



FACTSHEET

Social and Cultural Changes in the European Arctic

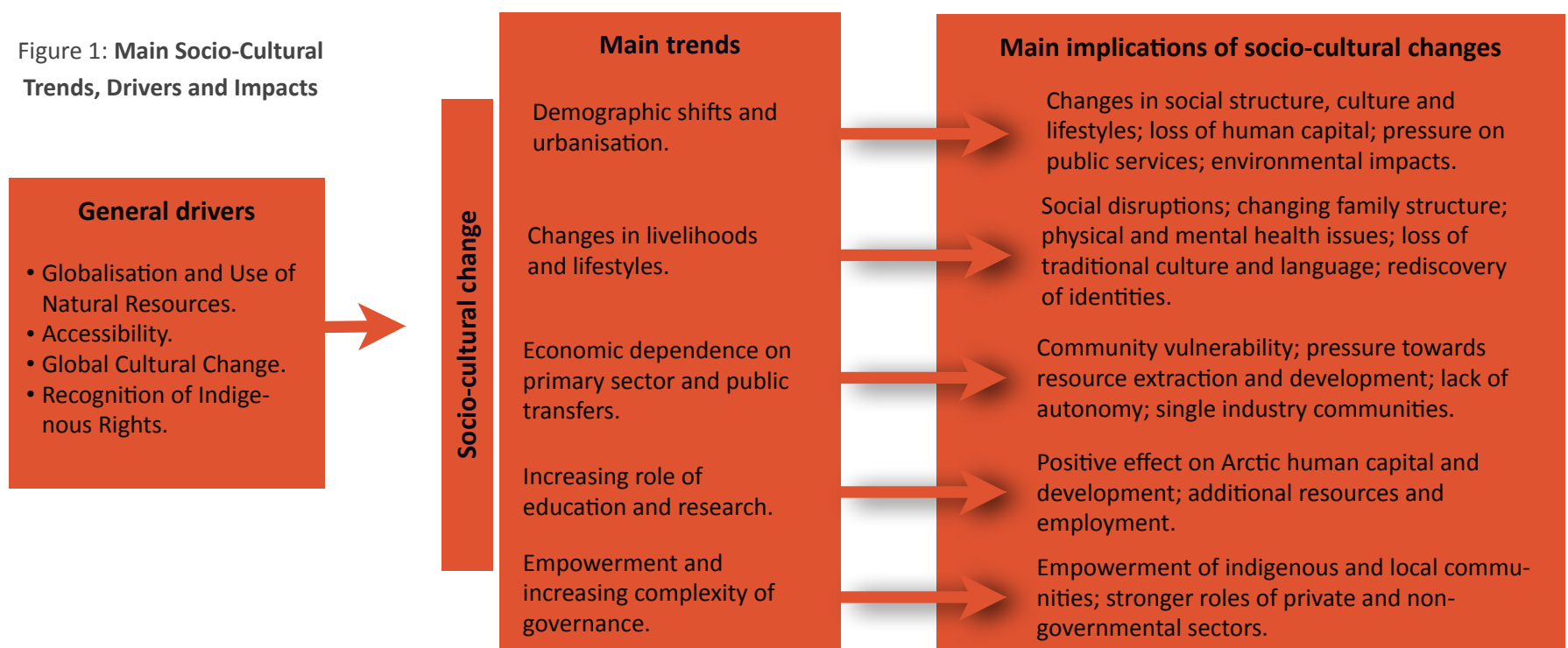
Overview

Arctic societies – both indigenous and non-indigenous inhabitants – are considered to be highly resilient and adaptive, yet today's rate and magnitude of change challenges adaptive capacity. Change is driven by increased accessibility, government policies, global cultural change and recognition of indigenous peoples' rights. Globalisation and world markets are also important drivers in the Arctic social transformation.

Climate change influences societies and cultures in some locations, and its impacts are predicted to grow in coming decades. These changes create both opportunities and challenges and occur along local, regional and global dimensions.

This factsheet highlights five trends in social and cultural change in the European Arctic, their drivers, implications and relevance of the European Union (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Main Socio-Cultural Trends, Drivers and Impacts

