

Press Release: For release on 12 March 2014

Arctic 2050: Towards ecosystem-based management in a changing Arctic Ocean
European Marine Board Forum discusses the implications of a changing Arctic

About 150 scientists, policy makers and members of industry are gathering today at the 4th European Marine Board Forum in Brussels to discuss how best to manage the consequences of a changing Arctic Ocean for human health and well-being. The European Marine Board has convened this flagship event in collaboration with the European Polar Board, working in association with the European Science Foundation, in the knowledge that industry and science must work together to achieve sustainable management of resources such as fishing and oil and gas exploration while at the same time, protecting and conserving the Arctic environment.

Dramatic changes, largely attributed to anthropogenic activity, have taken place in the Arctic in recent decades. These changes include melting of glaciers and sea ice, altered oceanic current patterns, movement and accumulation of contaminants and range shifts in many species. As a result of these changes the Arctic region is being transformed, with wide-ranging impacts and opportunities including the potential for ice-free shipping routes in the future, increased activity in oil and gas exploration, changes to Arctic fisheries and biodiversity, and impacts on residents' livelihoods.

"At present we are unprepared for the environmental and societal implications of increased human access to the Arctic that will come with the receding ice" explains Professor Peter Haugan from the University of Bergen and vice-Chair of the European Marine Board. *"We have not fully anticipated the consequences of an increase in activities like hydrocarbon exploration, mineral extraction, bioprospecting and pelagic and demersal fisheries"*.

The 4th EMB Forum, recognized as an official ICARP III event, promotes the need for an ecosystem-based management approach in the Arctic Ocean, in order to adapt to and manage rapid environmental change and commercial exploitation, supporting a key recommendation of the recently published Arctic Biodiversity Assessment.¹ Moderated by David Shukman, BBC Science Editor, forum sessions include, 'Living with a Changing Arctic Ocean', 'Utilizing and managing Arctic Ocean resources' and a session on 'Arctic Ocean Observation', building on the European Marine Board call in 2013 for urgent action to increase our observational capacity across the entire Arctic Ocean (EMB, 2013).² Speakers will include industry representatives from Shell, the International Association of Oil and Gas Producers and the International Maritime Organisation.

The forum provides a platform to address ecosystem-based management in the Arctic Ocean by stimulating dialogue across sectors to aid common understanding, collaborative actions and sustainability targets. Later today the forum will culminate with an open panel discussion on the roles of industry and science in achieving sustainable management of the Arctic Ocean.

¹ <http://arcticbiodiversity.is/>

² <http://www.marineboard.eu/images/publications/Getting%20Ready%20for%20an%20Ice-free%20Arctic-151.pdf>

Notes to editors

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A full programme and further information can be viewed on the event website:

<http://www.marineboard.eu/fora/4th-marine-board-forum>

The **European Marine Board** (founded in 1995) provides a pan-European platform for its member organizations to develop common priorities, to advance marine research and to bridge the gap between science and policy, in order to meet future marine science challenges and opportunities.

www.marineboard.eu

The European Marine Board Open Forum series brings together a wide range of marine science stakeholders (scientists, European and national policymakers, pan-European and regional networks, etc.) to discuss and develop a common position on a marine science topic of common concern. The forum bridges the gap between the scientific community, policymakers and other stakeholders to advance the issue at hand.

The 4th EMB Forum is organized in collaboration with the [European Polar Board](http://www.esf.org/epb).

The **European Polar Board** is a strategic advisory body on science policy in the Polar Regions, acting as a voice and high-level facilitator for cooperation between European national funding agencies, national polar institutes and research organizations. Bringing together 24 members from national operators and research institutes in 17 countries, the EPB is playing a central role in the coordination and management of Polar Initiatives at a European level. Furthermore, the EPB is actively liaising with major polar programmes outside Europe including those in the USA, Russia and Canada. www.esf.org/epb

The 4th EMB Forum is an official [ICARP III](http://www.esf.org/icarp) event.

The **Third International Conference on Arctic Research Planning** (ICARP III), conducted by the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) and its partner organizations in 2014-2015, will provide a framework to identify Arctic science priorities for the next decade, to coordinate various Arctic research agendas, to inform policy makers, people who live in or near the Arctic and the global community, and to build constructive relationships between producers and users of knowledge. It will provide a process for integrating priorities for forward-looking, collaborative, interdisciplinary Arctic research and observing and for establishing an inventory of recent and current synthesis documents and major developments in Arctic research. <http://icarp.arcticportal.org>

The European Marine Board and the European Polar Board work in association with the European Science Foundation (ESF), an independent, non-governmental organization that promotes collaboration in scientific research, funding of research and science policy across Europe. www.esf.org