FOREIGN POLICY INTERESTS OF FINLAND IN THE ARCTIC

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Introduction

Finland is geographically a northern European country and an integral part of the Nordic region. Culturally and geopolitically Finland is located between the East and the West. Finland is also a country with territories above the Arctic Circle, though without an access to the Arctic Ocean. Following from this, it has had cultural, environmental, economic, political, and security interests in the Arctic region. However, Finland to a greater extent used to be a Nordic country with clearly formulated interests within the Nordic region and the Baltic Sea region, as well as having good relations with neighbouring Russia. These elements and aspects comprised the so-called 'de-facto' Northern dimension policy, based on Finland's entire foreign policy and activities in North Europe in the Cold War period. During the Cold War the official foreign policy of Finland, led by the President, and for a long time President Urho Kekkonen, was supported by all political parties in the Parliament, as well as the influential metal, paper, and pulp industry, the science community and many civil society organizations. The above mentioned elements and aspects also guided Finland to launch a Northern Dimension policy after joining the

European Union (EU) in 1995. This policy was well supported by most of the political parties, several civil society organizations, and partly by the science community, although among the latter one there was some scepticism about the real influence of the initiative.

Finland did not formulate its own national Arctic strategy or policy before 2010 and has at times lost its interests toward the entire North. Finland is, however, an Arctic state, and a forerunner of current international Arctic cooperation, most notably the AEPS initiative.[1] According to official statements, "Finland has a primordial interest toward Arctic issues. Our geography and history make us an Arctic state."[2] Due to the significant and multi-faceted change of the Arctic in the early 21st century, and after the five coastal states of the Arctic Ocean held their meeting in Ilulissat in Greenland in May 2008 when the first modern Arctic strategies were adopted, Finland 'woke up' and again became active in Arctic cooperation and issues. This renewed interest toward the Arctic was supported by the report on the region by the Finnish Parliament in November 2009. Furthermore, it was emphasized by the statement of Finland's first national Arctic Strategy that: "As an Arctic country, Finland is a natural actor in the Arctic region."[3] According to the Strategy, which was adopted in 2010, Finland's political objectives are in substantial sectors of the environment, economic activities and know-how, transport and infrastructure, and indigenous peoples. It also emphasizes the Arctic as a stable and peaceful area, the importance of international cooperation there, and the Arctic Council as the main international cooperative entity in the region.

[1] Heininen, Lassi. *Euroopan pohjoinen 1990-luvulla. Moniulotteisten ja ristiriitaisten intressien alue*. Rovaniemi: Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 21 - Arktisn keskuksen tiedotteita/Arcic Centre Reprts 30, 1999.

[2] Mäkeläinen-Buhanist, Soili. "Finland's approach to the Arctic; The past and the future". Statement by Ms Soili Mäkeläinen-Buhanist, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland (Ottawa, Canada: May 27, 2010).

[3] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*. Prime Minister's Offic Publication 8/200:7.

This chapter discusses Finland as a Northern country and an Arctic state, and describes and analyses Finland's foreign policy interests in the Arctic region and the entire North, particularly the Finnish Arctic strategy, as well as its initiatives for Northern and Arctic cooperation.

Finland's 'de-facto' Northern dimension

Finland does not only have a northern identity, the country is also culturally and geopolitically located between East and West. Indeed, the Finns have long been influenced by a diversity of eastern and western cultures and it is difficult to understand Finland without reference to this history.[4] Although, the Finnish foreign policy toward the Soviet Union during the Cold War was referred abroad with negative connotation to as 'Finlandization'[5], it provided enough room for Finland to have good relations with West Europe as well as the United States, and to join European economic integration. Though the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War were a surprise to the Finnish political elite as well as to the majority of Finnish people, these events made it possible for Finland to establish a deeper European integration with European Communities in 1995. This was not an easy decision, as almost half of the citizens voted against joining the European Communities, and consequently lose a part of the sovereignty. The political and economic elites and President Mauno Koivisto were however, ready and conscious to lead Finland into a Western Europe, and later the core of the European Union including the Monetary Union and Euro Area. If the former goal was supported by more than half of the voters, the latter one meaning that Finland would lose its one currency, the Finnish Mark lacked public support.

