

Canada – Europe
Parliamentary Association



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**Report of the Canadian Parliamentary Delegation
respecting its participation
at the Meeting of the Standing Committee
of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region**

Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association

**Kangerlussuaq and Sisimiut, Greenland/Denmark
May 15-18, 2017**

INTRODUCTION

A Canadian delegation of two Members of Parliament, the Hon. Larry Bagnell and Mr. Larry Maguire, attended the meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (the Standing Committee)¹ held in Kangerlussuaq and Sisimiut, Greenland/Denmark, from 15 to 18 May 2017. Accompanying the delegation was Mr. Thai Nguyen, from the Parliamentary Information and Research Service of the Library of Parliament as adviser to the delegation.

Arctic parliamentary cooperation is facilitated by the Standing Committee between biennial meetings of the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region (CPAR).² CPAR and the Standing Committee act as a parliamentary forum for issues relevant to the work of the Arctic Council. It comprises 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 WITH THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR IN COPENHAGEN

On 14 May 2017, prior to the SCPAR meeting in Greenland, the Canadian delegation held discussions in Copenhagen with Ms. Emi Furuya, Canadian Ambassador to Denmark. Ms. Emi Furuya indicated that, as Arctic partners, Canada and Denmark share a history of productive cooperation across a broad range of issues, from sustainable development to climate change. Canada and Denmark are also neighbours, with Nunavut and Greenland sharing unique cultural, historic and economic ties along the shared 2,000 km maritime border.

The Canadian delegation and the Ambassador and her staff discussed developments following the signing of the Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement between Canada and the European Union (CETA). The Ambassador mentioned that, in addition to scientific research, there are a range of sectors that could benefit from enhanced cooperation and investment between the two partners in the Arctic, such as ice and ocean technologies and northern mining services.³

SUMMARY OF SCPAR'S MEETING IN GREENLAND

A. GREENLANDIC AFFAIRS

On 15 May 2017, in Kangerlussuaq, Greenland, Mr. Larry Bagnell, Vice-Chair of SCPAR, chaired the meeting of the Standing Committee. The Standing Committee heard from Ms. Sara Olsvig, Deputy Premier and Minister of Justice and Social Affairs of Greenland. She described the shared challenges in the Arctic: limited capacity for

¹ Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, <http://www.arcticparl.org/>.

² The 12th CPAR took place in Ulan-Ude, Russia, from 14 to 17 June 2016. The Ulan-Ude Conference Statement is available at: <http://www.arcticparl.org/conferences.aspx?id=6776>

³ Government of Canada, *Canadian Arctic Capabilities by Sector* – Canada. See <http://international.gc.ca/gac-amc/institution/tcs-sdc/publications/cacg-qcac/cacg-qcac.aspx?lang=eng>

business development in the context of small population bases, Indigenous issues, and remote geography.

Ms. Sara Olsvig informed the Standing Committee about the self-government arrangement for Greenland recognizing its right for self-determination and facilitating further devolution of powers from Denmark. Her coalition government has started the process of drafting a Constitution for Greenland and is inspired by the Nordic welfare-state model emphasizing societal equality with priority given to education and health care. However, Ms. Sara Olsvig acknowledged that, as Greenland is still dependent on subsidies from Denmark, there is a need to strengthen the economy and infrastructure allowing Greenland to take on more responsibilities. Currently, fisheries represent the most important component of Greenland's economy.

1. Energy and Environment

Greenland is self-sufficient as 70% of its energy originates from hydro power but is facing challenges in cleaning waste dumps due to its rocky soil.

2. Culture

Greenland is planning to establish a film institute to foster local film production based on the experience of the International Sami Film Institute in Norway. Ms. Sara Olsvig noted that Greenlandic music bands are a vibrant part of society and the government also would like to encourage literature published in Greenlandic.

3. Education

Ms. Sara Olsvig mentioned that, while education is free in Greenland, the territory is experiencing high drop-out rates. In her view, a child welfare strategy is needed to improve parenting skills and promote the value of education among Greenlandic families. Education is especially important for economic development by reducing the need to import educated labour.

