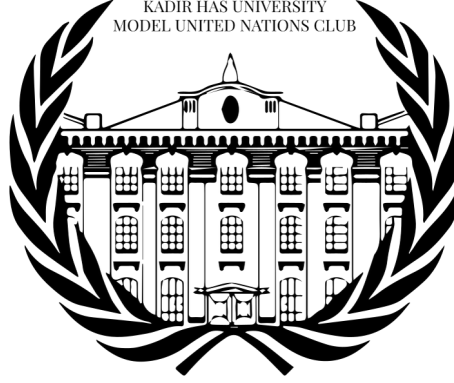


# HASMUN



# UNGA

## STUDY GUIDE

### PREVENTING MILITARIZATION OF THE ARCTIC AND ENSURING FAIR RESOURCE SHARING

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## *Letter from the Secretary-General*

Dear Delegates,

Welcome to HASMUN 2025 — a journey that goes far beyond a typical Model United Nations conference.

This year, we invite you to become part of an experience built on diplomacy, dialogue, and the determination to create change. HASMUN has long stood as a platform for driven individuals to challenge perspectives, develop leadership, and speak for the world they envision. In every committee room, in every debate, we believe your voice has the power to shape not only resolutions, but real ideas for the future.

Whether this is your first MUN or one of many, we encourage you to approach each session with openness, curiosity, and commitment. The friendships you form, the ideas you exchange, and the challenges you overcome will stay with you long after the final gavel falls.

On behalf of the entire Secretariat, we are thrilled to have you with us. Prepare to question, to collaborate, and to grow.

We look forward to meeting you soon.

Warm regards,  
Nazrin Sadigova  
Secretary-General  
HASMUN 2025

### ***Letter from the Board***

Dear Delegates,

We, as the Board of UNGA, are honored to welcome you all to HASTRAIN'25, and are thrilled to have you in the committee. As the Board of the committee, we extend our warmest greetings to all delegates who are preparing to contribute to the discussions and solutions in this committee.

Our agenda item, “Preventing Militarization of the Arctic and Ensuring Fair Resource Sharing” is of high significance. The Arctic, even though it seems far away and unreachable to us, holds strong political importance and both impacts and is impacted by the environmental changes our world is going through. We hope that this committee and the discussions you have in these three days cause you to reflect on the importance of preventing militarizations of the region and the gravity of resource extraction and sharing holds.

We would like to express our utmost gratitude to our Secretary-General Nazrin Sadigova and Director-General Alper Gültekin Dikmen for their efforts in this conference, and for entrusting us with bringing this committee to life. We also thank our esteemed Deputy Secretary General Samet Aba and our Executive Assistant Tunahan Söyleyici for their help throughout the preparation process. It is with their guidance and hard work that this conference and committee are possible.

We are confident that your discussions, solutions, and hard work will enrich the committee and leave you with more insight than you arrived with. We hope that this guide is both enlightening and inspiring for you, and satisfies your need for information. With respect, admiration, and excitement, we eagerly look forward to witnessing your contributions, intellect, and energy in the coming days. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us through our emails, [mayagencdis@gmail.com](mailto:mayagencdis@gmail.com) & [rusenbaranalts@gmail.com](mailto:rusenbaranalts@gmail.com) for any questions regarding the guide or committee.

With our best regards,

Maya Gençdiş, Ruşen Baran Alataş, and Elif İbicioğlu



## ***I. Introduction to the Committee***

The Sixth Committee, also known as the Legal Committee, is the primary forum for the consideration of legal questions in the General Assembly. All of the United Nations Member States are entitled to representation on the Sixth Committee as one of the main committees of the General Assembly.

It deals primarily with legal matters and is the primary forum for the consideration of international law and other legal matters concerning the United Nations. Issues allocated to the Sixth Committee include the promotion of justice and international law, accountability and internal UN justice matters, drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism. Counter-terrorism issues are also dealt with by other UN bodies, not all of which report to the GA.

## ***II. Introduction to the Agenda Item***

The Arctic is the polar region of the Earth that surrounds the North Pole. While often associated with beautiful landscapes and wildlife, it is a strategically important area shaped by environmental, political, economic, and military forces. While historically it has always been a point of conflict, with its rapid change in landscape due to global warming, these tensions have heightened. With the ice cover in the area retreating, both Arctic and non-Arctic states have been expanding their economic, scientific, and military activity in the region.

In 2009, global interest in the Arctic surged when the US Geological Survey estimated the Arctic held 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and 30 percent of the world's natural gas. With climate change making previously inaccessible areas accessible, the interest has heightened. This increased activity raises significant concerns about environmental degradation, potential militarization, and the possibility that powerful states may exploit the region at the expense of Indigenous communities who have lived there for centuries. The challenge facing the international community is to manage the changing landscape of the Arctic in a way that prevents conflict, ensures environmentally safe and fair resource extraction, and in a way that respects the Indigenous population of the region.