[4] Salmén, Leif. "Rajamaa." In: Helsingin Snomat, Vieraskynä, [a] 12.10.194, p A2.

[5] However, in the post-Cold War the term has been deeper analyzed and partly reevluated to mean a wise policy by Finland ad its political elit, also in the West.

In the wake of these pivotal events, Finland's geopolitical and security-political positions are much changed, although Finland is still militarily non-aligned and maintains its own independent army – this is much supported by majority of the nation – but also cooperates closely militarily with NATO and its member-states. Finland also has good cooperation with the Russian Federation, and has revitalized its bilateral relations, for example in trade, tourism, culture and science (e.g. the Finnish-Russian Arctic Partnership), with Russia and its president and government. Finally, Finland has its 'Northern' identity and a natural interest toward the entire North, as the Finnish-Karelian national epoch, *The Kalevala* indicates.

Taking into consideration Finland's foreign policy and its activities in the Nordic region and northern Europe more generally, it can be argued that Finland has since long ago had somewhat of a 'de facto northern dimension' to its foreign policy.[6] For example, as a reflection to growing concern over the state of the Northern environment, particularly nuclear safety by the Saami and Northern European environmental organizations, Finland made an initiative for international cooperation on environmental protection in the Arctic. This was the Finnish response to President Mikhail Gorbachev's speech, which included six proposals for international cooperation in the Arctic including environmental protection, in October 1987 in Murmansk, the Soviet North. The Murmansk speech was analysed and the Finnish initiative was supported, and partly contributed to by the Kuhmo Summer Academy, an international and annual academic forum run by the Tampere Peace Research Institute's international Arctic research project (from 1987 to 1995).[7] That led to the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), which was signed by ministers of eight Arctic states in 1991 in Rovaniemi, Finland.[8] Also, Finland is a founding member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, established in 1993.

In general, the North has been a rather delicate issue for Finland, both in terms of domestic policy, as indicated above, and foreign policy. Even though Finland had been active in international northern and Arctic undertakings since the late 1980s, and successfully initiated the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, it did not have an official Northern policy as part of its foreign policy until the launch of the Finnish initiative on a European Union's Northern Dimension in the 1990s.

The Finnish initiative on a Northern dimension

The Finnish government made an initiative for a Northern Dimension of the European Union in September 1997.[9] It was further developed by

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[6] Heininen, Lassi. *Euroopan pohjoinen 1990-luvulla. Moniulotteisten ja ristiriitaisten intressien alue*. Rovaniemi: Acta Universitatis Lapponiensis 21 - Arktisen keskuksen tiedotteita/Arctic Centre Reports 30, 1999; Heininen, Lassi. "Ideas and Outcomes: Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative". *H. Ojanen (ed), The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?* Kauhava: Ulkopoliittinen instituutti & Institut fur Europäische Poitik, Programme on the Northern Dmension of the CSP, 2001, 20-53.

[7] Heininen, Lassi, Jalonen, Olli-Pekka and Käkönen, Jyrki. Expanding the Northern Dimension. *Tampere Peace Research Institute. Research Report No. 61*. University of Tampere, Jäljennepalvelu, 1995; Heininen, Lassi and Käkönen, Jyrki. Rajalta maailmaan. Tutkijoiden matka periferiaan. *Rauhan- ja konfliktintutkimuskeskus, Tampere Peace Research Institute. Tutkimustiedote / Research Report No. 68*. Tampereen yliopisto, äljennepalvlu, 1996.

[8] Rovaniemi Declaration (1991) on Arctic Evironmental Protectio Strategy, June 1991.

