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New comers of the Arctic Council open the Far North



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Abstract. The article is devoted to the study of the elaboration and realization of the Arctic policy in three countries-members of the EU. These are Netherlands, Poland and Spain. Up to now Spain is not very interested in the Arctic, but now it is very interested in the development of the arctic tourism. Netherlands possesses the wide experience in offshore extraction of hydrocarbons, which may be used in the Far North. Poland is very active and aims to unite the observer countries of the Arctic council. The study of the climate change and environmental conditions are the main objects of the interests of these three countries.

Keywords: *arctic policy, global warming, the threat of the flooding of the coastal areas, Svalbard, arctic tourism, arctic technologies for extraction of mineral resources, sustainable development of the Arctic*

Due to the increased attention of the whole world to the Arctic, the European Union countries — Spain, the Netherlands and Poland — in the XXI century are also interested in the Arctic region, which is primarily directed at the study of changes in the Arctic climate and the state of the Arctic environment. This is a common thing that unites these three countries. Identification of features of formation of Arctic policy of these countries, their specific interests in the Arctic, positioning and the role of the Arctic Council are actual. In preparing the article for publication the scientific methods of analysis and synthesis, observation, methods of political and social sciences, statistics were used.

Spain

Unlike Germany, Britain and France, Spain does not have a long tradition of scientific research in the Arctic zone. Spain's interest in the region woke up due to global warming, the threat of rising sea levels and the potential to gain access to its natural resources, especially energy. It is also important that that Spain is the energy-dependant country, therefore, it needs to diversify its fuel supply sources and access to new reserves. The Spanish company Repsol YPF which provides employment for 30 thousand workers and employees is consistently among the top 500 TNCs, while Spain is one of the world's largest importers of oil and gas [1].

However, Spain's interest in the Arctic is not so intense as in circumpolar countries or countries that have been studying the region for a long time already, as almost all opportunities widely discussed in the international media that are opened in the Arctic have a potential character. In this regard, currently the interest of Spain to the Far North is mainly focused on

scientific research purposes: first, it is aimed at the study of climate change and the environment. The decision of some EU member countries to participate in the work of the Arctic Council influenced on the position of Spain, and it acquired the status of observer in the Arctic Council in 2006. Spanish representatives take part in functioning of the Arctic Council working groups, in particular, in the working group on conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF), the Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response Working Group (EPPR) and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) [2, p. 25].

In Spain, the national body for the development and implementation of the national Arctic policy was created: Spanish Polar Committee¹. In the Arctic policy of the kingdom on the forefront, as noted before with enumeration of purposes, there is a research policy conducted with the aim of finding opportunities that are truly open to countries in the Far North. To conduct Arctic research projects Spain has a research vessel named "Hesperides", which can go to the Arctic waters, and it is operated by the Spanish Navy. Spain also has one auxiliary ship Las Palmas. The results of observations and studies come to collect, store and analyze in National Polar Data Centres, the data from which are also used for exchange with partners in scientific cooperation. Fifteen Spanish research centers, most of which are located at universities take part in the Arctic research. The focus of Arctic research in Spain is studying climate change, the state of the marine environment, biological resources and their changes, the impact of ongoing processes in the Arctic on economic activity in the high latitudes. Spanish scientific researchers are participating in five research programs of the European Union, which receive full or partial funding from the EU Seventh Framework Programme.

Higher Scientific Research Council of Spain (Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas) participates in the European ATP program (Arctic Tipping Points) within which the study of marine ecosystems is made.

The Spanish Ministry of Science and Innovation is included in SIOS (Svalbard Integrated Earth Observing System), which has a support base on Svalbard.

Polytechnic University of Catalonia participates in program ACCES, aimed at the study of the climate and the natural environment of the Arctic, including the observation of impacts of these changes on the economy and society (Arctic Climate Change, Economy and Society / Climate Change and the Arctic environment WG).

¹-COMNAR. Comité Polar Español. URL: <https://www.comnap.aq/Members/spain/SitePages/Home.aspx> (accessed: 08 June 2016).

Madrid Polytechnic University, the University of Barcelona, the company Navantia SA, number of other European partners are involved in the multilateral European program JOULES (Joint Operation for Ultra Low Emission Shipping), which aims to design, construction and commissioning of ships with ultra-low emission of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide.