### ***III. Preventing the Militarization of the Arctic***

#### ***A. Historical Background***

##### ***1. World War 2 Era***

Prior to World War 2 the Arctic was only lightly militarized. The active states mainly aimed to explore the area. By the beginning of WW2 the strategic potential of the Arctic was exploited by some states. Both sea and air routes between Allied ports and Soviet ports were shorter when they ran through northern waters. Initial projects were the Arctic Convoys: after Operation Barbarossa, the invasion of the Soviet Union even though there was a non-aggression treaty signed; the allies had mounted aid efforts through the Arctic. The supplies were carried by Merchant Navy which escorted by warships and also supported air cover. The convoys were subject to persistent threats from German U-Boats. The journey was very dangerous, the loss rate for allied ships was higher than on many allied convoy series. With constant risk of enemy attack the weather conditions were atrocious. Enormous waves were landing on board and freeze with that cold conditions. De-icing the ships were necessary since the weight would build up would lead the ships to sink and the life expectancy in the cold waters of Arctic were roughly 5 minutes. At the end of the war over 100 Merchant vessels were lost. It was similarly dangerous for the Germans that trying to prevent the convoys reaching Russia. Their surface vessels and aircrafts had to deal with same threats from violent weather. The Germans used the advantage of their submarines that provided life expectancy up to few months but at the end there were over 30 U-Boats sunk in the Arctic.

Despite the dangers of the route, roughly 4 million tons of supplies were delivered at the end of the war. That included aircrafts, tanks, trucks, fuel, food and much more. So it can be said that the Arctic Convoy made an important political statement of support and proved the strategic importance of the Arctic.

##### ***2. Cold War Era***

During the Cold War, the Arctic became one of the most important fronts between the Soviet Union and the United States. The militarization process had two phased trajectories. In early Cold War, the region was the central arena of nuclear deterrence due to its flight routes and missile paths crossing the North Pole. This geographical status led both parties to establish an extensive early warning and surveillance infrastructures and develop long range aviation bases, bomb fleets and experimental missile systems suitable for the environment of the polar circle. By



late Cold War the militarization in the region became more structured, technologically more advanced and politically normalized. Unlike the United States, the Soviet Union concentrated on consolidation of existing bases, integrating space based reconnaissance, advanced sonar systems, under ice submarine operations and more survivable second strike capabilities into its broader Arctic strategy. The Soviets Bastion Strategy emerged during this period, designating the Barents and Kara Seas as heavily defended zones so their ballistic missile submarines can operate safely protected from NATO forces. This defensive offensive posture turned the Arctic into a highly controlled military space dominated by the Northern Fleet. By the end of the Cold War, the Arctic hosted one of the densest concentrations of nuclear deterrence assets in the world and the Soviet Union had fully institutionalized the region as a permanent pillar of its strategic doctrine, a legacy that would profoundly shape Russia's approach to the Arctic after 1991.

### ***3. Post Cold War and Modern Era***

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Arctic shifted from a heavily militarized Cold War frontier to a region focused on cooperation, environmental protection and legal governance. By the 1990s most of the Arctic states reduced their military presence and new multilateral initiatives emerged. The Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (1991) initiated the coordinated environmental monitoring and pollution control while the establishment of the Arctic Council (1996) institutionalized dialogue between the Arctic states and the Indigenous groups in order to emphasize sustainable development where used to be military competition.

At the same time climate change started to become a problem. With the sea ice melting new navigation routes opened and that increased access to the offshore resources, therefore the necessity of legal frameworks increased. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) became the center mechanism of resolving overlapping claims to continental shelves and maritime boundaries. Throughout the 2000s, Arctic states filed scientific submissions for extension of continental shelf claims, which shows us that with the new policies there is a shift toward rule based competition rather than open confrontation.

However the decline in the military activities were not permanent as Russia rebuilt and modernized its military infrastructure in northern regions, upgraded its Northern Fleet and expanded their both air and coastal defences. Other Arctic states also had strengthened surveillance, patrol and search&rescue capabilities. By the 2010s the region became a hybrid

space cooperative through institutions such as the Arctic Council but increasingly shaped by strategic rivalry, resource interest and environmental risks.

### ***B. Current Trends in Militarization***

The Arctic is facing rapid strategic transformations primarily driven by the consequences of climate change. The thick sea ice that opens through the region creates new routes and states perceive new economic opportunities and new strategic avenues as shorter shipping routes like the Northern Sea Route. Simultaneously states also responded to the issue by increasing military posture, infrastructure and operations in the High North.

#### ***1. Emerging Trends in Arctic Militarization***

Recent studies highlight the significant acceleration in the militarization of the Arctic, driven by climate induced accessibility, geopolitical rivalry and strategic recalculations made by major powers. As mentioned before, the melting sea ice has opened new routes and resource frontiers which prompts both Arctic and non-Arctic states to expand military infrastructure, enhance operational preparedness and revise their strategies towards the north. Russia leads this trend by their extensive base modernization, new air defences and multilayered military posture along the northern sea route. As a response to Russian activities the United States and NATO have renewed their cold weather capabilities, increased joint exercises and begun interrogating the Arctic more explicitly into grand strategy considerations. Meanwhile, dual-use infrastructure such as ports, satellite networks, and communication technologies are becoming more strategically sensitive as China and other external actors have increased their economic presence to carry out military implications.

#### ***2. Potential Consequences of Continued Militarization***

By observing the current trajectories of the actions made in the Arctic region, it can be said that the Arctic could face multiple destabilizing outcomes. Firstly, increased military density raises the likelihood of accidents, miscalculated encounters or unintentional escalation in an environment where communication is difficult and conditions are critically harsh. Even a small leakage of fuel could affect the environment in such a way that could lead to unexpected consequences. Secondly reciprocal force build ups risks creating a regional arms race, normalizing the presence of advanced weapons systems, surveillance networks and hardened basing that leads to long-term confrontations. Thirdly these tensions threaten to undermine cooperative institutions such as the Arctic Council and weaken scientific environmental and



emergency response frameworks that have long supported regional stability. Finally militarization increases pressure on the fragile ecosystems and Indigenous communities whose livelihoods are directly affected by the environmental disruption and restricted access to their traditional lands.