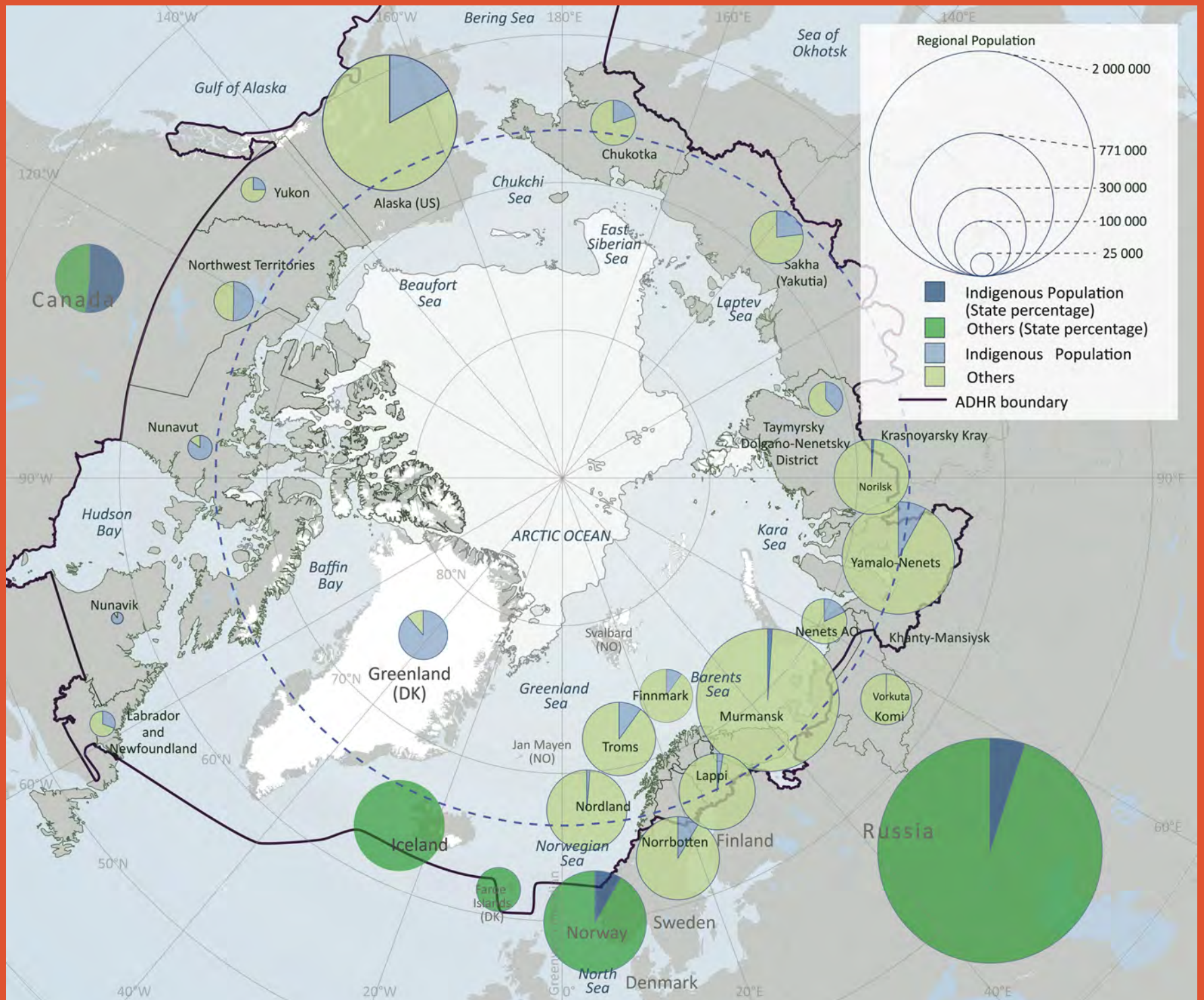


Website: www.arcticinfo.eu

Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment of Development of the Arctic

This factsheet is to stimulate dialogue between stakeholders, Arctic experts and EU policymakers. Stakeholder input informs the analysis of trends and the role of the European Union in shaping Arctic developments. It will lead to recommendations to EU policymakers and be published as the Strategic Assessment of Development of the Arctic Report in spring 2014. The European Commission-funded project is implemented by a network of 19 institutions lead by the Arctic Centre in Rovaniemi and is linked to the EU Arctic Information Centre initiative.

Figure 2: Arctic Population: Indigenous and Non-Indigenous



Note: The Arctic Human Development Report (AHDR) (2004) estimated that there are four million people living in the Arctic, of whom 10% are indigenous, e.g. Inuit, Sámi and Nenets. 1.3 million people live in the Arctic regions of the Nordic countries (including Greenland). The Barents region (which extends south of the AHDR boundary) has a population of six million. Arctic areas in Russia, according to AHDR (2004) include: the Murmansk Oblast, the Nenets, Yamalo-Nenets, Taimyr, and Chukotka autonomus okrugs, Vorkuta City in the Komi Republic, Norilsk and Igarka in Krasnoyarsky Krai, and those parts of the Sakha Republic whose boundaries lie closest to the Arctic Circle

Source: Arctic Portal and Arctic Centre, 2014. Based on: Statistics Sweden 2011, Tilastokeskus 2013, Statistics Norway 2013 and Sami Statistics 2014 (Statistics Norway), Statistics Iceland 2012, Faroe Statistics 2013, Statistics Greenland 2013 (for Greenland indigenous number refers to persons born in Greenland), Barents Euro-Arctic Council, US Census 2010, (Russian) Federal State Statistics Service 2013-2014, Census (Russian Federation) 2010, Statistics Canada 2006-2011, US Census Bureau 2010, Statistics Alaska 2012, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland estimates (data based on estimates with discrepancies between available sources). Numbers for Sakha Republic (municipalities on or above the Arctic Circle) based on estimates only. All numbers, although based on statistics, are illustrative, estimate and approximate, often due to difficulty of specifying exact number of indigenous peoples living in the particular region.

Social and Cultural Trends in the European Arctic

Demographic Shifts and Urbanisation

An important feature of the Arctic in comparison to lower latitudes is its peripheral character — a sparsely populated region with low population density and relatively big distances between communities — and the presence of indigenous populations.

These factors influence social networks, community viability and the way the region is governed. Arctic populations experience ongoing transformation from traditional small, rural communities often living in remote conditions into modern societies, increasingly concentrated in urban areas.

Arctic demography and social composition are significantly influenced by migration: north-to-south, rural-to-urban as well as an influx of people seeking work in the resource extraction and services sectors (Figure 3).

