

Canada – Europe
Parliamentary Association



Association parlementaire
Canada – Europe

Report of the Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

14th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

Oslo, Norway

From April 13 to 14, 2021

Report

A Canada delegation attended the 14th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR)¹ and the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (the Standing Committee)², virtually hosted by Stortinget, the Norwegian Parliament, from 13 to 14 April 2021.

The Canadian delegation comprised:

- The Honourable Larry Bagnell, P.C., M.P. (Head of Delegation, Vice-Chair of the Standing Committee);
- Mr. Larry Maguire, M.P.;
- The Honourable Patricia Bovey, Senator;
- Mr. Stéphane Bergeron, M.P.;
- Ms. Mumilaaq Qaqqaq, M.P.;
- Ms. Yvonne Jones, M.P.

The delegation also included Ms. Sara Fryer and Mr. Thai Nguyen, from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service, Library of Parliament, as advisors, and Mr. Matthieu Boulianne, Association Secretary.

The biennial CPAR and the Standing Committee³ act as a parliamentary forum for issues relevant to the work of the Arctic Council.⁴ The forum is made up of delegations from the eight Arctic states (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the United States) and the European Parliament. CPAR and the Standing Committee also include Permanent Participants representing Indigenous peoples, as well, as observers.

MEETING SUMMARY

The conference featured speakers from different Arctic nations grouped according to five themes. For the first time, the [CPAR was available to be streamed online](#)⁵. The CPAR opened with addresses from Ms. Tone Wilhelmsen Trøen, President, Norwegian Parliament, and Ms. Aili Keskitalo, President, Sami Parliament of Norway. Of note, Norway will soon release a new Northern Strategy and highlighted that youth are engaged in its development.

The following is a summary of the conference, organized by conference theme.

A. 13 APRIL 2021 – Country Reports

- Mr. Guðlaugur Þór Þórðarson, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Iceland, provided highlights of the Icelandic Chairmanship of the Arctic Council, which is concluding in the spring of 2021. He observed that the COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the resiliency of Arctic inhabitants and provided the Arctic Council with an unexpected

¹ [14th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Norway](#), 13-14 April 2021.

² Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, [Standing Committee](#).

³ Arctic parliamentary cooperation is facilitated by the Standing Committee between biennial meetings of CPAR.

⁴ [Arctic Council](#).

⁵ <https://youtu.be/bYjOPn-Byck>

opportunity to develop its work and collaboration. He also noted the priorities of the Arctic Council's work over the course of Iceland's leadership, which included: Arctic marine cooperation, climate and green energy solutions for Arctic nations.

- Mr. Eirik Sivertsen, Chair of the Standing Committee, highlighted the work of the Committee during his term.
- CPAR delegates heard from Ms. Aurora S. Møllersen, Norway regarding the Norwegian youth panel's report to the Norwegian Parliament related to youth priorities for the forthcoming Northern Strategy. Priorities she raised included education, transportation networks, climate change and balancing the needs to protect Sami culture when considering economic development initiatives.
- Mr. Larry Bagnell highlighted the fact that Canada is developing a rural transportation strategy and asked about Norwegian youth's recommendations regarding Arctic transportation. Ms. Møllersen noted that affordability is critical for youth.

B. The Impact of COVID-19 in the Arctic

- CPAR delegates heard about the economic and social effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Alaska, United States of America (USA) from Senator Lisa Murkowski, USA, and in Greenland, from Ms. Aaja Chemnitz Larsen, M.P., Denmark/Greenland. International public health cooperation was highlighted by Dr. Eydis Kristin Sveinbjarnardottir, Arctic Council.
- Ms. Yvonne Jones, M.P. remarked on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in Labrador and Arctic Canada, highlighting the challenges faced by remote communities such as overcrowded housing, food insecurity, lack of medical resources and gaps in broadband connectivity.
- Senator Patricia Bovey of Manitoba acknowledged the importance of artists and encouraged delegates to support artists who have sustained societies during the pandemic.

C. The Arctic in 2050

- The first day of the conference concluded with reflections from panelists on the future of the Arctic in 2050. Remarks were made by Ms. Ine Eriksen Søreide, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Norway; Ms. Maria Grånemo, Barents Regional Youth Council, Sweden; Ms. Niina Pietikäinen, Harriniva Hotels and Safaris, Finland; and Ms. Erin Linklater, Gwich'in Council International, Canada.