### ***3. Why Preventing Militarization Matters***

Preventing further militarization is essential not only for regional peace but also for the global security, environmental protection and integrity of international governance on the Earth's Poles. The Arctic is especially sensitive due to its geography compressing space among great powers, its climate magnifies environmental harm and its governance system depends heavily on cooperation and mutual restraint. By limiting military escalation states can preserve the Arctic as a region where diplomacy, science and environmental management outweighs competition. This restraint reduces the risk of miscalculation, accidental encounters and unintended escalation scenarios made more dangerous by the harsh climate, limited visibility and communication gaps. It also keeps open military to military channels that are crucial for the deconfliction and crisis management between US, Russia and the other Arctic actors. Another equally important thing is the protection of the cooperative mechanisms that has historically distinguished the Arctic from other geopolitical hotspots: a demilitarized or low tensioned Arctic enables the continuation of the scientific collaboration, environmental monitoring programs and crossborder research initiatives that generates vital knowledge about

climate change, melting ice and ecosystem shifts. These cooperative structures including but not limited to: search&rescue agreements, fisheries management frameworks and pollution response mechanisms function best when the region is not dominated by strategic rivalry or military posturing.

Prevention of the Arctic arms race also carries profound economic and social benefits. Military buildups diverts significant financial and logistical resources away from urgent climate adaptation measures, sustainable development and improvement of civilian infrastructure in remote Arctic communities. Indigenous populations which are already disproportionately affected by climate change face increasing environmental degradation, restrictions on land use and potential displacement when military operations expand. Keeping the Arctic peaceful ensures that policy priorities remain centered on resilience, ecological protection and community wellbeing rather than on deterrence strategies and weapons procurement.

Ultimately deescalation, strategic transparency and strengthened governance institutions are necessary to prevent the Arctic from becoming a new theatre of great power confrontation. A militarized Arctic would not only heighten global tensions but also undermine the region's role as the barometer of planetary climate health, compromising both regional stability and international security. Maintaining the Arctic as a zone of cooperation rather than competition is therefore a global imperative.

### ***C. Legal and Political Challenges***

The Arctic is going through rapid environmental transformation and this has intensified legal and political challenges among Arctic and non-Arctic states. A main issue is the fragmented legal framework that is governing the region. Even though the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) provides the basic rules for the maritime zones and continental shelf claims, the unexpected speed of the Arctic ice melting has created new ocean spaces and navigational routes that UNCLOS did not anticipate. This gap complicates the delimitation of extended continental shelves and fuels overlapping claims especially among Russia, Canada and Denmark over the Lomonosov Ridge. Scholars emphasize that the Arctic is not a legal vacuum but yet existing norms often prove insufficient for the emerging geopolitical realities.

One of the other major issues lies on balancing sovereignty interests with cooperative governance. Arctic states assert jurisdiction over newly accessible resources, fisheries and shipping lanes but at the same time trying to maintain regional stability. The Arctic Council as the primary forum for the circumpolar cooperation has promoted environmental protection and sustainable development but lacks binding authority and excludes military security from its mandate. This is limiting its ability to address strategic tensions and enforce compliance even though working groups have produced influential guidelines on scientific cooperation, search&rescue, and pollution prevention.

Environmental protection further complicates the political landscape. The melting in the Arctic expands economic opportunities such as hydrocarbon extraction and trans-Arctic shipping but also intensifies ecological risk and raises Indigenous rights concerns. According to Quill  rou et al. the region's fragility makes the current governance model vulnerable to jurisdictional standards across states. Simultaneously Indigenous communities face uncertainties about how national and international legal systems will safeguard their cultural, territorial and subsistence rights in a rapidly changing environment.



Overall the Arctic's legal and political challenges stem from the interplay among climate change, state competition, insufficiently adapted framework and limited institutional authority. While cooperative mechanisms like the Arctic Council help manage dialogue, long term stability depends on updating legal instruments, clarifying jurisdictional claims and integrating Indigenous perspectives into governance.

#### ***IV. Ensuring Fair Resource Sharing***

##### ***A. Historical Background***

The importance of arctic regions significantly increased in recent years in a global geopolitical way. For many years the arctic area was inaccessible due to the climate conditions such as thick ice layers. Nowadays the arctic region has become a rapidly changing geography because of climate change. The melting of glaciers and retreat of glaciers have revealed previously inaccessible resources and caused them to appear.

For the reasons mentioned; the Arctic region has become a very strategic area and has drawn attention and created discussions such as resource sharing. Reserves of the arctic regions offer economic opportunities especially for Arctic states but also this situation causes geopolitical competition between them.

Enquiries show that The Arctic's geography contains undiscovered resources with an important and significant portion of oil and gas reserves. There are some essential elements such as zinc, nickel and copper therewith essential for renewable energy development and modern technologies.

Furthermore the growing potential of these undiscovered resources attract companies' attention around the world, not only companies from Arctic States.

##### ***1. Oil, Gas, and Mineral Reserves***

The Arctic region is recognized with its not fully explored natural energy and mineral resources. There are oil and natural gas reserves in glaciated and under water areas.

The essential elements and minerals which are important for development of renewable energy and modern technologies have attracted global powers around the world in order to undertake some projects and invest in the mentioned region.

