



# HOUSE OF LORDS

Revised transcript of evidence taken before

## **The Select Committee on the Arctic**

Inquiry on

### **THE ARCTIC**

*Evidence Session No. 19*

*Heard in Public*

*Questions 250 - 259*

**TUESDAY 4 NOVEMBER 2014**

**11.40 am**

**Witness: Matthew King**

Members present

Lord Teverson (Chairman)  
Lord Addington  
Baroness Browning  
Lord Hannay of Chiswick  
Viscount Hanworth  
Lord Hunt of Chesterton  
Lord Oxburgh  
Baroness Neville-Jones  
Lord Soley  
Lord Tugendhat

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**Examination of Witness**

**Matthew King**, Head of Unit C1, Maritime Policy, Atlantic, Outermost Regions and Arctic, Directorate-General of Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, European Commission

**Q250 The Chairman:** Mr King, welcome to the House of Lords Select Committee on the Arctic. We have just had a session on biodiversity with witnesses from WWF, and we are very keen to move on to fisheries and the broader European Union area. You have had a list of our own interests, I hope.

**Matthew King:** Yes.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps I could ask you to introduce yourself. Then, if you are happy, we can move straight into questions, unless there is anything specific you want to say beforehand.

**Matthew King:** No, that is fine. I am Matthew King. I am an official at the European Commission and I am in charge of the unit in the Directorate-General for Maritime Affairs and Fisheries that is responsible primarily for the Arctic, the Atlantic and the outermost regions of the European Union.

**The Chairman:** I am aware that the questions are quite broad on some European policy issues, and if there is anything that you do not feel is completely in your area we will be very happy to have written evidence from the Commission following this session.

I will start by asking you how European Union policy towards the Arctic region has developed and evolved in recent years, and what the current priorities are for the EU in the Arctic. I suppose I am asking that within the context that clearly a number of the Arctic Council members are also members of the European Union but others are not, so the Arctic is partly an internal EU issue and partly an external affairs issue. We are interested in your views.

**Matthew King:** Indeed. Thank you very much, my Lord Chairman. The policy towards the Arctic is not solely about the Arctic Council, but let me begin by explaining a little of the evolution of EU policy towards the Arctic. In 2008 we made a first policy statement that looked tentatively at how the EU could become involved in the work of the Arctic Council. We considered such issues as the broader governance of the Arctic as an area. Governance may not be such a good word; stewardship is possibly a better word. The policy statement was well received by the European Parliament and by the Council of Europe, the council of the member states of the EU, which both issued their own statements on the Commission's policy work, but I think that our policy towards the Arctic and our endeavours to become observers in the Arctic Council were slightly derailed by the enactment in the European Union of a ban on the import of seal products in 2009-10. I know there is a second question on that, so perhaps we can come to that in more detail later. That made us a lot more aware of the interests and competing politics and polities engaged in the Arctic and we took a step back, although we had made a formal request for observer status on the Arctic Council. In 2012, on the basis of some further policy reflection, the Commission, and the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Baroness Ashton, and Commissioner

Damanaki, issued a second policy statement that reviewed and superseded in some sense our 2008 effort. We tried to make a much more positive contribution to the work of the Arctic Council, and we wanted to put our best selves forward so that other Arctic Council members would be aware of the work that the European Union is currently doing and continues to do in the Arctic, notably in the research contribution that we make.

We also understand, of course, that the European Union has a huge environmental impact in the Arctic. Our footprint is quite considerable in black carbon terms, and we have some responsibility for that. We are also aware, of course, that there are untapped potential resources in the Arctic area, and while most of them may reside within the exclusive economic zones of Arctic Council members today, a significant proportion of the Arctic is the high seas and is therefore not subject to any international jurisdiction except the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

We are also trying to build up relations bilaterally and collectively with Arctic Council members. We have made a more significant effort in that sense through attendance at Arctic Council meetings and working groups, and we have embarked on a dialogue with indigenous peoples of the Arctic, who are significant political players in the Arctic Council itself. The journey, however, has not yet finished. At the last ministerial meeting of the Arctic Council, the EU's application for observer status was positively received. However, formalisation of the EU's observer status was dependent on a successful resolution of the seal ban issue with Canada. Again, we might come to that in a second question.

