

Northern Notes

Issue 42 - Autumn / Winter 2014



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The Norrskén (Northern light) at Umeå University campus.

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Welcome from the President

Winter has finally come to Umeå with temperatures reaching down to -20 degrees Celsius. That is definitely an appropriate setting for the new IASSA secretariat. I am proud to write this column as President of IASSA and so happy that the members chose Umeå University as the next ICASS venue in 2017. ICASS VIII that was arranged at UNBC/Prince George in May last year was a great success by many reasons. The number of researchers and nationalities present, the quality of sessions, the green and sustainable profile, the localities and social events, and the beautiful setting all contributed to make the conference a memory for life for all of us that were lucky enough to be there. I would like to express my gratitude to the former IASSA President Gail Fondahl and the organizing committee that put strong efforts in making it happen.

I am also pleased to have a skilled, competent and experienced IASSA Council on board for the next three years. Some were members of the previous Council (Gail Fondahl, Alona Yefimenko, Andrey Petrov, Florian Stammler and Tatiana Vlasova), while some are new (Diane Hirshberg, Gertrude Eilmsteiner-Saxinger and Grete Hovelsrud). Those who have left the Council will be missed, and I want to extend warm thanks to Joan Nymand Larsen, Birger Poppel, Chris Southcott and Peter Schweitzer. The new IASSA Secretariat is under control of Gabriella Nordin at the Arctic Research Centre here at Umeå University, and we are so grateful for the help and assistance we have received from the previous persons in charge, especially Cher Mazo and Lára Ólafsdóttir.

Social sciences and humanities have today a stronger position in Arctic research than ever before, emphasized by Admiral

Robert Papp, former head of the U.S. Coast Guard, and newly appointed by Secretary of State John Kerry as his Special Representative to the Arctic social sciences in his presentation in Alaska late last year. The council has discussed the opportunities for social sciences from the US Arctic Council Chairmanship Priorities. This is evident not least from the calls from research funders that in many cases direct themselves directly to our field of disciplines which is most encouraging.

IASSA council members have been engaged in several important activities. The Arctic Human Development Report II will soon be published, the international workshop Indigenous Peoples and Extractive Industries was arranged in Umeå 26-27 November, with strong representation of IASSA Network on Extractive Industries, we have been represented at Arctic Resilience Report meetings, and the President has participated as IASSA observer at the AC Special Task Force on Scientific Collaboration (Tromsø 30 September-2 October) and Arctic Council SDWG Meeting in Yellowknife (18-19 October). He also presented IASSA at the Polar Day arranged by the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat in Stockholm, and represented IASSA with a presentation at the 1st Spanish Symposium on the Arctic Region in Madrid (read more about this event in this issue of Northern Notes). IASSA has decided to co-operate with the Arctic Frost project in arranging a sustainability workshop that will result in a white paper for ICARP III. It will be arranged in Charleston, South Carolina in February 2015. We are equally proud that we managed to co-arrange several social science sessions at the forthcoming ICARP III conference in Toyama, Japan in April this year.

1st SPANISH SYMPOSIUM ON THE ARCTIC REGION: The Arctic facing International Law, Politics and Research

By Elena Conde Pérez



INTRODUCTION

The 1st Spanish Symposium on the Arctic region: the Arctic and International Law, Policy and Science was held on November 13th, 2014, in the Graduate Hall of the School of Law at Complutense University of Madrid. The Symposium was led by Professor of Public International Law, Elena Conde Pérez, and coordinated by the postgraduate student of Università degli Studi di Milano, Marzia Scopelliti, research assistant of Professor Conde during the academic year 2013-2014 (under an Erasmus Placement Programme).

OBJECTIVES

The 1st Spanish Symposium aimed to create an interdisciplinary space of discussion and debate among different Arctic and non-Arctic scientists, policymakers and stakeholders. It gave a general overview of the most relevant issues related to the North-Pole region derived from climate change. Noteworthy, this was the first Spanish Symposium on Arctic issues from the perspective of Human and Social Sciences, particularly, International Law and Political Science.

In addition to this, another important objective pursued by the Symposium was to raise public awareness and highlight the main research topics developed by the research project "The race for the Arctic: issues of international law arising in the light of climate change" (DER2012-36026), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education, and headed by Professor Elena Conde. The volume *Global Challenges in the Arctic Region. Sovereignty, Environment and Geopolitical Balance*, E. Conde and S. Iglesias, eds. (Ashgate, 2015) will collect some of the contributions of the speakers at the Symposium. The Proceedings of the 1st Symposium are available on the website of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies, Spanish Defense Department (<http://www.ieee.es>)

The Congress not only intended to be a forum for scientific discussion, but also a way to make students aware of the main challenges present in the Arctic.

