

Check against delivery

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Greeting to exchange students from MGIMO to University of Nordland

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Welcome to Bodø and the University of Nordland, the North of Norway.

Welcome to a region rich in natural and human resources.

Russia and Norway have many similarities and a few differences.

One striking similarity is how both of our countries have resource based economies, getting much of our income from oil, gas and fisheries. Also in both countries many of these resources are in the North. We have successfully cooperated in managing joint fish resources in the Barents Sea.

The ties between our two countries are strong and from a Norwegian view Russia is a key partner in the Arctic cooperation.

There are new business opportunities emerging in the Arctic. There are several initiatives for including the business community in the discussions of the future of the Arctic. I see this as crucial to tackle the challenges at hand and to seize the opportunities.

We will see the North East Passage emerge as a new shipping lane and as a supplement to the Suez Canal and the Strait of Malacca. Destination traffic will dominate in Arctic waters, but we will also see an increase in transits.

Sometimes foresight is needed. Robust search and rescue response as well a new Polar Code that regulates shipping in the Arctic, are keys to prepare for increased maritime activity. Another emerging industry in the Arctic is mining that we have to discuss in further details at our next discussions.

We need to respect traditional ways of life and build on traditional knowledge. In the same way as there are different Arctics when speaking of energy development, there is not one group of indigenous peoples living in the Arctic. There are many different ones. We have to be mindful of this.

Dilemmas relating to different use of land have to be addressed.

Then finally to the geopolitics of a changing Arctic: Yes, there are certainly risks involved that can go wrong. But security policy is all about how to avoid it. One of the main challenges in the North, but also in the rest of the world, is how we best can prepare the ground for a sustainable development the rich resources in the region. Resources development in Arctic conditions brings additional challenges.

The Arctic Council is strengthened by including more observers after the meeting in Kiruna last year. The Council will also in the years to come, be one of the key arenas for developing the Arctic and finding solutions to the challenges we face. As a member of the international Standing Committee of Arctic

Parliamentarians, I also believe that this committee plays an important part in taking initiatives and proposing new solutions for bringing the Arctic further.

In my mind knowledge is the key to sustainable development of the North. Use and development of traditional and conventional knowledge is vital for in for example the extractive industries or tourist development.

The Arctic parliamentary cooperation participated in the creation of the University of the Arctic. Since then we have had regularly updates on the cooperation and the positive development in the exchange between student, professors and researchers in the North.

Student exchange strengthens the Northern identity of the students and they learn new skills which are directly relevant for their further studies and work in their home country. It increases innovation, creation of new jobs, and secure long term connections and business opportunities between our countries. It also addresses the need to make young people – especially young women - to stay in the North.

Student exchange is close to the heart of many parliamentarians because it includes and involves the young people - the future of our countries and our voters.

I want to congratulate the University of Nordland for their cooperation with MGIMO and I wish you great success in your future cooperation.

Because, ultimately the Arctic is about people. It is about how we - who live here- uses the opportunities we have and what kind of future we wants. In that task, knowledge is the ultimate key factor.