

Committee: Arctic Council

Issue: Preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of local indigenous populations

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Position: Rapporteur

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates of the Arctic Council,

My name is Despoina Papadopoulou, I am a senior at Anatolia College in Thessaloniki, and it will be my utmost honor to serve as the Rapporteur of the Arctic Council at the 4th annual DSTMUN. It was almost three years ago, when I participated in my first MUN conference, and although I was hesitant at the beginning, later on I realized that it was one of the best decisions I've ever made! This will be my seventh conference in total, yet my second- time chairing, and I will be the expert chair on the first topic of our Council.

MUN is undoubtedly a truly rewarding experience for all of us, considering the knowledge and social skills that it provides us with. Not only do we get to explore, understand, and try to resolve current issues that our world faces, but we also get to meet fascinating people who share our interest in doing so. MUN promotes constructive teamwork, open dialogue, active listening and taking initiatives, which in my opinion play a catalytic role in dealing with real world issues. Therefore, I would like to congratulate all of you on contributing to fostering such principles by participating in this conference!

The Arctic Council's agenda includes the topic of preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of local indigenous populations, a topic that can help us realize the importance of culture in a civilization and society, by exploring ways to protect and foster its characteristics! This study guide will help you gain some general knowledge on the topic and what it consists of, therefore it is important that you thoroughly read it through. However, considering this is a crisis committee, in which you will also be asked to discuss other issues related to the agenda, that will be announced at the time of the conference, for your better preparation you ought to conduct your own in-depth research on the matter.

If you have any questions regarding the study guide or the topic, do not hesitate to contact me via email: 20191168@student.anatolia.edu.gr.

Best regards,

Despoina Papadopoulou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The Arctic is a vast area which, according to its political definition, consists of territories from 8 States, such as Canada, the Kingdom of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden, and the United States. When it comes to its cultural definition, which includes regions that are inhabited by Circumpolar peoples in general, the Arctic encompasses more area, that is however included in the abovementioned States.¹

The Arctic has been inhabited by Indigenous peoples for millennia, which has caused them not only to fully adapt and reconcile with its arduous and simultaneously quite extraordinary conditions, but also to evolve and develop a strong bond with nature, full of understanding and appreciation.² According to the definition of the Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR), from the total population of 4 million people, only 10 percent are Indigenous, with the percentage rapidly declining.³

These people have developed a unique civilization of their own, that includes a great variety of cultural, historical, and economical backgrounds. However, due to factors such as the globalization of the western way of life, the introduction of the mixed economy, modern transport, state policies, and climate change, the integrity of their culture and the continuity of their livelihoods is being threatened.⁴ Therefore, the need of preserving and promoting their cultural heritage arises, and has nowadays become more important than ever, since a loss of culture could mean a loss of cultural identity, thus a loss of the past and the future for these groups.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Indigenous Peoples

“Indigenous peoples are inheritors and practitioners of unique cultures and ways of relating to people and the environment. They have retained social, cultural,

¹ Gaither, Jessica. “Where Does the Arctic Begin? End?” *Beyond Penguins and Polar Bears*, <https://beyondpenguins.ehe.osu.edu/where-does-the-arctic-begin-end>.

² Crump, John et. al. “Indigenous Peoples of the Arctic.” *Arcgis.com*, <https://www.arcgis.com/apps/Cascade/index.html?appid=2228ac6bf45a4cebafc1c3002ffef0c4>.

³ Jose Sterling, Jose, and Rasmus Rasmussen. “Indigenous Population in the Arctic Regions.” *Nordregio*, 23 July 2020, <https://archive.nordregio.se/en/Maps/01-Population-and-demography/Indigenous-population-in-the-Arctic-regions/index.html>.

⁴ “Arctic Indigenous Peoples - Arctic Centre, University of Lapland.” *Uni of Lapland*, <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples>.

economic and political characteristics that are distinct from those of the dominant societies in which they live.”⁵

Circumpolar/Arctic Peoples

“The Arctic, or circumpolar, peoples are the indigenous inhabitants of the northernmost regions of the world.”⁶

Cultural heritage

“Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions and values. This term is often expressed Tangible cultural heritage or Intangible cultural heritage.”⁷

Tangible Cultural Heritage

“Tangible Cultural Heritage refers to physical artefacts produced, maintained and transmitted intergenerationally in a society. It includes artistic creations, built heritage such as buildings and monuments, and other physical or tangible products of human creativity that are invested with cultural significance in a society.”⁸

Intangible Cultural Heritage

“Intangible Cultural Heritage indicates the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills – as well as the instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces associated therewith. Such examples are oral traditions, performing arts, local knowledge, and traditional skills.”⁹

Cultural Identity

“Cultural identity is self-identification, a sense of belonging to a group that reaffirms itself. It is the extent to which one is a representative of a given culture behaviorally, communicatively, psychologically and sociologically. It consists of values, meanings, customs and beliefs used to relate to the world. It reflects the common

⁵ “Indigenous Peoples at the United Nations For Indigenous Peoples.” *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/about-us.html>.