[9] The initiative was launched by the Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen in an international conference in September 1997 in Rovaniemi, Finland and was organized by the University of Lapland, the Province of Lapland and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (Lipponen, Paavo. "The European Union Needs a Policy for the Northern Dimension. Speech delivered by the Prime Minister of Finland at 'Barents Region Today' conference, Rovaniemi 15 September 1997." In *Europe's Northern Dimension - the BEAR meets the South,* edited by L. Heininen and R. Langlais (Rovaniemi: Publications of the Aministrative Office of the Universiy of Lapland, 199: 39, pp 29-35).

the EU Commission (see the Chapter of EU Arctic Policy). The Northern Dimension policy placed Northern, and in part, Arctic issues on the political agenda of the European Union, and further, it led to the EU's Northern Dimension policy as stated by the European Council in 1997-1999. As an EU external policy, the Northern Dimension was approved and implemented by the 1st Action Plan in 2000 and a second one in 2003. The new Policy Framework Document of the Northern Dimension, which was adopted in 2006, has emerged as a common policy of the EU, the Russian Federation, Iceland, and Norway for North Europe.[10]

Originally, the Northern Dimension policy was primarily defined to be one of the external, foreign policies of the European Union in North Europe, particularly toward (Northwest) Russia, but also including an Arctic aspect. The mainstream interpretation was, however, that it is an EU policy toward Russia, when Russia was very much seen as an 'other', or even *the* 'other'. Consequently, the main aims of the 1st Action Plan of the Northern Dimension were to increase stability and societal security, to enhance democratic reforms, and to create positive interdependence and sustainable development.[11] Although not always explicitly mentioned, the European Arctic has been an approach, or a cross-cutting issue, within the Northern Dimension policy.[12] Correspondingly, the

[10] Heininen, Lassi. "Ideas and Outcomes: Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative". *H. Ojanen (ed), The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?* Kauhava: Ulkopoliittinen instituutti & Institut fur Europäische Poitik, Programme on the Northern Dmension of the CSP, 2001 20-53.

[11] The European Council, Action Plan for Northern Dimension with Eternal and Cross-border Policies f the European Uion 2000-2003.

[12] For more information on the Finnish initiative and the chronology of the beginning of the Northern Dimension process see Heininen, Lassi. "Ideas and Outcomes: Finding a Concrete Form for the Northern Dimension Initiative". *H. Ojanen (ed), The Northern Dimension: Fuel for the EU?* Kauhava: Ulkopoliittinen instituutti & Institut fur Europäische Poltik, Programme on the Northern Diension of the CFSP, 2001, 20-53.

Policy Framework Document of the EU's Northern Dimension is rhetorically a strong statement to promote dialogue and concrete cross-border cooperation, and strengthen stability and integration in the European part of the Arctic region.[13]

From the point of view of Finland, an initiative in the context of the European Union was to make sure that the EU did not move only geographically toward the North, but that Finland would be taken seriously as a European country among the established EU member-states. Membership of the EU with a focus on deeper political cooperation and integration was perceived by Finland as an ultimate security measure against any future threat from Russia, at the same time when new kind of bilateral relations with the Russian Federation were formulated. Finland positioned itself as a key player in Europe's Arctic issues. All this is mostly according to the long-term interests and aims of Finland and its 'de-facto' northern dimension policy. Thus, the Finnish initiative on the Northern Dimension as well as the concept behind it not only serves Finland's interests (and those of the other Nordic countries), but also fits well with the post-Cold War state politics in North Europe, and consequently supports the EU as an international actor and its Common Foreign and Security Policy.[14]

All in all, the aim of the EU's Northern Dimension defined by the Finnish government and Finnish policy-makers, though less so by Finnish civil society, was to earn Finland a place at the EU table where decisions on issues pertaining to Europe's northern areas were made. Though the Northern Dimension is not always taken within Finland to be a success, from the point of view of Finland's foreign policy it, maybe, should be interpreted to be. However, in spite of the ND policy and establishment of the Arctic Council based on the AEPS, Finland has neither shown great or continuous interest at all times toward the entire Arctic region, nor

[13] Policy Framework Document of the Northen Dimension of the Eropean Unin (2006).

[14] Heininen, Lassi. "The Barents Region in the State Interests and International Politics." *Barents Journal,* N 1(7)/2009, 5–10.

has it had a national Arctic strategy or policy of its own before the first Arctic strategy was adopted in 2010.

Finland's Arctic Strategy

During the first decade of the 21st century, due to significant and multi-faceted change(s) in the Arctic, and after the five coastal states of the Arctic Ocean had their first ministerial meeting in May 2008 and adopted their respective Arctic strategies or state policies, Finland realized there is a new state of the Arctic and became more interested in Arctic issues.

