

Press release: UArctic Rectors meet in Monaco to deepen cooperation towards a sustainable Arctic

For immediate release

January 9, 2023

Leads of higher education institutions, members of the University of the Arctic (UArctic) network, concerned with the Arctic and its relations with the world, are meeting at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco on January 12-13, 2023 with the theme “Academic cooperation as a solution for achieving sustainable goals in a rapidly changing Arctic world”. The aim is to develop and deepen cooperation ties both inside and outside academia to address the challenges and opportunities arising in the Arctic. The meeting participants will focus especially on how Arctic institutions and members of UArctic in general can work more closely together while also seeking intersectoral connections to address the challenges we are facing in a rapidly changing world. This meeting, organized in collaboration with the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation, is a joint initiative of UArctic, the Oceanographic Institute, Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation, and the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (UVSQ), associate member of the University of Paris-Saclay.

Climate change increasingly impacts our planet, reflecting on the circumpolar regions and the Arctic nearly four times as much as the rest of the globe; a phenomenon that has been identified as “Arctic amplification”. As the latest research shows, changes in the Arctic have the potential to strongly impact the world with irreversible negative effects. We urgently need science to find the best ways to address the critical problems, not just in theory but also in practice. In order to act swiftly, we need collaboration across organizations and nations, and we need the combined expertise and knowledge of various actors.

The meeting discussions will take place under four sessions, each including a keynote speech followed by a panel:

- The Green Shift, energy crisis, and quest for natural resources: impacts on the Arctic environment and communities
- Arctic societies and communities in a rapidly changing world: to what extent is the renewed interest in the Arctic welcome?
- The role of oceans in the Green Shift: research gaps and requirements (transport, deep sea minerals, fish, local hunting, training of experts)
- Arctic cooperation in higher education and research: the need to re-think and intensify academic and intersectoral cooperation

The themes reflect some of the most critical and debated issues that the Arctic region and its inhabitants are facing as a result of the world in need of sustainable solutions. As creators and providers of knowledge, education and research institutions in the Arctic play an important role in developing those solutions. By increasing and deepening academic collaboration and combining their expertise, institutions can contribute significantly to sustainability goals in a way that serves both the world and the Arctic.

In addition to leads of higher education institutions from several countries, the meeting will engage members of the UArctic Board and other representatives. Invited high-level speakers include:

- Sara Olsvig, International Chair, Inuit Circumpolar Conference (ICC), Greenland
- Vladimir Ryabinin, Executive Secretary, Assistant Director General, Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission, UNESCO, France
- Sir Frederik Paulsen, Chair of the Board of UArctic

Monaco and the Poles, Over 100 Years of Relations

Prince Albert I, explorer and visionary, founder of the Oceanographic Institute of Monaco, opened the way at the end of the 19th century by organizing several expeditions in the Arctic and Spitsbergen with the aim to become better acquainted with environments which at that time were little known and well-preserved. In 2022 and for a period of two years, the Oceanographic Institute has put Arctic and Antarctic at the centre of its new programme, including the publication of the book *At the heart of the polar worlds, Challenged by global warming and exploitation* by Glénat and the major “Polar Mission” exhibition at the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco, in order to raise awareness and mobilize the public on a very large scale.

Some one hundred years after Prince Albert I, climate change has produced a very different situation. After following in the steps of His great-great-grandfather to the North Pole and rounding off the path by visiting the South Pole, HSH Prince Albert II has made His commitment, convinced that only international cooperation can save the poles. The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation and UArctic have collaborated for over a decade in research development, education, and awareness about northern environmental issues and fight against climate change. His Serene Highness Prince Albert II of Monaco will join the Rectors Meeting in person and deliver the welcome address on the morning of January 13.

UArctic Rectors Meetings are convened once every 1-2 years for the heads of UArctic higher education institution members. Typically UArctic Rectors Meetings result in a joint statement or declaration by the Rectors. The previous UArctic Rectors Meeting was hosted by the University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (UVSQ) in Versailles in December 2021.

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About the organizers

The University of the Arctic (UArctic) is a network of 170+ universities, colleges, research institutes, and other organizations concerned with education and research in and about the North. UArctic builds and strengthens collective resources and infrastructures that enable our member institutions to better serve their constituents and their regions. Through cooperation in education, research, and outreach we enhance human capacity in the North, promote viable communities and sustainable economies, and forge global partnerships. Created through the Arctic Council, UArctic is committed to upholding its principles of sustainable development as well as the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. UArctic is constituted as an international association based in Finland.

www.uarctic.org

The Oceanographic Institute, Prince Albert I of Monaco Foundation, was founded in 1906 by Prince Albert I. Recognised as being in the public interest, the Foundation has been actively supporting the Ocean for over a century. It carries out its mission of environmental outreach via its two facilities – the Oceanographic Museum of Monaco and the Maison de l’Océan in Paris – and by bringing together players from the worlds of politics, science, business, the associative sector and the general public. The Foundation is at the initiative of numerous projects on the national and international stage (symposiums, exhibitions, teaching programmes...) with the aim to promote sustainable management of the Ocean. Interest in polar regions has been enshrined in Monaco’s DNA for over a century and is part of the new programme developed by the Oceanographic Institute, including the “Polar Mission” exhibition which offers an immersive experience into the heart of the Arctic and the Antarctic where the major issues concerning these lands of extremes, remote and yet vital for the global climate, are decrypted.

www.oceano.org

University of Versailles Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (UVSQ) is a multidisciplinary institution located 15 kilometers west of Paris, in the district of Yvelines. Home to over 17,000 students, UVSQ offers a large range of courses at bachelor, master and doctorate level, in different academic fields such as environmental studies, science and technology, engineering, medicine, law, political science, human and social sciences, economics and management. UVSQ is an active member of the regional and European research as well as higher education networks and communities, with multiple effective partnerships worldwide. UVSQ has been a member of the University of the Arctic since 2011, and it counts about 80 researchers regularly engaged in polar research.

www.uvsq.fr

The Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation (PA2F) has been working since 2006 to protect the environment and promote sustainable development. Active at an international level, the Foundation focuses its actions on three main areas: limiting the effects of climate change and promoting renewable energies, preserving biodiversity, managing water resources and combating desertification. The Foundation works in three main geographical areas: the Mediterranean Basin, the Polar Regions and the Least Developed Countries. In 2022 the Prince Albert II of Monaco Foundation launched the Polar Initiative with the ambition to strengthen the Foundation's work and impact for a greater protection of both North and South poles.

www.fpa2.org