Several Spanish scientific institutions (Institute of Environmental Science and Technology, University of Barcelona and Instituto de Investigación en Recursos Cinegéticos) take part in HUNT program. Within its framework the economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects and the consequences of hunting, including Arctic species, are studied.

Another feature of the Arctic Spanish policy is its interest in the development of the Arctic tourism, moreover, it is going to develop it on the basis of the principle of sustainable development. Spain takes part in the communitarian Program for northern periphery [3, p. 65-78]. The program aims to develop cooperation between different administrative units, located in the north of Europe, in particular, to promote the development of Arctic tourism. The program is aimed at those northern countries and territories like Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, Faroe Islands, Finland, Sweden, Scotland. The program also involved the Arctic indigenous peoples (Inuit, Saami, Scottish and Irish Celts). The program is funded by the European Regional Development Fund in order to implement principles of sustainable development in the tourist business. To create the infrastructure needed for tourism, the EU developed and implemented the project the Northern Sea Route in 2005. It provides a link between the northern coastal areas of Norway and Russia with the continental Europe by environmentally friendly sea transport.

The representatives of the countries and territories listed above, as well as Spain also participate in the activities of the Association of sustainable development of the Arctic tourism (SATA), as well as in the project "Sustainable Model of Arctic tourism» (SMART). This participation reflects the specific interests of Spain, which specializes in the development of international tourism and has a well-developed tourist complex.

There is a certain interest in case when point of view of Spain coincided with the position of Russia. This happened in the following situation. By submitting application to the UN Commission of the Limits of the Continental Shelf, Norway introduced shelf of Svalbard as part of the Norwegian continental shelf, ignoring the special legal status of the archipelago. In principle, this is contrary to the spirit of the Paris Agreement of 1920, which provided Svalbard a special legal status and allowed to all countries that signed the agreement, to conduct economic activities there. Four countries sent diplomatic notes in response to the claims of Norway for Svalbard shelf,

but only two countries (i.e Russia and Spain) pointed out that these countries had the right to the shelf, arising on the basis of Svalbard Treaty. Spain in that note indicated that it reserves the right for natural resources of the continental shelf, which can be opened around Svalbard. It seems that the Spanish position on this issue quite clearly characterizes hopes of Spain.

Spain as well as the EU in whole, depends on external energy supplies. One of the Spanish petroleum company «Repsol YPF» belongs to class of TNCs, and it is engaged in exploration and extraction of hydrocarbons outside the borders of the country. Accordingly, it is interested in the prospects of development of Arctic hydrocarbon resources, such as at the Svabard shelf. In Spain there is also strong interest in the Arctic fisheries, including 200-mile zone around the archipelago. [1]

Summarizing the above, it should be noted that the main Spanish interests in the Arctic are to conduct scientific research, cooperation in this sphere, the transition of the kingdom together with other countries towards sustainable fishery in the Arctic seas, the development of transparent and mutually agreed rules of fishing. Since Spain imports energy resources, it is interested in the development of mineral resources of the Arctic shelf in the long term, in particular, around Svalbard. Spain considers that it has a legitimate right for it, because it participates in the Treaty of Paris of 1920, which does not extend the jurisdiction of Norway on the shelf and allows economic activity in the archipelago for all the member countries of the Paris agreement. The peculiarity of the Spanish position in the Arctic is the interest in the development (along with the riparian countries) of the Arctic tourism and fishery in a sustainable way.

Activities of the Netherlands in the Arctic

Interests of the Netherlands in the Arctic are determined by the fact that it is a maritime power, which plays the important role in the maritime industry, as well as in the production and export of hydrocarbons. The golden rain of oil revenues spilled on it, which had deep impact on the economic development. It is just here a negative economic effect was manifested which was called "Dutch disease". This effect is manifested in the fact that high oil revenues cause the outflow of investment resources in the production of hydrocarbons, followed by the lack of investment resources for other sectors of the economy, the corresponding change in the structure of the economy and the impact on the economy in whole. Currently, however, the country has faced the prospect of depletion of hydrocarbon reserves. The Netherlands is still the large producer and exporter of gas (the country is among the top ten exporters of the world), most of which is sold to neighboring countries, but its position in oil export is more modest. However, many fields have been already worked out (according to some estimates up to 2/3), especially oil

resources. According to expert estimates export of gas and oil from that country will be reduced. At the same time, the country has much experience in the offshore production of hydrocarbons, including deep-sea drilling technologies, which can be adapted to the arctic conditions. The Dutch companies consider them as technological capital, which should be used not only at home but also abroad. The Netherlands also has experience in the dismantling of obsolete oil and gas platforms in the North Sea, which can be used in the conditions of northern seas [3, p. 65—78].

