

REPORT OF THE 2001 EMERGENCY PREVENTION, PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE (EPPR) WORKING GROUP MEETING

INTRODUCTION

The Arctic Council (AC) Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response working group held its meeting in Kiruna, Sweden, 20-22 February 2001.

The meeting was attended by delegations from Canada, Denmark, Finland, Norway, The Russian Federation, Sweden and the US. Also RAIPON and the Arctic Council Secretariat were presented. A list of participants is attached to the report (Annex 1).

Mr Olli Pahkala from Finland acted as Chair for the meeting and Ms Miliza Malmelin acted as secretary of the meeting.

AGENDA

Agenda item 1 Opening of the meeting

The Chair opened the meeting and hoped that the meeting and the discussion at the meeting would be to everybody's satisfaction.

Agenda item 2 Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted with some small changes to the sequence of the items (Annex 2). A list of documents concerning the items on the agenda is attached (Annex 3).

Agenda item 3 The Arctic Council

3.1 Work of the Arctic Council and the SAOs

The chair reported on the SAO and the Second Ministerial Meetings held in Barrow, Alaska, in October 2000. The Barrow declaration addresses the work of EPPR in paragraph 10: "endorsing the main conclusion of the Analysis of Agreements and Arrangements; looking forward to finalization of the Circumpolar Map of Resources at Risk from Oil Spills in the Arctic; and encouraging EPPR to continue with ongoing activities initiated under EPPR's Strategic Plan of Action". Also paragraph 17 is relevant for the work of EPPR, even though it is not directly directed to the working group: "Encourage actions to reduce the risks of release of radioactivity to the Arctic..." The chair noted that the radiological issues were mentioned by many delegates. The Barrow declaration (http://www.arctic-council.org/barrow/bar_decl.pdf (in English) and

<http://www.arctic-council.org/barrow/dec-russ.pdf> (in Russian)) will be used for guidance of EPPR's future work.

The chair also reported on the Working Group Chair meeting held in Barrow as well, where among other things the Canadian Capacity Building initiative was discussed. The next WG Chair meeting will be held in Rovaniemi, Finland, on April 4th 2001.

The Arctic Council Executive Secretary Ms Johanna Lammi thanked US for the good cooperation on moving the AC secretariat to Finland. She then shortly introduced the priorities of the Finnish AC presidency and distributed the program of the presidency to the meeting participants. http://www.arctic-council.org/finland/ohjelma_eng.pdf (English)
http://www.arctic-council.org/finland/ohjelma_ven.pdf (Russian).

The AC Executive Secretary continued by informing the meeting of the review process of the AC, which was requested by the Ministers in the Barrow declaration. Mr Pekka Haavisto, the former Ministry of Environment of Finland, has been appointed for the task and a first report will be presented, followed by discussions, at the SAO meeting in June 2001. The chair informed of the issues he brought forth when he was interviewed by Mr Haavisto.

The AC Executive Secretary also informed about the upcoming 10th Anniversary of the establishment of the AEPS. The celebration will be held in Rovaniemi on June 11th 2001 in connection to the next SAO meeting. The draft agenda for the celebration was distributed. The chair informed that he plans to present the main achievements of EPPR at the meeting. This would be the Circumpolar Map, the Risk Analysis, the Field Guide and hopefully also the training course.

It was decided that the chair/secretariat should circulate for comments the draft text of the presentation, which the chair is going to give on behalf of EPPR at the Rovaniemi 10th Anniversary.

3.2 Other working groups and activities

Mr Joe Nazareth reported on the last PAME meeting held in January 2001. The EPPR chair had addressed the PAME meeting with a letter telling about the EPPR work and about EPPR's interest in several PAME projects. At the PAME meeting the following issues were brought up that has relevance for EPPR: 1) PAME is continuing the process to update the matrix of legal instruments. The updated version will be circulated for comments and review among the other working groups and Permanent Participants in mid August. 2) PAME is about to establish a process for reviewing and updating the Offshore Oil and Gas Guidelines, that were issued in 1997. Amendments and additions should be sent to the PAME secretariat no later than June 1, 2001, and will be considered at the next PAME meeting 3) PAME is initiating a project, under the leadership of Canada, to develop Arctic Waters Oil Transfer Guidelines. Canada will initiate the project by sending out a call letter asking for specific contacts in the various countries to form a correspondence group. 4) An interest in using the EPPR circumpolar map in the follow-up activities of The Snap Shot Analysis of Maritime Activities was indicated.