Young people, especially women — attracted by economic and educational opportunities — move to Arctic urban centres or migrate to cities in the south. Conversely, inflow of labour from outside the Arctic — usually dominated by young men — may create various social problems and change the structure of the communities. Out-migration of the young means that Arctic regions lose human capital that is indispensable for regional development.

An influx of migrants and urban expansion result in the need for improved services and facilities (housing, utility services, health care, education and transport).

These in turn may cause environmental impacts that include increased pollution from wastes, and higher energy and resource demands. In the Arctic, some of these impacts are compounded by harsh climate, geographic conditions and remoteness.

“Young people, especially women — attracted by economic and educational opportunities — move to Arctic urban centres or migrate to cities in the south”

Urbanisation is a global trend: the Arctic region is no exception (Figure 4). People move to urban areas usually attracted by expectations of finding a job, higher salaries and improved quality of life, as urban areas usually offer better opportunities, a diversity of economic activities and more options for education, culture and social networks.

In the Arctic, urbanisation is often a result of resource extraction, establishment of military facilities and administration centres, industrial development and expansion of the welfare state.

Urbanisation entails a complex set of processes, not only in where people live and what they produce, but in who they are, how they live in terms of economic well-being, political organisation and the

distribution of power, demographic structure, e.g. family size, social and family relations. Urbanization may have particular impacts on indigenous cultures and identities, as an increasingly bigger part of indigenous groups are city-dwellers.

Eventually, many aspects of urbanisation may nowadays occur in the areas previously not considered “urban”.

Social Housing in Nuuk, Greenland



Photo: Adam Stepień, Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, 2011.

Changes in Livelihoods and Lifestyles

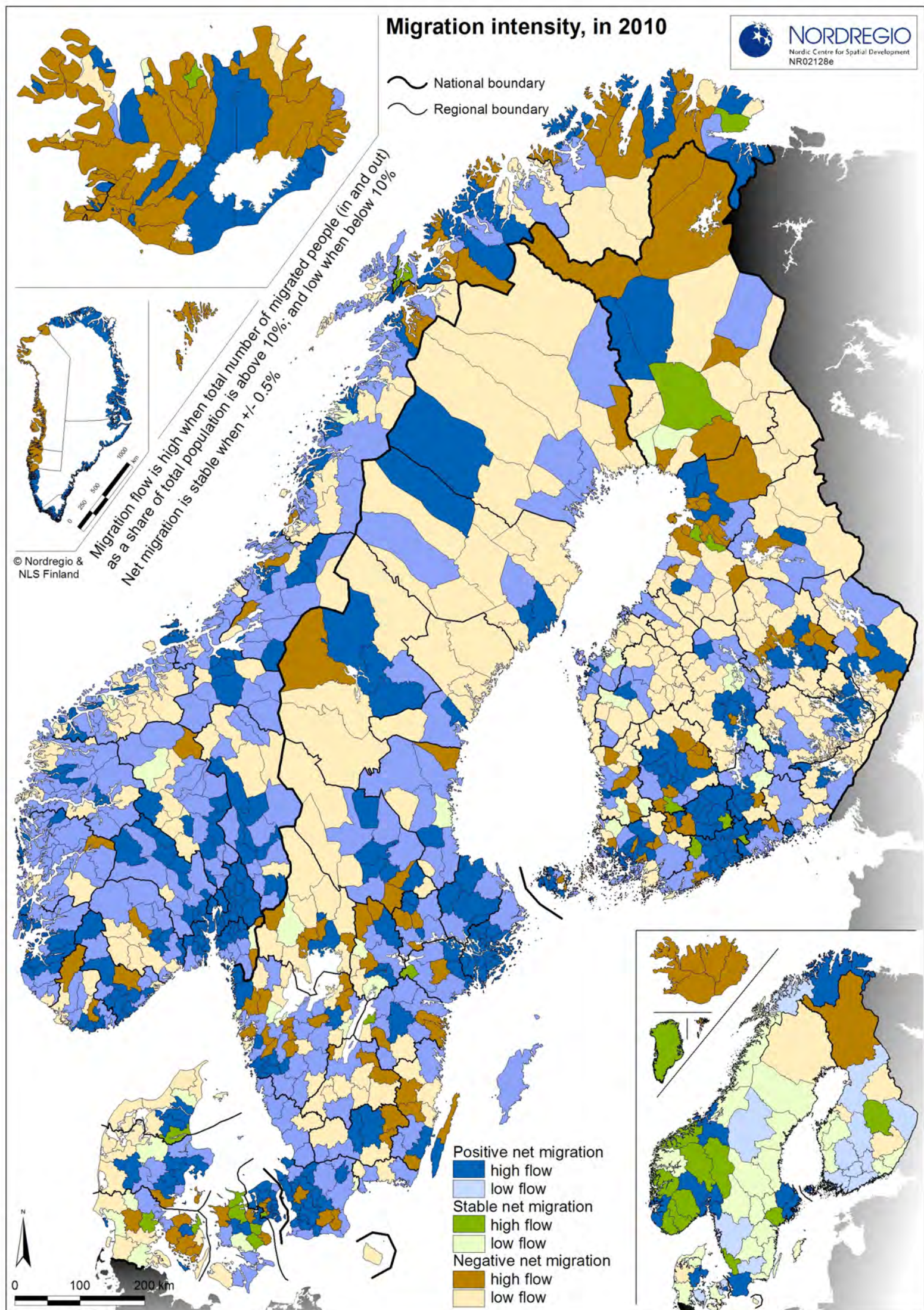
Reflecting economic and socio-cultural changes, livelihoods and lifestyles in the European Arctic have been undergoing transformation.