Arctic states and other global powers aim to do research about the region and planning projects in order to explore and use these reserves because it is believed that these resources would be useful in the future. It is also believed that some parts of the Arctic region contains uranium and other strategic and rare metals which makes the region more important for development of modern technology and improvement of industry.

However, the weather conditions are also not suitable for extracting these resources and makes it difficult. According to these factors it is really risky and expensive for working on that area, additionally the Arctic Region is environmentally fragile. For these reasons companies and governments who want to reach these resources must be very careful to not harm the region.

## ***2. Melting Ice and Extraction Opportunities***

Especially in recent years global warming has caused many climate changes, an example of this is The Arctic Region. This global change has shifted the Arctic Region in a significant way due to these environmental changes. As a result of global warming the ice in Arctic regions started to melt earlier and return later in winter seasons. The thick ice makes it harder to work on those regions in order to extract resources and makes it really expensive to reach the resources.

Depending on the warming on the weather the ice is getting thinner compared to the normal conditions and the companies using that as an opportunity or an advantage. With thinner ice layers it is more easy for them to work on that area and extract the resources such as oil and gas. Consequently melting ice reduces many difficulty for the companies or other states that wants to use undiscovered resources for their projects.

## ***3. Indigenous Communities' Resource Dependence***

The Arctic region has indigenous communities including Saami, Nenets, Evenki, Chukchi, Khanti and Inuit these communities have lived in this region through long ages and generations. This indigenous communities developed their lifestyles and adapted themselves to Arctic's challenging weather and climate conditions.



Their subsistence practices, sources of income, cultures and other social connections are shaped and connected to the Arctic's extreme conditions.

Environmental and climate changes have an immediate impact on indigenous communities, indigenous people and their lives. For the reason for environmental changes The Arctic region is inclined to be concerning such as unpredictable storms. These disruptions cause problems which affect the community especially in an economic way.

Consequently the interest for the Arctic Region is rising day by day from other states and climate change causes another difficulty. Global powers and other companies are waiting for an opportunity in order to use mineral, gas and oil reserves for their projects where indigenous communities use for their activities.

## ***B. Legal Framework Regarding Resources***

### ***1. United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)***

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is an international treaty that establishes a legal framework for all marine and maritime activities that was signed in 1982 and has been in effect since 1994. According to UNCLOS, the five polar states bordering the Arctic Ocean have the right to establish a territorial sea up to a limit of twelve nautical miles and an exclusive economic zone of up to 200 nautical miles. These five states are The Kingdom of Denmark, Norway, The Russian Federation and the United States of America.

One important part of UNCLOS that is highly relevant for the Arctic is Part V, titled "Exclusive Economic Zone" (referred to as EEZ). According to UNCLOS, "The exclusive economic zone is an area beyond and adjacent to the territorial sea, subject to the specific legal regime established in this Part, under which the rights and jurisdiction of the coastal State and the rights and freedoms of other States are governed by the relevant provisions of this Convention." This means that a state has sovereign rights over natural resources, oil, gas, and minerals, while still allowing freedom of navigation for other states.

In the Arctic, EEZs have been highly relevant because with global warming, the retreating ice is opening up new areas for source extraction and exploration. The aforementioned five states claim

that an EEZ gives them priority over these newfound resources. However, the Arctic Ocean contains areas beyond EEZs, as shown in the image provided. These areas are referred to as “high seas,” in which resources are shared internationally.

Moreover, the UNCLOS contains regulations regarding environmental protection under Part XII, titled, “Protection and Preservation of the Marine Environment.” Article 193 states that “States have the sovereign right to exploit their natural resources pursuant to their environmental policies and in accordance with their duty to protect and preserve the marine environment.” The convention goes on to say that all states must take all necessary measures to ensure their activities do not cause pollution, notify other States in the case that they notice pollution or harm in the area, and collaborate to prevent and minimize the damage.

This Part is particularly important for the Arctic as the fragile environment and Indigenous lives are vulnerable to oil, gas, mining, and shipping activities.

## ***2. Ilulissat Declaration***

The Ilulissat Declaration was signed after the Arctic Ocean Conference held in Ilulissat, Greenland, 27-29 May 2008. The five coastal states bordering on the Arctic Ocean met at the political level at the invitation of the Danish Minister for Foreign Affairs. The declaration highlights the environmental changes that the Arctic is going through, and serves as a call to action. Some significant portions of the declaration are as follows, important expression bolded:

1. The Arctic Ocean stands at the threshold of significant changes. ***Climate change and the melting of ice have a potential to impact on vulnerable ecosystems, the livelihoods of local inhabitants and indigenous communities, and the potential exploitation of natural resources.***
2. The Arctic Ocean is a unique ecosystem, which the five coastal states have a stewardship role in protecting. ***Experience has shown how shipping disasters and subsequent pollution of the marine environment may cause irreversible disturbance of the ecological balance and major harm to the livelihoods of local inhabitants and indigenous communities.*** We will take steps in accordance with international law both nationally and in cooperation among the five states and other interested parties to ensure the protection and preservation of the fragile marine environment of the Arctic Ocean. In



this regard *we intend to work together including through the International Maritime Organization to strengthen existing measures and develop new measures to improve the safety of maritime navigation and prevent or reduce the risk of ship-based pollution in the Arctic Ocean.*

3. *The increased use of Arctic waters for tourism, shipping, research and resource development also increases the risk of accidents* and therefore the need to further strengthen search and rescue capabilities and capacity around the Arctic Ocean to ensure an appropriate response from states to any accident. *Cooperation, including on the sharing of information, is a prerequisite for addressing these challenges.* We will work to promote safety of life at sea in the Arctic Ocean, including through bilateral and multilateral arrangements between or among relevant states.

