

## **Minute report from the meeting between ACCESS representatives and EU officials involved in Arctic affairs (Brussels, February 20, 2012)**

**EU representatives:** Le Bouler Gaëlle (RTD Transport and Project Officer for ACCESS), Reynolds Jaime (Env), Bieniuk Zuzanna (EEAS), Van Barneveld Ramon (MARE), Casanovas Josep (MOVE), Bock Nikolaj (EEA), Lippold Marcus (ENER), Calsamiglia Mendlewicz Susanna (RTD)

**ACCESS representatives:** Gascard Jean-Claude (Scientific Coordinator), Airoidi Adele (ACCESS Advisory Board), Pellen Melanie (ACCESS project manager), Karcher Michael (Assistant Coordinator), Joachim Schwarz (WP2 leader), Wilkinson Jeremy (WP4 leader)

This meeting was the second of a kind following a first meeting organized in Brussels on July 7, 2011 (cf minute report on the ACCESS website).

The proposed agenda covered 4 main topics that will also be dealt with during the ACCESS GA in Stockholm.

1/ An update of the ACCESS project (one year after the kick-off meeting in Paris, France) before the General Assembly scheduled on March 8 and 9, 2012 in Stockholm Sweden.

2/ Improved communication with several EU Commission departments involved in Arctic affairs. An update of the preparatory action proposed by the European Parliament and to be implemented by the European Commission, aiming inter alia at the future installation of an European Arctic Information Center.

3/ Interaction between ACCESS and the Arctic Council Working groups and Task forces.

4/ ACCESS and the international cooperation.

### **Summary of discussions**

**Item 1 and 2.** A draft of the ACCESS newsletter N°2 giving a short summary of the most recent ACCESS activities occurring during the past 4 months (since the ACCESS newsletter N°1) was released and well received by the ACCESS project officer. EU officials would like sustained and quality communications with ACCESS particularly to be informed of ACCESS progress. ACCESS on its part would like to have relevant information from the EU whenever available. It was further agreed to insert a calendar of deliverables on the ACCESS website together with the Gantt Chart. EU officials were invited to contact the central office in Paris for any questions that might be re-routed to relevant partners. EEAS requested some ACCESS expert input on the value of the proposals contained in the Commission communication COM(2008)763 "The European Union and the Arctic region". Policy briefs being part of the ACCESS DoW, the issue was raised with the EU officials and will be discussed during the upcoming ACCESS GA. All the EU representatives were invited to participate to the ACCESS General Assembly scheduled in Stockholm on March 8 and 9, 2012. Unfortunately ACCESS Project officer Ms Gaëlle Le Bouler will not be able to attend the ACCESS GA.

There was an explicit request from EU officials for input from ACCESS as early as possible (not waiting for finalization of results) since ongoing work needs input all the time and the idea to set up WIKI access for EU officials. This aspect could be achieved partly with information contained in the periodic ACCESS newsletters, the ACCESS website, the ACCESS deliverables and the ACCESS policy briefs. While certainly ACCESS will strive to provide valuable information to the EU as early as possible it also has to be clear that the project is bounded to the range of activities and the timing laid down in the DOW. The potential of ACCESS to provide information to the outside (e.g. forecasting and projections) should be clearly addressed in its dissemination products (policy briefs, website and newsletter) to avoid disappointment and false expectations.

We had the confirmation from Jaime Reynolds that the DG Environment was in charge of the implementation of the Preparatory Action proposed by the European Parliament inter alia for exploring ways to create a future European Arctic Information Center. It was also confirmed that an important meeting would be organized in Rovaniemi, Finland on March 6 and 7, 2012 with a participation of the European Commission, to better define how the Preparatory Action would be implemented by the EU Commission through a negotiation phase or a tender (not yet decided).

#### **The Preparatory Action concerns « Strategic Impact Assessment of the Development of the Arctic »**

The **Arctic is growing in importance** due to emerging economic opportunities. With this come concerns and a need for proper management and stakeholder engagement in future decisions. All Arctic stakeholders have expressed the need for better information accessibility: private sector, Policy and decision-makers and local inhabitants. **Impact assessments serve the needs** of various Sectors: economy, energy, transport and tourism among others. The EU is one of the main clients of Arctic products and thus has interest and responsibility on good, equitable development of the region. The strategic Impact Assessment about the development of the **European Arctic** would be carried out as a **networked undertaking**, by leading Arctic communication and research centres and universities **within and outside the EU** creating a **bridge** that would facilitate two-ways information exchange between the EU institutions and **the Arctic stakeholders** and foster EU-civil society contacts. Furthermore the work would be closely linked to **the assessment activities of the Arctic Council** as laid down in the Senior Arctic Officials Report to Ministers, Nuuk, Greenland, May 2011. Finally the Preparatory Action would advance the future establishment of the **EU Arctic Information Centre** as expressed in Commission's Arctic communication and in Parliament's Report « sustainable EU policy for the High North » in 2011.

**Item 3.** On the interaction between ACCESS and the Arctic Council working groups and task forces, it was recognized that some of these groups and tasks forces are more prone for setting up external cooperation than others. ACCESS already participated to the SAON Board that met in Tromso January 26, 2012 for the first time. There are also lots of mutual and common interest between ACCESS and the Arctic Council WGs and Task Forces on many topics such as risk of oil spill in ice, polar code for navigation along the northern sea route and the north west passage, impacts of climate change on socio economy and indigenous communities and impact of human activities on the environment such as black carbon deposition on sea ice, spring tropospheric ozone depletion, melt onset and freeze up sea-ice outlook etc...

**AC Working Groups**

**AC Task Forces**

|   |                                      |
|---|--------------------------------------|
| ACAP Arctic Contaminants Action Program           | Short-lived Climate Forcers          |
| AMAP Arctic Monitoring & Assessment Program       | Sustainable Arctic Observing Network |
| CAFF Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna       | Ecosystem-based management           |
| EPPR Emergency Prevention Preparedness & Response | Oil Spill preparedness & response    |
| PAME Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment  | Search & Rescue                      |
| SDWG Sustainable Development Working Group        | Arctic Change & Resilience report    |

A discussion concerning the IMO Polar Code was initiated by Mr J. Casanovas regarding the role of ACCESS due to the publication date of the Polar Code not expected before the next 2 to 3 years.

J. Schwarz expressed the opinion that the IMO Polar code will come out sooner, however without covering all the Arctic technology issues. ACCESS is interested to establish some cooperation with IMO regarding the Polar Code by providing new results for the further development of the Code.

**Item 4.** It was confirmed that an SSA similar to Search for Damocles installed during the FP6 could not be put in place for ACCESS and the FP7. Nevertheless ACCESS RTD representatives (Jacques Fuchs , Gaëlle Le Bouler) are searching for a new solution that would be adapted to FP7 and ACCESS. There is a great interest in North America (Canada and USA) for establishing some links with ACCESS in order to develop further cooperation (joint workshops, sharing logistics, data exchanges, complementary fieldwork activities etc...)