Concerning the above mentioned issues the EPPR meeting decided that the chair and the secretary will provide EPPR's comments to the work on the legal instruments, based on EPPR's own legal analysis.

It was also decided that US take the lead role in reviewing and updating the Emergency chapter of the Offshore Oil and Gas guidelines. The individual countries will send their comments on the chapter to US by March 15th. US will then circulate a new draft version of the chapter for any final comments by the working group by April 15th. The final EPPR comments will be sent by the secretary to PAME by May 15th.

Mr Walter Parker reported shortly on the joint AMAP-CAFF meeting held in September 2000. The meeting had discussed among other things how ACIA affects the work of the two groups. AMAP is interested in how the climate change affects the pollution of the Arctic, whereas CAFF is concentrating its effort to find out the effects of the climate change on the arctic biodiversity.

Ms Ann Heinrichs informed that the AMAP radioactivity experts group is planning a conference on radioactivity issues to be held in 2002 in St Petersburg.

Mr Kjell Kolstad informed that he had been contacted by Lars-Otto Reiersen from AMAP. AMAP had expressed its interest in using the Circumpolar Map EPPR is preparing. AMAP had also informed that they are planning an assessment of the oil situation in the Arctic, with the aim to report on the outcomes at the 2004 Ministerial Meeting.

The chair informed that an interim ACAP steering committee was established in Barrow. Norway is leading the steering committee, and providing the secretarial support. All member countries have been asked to appoint their representative for the steering committee. Three projects are initiated at this moment: 1) Multilateral cooperative project for phase out of PCB use and management of PCB contaminated wastes in the Russian Federation, 2) Evaluation of dioxins and furans in the Russian Federation and 3) Develop fact sheets on arctic contaminants for use by Arctic Council countries' delegations in other fora.

Of the proposed ACAP projects two touch upon issues relevant for EPPR, namely Guidelines for performing environmental impact assessments of handling and storage of radioactive waste in Russia, and Outspread and implementation of the cleaner production methodology in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation. The meeting brought forth that EPPR should follow closely the work of ACAP and be more active concerning the issues.

The meeting decided that the chair and the secretary should discuss and find out more on the following issues: ACAP projects with possible relevance to the work of EPPR, and AMAP plans on updating the assessment of the oil situation in the Arctic. A good possibility for this is offered at the upcoming Working Group Chair meeting (April 4th 2001). The chair and the secretary should also suggest that the working groups again start to use the matrix, listening all ongoing projects, to facilitate the co-operation between working groups and to avoid the duplication of work. The chair and the secretary will report back to the working group after the WG Chair meeting.

Mr Joe Nazareth reported that he had presented EPPR, at the request of the chair, at the Indigenous Peoples' Secretariat/Permanent Participant seminar held in Copenhagen in August. After given a short introduction to the work of EPPR the Permanent Participants attending the seminar were asked about their views on the work done, on broadening the mandate of EPPR to include also natural disasters, and on other issues they feel that EPPR should address. Among other questions that were raised at the seminar was to what extent indigenous people had had the chance to give input to the Circumpolar Map.

Agenda item 4 Information exchange

Canada

- There is expansion of the gas exploration in the McKenzie river delta. So far the exploration is only on shore but there will be movement off shore soon.

Denmark/Greenland

- The first well in the Fylla licence held by Statoil (operator), Phillips Petroleum, DONG and Nunaoil was drilled in the summer of 2000. The well, Qulleq-1 was drilled by the new built deepwater drillship [*West Navion*](#). The water depth of the well location was approx. 1050 m. There were over 250 icebergs sighted in the operational area but the downtime due to this was just 26 hours. The Ice Management Plan prepared as part of the contingency planning was a great success.
- In preparation for these operations, the Danish Energy Agency along with the Bureau of Minerals and Petroleum (the regulatory body in Greenland) financed a Sensitivity Mapping project between 62°N and 68°. The results of this project were incorporated in the Oil Spill Contingency Plan. The maps are available on CD-ROM and in the near future on the Internet.

