

**Report of the Canadian Delegation respecting its participation at the Joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation (DSCTC), Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations (ESCTER), and the officers of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR)**

**Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)**

**Svalbard, Norway  
May 9-11, 2017**

# Report

Meetings held in Longyearbyen, Svalbard Island, Norway, May 9-11, 2017.

Seminar was arranged by NATO Parliamentary Assembly and the Norwegian Parliament.

More than 50 members of parliament from 18 member and partner nations and the delegation was joined by multiple senior government officials, as well as Vidar Helgesen, Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment and Marit Berger Røsland, State Secretary in the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The delegates had presentations from scientists and academics focused on security of the arctic as well as the challenges security becomes with climate change at the core.

“What happens in the Arctic, does not stay in the Arctic,” noted Vidar Helgesen, Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment. According to latest estimates, the Arctic will be largely ice free by the late 2030s, thereby profoundly weakening the Arctic’s function as a global cooling system. This will have consequences in far-away places such as Bangladesh, where up to 17 million people are expected to be relocated because of rising sea levels. This discussion was of particular interest to Canada as the declining ice and impact that will have on the Norwegian arctic is as well being felt in Arctic Canada. The understanding needed to manage this problem for Canada will have to be found in collaboration with other like-minded countries feeling the same effects of climate change.

The discussion identified how climate change was becoming a global risk that will directly impact in the near term parts of Europe and the United States, in particular.

- Kim Holmen from the Norwegian Polar Institute spoke to the evidence that indicated that the “climate system is changing so rapidly that our ability to predict is decreasing”.
- Sturla Henriksen, CEO of the Norwegian Ship Owners’ Association, spoke to the impact melting ice and the receding permafrost may have in the pursuit of resources available in the Arctic region. At the same time, climate change will make existing Arctic infrastructure, such as pipelines, railways and roads, more vulnerable. He expressed concern that the retreating ice will lead to increasing human activities while the existing support systems are insufficient to deal with this. The speaker underlined the need to expand existing infrastructure, particularly Search and Rescue capacities.

From a Canadian perspective this provided an opportunity to understand more fully the challenges we will face as the Canadian Arctic becomes more accessible to transnational traffic across the north. In the Norwegian context they have rolled out the Arctic vessels (similar to our new build Arctic vessels), but based on the sheer mass of Canada’s arctic there are other opportunities for coverage that will be required.

Overall discussions regarding the areas visited identified that the relationship on the north Scandinavian region remained very positive, even while sharing seagoing traffic and natural resource access with Russia. Russia maintains and operates a coal mine in the region visited.

Participants also raised questions about Russia's activities and intentions in the Arctic as Moscow is expanding the number of its military bases and its infrastructure in the region. Several speakers, including Professor Lassi Heininen at the University of Lapland and Professor Michael Byers of the University of British Columbia highlighted that "the Arctic is the destiny for Russia" because of the region's importance for its economic development and for its national security. There was discussion on the potential of Russia militarizing the arctic – with some agreement that although this was a possibility, for the most part Russia has limited capacity to maintain a level of diligence on their land based borders.

The arctic visit brought home the importance the arctic is to the overall security of the world, whether it was through the opening of the passages that would see movement of goods to and from Russia, China or our NATO allies, or the melting of the ice cap that will threaten the lives of those in the south. It was evident that the security of the arctic will be paramount to Canadians.

The group also saw the importance of the Svalbard Global Seed Vault and visited the SvalSat, Svalbard Satellite Station, the world's largest commercial satellite ground station and impact both can and do have on security around the world, not just the arctic.

Continued involvement in arctic security initiatives and Canada's parliamentary involvement will be key to maintaining engagement in our own arctic security.

Respectfully submitted,

Leona Alleslev, M.P.  
Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

## **Travel Costs**

<b>ASSOCIATION</b>	Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association (NATO PA)
<b>ACTIVITY</b>	Joint visit of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Defence and Security Cooperation (DSCTC), Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Economic Relations (ESCTER), and the officers of the Sub-Committee on Transatlantic Relations (PCTR)
<b>DESTINATION</b>	Svalbard, Norway
<b>DATES</b>	May 9-11, 2017
<b>DELEGATION</b>	
SENATE	Hon. Vernon White
HOUSE OF COMMONS	
STAFF	
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>	\$ 8,085.73
<b>ACCOMMODATION</b>	\$ 1,130.82
<b>HOSPITALITY</b>	\$ 0
<b>PER DIEMS</b>	\$ 275.58
<b>OFFICIAL GIFTS</b>	\$ 0
<b>MISCELLANEOUS</b>	\$ 0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 9,492.13</b>