4. Social Issues

Mr. Larry Bagnell, Canada mentioned that he championed a private member's bill in the Canadian Parliament, aimed at helping people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) involved in the justice system. Ms. Sara Olsvig confirmed that FASD is also a problem in Greenland.

5. Economic Development and Labour Market

The unemployment rate is high in Greenland but, paradoxically, importation of skilled foreign labour is common. In Ms. Sara Olsvig's opinion, all companies must develop policies addressing the issue of foreign labour.

According to Ms. Aaja Larsen, MP from Greenland, building local competence is critical in securing employment in Greenland. Investments in education and infrastructure are also key for ensuring local economic benefits. She mentioned that, at first, Greenland

regarded the development of natural resources as a solution for social problems. However, with the current debate on uranium mining, the Greenlandic population has since adopted a more measured point of view considering environmental concerns. Ms. Aaja Larsen indicated that, for Greenland, smaller-scale development projects may be preferable to large industrial ventures.

Mr. Larry Bagnell reminded Committee members of the similar situation in Yukon. He indicated that Yukon is also experiencing northern challenges and opportunities in developing its tourism market, in education and housing. With regards to building local capacity, Mr. Larry Bagnell mentioned the example of Yukon College's Centre for Northern Innovation in Mining contributing to the economic viability of Yukon's industry by growing a skilled workforce within the territory through skills and trades training.

6. Fisheries

Mr. Larry Bagnell asked for Ms. Sara Olsvig's view regarding Greenland's current unilateral 45 tonnes harvest quota of wild Atlantic salmon. He expressed his appreciation for Greenland's 2016 reduced actual catch of 27 tonnes and indicated his hope that this downward trend will continue in the future to ensure the conservation of this shared species. Greenland operates a mixed-stock Atlantic salmon fishery in its waters that intercepts salmon of Canadian origin. According to the 2017 International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) advice, mentioned in the Atlantic Salmon Federation's *State of North American Atlantic Salmon Populations, May 2017* document, "there is no surplus of multi-sea-winter salmon stocks and no fisheries should operate on mixed stocks."⁴ Canada and Greenland have been working together through the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) to help reduce Greenland's catch.

Ms. Sara Olsvig did not address the 45 tonnes quota but pointed out that Greenland manages its fisheries based on the principles of sustainability and there are efforts to combine knowledge from fishers and scientists in its decision-making process. She also indicated that Greenland has been active in implementing better catch reporting requirements and enhancing conservation awareness in its fishing communities. Ms. Sara Olsvig added that Greenland harvests Atlantic salmon for subsistence purposes as the catch is for domestic consumption.

Continuing discussions on fisheries, Ms. Sara Olsvig mentioned that climate change has induced a shift in species distribution. Shrimp, Greenland halibut and mackerel have migrated further north into Greenland's waters. Therefore, Greenland is seeking to develop new fisheries and diversify its fisheries industry.

7. Tourism

Visit Greenland, the national tourism board of Greenland, presented to SCPAR the state of tourism in Greenland. Greenland has been experiencing strong growth in tourist numbers in recent years (23% in 2015 and 10% in 2016). Visit Greenland has

⁴ Atlantic Salmon Federation, *State of North American Atlantic Salmon Populations, May 2017*. See: http://0104.nccdn.net/1_5/2cb/110/296/asf-sop2017-backgrounder.pdf

developed a tourism statistics website allowing it to better devise its marketing strategy. The Board recognized, however, the challenges in Greenland's current lack of capacity to handle a greater number of tourists.

Mr. Larry Maguire, Canada enquired if Greenland promotes polar bear tours as the case in Churchill, Manitoba. Anders Stanbakken, Head of Visit Greenland, replied that Greenland does not allow trophy hunting and does not factor polar bear in its tourism strategy. He indicated that the number of polar bears in Greenland is low and their constant presence is not reliable enough to establish viewing tours.