Finland

- The Finnish Environment Institute will organize, in collaboration with an expert committee, a seminar dealing with combatting marine oil spills in ice and cold conditions. The seminar will be held in Helsinki on 20-22 November 2001. The language is English. An exhibition will also be organized in connection of the seminar. The Finnish Environment Institute will circulate the call for papers and the invitation to the seminar to all EPPR members in a few weeks.
- Local resources for rescue operations are at the moment mainly scattered in the 432 self-governing municipalities. The municipalities each decide on a threat analysis concerning their respective territories and arrange a corresponding response capacity. In spite of various forms of co-operation, there is a need to improve the efficiency of joint operations. A proposal on collecting resources within a more extensive area, and deploying them more accurately according to actual threats, is under development. Rescue services will remain a municipal activity, but municipalities should reorganise the service within a framework of 21 co-operation districts. The districts will be determined by the Government. As regards the

Province of Lapland, all its municipalities are proposed to be included in the same co-operation district.

- The current number of emergency response centres for fire and rescue services is 36. Their tasks consist of receiving emergency calls and sending equivalent relief units. According to a new law on emergency response centres the units will be renewed in two ways. On one hand the number of centres will be reduced to 13, which means that the Province of Lapland will be served by only one centre. On the other hand the same emergency response centres will take all emergency calls regardless of their purpose. This means that the same response centres, operate the common emergency number 112, support fire and rescue operations, paramedic services, transportation of a patient, the police as well as sea rescue operations. To be able to send the best aid, emergency response centres are equipped with complete information on available resources of all these emergency response functions.
- The cooperation between the rescue services in the Province of Lapland (Finland), the County of Norrbotten (Sweden) and the EMERCOM regional office in Murmansk has been established, partly due to the work within EPPR. The procedures for calling for help across the borders have been simplified. An emergency exercise will be held in the autumn. Finland, Sweden and Russia wants to involve also Norway in the rescue service cooperation.

Norway

- A project with the aim to develop a Russian Barents Sea regional oil spill contingency plan is under way. The project starts with a risk assessment, then developing a contingency plan and finishing with recommendations to improve existing preparedness and response. The project is sponsored by Norway (50.000 US dollars) and carried out by CNIIMF(Gennady Semanov) of St.Petersburg, Russia.
- 53.000 ton ore carrier grounded outside the coast of Tromsø, northern Norway the 26 of December. The ship broke in two pieces. The front part remained floating and was later on towed inside a fjord and prepared for transport to a scrap yard in Spain, while the aft section sunk in very shallow water. The ship was lightened for apx. 1000 ton of bunker oil, highly necessary as the grounding took place in very sensitive area for birds.
- After several years of none activity in the Barents Sea exploration drilling was taking up again last summer. The plan was to drill 4 exploration wells but time allowed one more to be added to the program. Traces of hydrocarbons was found in 3 of the wells which must be considered very promising.

Sweden

- Informed about the illegal oilspills around the island of Gotland and the long term impact these seem to have on the population of the migrating "long tailed ducks" spending their winter there. There are indications of a 50 % reduction of the population in ten years and that around 160 000 birds are killed by the illegal oilspills every winter.

- The Barents Rescue 2001 exercise will take place in September 2001. The Swedish Rescue Service Agency is responsible for the exercise in which authorities from Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland and Russia will take part. A planning conference for the exercise was held in November 2000.
- A dam accident in the County of Norrbotten occurred in the autumn. The accident will lead to a risk assessment of all the dams in the region and a recommendation to the government on better monitoring of dams, including the dams of hydropower plants.

The United States

- A joint contingency plan with Canada has been done covering the five common marine areas.
- Research on the evolution of the marine ecosystem in the Prince William Sound is underway. The goal is to apply new tools to improve research and management information of the marine ecosystems. Among other things acoustic sonars have been used to monitor different types of species.

RAIPON

- The beginning of the oil exploration on the Sakhalin shelf will reduce the water quality in the area, which means that some populations of fish are in danger. This fish is a very important food resource for the indigenous peoples in the area. The peoples therefore want the area to be recognized as a nature protection area, so far without any success. EPPR's help in this issue is very welcome.

Agenda item 5 Ongoing activities of the EPPR working group

5.1 Circumpolar map of resources at risk from oil spills in the Arctic

Mr Michael Carroll from Akvaplan-niva in Norway thoroughly presented the current state of the circumpolar map to the meeting. He also explained how the national materials have been used and what sort of selections have been made to achieve the outcome.

The project has been delayed due to that some of the material have only lately been delivered to Norway and has yet to be converted into the right format. After this the analysis and the production of the maps can be completed.

