of rare earth elements from Greenland<sup>42</sup>.

The EU is aware of the fact that leaving Greenland under the influence of “foreign” economic assistance (from non-Arctic states) may lead to a loss of control over the policy of managing natural resources, and it puts both Greenland’s and EU’s interests at risk. The agreement between the Russian *Rosneft* and the American concern *ExxonMobil*, the Norwegian *Statoil* and the Italian *Eni*, concluded between April and May 2012 on strategic cooperation in exploitation of resources from the area of the Karsk Sea, the Barents Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, shows that a global “play” for resources in the Arctic has started; therefore, the EU has to show significant determination and unanimity in order not to lose its impact on the course of events in the region with respect to the policy of “accomplished facts” of Russia and in order not to be left behind other A5 states and non-Arctic actors, such as China and Korea, whose activity in the region and possibilities of financing are significant.

## Conclusions

- The European Union has undergone deep evolution and increased its involvement in Arctic issues, treating this region as one of the priority areas of engagement; however, so far it has not been possible to create a uniform EU Arctic policy. In consequence, the impact of EU activities in the Arctic remains slight in spite of the growing number of political documents referring to the problems of the region.
- The objectives of the EU in the Arctic, apart from environmental aspects and counteracting climate change, more and more boldly emphasise economic and security issues related to the mineral resources of the region and the significance of navigation routes. The EU member states are interested in shorter and safer transport routes for goods towards the regions of economic boom in Asia. The Arctic also offers new possibilities within the scope of traditional sources of energy, i.e. crude oil and gas and, in the future, could play a key role in diversification of supplies of fossil fuels to the Community.

---

<sup>39</sup> South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak in Ilulissat, Greenland Today, 10.09.2012.

<sup>40</sup> Arctic expert: Greenland could re-join the EU in a generation, EurActiv, 25.06.2012.

<sup>41</sup> D. Degeorges, *The Arctic. A region of the future...*, op.cit., p. 4.

<sup>42</sup> European Commission signs today agreement of cooperation with Greenland on raw materials, 13.06.2012, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-600\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-600_en.htm), web. January 28 2013

Energy security is becoming a central element of the future external policy of the EU, whereas the prospect of rich resources and new transport routes has become the main incentive for the EU's engagement in the Arctic region.

- The EU's readiness to play a more active role in the Arctic may collide with the interests of other rich states in the region. The United States, Canada and Russia prefer to act unilaterally in Arctic issues. Among the member states of the Community, Denmark also emphasises predominance of national interests over the interests of the remaining 26 member states. European institutions assumed the existence of a European interest in the Arctic region, yet failed to analyse how this interest is understood by the Arctic member states. Large European countries involved in the affairs of the Arctic should provide an impulse for the EU for closer cooperation among the member states.
- The economic interests of the EU in the Arctic may contribute to the EU being accused of inconsistency in its activities and eventually loss of reliability. On the one hand, it promotes environmental protection and renewable energy sources, trying to attain a leading position in the fight against climate change, yet on the other hand allows for commercial exploitation of Arctic resources, which creates a serious risk for potential pollution of waters in the case of leakage, even if the highest security standards are applied, and which constitutes a potential threat to the local environment. Brussels emphasises that European industry and enterprises could be useful with their knowledge on combining sustainable development of the Arctic and use of its resources. The discrepancy between energy needs and environmental protection is, however, clear.
- The growing strategic importance of the Arctic confirms the increased engagement of France, Germany and Great Britain in the High North. These countries, motivated by economic interests, defined their strategic interests with respect to the Arctic, among which securing energy supplies and protection of sea transport routes are the most important. These countries are also concerned about environmental issues and called for a joint strategy with respect to counteracting the causes and the results of climate change. Member states and the EU increased the level of the significance of security, which is no longer limited to traditional aspects (military and defence of territory), but takes into account new environmental and economic challenges (so called "soft" security problems, such as energy, pollution, communication, trade navigation) whose importance in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will continue to grow.

### **Bibliography**

1. *A Sustainable EU Policy for the High North*, „Official Journal of the EU”, C 136 E/71, 11.5.2012.
2. *Arctic Expert: Greenland Could Re-join the EU in a Generation*, EurActiv, 25.06.2012.