⁶ “The People of the Arctic.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/place/Arctic/The-people>.

⁷ Teiggeler, René. “What Is Cultural Heritage.” *Culture in Development*, https://www.cultureindevelopment.nl/Cultural_Heritage/What_is_Cultural_Heritage

⁸ “Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.” *RICHS Resources*, 27 Nov. 2014, <https://resources.riches-project.eu/glossary/tangible-and-intangible-cultural-heritage/>.

⁹ “Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage.” *RICHS Resources*, 27 Nov. 2014, <https://resources.riches-project.eu/glossary/tangible-and-intangible-cultural-heritage/>.

historical experiences and shared cultural codes which give us as one entity a stable, unchanging, continuing frame of reference and meaning.”¹⁰

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Ethnic Background of Indigenous People

There are over 40 different ethnic groups inhabiting the Arctic, which although they might appear quite similar at first glance, are very different and unique.¹¹

The Inuit (Eskimo)

The Inuit peoples constitute the chief element in the indigenous population of the Arctic. They inhabit the circumpolar areas of Canada, Alaska and Greenland, in each of which they are called by different names: Inuvialuit, Iñupiat Kalaallit and Yupik.¹² All of these terms contain the meaning of “the people” or “the real people”, while the popular name of “Eskimo”, that is however not as acceptable nowadays, means “eaters of raw flesh” and therefore it is considered quite offensive.¹³ Furthermore their homeland is called “Inuit Nunangat” referring to the ice, water and land that surrounds them.¹⁴



Figure 1: Nuns and Inuit children in front of the Post Harrison (Inukjuak) Federal Hostel

It is estimated that the ancestors of the present-day Inuit arrived at the Arctic about 1050 CE. Since then and especially in the 11th century, due to the arrivals and the influence of whalers, explorers, traders, scientists etc. these groups experienced

¹⁰ “Cultural Identity Theory.” *Communication Theory*, 8 Sept. 2014, <https://www.communicationtheory.org/cultural-identity-theory/>.

¹¹ “Arctic Indigenous Peoples - Arctic Centre, University of Lapland.” *Uni of Lapland*, <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples>.

¹² “Arctic Indigenous Peoples - Arctic Centre, University of Lapland.” *Uni of Lapland*, <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples>.

¹³ Wallenfeldt, Jeff. “Eskimo.” *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 28 Nov. 2020, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Eskimo-people>.

¹⁴ Freeman, Minnie. “Inuit.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 8 June 2010, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit>.

irreversible cultural changes. For many years the Inuit were under colonization. In 1939, they were subjected to policies that forced them to forget about their unique way of life and adapt to a “Canadian” model, which undoubtedly threatened the integrity of their cultural heritage. Many Inuit children were forced to attend residential schools in Canada, to be transformed and relocated. In the 1960s the Inuit populations began serious attempts to reclaim their rights and own territory. In 1971 the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) was formed, which as mentioned later on in the study guide, played and still plays a very important role in preserving the rights of the Inuit. Finally in 1993, with the Nunavut Act, a land claim of a self-governed region in the northeastern part of Canada (Nunavut), was agreed and officialized on the 1st of December 1999. Later on, the Inuit expanded to and inhabited more areas except for Canada.¹⁵

The Saami

The Saami peoples live in the northern parts of mostly Norway and furthermore Sweden, Finland and the Kola Peninsula of the Russian Federation.^{16, 17} They are also known as Lapps, however this term is considered pejorative, since it is close to the High-German lapp, which means “stupid”. Their ancestral lands are called Sápmi or Lapland and it is estimated that their ancestors were the first residents of this area, inhabiting the different ecosystems and adapting to the challenging conditions.¹⁷



Figure 2: The map of the “Sápmi”

The groups of these people firstly arrived at their current homelands from around 1600 to 1500 BC, which makes their culture the oldest in the Scandinavian countries, if not the world. Today there are over 80,000 Sami people worldwide and 70,000 inhabiting the Fenno-Scandinavian peninsula and more specifically 40,000 in Norway, 20,000 in Sweden, 6,000 in Finland

¹⁵ Freeman, Minnie. “Inuit.” *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 8 June 2010, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/inuit>.