The Arctic regional economy is characterised by a co-existence and interdependence between a formal and informal economy, especially in indigenous communities. The major components of the

formal “cash” economy include tourism, fisheries, large-scale mineral and energy development and reindeer husbandry. The informal economy consists of small-scale subsistence hunting, herding, fishing, trapping and gathering, and it constitutes crucial components of cultural practices, identities and food sources.

“The Arctic regional economy is characterised by a co-existence and interdependence between a formal and informal economy, especially in indigenous communities”

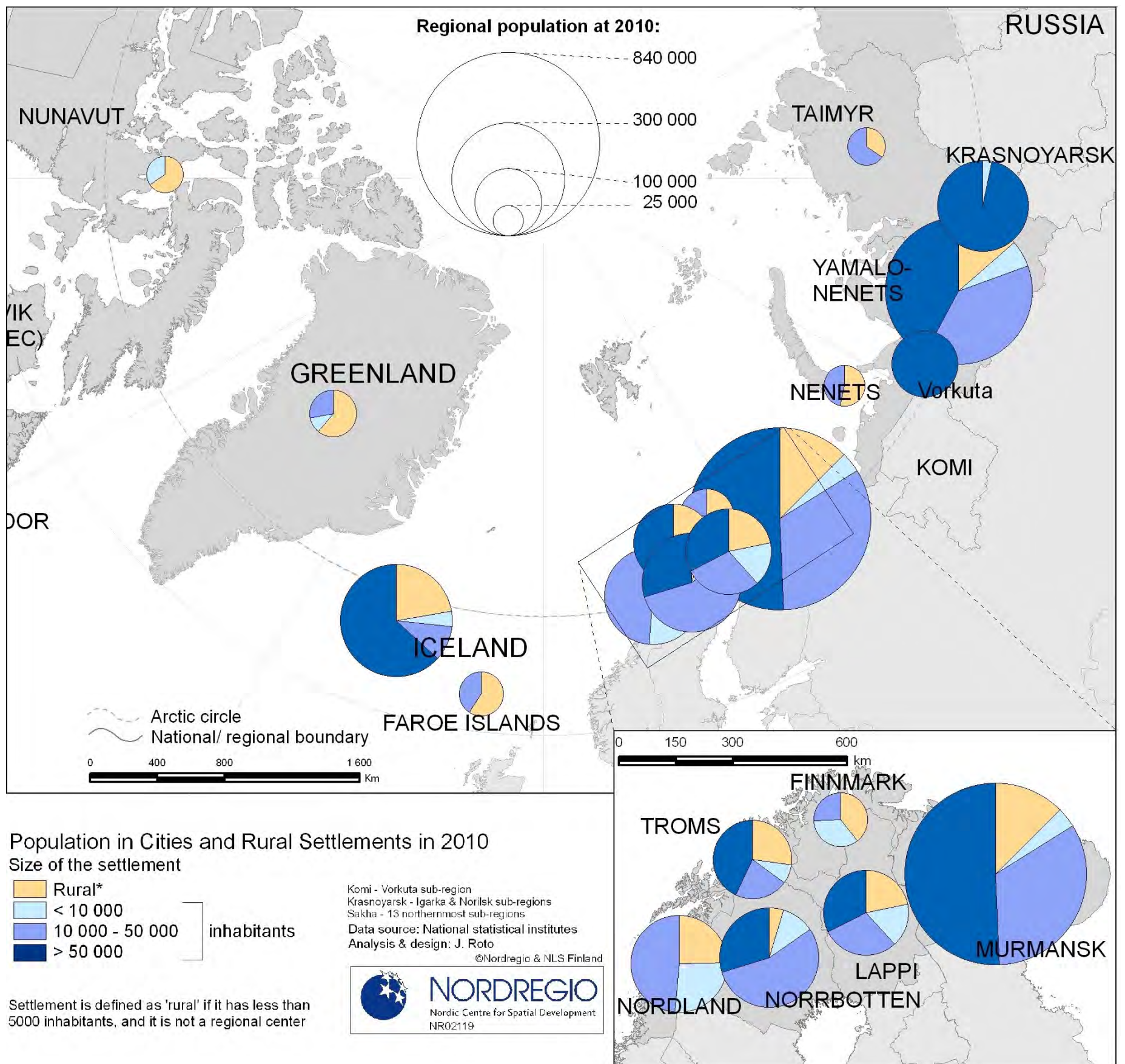
Figure 3: Migration Intensity, 2010



Notes: Migration flow is high when total number of migrants (in and out) as a share of total population is above 10%; and low when below 10%. Net migration is stable when $\pm 0.5\%$.

Source: Nordregio, Johanna Roto, 2011. www.nordregio.se.

Figure 4: Population in Cities and Rural Settlements, 2010



Source: Modified from Nordregio, Johanna Roto, 2010, www.nordregio.se.

Even with the use of modern technology (like snowmobiles or GPS), nowhere in the Arctic are these subsistence activities the only source of livelihood. In the European Arctic a formal economy is dominant and the relative role of traditional activities as a source of livelihood is declining.