SPONSORSHIP

The Symposium owes gratitude for economic support given by generous sponsors as the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE, Ministry of Defense), the Royal Embassy of Norway to Spain, Canada Foundation and some others who wish to remain anonymous.

THE SYMPOSIUM

Invited speakers at the opening of the 1st Spanish Symposium were Professor R. Canosa, Dean, Faculty of Law, Dr. Juan Luis Muñoz de Laborde, General Deputy Director of Multilateral Economic Relations and Cooperation, Maritime and Terrestrial Area (TBC), Admiral Manuel Catalán, Secretary of the Spanish Polar Committee and Mr. Simon Cridland, Councillor of the Canadian Embassy.

Introducing the Arctic region from an international law perspective Professor Elena Conde, head researcher of the project "The race for the Arctic: International Law issues considering climate change" presented the main challenges due to climate change followed by a session on Burning Questions. The session included "Hot topics and knowledge gaps in the Arctic resource governance: Perspectives from Norway and Iceland" presented by Professor Schram Stokke, University of Oslo/ Fridtjof Nansen Institute and Dr. Niels Einarsson, Director of the Stefansson Arctic Institute. The session closed with presentations on "Security threats in the Arctic, still present?" by Professor Rob Huebert, University of Calgary and Lieutenant Colonel Ángel Gómez de Ágreda, Spanish Ministry of Defence.

The second session of the day started with Professor Nuria Arenas Higaldo, University of Huelva and Professor Soledad Torrecuadrada García Lozano, University Autónoma of Madrid who spoke



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Photo credits: Peter Sköld

on "Arctic Peoples, how to balance rights, development and traditional values". Professor Peter Sköld, President of International Arctic Social Science Association (IASSA) rounded up the session with a presentation on present challenges to Arctic research.

The Spanish role in the Arctic area was highlighted in the session "Spain gets a northern dimension" which included a presentation by Navy Captain Ignacio José García Sánchez, Deputy Director of the Spanish Institute for Strategic Studies (IEEE) on "Spanish interests in the Arctic" followed by Admiral Manuel Catalán, Secretary of the Spanish Polar Committee speaking on "Spanish Polar structure". The session closed with "Compromising interest: Do enterprises face NGO:s demands?" by Mrs. Pilar Marcos Rodriguez, Main Responsible of the campaign "Save the Arctic" of Greenpeace Spain.

From a Spanish perspective to EU, the last session "The European Union in the Arctic" comprised topics as "Europe playing an Arctic role: the participation of European States in the Arctic Council and the legal protection of Arctic Peoples" presented by Dr. Sara Iglesias, European Court of Justice and Postgraduate Marzia Scopelliti, University of Milan. Professor Marta Sobrido, University of La Coruña and Professor Marta Iglesias, University Pontificia of Comillas each gave presentations on "Sustainable development in the Arctic: Europe, marine governance and new navigation routes".

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By Elena Conde Pérez

Closing remarks were presented by Ambassador Johan C. Vibe, Kingdom of Norway.

STATE OF ARCTIC RESEARCH IN SPAIN¹

a) Historical approach

The historical approach of Spain to the Polar Regions follows the discovery of America. In successive steps along the XVI, XVII, and XVIII centuries Spanish researchers charted the coasts of America and adjacent islands, from the northern Atlantic mid latitudes to Cape Horn, and from that Cape Horn to the farthest northern extremities of America.² These ancient research voyages contributed, beside the geographic extension, to the scientific knowledge of the botany, mineralogy and navigation in both hemispheres covering all known latitudes.

b) Present polar scientific structure of Spain

After two centuries of polar research, Spain returns to its historical bipolar interest in high latitudes science and enters as an Observer State in the Antarctic Treaty in 1982, it becomes an Antarctic Treaty Consultative Member in 1988, SCAR member (Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research) in 1990, COMNAP member (Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs). Finally, Spain becomes an Observer State in the Arctic Council in 2006 and a member of IASSA in 2009.

At present the Spanish polar research infrastructures are two Antarctic bases and two oceanographic vessels.

To perform its scientific activities in the polar zones Spain has at present the following polar structure:

- The Polar National Authority is the Spanish Polar Committee (Comité Polar Español, CPE), depending on the Ministry of Science and Innovation, General Directorate of International Cooperation and Institutional Relationships. The Spanish Polar Committee has the representation of the main national organism that take

part in the Spanish Polar activities. The CPE has the responsibility to represent Spain in the main polar organisms (Antarctic Treaty, Arctic Council) including, among others duties, to give the authorisations for polar activities, the whole polar coordination and the maintenance of the data polar bank.