¹⁶The Saami Council. “Submission of the Saami Council for the Preparation and Adoption of the List of Issues to Reporting (LoIPR) for Finland by the Human Rights Committee in March 2019, during Its 125th Session.” 14 Jan. 2019, https://tbinternet.ohchr.org/Treaties/CCPR/Shared%20Documents/FIN/INT_CCPR_ICS_FIN_33452_E.pdf.

¹⁷ Hicks, Christian. “Historical Synopsis of the Sami/United Nations Relationship.” *The Arctic*, <https://www.thearctic.is/PDF/Synopsis%20of%20Sami-UN%20Relations%20PDF.pdf>.

and 2,000 in Russia.¹⁸ Yet only 10 percent of the total population has been fully loyal to practicing and reviving the Saami culture, including reindeer husbandry and transhumance. Over the years they came into contact with peoples such as the Norwegian Vikings, who make up the current dominant ethnic group of the region. Their interaction caused many alterations in Saami culture. Later on, the Scandinavians took over the region, and not only did they want to get advantage over the wealth of resources of the North and assimilate the Sami in their nations but also to prove their countries' sovereignty, by taxing the locals, meaning the Saami groups.

Until the nineteenth century the Saami would face discrimination and neglect, which left them out of the standard education system. Their culture was considered "harmful" and the Fenno-Scandia rulers did everything they could to undermine it. During the 60s, the Saami began to assert themselves strongly, reclaiming their rights and starting a new beginning for themselves. In our days, there are Saami schools, businesses, political parties and organizations, while their culture is no longer under such a direct threat.¹⁹ It is however worth-mentioning that although the Saami are acknowledged as a minority in the three Scandinavian countries, the Russian Federation does not recognize them as a legal minority.²⁰

The Unangan

The Unangan peoples, also known as Aleut, inhabit the Alaska Peninsula, the Shumagin Islands in the south of the Alaska Peninsula²¹ and the Aleutian Islands, a chain of small islands located in the Northern Pacific Ocean, of which nearly all belong to the U.S state of Alaska and some



Figure 3: Unangan children in internment camps in WWII

¹⁸ "Who Are the Sámi?" *YouTube*, 27 Dec. 2020, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrAzlO-3f3o>.

¹⁹ Hicks, Christian. "Historical Synopsis of the Sami/United Nations Relationship." *The Arctic*, <https://www.thearctic.is/PDF/Synopsis%20of%20Sami-UN%20Relations%20PDF.pdf>.

²⁰ "Saami National Day." *Bluejayblog*, 23 Jan. 2013, <https://bluejayblog.wordpress.com/2013/02/06/saami-national-day/>.

²¹ Wolak, Jeanette, and Erin Klauk. "Cultural Heritage." *Pribilof Islands*, 15 Jan. 2021, https://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/nativelands/pribilofs/culture.html

have been claimed by the Russian Federation.²²

It is estimated that they settled in their homelands approximately 7,000 years ago, with the number of their population ranging around 15,000 to 18,000 during the 1700s.²³ In 1741, the Unangan faced Vitus Bering's



Figure 4: Painting by Louis Choris, a sketch artist that was aboard a Russian ship: Russians enslave Unangan People

expedition, alongside with Russian colonizers, to the Aleut Islands, in an attempt to take over the area and take advantage of its wealth of resources, meaning the fur-bearing animals. Eventually they did accomplish their goal, by quickly establishing control, causing however multiple injuries and death to the indigenous populations, especially during their state

at the islands to spent the winter, in 1745. The Russian's control over the Aleut islands, caused intense disruption in the Unangan traditional way of life, threatening the continuity of their culture. This phenomenon was even more evident in the 1820s, where indigenous communities were established in the Pribilof Islands and were forced to hunt, by the Russians for their much profiting fur-trade market. After gold was found in Alaska, the arrival of many prospectors to the state and the Unangan being under foreign control for an extended period of time, made their life conditions for even more harsh and unbearable, which lead to their population declining from 25,000 to 2,000 by the end of the 19th century.

