



**XLV
ANTARCTIC TREATY
CONSULTATIVE MEETING**

May 29 – June 8, 2023 | Helsinki – Finland

**XLV ANTARCTIC TREATY CONSULTATIVE MEETING
HELSINKI 28.5.-8.6.2023**

**HOST COUNTRY COMMUNIQUÉ
9 MAY 2023**

From May 28 to June 8, Finland hosted the XLV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (ATCM) as well as the XXV meeting of the Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP). The meetings, organized by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, took place in Helsinki and were held in in-person format after the virtual and hybrid meetings in Paris and Berlin in 2021 and 2022. A total of 500 delegates were registered for the ATCM XXV of which 400 attended in person.

The ATCM brought together the 56 States Parties to the Antarctic Treaty, as well as Observers and Experts and was chaired by Ms. Päivi Kaukoranta, the Director of the National Security Authority of Finland at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The CEP was chaired by Ms. Birgit Njåstad (Norway). Ms. Tiina Jortikka-Laitinen acted as the Head of Host Country Secretariat.

Ms. Johanna Sumuvuori, Deputy Foreign Minister of Finland, Ms. Terhi Lehtonen, State Secretary of the Ministry of the Environment, and Helena Gualinga, climate and environmental activist, officially opened the conference. Ms. Sumuvuori condemned Russia's breach of international law and illegal war of one Consultative Party against another, noting it to be contrary to the spirit of the Antarctic Treaty. Ms. Sumuvuori and Ms. Lehtonen highlighted the importance of acting in accordance with the slogan of the Helsinki meeting "From Urgency to Action" and called on the international community to intensify action against climate change and its impacts in Antarctica. Ms. Gualinga, representing the Youth, emphasized the dramatic global effects of climate change, from the Amazon rainforest to the Arctic and Antarctic, and reminded of the responsibility of today's decision-makers for future generations.

In accordance with the decision of the ATCM-44 in Berlin, the first joint ATCM-CEP session on Climate Change was held in Helsinki on June 2. The day started with the inspirational kick-off session, during which the Secretary General of the World Meteorological Organization, Dr. Petteri Taalas and the Executive Secretary of UNFCCC, Mr. Simon Stiell highlighted the central role of the Antarctic in the global climate system and the importance of GHG emissions reductions. The Key Note Speaker Dr. Valérie Masson-Delmotte, Co-Chair of IPCC Working Group 1, emphasized seriousness, urgency and action and underlined the need for rapid environmental governance responses and research advances to inform decision-making.

Concluding the climate discussions, the Consultative Parties adopted the *Helsinki Declaration on Climate Change in the Antarctic* highlighting the global implications of climate change and the need for urgent action to protect Antarctica.

Parties expressed concerns about the rapidly growing tourism in Antarctica and decided to establish a dedicated process to develop a comprehensive framework for regulation of tourism in Antarctica. They also highlighted the importance to implement the already approved ATCM Measures M4 (2004) and M15 (2009).

Throughout the discussions, Parties highlighted the importance of Article 7 of the Protocol on Environmental Protocol, which prohibits any activity relating to mineral resources, other than scientific research. It was emphasized that the ban on mining is one of the core provisions of the Protocol, which does not have an expiry date.

The Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) considered a wide array of issues, and through its advice to the Parties contributed to strengthening the implementation of the Environmental Protocol. Its advice included management of protected areas, efficiency of the environmental impact assessment system, climate change response, environmental monitoring and conservation of Antarctic flora and fauna. The Committee expressed great concern that an outbreak of avian flu in Antarctica could be a detrimental threat to Antarctic wildlife, and advised the Parties on the importance of developing and implementing appropriate preventive actions. The CEP will continue to work to promote the effectiveness and enhance the work of the Committee.

Finland and Argentina co-hosted the Topical Session on the harmonized implementation of the IMOs Polar Code. There were engaged discussions on the need to continue prioritizing the harmonized implementation and effective

enforcement of the IMO Polar Code in the Multi-year Strategic Work Plan. Furthermore, ship owners and operators of vessels in Arctic and Antarctic waters were called to recognize and thoroughly implement the requirements of the Polar Code.

The Helsinki meeting acknowledged the growing number of women in Antarctic policy-making, science and operations and highlighted the importance of equality and inclusiveness in the implementation of the Antarctic Treaty. Many Parties announced their commitment to promoting inclusivity and diversity in their national Antarctic programs. The meeting also emphasized the importance of gender-neutral and respectful inclusive language in spoken and written documentation, reporting and other forms of communication.

The next ATCM will be hosted by India from 20 to 30 May 2024.