Going forward, the EU's observer status on the Arctic Council is somewhat in limbo, but with the new Commission just having taken office three days ago we are in the process of re-evaluating where we want to go with our Arctic policy over the next few years. The Council of Europe, the council of member states, has requested the Commission to come forward

with yet another policy statement on the Arctic by the end of 2015. As we move towards that date, we have launched a public consultation to seek the views and advice of stakeholders in the Arctic, and of course of member states, which are observers themselves on the Arctic Council.

In a certain sense, Arctic Council observer status is one strand that could be a fruitful strand of Arctic policy, but there are other things that the European Union can and will continue to do, I imagine, in the Arctic context. We are major development donors in the Arctic region, of course mainly in the—shall we say European—zone of the Arctic, from Greenland to western Russia, and I think we need to consider how we can maximise the bang for our buck from all the European investment programmes that benefit northern Europe and the Arctic, especially Greenland. We have exclusive competence for fisheries management in the European Union—or rather, I should say, for the conservation of biological resources at sea. Fisheries could be a significant issue in the Arctic in future years. We are also developing a Northern Dimension policy with, among others, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and there is an EU strategy for the Baltic Sea region, for example, so we may consider other strands to our Arctic policy that are not dependent solely on the Arctic Council.

**The Chairman:** Thank you. Obviously Arctic policy involves not just EU member states but the EEA as well. Are they integrated into Arctic policy? Of course the EEA affects mainly the single market and not fisheries, but just very briefly, how do those two connect?

**Matthew King:** We have significant bilateral relations with Norway and Iceland on fisheries and Arctic issues, but when it comes to a Commission policy statement that policy statement is delivered to the member states of the European Union.

**Q251 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** There is something rather anomalous—I imagine you feel that too—in the issue of observer status being taken hostage, as it were, in the first place by

the Canadians over the seal ban and possibly now by the Russians over the sanctions that were imposed as a result of their seizure of Crimea and their destabilisation of eastern Ukraine. Yet around the table in the Arctic Council, which is not so far accepting EU observer status, are a number of countries that are party to the seal ban and to the sanctions. That does seem to me to be a little anomalous. The EU is not some extraterrestrial organisation floating out there; it consists of 28 member states, of which quite a few are there and quite a few are also observers. Do they never point out this anomaly?

**Matthew King:** Thank you for your question, my Lord. Indeed they do. The issue with the Arctic Council, however, is that it is a consensus-based organisation, and there is a sense that while Russia has enacted its own seal ban—and the US has had one in place since the 1960s I believe—it was the EU seal ban that had the most economic but also emotional impact, I believe, on the indigenous peoples of Greenland and northern Canada. There was a sense that the EU was too big for the Arctic Council to swallow, so together these issues resulted in some concerns. But of course where you have a consensus organisation and where some member states of the EU are enjoying privileged access and membership of such an international organisation, there is a sense that it is possible to look two ways on an issue. As it is, we have made our position very clear at the highest levels to the Russian and Canadian authorities, and we shall see what comes of that in time.

**The Chairman:** We will come on to the seal ban later in question 3.

**Q252 Lord Soley:** Can you explain how the Northern Dimension—the European Union plus Russia, Iceland and Norway—fits into the EU's Arctic policy, and can you explain particularly the problems of overlap, or of any interaction between the Northern Dimension and the Arctic Council?

**Matthew King:** I will be very brief in my answer here, and if possible I will supplement my answer with written evidence later. The two are designed to be complementary. The areas of overlap relate quite simply to the funding available, mostly for northern Russia, through the Northern Dimension environmental fund. The EU has, with other members of the Northern Dimension, put around €100 million on the table so far for the environmental clean-up of northern Russia. Similarly, the Arctic Council has about €10 million available for the same sort of projects, so there is a risk of overlap there unless the two are co-ordinated. The Northern Dimension accepts the Arctic Council as an observer in its work, but I would not like to comment beyond identifying that potential area of overlap.

**Lord Soley:** It is an important area for the Committee and the Chairman, and more evidence on the relationship between the two would be very useful.

**Matthew King:** Indeed, and I shall provide further submission.

**Lord Tugendhat:** Perhaps I may come back to the question touched on by Lord Hannay, along with the question that has just been asked. Can you say a word about how Denmark plays its hand on these discussions? Does it play a leading role in council discussions on the subject or does it see itself as some form of bridge builder? How does Denmark play its hand?