In 1867 the United States purchased Alaska, which caused the Unangan to lose many of the minimum rights they enjoyed under Russian rule, since they were from now on classified as "Indians". Their



Figure 5: Sled Dog Race in Alaska, 1987

²² Gaur, Aakanksha. "Aleutian Islands." *Britannica*, 18 Sept. 2020, [serc.carleton.edu/research_education/nativelands/pribilofs/culture.html](https://www.britannica.com/place/Aleutian-Islands)

²³ Wolak, Jeanette, and Erin Klauk. "Cultural Heritage." *Pribilof Islands*, 15 Jan. 2021, https://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/nativelands/pribilofs/culture.html

mistreatment continued in the 20th century and especially the Second World War, when they were evacuated into internment and relocation camps and treated worse than Japanese and German prisoners of war. After all these horrible events the Aleut, with a population of 17,000- 18,000 people, have claimed many of their rights and are more included in today's society, however it has been extremely hard for them to protect their culture and traditions.²⁴

Common Characteristics of the Arctic Peoples' Cultural Heritage

The circumpolar culture both on a tangible and intangible level possesses unique characteristics that provide the chance for a deeper understanding of their remarkable lifestyle:

Tangible Cultural Heritage

The Arctic Peoples' tangible culture consists of artifacts and constructions that are representative of its complexity and beauty. On the one hand, ancient artifacts that depict male and female figures, animals, seal traps, knives, boats and sleds, decorate their living space and portray their way of life.²⁵ On the other hand, more practical constructions such as igloos were and are still used for protection, rest and storage of supplies. Igloos, also known as "pukaangajuq", are dome-shaped dwellings made of hard snow and although the Arctic peoples now have European-style homes, igloos are still used as emergency shelters and are considered to be objects of incredible cultural value and not just relics of the past.²⁶



Figure 6: An Inuit building an igloo at a hunting site on ice in Jones Sound, Nunavut, Canada.

Intangible Cultural Heritage

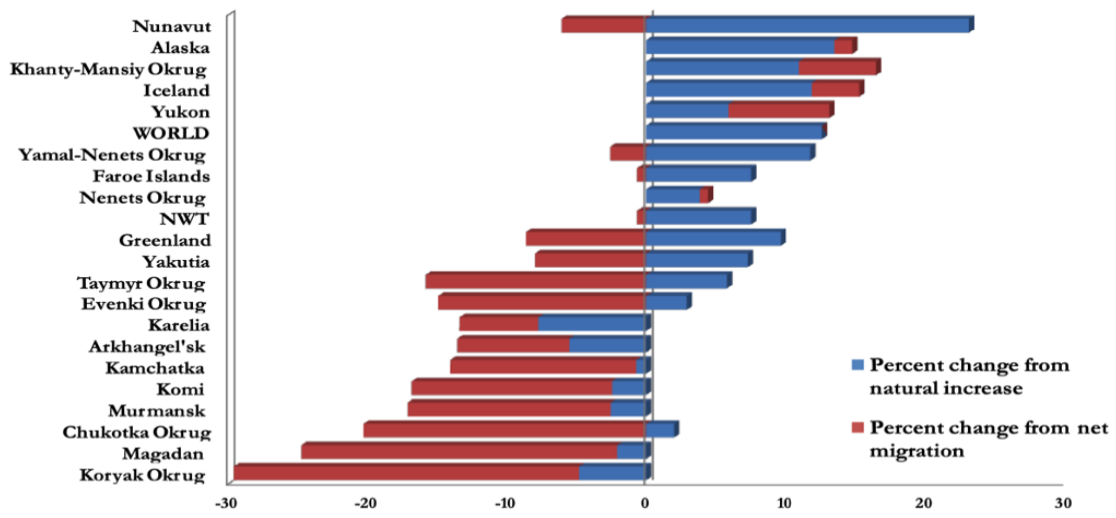
²⁴ Wolak, Jeanette, and Erin Klauk. "Cultural Heritage." *Pribilof Islands*, 15 Jan. 2021, https://serc.carleton.edu/research_education/nativelands/pribilofs/culture.html

²⁵ Penny Pine, Penny, and Jeanne L'Espérance. "Historic Inuit Art." *Civilization.ca - Historic Inuit Art - Artifacts*, https://www.historymuseum.ca/cmcc/exhibitions/tresors/art_inuit/inart50e.html.

²⁶ Gadacz, René. "Igloo." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 24 Apr. 2020, <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/igloo>.