The Netherlands give higher priority to the preparation of the scientific basis of economic activities in the Arctic. All the research activities are carried out within The Netherland's Polar Program², which is arranged under control of The Netherland's National Research Council. The Arctic Centre, in which the majority of the Dutch scientific research on polar issues are made, is The Willem Barentz Polar Institute³.

The Arctic Centre, located at the University of Groningen, was founded in January 1970 and initially studied the languages and culture of the Arctic sub-Arctic peoples. Then the scope of interests was extended to the archeology, biology, geography, and then to the Antarctic. Currently it conducts research on a wide range of scientific spheres. The Arctic Centre of Groningen represents the interests of the Netherlands in the Council of the International Arctic Science Committee (IASC).

Also it is represented in some working groups of the Arctic Council (flora and fauna, pollution of the Arctic, Sustainable Development of the Far North), enumeration of which identifies the directions of the Arctic cooperation, which are most important for the Netherlands. In addition, the Arctic Centre of Groningen participates in EU Arctic information center created by the EU in 2011 at the University of Lapland, Finland (Arctic Information Centre). It also manages the scientific research at the permanent scientific station of the Netherlands in Ny-Ålesund at Svabard, participates in Ny-Ålesund Science Manager Committee. Arctic Centre conducts training for undergraduate and postgraduate students.

From the organizational point of view, the Arctic Centre of the University in Groningen is a association of several institutions of the country interested in conducting of the Arctic research. This association includes major scientific organizations of the kingdom that specialize in the Arctic research, namely the Free University of Amsterdam, the Wageningen University, University of Groningen, the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research, the Royal Netherlands

² Netherlands Polar Programme. URL: [http://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/Netherlands +Polar+ Programme](http://www.nwo.nl/en/research-and-results/programmes/Netherlands+Polar+Programme) (accessed: 08 June 2016).

³ Willem Barentsz Polar Institute. URL: <http://www.rug.nl/research/arctisch-centrum/arcticcentre/willem-barentsz-poolinstituut> (accessed: 08 June 2016).

Meteorological Institute. Arctic Research Center of the University of Groningen participates in the Arctic Information Centre, created by the EU in 2011 at the University of Lapland in Finland. In addition, in the village of Ny-Ålesund on Spitsbergen there is the Dutch research station, which operates only during the warm season.

Scientific organizations and universities of the Netherlands are involved in several European research programs funded by the EU Seventh Framework research program. Among them it is worth mentioning the following programs and projects.

University of Groningen participates in the European program SIOS (Svalbard Integrated Earth Observing System), under which the infrastructure for global monitoring of climate change in the Arctic and the impact on the Earth's climate is developed and optimized⁴.

The research organizations, manufacturing plants, engineering centers and bureaus participate in the European project "Joel" (Joint Operation for Ultra Low Emission Shipping), namely: Centre for Concepts in Mechatronic, Imtech Marine, MTI Holland BV, Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research, NyGear Fuel Cell Systems BV, the Stichting Maritiem Research Instituut Nederland, Technical University of Delft, WAERTSILA NETHERLANDS BV⁵. In the framework of this project, the issues related to the design, manufacture and operation of vessels with low emissions of greenhouse gases. The large number of participants in this project shows the great interest of the Netherlands — the important maritime power — to this problem.

The European project Epoca (European Project on Ocean Acidification) aims to study the process of increasing of the acidity of sea water and its impact on the biological, ecological, biochemical and social consequences of these processes. Some organizations of the Netherlands participate in it, namely: University of Utrecht), Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen — KNAW, together with other Dutch organizations involved in marine research and patent activity (NIOZ, WOP)⁶.