- The **National Research Program** (Ministry of Science and Innovation) rules all matters related with the scientific programs in both Polar Regions, including the approval of the research programs and its finance.
- The Council of Scientific Research (CSIC), through the Technical Marine Unit (**UTM**), gives the logistic support to the Antarctic campaigns and manages the Antarctic Base Juan Carlos I and the scientific equipment of the R/V *Hesperides* and Gabriel de *Castilla Antarctic Base*.
- The Army is the manager of the Spanish Antarctic Base Gabriel de Castilla (Ministry of Defense) and the Research Vessel *Hesperides* and the Support Vessel *Las Palmas* are Navy ships.

Although up to now, the main research activities of Spain in the polar region were performed in the Antarctic, currently a considerable number of researchers, from many Spanish research institutions and universities, are working in programs and projects related to the Arctic, mainly in campaigns developed in cooperation with centres and laboratories in the Arctic countries.

These projects practically cover all science polar branches including the study of present biodiversity of benthos in Arctic coastal ecosystems; the adaptations to the Arctic climate for some key-species, the sediment transport on European Atlantic margins, the continental slope stability submarine flow dynamics, the study of sedimentary processes, gas hydrates, and margin research, the fresh

water ecosystems in the arctic, ground and sounding globe observations to study the European arctic stratospheric ozone depletion, including field campaigns and modelling to quantify the CFC radicals over the ozone layer, the Arctic glaciology, permafrost, glaciology in all its different aspects.

The research project led by Professor Elena Conde "The race for the Arctic: issues of international law arising in the light of climate change" (DER2012-36026), funded by the Spanish Ministry of Education, is the only one in Spain that considers the Arctic region from the perspective of Social and Human Sciences.

Today, Spain is preparing its first Polar Strategy.

Footnotes:

¹This part of the report has been mainly taken from the SPAIN'S REPORT ABOUT THE SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ACTIVITIES IN THE ARCTIC AREA (2011), prepared for the Arctic Council by the Secretary of the Spanish Polar Committee, Admiral Manuel Catalán, one of the speakers at the 1st Spanish Symposium on the Arctic Region.

²In XVI century Spanish navigators, bordering the American Pacific high latitude north, search for the Northwest passage, Cabrillo (1542), Gali (1582) and Vizcaino (1596/1602). The development of a discovering enterprise, at such grand scale, was only possible with the Support of La Casa de la Contratacion founded in Seville at 1503, as a school for navigation, and the purpose to be a first Maritime University. The centre was also responsible for keeping the Padron Real, a top secret universal navigation chart, to which were continuously added all observations and discoveries made on each voyage. In relation to the Arctic, the expedition of Malaspina and Bustamante must be related like an outstanding reference of the Spanish marine researchers in the high north latitudes. On 30th July, 1789, the corvettes *Descubierta* and *Atrevida*, commanded by Alejandro Malaspina and



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Bustamante, sailed from the port of Cadiz, in order to co-operate with the other maritime powers in the extension of the human knowledge, and more particularly, between others aims, to look for the possible Northwest Passage. Between lat 59°, 60° and 61°N they searched, in vain, for a passage to penetrate from Pacific toward the Atlantic Ocean and they, accordingly concluded, that the sound mentioned by Maldonado, an old Spanish navigator, had no existence. As a result of this part of these expeditions Malaspina's name is associated with the Nanaimo area, though he never came closer than Yaqui on Nootka Island. Finally at the beginning of the year 1792, two Spanish galliots, under the command of Dionisio Galiano and Cayetano Valdes joined the English squadron commanded by Captain Vancouver, with an intention to examine the immense Archipelago, known by the name of Juan de Fuca.



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Lill Rastad Bjørst travelled to University of Northern British Columbia, Canada from Aalborg University, Denmark.

Photo credits: Lill Rastad Bjørst

Research Exchange from Aalborg University to University of Northern British Columbia

By Lill Rastad Bjørst

Lill Rastad Bjørst travelled to University of Northern British Columbia, Canada from Aalborg University, Denmark, for a 6 day research exchange.

The funding from MobilityDK made it possible for me to participate in the International Congress of Arctic Social Sciences (ICASS) VIII this spring at University of Northern British Columbia. The aim with the visit was to represent our new research center and upcoming specialization in Arctic studies at Aalborg University as well as present my research.

What kind of new opportunities did the mobility create?

- To participate in ICASS brought inspiration to our curriculum in Arctic Studies as well as concrete appointments with future guest teachers.
- I had the change to network with other scholars in the social and human sciences, who do work on mining, risk and tolerance from Sweden, Norway, Canada and Greenland.
- I ended up being invited to contribute to special issues on mining and sustainable development in the Arctic.

- I met up with other UArctic partners during the conference and had the opportunity to learn more about the networks and programs.
- I was furthermore invited to participate in the development of a new Nordforsk-application by colleagues from KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden.
- After I returned to Denmark I got invitations to present my work at other UArctic Research centers.



Lill Rastad Bjørst and Pelle Tejsner from Aarhus University, Denmark.

