



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 4 December 2008

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"A" ITEM NOTE

from: Permanent Representatives' Committee
date of receipt: 4 December 2008
to: Council

Subject: Draft Council conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic region

1. At its meeting on 3 December 2008, the Permanent Representatives' Committee agreed on the draft Council conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic region set out in Annex.
2. In light of the above, the Council (General Affairs and External Relations) at its meeting on 8-9 December 2008, is invited to adopt these conclusions.

Draft Council conclusions on the European Union and the Arctic region

1. The Council welcomed the Commission's Communication on the European Union and the Arctic region, considering that it is a first layer of an EU Arctic policy. The Communication is also an important contribution to implementing the Integrated Maritime Policy of the EU.
2. The Council agreed that the effects of climate change and of human activities in the Arctic have significant repercussions for the European Union as a whole. The European Union should therefore aim at preserving the Arctic in unison with its population and address Arctic challenges in a systematic and coordinated manner in areas such as environment, biodiversity, climate change, chemicals, maritime affairs, energy, research and observation, fisheries and transport, as well as the protection of the livelihood of indigenous peoples. This should have due respect for and take into account the special position and interests of the Arctic areas of the three Arctic Member States, including those areas of one Member State enjoying OCT-status and special contractual links with the EU. Furthermore, the Council welcomed the conference "The Arctic: observing the environmental changes and facing their challenges", organised by the Presidency in Monaco in November 2008.
3. The goals of the EU can be achieved only in close cooperation with all Arctic partner countries, territories and communities, noting also the inter-governmental cooperation in the region. The European Union should enhance its contribution to Arctic multilateral cooperation, in conformity with international conventions, in particular the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and recognising the role of the Arctic states and that of the Northern Dimension policy. The Council welcomed the decision of the Commission to apply for permanent observer status in order to represent the European Community in the Arctic Council.
4. The Council agreed that the proposals for action contained in the Communication should lead to a more detailed reflection and looked forward to further examining them in the first half of 2009.
