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**European Union and Inuit Circumpolar Council:
Prospects for a Common Arctic Vision**

Erica M. Dingman*

Acquisition of Arctic hydrocarbon deposits is a strategic priority of Arctic States and numerous Non-Arctic States alike stimulated by the global thirst for energy. Concurrently the European Union (EU) and Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC) have aggressively implemented strategies that seek to curtail greenhouse gas emissions. This nexus of hydrocarbon extraction and climate change dominate the Arctic debate, yet the economic benefits attributed to extraction could undermine environmental policy.

Nonetheless, the EU and the ICC are confronting the co-mingling of these exceedingly complex issues, albeit from different perspectives. Whereas the EU ties climate change policy to energy independence and economic growth, the ICC has a dual discourse combining global environmental security with judicious resource development aimed at enhancing Inuit socioeconomic security. Both have a strategic interest in accessing Arctic resources.

When the EU Arctic policy comes to fruition some believe it will emphasize climate change and environmental issues rather than energy security (Offerdal 2010). One of the contributing factors for such a strategy includes the EU's aim for permanent observer status at the Arctic Council (AC) by seeking to be seen as a benevolent ally. The AC has three levels of participation: Member States which consist of the eight Arctic States and are the only members with voting rights; Permanent Participants which consist of six Arctic Indigenous peoples organizations including the ICC; and Observers which is open to non-Arctic States, inter-governmental and inter-parliamentary organizations and NGOs.

* *The views expressed are attributable only to the author in a personal capacity and not to any institution with which they are associated. Erica Dingman is a research associate at the World Policy Institute based in New York City.*

Despite the EU's lack of official status at the AC, the EU is pushing forward with its Arctic policy which will likely be influenced by the European taste for climate change mitigation and the fact that Europe's transition to a low-carbon energy system can succeed only in correlation with global climate change reform (Behrens 2010). Collectively this suggests that the EU may pursue a non-confrontational approach towards gaining an enhanced footing into Arctic governance.

The climate change discourse resonates broadly in both the public and political spheres. Region-wide emissions targets, set at 20% below 1990 levels, were reinforced by binding legislation in 2009. The implementation of the "20-20-20" targets was eased by Europe's largest economies, France, Germany and the UK, with a burden sharing scheme designed to distribute emission reductions based partially on individual Member States' economic status. Successful implementation would argue well for international cooperation on global warming (Schreurs and Tiberghien 2007).

Policy considerations have moved to offshore drilling, which is a particular concern in the Arctic due to the sensitive ecosystem. Recently the European Parliament passed a resolution placing stricter liability on companies pursuing offshore drilling contracts. While the European Parliament (2011) rejected an outright ban, Vickie Ford, the resolutions rapporteur, said that every drill site and operator should be scrutinized for risk, and specifically noted concern for the Arctic. The resolution seeks to apply the polluter pays principle to cover all possible environmental damage.

As Arctic ice turns to water another key issue is international law. The 2011 European Parliament Resolution, *A Sustainable EU Policy for the High North* accurately maintains that the *UN Convention on the Law of the Sea* applies to states beyond the borders of Arctic states (Byers 2010). Here international law is used to justify enhanced EU status in the Arctic governance debate (Koivurova 2010). While Arctic states will likely challenge this position, both the EU and ICC draw widely on international agreements to advance increased participation.

For instance, the ICC's *Circumpolar Inuit Declaration on Sovereignty in the Arctic* references the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples* and specifies the Inuit's right to "determine collectively our political, social, economic and cultural development." This extends to the ICC's position on resource development whereby the paradox of non-renewable resource development and environmental security is considered a human right. Insofar as Inuit seek to enhance their socioeconomic capacity through self-directed resource development, equally desired is environmental preservation capable of supporting their physical and cultural connection with the land and sea (Penikett 1997).

Consequently it was understandable when the current ICC Chair, Aqqaluk Lyngé (2009), equated the impact of climate change to the "culture-changing" effects of colonization. As a result of industrialization, distant pollutants settle in the Arctic; and as a result of globalization the environment is further threatened by the onset of increased human activity and potential oil spills. Despite the EU contribution to this problem the ICC has viewed EU climate change reform in a positive light (Watt-Cloutier 2004).

Certainly differences exist between the ICC and the EU, however should differences be put aside, both might find compelling reasons to cooperate on Arctic climate change reform. The potential benefits are twofold: partnership could increase pressure on stakeholders to strike a balance between climate change and hydrocarbon exploitation, and a shared agenda might produce a reciprocating boost in the Arctic governance debate.

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