



THE GLOBAL-ARCTIC MISSION COUNCIL

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There are several perspectives and discourses on the Arctic. Among them is the ‘Global Arctic’, a research approach initiated by the GlobalArctic Project in 2014. It is motivated by the growing interest of multiple actors from non-Arctic states on Arctic issues, and the Arctic Council’s acceptance of new Observer States from Asia. Since then, the conceptualization has been mentioned and discussed rigorously by experts, scholars and policymakers. The Project teamed up with Arctic Circle to jointly create the GlobalArctic Mission Council which was formally launched in Shanghai at the 2019 Arctic Circle China Forum. It is an open, interactive, international platform and network of experts from different fields and disciplines, as well as a process for clear-thinking across sectors and beyond state borders.

In spite of rumors of increasing tension, the globalized Arctic is a region of geopolitical stability and constructive cooperation. This is based on the common interests of relevant stakeholders on environmental protection, sustainable development, and science and knowledge. Interestingly and most importantly, this constructed geopolitical reality is supported by the Arctic States, Arctic Indigenous peoples, Northernmost regions and civil societies, as well as non-Arctic states from Asia and Europe. This reality has provided a solid foundation and inspiration for the GlobalArctic Mission Council of the Arctic Circle to view the Arctic as a resilient structure, study the global and Arctic interrelations and to have policy-relevant agendas for stakeholder dialogues.

The Mission Council is an open, international platform and network with a flexible – ‘work in progress’ - format. It aims to interpret the globalized Arctic in a new geopolitical context, (re)place the Arctic within the context of global multi-dimensional changes and explore worldwide implications. Finally, Arctic resiliency is enhanced by new strategic research mechanisms and by the formulation of a network of experts interested to study ‘globalism,’ the ‘Arctic’ and their interrelations.

Among methods and activities are;

- To combine the local – global perspective (Area and Global Studies) with the global Arctic as an interdisciplinary workshop of the ‘Anthropocene’;
- To use the two-stages of the *Global>Arctic / Arctic>Global* Matrix as a method for studying Arctic actors and their interests;
- To implement ‘Transdisciplinarity’ by having a policy-relevant agenda;
- By promoting a problem-solving dialogue between different stakeholders.

Among the activities, the first GlobalArctic VIRTUAL in November 2020 (<http://www.arcticcircle.org/virtual/global-arctic>) consisted of a dialogue on *The Global Arctic Today: geopolitical stability and power politics, fossil economy, focus on science, an urgency of climate change mitigation*. Three members of the Mission Council participated; Prof. Miayse Christensen, Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden; Heather Exner-Pirot, Managing editor of the Arctic Yearbook and Prof. Matthias Finger, EPFL, Switzerland. The dialogue concluded with the launch of the Arctic Yearbook 2020 *Climate Change and the Arctic: Global Origins, Regional Responsibilities* (see, www.arcticyearbook.com). The dialogue was well received by a large international audience from 30 countries and included several interesting questions.

The dialogue’s theme was to describe the situation in the Arctic at the 2020s by focusing on relevant issues – both emerging and fading ones - and their global implications. Last year, the COVID-19 pandemic became a global crisis and an invisible enemy threatening modern societies where public authorities were forced to make exceptional decisions like closing international borders. However, the pandemic has also saved energy, resources and time, decreased CO2 emissions, and resulted in new investments for ‘Green Deal’ policies. Behind all of this is the blunt fact that the original wicked problem – the combination of environmental degradation, loss of biodiversity and rapid climate change – cannot be benched until the termination of the virus. Efforts to address the environmental challenges must be a part of the exit strategy.

Here the global Arctic plays a double role:

- As a target, or 'victim' of rapid and multidimensional changes much due to the paradox of Arctic development, when a balance is sought between climate change mitigation and increasing economic activities. This in turn provides challenges for Arctic governance, in particular due to growing interests towards the Arctic region, from inside and outside, as indicated by a boom of Arctic policies.



- And, more importantly, as a multidimensional case and interdisciplinary workshop of climate research and governance, and a search for a paradigm shift in security to better incorporate societal security.

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