The meeting discussed the future directions of the project. Questions arising were: how the data on the maps will be updated when the situation changes? Should the maps be built upon with other data, for example from the EPPR risk analysis? Several other Arctic Council working groups have expressed their interest in using the map and adding data to it, should it be developed into a large scale AC database? Also Grid-Arendal has expressed its interest in using the data. Should the delivered national data be available to all users when the final product is out on the web? What about interactive maps? Different opinions on these issues were expressed.

The meeting thanked Norway for the product that in many senses has exceeded the expectations of the group. To finalize the product the meeting decided on the following timetable: a draft final version of the map will be sent out by Norway by the end of March, the countries will then have one month time to make corrections and additions. The finalized product will be distributed on CD and on the web by May 17th 2001.

[The draft final version was sent out on April 11, thus leading to that the finalized product will be distributed at the end of May.]

The meeting welcomed the offer of the Akvaplan-niva to host the product indefinitely, a link from EPPR's own homepage to the Akvaplan-niva will be established. The Map will mainly be in internal use until the end of the year to allow members to get accustomed to it and to reflect over the possible future ways of developing it. Decisions on how to continue the project (update, expansion, connection to other working groups, etc.) will be taken at the next meeting. Norway offered to find out more about the needs and expectations of the other working groups, and the ideas of Grid-Arendal.

5.2 Source control management and prevention strategies for chlorine handling at the Apatit waterworks

The US and Russia reported on the pilot project on source control management. The aim of the pilot project is to develop and test a methodology for reducing the potential for emergencies at facilities. The process includes a facility risk assessment, application of international standards such as ISO 14001, Environmental Management Systems Standards, and recommendations as to what should be done to reduce the risk. The resulting methodology will be applicable to a broad spectrum of Arctic activities. Technical and organizational proposals for wider application of ISO 14001 standards for risk reduction will be submitted to EPPR for review and discussion.

The initial phase of the pilot project has been conducted at Apatity Vodokanal, which provides drinking water to 80 000 people, by treating surface water with chlorine. This pilot phase will be finalized by the end of May and a report will be delivered to EPPR. The future concept of the project is to apply the developed risk assessment methodology at a second facility, with the purpose of refining the methodology.

Representatives of Finland, Sweden and Norway expressed interest in supporting various aspects of work that would follow the finalization of the risk methodology at the Apatity facility. These projects may include: joint contingency planning, exercises, drills and training, damage assessment, harmonization of legal regimes controlling hazardous substances and liability, and application of the risk assessment methodologies in other areas within the Kola peninsula.

The meeting took note of the progress report on the pilot project conducted in Apatit-vodokanal, and is looking forward to the finalization of the initial pilot phase by the end of May and the continuation of the pilot project at a second facility. The meeting asked the lead countries of the project, and other interested countries, to prepare proposals for follow up projects for the consideration of the next EPPR meeting.

5.3 **Development of standardised approach to shoreline cleanup assessment technology (SCAT)**

Canada reported that except for Canada only US had indicated interest in producing a special Arctic SCAT manual, all the other countries were satisfied with their national or other existing manuals. **It was therefore decided that the project should continue as a bilateral project between US and Canada, allowing of course for other countries to participate if they so wish. Canada and US will circulate for comments a draft table of contents for the manual. A writing workshop will then be arranged (scheduled for May 2001) and a final version of the manual circulated for comments among EPPR participants. Canada and US will then seek EPPR endorsement for the final product, which should be ready until the 2002 Ministerial Meeting.**

5.4 **Training course for oil spill response in the Arctic environment**

Norway informed that a new trial to arrange the training course at Svalbard is on the way. The course is planned to be held on May 21st-26th 2001. At the same time with the course the MORICE project will be up at Svalbard, so there should be possibilities to see that equipment being tested as well. Some countries informed that they are going to send participants to the course.

The meeting urged all countries to do their outermost so that there will be enough participants for the course to be arranged. Information on participants should be sent to Norway by March 9th

[On March 16th Norway reported that due to too few participants the training course will not be arranged.]

5.5 **Airborne radiation monitoring**

The US reported on the NEWNET system of airborne radiation monitoring stations in the US. The six stations in Alaska collect data including gamma radiation measurements and make the data available via satellite links and the Internet to interested parties and the public. NEWNET information may be viewed at <http://newnet.lanl.gov>.

The NEWNET system was expanded in October 2000 with the addition of the sixth station in Barrow, Alaska, however, due to an ongoing reevaluation of the entire system, no additional EPPR project proposal on this subject can be delivered at this time.