8. Climate Change and Glaciers

Professor Sune Olander Rasmussen, University of Copenhagen, gave a presentation on climate change and its effects on Greenland's glaciers and ice sheets. He is part of the East Greenland Ice-core Project (EastGRIP) which aims to generate a better understanding about ice sheet dynamics and climate history. According to Professor Rasmussen, current sea-level change predictions exclude ice streams' contribution. Ice streams within the ice sheet are responsible for transporting a significant portion of the ice that ends in the ocean and, in Professor Rasmussen's opinion, climate change induced sea-level rises are being underestimated.

SCPAR members had the opportunity to visit the Rensdyr glacier in Kangerlussuaq with Professor Rasmussen and gained a better appreciation of effects of climate change on local glaciers.

9. Search and Rescue

Jakob Rouse, Danish Ministry of Defence, presented to SCPAR the Danish approach to climate change-related challenges in the Arctic. He indicated the need for stronger cooperation between the United States, Canada and Denmark. Jakob Rouse mentioned the example of the 2016 rescue of an Iqaluit Fisheries Corporation-owned fishing vessel *F/V Saputui* by the joint efforts of the Danish and Canadian Coast Guard. Climate change opens economic opportunities in fisheries, tourism and oil and gas development. However, search and rescue and environmental protection infrastructure is still greatly deficient in the region.

Small and isolated settlements lack support infrastructure and people power to handle search and rescue operations. In addition to deep ports, communication infrastructure is also lacking in the Arctic. In Jakob Rouse's opinion, heavy fuel oil in shipping should be phased out in the Arctic due to oil spill risks. He further indicated that, although the Arctic Coast Guard Forum is a good cooperation initiative launched by the Arctic Council, Coast Guard services need a greater political push from Arctic nations to share resources.

Mr. Larry Bagnell, Canada enquired about language issues in the context of cooperation with the Russian Coast Guard. In the view of Mr. Jakob Rouse, Norwegian-Russian exercises in the Barents Sea are useful in identifying areas for cooperation improvements and synchronization. Consequently, Mr. Larry Bagnell suggested that best practices from Exercise Barents should be applied elsewhere in the Arctic Region.

Mr. Jakob Rousee added that Denmark is also looking at the Canadian Rangers example in order to increase the involvement of the local population in search and rescue as well as patrol operations in northern Greenland.

Mr. Larry Maguire, Canada recalling discussions about Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) at the last SCPAR meeting in Alaska, asked about UAS' potential for patrolling northern Greenland. According to Mr. Jakob Rousee, UAS may not perform well in Arctic weather but may be useful as part of a communication infrastructure or employed for shipping of goods. He stated that UAS are still in the development phase and the Ministry of Defence is examining their limitations and potential.

B. SCPAR/CPAR: THE WAY FORWARD

1. Contributing to the Arctic Council's Work

Mr. Eirik Sivertsen, Chair of SCPAR and MP from Norway, informed SCPAR of the signing of the *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation* in May 2017 at the biennial Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council in Alaska.⁵ The Chair noted that this Agreement is the third legally-binding agreement concluded under the auspices of the Arctic Council and was the result of the United States-Russia joint efforts in co-chairing the Scientific Cooperation Task Force.

The Chair of SCPAR added, as the midpoint has been reached between the 12th CPAR in Ulan-Ude, Russia and the 13th CPAR to be held in Finland in 2018, it is the responsibility of the Standing Committee to start examining issues to pursue in both the long-term and for next year. Mr. Eirik Sivertsen was satisfied that the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council 2017-19 is considering organizing an Arctic Summit involving Heads of State and governments of the Arctic Council as well as the Heads of the Permanent Participants. This Summit was called for by Recommendation 38 of the 12th CPAR Statement adopted in Russia. The CPAR Statement was conveyed to the Arctic Council as SCPAR/CPAR has observer status at the Arctic Council.

The Chair proposed that the next SCPAR meeting in Iceland in October 2017 be held in conjunction with the Arctic Circle Assembly in Reykjavik. The Arctic Circle includes the participation of regional governments and organizations, such as Quebec and the West Nordic Council (a new observer at the Arctic Council). The Chair noted that exploring new ways on how to involve regional and local governments in decision-making processes of the Arctic Council was advocated for by Recommendation 37 of the 12th CPAR Statement.