University of Twente and the Faculty of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation participate in EU CoreClimax project, which coordinates the research work in climate change and registers the relevant information for a long time to be able to identify trends and to forecast climate.

⁴ Svalbard Integrated Earth Observing System. URL: <http://www.slideserve.com/cleveland-orlando/svalbard-integrated-arctic-earth-observing-system-sios>; http://faro-arctic.org/fileadmin/Resources/DMU/GEM/faro/2013_Nicole__SIOS_for_FARO.pdf; <http://soa.arcus.org/files/sessions/2-2-design-and-optimization-integrated-arctic-observing-system/pdf/hansen.pdf> (accessed: 08 June 2016).

⁵ Joint Operation for Ultra Low Emission Shipping. URL: http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/109269_en.html. (accessed: 08 June 2016).

⁶ EPOCA. URL: http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/87798_en.html (accessed: 08 June 2016).

University of Amsterdam (Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam) is involved in monitoring the process of reducing the permafrost, which are studied in the framework of the European project "Page 21". It is aimed at the study of global climate change and greenhouse gas effect on melting of the eternal ice.

The Netherlands take part in the activity funded by the EU Commission (through the Directorate of International Relations), which aims to explore the different aspects of the transformation of the Arctic region and the development of policy in these areas. This relates to shipping, fishing and offshore hydrocarbon production. For this purpose, some working groups were established, in which the Netherlands Institute for Maritime Law and the University of Utrecht participate. The Netherlands participate in the Arctic Forum for NGOs, which discusses various issues of cooperation on the non-governmental level. The forum focuses on questions of environmental protection, it is a place of exchange of ideas and serves as an advisory body to develop the Arctic policy.

Due to the fact that the arctic conditions are very different from those of the North Sea, where currently the Netherlands produce hydrocarbons, research institutions of the kingdom carried out research and development works with purpose to adapt their existing technologies to the Arctic latitudes. The Dutch research organization IMARES Wageningen UR, which unites the scientific departments of Wageningen University and DLO foundation, is engaged in the development of innovative marine technology, including methods of environmentally friendly production of oil and gas from the sea shelf. In this country there are also technologies of clean of sea and sea coasts from oil spills, however, they are not intended for the northern regions, where lower temperatures require the use of other treatment technologies. It is planned to continue this work to improve the offshore hydrocarbon production technologies [1].

As a maritime country, which goes across the North Sea to the Atlantic Ocean, the Netherlands is very concerned about observed melting of the Arctic sea ice in conditions of some warming of the climate and about the prospect of flooding of coastal areas resulting from it. The concern about such a prospect is so serious as part of the country is below sea level. In this context, the Dutch research organizations primarily pay attention to the study of climate change in the Arctic. In addition, the prospects of oil and gas fields operation in the Arctic zone are also studied as well as possible impact of economic development in the Arctic on the environment [4].

Some fundamental aspects of the Arctic policy of the Netherlands were set out by Mr. Maxime Verhagen, Minister of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation of the Netherlands, speaking on August 27, 2012 at the International Conference on Energy in Stavanger, the capital of

the offshore economy of Norway. He noted that he is confident that the oil and natural gas extraction near the North Pole is only just a matter of time. The problem is how to achieve the extraction of the hydrocarbon resources in a responsible manner, that is, without any harm for the environment. In order to arrange this, the Dutch Minister proposed to develop international rules governing the development of Arctic hydrocarbon fields, and added that it is not necessary to rely on the statements of energy companies that they will be careful enough and called for a high degree of responsibility in this matter [5]. For this purpose, the Netherlands cooperate with Norway in the development of safe and environmentally friendly technologies of oil and gas production in offshore fields of the Arctic.

Having important sea ports with large turnover, the Netherlands are much interested in the development of new northern route, as this would lead to an increase in turnover through major Dutch ports of Rotterdam and Amsterdam, which serve the needs of the whole western Europe. Therefore, the Netherlands are interested in the operation of the Northern Sea Route, in security and maintenance of the stable situation in the Arctic for the northern sea routes to function smoothly [3, p. 65—78].