Projected increases in tourism may offer potential economic benefits for local communities. How Arctic communities allow their natural and cultural resources to be used by visitors and how they benefit from tourism depends on local attitudes, management and resources.

Lifestyle changes (coupled in some areas with the effects of climate change) have impacts on human health and well-being in the Arctic, and are already seen in an increased number of water, food and vector borne diseases. Transition away from a traditional diet increases the probability of obesity, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. Many Arctic communities are also troubled by domestic violence, substance abuse and high suicide rates.

Changes in lifestyle and increased connectivity lead to cultural transformation, including alterations in family structure, values and cultural forms of expression. These can entail positive develop-

ments, as in the role of women in society, but also undesirable outcomes, such as barriers to social transmission of knowledge across generations or language loss.

“Single-industry communities are particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity demand and “boom and bust” cycles that may take a significant toll on socio-cultural, as well as economic, well-being.”

Economic Dependence on the Primary Sector and Public Transfers

In the years ahead, Arctic economies will continue to be dominated by the primary sector, which makes direct use of natural resources, and public transfers. Exploitation of natural resources accounted for about 31% of Arctic GDP in 2003 (higher levels in some Russian and North American areas) and 5 to 10% of the work force in the European Arctic.

Hydrocarbon and mineral resource developments make Arctic regions important contributors to national economies, especially in Russia and Fennoscandia. In addition, fisheries and forestry remain vital components of European Arctic economies.

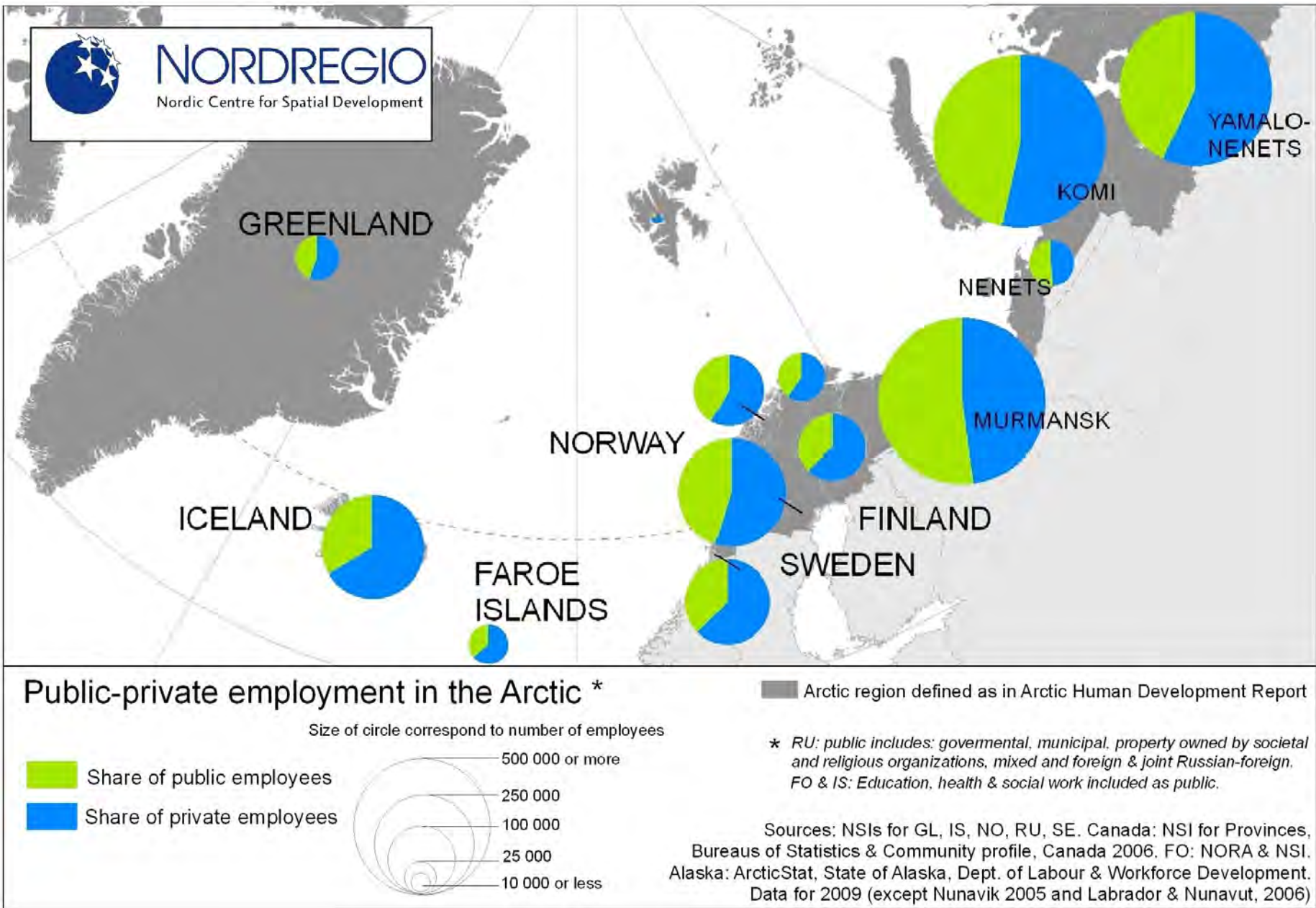
Single-industry communities are particularly vulnerable to fluctuations in commodity demand and “boom and bust” cycles that may take a significant toll on socio-cultural, as well as economic, well-being. Moreover, primary industries tend to create islands of economic activity, rather than providing development for whole regions.