2. Challenging the Arctic Council's Thinking

Mr. Larry Bagnell, Canada and Mr. Lars Tysklind, Sweden suggested SCPAR to focus on issues not currently tackled at the Arctic Council so as to increase the value of the Committee's work. Mr. Larry Bagnell and Mr. Jorn Dohrmann, European Parliament also emphasized that ministers rarely get opportunities to visit small Arctic communities.

⁵ U.S. Department of State, *Agreement on Enhancing International Arctic Scientific Cooperation*, 11 May 2017. See: <https://www.state.gov/e/oes/rls/other/2017/270809.htm>

In contrast, parliamentarians represent the voice of those communities and the fact that SCPAR meetings are often held in small Arctic settlements is significant in allowing parliamentarians to better understand local and shared challenges. Mr. Georgy Karlov, Russia agreed with the above statements and proposed SCPAR to put forward action items, such as economic cooperation, in addition to general discussion matters.

Committee members put forward a list of issues that could be further examined by SCPAR/CPAR in the future, including:

- Connectivity in the Arctic: digital infrastructure, satellites;
- Economic cooperation: fisheries, natural resources development;
- Corporate Social Responsibility: United Nations Global Compact, World Economic Forum's Arctic Investment Protocol;
- Skills development for the future workforce;
- Adaptation and mitigation plans to climate change; and
- Education.

Mr. Larry Maguire, while mentioning that he is a member of the Canadian House of Commons Standing Committee on Heritage, indicated that the Heritage Committee is carrying out a study on media access in rural communities. He told SCPAR members that issues directly impacting people livelihoods should take priority when SCPAR decides on study topics. The Chair pointed out that climate change and connectivity are two subjects already being examined by the Arctic Council. However, he suggested that SCPAR may consider the priorities of the Finnish Chairmanship and propose new thinking on those priorities.

3. Effectiveness and Visibility of SCPAR/CPAR

As 2018 marks the 25th anniversary of SCPAR/CPAR, Ms. Aaja Larsen, Greenland stressed the need for SCPAR/CPAR, as the voice of Arctic parliamentarians, to raise its visibility among policy-makers, non-governmental organizations and scientists in international forums. Mr. Ari Trausti, Iceland agreed and added that there should be a better dissemination of the Committee's work.

Mr. Larry Maguire pointed out that SCPAR/CPAR needs to raise its profile by publicizing its history, accomplishments to date and issues that the Standing Committee is studying. The Chair concurred and noted that the Parliament hosting a SCPAR meeting should take the responsibility to broadcast details of the meeting to other parliamentarians and the local media.

Since the first CPAR was held in Reykjavik, Iceland in 1993, the Chair proposed to mark the 25th anniversary by organizing a SCPAR meeting in Iceland during the Arctic Circle Assembly with the theme "People living in the Arctic shaping their future". This theme would emphasize the role of parliamentarians in representing people living in the Arctic Region.

To increase the visibility and effectiveness of SCPAR/CPAR, Mr. Eirik Sivertsen encouraged members to draw the attention of their respective parliaments to recommendations brought forward by CPAR statements. He mentioned that both the Chair and Vice-Chair of SCPAR have the responsibility to actively participate in various

international forums and add the parliamentary perspective to international discussions potentially affecting the Arctic.

Mr. Eirik Sivertsen suggested the creation of working groups responsible for developing topics as part of the program of the upcoming 13th CPAR. He also proposed to establish a Communications Working Group tasked with generating proposals to raise the visibility and effectiveness of SCPAR/CPAR. Ms. Aaja Larsen, Greenland, Mr. Ari Trausti, Iceland, and Mr. Samu Paukkunen, Secretary-General of SCPAR and adviser to Finland's delegation, volunteered to be part of the Communications Working Group. Mr. Larry Bagnell, Canada also submitted Mr. Thai Nguyen, adviser to the Canadian delegation, to be a member of that working group. At the suggestion of Mr. Eirik Sivertsen, Mr. Thai Nguyen will chair and coordinate the work of the Communications Working Group and draft proposals will be considered during the next SCPAR meeting in October 2017.