This sparked a growing interest in Arctic issues within the political elite and on the part of industry in Finland. The Finnish science community was already integrated in growing international scientific cooperation on the Arctic, such as the International Arctic Science Committee, and Lapland and Oulu universities were involved in establishing the Northern Research Forum and the University of the Arctic. This emerging interest was especially evident among stakeholders in businesses and organizations involved in the pursuit of regional development, economics, and trade. This growing interest toward the Arctic was accelerated and supported by a report on "Finland and the Arctic Regions" issued by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Finnish Parliament[15], as well as by general discussion of Finland's activities in the Arctic at Parliament in November 2009, where all the political parties showed clear support to make and adopt the first Finnish national strategy on the Arctic region. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs began a process of developing Finland's Arctic agenda with the objective of creating a policy or strategy. An ambassador for Arctic issues was named as Finland's "own northern envoy" in the summer of 2009.

[15] Ulkoasiainvaliokunta, Ulkoasiainvaliokunnan ietintö 12/2009 vp – Sumi ja arktiset alueet".

A seminar for a Finnish research network on Northern Politics and Security Studies took place in Helsinki in February 2010 to produce material for a working group representing all the ministries, appointed by the Prime Minister's Office in February 2010, "to prepare a report on Finland's policy review for the Arctic region".[16] This kind of procedure, to have an academic seminar as a pre-activity of an official document adopted by the Government, is a very Finnish way to implement interplay between science and politics, which the Northern Research Forum has done in the Arctic, and also globally, within the last 15 years.[17]

"Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region" was adopted by the Finnish Cabinet Committee for the European Union (of the Government) in June 2010.[18] It is based on proposals made by the above mentioned working group of civil servants from different ministries (appointed by the Prime Ministers' Office). The issue re-emerged on the agenda of the Foreign Policy Committee of the Finnish Parliament in autumn 2010, when the Committee had its hearings and discussion on the Strategy. The Strategy defines Finland's objectives in the following substantial sectors: the en-

[16] Mäkeläinen-Buhanist, *Finland's approach to the Arctic; The past and the future*; Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*; Heininen, Lassi ja Palosaari Teemu. "Johdanto." In: *Jäitä poltellessa. Suomi ja arktisen alueen tulevaisuus* (Tampere: Tampere Univesity Press, 2011, 9-13).

[17] See Heininen, Lassi. "Importance of Interplay between Science and Politics when Building New Stages." In: *Negotiating Futures – States, Societies and the World. Proceedings of the International Conference, Riga, November 11-14, 2004, e*ds. Eda Ansone and Ieva Zarane. Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Latvia, Advanced Institute of Social and Political Research and Strategic Analysis Commission (Riga: 2005, 15-24); Heininen, Lassi. "Northern European Geopolitics: Northern Dimension and 'Northernness' – an essay." In: *Northern Sciences Review 2005 – Northern Dimensions and Environments, e*ds. Lassi Heininen, Kari Strand and Kari Taulavori (Oulu: Oulu Universty Press, 2005,13-50).

[18] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*. Prime Minister's Office Publications 8/2010. The Strategy was first publishd in Finnish in June (Valtioneuvosto 210) and in Englishin Septemer 2010.

vironment, economic activities and know-how, transport and infrastructure, and indigenous peoples. These are followed by a list of different levels of means with which to achieve Arctic policy goals. Additionally there is a chapter on the European Union and the Arctic Region. Finally, the Strategy offers conclusions and proposes further measures.

The Strategy document states that Finland is one of the northernmost nations of the globe, and an Arctic country. The Arctic region is a stable and peaceful area, but, it adds, significant changes are taking place in the region, including climate change and increased transportation. As global interest toward the region grows, so does its global significance. The Strategy has a specific focus on external relations. The four most substantial chapters are titled: "Fragile Arctic Nature", "Economic Activities and Know-How", "Transport and Infrastructure" and "Indigenous Peoples" and define Finland's political objectives in those important sectors. They are followed by a chapter on "Arctic Policy Tools", which includes policy activities at global and regional levels, bilateral cooperation, and funding. The next chapter, "The EU and the Arctic Region" deals with Finland's policy objectives on the European Union's activities in the Arctic, and to make the EU a relevant, perhaps even global, actor in the Arctic was *per se* one of Finland's objectives.