D. 14 April 2021 – Arctic Climate Change

- The second day of the CPAR featured a panel on climate change in the Arctic. Mr. Rasmus Benestad, Norwegian Meteorological Institute, and Mr. Andreas Schwab, Chair of the European Parliament's Delegation for Northern cooperation, relations with Switzerland, Norway, to the EU-Iceland Joint Parliamentary Committee and the European Economic Area (EEA) Joint Parliamentary Committee both offered remarks on scientific evidence and priorities for action, respectively.
- Mr. Sivertsen, Chair of the Standing Committee, provided an overview of the regional differences throughout the Arctic with respect to climate change. He emphasized that existing infrastructure must be adapted to climate change and highlighted the importance of cooperation among Arctic states. A notable example

of cooperation he raised was the [International Agreement to Prevent Unregulated High Seas Fisheries in the Central Arctic Ocean](#) (2018), whereby signatory countries agreed to cooperate to better understand the Arctic's ecosystem and to prevent commercial fishing until such time as there is adequate scientific information to inform fisheries management. He called for the establishment of a new International Polar Year to draw attention to the priorities of Arctic nations.

- The Russian Federation observed that the thawing of permafrost and ice cover is affecting many regions. The delegation noted that Russia will host a conference related to permafrost in 2023 and looks forward to assuming Chair of the Arctic Council in spring 2021.
- Mr. Larry Maguire, M.P. observed that Arctic nations understand the problem of climate change but require political will to solve it. He raised the matter of carbon capture and storage as an emerging innovation.

E. Sustainable Arctic Business

- Mr. Mads Qvist Frederiksen, Arctic Economic Council, provided an update on the status of economic activities in the Arctic. He highlighted the Arctic Investment Protocol⁶ (2015) as a means by which to balance the Arctic's environment sensitivity with industrial development. He highlighted tourism and fisheries as important economic activities in the Arctic and that rare earth minerals that are present in the Arctic have the potential to drive innovation in green technology.
- Senator Yury Vazhenin, Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, gave a presentation about Russian Arctic business development. He noted that the Russian Federation has invested heavily in the Northern Sea Route and raised the idea of an environmental standard for the Arctic at the international level that could become an example of cooperation.
- Dr. Olav Lanes, ArcticZymes Technologies, Norway, and Ms. Inger Anita Smuk, Sámi reindeer herder, Varjnárga Mobile Slaughterhouse and Processing, Varanger, Norway, discussed their respective businesses.
- Mr. Stéphane Bergeron, M.P., discussed economic development in northern Quebec, highlighting initiatives led by Inuit in Nunavik; he asked about the effectiveness of the Arctic Economic Council's Arctic Investment Protocol; and noted that Quebec could make greater diplomatic efforts and foster connections with Nordic countries to increase its international trade with the region.

F. Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region 2022, NUUK, Greenland/Denmark

- M.P. Aaja Chemnitz Larsen, Parliament of the Kingdom of Denmark, highlighted that the next CPAR will be held in Nuuk, Greenland/Denmark.

G. Conference Statement

- At the conclusion of the CPAR, delegates adopted a [Conference Statement](#)⁷.

⁶ Arctic Economic Council, [Arctic Investment Protocol](#), 2017.

⁷ <https://arcticparl.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/Conference-statement-Final-draft.pdf>

Respectfully submitted,

Mr. Scott Simms, M.P.
Chair Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	14th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
DESTINATION	Videoconference
DATES	April 13 to 14, 2021
DELEGATION	
SENATE	Hon. Patricia Bovey
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Larry Bagnell Mr. Larry Maguire Mr. Stéphane Bergeron Ms. Yvonne Jones Ms. Mumilaaq Qaqqaq
STAFF	Mr. Matthieu Boulianne Ms. Sara Fryer Mr. Thai Nguyen
TRANSPORTATION	0
ACCOMMODATION	0
HOSPITALITY	0
PER DIEMS	0
OFFICIAL GIFTS	0
TOTAL	0

APPENDIX 1

Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

The Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region

14th Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region Digital

Conference 13 - 14 April 2021

Conference Statement

The Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region envision the Arctic as a region of peace, stability and low tension where nations act responsibly, and where economic and energy resources are developed in a sustainable, transparent manner respecting the environment and the interests and cultures of all inhabitants of the Arctic, especially Indigenous peoples.