The Netherlands vigorously develop the cooperation with Norway, as the kingdom is very interested to participate in the development of fields in the Norwegian sector of the Barents Sea. In particular, 26 Dutch companies participated in the exhibition in the Norwegian oil capital — Stavanger. The Dutch association of IRO, bringing together the suppliers of oil and gas companies of the country, develops cooperation with the Norwegian company Statoil and with several other smaller Norwegian oil and gas companies. In 2010, the Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, as well as the company Gasinue reached an agreement with Gazprom on the strategic partnership and the implementation of the joint project, which was planned to carry out with a focus on the Russian part of the Arctic shelf. However, due to the introduction of sanctions in the West against cooperation with Russia in the oil and gas sector, this cooperation has been frozen. Gasinue is a Dutch transport company that distributes natural gas through pipelines in the Netherlands and Germany. It owns the gas pipe line network in length of 12,000 km in the Kingdom, and 3,000 km in Germany. Previously there were 3 company owners: Shell, Exxon Mobil and the Dutch state, but now it has become a state-owned company. In possession of one of the world's largest gas and oil company Royal Dutch Shell there is a share of the Netherlands. This company is of TNC-class and last year it took the third place in world in terms of turnover, and it shows interest in the Arctic fields. However, having spent 7 bln. dollars, the company decided to suspend oil exploration in the Chukchi Sea and Baffin Bay, where it acquired licenses for drilling, but it did not lead to the

positive results. Despite the fact that the drilling was carried out in great depth, only one oil field was found at distance of 60 km from the coast of Alaska, which is not interesting for the operation by its characteristics. The company has a broad international activity, leads the production of hydrocarbons in 70 countries.

Thus, the Dutch interest in the Arctic is stipulated by the fact that they hope to find here the use of their deep-water drilling technologies, which, however, have to be adapted to the arctic conditions. A number of Dutch organizations deal with it, in particular, they work on environmentally friendly methods of production of hydrocarbons from the sea shelf. The Netherlands are also interested in the development of navigation along the northern routes, as this would lead to further strengthening of the economic importance of the major Dutch ports, which serve the whole Europe.

Poland

Poland is interested in the Arctic region at the political level, as well as the active participant of the Arctic observations and research. And this happened even before the Arctic "fever." It is not just the outside observer, it is actively involved in the region through participation in regional cooperation, organized through regional and subregional organizations: CBER, Northern Dimension, the Arctic Council.

As energy dependant country Poland is looking for the ways to increase the degree of energy security and diversification of sources of energy. The degree of dependence of the Polish economy on energy imports is illustrated by the fact that it takes 15th place in the world in import value of natural gas and 17th place in oil import. The Polish oil and gas companies are not represented in the list of 500 largest companies in the world. Poland was cut off from revenue for the transit of Russian gas to Germany, as it is now transported on the sea through the pipeline Nord Stream. However currently, either shale oil or Arctic hydrocarbons are not regarded as a fundamental means of solving the problems of energy supply. In Poland there are large reserves of shale gas, but with modern technology, which is not indifferent to the environment, they are not developed, only the experiments are arranged in this sphere. Polish company KGHM International Ltd. is showing clear interest in the extraction of Arctic energy resources, the company has acquired a license for exploration of hydrocarbons in the offshore of Greenland. Two more polish oil and gas companies: Lotos, PGNiG conduct exploration on the Norwegian shelf. PGNiG has received from Norway ten licenses covering the part of the North Sea. In 2012 the company began production at three sites. Lotos has seven licenses to conduct research in the Norwegian and North Seas.

The specifics of the Arctic policy of Poland is that Poland considers cooperation with the Arctic Council in the light of its participation in the BEAC⁷, in Northern Dimension policy, the EU and NATO. The main interest of Poland in the Arctic, as well as for many other countries-observers in the Arctic Council, is to conduct scientific research. Poland has half a century tradition of studying the Arctic. Polish research station on Svalbard was built already in the 1950s. Permanent station named after Stanislaw Siedlecki, located in the national park in the south Spitsbergen has a high academic reputation. It is actively participated in conducting the International Polar Year 2007—2008. In addition, five polish universities (from Wroclaw, Krakow, Lublin, Poznan and Torun) have been observing the Arctic Circle on a seasonal basis.

