

AY 2016

year in review

Heather Exner-Pirot & Joël Plouffe

2015

October

16th – The third annual Arctic Circle 2015 event was held in Reykjavik, Iceland. **The 2015 Arctic Yearbook is launched** at the Embassy of the United States in Iceland. AY2015 is themed *Arctic Governance & Governing*.

23rd – The 8-state **Arctic Coast Guard Forum** was established at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut.

November

29th – Norwegian immigration control agents in Finnmark **restricted access to migrants crossing their Russian border**, after months of large flows of migrants and asylum seekers. Finnish authorities in Lapland did **the same** in March 2016.

December

12th – Parties to the *United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change* 21st session, or COP 21, conclude the **Paris Agreement**.

2016

January

19th – The Inuit Circumpolar Council initiates the **Pikialaorsuaq Commission** to study the North Water Polynya and explore locally driven management options, including a travel corridor. In September they concluded their consultation in Inuit communities and will now make recommendations to their respective national governments.

20th – NASA and the NOAA determine that Earth's 2015 surface temperatures were the **warmest** since modern record keeping began in 1880.

25th – The **Indigenous Peoples Secretariat** relocates to Tromsø, Norway.

2016

February

- 20th – The **Arctic Human Development Report II** (AHDRII) is published on the tenth anniversary of the first volume, with a theme of *Regional Processes and Global Linkages*.
- 27th – UK **House of Lords Arctic Committee** publish their report on *Responding to a Changing Arctic*.

March

- 6th – The **Arctic Winter Games** are opened in Nuuk, Greenland.
- 10th – The **U.S.-Canada Joint Statement on Climate, Energy, and Arctic Leadership** is announced by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in Washington DC.
- 9th – **Cold Response 2016**, the Norwegian Armed Forces main winter exercise, concludes with 15,000 soldiers from 14 different nations participating.
- 10-12th – The first **Model Arctic Council** was held at the University of Alaska Fairbanks

April

- 5th – China issues its 365 page “**Guidances on the Arctic Navigation in the Northwest Route**” [Northwest Passage].
- 13th – The **Arctic Economic Council** adopted a suite of foundational documents to provide strategic direction for the organization.
- 27th – The European Commission **released** its Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on “An Integrated European Union Policy for the Arctic”.
- 29th – The three Canadian territories release their joint “**Northern Vision**”, including a common climate change adaptation strategy, a renewable energy inventory, and a pan-northern approach to science.

May

- 10th – Shell relinquishes all but one of its federal offshore leases in **Alaska’s Chukchi Sea**. In June, it further relinquished its 30 offshore exploration permits in Canada’s Lancaster Sound.

30th (through June 5th) – **Calotte Academy 2016** begins in Rovaniemi, Finland. This year’s theme was “Resilience Related to Sustainable Development in Globalization.”

2016

June

10th – The Arctic Coast Guard Forum heads met for the second time, and signed a **joint statement** that establishing the framework for a multi-year strategic plan, avenues to share information, highlight best practices, identify training exercises, and on-the water combined operations.

14th – France launches its first **National Roadmap** for the Arctic: “The Great Challenge of the Arctic”.

July

6th – Nine countries plus the European Union gathered in Iqaluit to discuss international regulation of central **Arctic Ocean fisheries**, following up on a Declaration signed by the “Arctic 5” a year before.

8th – An *ad referendum* agreement on enhancing **scientific cooperation** among circumpolar countries and others interested in polar research signed in Ottawa at the meeting of Arctic Council’s Task Force for Enhancing Scientific Cooperation in the Arctic (SCTF).

25th – Alaska and Lapland return to the **Northern Forum**.

August

9th – **Russia** presents its claim to the Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

29th (through 2nd September) – The 6th International Meeting of Representatives of Arctic Council Member States, Observer States and Foreign Scientific Community begins, held on board the Russian nuclear icebreaker “**50 Years of Victory**”.

September

3rd – The **HMS Terror**, one of 2 ships lost in Sir John Franklin’s doomed 1845 expedition to find the Northwest Passage, is found in Nunavut’s aptly named Terror Bay.

6th – Russia announces **a ten-year moratorium on new offshore oil and gas** licenses for drilling in the Arctic shelf.

16th – **Crystal Serenity** completes its luxury cruise through the Northwest Passage.

16th – Russia announces tender for what will be **the world's most powerful icebreaker**.

... (*September 2016 continued*)

19th – The **Arctic Council celebrates its 20th anniversary**. The Ministers of the Arctic states release a joint statement to commemorate the occasion.

28th – A White House **Arctic Science Ministerial** is held.

29th – Canadian Foreign Minister Stéphane Dion **delivers a speech** celebrating the 20th anniversary of the Arctic Council.

5th – The third **Senior Arctic Officials meeting** of the US Chairmanship begins – in Maine.

6th – Finland announces its **preliminary agenda** for its 2017-19 Arctic Council Chairmanship.

7-9th – The 4th **Arctic Circle Assembly** was held in Reykjavik, Iceland.

28th – The **Arctic Yearbook 2016** is launched in Ottawa, Canada, where the Arctic Council was founded twenty years ago with the Ottawa Declaration. AY 2016 is themed *The Arctic Council: 20 Years of Regional Cooperation and Policy-Shaping*.

October

year in review 2016