



Closing Remarks

Jérôme Béquignon, Senior Coordinator, Brussels Office, European Space Agency (ESA)

It is not surprising that these two sessions have reflected the tensions mentioned by Stewart Arnold, in the political sense, between those who are interested in the exploitation of the Arctic and those who are more interested in protecting the environment.

The whole workshop was built along these two lines that exist and we have to accept it. For protecting the environment and looking at climate change, it was mentioned that we are not starting from scratch. We build on something like 20 years of work. Many things have been developed; In the sea-ice for instance, in developing pre-operational or nearly operational services in extending iceberg detection, etc.

Further work is required in a number of areas. I will just pick up the example of permafrost. We certainly need to ensure data continuity and data synergy - Harmonisation between various sensors. There is a need to continue research. The EarthCare Mission and the current NASA A-Train mission were mentioned as well. One question was raised in the session which is what do we do after CRYoSAT 2 – this is a scientific mission which provides a very important measurement, that of ice thickness. The question is open whether we shall envisage follow-up missions. There were a lot of comments on whether we should enhance international cooperation with other partners be it the USA, Canada or Russia and others.

Wouter Veening, Chairman / President, Institute for Environmental Security (IES)

This has been an extremely rich experience. What is clear and what this workshop has confirmed is the importance of the Arctic region not only for Europe but also for the world as a whole. Europe of course is a major leader in climate change negotiations and concerns about the Arctic should hopefully be reflected in the on-going negotiations in Cancún and its follow-up. A good early warning system is indispensable and has to rely on space-based information and for an effective early warning system you need data continuity. Both have been mentioned several times today.

Data continuity is extremely expensive and needs international cooperation. Coordination between ESA, NASA and other space agencies has to play an important role here. Otherwise the world cannot allow itself the system of early warning and monitoring for which the need grows everyday. I was pleased with the reaction from the European Parliament, showing a proactive attitude towards the European Council and also the Commission to really have an effective and operative policy with budgets associated to it, for the Arctic. I understand that 2011 will be a year in which these efforts come into fruition. The European Union which maintains outstanding coordination with the Arctic Council and other relevant bodies is now busy working to design an integrated, consolidated Arctic policy. I also would hope that today's contribution by Ecologic about Europe's footprints on the Arctic with of course the still existing gaps filled up, will further be elaborated and translated back to the need for more space-based information so as to accompany Europe's footprint, to maybe change it, and to bring it in line with the requirements of sustainability.

I want to thank everybody for their contributions and it was a great pleasure working with the ESA and we look forward to cooperate and follow-up to this excellent workshop.

Isabelle Duvaux Bechon, Head of Future and Strategic, Studies, Director General's Policy Office, European Space Agency (ESA)

A few words about the future:

The presentations will be available via internet so that you can spend some more time on them. Tonight I will finalise an information note to our Council. It will be a short document. The Council was promised to have an activity report. Beginning next week we will start finalising the preparation of a study in the framework of the General Studies Programme to do more thorough analysis of the policy needs and priorities for the member states, for the EU and the international partners. It will be a 6-month study. There will be an ITT sent out to receive proposals - Six months so that we have the results one year from now. So in time to decide what we prepare or not for the next Council at ministerial level that should be held in 2012.

The objective is to do a survey of the activities and consolidate the policy needs. This will help us to identify where we are going because the different possibilities we have for the future, either to show that there is coordination between activities that exist, and that these activities in the individual programmes cover the needs that we can manage, or also a possibility that there may be a new programme or a separate programme. This option is not the favoured one because it is a bit complex. But we are keeping this possibility open so that at the next Council where we report on the progress we can give information on what are the needs that we have identified and what are the needs we think we can cover with future activities.

I want to thank you all, those who contributed, those who were present. I hope it was useful. We are only midway. We should keep in touch. Don't hesitate to communicate, send information and ask information to try to support the network.