The public sector and transfers include government employment, welfare payments, unemployment support, pensions, goods and services provided by the government, as well as development policies and infrastructure maintenance.

The public sector is responsible for 20-30% of economic activity in most Arctic regions, with figures for those with little access to natural resources at around 50%.

“As Arctic regions attempt to lessen dependence on government transfers, there is greater interest in developing natural resources.”

Figure 5: Public-private employment in the Arctic, 2010



Source: Modified from Nordregio, Johanna Roto, 2010, www.nordregio.se.

Over the last decades, employment in the services sector has expanded significantly, dominated by public sector jobs in education, health care and administration. The share of public sector employment in the European Arctic (30-55%) is higher than average for developed states (5-28%).

As Arctic regions attempt to lessen dependence on government transfers, there is greater interest in developing natural resources. As well, there is interest in encouraging employment in activities such as tourism, creative industries, research and innovation that offer alternatives to dependence on both public transfer and resource-based economies.

Rising Role of Education and Research

Education – a foundation for enhancing Arctic human capital and empowerment of Arctic communities - has evolved in the Arctic from more experiential-based knowledge transfer and training within small communities to more formalised, nationally organised systems.

Human capital is critical for economic development and socio-economic transformation in the Arctic. Although by a textbook definition human capital in the Arctic is underdeveloped, this overlooks the diversity of the Arctic creativity based on informal and traditional knowledge.

“Human capital is critical for economic development and socio-economic transformation in the Arctic.”

Development of human capital and higher levels of education allows Arctic regions to benefit more from primary industries and developing alternatives to these industries. Importantly, women dominate the realm of education in most of the Arctic.

However, at the same time, higher levels of education stimulate greater out-migration from smaller communities to larger cities and from the north to the south.

Education and research have also become an important industry in Arctic regions, creating jobs and bringing resources into communities.

Increasing Inclusiveness and Complexity of Governance

Governance has a crucial role in boosting resilience and adaptive capacity to changes in the Arctic. Globalisation and increasing international attention to climate change are transforming the way the Arctic is governed. Faster and more extensive networks of communication make for greater awareness and engagement at all levels.

In the Arctic, governance at various levels is in transition. A few highlights include:

- Indigenous efforts to secure land rights have transformed institutional arrangements in many Arctic regions. Significant

changes in the rights and role of indigenous peoples have occurred in North America (e.g., land claims), and parts of Fennoscandia (e.g., Sámi Parliament and self-governance in Greenland in 2009). Governance in Russia, in contrast, leaves indigenous people with limited decision-making authority.

- Frameworks for indigenous rights are evolving in the Arctic. Denmark and Norway have ratified International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention 169, a legally-binding international instrument dealing specifically with the rights of indigenous peoples. Legal systems in Nordic states and Russia currently include safeguards for indigenous rights, e.g., Finnmark Act in Norway. Indigenous organisations are permanent participants in the Arctic Council and have an important place in Barents regional co-operation.
- The sharing of power and responsibilities between national governments and regional/municipal authorities has become increasingly complex. Because of demographic changes, the balance between the need for democratic representation at regional/local level and the capacity to provide basic services is not satisfactory. As a result, local authorities depend more heavily on government support and municipalities are merged into bigger administrative units (as in Greenland and Finland).
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have become more and more active in advocating interests of various groups such as indigenous peoples, environmental organisations and industry associations.
- Various intergovernmental and regional forms of co-operation between Arctic nations and other stakeholders have emerged over the last 20 years, such as the Arctic Council, Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Northern Forum. Increased awareness of pan-Arctic issues and supporting the provision of basic services and transport in remote locations may be a tangible outcome of international and cross-border co-operation in the Arctic.

University of Akureyri, Iceland



Photo: Hjalti Þór Hreinsson, Arctic Portal.

What Is Driving Social and Cultural Changes in the European Arctic?

Putting a finger on what is pushing social and cultural shifts is not an exact science. Nevertheless, here we touch on four drivers that are influencing transformation.

Driver: Globalisation and Use of Natural Resources

Global economic shifts are critical factors shaping social and cultural development around the world and the Arctic is no exception. Robust economic growth in emerging economies shapes demand for Arctic natural resources and its position in the international economic system, which in turn influences Arctic migration, urbanisation, politics, governance and worldwide connections.

Resource exploitation and resistance to some developments were key factors for the emergence of indigenous activism and indigenous rights.

Driver: Accessibility

Access by sea, roads and air in the Arctic is crucial for both businesses to connect to markets and administrative centres and to communities to reach social, educational and service providers.

Insularity, one-directional linkages, the dominance of north-south connections and high costs are structural features of all modes of Arctic transport. Initiatives to facilitate Arctic-Arctic (east-west) transport connections have had limited success. Maintaining and expanding transport infrastructure generally depend on public financing.

Communication technologies and connectivity open the door to a multitude of opportunities for people and services in the Arctic, including in areas of education, entertainment, health, administration, social and political life at regional, national and global levels.

Digital contacts strengthen, or build new, local, regional and national identities. Digital skills are essential to take advantage of the empowering tools of the internet, such as sharing experiences between distant communities in the Arctic.

While coverage and internet literacy appear to be in place in the European Arctic, the quality and capacity of the networks, and costs for the users may pose significant limitations.