The Arctic Peoples’ intangible culture mostly includes hunting and various performing arts, from which we can really understand their perception of the world. For thousands of years through their meat, fat and skin, reindeer and caribou have provided circumpolar populations the basis of life, not only when it comes to food, but also clothing. However, hunting’s importance is not only related to surviving but also to the formation of a common culture and appreciation of the world’s resources. Wild animals, like these, truly link regions and indigenous people around the Arctic.²⁷ Such demanding hunting, inquiries about the possession of a quick medium of transportation. In the Arctic, people use sled dogs, most often Siberian huskies or Eskimo dogs, in pairs.²⁸ Nowadays, this part of their culture is revived through the well- known Sled Dog Races that have been occurring since 1850.²⁹ Equally significant appears to be the variety of performing arts, which include, music, storytelling, throat singing, acrobatics, drum dancing or even competitions of strength, agility, dexterity and stamina, which are necessary when it comes to hunting and surviving in the Arctic.³⁰ Furthermore the linguistic diversity of the Arctic is also of major importance, since it is estimated that there are between forty to ninety languages spoken in the Arctic.

Threats to the Arctic Cultural Heritage



Sources: National and regional statistical offices. Data are in order by total population change.

Figure 7: Population change from natural increase and net migration in selected Arctic regions, 2000 to present.

²⁷ Gadacz, René. "Igloo." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 24 Apr. 2020, <https://thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/igloo>.

²⁸ "Sled Dog." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., <https://www.britannica.com/animal/sled-dog>.

²⁹ "History of Dog Sledding." *Hurtigruten Cruises: Norway, Arctic & Antarctic Expeditions*, <https://global.hurtigruten.com/destinations/norway/inspiration/attractions/history-of-dog-sledding/.n>

³⁰ Canadian Geographic. "Performing Arts." *Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada*, Canadian Geographic, 14 June 2018, <https://indigenouspeoplesatlasofcanada.ca/article/performance-arts/>.

Over the years the Arctic peoples managed to protect their cultural heritage, although the difficulties that they faced were plenty. However nowadays, new threats have risen to the surface:

Globalization of the western way of life

Since the introduction of the European lifestyle, waves of immigrants that have settled down in the arctic have unwittingly altered a significant portion of the circumpolar culture, just like how it happens in most migration events.³¹ However, in this case, the number of indigenous populations is constantly declining while the number of foreign populations is rising, which can impose a real threat to the arctic culture, since the people that speak its language, perform its arts, revive its traditional hunting methods, are becoming less, among the foreigners. Simultaneously, more and more indigenous people, adopt western living standards that do not include neither igloos, nor sled dogs.³²

Climate Change

Climate change, has caused phenomena such as rapid weather changes and especially melting sea ice, which not only have made living and hunting in the Arctic really dangerous, but also impose a great threat towards animals such as caribou,³³ fish,³⁴ etc. Therefore, traditional activities such as hunting, fishing and herding have become very difficult to be executed. Additionally, such extreme conditions, with which most arctic indigenous people are not familiar with, cause them to abandon their homelands, leaving behind the roots of their culture and unique lifestyle.³⁵ The Arctic States having acknowledged the effects of climate change to their community, are participating in corresponding programs. For example, Canada has committed to achieving net-zero emissions by 2025³⁶, Finland has set the goal to be carbon-neutral in 2035 and carbon- negative eventually³⁷, Sweden has committed to following a zero net emission policy that will result in achieving

³¹ Heleniak, Timothy. "Migration in the Arctic." 2004, https://arcticyearbook.com/images/yearbook/2014/Scholarly_Papers/4.Heleniak.pdf.

³² "Arctic Indigenous Peoples - Arctic Centre, University of Lapland." *Uni of Lapland*, <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples>.

³³ "Reindeer & Caribou." *WWF Arctic*, <https://arcticwwf.org/species/reindeer-caribou/>.

³⁴ "Arctic Fisheries." *National Ocean Economics Program*, 27 Mar. 2017, <https://www.oceaneconomics.org/arctic/fisheries/>.

³⁵ "Arctic Indigenous Peoples - Arctic Centre, University of Lapland." *Uni of Lapland*, <https://www.arcticcentre.org/EN/arcticregion/Arctic-Indigenous-Peoples>.

³⁶ Canada, Government of Canada. "What's in Canada's Climate Plan." *Canada.ca*, 23 Apr. 2021, www.canada.ca/en/services/environment/weather/climatechange/climate-plan/climate-plan-overview.html.