Four airborne radiation monitoring stations will during the spring and summer be placed around the Bilibino nuclear power plant in Russia. When the stations are in place a bilateral US-Russia emergency exercise will be conducted. US invited interested countries to take part in the exercise. Finland and Norway expressed their interest in participating.

The meeting took note of the US proposal for the other arctic countries to participate in the bilateral US-Russia emergency exercise at the Bilibino nuclear power plant. The meeting is looking forward to receive a report on the outcomes of the exercise.

5.6 Possible new projects

The meeting discussed and brought forth different ideas for new projects. Among other things the Strategic Plan, the AMAP recommendations and the ACAP project proposals were seen as good starting points for new projects. The possible need for broadening the mandate of EPPR, to include also natural disasters like earthquakes, forest fires etc, was also discussed. It was emphasized that the new projects should be circumpolar in scope. More particular ideas for projects that were mentioned were the prevention of accidental oil pollution at the Sakhalin shelf and co-operation on the implementation of the Convention on trans-boundary effects of industrial accidents (ECE-convention).

[In the beginning of May Russia informed that they intend to prepare a proposal for a new project named "Development of the System of Interstate Interaction for Prevention of Transboundary Accidents and Elimination of Consequences of Major Accidents and Disasters with Hazardous Materials Releases in the Arctic Region among Arctic Council Member Countries". The proposal will be sent out in May 2001.]

Finland offered to conduct a survey on past major accidents in the Arctic. This survey can then be used as a platform for further discussions concerning the EPPR mandate.

The meeting decided that the chair and secretary prepare a "shopping list" of possible new projects based on the proposals and comments given at the meeting by the Arctic countries and Permanent Participants. The "shopping list" should then be circulated for comments and indications of possible interest for lead country responsibility during the spring. This should then lead to that possible new project proposals can be endorsed at the next EPPR meeting or by the Ministers in 2002, if the proposals are outside the present EPPR mandate.

The meeting welcomed Finland offer to conduct a survey on past major accidents in the Arctic.

Agenda item 6 Other activities of EPPR

6.1 The Operating Guidelines for the EPPR

The draft operating guidelines prepared by the chair and the secretary were discussed. The main comments concerned the inclusion or exclusion of the quoting of the Arctic Council Rules of Procedure. It was emphasized that the issue of having references to the rules of procedure included in the operating guidelines was common to all working groups and that it should be discussed at the WG chair meeting in April and decided by the SAOs.

After some new drafting in a smaller group **the meeting adopted the Operating Guidelines for EPPR (Annex 4).**

6.2 EPPR website & The Arctic Guide

The secretary informed that Finland had made an agreement with the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi to host the EPPR webpage. The new webaddress is <http://eppr.arctic-council.org> and this address will not change even if the hosting organization changes in the future. The actual transfer of the pages from the Fairbanks University to the Arctic Centre will be in late February 2001.

The participants were asked to send their suggestions on how to improve the website, and there corrections to the Arctic Guide to the secretary by March 20th . The secretary will then see to that the corrections are done at the website. Further discussion on how to develop the website will be held at the next meeting.

6.3 EPPR brochure

The secretary distributed the new EPPR brochure, which was welcomed by the participants. **Additional postal addresses should be given to the secretary within one week if the countries do not want all of their brochures to be delivered to the head of delegation.**

6.4 Work plan for 2001-2002

The draft work plan prepared by the chair and the secretary was discussed. Based on the comments at the meeting it was decided that a more detailed work plan should be prepared and that it should be part of the meeting report (Annex 5), thus giving the meeting participants time to go through it and make additions and corrections if needed.

Agenda item 7 Any other business

Canada presented the information sheet telling about the use of the Field Guide. Some comments were given at the meeting and **further comments and changes should be sent to Canada by March 20th**. About 150 copies of the Field Guide is still available and Canada is ready to print more when needed.

Agenda item 8 Next meeting

US invited to the 2002 meeting which will be held in Cordova, Alaska, US in April or May. The precise date will be settled when it is known when the SAO meeting, which is also scheduled for April 2002 is going to be.

Agenda item 9 Record of decisions and end of meeting

The record of decisions was discussed and approved by the meeting, with some small changes (see bolded texts above).

The Chair thanked the participants for a fruitful meeting and most of all Sweden for the excellent hosting and wished all a safe trip home.