Poland has begun to show interest in Arctic issues, starting from the so-called Rovaniemi process, which adopted the Declaration about Protection of the Arctic environment and the Arctic Strategy for the protection of nature in the region. As is known, just this process became the basis for the Arctic Council, but Poland turned out outside this Council because of its geographical position, since this council was organized as a regional organization. Together with Poland, Germany, Britain and the Netherlands participated in this process. Now all these countries as well as Poland, are permanent observers in the Arctic Council. Poland also has similar status in Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), in the Arctic Council and in the Nordic Council, which spread their activities to the north of Europe, including the Far North.

The polar target group consisting of diplomats and scientists has been formed in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It helps to develop the aspects of Polish foreign policy, relating to the Arctic. In particular, Poland considers useful to develop relations between the member countries of the Arctic Council and the countries that are permanent observers, as well as to coordinate policy of observer countries of the AC. The Republic of Poland supports the idea of joining the EU in the AC as a permanent observer. Poland offered to arrange regular meetings of the Arctic Council at the level of deputy ministers, who would meet in the interval between ministerial meetings. Poland considers it useful to invite deputy ministers of observer countries to such meetings, in order to increase their status and to strengthen their influence on decisions taken within the framework of the Arctic Council.

Another initiative, supported by Poland, is invitations of the representatives of observer countries to the meetings of the Arctic Council, Poland also welcomes the participation of EU representatives at such meetings. A similar meeting was already held in Warsaw in March 2010. At this meeting all the countries that had observer status in the Arctic Council took part, both

⁷ Poland has a status of observer in the BEAC.

permanent and those who participated on the basis of «ad hoc» principle. Poland would like to introduce similar meetings in regular practice. During EU presidency Poland organized the working meeting of senior officials of Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the EU member states in November 2011 to discuss EU Arctic policy. The purpose of the meeting was to improve coordination of policy in the Arctic. Poland supports the EU's intention to acquire the status of permanent observer in the EU.

Fundamentals of the Polish Arctic policy were established by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland M. Shpunar, who formulated the four basic principles of the Polish approach to Arctic policy:

1. Recognition of the existing legal framework defining international cooperation, first of all, United Nations Division for Ocean Affairs and the Law of the Sea dated 1982.
2. Active participation in the development of the Arctic EU policy in order to keep Polish interests in it.
3. The development of cooperation with regional institutions and organizations, especially with the Arctic Council.
4. Conducting of the Arctic policy of Poland at the basis of the principle of the public diplomacy [6].

Thus, the key positions of the Polish Arctic policy are: the freedom of the Arctic research; enhancing the role of the observer countries; giving the EU the status of permanent observer; compliance with international law and standards; further development of EU Arctic policy and public diplomacy. Poland, as well as Finland and Sweden, seeks to operate in the Arctic on several levels: regional (Arctic Council), sub-regional (BEAC), communitarian (EU), through bilateral relations.

For Poland, as well as for many other countries that do not have direct access to the Arctic seas, the research objectives are on the first place, in particular the study of changes in the Arctic climate and their impact on the climate of the planet, as well as the state of the Arctic environment, observations for the ecological systems and biodiversity conservation factors. Polish scientific research in the Arctic are coordinated by the Committee of polar research at the Polish Academy of Sciences, which provides corresponding infrastructure. Polish Committee of polar research is included in a network of 19 leading Arctic research organizations from the European Union and the European Economic Area in Strategic Environmental Impact Assessment in the Arctic⁸.

In Poland 24 scientific institutions and organizations are involved in the Arctic research, more than 200 scientists. Observations are made in Iceland, Greenland, Alaska, Canada and Russia.

⁸ Arctic Policy. Contribution of the Arctic. Strategic Environmental Impact. Assessment of Development. URL: <http://www.wageningenur.nl/en/show/Strategic-Environmental-Impact-Assessment-in-the-Arctic.htm> (Accessed: 11 June 2016).

They published over one hundred scientific papers and reports on the results of the Arctic research, based on data collected at the research stations on Spitsbergen and during arctic expeditions. Poland has five research stations in Svalbard, including the expedition base of Poznan University. However, only one of which operates on a permanent basis — a station named after Stanislaw Siedlecki in Hornsund on Spitsbergen. It was formed in 1957 and since 1978 has been operating on a permanent basis. Three stations are valid only during warm seasons. This polar station of Stanislaw Baranowski of Wroclaw University, the University of Nicolaus Copernicus Station, station of Marie Curie University. Poland has a research vessel "Oceania" and support ship "Horizon II", which belongs to the Maritime University in Gdynia.