We congratulate the Arctic Council with its 25th anniversary as the primary forum for Arctic cooperation and its proven ability to maintain a constructive and positive spirit. We encourage the stronger inclusion of youth representatives, strengthened cooperation with the Arctic Indigenous peoples, and constructive cooperation with existing and new observers.

We congratulate the University of the Arctic, UArctic, with its 20th anniversary and take pride in having supported the creation and its successful development since the inception.

We firmly underline the importance of international law in the Arctic, especially the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), which provides the essential multilateral legal framework for all ocean activities, including in the Arctic.

As elected representatives from Canada, Denmark/Greenland, European Union, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the United States of America, and in close collaboration with the Indigenous peoples of the Arctic, we highlight the following:

Climate change in the Arctic

We see with grave concern that the Arctic is warming at a rate more than twice that of the global average, resulting in rapid social, environmental, and economic impacts, not only in the region but worldwide. The peoples of the Arctic are dramatically experiencing the effects of this change, and need support and resources to adapt to these profound changes.

We call on the governments of the Arctic region to:

Renew and increase their 2015 Paris Agreement commitments at the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow, with the understanding that climate change is a critical threat to our planet.

Take a leading role in the work to forge an ambitious climate action plan for the Arctic, addressing emissions cuts of greenhouse gases globally and in Arctic States, especially

CO2 and black carbon, and adaptation to climate change while supporting innovative solutions relevant to the Arctic, which will protect the people in the region.

Strengthen the knowledge base and improve scientific cooperation with a new International Polar Year Initiative. In close cooperation with the World Meteorological Organization and other main polar science organizations such as the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research and the Arctic Science Partnership, the International Arctic Science Committee, International Arctic Social Sciences Association and University of the Arctic, with focus on extensive interdisciplinary and multilateral scientific programs that include Northerners and Indigenous peoples in the planning and conducting of scientific activities.

Continually consider new technologies to reduce carbon emissions in pursuit of ambitious climate action.

Sustainable Economic Development

Sustainable economic development is fundamental for the future of the Arctic region and requires close cooperation between government, academia and business representatives.

We stress the importance of financial institutions for the development of the Arctic as a key instrument for sustainable development of the region, including enhancement of socio-economic conditions, modernization of industries, and development of infrastructure across borders, while respecting Arctic ecosystem boundaries.

Underscore the importance of promoting the use of renewable energy in remote Arctic communities and encourage further work on innovative energy solutions and related capacity construction in the Arctic aimed at climate change prevention taking into account the needs of the increasingly electrifying society.

Acknowledge the need to support small and medium size business in the Arctic as well as develop large-scale projects in a sustainable responsible manner in order to ensure overall progress, increase employment rate and enhance living standards of the Arctic inhabitants.

We call on the governments of the Arctic region to:

Increase the accessibility of digital infrastructure in the Arctic, thereby promoting entrepreneurship, innovation and diversify economic development in the Arctic.

Strengthen the cooperation with the Arctic Economic Council and ensure the implementation of the Arctic Investment Protocol.

The Peoples of the Arctic

Urbanization is making the Arctic a more interesting place for young people to live as it offers better services, education and leisure opportunities. However, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is difficult, with the loss of employment and health concerns.

COVID-19 has shown that medical resources and infrastructure available in parts of the Arctic is poorer than in the southern regions.

We call on the governments of the Arctic region to:

Strongly strengthen the cooperation on public health in order to increase the exchange of knowledge and foster greater awareness and better response to the health issues of circumpolar peoples.

Incorporate voices of the youth in venues and engagements organised for Arctic cooperation.

Support the youth cooperation across the borders and ensure a meaningful engagement of the Arctic youth in the activity of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic region.

Strengthen the funding of “north2north” and other mobility programs especially directed at young people living in the Arctic.

Base all activities in the Arctic Region on the respect of the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Facilitate contacts between people in the region by simplifying the visa regime and ensuring freedom of movement of the citizens of the Arctic states.

Strengthen the cooperation and dialogue on security issues in order to address the global and regional challenges and key risks and threats of today, including COVID-19 pandemic.

Underscore the importance to maintain peace, stability and low tension in the Arctic region; acknowledge the need to strengthen the cooperation and dialogue between the Arctic states on security issues, in order to address the global and regional challenges, key risks and threats of today.