3. *Arctic Governance P6\_TA (2008)0474 Resolution of the European Parliament of October 9, 2008 on Governance of the Arctic Region (2010/C 9 E/07)*, „Official Journal of the EU”, C 9 E/41, 15.01.2010.
4. *Catherine Ashton to Visit Northern Finland, Sweden and Norway to Highlight Importance of an Enhanced EU Policy towards the Arctic*, Brussels 5 March 2012 A 99/12.
5. *Climate Change and International Security*, document of the High Representative and the European Commission addressed to the European Council, S113/08, 14.03.2008.
6. Collin J.-M., *Arctique, La France prend position*, La revue géopolitique online, September 26 2010, <http://www.diploweb.com/Arctique-la-France-prend-position.html>, web. January 20 2013.
7. *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council the EU and the Arctic Region*, COM (2008) 763, Brussels, 20.11.2008.
8. *Council Conclusions on Arctic issues*, 2985th Foreign Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels, 8.12.2009.
9. *Council Conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic Region*, 2914th Foreign Affairs Council Meeting, Brussels 8.12.2008.
10. Degeorges D., *The Arctic. A Region of the Future for the European Union and the World Economy*, „European Issues”, no 263, 8.01.2013, Foundation Robert Schuman, Policy Paper.
11. *Developing a European Union Policy towards the Arctic Region: Progress since 2008 and Next Steps*, Brussels, 26.6.2012, JOIN(2012) 19 final.
12. Discours de Michel Rocard, ambassadeur de France chargé des négociations internationales relatives aux pôles Arctique et Antarctique, 9.11.2010, <http://www.ambafrance-ru.org/Discours-de-Michel-Rocard>, accessed on 15.01.2013.
13. *Draft Council Conclusions and the Arctic Region*, 4 December 2008, 16826/08.
14. *EU Energy in Figures*, Statistical Pocketbook 2012, EC 2012.
15. European Commission *Legal Aspects of Arctic Shipping*, No. FISH/2006/09 – LOT2, February 2010. *Convention of the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)*.
16. *European Commission Signs Today Agreement of Cooperation with Greenland on Raw Materials*, 13.06.2012, [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_IP-12-600\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-12-600_en.htm), web. January 28 2013.
17. *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, <http://www.geopoliticsnorth.org/images/stories/attachments/Finland.pdf>, web. January 05 2013.
18. GDF SUEZ E&P Norge License Portfolio, [www.gdfsuezep.no](http://www.gdfsuezep.no).
19. Gjøa, [www.gdfsuezep.no/en/About-us/Activities/Gjoa](http://www.gdfsuezep.no/en/About-us/Activities/Gjoa), web. September 22 2012.
20. *Interests and Roles of non-Arctic States in the Arctic*, seminar presented by the National Capital Branch of the Canadian International Council and the Munk-Gordon Arctic Security Program, Ottawa, October 5, 2011.
21. Keil K., *The EU in the Arctic 'Game'- The Concert of Arctic Actors and the EU's Newcomer Role*, Paper for SGIR 7th Pan-European International Relations Conference, Stockholm 2010.
22. *Kingdom of Denmark Strategy for the Arctic 2011–2020*, <http://uk.nanoq.gl>, web. January 22 2013.
23. *Liam Fox: The EU Should Only Act when NATO Can Not*, 11.02.2010, [http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/02/Liam\\_Fox\\_EU\\_should\\_only\\_act\\_when\\_NATO\\_cannot.aspx](http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2010/02/Liam_Fox_EU_should_only_act_when_NATO_cannot.aspx), web. January 20 2013.

24. Major C., Steinicke S., *EU Member States' Perceptions of the Security Relevance of the High North*, Working Paper, German Institute for International and Security Affairs, Berlin 2011.
25. Minister for International Defence and Security, at the Joint NATO/Icelandic Government conference, Reykjavik, Iceland, on 29 January 2009, Ministry of Defence Archives, <http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk>, web. January 20 2013.
26. *Rocard nommé ambassadeur de France en Arctique*, „Le Nouvel Observateur”, 18.03.2009.
27. *South Korean President Lee Myung-Bak in Ilulissat*, Greenland Today, 10.09.2012.
28. *Sweden's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2011-2013*, <http://www.government.se/content/1/c6/18/61/74/9168f21a.pdf>, accessed on 10.01.2013.
29. *Un problème oublié : les pôles*, <http://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/the-north-pole-in-peril/french>, web. January 20 2013.

### **Abstract**

Climate changes in the Arctic made the North Pole area a focal point for political interests of great powers. This brought questions: *Is the Barents Sea an emerging region of new energy oil and gas supplies for the European Union? Will the High North resources play an important future role in diversification of European energy supplies? What is the UE's role in the "game" for the Arctic?* The article analyzes interests and conditions of Arctic policy of the EU and its selected Member States against the dynamic development of political and economic considerations in the Far North.

### **Unia Europejska wobec Arktyki. Klimat i aspekty energetyczne w polityce arktycznej wybranych państw członkowskich**

Zmiany klimatyczne w Arktyce sprawiły, że wokół regionu Bieguna Północnego zogniskowały się interesy polityczne wielkich mocarstw. Zrodziło to pytania: *Czy z Morza Barentsa wylania się nowy region energetycznych dostaw ropy i gazu dla Unii Europejskiej? Czy zasoby Dalekiej Północy będą w przyszłości odgrywać ważną rolę w dywersyfikacji dostaw surowców do UE? Jaka jest rola UE w „grze” o Arktykę?* Artykuł analizuje interesy i uwarunkowania polityki arktycznej UE oraz jej wybranych państw członkowskich na tle dynamicznego rozwoju uwarunkowań polityczno – gospodarczych na Dalekiej Północy.

Tomasz Młynarski, Ph.D. hab., professor at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce, Poland.