³⁷ Muurman, Jarmo. "Finland's National Climate Change Policy." *Finland's National Climate Change Policy*, <https://www.ym.fi/en/finland-s-national-climate-change-policy>.

negative emissions by 2045³⁸ and the Russian federation has set a low carbon development plan for the coming three decades.³⁹

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

Canada

Canada is one of the Arctic and its population consists of nearly 60,000 circumpolar peoples and mainly Inuit, almost 73% of whom lives in Nunangat.⁴⁰ In general, despite the pressure from factors such as industrial development and the political upheaval, the arctic culture is supported and promoted by the Canadian government.⁴¹ Contrariwise, recent developments have proven Canada's dark past when it comes to the residential schools in which indigenous children, including Inuit where held captive to be stripped of their culture and beliefs. In May 2021, the remains of 215 Indigenous children were found in the Canadian province of British Columbia (BC), near Kamloops.⁴² Since then, searches for the thousands of kids that have vanished have been more intensified, with the most recent in June 2021, being the discovery of more than 600 unmarked graves of indigenous children at the Marieval Indian Residential School.⁴³ The Prime Minister has indeed apologized and has made numerous attempts to improve Canada's relationship with its indigenous populations, which have been generally well-taken.⁴⁴

Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North (RAIPON)

The RAIPON, was founded in March 1990 at the First Congress of the Peoples of the North, while in July 1991, it was formally registered in the Ministry of Justice of

³⁸ Carisson, Annika. "The Swedish Climate Policy Framework." https://www.government.se/495f60/contentassets/883ae8e123bc4e42aa8d59296ebe0478/the-swedish-climate-policy-framework.pdf?TSPD_101_R0=082953afa5ab2000320b9c49f1e0a7b431cf50df430d72694d1bef8e2402c5045d76946cc8011003084916dd75143000bebd6dc008ead6d00f6037df23ce1f0c509ece965006013db087c651227b70d91a2ebb0d5fd69c4ed1213ba5a66dd7a.

³⁹Digges, Charles. *Russia Publishes Baby-Steps Plan toward a Low Carbon Future*, 27 Mar. 2020, <https://bellona.org/news/climate-change/2020-03-russia-publishes-baby-steps-plan-toward-a-low-carbon-future>.

⁴⁰ Freeman, Milton. "Arctic Indigenous Peoples in Canada." Edited by Zach Parrott, *The Canadian Encyclopedia*, 24 Oct. 2027, <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/aboriginal-people-arctic>.

⁴¹ "Canada, Arctic Indigenous Population." *GRID*, 2006, <https://www.grida.no/resources/7666>.

⁴² Kestler-D'Amours, Jillian. "Canada: 'This One Unmarked Grave Is What Genocide Looks like'." *Child Rights News / Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 1 June 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/1/canada-this-one-unmarked-grave-what-genocide-looks-like>.

⁴³ "Report: More Than 600 Bodies Found at Indigenous School in Canada." *Voice of America*, 24 June 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/americas/report-more-600-bodies-found-indigenous-school-canada>.

⁴⁴ Kestler-D'Amours, Jillian. "Canada: 'This One Unmarked Grave Is What Genocide Looks like'." *Child Rights News / Al Jazeera*, Al Jazeera, 1 June 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/6/1/canada-this-one-unmarked-grave-what-genocide-looks-like>.

the Russian Federation as an all- Russian public organization. Nowadays, it united 41 arctic indigenous groups, which consist of almost 250,000 people.⁴⁵ RAIPONS’s main goal is to guarantee the protection of native homelands, and traditional ways of life. Through proposing solutions to issues related to cultural development and education for the younger generations, this association protects the human rights and the legal interests of indigenous peoples, while guaranteeing the protection of the native homelands and traditional lifestyle, of the Arctic natives.⁴⁶

International Polar Heritage Committee (IPHC)

The IPHC was founded on the 1st of November 2000, and it is one of the most recently formed committees of the Scientific Committees of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS). Its main goal is the protection and promotion of the cultural heritage of the Arctic and Antarctic, by ways such as reinforcing international cooperation of the matter, providing a forum in which ideas and knowledge will be exchanged by archaeologists, historians and other professional and collaborating especially with Arctic indigenous peoples regarding their cultural heritage and its high value.⁴⁷

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
1741	Russian colonizers arrived at the Aleut Islands to take advantage of its wealth of recourses and reinforce their fur trade market.
1745	The Russians colonizers overwintered in the Aleut Islands, causing oppression to the indigenous populations.
1820-1829	The Unangan were established the Pribilof Island and were forced to hunt fur- bearing animals for the Russians.
1850	The first formal Sled Dog race is held.

