



The Government's strategy session 26.9.2016

## GOVERNMENT POLICY REGARDING THE PRIORITIES IN THE UPDATED ARCTIC STRATEGY

Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region was published in August 2013. The Government's goals were further defined in the update to the Strategy regarding the development in the Arctic region and Finland's role in the region. In addition, the goals and measures of the current Strategy are reviewed from the perspective of the goals and key areas defined in the Government Programme and the Strategy's measures are prioritised. The recommendations put forth in the reports published in 2015, *Growth from the North* and *A Strategic Vision for the North*, and the EU's Arctic Communication published in April 2016 were taken into consideration in the update.

### **Desired development in the Arctic region**

The global significance of the Arctic environment is increasing. The prevention of harmful impacts of climate change, environmental protection and key international issues enhance the dialogue on arctic issues. Continuous and active international cooperation contributes to solving emerging conflicts through negotiations. Although targeted by growing interests, in terms of security policy the Arctic region will remain stable.

It is possible to maintain the unique Arctic environment through joint contingency

and protection measures. New opportunities are opening up as the significance of the Arctic region increases. As a result, opportunities can be benefited from in bolstering employment and welfare within the limits of sustainable development. Also these principles are based on broad international consensus. While the vitality of Arctic communities and indigenous peoples increases, versatile networks become more concentrated both among and between Arctic communities.

### **Finland's foreign and EU policy in the Arctic region**

Finland aims to strengthen security policy stability in the Arctic and enhance the vitality of the region, in line with the principles of sustainable development. The Government's objective is to ensure that Finland is a leading actor in international Arctic policy, both in the EU and globally. A further aim is to produce key solutions to problems in Arctic development by providing innovative products and practices. By making even better use of Finnish expertise in developing the Arctic region Finland can achieve significant impacts

on growth and employment also at domestic level. The promotion of the interests of indigenous peoples is among the key elements of Finnish Arctic policy.

To strengthen the visibility and impact of the Arctic policy, ongoing and soon to start Finnish Presidencies especially in the Arctic Council and the Arctic Economic Council will have to be made use of effectively; this will benefit both international dialogue and Finland's Arctic policy. The goal-oriented work must continue also after Finland's

Presidencies. Based on shared norms, Finland promotes stability and security in the region by developing broad-based multilateral cooperation. Special emphasis is placed on promoting cooperation within the two main tasks of the Council, environmental protection and sustainable development.

Finland sees the EU as the key actor in the Arctic region and supports efforts to consolidate its Arctic policy. From Finland's perspective, Arctic policy should be made one of the priorities of the international relations of the EU.

## Priorities in the update of the Arctic Strategy

The main elements of the Finnish Arctic Strategy published in 2013 are still valid. Finland wishes to achieve growth and competitiveness, for example, in the cleantech and bioeconomy sectors via Arctic operations, with due respect for the environment.

Finland responds to the climate change and environmental protection challenges through international cooperation. The main channels of influence are the Chairmanship in the Arctic Council and international agreements and organisations.

Arctic approach is one of the central viewpoints in implementing key projects of the Government's action plan. It is particularly important to take it into account in the key Government projects on employment and competitiveness, for example in measures

related to cleantech and bioeconomy. Furthermore, the growth programmes of Team Finland, promotion of tourism and Finland's country brand also contribute to the implementation of the Arctic policy.

To benefit from Finland's northern location and its expertise in operating in cold conditions, the Government will enhance the use of the existing aid instruments, particularly the growth programmes of Finpro and Team Finland. The Government seeks to remove legal and other barriers, for example to the free movement of labour in the Nordic countries and to selling ice-breakers to the United States. The Government also promotes large infrastructural projects and bringing together Finnish consortia and Finland's Arctic travel brand.

Particular attention in the update will be paid to three questions:

## Finland's arctic expertise, sustainable tourism and infrastructural solutions

**1** The objectives related to *arctic expertise* as defined in the Strategy remain main topical issues. Arctic research has been reinforced by various means and all the measures identified in the 2013 strategy have either been put to practice or they have become an established part of activities. It is essential to make efficient use of research regarding, for example, working in cold conditions, energy-efficient construction and maintenance of stability. To uphold, develop and market arctic expertise it is central to create business opportunities and to benefit from them.

**2** Increasing *travel business* in the Arctic region requires responsibility that takes into account the vulnerability of nature, the rights of indigenous peoples and the need to ensure safety and quality. The programme of sustainable travel destination pays attention to all aspects of sustainability. To implement the programme successfully, tailored cooperation over sectoral boundaries is required. The Arctic aspect is raised to spearhead Finland's marketing strategy for tourism; the goal is to boost the attributes related to 'Arctic'.

**3** The central solutions of *infrastructure* are connected to the reports being prepared on the north-east telecommunications cable, the region's wireless network project and the Helsinki-

Tallinn tunnel project. After the reports have been completed it will be possible to form a broader vision of the infrastructure and to take a stand on the Government's projects.

### Follow-up on the updated Strategy

A concrete plan of action will be made on the basis of the updated Arctic Strategy. Its implementation will be followed and assessed at the Government's strategy sessions. The Government strategic secretariat will prepare

in cooperation with the ministries a concrete plan of action where each priority sector and the contents, schedule and responsible party of key measures will be defined.

## PRIORITIES IN THE ARCTIC STRATEGY

### ARCTIC FOREIGN AND EU POLICY

- Strong role during the Arctic Council presidency
- Synergy of Arctic and Nordic matters
- Benefiting from the BEAC and presidency
- Bilateral Arctic partnerships
- Leadership in the EU Arctic policy
- International environmental agreements and cooperation

### SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

- Sustainable travel destination programme
- Tailored cooperation among sectors
- Spearheading marketing of international tourism
- Developing stopover services

### ARCTIC EXPERTISE

- Benefiting from research
- Maintaining, developing and marketing expertise in cold conditions
- Creating business opportunities and benefiting from them

Finland aims to strengthen environmental protection and security policy stability in the Arctic region and to boost the region's vitality within the framework of sustainable development.

FINLAND'S GOAL  
IS TO BE

**A leading actor in the  
international Arctic policy**

AND

**A key provider of  
solutions to problems  
in Arctic development**



By utilising better our expertise to develop the Arctic region it is possible to achieve significant impacts on sustainable development and employment also on national level. Promoting the interests of indigenous peoples plays a central role in Finland's Arctic policy.

### INFRASTRUCTURE

- Report on the north-east cable
- Preliminary report on wireless network
- Other development of infrastructure