



EUROPEAN UNION

Brussels, 6 March 2012
A 106/12

Remarks by High Representative Catherine Ashton at the Arctic Information Centre during her visit to Finland, Helsinki 06/03/2012

Thank you very much. It's a great pleasure to be back in Rovaniemi for my third visit. And I wanted to say at the beginning that this is a very important place because it's also the birth place of both the Northern dimension and the Arctic Council. And I will be completely upfront in saying I can think of nowhere better for the Arctic Information Centre to be but here. So you have my thanks for being here and I pay tribute to this Foreign Minister and his predecessor: you have successfully lobbied me on a daily basis to good effect! We have a great interest in the European Union in helping to support what happens here in the Arctic. I think one is very aware that climate change affects this part of the planet more than anywhere else and that climate change brings challenges but also some opportunities. What I'm going to do on this trip, which is taking in not just this part of the Arctic, I'm going on to Sweden and then on to Norway, is to think things through, how best we can develop our strategy, our policy towards the Arctic in a way that makes sense.

You can only do that by talking to the people who live here and the people who are if you like the guardians of this part of the world. So for me this is a very important opportunity to be able to have a chance to talk with you about what you think will be a useful contribution. In doing that what I really want to do is to build on many of the things that we've already done. We want to make sure of the effectiveness of the projects that we've got - looking at everything from glaciers to eco systems, ice breakers designed here, and what happens in terms of the impact of human activity on this region, what happens to the Arctic.

P R E S S

FOR FURTHER DETAILS:

Michael Mann +32 498 999 780 - +32 2 299 97 80 - Michael.Mann@eeas.europa.eu

Maja Kocijancic +32 498 984 425 - +32 2 298 65 70 - Maja.Kocijancic@ec.europa.eu

Sebastien Brabant +32 498 986 433 - Sebastien.Brabant@ec.europa.eu

COMM-SPP-HRVP-ASHTON@ec.europa.eu

www.eeas.europa.eu

EN