Institute of Geophysics and the Institute of Oceanology (both belong to Polish Academy of Sciences) take part in the European program SIOS (Svalbard Integrated Earth Observing System), in which the infrastructure for Earth observations is created. It is able to provide timely information about the changes in the Arctic to interested organizations. Polish Institute of Oceanology of the Polish Academy of Sciences system participates in the European program ATP (Arctic Tipping Points), aimed at the study of marine ecosystems, the effects of climate change. This program is funded through the seventh EU framework program.

Poland participates in multidisciplinary research project on Svalbard PO-LARPROG, which also involves Germany, Norway and Russia. Polish Academy of Sciences participates in Boreas program which coordinates the Arctic research, including social, natural and health sciences, and which brings together research institutes and organizations of Europe, the USA, Canada and Russia. The program is partially funded by the EU.

Since 2012 nine polish research organizations are participating in the program SAON (Sustainable Observing Networks) — monitoring system for sustainable development.

Three polish ports are interested in using of the Northern Sea Route. Container transportations are developed rapidly in Poland. Gdansk plays the main role in it, where new powerful cargo terminal has been built for vessels with deep drafts. It provides services not only for Poland, but also for Russia, Finland, Belarus and others working as a hub for the entire Baltic Sea and countries of the Eastern Europe which do not have access to the Baltic Sea (in particular, Belarus and Ukraine). However, it is not currently planned to use it widely as this transport route is considered as too expensive.

For a long time in the Polish Arctic polic the interest primarily to conduct scientific observations and research prevailed, but at the moment Poland is trying to convert previous approach in political advantages. The aim is to strengthen the polish vote in the regional and

European levels. Currently, the country is not clearly intended to participate actively in the development of Arctic shipping (as believes it is unprofitable from the commercial point of view) and / or in the active participation in the development of the Arctic mineral deposits⁹. That is why — the Polish side supposes — they can be a useful intermediary between the Arctic and non-regional countries and act as advocate of the interests of the observer countries¹⁰. Poland is most active in diplomatic terms in the Arctic, it seeks to act as a link between the Arctic Council members and observers of its activity. In addition, Poland is showing intensive interest in polar research, which it carrying out since the 1950s. "In general, Warsaw today, although does not have formally adopted and published Arctic strategy, but has a fairly elaborate and balanced position based on the research of corresponding analytical centers" [2, p. 57].

Conclusion

Three EU member countries: Spain, the Netherlands and Poland, which recently acquired the status of permanent observers in the Arctic Council, have general and specific interests in the Far North, determined by the specific features of their economies and participation in international cooperation. At the current stage of the development of the Arctic, all three countries, above all, concentrate their efforts in the field of scientific study and observation of the state of the environment and climate change.

Spain which specializes in international tourism and in maritime sector, is interested in the development of adventure tourism in the northern seas. Arctic cruises are gaining popularity. Kingdom intends to develop this type of recreation and entertainment in a sustainable way.

The Netherlands is the only one of the three countries, which has its own reserves of hydrocarbons offshore. Kingdom has accumulated experience of installation and decommissioning of oil platforms, which can be used in the northern seas. In addition, the Netherlands is specializing in transportations by sea, and has seaports of European significance. In this regard, the country is interested in the Northern Sea Route, which opportunities are studied.

Poland has been organizing expeditions to the Far North for a long time already and has accumulated a lot of observations. Now Poland is intending to play an active role in the Arctic region. For this purpose, the country is trying to unite the Arctic Council observer countries around itself to coordinate their actions and to influence on the decisions of this international body.

⁹ In 2013 one polish vessel went along the Northern Sea Route.

¹⁰ Arctic Policy. Statement of Minister M. Szpunar to Swedish Presidency of the Arctic Council. (2012). Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Strategic Environmental Impact. Assessment of Development. URL: <http://www.arcticinfo.en.poland> (Accessed: 11 June 2016).

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