### ***3. Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic***

The Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response in the Arctic was signed in Kiruna, Sweden in 2013 by all eight Arctic States. The agreement has the objective of strengthening “cooperation, coordination and mutual assistance among the Parties (Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden, United States of America) on oil pollution preparedness and response in the Arctic in order to protect the marine environment from pollution by oil” (Article 1).

This agreement is one that focuses on the pollution that is caused by the extraction or shipment (where “ship” means a vessel of any type) of the resources. In summary, the agreement sets areas for each Party as follows:

1. For Canada, marine areas above 60 degrees North;
2. For Denmark, marine areas above the southern limit of the Greenland exclusive economic zone and the Faroese fisheries zone;
3. For Finland, marine areas above 63 degrees 30 minutes North;
4. For Iceland, marine areas above the southern limit of the exclusive economic zone of Iceland;
5. For Norway, marine areas above the Arctic Circle;

6. For The Russian Federation, marine areas above the coastlines of the White Sea, the Barents Sea, the Kara Sea, the Laptev Sea, the East Siberian Sea and the Chukchi Sea, and the mouths of the rivers flowing into these seas seaward of the baselines from which the breadth of the territorial sea is measured;
7. For Sweden, marine areas above 63 degrees 30 minutes North;
8. For The United States of America, marine areas seaward of the coastal baseline from the border between the United States and Canada at the Beaufort Sea along the north side of the mainland of Alaska to the Aleutian Islands, above 24 nautical miles south of the Aleutian Islands, and, in the Bering Sea, east of the limits of the exclusive economic zone of the United States.

The agreement requires states to respond promptly and effectively to oil pollution incidents, establish pre-positioned oil spill combating equipment, a program exercise for oil pollution responses, and plans and mechanisms. It also states that if the oil pollution severity justifies doing so, other Parties should be notified and the other Parties should cooperate.

In conclusion, this agreement reinforces and details UNCLOS' articles on pollution and specifies them to oil pollution. This agreement is significant to the combat against pollution in the Arctic and the collaboration of the Arctic states.

#### ***4. Arctic Council Declarations***

The Arctic Council Declarations are formal statements issued at the conclusion of each Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, which is the leading intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination, and interaction among Arctic states and Indigenous communities.

The Arctic Council Declarations are the statements issued at the conclusion of each Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council, which is the intergovernmental forum that promotes cooperation, coordination, and interaction among the Arctic States and Indigenous communities. While these declarations are not binding, they carry significant political weight and work to establish the council's commitments and agreements. Some significant declarations and their details are as follows:



1. The Ottawa Declaration, 1996, marked the establishment of the Arctic Council. The Ottawa Declaration established the Arctic Council as a high-level forum for discussing and addressing issues related to sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic region.

The declaration states that one of the key objectives of the Arctic Council is to promote environmental protection and sustainable development in the Arctic region. The Ottawa Declaration also emphasizes the importance of working in partnership with the indigenous peoples of the Arctic region.

2. The Iqaluit Declaration, 1998, is the first ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council. It approved the membership of the Aleut International Association and welcomed the observers of the Arctic Council. Its main focuses are sustainable development and environmental protection, while reiterating the objectives of the council.
3. The Salekhard Declaration (2006) notes the continued commitment of the Arctic States to promoting sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic region. It takes into account the environmental concerns and challenges associated with environmental change. It recognizes the importance of the protection of the Arctic marine environment and takes action on the monitoring and assessment of the Arctic.
4. The Kiruna Declaration (2013) focuses on the importance of sustainable use of resources, economic development and environmental protection, highlighting that the Arctic is an inhabited region with diverse economies, cultures and societies. The declaration acknowledges the rights of the indigenous people and the interests of all Arctic inhabitants. An important remark in the declaration is that “a fundamental strength of the Council is the unique role played by Arctic indigenous peoples.” The declaration has four main points, which are: (1) Improving Economic and Social Conditions, (2) Acting on Climate Change, (3) Protecting the Arctic Environment, and (4) Strengthening the Arctic Council. This declaration established Task Forces for these topics.

5. The Reykjavík Declaration (2021) is important for its underscoring of the environmental changes the Arctic is going through and the dangers of it. The declaration notes that “for the past 50 years the Arctic has warmed at a rate three times the global average with harmful effects on the environment, biodiversity, society and infrastructure.” It also recognizes “the deposition of black carbon in the Arctic accelerates the melting of snow

and ice, intensifying the adverse effects of climate change.” The document acknowledges that Arctic Indigenous People contribute the least to climate change while getting affected the most. The declaration calls for a stronger Arctic Council, and approves of several plans to battle the environmental harm the Arctic is facing. The Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030 was adapted during this meeting.

6. The Romssa-Tromsø Statement (2025) is the most recent declaration made by the Arctic Council on their fourteenth meeting. This declaration doesn't differ from previous declarations. It reiterates the importance of addressing social and environmental issues in the Arctic while emphasizing the importance of sustainable economic development, the Council's commitment to advancing prevention, preparedness and response to environmental emergencies.

The declarations stress the importance of the environmental protection of the Arctic heavily, as the severe changes the region go through are both the result and (part of) the cause for increased militarization and resource extraction.