**Matthew King:** Denmark acts in the Arctic Council on behalf of Greenland and the Faroe Islands because of its foreign policy competence for those members of the kingdom of Denmark. There is bridge-building, yes, but it is clear that Denmark's interests—it is difficult for me to speak for Denmark; this is an opinion—reside mainly in ensuring that resources in Greenland are well managed. Uranium and other mining resources are to be found there, along with significant fisheries. Its own relations with the US, Canada and Russia on a bilateral basis and are of course extremely important. Naturally it has supported the EU's

application for observer status, but it is difficult to say how much influence it is possible for individual member states to have—I would include Sweden and Finland in that comment—given the previous strong opposition by Canada and what appears today to be quite an entrenched Russian position.

**The Chairman:** Baroness Browning, I think we have covered a little of your area, but I am sure that you have other questions.

**Q253 Baroness Browning:** Perhaps I may move on to other aspects of the seal ban. Following the determination of the WTO, I understand that Inuit seal skins are perceived as being a quite separate commodity for marketing from the overall ban, which deals with the east coast seal hunt. I gather that discussions have been held recently in order to work through what the WTO determination requires and that there has been some progress, although no timescales have been set. How realistic is it that the Inuit seal skins will be identified so that they can be verified as a separate commodity? Also, after all the publicity, are they ever likely to regain the marketplace position in Europe that seal skins once had? In other words, is this going to be a solution to the EU's application for observer status or is it just being dragged out as a bit of a red herring?

**Matthew King:** It is certainly part of the solution to the EU's observer status. The EU's discussions with Canada on the seal ban are now concluded. At a recent EU-Canada summit a statement was issued following some negotiations in which, following the WTO ruling, Canada has agreed to make use of the exemption that exists under the EU seal ban regulation to allow the import of indigenous, traditionally caught seal skins into the EU. In practical terms, some work needs to be done for that to happen. The Canadian authorities need to identify an organisation that will be responsible for tracking and tracing the indigenously captured seal skins. Whether that will be done in short order is anyone's guess,

but the Canadian Government have clearly said that they are no longer standing in the way of the EU's application for observer status.

**Baroness Browning:** Are you in a position to tell us the difference between how the indigenous population hunts seals and the reason for the EU banning the import of seal products from seal hunts in the first place? Is there a tangible example of how different the two processes are?

**Matthew King:** The ban was announced as the result of significant pressure exerted by environmental groups from across the whole of the European Union, including the UK.

**Baroness Browning:** I gather that Miss Bardot had a lot to say about it.

**Matthew King:** Indeed. These are emotive issues and the European Parliament was very supportive of a ban, as were the Environment Ministers of all the member states. The ban was enacted on that basis.

**Baroness Browning:** I just want to come to some sort of conclusion on whether, if this progresses now that the talks have been completed and the indigenous population's product can start to flow again, you are going to run up against exactly the same objections as you did in the first place. To put it quite bluntly, we have all seen programmes about how seal cubs are clubbed to death on ice floes and so on. Is there any difference in the way the Inuit deal with them?

**Matthew King:** The Inuit are killing seals for their food and subsistence, which is materially different from commercial seal hunts where the seals are not used for human consumption. In terms of the methods used, indigenous practices have obviously evolved over time as well, so they are not that different from the way seals are killed commercially. However, the scale is smaller and the purpose of the killing is larger. That is why the exception was put into the seal ban regulation. Once, and if, seal skins appear on the European market, it will

be anyone's guess how the citizenry at large will react, but in terms of the politics between the EU and Canada, the issue of allowing indigenous seal skins has been resolved, at least for the purposes of the Arctic Council.

**The Chairman:** We now come on to a number of fisheries issues, which I hope we will be able to keep reasonably separate.

**Q254 Lord Hunt of Chesterton:** The first question is about how good our knowledge is in evaluating the current state of the fish stocks and tracking them. It is not clear to me where the EU's interest lies in this. Do you extend into the areas north of Russia as well? Does the technology and science of your EU programmes help in understanding the tracking of fish stocks?

