

Program

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Europe Office

KAS Expert Briefing: Quo vadis, Arctic Security?

4th March 2026

10:30 – 12:30 h

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Europe Office, 11 Avenue de l'Yser, 1040 Brussels

Once a region thought to be insulated from global geopolitical tensions (“Arctic exceptionalism”), the Arctic has now become a strategic theatre of intensified Great Power rivalry due to changed climatic and political circumstances. In the aftermath of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and Finland’s and Sweden’s NATO accession, military tensions vis-à-vis Russia have extended to the Arctic and disrupted regional cooperation. Due to Russia’s dependence on its nuclear assets on the Kola peninsula, including its Northern Fleet, the Barents region has been most prone to confrontation. Russia’s increased military build-up and hybrid threats pose a particular risk of escalation in grey-zone scenarios along NATO’s Northern Flank. Closer Russo-Chinese military collaboration, including joint exercises off the coast of Alaska, further strain the security environment.

While the EU’s 2021 Arctic Policy already reflected a change towards greater geopolitics, it has not yet laid a strong emphasis on hard security issues and is therefore currently under revision. In November 2025, the European Parliament called for a security-focused strategy for the Arctic as the frontline of European security. Furthermore, since long-standing US strategic interest in Greenland culminated in President Trump’s threats to annex the island for national security reasons, Arctic security has been catapulted into the global spotlight and to the forefront of the EU agenda. As the EU grapples with the rupture in the rules-based international order laid bare by the crisis, there is consensus on the need to redefine its Arctic posture and step up its investment in comprehensive Arctic security. However, questions remain on the future of transatlantic security cooperation in the Arctic, the impact of a stronger NATO presence and closer EU partnerships with Greenland and non-EU Arctic allies Norway, Iceland and Canada. Amid unprecedented political attention to Arctic security, any future security architecture must consider the varying security dynamics across the vast Arctic space.

Against this backdrop, the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation’s Europe Office is delighted to host the expert briefing “Quo vadis, Arctic Security?” to provide a forum for in-depth discussion of these timely questions. Leading Arctic experts **Andreas Østhagen**, PhD, Research Director, Fridtjof Nansen Institute, **Andreas Raspotnik**, PhD, Director, High North Center for Business and Governance, and **Karen van Loon**, Research Fellow, Clingendael Institute and Associate Fellow, Egmont Institute, will map the distinct security threats across different parts of the Arctic and shed light on the underlying dynamics of the region’s evolving security landscape.

Program

Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung Europe Office

Agenda

- 10:15- 10:30h **Arrival & Registration**
- 10:30h **Welcoming Remarks**
- Dr. Beatrice Gorawantschy**
Director of the Europe Office
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
- 10:35h **Expert Briefing: Quo vadis, Arctic Security?**
- Andreas Østhagen, PhD**
Research Director, Fridtjof Nansen Institute
- Andreas Raspotnik, PhD**
Director, High North Center for Business and Governance
Senior Researcher, Fridtjof Nansen Institute
- Karen van Loon**
Research Fellow, Clingendael Institute
Associate Fellow, Egmont Institute
- 11:15h **Moderated Discussion**
- Moderator:
- Lavinia Klarhoefer**
Policy Advisor, Europe Office Brussels
Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
- 12:00h **Networking Lunch**
- 12:30h **End of Event**