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ARCTIC RESCUE

Initiative proposed by the EMERCOM of Russia

What is Arctic Rescue?

It is a mechanism for coordination of international activities on prevention and response for the consequences of the emergencies in the Arctic. Arctic Rescue implies creation of the information management system in order to integrate the potential and promote interaction between the rescue services of eight Arctic countries at all the stages of emergencies: monitoring, forecasting, prevention, response, providing humanitarian aid to the affected persons and post-crisis rehabilitation and renovation.

We believe the reasons in favour of the creation of the above international structure are as follows:

- a considerable increase of exports from Russia along the Arctic Seas' routes based on the actual implementation the Russian Government's decision on the construction in Murmansk a seaport for oil takers and oil pipeline for export deliveries;
- general boom of economic activities in the Arctic – both in its Russian and foreign parts;
- internationalization of transportation in the Arctic – development of the Arctic Circumpolar Route and its use by the vessels of third countries, increase in air traffic;
- development of the international tourism in the Arctic, including the extreme types;
- progress in industrial and social infrastructure taking into account wide-scale use of natural resources in the Arctic;
- forecasted increase of risks, mainly of man-made disasters;
- high vulnerability of the Arctic environment from man-made disasters;
- increased risk to the indigenous people (preserving the traditional way of life and attitudes to the environment) due to their wide dispersion in the Arctic region.

Arctic Rescue Structure

The Coordination center merges with the EPPR Secretariat (at the moment the relocation of the Secretariat to Moscow on permanent basis is being discussed). The coordination mechanism is based on the principle of real time information exchange. It differs from the coordination mechanism in the Council of the Baltic Sea States: the Arctic Rescue will incorporate the system of monitoring and emergency response. The system will be supported by the environmental, fire-fighting and rescue facilities active in the Arctic and also by relative legislation.

In particular, the system of monitoring, measuring and forecasting the natural and man-made disasters is being developed in the Russian Federation in accordance with the Presidential Decree dated 23 March 2000.

To execute the above Decree after concordance with the Federal ministries, the EMERCOM of RUSSIA approved the Regulations on the system of monitoring, measuring and forecasting the natural and man-made disasters. Based on the Regulations the above system functions on Federal, regional and territorial levels. This sphere of activities should become pivotal for the Arctic Rescue.

Sources of Financing

It is a complicated matter, but we believe it can be resolved. It is clear there is no free money in the budgets of the countries in the Barents Sea and Arctic region. That is why we offer to count on investments of various legal entities engaged in economic activities in the Arctic:

- insurance companies,
- companies extracting and exporting crude oil, ore, etc.,
- shipping companies sailing in the Arctic seas,
- airlines flying in Arctic,
- tourist companies,
- legal entities and persons interested in the safety of the Arctic region.

It is necessary to secure the coherence of the Arctic Rescue with the Northern Dimension concept.

Expected results of the Arctic Rescue activities:

- **in the political sense** – it is another step so as to integrate fire-fighting services of all countries in the Arctic region, strengthen confidence, develop cooperation and implement various projects for mutual benefit;
- **in the economical sense** it is directed to mitigate the damages and consequences of the emergency situations, mutually control risks, minimize costs, gain extra time, considerably increase safety and balance in the Arctic economic space, improve safety of the transportation routes. All of it will assist economic growth of the Arctic region;
- **in the sense of community life** it is directed to secure gains for population welfare, top level of rescue services' personnel training and skills, social security in case of emergencies.