**Matthew King:** To be brief, at the moment there is small-scale fishing on the shelves around the Arctic. The high seas of the Arctic are very deep; you can imagine the sides of a bowl sloping down to quite a few thousand metres. But the shelves north of Russia are very shallow, and are to be found at around 25 metres. Apart from Norwegian and Russian fishing around Svalbard, where we understand the cod have migrated already, there is little to no commercial fishing in the Arctic at present. There is next to zero knowledge about the state of fish stocks in the Arctic today, nor is there much knowledge about the ecosystem and the marine environment, especially given that the high seas area is covered in ice for most of the year, although as we know that ice is diminishing. However, we also know that as the seas are warming, stocks are beginning to migrate north up from the Atlantic. There have been recent movements of mackerel stock further north, and there is already a political dimension to that in discussions between the EU and Norway and Iceland, as the stock rotates around the north Atlantic at higher circulations through their waters. It is a likely guess that fisheries on a commercial scale will take place in the Arctic at some point in the future. Only the

United States has banned commercial fisheries off the northern coast of Alaska. No other state has introduced a measure to do that so far. As stocks begin to move further north and as the ice begins to recede in the summer, it is likely that fisheries activity will take place. The question then needs to be asked: is anyone going to do anything about it and what are the ramifications? We have said in both our 2008 and 2012 statements that we believe that the existing regional fisheries organisation could expand its area of activity and invest in the science required to determine whether and how commercial fishing could or should take place. Some have called for an immediate moratorium on fisheries in the Arctic until such time as sufficient—

**Lord Hunt of Chesterton:** Can I interrupt you? Iceland is to the north of the Arctic Circle.

**Matthew King:** Only a very tiny bit of it.

**Lord Hunt of Chesterton:** I see. So the southern part of Iceland, where most of the fish are, is excluded from your remarks. We are talking about what happens to the north.

**Matthew King:** Indeed. The North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission already deals with fishing here. We are talking about the Arctic fisheries that are, shall we say, north of the tip of the landmass of Scandinavia, Russia and Greenland. As I say, some have called for a moratorium, but the so-called Arctic Five—the United States, Canada, Russia, Norway and Denmark on behalf of Greenland—have begun their own discussions in camera, as it were, on whether and how they, as the Arctic coastal states, should control this future fishery. That is a topic of some importance.

**The Chairman:** Perhaps I may ask a question on the scientific side. Is a specific programme being undertaken to understand better the current state of the ecosystems in the high Arctic, or is nothing like that in place at the moment?

**Matthew King:** Under current research programmes, we are encouraging the International Council for the Exploration of the Seas to move its research further north in anticipation of a future fishery, but to date there has been no significant exploration of the potential for fisheries in the high Arctic.

**The Chairman:** Okay, thank you.

**Q255 Viscount Hanworth:** My question has been somewhat pre-empted. I was intent on asking how flexibly the current Arctic fisheries are managed, but you are saying that they are not very extensive. The question therefore becomes one of whether sufficient provisions will be in place to accommodate whatever fisheries are derived in the future. I am familiar with the dysfunction of the European Union fisheries policy, albeit that our Chairman has told me that changes are under way that will amend this. Perhaps you would be prepared to comment on the difficulties of that policy and its quota system and whether lessons have been learnt that might be applied to Arctic fisheries in the future. Finally, what are the main threats to the sustainability of Arctic fisheries that a management regime should take into account?

**The Chairman:** We do not want to go through the whole of the common fisheries policy and why it works and does not work. There will be lessons that might be learnt for any future regime.

**Viscount Hanworth:** No, but we must be aware of its dysfunction. I wonder whether we are taking any steps to amend that and whether those steps might lead to a better policy for Arctic fisheries management.

**Matthew King:** Perhaps I may comment on two innovations in the reformed common fisheries policy that has been adopted recently. One is the idea that fish stocks should be fished at the maximum sustainable yield based on evidence and science. That was possibly

not always the case. The second is a move towards the regional management of fisheries. In the past there was a one-size-fits-all approach to the common fisheries policy, which was difficult to manage at the local level. There has been a devolution, in a sense, to regional authorities at the sea basin level to manage their fisheries in compliance with the broad provisions of the common fisheries policy that are set at the EU level. If those ideas could be taken on board by the Arctic coastal states and used in their discussions about the management of a future Arctic fishery, we would then be able to see the science and the evidence before any significant fishing takes place. There would be local management of the fishery that would involve the coastal states and the flag states—the states from which the trawlers actually come.