#### ***5. Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030***

The Arctic Council Strategic Plan 2021 to 2030 is the first long-term strategy of the Arctic Council, adapted as part of the Reykjavik Declaration in 2021. It starts with the vision for the Arctic and the Arctic Council in 2030, stating that the Council envisions the Arctic to remain “a region of peace, stability and constructive cooperation.” It states that the Arctic Council will, in summary, work towards:

1. Monitoring, assessing and highlighting the impacts of climate change in the Arctic to encourage compliance with the Paris Agreement,
2. Promoting pollution prevention, monitoring, assessing, the conservation and protection of Arctic biodiversity and ecosystems,
3. Promoting enhanced actions, within and beyond the Arctic, to reduce greenhouse gases and short-lived climate pollutants in the Arctic environment, including through cooperation on reduction of emissions of black carbon and methane,
4. Strengthening cooperation related to Arctic marine and coastal areas,
5. Strengthening cooperation that improves the health, safety and long-term well being of Arctic inhabitants.



The Plan strengthens the Permanent Participants' capacities to facilitate their full and effective participation in Arctic Council activities. This plan is significant because, as aforementioned, it is the first long-term strategy of the Council and its implementation is continuously stressed in the declarations that follow it.

### ***C. Challenges in Ensuring Fair Resource Sharing***

In the Arctic region there are some challenges and difficulties while ensuring fair resource sharing between states, companies and indigenous communities. As mentioned the region has vulnerable resources such as oil, gas and minerals that would bring great opportunities to willing communities who want to use these resources.

In some Arctic areas there are legal movements and clear legal rights over the region, for example in Canada Canadian Arctic Archipelago, Hudson Bay the resources in these places are protected in a legal way but there is also some disagreements about Lincoln Sea, Barents Sea, Lomonosov Ridge and Mendeleev Ridge caused by unclear borders and demanding rights for resources such as oil and gas. These are the reasons that makes difficult to ensure fair resource sharing.

The environmental and geographical shapes is also one of important factors that makes the region more challenging to work on. As is known the Arctic Region is very fragile because of this reason all of the communities or companies must be careful while discovering and using natural resources in order to not harm the region environmentally and protect the habitat.

There are some other economical factors that hinder fair resource sharing. Countries with more economic opportunities and better technologies would be more advantageous for reaching the resources with spending less time and with less effort. This situation is prone to ensure unfair resource sharing and allow discussions, disagreements.

## ***V. Bloc Positions***

### ***A. Arctic States***

For the arctic states in the arctic region, there is a distinction between the Arctic Five and Arctic Eight. This two groups are separated according to their geographical location. The Arctic Five is including five states that have direct access to sea to the Arctic Ocean. These countries include

specifically; Canada, United States of America (USA), Russia, Norway and Denmark. The countries mentioned, are trying to protect their resource and other rights with legal movements and treaties.

The group of Arctic Eight includes states that have territory directly in the place of the Arctic Region with no direct access to the Arctic Ocean. This situation adds 3 more countries which is; Sweden, Finland and Iceland.

### ***1. Canada***

The government of Canada believes that the Arctic Region is really important for their security, environment also aware of the potential and importance for its strategy. The area of northern territories is accepted as really valuable because of its rich natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals and rare elements. Canada supports and believes that these sources should be shared in a fair way between the arctic states, indigenous communities and the groups who are doing scientific researches and environmental studies in order to benefit from the region.

The country gives support to frameworks and legal actions such as; The Arctic Council, United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Indigenous Engagement Frameworks and Multilateral Environmental Agreements in order to ensure fair resource sharing, to guarantee prioritizing not harming the region environmentally and not harming the climate.

For militarization; the government focuses on, aims to protect the country and not supporting militarization in order to make attacks on other states.

### ***2. Denmark***

The Kingdom of Denmark is included in the Arctic States and Arctic Five because of its direct access to the Arctic Ocean from Greenland and this leads to a direct presence in the territorial area of the Arctic Region. The country is protecting the safety of the region and aware of the importance of resources and trying to encourage countries to follow international rules and laws in order to ensure fair resource sharing, peaceful usage of natural resources and protecting the environment.

Denmark is trying to ensure protection of these topics with legal frameworks and actions such as; United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Arctic Council, Ilulissat Declaration (2008) and Kingdom of The Denmark Strategy for the Arctic. Denmark cares and



taking actions for protect the environment,habitat and ecosystem of the region,development and safer usage of resources such as oil,gas and minerals,ensuring protection of rights for its indigenous communities and supporting scientific research on the region.The country believes that increased militarization would not be beneficial for the region supports military enough to be necessary ,only as much as needed and against to use them to make an attack.

### ***3. Norway***

The Kingdom of Norway is one of the most important arctic states because of its extensive territories in the northern side of the region. Its large area includes valuable resources and the government is aware of the importance in economic and strategic ways.

Their position on militarization shows that they support defensive military forces, want to stay low tension and keep their security safe, prevent militarization from making an attack.Norway is working with other countries,states in order to prevent conflicts over resources.The country also cares about indigenous communities and protect environment from any possible harm.

In order to protect the rights for resources, clarify boundaries to prevent disagreements about resource sharing and ensure protection on environment there is legal movements that Norway took such as; following the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), implementation of the Svalbard Treaty (1920), Barents Sea Agreement and participating in Arctic Council Agreements

### ***4. Russia***

The government of the Russian Federation is fully aware of the importance for national,economical,security and strategic ways. Since the country has the largest territories in the Arctic Region these things play a vital role for the country.Russia believes that they have legal rights over the region and defending these rights.