The updated version of the Strategy was adopted as government resolution by Government in August 2013.[19] It is based on the 2012 vision of the 'Arctic' Finland and consists of the four pillars of policy outlined by the Government: An Arctic country, Arctic expert, Sustainable development and enviromental considerations, and International cooperation. It also includes four substantial sectoral chapters on education and research, business operations, environment and stability, and international cooperation. In addition, the strategy includes objectives and detailed actions to attain them.

Analysing Finland's Arctic strategy and policy[20]

[19] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013. Government resolution on 23 August 2013.* Prime Minister's Offic Publicatios 16/2013.

[20] This chapter is strongly based on my comparative study on Arctic strategies including the Finnish strategy (see Heininen, Lassi. *Arctic Strategies and Policies: Inventory and Comparative Study*, Akureyri: Northern Research forum an University of Lapand, Augut 2011).

When analysing the 2010 Finnish Strategy there are eight relevant and interesting findings which characterize Finland as an Arctic as well as (Northern) European state: First, the Strategy is comprehensive and ambitious, and reflects great efforts in preparing and outlining Finland´s first Arctic strategy, clearly asserting itself as an Arctic state while referring to the European Union as "a global Arctic player". The document was prepared by a working group appointed by the Prime Minister´s Office consisting of civil servants rather than a broader advisory board representing different stakeholders. A working group with broader representation and a mandate with a mission of follow up for the Strategy was appointed two months later. However, the whole process was greatly accelerated by the Finnish Parliament and promoted through its Foreign Policy Committee's statement[21], as mentioned earlier. There were no public hearings or town hall meetings as a part of the process, unlike in 2013, and therefore it is very difficult to measure to what extent regional and local authorities, or the civil society, supported the initiative and strategy.

Second, the four main sectors and related objectives are according to Finland's long-term national, political and particularly economic interests in the Arctic and generally in northern regions; they were also mentioned in the Statement by the Parliaments' Foreign Policy Committee. It is not, however, entirely clear if they are meant to be priorities or priority area(s), or whether they are mostly objectives supported by strong economic and business lobbies. In any case, the Finnish Strategy document strongly emphasizes economic activities, as do most of the other Arctic states' strategies. For example, it supports increasing marine traffic and transport, and better infrastructure, and there is a

[21] The Statement received great interest and cross-party support in general discussios on Finland's interests at the Assembly o the Finnish Parliamnt in Noveber 2009.

perceived need to develop transport and other logistical networks in both the Barents region and North Finland. This is clearly indicated by a list of five transport networks and corridors of Northern Finland which are under discussion; in reality only one or two of those may be implemented in the near future.[22] On the other hand, some of the objectives, particularly those dealing with the drilling for oil and gas in the Barents Sea, can be seen as hopeful expectations rather than realistic goals, although a Finnish company Steel Done Group is involved in the Shtockman gas field project.[23] The same applied when the Snöhvit gas field in the Barents Sea was developed by the Norwegians; expectations among Finnish companies, particularly in North Finland, were high, but very little was gained by them from that project.

Thus, the Strategy is business-oriented with a strong emphasis on economic activities, coupled with expertise, or know-how, particularly the utilization of natural resources, such as oil and gas reserves in the Arctic region. To a certain extent this is understandable, since this is a national report reflecting strong national interests and expectations of stakeholders in both business and organizations engaged in the pursuit of regional development and economic interests. This is also in line with a strategic point of view which emphasizes the importance of the High North's strategic position in (global) energy security, and economically, due to its rich natural resources and potential for transportation (new global sea routes and air routes).

Third, the Strategy reflects the desire to promote and strengthen Finland's position as an international expert on Arctic issues with know-how in the fields of ice-breaking and other winter shipping (e.g. by the state company *Arctia Shipping*), sea transport and special shipbuilding technology (e.g. by the planning company *Aker Arctic*), expertise in forest management, mining and metals industry, and cold-climate research. This is sensible and may be the case in terms of some fields of research, but is not necessarily the case when generally evaluating Finnish research in the context of international scientific cooperation.[24] Taking this into consideration, the Strategy's proposal to launch a study program with interdisciplinary and international cooperation on northern issues was very welcome and led to establishing the Arctic Research Programme 2014-2018 by the Academy of Finland.