C. UPDATES BY MEMBERS

Mr. Larry Bagnell updated SCPAR members on Arctic-related activities in Canada since the last SCPAR meeting in Anchorage, Alaska, in February 2017. He described the federal 2017 budget which included several specific measures for the Canadian Arctic region. Mr. Larry Bagnell also mentioned the signing of the *Inuit Nunangat Declaration*, a commitment made by the federal government and Inuit leadership to work in partnership on shared priorities through the Inuit-Crown Partnership Committee. He also shared information regarding the Canadian participation to the International Arctic Forum held in Arkhangelsk, Russia, on 29-30 March 2017.

D. FUTURE MEETINGS OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE

The next meeting of the Standing Committee is scheduled for 11 to 13 October 2017 in Reykjavik, Iceland. Finland will host the subsequent meeting of the Standing Committee in Helsinki from 23 to 24 November 2017.

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

APPENDIX 1



CONFERENCE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

THE STANDING COMMITTEE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS OF THE ARCTIC REGION

MEETING IN KANGERLUSSUAQ AND SISIMIUT, GREENLAND

15-18 May 2017

MEMBERS

Canada	Mr. Larry Bagnell, MP, Vice-Chair of SCPAR Mr. Larry Maguire, MP Mr. Thai Nguyen, Adviser
Denmark/Greenland	Ms. Aaja Chemnitz Larsen, MP Mr. Peder Pedersen, Head of Section Ms. Anne-Kathrine B. Olsen, Adviser Mr. Janus Haraldsen, Head of Secretariat Ms. Jonna Sando, High Executive Officer
European Parliament	Mr. Jørn Dohrmann, MEP Ms. Ausra Rakstelyte, Administrator
Finland	Mr. Kari Kulmala, MP
Iceland	Mr. Ari Trausti Gudmundsson, MP Ms. Arna Gerdur Bang, Adviser

Norway
Mr. Eirik Sivertsen, MP, Chair of SCPAR
Ms. Margunn Helen Ebbesen, MP
Mr. Bjørn Willy Robstad, Adviser

Russia
Mr. Georgy Karlov, MP
Ms. Irina Kuzmina, Secretary

Sweden
Mr. Lars Tysklind, MP

OBSERVERS

Nordic Council
Mr. Steingrimur J. Sigfusson, MP
Mr. Larus Valgradsson, Adviser

West Nordic Council
Ms. Bryndis Haraldsdottir, MP, President
Ms. Inga Dora Markussen, Secretary-General

SECRETARIAT
Mr. Samu Paukkunen, Secretary-General

GUESTS
Mr. Anders Stenbakken, Visit Greenland
Mr. Sune Olander Rasmussen, University of
Copenhagen
Mr. Jakob Damgaard Rouse, Ministry of Defence
Mr. Malik Berthelsen, Mayor of Sisimiut
Mr. Ulrik Lyberth, Maki Seaveed
Mr. Hans Hinrichsen, Greenland School of Mineral
& Petroleum

INTERPRETERS
Ms. Alexandra Loow

Travel Costs

ASSOCIATION	Canada-Europe Parliamentary Association
ACTIVITY	Meeting of the Standing Committee of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region
DESTINATION	Kangerlussuaq and Sisimiut, Greenland/Denmark
DATES	May 15-18, 2017
DELEGATION	
SENATE	—
HOUSE OF COMMONS	Hon. Larry Bagnell, P.C., M.P. Mr. Larry Maguire, M.P.
STAFF	Mr. Thai Nguyen, Advisor
TRANSPORTATION	\$9,858.20
ACCOMMODATION	\$4,352.87
HOSPITALITY	0
PER DIEMS	\$1,723.52
OFFICIAL GIFTS	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0
TOTAL	\$15,934.59