Unlike some other countries, the Russian Federation is supporting the presence of militarization strongly and supporting that it is necessary for countries national security,sovereignty and to ensure protection of natural resources.

To recognize rights over the region in a legal way, Russia accepted the United Nations Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf (UNCLCS) for Lomonosov and Mendeleev Ridges. With the acceptance of the Arctic Development Strategy (2020) ensured prioritizing

Russian economic developments, strategic plans and security in the Arctic Region. Usage of strict regulations of the Northern Sea Route (NSR) for ensuring safe transportation of natural resources.

In summary, fundamental and main reasons for these legal steps are the protection of sovereignty, access to natural resources (oil, gas and minerals) and achieving the goals for economy and strategy fields.

### ***5. United States of America***

The United States of America is describing the Arctic region with its reasons for security, economy and environment. The United States has small seaboard when compared to Russia or Canada but they control Alaska and the other waters next to that region which includes vulnerable and rich oil, gas and mineral resources.

The United States is defending their rights over oil and gas reserves, mineral resources.

In order to make legal the claims made for the resources the country supports and follows legal actions such as; scientific mapping and data collection studies with the support of agencies like National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and United States Geological Survey (USGS), participating in agreements with Arctic Council, Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), Outer Continental Shelf Lands Act (OCSLA)

Their presence in the Arctic Region aims to be defensive not to be aggressive, protecting national sovereignty and ensuring resource protection. To keep the region safe The United States is using ships, radars for watching the seas and providing safety. The government is also planning practices, making cooperation with other states like Canada, Norway and Denmark to be ready when an emergency problem occurs.

### ***6. Finland***

The Republic of Finland does not have direct access to the Arctic Ocean but has valuable territories in the Arctic Region. Finland firmly believes in the significant importance of environmental protection, stability of the nation, supports cooperations between nations and fair sharing of the resources. As a Nordic country and Arctic State government making collaborations with other aligned countries and preventing militarization.



Finland is following United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) in a very strict way, Environmental Protection and Nature Conservation Acts, strategy plans, as a founding member of Arctic Council accepting 3 agreements with a great validity; Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement (2011), Agreement on Cooperation on Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response (2013) and Agreement on Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (2017). In a summary Finland is a country that contributes to legal actions and frameworks in order to ensure protection of environment and ecosystem of the region, promote scientific researches and studies, sustainable usage and control of economy and to defend the rights of indigenous communities.

The Government is supporting militarization to stay in low tensions and a peaceful region for everyone. They believe that more than enough military opportunity increases the risk of any possible conflict, harms connections and cooperations between states. Finland is also aware of the risk that environment would be in danger when a conflict occurs. Their goal is ensuring security of Arctic Region and be defensive.

### ***7. Iceland***

Iceland is an Arctic State that fosters communication among Arctic nations. The country strongly supports peaceful connections, fair and equal sharing of resources and protection of the environment. As a founding member of Arctic Council they are supporting all of the framework which supports environment, science and security such as; Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement (2011), Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response Agreement (2013), Agreement on Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (2017), United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, membership of North-East Atlantic Fisheries Commission (NEAFC), Icelandic Act on Marine and Coastal Zone Management, Iceland Arctic Policy in order to ensure environmental protection to not harm the ecological balance because it would affect the economic activities directly, supporting the scientific researches that made in the Arctic Regions.

For the topic of militarization the government of Iceland is completely against militarization and they do not have an army. Iceland supports that the Arctic Region should stay like an area that

promotes peaceful partnerships between nations and believes that when military activities increase that would also increase the possible conflicts or disagreements and tensions.

### ***8. Sweden***

Sweden is playing a significant role in the Arctic Region with its policies for the environment, support for scientific researches and collaborations with other Arctic States. The government is aware of and cares about climate change, protection of the indigenous communities and their rights.

The country is following United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and editing rules according to convention. Additionally they accepted the Arctic Council Agreements such as; Arctic Search and Rescue Agreement (2011), Arctic Marine Oil Pollution Preparedness and Response Agreement (2013), Agreement on Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (2017), other strong national environmental frameworks, protection laws for indigenous communities in order to ensure protection of human rights environment and stability. For militarization, Sweden firmly believes that presence of military can harm stability, environment and indigenous communities.

### ***B. Non-Arctic States***

#### ***1. China***

Over the past few decades, China's interest in the Arctic has increased. This increase has been shaped by economic, political, scientific and environmental interests. China joined the International Arctic Science Committee in 1996, and has been involved in polar research and conducted polar expeditions. China became an observer in the Arctic Council in 2013.

In 2018, China declared itself a "near Arctic state" with the publication of its Arctic Policy, outlining its interests in the Arctic. The document presents China's interests in scientific, economic, and governance activities in the region and calls the Arctic the "common heritage of humankind."

The Polar Silk Road was added in 2017 to China's mega-scale connectivity project, the Belt and Road Initiative. The Polar Silk Road is China's plan to develop shipping routes, infrastructure, and economic partnerships in the Arctic as a part of its larger Belt and Road Initiative. China



views the Arctic not only as a source of raw materials but also as a strategic corridor that can enhance global trade routes.