⁴⁵ RAIPON. “Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North.” *Ассоциация - АКМНСС и ДВ РФ*, <https://en.raipon.info/association/index#common-information>.

⁴⁶ Nguyen, Thai, and Tim Williams. “The Arctic: Organizations Involved in Circumpolar Cooperation .” *The Arctic: Organizations Involved in Circumpolar Cooperation*, 1 Aug. 2012, https://lop.parl.ca/sites/PublicWebsite/default/en_CA/ResearchPublications/200815E#a4.

⁴⁷ Barr, Susan. “ICOMOS and the International Polar Heritage Committee (IPHC).” *World Heritage and the Arctic*, <https://whc.unesco.org/archive/websites/arctic2008/2.html>.

1867	The United States purchased Alaska and the Unangan were classified as “Indians”.
1939	The Inuit were subjected to policies, by the Canadian government, that enforced them to adapt to the “Canadian”-western way of life.
1960-1969	The Saami and the Inuit began to assert themselves strongly by reclaiming their rights, obtain their own territory and independence in general.
December 16 th , 1966	The International Convent on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, was agreed
1971	The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK) was formed, which played a catalytic role to the Inuit’s attempt to claim their independence.
1993	The Nunavut Act, a land claim of a self-governed region in the northeastern part of Canada, Nunavut was agreed.
December 1 st , 1999	The Nunavut Act was officialized.
September 13 th , 2007	The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, was adopted.
March 16 th , 2017	The European Parliament resolution on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic was adopted.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

International Convent on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

This convention was agreed on by the UN Member States, including the Arctic Sates, in the 16th of December in 1966, during their 21st session in New York.⁴⁸ Its content includes the first article in which it is stated that: “1. All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”, which is particularly relevant to the context of the protection, free practice and promotion of the Arctic people’s cultural heritage. It is also worth mentioning that, while all the

⁴⁸ “Documentation, Reports, Resolutions, Decisions, Meeting Records.” *United Nations*, United Nations, <https://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/21>.

Arctic states have signed the covenant, the United States is the only member that has not yet ratified it.⁴⁹

UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP)

This declaration was adopted on the 13th of September 2007, by the United Nations during their 62nd session and aimed at enshrining the rights that “constitute the minimum standards for the survival, dignity and well-being of the indigenous peoples of the world”. More specifically in articles 8, 11, 14, 15, 31, it is guaranteed that indigenous peoples have the right to enjoy and freely practice their culture and customs, while they are not obligated to endure any discriminatory behavior that prevents them from doing so. This statement of course includes circumpolar peoples and plays a very important role in preserving and promoting their cultural heritage. However, it is very interesting to note that among other countries with colonial histories, the United States and Canada have refused to sign the UNDRIP.⁵⁰

European Parliament resolution of 16 March 2017 on an integrated European Union policy for the Arctic

This resolution was adopted the 16th of March 2017, in Strasbourg France and it refers to the European States formulating a common policy towards the Arctic, on an economical, geopolitical and cultural level. More specifically it is recognized that: “the Sami, Nenets, Khanty, Evenk, Chukchi, Aleut, Yupik and Inuit cultures need to be protected pursuant to the UNDRIP” and also the “the necessity to safeguard and promote their rights, cultures and languages” is mentioned in the 36th article of the resolution.⁵¹

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Events and Festivals in Inuvik, under the Arctic Midnight Sun, Aiming to the Promotion and Practice of the Arctic Traditions

Every year, many events and festivals are being held in the small town of Inuvik, Canada, the ancestral home of Inuit, Metis and Gwich'in peoples.⁵² Two of these events in which, people from different cultures come together to recognize and witness the beauty and importance of the Inuvialuit, tradition are the following:

⁴⁹ “International Agreements.” *Arctic Portal*, <https://arcticportal.org/arctic-governance/international-agreements>.

⁵⁰ Hanson, Erin. “UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.” *Indigenousfoundations*, https://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/un_declaration_on_the_rights_of_indigenous_peoples/.

⁵¹ United States, Congress, European Parliament. 2017. P8_TA(2017)0093, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/TA-8-2017-0093_EN.pdf.

⁵² “Inuvik, Nwt Archives.” *Yukon Territory Information*, <https://yukoninfo.com/region/inuvik/>.