Driver: Global Cultural Change

Arctic social and cultural changes reflect global, particularly western, cultural trends. At a general level, these include often contradictory developments such as: declining respect for authority; increasing emphasis on freedom of expression and equality of opportunities; growing social and political tolerance; emancipative orientation towards the role of women; wider spread of protest culture: and increasing emphasis on democratic principles combined with dissatisfaction with democratic process (Dalton and Welzel, 2011).

These trends are coupled with the spread of popular culture, information technology, virtual networks and the culture of innovation.

Both ongoing westernisation and resistance to that process are important components of cultural change. In the increasingly globalised world, notwithstanding pressure from other influences dis-

Reindeer roundup in Finnmark, Norway



Photo: Lawrence Hislop, UNEP/GRID-Arendal

cussed in this factsheet, Arctic cultures will undergo transformation that follows global cultural developments.

Driver: Indigenous Activism and Recognition of Indigenous Rights

Over the last four decades, indigenous peoples have become more active in international forums with a focus on human rights. Key demands include: the right to self-determination, land rights, cultural survival and development (including language and traditional livelihoods), non-discrimination, equality, justice and participation in decision-making at all relevant levels of governance.

Achievements include: ILO Convention 169 Concerning Indigenous and Tribal Peoples (1989); UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007) and establishment of the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues. International law related to indigenous peoples has developed notably, yet except in the cases of Norway and Denmark/Greenland, international legal developments have had limited influence on the domestic legislation of the Arctic nations.

How Does the European Union Influence Social and Cultural Changes in the Arctic?

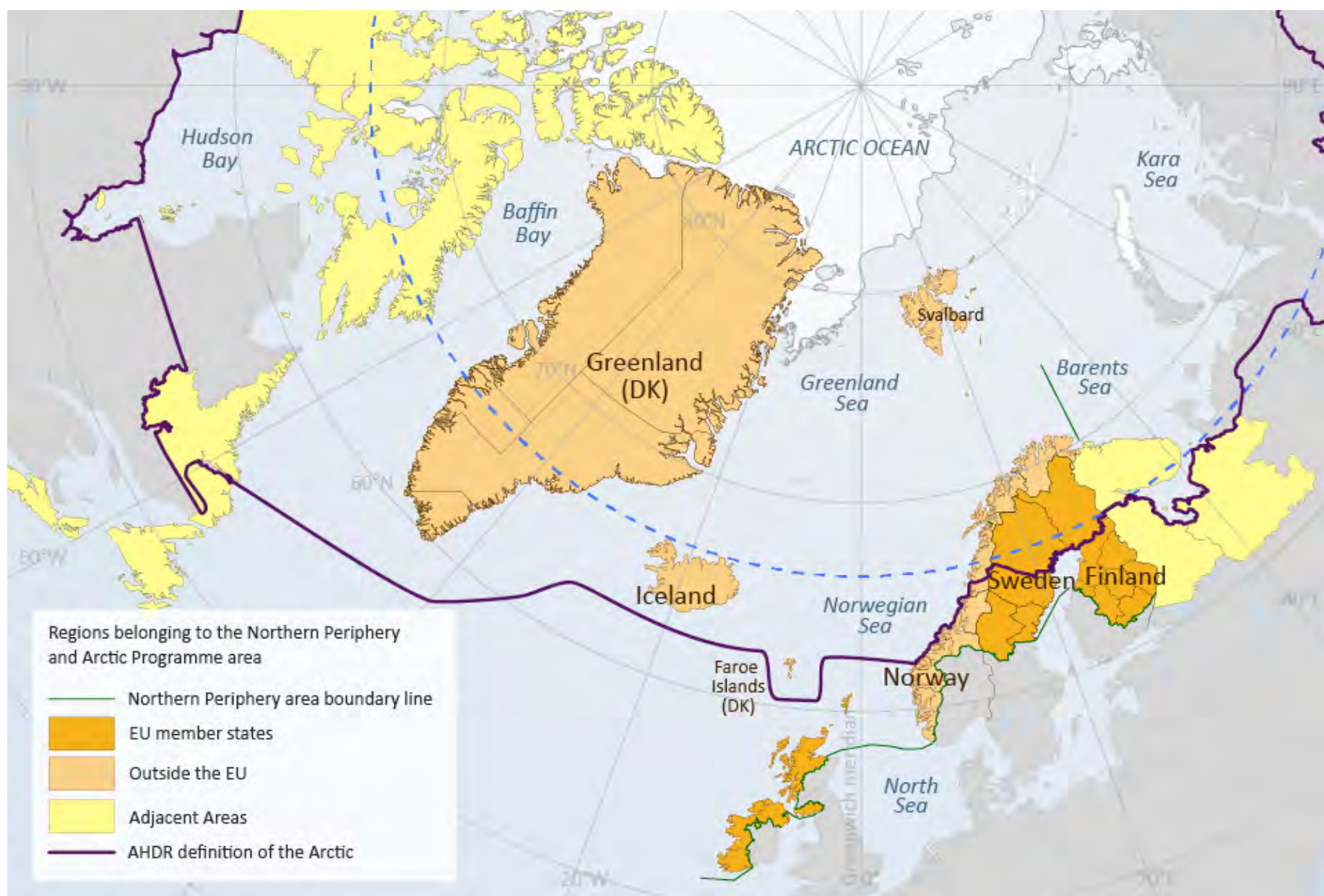
Funding is the key instrument for EU influence on social development and mitigation of adverse effects related to the changing social/cultural landscape in the Arctic.