Fourth, the Strategy also emphasizes special features of, and risks to, fragile Arctic ecosystems; importantly the term "fragile" has re-emerged, but of even greater importance is the protection of ecosystems. Climate change, pollution, and biodiversity receive considerable attention. A need for safe navigation in the Arctic Ocean is of great importance, in terms of physical impacts of climate change and of general increase in sea transports. Increasing sea transport is being defined as "the biggest threat to Arctic marine ecosystems"[25], despite the fact there are heavy impacts from long-range air and water pollution, and mass-scale oil drilling. Furthermore, it says that Arctic research, regional climate models, and long-term monitoring of the state of the environment should feed into decision-making processes, clearly indicating the importance of the interplay between science and politics. Interestingly the uncertainty related to climate change is not emphasized (as a challenge), but nuclear safety at the Kola Peninsula is, though this problem has been under control for a few years now.

Although protecting Arctic ecosystems is prioritized, in seems somewhat short-sighted not to give greater emphasis to the promotion and export of Finnish know-how and expertise in environmental technology. Furthermore, here the Strategy has at least one internal contradiction: It

[22] This was already seen in October 2010, when the mining company Northland Resources decided to transport iron ore mined i Pajala, just beside the Finnish border, to the port of Narvi in Norway instead of the portof Kemi which s much losr.

[23] The company, Steel Done Group has signed a contract of 10 millon Euro with the Russians (Helsigin Sanomat 27.1.2008, . A8).

[24] The latest Finland's Strategy on Arctic Research was published in April 1999 (Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriö, *Suomen arktisen tutkimuksen strategia*. Kauppa- ja teollisuusministeriön euvottelukuntaraortteja /1999).

[25] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, Prime Minister's OfficePublications8/2010: 28.

states that: "(I)ncreased human activity in the region also raises the risk of environmental pollution"[26], but then later in the text it states that: "(F) rom the perspectives of Finnish – especially Northern Finnish – industry and employment, it is important that all types of economic activity increase both in large seaports and in land-based support areas of oil and gas fields in Norway and Russia".[27] Which of these isthe first priority? Is there a greater emphasis on more strict environmental protection, or is it mass-scale utilization of natural resources? These questions indicate criticisms against the main content of the first Finnish national strategy on the Arctic region.[28]

Fifth, likewise, the Strategy is somewhat short-sighted to claim a focus "on external relations" instead of a more holistic approach. For example, though somewhat abstract, it seems logical to give the highest priority to protecting Arctic ecosystems which are threatened or at risk due to rapid climate change, by promoting and exporting Finnish know-how and expertise in environmental technology. Or, at the very least to identify more clearly links between different sectors, i.e. the interactions of economic activities with both ecosystems and peoples, as is actually done later in the document when the 'Arctic Window' of the Northern Dimension is introduced.[29] This would establish a more global perspective and invite an alternative interpretation as to why the Arctic region plays such an important role in world politics.

Sixth, the Strategy includes objectives concerning Indigenous peoples, particularly those of the Barents Region such as the Sámi, and their

[26] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, Prime Minister's OfficePublications8/2010: 15.

[27] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, Prime Minister's OfficePublications8/2010: 18.

[28] Heininen, Lassi. *Arctic Strategies and Policies: Inventory and Comparative Study*, Akureyri: Northern Research forum ad University of Laland, Augst 2011.

[29] The fragile natural environment, long distances, indigenous peoples and the economic potential of th regions are tied together as the first requested eement of the Northern Dimnsion's 'Arcic Window'.

active participation in international cooperation. Absent, however, is a clear objective to ratify the International Labour Organization's 169 Convention, although it is very timely and relevant for the Sámi and their self-determination. Furthermore, Finland believes that the UNs' Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is, and will be, a sufficient framework and tool to resolve Arctic issues, and that there is no need for a new international, legally-binding agreement or regime. Although this shows political realism, it is a rather traditional and narrow state-oriented approach. The real challenges are comprehensive and global, and request the attention and participation of a global community including a discourse on the global commons, coupled with a desire to engage in new ways of thinking.