National Indigenous Peoples Day

This event occurs every year on the 21st of June, in Canada Inuvik, during which, Canadians, alongside members of the indigenous groups of the region, such as Inuit, Métis and the First Nations, enjoy traditional Inuvialuit food, drumming and dancing under the Midnight Sun.⁵³

Great Northern Arts Festival

This Festival has been held every year in mid- July in Inuvik, since 1989 and it is considered to be the world's finest celebration of Arctic arts⁵⁴. It features 10 days of music, fashion, dances, games and generally artistic creations, that are inspired by arctic culture and tradition.⁵⁵

Expert discussion on the theme of “Cultural Heritage Protection and International Cooperation in the Arctic”

This virtual event took place on Friday January 29th 2021 and was held by experienced practitioners, such as Dr. Susan Barr, the President of the International Polar Heritage Committee, Dr. Frigga, the current Chair of the Polar Archaeology Network, Dr. Klemetti Näkkäljärvi, a project leader in the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry in Norway, Robbert Casier the Associate Programme Specialist at UNESCO's World Heritage Marine Programme and Dr. Christian Koch Madsen the Deputy Director of Greenland National Museum & Archives. Their conversation was open to the public and included discussing about the effects that climate change and the increased human activity in the Arctic have had to the various attempts, to protect and preserve the Polar cultural heritage, during the past, present and future, and also about the different innovative ways to promote it to the wider public, using technology and international cooperation.⁵⁶

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

⁵³ “Inuvik Celebrates Summer: 4 Events & Festivals Under the Arctic Midnight Sun.” *Spectacular Northwest Territories*, Spectacularnwt, 24 Feb. 2021, <https://spectacularnwt.com/story/inuvik-celebrates-summer-4-events-festivals-under-arctic-midnight-sun>.

⁵⁴ “GREAT NORTHERN ARTS FESTIVAL: Returning To Our Roots.” *Gnaf*, <https://www.gnaf.org>.

⁵⁵ “Inuvik Celebrates Summer: 4 Events & Festivals Under the Arctic Midnight Sun.” *Spectacular Northwest Territories*, Spectacularnwt, 24 Feb. 2021, <https://spectacularnwt.com/story/inuvik-celebrates-summer-4-events-festivals-under-arctic-midnight-sun>.

⁵⁶ “Online Event: Cultural Heritage Protection and International Cooperation in the Arctic.” *News*, 26 Jan. 2021, <https://www.uarctic.org/news/2021/1/online-event-cultural-heritage-protection-international-cooperation-in-the-arctic/>.

Although serious attempts have been made, as aforementioned, they have all failed to address the importance of the current situation. Not everything stated in these treaties has been implemented and the issue, although it is oftenly discussed, still remains obscure in many parts of the world. Therefore, information and effective legislation is needed.

Launching a media campaign, related to the protection of the circumpolar culture

Although the issue of protecting the cultural heritage of arctic indigenous populations, from the numerous threats that endanger it, is of major importance, it is not given the attention that it deserves on a global level. In order for the problem to be successfully resolved, awareness needs to be risen in all parts of the world, thus more people will contribute to protecting and promoting the arctic culture. A media campaign, can undoubtedly undertake such a challenging project, considering its wide sphere of influence and the effectiveness of using audiovisual media to promote social change, by informing the public about the situation and encouraging them to take action. It can contain programs informing the audience about the arctic history, culture and way of life in general, while simultaneously emphasizing the threats that endanger the arctic peoples' cultural heritage. Such a campaign can be organized by an effective cooperation between the Arctic States and other Member States of the United Nations.

Reinforcing legislation on combating climate change in the arctic and protecting arctic fauna

As abovementioned climate change is one of the major factors that impose a threat to the continuation of the arctic culture, therefore combatting it with stronger legislation, specifically aimed at the arctic region, that can include the adoption of more eco-friendly technologies, usage of renewable energy source, in an attempt to slow down the rates of the arctic ice melting, and also an imposition of stricter sanctions against those who litter environmentally significant areas, or those who overfish or overhunt causing the arctic fauna to undergo a crisis, can really strengthen the attempts made to protect the circumpolar cultural heritage. Furthermore, wild animals such as caribou, reindeers, arctic fish etc. that play a very important role in the intangible cultural heritage through a variety of practices, should be effectively protected by legislation through which any interference by other peoples, or by extreme climatic phenomena, that can expose them to any danger that can lead to their progressive extinction, will be prevented.

LINKS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

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