Among other programmes related to the Arctic (e.g., Kolarctic, ERDF programmes in Northern Finland and Sweden), the Northern Periphery Programme (2007-2013) aims to help peripheral and remote communities in the northern margins of Europe to develop their economic, social and environmental potential.

Its priorities are: promoting innovation and competitiveness in peripheral areas; and sustainable development of natural and community resources. It covers a vast area as shown in Figure 7.

Funding within the EU 2014-2020 financial perspective will focus on “smart specialisation” and thus support primarily research, technological development and innovation. The new financial perspective will include the Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, currently under formulation.

Figure 6: European Union’s Northern Periphery and Arctic Programme, 2014-2020.



Natural Resource Development

Demand for minerals, energy resources, fish and forestry products in the EU affect resource developments in the Arctic, which are contributing to changes in the social/cultural landscape. (See the fact-sheets: Mining in the European Arctic, Developing Oil and Gas Resources in Arctic Waters and Changing Nature of Arctic Fisheries.) The EU provides, for example, funding for research on sustainable mining and local communities.

Fostering Economic Diversification

- Support for youth entrepreneurship (countering out-migration).
- Combining traditional culture and business, including support for Sámi entrepreneurs.
- Support for creative industries and media in the north.
- Business opportunities for agriculture.
- Development of tourism industry, including rural and ecotourism, promoting small and medium-size destinations and creating networks of entrepreneurs.

Responding to Demographic Shifts and Urbanisation

Legislation on the free movement of persons impacts the labour market. Relevant EU support includes: local development; strengthening urban and rural services; promoting cultural heritage; projects dedicated to social well-being, including elderly and physically challenged people.

Increasing Accessibility

EU funding for transport infrastructure. Support for enhancing ICT services in remote communities, including tele-medicine and virtual learning environments.

Expanding Education and Research

EU funding for student and teacher exchanges, and training programmes. The EU-Greenland Agreement supports education, vocational training and development of human resources. European Union's Seventh Framework Programme for Research (2007-2013) funded 46 projects and scholarships directly related to the Arctic at about €20 million a year.

Supporting Indigenous Rights

- EU advocacy for indigenous rights at international level.
- Support to NGOs, including capacity-building for RAIPON (Russian Association of Indigenous Peoples of the North) and other Arctic indigenous organisations.
- Exclusive Sámi rights within traditional industries, primarily reindeer herding, are safeguarded in a Protocol to Finland's and Sweden's Accession Treaty.

Arctic Indigenous Cultures

- The EU supports language and local culture preservation, including facilitating cultural co-operation, events and network-building.
- Policy statements support enhancement of EU-indigenous peoples dialogue.
- The EU ban on seal products is said to adversely influence indigenous cultures and the livelihoods of commercial sealers.
- The EU position regarding the aboriginal quota within the International Whaling Commission is of major relevance to Greenlandic whaling.

Supporting Cross-border Co-operation

EU funding for cross-border co-operation includes research platforms, co-operation between companies, joint public services and infrastructure, and development of information channels.

Supporting Local and International Governance

- Providing support to municipal and regional administrations, such as funding strategic work as in the case of Lapland's Climate Strategy.
- EU Arctic policy has a main goal to support international co-operation in the Arctic.
- EU initial funding to found the Arctic NGO Forum in 2011 that provides a platform to enhance co-operation of NGOs concerned with Arctic environmental issues.

What is the Role of the European Union in the Arctic?

The European Union is a complex international actor. It has acquired a number of decision-making powers from its Member States and hence influences the content of their national legislation. Based on the European Economic Area Agreement, the EU also influences relevant legislation in Iceland and Norway. The EU also influences outcomes of international negotiations – including those of importance for the Arctic.

Only a small part of the territory of EU Member States - in northern Sweden and Finland – is located in the Arctic and the EU has no Arctic coastline. Nevertheless, EU regulations and actions, including research funding and regional policies, influence Arctic developments. Moreover, the EU is a major environmental and economic actor in the Arctic and has established a special relationship with Greenland.

Since 2008, relevant EU activities have been brought under a common umbrella of "Arctic policy". A communication in 2012 stresses three key aspects: knowledge – support for scientific research; responsibility – promoting the sustainable use of natural resources; and engagement – enhancing co-operation with Arctic partners.

Key Questions to Stakeholders Regarding Social and Cultural Change

- 1 Is the European Arctic bound to be “Europe’s resource region”? Can the European Arctic diversify from its dependence on natural resources and public transfers? Will Arctic regions move towards knowledge-based economy? What might be the EU’s role in such a shift?
- 2 In what ways can education, research and information and communication technologies in the European Arctic evolve to expand opportunities for its people? How could the EU enhance this role?
- 3 What specific aspects of the Northern cultures should be protected or supported in light of general cultural change?
- 4 How can the European Union support Sámi culture and Sámi transborder co-operation? How could the EU support the cultures and societies of other Arctic indigenous and non-indigenous peoples?
- 5 What would be the most effective ways for EU support in its 2020 financial perspective for Northern Europe?

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The chapter “Social and Cultural Changes in the European Arctic” in the final assessment report (see www.arcticinfo.eu) builds on this factsheet and on the stakeholder consultations conducted between October 2013 and February 2014.

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