**Viscount Hanworth:** It seems to me that the EU has tried to address the problem of fisheries by implementing quotas, but it might well have tried to staunch the development of technologies that now enable trawlers to identify shoals of fish wherever they might be and wipe them out. Is it plausible that an Arctic policy could place a limitation on the technologies available to fishers? That could be a substantial part of the solution to the problem, or do we have to live with modern fishing methods?

**Matthew King:** I would posit the opinion that it is difficult to stand in the way of technology. If one party has that advantage in identification of stocks, it would be difficult politically to deny EU fishers the same advantage—hence the importance of managing the amount of fish actually landed via a quota system. But you need to have sufficient science behind that to understand what annual reduction of biomass the stock can effectively tolerate: how much can you take out of the water to keep not only that stock but other stocks that are co-dependent within the ecosystem healthy enough for future generations, or even for fish stocks the following year?

**Viscount Hanworth:** It seems to me that modern technology enables one to fish very productively from a depleted fishing stock, whereas more limited technology would enable one to derive the same catch from a much more abundant fish stock. Surely that is the essential issue with fisheries.

**Matthew King:** Yes, but then it becomes economically less efficient for the fishers to carry on their work. The value of the catch would be reduced, which would mean that subsidy requests in relation to fuel and so on would increase. The public cost of maintaining a fishery would be higher.

**Viscount Hanworth:** With respect, I find that very doubtful. That is because this high-tech is used simply for the purpose of pre-empting fish stocks that other rival fishers might also be going for. With a restriction on the technology, that would not arise because there would be much more abundant fish stocks.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** I would like to ask a question in the same area.

**The Chairman:** Mr King, do you want to add to your remarks on this subject?

**Matthew King:** Perhaps I could make one final point. It is a question of the stewardship or governance framework that one wishes to put in place.

**The Chairman:** That is what we are going to come on to next.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Could I ask a supplementary question first? Would it be unfair to say that there is as yet no example anywhere in the world of a fisheries regulatory regime that has been instituted before substantial damage has been done to the fish stocks in that region?

**Matthew King:** Not to my knowledge.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** It is therefore a real challenge to do something in the Arctic before we manage to damage the fish stocks.

**Matthew King:** Indeed, but on the positive side at least discussions have begun, even though they are restricted to a limited group.

**Q256 Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Could we move on to the issue of the regulatory framework? If I understand it rightly, the Commission's opening bid, as it were, has been to look for an extension to the geographical coverage of the existing regional organisations. Presumably that means organisations covering both the north-west and the north-east Atlantic. I do not know if there is anything in the Pacific that might be an equivalent, and I fear I am quite ignorant on that point, but an extension, if I have understood it rightly, is your preference. You have not pursued the idea of having a separate Arctic regime for handling the high seas areas of the Arctic, the EEZ areas being already covered by the littoral states. Is that preference firm, is it an either/or, or what?

**Matthew King:** At the moment the position is that our preference would be for the North East Atlantic Fisheries Commission to extend its remit into the Arctic. However, neither Norway nor Russia is in favour of that solution. We have not put an alternative suggestion on the table and nor have we suggested the creation of a new regional fisheries management organisation. That would require the compliance and consent of the coastal states, notably Norway and Russia. The most promising avenue that we can see at this point is that of trying to insert ourselves into the discussions that are taking place between the Arctic Five coastal states so that the interests of European fishermen and European consumers are also taken into account. However, this is still quite a long-term project. Sea ice coverage during the summer in the Arctic high seas area is still significant and we do not yet know when the ice will recede significantly enough to allow large-scale commercial fishing—and, of course, those waters are treacherous even at the best of times. So, as with the transport routes across the north of Russia, it is very difficult to assess the likelihood of commercial activity

taking off on a significant scale over the course of the next five to 10 years. It may be premature to posit a new regional fisheries management organisation today, but we do want to be associated with the discussions that are taking place at the moment.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Am I right in thinking that the five members of the Arctic Council who have been putting their heads together on this have no greater rights in the high seas area than any other country?

**Matthew King:** Yes. Of course they do not.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Unfortunately, fish have a habit of swimming from one area to another, so that is not an entire answer to the problem. However, those countries cannot tell the world who may and may not fish in the high seas area.