Russia is a key partner in China's Arctic strategy, with both nations benefiting from mutual economic interests. The cooperation is not without caution, as Russia remains cautious about China's long-term ambitions in the region. The establishment of the China-Nordic Arctic Research Center (CNARC) is a prime example of how China uses soft power and scientific diplomacy to build influence in the region. The Nordic countries adopt a strategic approach that balances cooperation with China for scientific and environmental progress against concerns over China's influence in the region.

## ***2. European Union***

The European Union (EU) believes that "a safe, sustainable, peaceful and prosperous Arctic is important, not just for the Arctic itself, but for the EU and the entire world." The EU released an updated Arctic policy in 2021 that aims to help preserve the Arctic as a region of peaceful cooperation, to slow the effects of climate change, and to support the sustainable development of Arctic regions to the benefit of Arctic communities, not least Indigenous Peoples, and future generations.

The policy states that the EU has strategic and day-to-day interests in both the European Arctic and the broader Arctic region. It acknowledges that climate change is the most comprehensive threat the Arctic is facing and that it has reached an unprecedented crisis point. It points out that global demand for products from Arctic sources show that Arctic development is driven by international forces.

The EU repeatedly states that the Arctic needs increased EU involvement, and is seeking greater influence. It is generally critical of resource extraction and militarization, but this stance differs between countries, as expected.

## ***3. Observer States***

Observer States are non-Arctic countries that can participate in Arctic Council meetings but cannot vote. They generally contribute funding and conduct scientific research. These States have a few common motivations for their interest in the Arctic.

The first common interest is scientific. States such as Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Poland, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Japan, South Korea, China, Argentina and more focus on science, climate change, and Arctic monitoring.

The second common interest is shipping routes and maritime interest. States such as China, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the United Kingdom, Netherlands, France, and more are interested in this. These states seek access to emerging Arctic shipping lanes for shorter routes and reduced costs.

The third common interest is energy resources. States such as China, Japan, France, India, and more are interested in Arctic hydrocarbons (organic compounds containing carbon and hydrogen and found in crude oil and natural gas), energy infrastructure, and LNG terminals (liquefied natural gas terminals which are port terminals designed to accommodate large LNG carrier ships). This interest is born from the Arctic's large reserves.

The fourth common interest is minerals and rare-earth element access. States such as China, Japan, South Korea, and EU states are interested in these. The Arctic landscape is endowed with incomparably generous deposits of rare-earth elements, from neodymium and praseodymium to terbium and dysprosium, so many of which are critical to the energy transition. Beyond rare-earth elements, the Arctic is home to significant volumes of other valuable natural resources, from metals such as gold, iron, lead, nickel, silver, and zinc to minerals such as mica to construction minerals such as sand, gravel, and crushed rock to precious stones such as diamonds and rubies to combustibles such as oil, gas, and coal.

The fifth common interest is in fisheries and marine ecosystems. States such as Japan, South Korea, China, Poland, Spain, and more are interested in this for future access to fish stocks in the Arctic.



The sixth common interest is for environmental protections and sustainability. States of the EU and Japan, Brazil, India, and even China (though it uses this environmental stance for strategic aims) are interested and support cooperation for the preservation of the Arctic ecosystem.

The last common interest (that will be mentioned here) is governance, influence, and strategic and diplomatic presence in the Arctic. States such as China, Germany, the United Kingdom, Japan, and more are interested in the Arctic being governed by more than the Arctic states and seek not only military but long term geopolitical presence in the region.

### ***C. Indigenous Population and Local Communities***

Roughly 10% of the Arctic inhabitants are Indigenous communities. Arctic indigenous peoples include for example Saami in circumpolar areas of Finland, Sweden, Norway and Northwest Russia, Nenets, Khanty, Evenk and Chukchi in Russia, Aleut, Yupik and Inuit (Iñupiat) in Alaska, Inuit (Inuvialuit) in Canada and Inuit (Kalaallit) in Greenland. While the experiences of Indigenous people differ, they have all already undergone substantial changes due to the globalization of the western way of life, state policies, modern transport and the introduction of a mixed economy. Climate change poses a new threat for these people, who are worried about contaminants, land use, security, and the climate of the region. As the landscape changes, the harvesting activities of indigenous peoples are endangered. They also face increasing pressure from militarization and resource extraction.

Indigenous people are a Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council, and steps such as these are crucial for long-term solutions to protect the rights, culture, and livelihoods of Indigenous Peoples.

### ***VI. Questions to be Addressed***

This section contains questions that the delegates are expected to consider both before the start of the committee and during their discussions.

1. How can Arctic and non-Arctic states balance national security interests and the need to maintain the Arctic as a zone of peace?
2. How can existing international law be amended and strengthened to prevent militarization in the Arctic?

3. How can Arctic and non-Arctic states prevent a regional arms race while safeguarding their national security interests?
4. What legal mechanisms or international agreements could be strengthened to limit military expansions and activities in the Arctic?
5. How can Arctic resources be exploited and extracted sustainably without favoring certain states?
6. How can legal frameworks ensure sustainable exploitation of Arctic resources?
7. What role should the Arctic Council or other international legal instruments play in regulating resource sharing?
8. How can overlapping claims over continental shelf extensions be resolved within international law?
9. What strategies can ensure that Arctic militarization does not compromise environmental protection or Indigenous communities safety?
10. How can Indigenous Peoples' land rights be incorporated into resource management under international law?
11. How can observer states or non-Arctic states participate in Arctic development without infringing on sovereignty?
12. How can climate obligations be integrated into the legal governance of the Arctic?
13. What measures can ensure that peaceful cooperation is enforced effectively?

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