Seventh, the Strategy succeeds in emphasizing that the Arctic region is a stable and peaceful area - "High North – low tension", and that Finland supports "non-conflictual rules".[30] Further, in recognizing that significant changes are taking place when, for example, the importance of the Arctic climate globally is obvious, and consequently, the global significance of the region is increased. This is a clear statement in support of both the main discourse of the Arctic being a stable and peaceful region in spite of its challenges, and a recent and emerging discourse on globalization.[31]

In declaring that the Arctic Council is, and should remain as, the main forum on Arctic affairs and policy, "Finland strives to increase international cooperation in the Arctic" at many levels and bilaterally.[32] This statement is very important and timely, and shows clear and definite support of the Arctic Council and its work by Finland and its Parliament, Government and Saami Parliament, as well as the science community

[30] Stubb, Alexander. "A New Arctic Era and Finland's Arctic Policy", Keynote speech in the 20th Anniversary Seminar of the Arctic Centre, 29th September 2009, Alexander Stubb, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland. (mimeo).

[31] E.g. *Globalization and the Circumpolar North, e*ds. L. Heininen and C. Southcott. Fairbnks: University of laska Pres, 2010.

[32] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, Prime Minister's OfficePublications 8/2010:, 52.

and several Finnish NGOs. It was, and still is, imperative that the mandate of the Council be renegotiated and broadened so that it may move away from its current state, which is some sort of political 'inability'. The Finnish proposal to organize a Summit of the Arctic states should be seen in this context.[33] It is there that challenges of the future, such as the interrelationship between the utilization of natural resources and the fragile environment, as well as the mandate of the AC and its further development, would be discussed. In the meantime, a more important and necessary prerequisite would be to have enough political will among the eight Arctic states to broaden the AC mandate and working methods to include discussion on the utilization of natural resources, security and security-policy.[34] Furthermore, the Arctic states are ready for a deeper cooperation with all relevant non-state northern actors, such as Indigenous peoples, academic institutions, environmental organizations and other NGOs. The Kiruna Ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council in May 2013 at least showed that Arctic states are willing to enhance interactions with non-Arctic states interested in Arctic issues and allow interested Asian countries to become observers of the Council, and present their vision regarding the future of the Arctic.[35]

Finally, the Strategy emphasizes the importance of the European Union's role in the Arctic region, referring to "The EU as a global Arctic player"[36], and that the EU's Arctic policy should be further developed.

[33] Stubb, Alexander. "A New Arctic Era and Finland's Arctic Policy", Keynote speech in the 20th Anniversary Seminar of the Arctic Centre, 29th September 2009, Alexander Stubb, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Finland. (mimeo).

[34] Heininen, Lassi and Numminen, Lotta. "Suomi arktisena maana ja Euroopan unionin jäsenvaltiona: miten Arktista neuvostoa vahvistetaan". *Arcticfinland, 2011, a*ccessed 13/03/2011, http://www.arcticfinland.fi.

[35] *Kiruna Declaration* and *Visions for the Arctic Council* (2013). Adopted at the Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council on the 15th of May 2013 in Kiruna, Sweden. Online: www.arctic-council.org.

[36] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region*, Prime Minister's Office Publications 8/2010: 45.

This could be interpreted to mean that politics is a priority, trumping economics in the context of the EU, though the reality in the early 2010s seems to be the other way around. Consequently, Finland could be seen as claiming itself as an advocate for, or defender of, the EU in Arctic affairs. This sounds logical from Finland´s point of view taking into consideration that Finland initiated the EU's Northern Dimension, which could be integrated more into the EU's emerging Arctic policy. This may, however, involve political inconveniences for Finland as an Arctic Council member and more generally in the context of multilateral Arctic cooperation. Behind this lies divided opinion regarding the role of the EU as an Arctic actor among some Arctic states, particularly Canada, and Northern indigenous peoples' organizations, such as the Inuit Circumpolar Council, which is reflected in the somewhat hesitant responses to the EU's efforts.