**Matthew King:** Of course they may not. You are absolutely correct. The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea prevails and all states with a legitimate interest in the fishery would have as much right to participate in any interim measures or discussions as any others. In fact, they would have an obligation to do so.

**Lord Hannay of Chiswick:** Perhaps I may put a final question on enforcement. I think you have said very clearly that this is not an immediate problem but that it could likely become one that would require regulation. If you had such regulation, who would enforce it, particularly in the high seas area?

**Matthew King:** That question is difficult to answer because, first, there is little surveillance of or indeed surveillance capacity in the Arctic, although obviously we are trying to improve our contribution to that. Secondly, in the high seas area the stock, the biomass, is a resource that belongs to all mankind. It is not possible, unless it is done via a specific treaty agreed among the states with a dispute settlement and/or a sanctioning regime attached to it, to enforce restrictions. One could take action unilaterally or bilaterally, but in the absence of an

agreed regime among the states, at the moment there is no surveillance or enforcement capacity.

**Q257 Lord Tugendhat:** I also want to talk about maritime surveillance. Is the EU likely to play a role in improving maritime surveillance and security in the Arctic, and is it possible for the European Union to play a stronger role in the development of search and rescue operations in the European Arctic region?

**Matthew King:** The main issue here is one of capacity. As of today, only the Norwegian Coast Guard has the capacity to support significant search and rescue operations in the European Arctic. The European Union contribution that we are trying to funnel through both the Arctic Council and bilaterally via the European Maritime Safety Agency seeks to assist by providing pictures of what is happening at sea. Through software and the databases that are available to coastguards, EMSA can provide pictures of the movements and positions of ships. When the Galileo satellites are fully operational, they will also have an Arctic capacity that will be able to provide images of what is happening at sea. However, ships, helicopters and so on are not the EU's domain; they are a national competence. But we would endeavour to provide increasing support, especially as we might see not only that fisheries might move northwards but tourists in large numbers on ocean liners. I think that EMSA will have quite a significant role to play in providing information.

We also have a major programme under way in other parts of what I will call EU waters in the Mediterranean, the Baltic and elsewhere to try to encourage naval and coastguard craft, fisheries control vessels and so on, to pool their information resources on a cross-border and cross-agency basis. That would give them all a much fuller picture of what is happening at sea, and of course going forwards we would like to make these opportunities available in the Arctic as well.

**Lord Tugendhat:** You have used the word “we” in reference to the European Union, but again I suppose Denmark has a coastguard operation around Greenland and is involved on its own account in precisely the sort of things you have just mentioned.

**Matthew King:** Indeed, but it does so with relatively few vessels, which have to cover a huge area. It is probably fair to say that an accident at sea in the Arctic today could have significant consequences because of the huge size of the area and the temperature of the water, which of course has an impact on survivability. The EU could help by providing information about where ships are located so that those nearest to hand can be asked by local coastguards and navies to provide support. They could be contacted more quickly than approaching, say, a Danish ship that is 1,000 kilometres away off the coast of Greenland. That may be too late.

**Lord Addington:** Is there any way in which you are placed to co-ordinate some form of search and rescue provision across the whole of the Arctic? I ask that because it seems to be extremely difficult to do at the moment. There is a great deal of resistance to people going in. Moreover, as most of the Arctic coastline that is going to be used is Russian, there are diplomatic issues. Do you have any means of finding a way in there in order to co-ordinate with the Russian military, which presumably would be at the back of any of these efforts?

**Matthew King:** I think it is extremely unlikely that the EU would be invited by the Russian military to provide any assistance. It is really within the zone that is north of continental Europe where the EU could most usefully make available its information services on the positioning of ships, even though these services are available on a global basis. But in terms of search and rescue in the Arctic, there is an agreement among the members of the Arctic Council—not the observer nations, but the members—that they will assist each other where possible in providing assets and resources. I believe that an exercise will take place under

the US chairmanship of the Arctic Council in 2016. Until then, it is fair to say that no one really knows how search and rescue could work in the Arctic on a practical basis.

**Lord Soley:** A few years ago Britain had the capacity to operate long-range aircraft surveillance, but we do not have it any more. Does the Commission have a view on whether it would be useful to have that sort of capacity from a state, or is it something that has not crossed your desk?

