



# International Amateur Radio Union Region 1

Europe, Middle East, Africa and Northern Asia  
Founded 1950

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## EC Call for Evidence:

**Subject: Review of the EU Arctic Policy**

## EC proposal:

The European Commission, in collaboration with the European External Action Service (EEAS), has issued a **Call for Evidence** to update the EU's Arctic policy. While the existing 2021 Joint Communication remains the foundation, rapid environmental and geopolitical shifts necessitate a policy review to ensure it remains "fit for purpose".

## **Core Objectives & Priorities**

The initiative aims to refine the three established pillars of the EU's Arctic engagement while addressing emerging issues:

- **Environmental Protection:** Strengthening climate change mitigation, adaptation, and biodiversity loss efforts, particularly regarding thawing permafrost and retreating sea ice.
- **Sustainable Development:** Supporting the socio-economic aspirations of Arctic inhabitants and promoting sustainable resource management (e.g., fishing, mining, and raw materials).
- **International Cooperation:** Enhancing collaboration on trade, safety, and security through multilateral settings like the Arctic Council and the UN.

## **Key Drivers for the Update**

The Commission identifies several "new realities" that require policy adjustments:

- **Geopolitical Shifts:** Increased security risks and growing international interest in the Arctic since 2021.
- **Economic Opportunities:** Emerging prospects in shipping routes, green technology, and connectivity.
- **Strategic Alignment:** Ensuring the Arctic policy reflects current Commission priorities such as competitiveness, defense, and sustainable prosperity.

## Anticipated Impacts

Category	Expected Outcomes
Environmental	Improved polar climate protection through updated scientific data.
Security	Bolstered regional security and elevated geopolitical influence for the EU.
Economic	Stimulated investment in sustainable infrastructure and cold-climate innovation.
Social	Enhanced peace and stability through stronger collaboration with Indigenous communities.

## Timeline & Consultation

- **Indicative Timing:** The Joint Communication is expected in **Q3 2026**.
- **Engagement:** A public consultation is available in all **24 official EU languages** via the "Have Your Say" portal.
- **Stakeholders:** The Commission is targeting EU Member States, international organizations, NGOs, and specifically **Indigenous and local communities** for input.

## IARU Region 1 Response:

The International Amateur Radio Union Region 1 (IARU R1), an NGO representing the amateur radio service across EMEA, welcomes the review of the **EU Arctic Policy**. We fully support the vision for a **secure, resilient, and sustainable Arctic**. As a non-commercial, technical investigation service defined by ITU Radio Regulations, amateur radio is a proven resource that directly contributes to the EU's objectives regarding **skills, connectivity, and resilience**. This submission outlines how amateur radio can ensure continued contribution to the EU's strategic goals in the region.

### 1. Enhancing Connectivity and Emergency Resilience

The "Call for Evidence" identifies **connectivity and safety** as critical challenges. In the Arctic, where terrestrial and satellite infrastructure is often sparse or unreliable, amateur radio provides an essential, infrastructure-independent communication layer.

- **Emergency Redundancy:** High Frequency (HF) radio functions without reliance on external towers or satellites, offering a vital "fail-safe" for **Search and Rescue (SAR)** and disaster response.



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- **Low-Cost Digital Data:** Modern amateur modes (e.g., JS8Call) allow for the transmission of emails and small data files over radio, providing a cost-effective connectivity bridge for **remote research outposts and local communities**.

## 2. Climate Monitoring and Citizen Science

The EU's priority on **climate change mitigation and scientific research** can be bolstered by the existing global network of amateur radio operators.

- **Atmospheric Research:** Amateur radio operators contribute to **"Citizen Science"** by providing data on ionospheric conditions and space weather, which are critical for understanding the Arctic's changing atmosphere.
- **Ground-Truth Observations:** Local operators serve as persistent observers, capable of reporting real-time environmental changes, such as **retreating sea ice or permafrost shifts**, in areas where automated sensors may be absent.

## 3. Psychological Wellbeing and Social Cohesion

A key objective of the policy update is to support the **"social balance"** and **"legitimate socio-economic aspirations"** of Arctic inhabitants. Amateur radio offers a unique tool for maintaining mental health in isolated regions.

- **Combating Isolation:** For individuals in remote settlements or research stations, amateur radio provides a consistent social link to the outside world, fostering a sense of belonging to a global community.
- **Mental Focus and Escape:** The technical and social nature of the hobby offers a productive mental escape, providing residents with a structured cognitive challenge and a way to build cross-border friendships. This "invisible bridge" is vital for combating the psychological strains of **Arctic isolation and extreme environments**.

## 4. Technical Innovation and Capacity Building

To support **"innovation in cold climate technologies"**, the EU should recognize amateur radio as a training ground for technical skills.

- **STEM Education:** Promoting amateur radio in Arctic communities encourages local youth to engage with **telecommunications, electronics, and physics**.
- **Local Empowerment:** By building local technical capacity, the EU supports the **"meaningful involvement"** of Indigenous and local communities in managing their own technological and communication needs.

## Conclusion

We propose that the updated EU Arctic Policy explicitly recognize the role of **non-commercial, community-based communication networks**—specifically amateur radio—as a strategic asset. By integrating these networks into regional planning, the EU can enhance the **safety, scientific output, and psychological resilience** of those living and working in the Arctic.