Correspondingly, the follow-up resolution adopted by Government in August 2013 is first of all a review and an updated version of the 2010 Strategy with two public hearings, one in Helsinki and another in Rovaniemi[37]. It is based on the vision, i.e. four pillars of policy outlined by the Government in its special session in October 2012: Finland as an Arctic country, an Arctic expert, which respects sustainable development and enviromental considerations, and is active in international cooperation.[38] Now Finland in its entirety is very clearly stated to be an Arctic country and an expert about. Education and research, as well as expertise and know-how, is the first mentioned sector but rather briefly discussed. Like in the 2010 strategy, economic activities and business operations are greatly emphasized and discussed in detail. The environment and environmental protection are keenly bound with (geopolitical) stability and internal security which is somewhat surprising. Particularly so due to the fact the 2013 strategy has a substantial chapter on international

[37] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013. Government resolution on 23 August 2013.* Prime Minister's Office Publications 16/2013.

[38] Valtioneuvosto, Tiedote 309/2012. Hallitukse arktiset linjaukset itakoulussa 10.10.2012.

cooperation which positions Finland clearly as an Arctic state in the Arctic region. Now the EU's role in the Arctic is described much less and is a sub-chapter unlike the whole chapter in the 2010 strategy, although Finland still supports a stronger presence of the EU in the Arctic and the Arctic Council.

All in all, Finland's Arctic Strategy covers most of the features of a modern strategy document in adopting a holistic approach. It can be seen as reflecting and responding to recent significant and multi-faceted environmental and geopolitical change(s) in the Arctic and in its worldwide approach to the Arctic. It also clearly states the "Arctic dimension" is an important part of Finland's foreign policy in the 21st century.[39] The Strategy has not one clear priority or priority area, though there is an apparent preference for economic activities including transport, infrastructure and know-how, supported by the Finnish maritime and shipping industry, as well as economic and political elites, and, on the other hand, general objectives for international cooperation on Arctic issues based on international treaties.

Conclusion

In the early-1990s, Finland's geopolitical and security-political position fundamentally changed due to the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War. Finland keenly embraced the idea of political and economic (Western) European integration, although it is still militarily non-aligned and maintains its own independent army. One thing, however, did not change - the Finnish 'Northern' identity and the surrounded 'Arctic ambience', which is a fundamental part of the Finnish nation.

[39] Prime Minister's Office, *Finland's Strategy for the Arctic Region 2013. Government resolution on 23 August 2013.* Prime Minister's Office Publications 16/2013: 14-15.

The North has, however, been a rather delicate issue for Finland in terms of domestic policy and foreign policy. Finland is not a littoral state of the Arctic Ocean and has not shown great and continuous interest at all times toward the entire Arctic region. Neither did it have an (official) Arctic strategy or policy of its own as a part of its international, European or Nordic (foreign) policy, before the Arctic strategy of the 2010s. Finland is, maybe, more a Nordic and (Northern) European country, located geopolitically in the middle of North Europe and neighbouring Russia, and has strong interests within the Baltic Sea region. Taking all this into consideration, its foreign policy and activities in the Nordic Region and in northern Europe as a whole, Finland had a 'de facto northern dimension' in its foreign policy. The relevant parts as well as the results of this were Finland's two successive initiatives in the 1990s: First, the initiative for the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy, which initiated current intergovernmental cooperation in the Arctic and promoted the foundation for an Arctic Council. Second, the Finnish initiative on a Northern Dimension of the European Union, which brought Northern, and partly Arctic, issues on the political agenda of the European Union and led to its Northern Dimension policy as one of the external, foreign policies of the EU in North Europe.

Finland's first strategy for the Arctic region in 2010 and its updated version in 2013 is comprehensive and ambitious, and clearly asserts Finland as an Arctic as well as (Northern) European state. The Finnish Strategy covers most features of a modern strategy adopting by a holistic approach and responding to recent significant and multi-functional (global) changes in the Arctic Region. It does not have clear priorities, although there is an apparent preference of economic activities, transportation and know-how, as well as an emphasis on the environment. Finally, the Strategy strongly supports international cooperation on Arctic issues and emphasizes the importance of stability based on international treaties. This is in line with long-term national interests and long-term foreign policy of Finland.