**Matthew King:** That issue is not within the competence of the European Union.

**The Chairman:** Before we come to the remaining questions, as part of its broader remit would the EU help to fund some sort of European aspect of the Arctic in terms of search and rescue? Could it contribute to that, as it affects a number of European states and vessels?

**Matthew King:** The EU budget works more or less on a project basis, so it is conceivable that a project could be launched using EU funding to look at how search and rescue operations could be supported or how different agencies within member states could better link their efforts in search and rescue scenarios.

**The Chairman:** Something that has been mentioned in the documentation that we have had is the potential for a European Arctic observatory. Would that include this sort of provision, or is it completely different?

**Matthew King:** No. There is a discussion at the moment about a Euro-Arctic information centre that theoretically, because it has not been agreed yet, that could co-locate all the research pertaining to the Arctic.

**The Chairman:** We will come on to research in our final question.

**Q258 Lord Oxburgh:** Can you tell us a little about EU science efforts in the Arctic? How are they planned and supported and what are their prospects?

**Matthew King:** I have brought along with me a small booklet which I will leave with the Committee secretariat. It explains in detail the research that has been funded by the European Union over the past seven years. Between 2007 and 2013 some €200 million were put towards looking at the impacts of climate change, encouraging researchers to work together on how research vessels can be used collaboratively by different member states, how EU and Russian scientists could work together, the EU's footprint in the Arctic, the potential melting of the Greenland ice sheet, the impact of the Arctic's changing climate on lower latitudes and so on. This research effort, which involves all member states, will be continued and indeed increased over the next seven-year funding period through the Horizon 2020 programme.

If I could add just one more word, in 2012 the European Union agreed with the United States and Canada to establish a transatlantic research alliance, and as part of that transatlantic effort it was agreed that they would also look at Arctic research and try to collaborate further in the area. That does not mean, of course, that the EU will necessarily be funding US and Canadian research efforts or vice versa, but all parties will look collaboratively and in a synchronised manner at the same issues so that the research benefits can potentially be much greater.

**Lord Oxburgh:** This is clearly desirable. How is it co-ordinated?

**Matthew King:** The co-ordination takes place through working groups between the EU and the US and the US and Canada, so that calls and proposals for different research projects are aligned and so that the potential outcomes of different research efforts are shared. Possibly the biggest issue with the research spend is how research results find their way either into the public domain or the policy-making domain—or indeed into the commercial sphere. There may be more work to be done on that.

**Q259 Viscount Hanworth:** Can I ask a little question, which will reveal what lay behind my queries about fish stock management? My contention would be that the use of sonar to locate fish shoals should be banned, as should be the encrypted transmission of information as to where they are located. That is transmitted in order to assist sister ships in pre-empting the shoals. The question is: does the European Union have the leverage to implement a policy of this nature: that is, the banning of these scientific accoutrements to modern fishing?

**Matthew King:** In terms of what the EU fleet is able to do, of course the European Union has the authority to enact bans. A ban on the discarding of fish has just been enacted as part of the revised common fisheries policy. But in order for these bans to take effect, a majority of member states need to support them.

**Viscount Hanworth:** The transmission of this information could easily be monitored because it is transmitted via satellites. I am surprised that there has been no progress on this dimension.

**Matthew King:** I shall take that back with me.

**Lord Hunt of Chesterton:** The €200 million covers actual research by the EU, but the fact is that a lot of the research done by, for example, the European Space Agency, is not under that head. One of the most significant developments is the CryoSat satellite programme for monitoring the Arctic. Similarly, the European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts produces reports on ice levels in the Arctic Ocean. There are a lot of other organisations of the European states that have a role to play.

**Matthew King:** That is true. And, of course, the €200 million I referred to does not take account of nationally funded research efforts that are undertaken by EU member states themselves. Those may possibly be up to four times larger than the EU's own.

**Lord Hunt of Chesterton:** Just to make your point, many of the developments in Europe started out as projects. An example would be radar across Europe. It started out as an EU project and then it was picked up by the member states. That is the point you are making and I think that it is a good one.

**The Chairman:** I believe that we have ended on a moment of agreement, which is good. Mr King, thank you for providing evidence to the Committee. We are grateful to you. I will now bring this public session of the Committee to an end.