

Arctic Conference: Challenges And Opportunities For Norway

10 May 2012, Oslo Militære Samfund

The High North is an area with growing global importance, an area with relevance and importance to many countries. Due to climate change transport routes that have hitherto been inaccessible are opening up on a seasonal basis, and natural resources in the area become accessible. Moreover, increasing energy prices as well as technological advances finally make their exploitation possible. The region offers a considerable potential for economic growth.

However, these opportunities do not come without challenges. First of all, there are several risks linked to transport and traffic in the region, i.e. rescue and recovery missions, pollution and oil spill in the event of an accident. The exploitation of natural resources does not only represent technological challenges but also comes with considerable environmental risks. Environmentalists request not to exploit resources in this sensitive eco-system. Furthermore, unsolved jurisdictional issues constitute an additional challenge.

In light of the GeoNor-Programme's assertion that "the Norwegian discourse on High North issues has tended to be myopic and self-centred", this conference tries to bring together Norwegian and international experts, researchers and decision-makers in order to analyse the country's challenge. Solutions and answers will be presented and discussed. The aim is to support Norway's ambition "to seize the opportunities ahead and meet the challenges we are facing in the High North." (Jonas Gahr Støre)

08.30 Registration

09.00 Welcome

Sverre Myrli, Member of the Storting for Akershus County; Member, Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence; Member, Delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly; Member, European Consultative Committee & Fridtjof Fossum Unander, Executive Director, The Research Council of Norway

Block 1: New Infrastructure Challenges

Due to global warming, the once impassable North East and North West Passages have been ice-free a few weeks in past summers. This opens new possibilities for shipping, trade and transport. These routes around the North Pole allow shipping companies and traders to cut thousands of miles, appr. 10 days at sea, money and CO2. Yet, these come at a high risk which needs to be managed carefully. Because of the weather patterns in the area, northern routes are not consistently open and still freeze up for long time periods. The specific weather pattern and climate in the area represent a challenge for ships and their crews. At the same time, traditional transport routes on-shore may become periodically unusable. In parallel, increasing trade means more ships, more cargo, and more traffic in the Arctic area which represents also a challenge for ports. These need to manage the increasing traffic efficiently.

09.30	Research Presentation: "SAMCoT- Sustainable Arctic Marine and Coastal Technology" Arnstein Watn, Research Director, SINTEF Building and Infrastructure
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10.00	Industry Presentation: Joost Verton, Manager Business Development & Strategy, System Design Centre, EADS Cassidian
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10.30	Coffee Break
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11.00	Panel discussion
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Block 2: Arctic & Maritime Security

Arctic security & Maritime Surveillance in the High North is of interest for the Arctic nations as well as for those using Arctic waters and ports for trade and transport. Ports and coastal areas present many traditional and non-traditional security challenges, such as hazardous cargoes, maritime accidents, ecological disasters, Icebergs, marine winds etc. Experts agree that non-traditional security dimensions, such as environmental, energy or economic security are of greater relevance to the Arctic than military security. Solutions are needed in order to identify hazardous situations, to alert command authorities; when disaster occurs, search, rescue and emergency response teams need support to carry out their task in this extraordinary environment. These solutions must help to coordinate the work of coast guards, other maritime safety agencies and rescue forces—sometimes originating from different countries.

11.45	Research Presentation: “Monitoring of the Arctic by Remote Sensing” Stian Arne Solbø, Research Scientist, Earth Observation, Northern Research Institute (NORUT)
12.15	Industry Presentation: “SAT Automatic Identification System” Philippe Chèoux-Damas, Head of Maritime Surveillance Pole (AEF 42), EADS Astrium “Geo-Information Services Integrated Optical and SAR Satellite Based Maritime Surveillance Capabilities” Stefan Knabe, Market Manager Maritime Services, EADS Astrium
12.45	Lunch
13.45	Panel discussion

Block 3: Natural Resources: Sustainable development in an extreme climate

Higher demands in energy and natural resources for growing industrial production request the discovery and exploitation of new oil and gas fields and mineral deposits. The search for these meets specific challenges in the extreme Arctic climate. Technological advances make their exploitation more likely. At the same time, environmental protection and disaster management face new challenges as well. In order to carry out future exploration and production activities in a sustainable manner, conventional methods must be improved and adapted to the Arctic. Moreover, safety Management is particularly important to oil and gas ports. HSE standards must be harmonised.

14.30	Research Presentation: “Requirements for safe operations in the high north” Jørn Eldby, President, SINTEF Nord AS
15.00	Industry Presentation: tba
15.30	Coffee Break
16.00	Panel discussion

16.45 Closing Remarks

17.00 End