BRUSSELS' PREMIER ARCTIC DISCUSSION FORUM RETURNS FOR FIFTH TIME



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With 49 speakers and moderators taking part this year, more than 200 participants attended the fifth edition of the International Polar Foundation's annual Arctic Futures Symposium.

Thanks to the help and support of its 13 sponsors and partners, the 2014 edition of the symposium brought together a mix of familiar and fresh faces over two full days on October 14th adn 15th. Held at the Residence Palace in the European Quarter of Brussels, the symposium focused on the diverse peoples and economies of the Arctic. Speakers included Senior Arctic Officials and policymakers from Arctic Council nations, EU policymakers, representatives from the indigenous circumpolar communities, business representatives, and top academics presented and discussed the latest issues affecting those who live and work in the Arctic.

Continuing to follow the priorities of the two-year Canadian chairmanship of the Arctic Council, the 2014 Arctic Futures Symposium had as an overarching theme the peoples and economies of the Arctic. As no region of the Arctic is uniform in terms of its population, environment, or economic activities, the symposium took at closer look at a number of different regions of the Arctic. The continuing evolution of the Arctic Council, commercial shipping activities, maritime securiy, reindeer herding, the EU's contributions to Arctic research and dialogue with Arctic inhabitatns, oil and gas development, current and proposed mining

operations, the EU ban on seal products and even the continued development of an IT cluster in the Barents region were issues brought up during the event.

In addition to featuring a roundtable discussion with senior Arctic Officials and representatives from the foreign ministries of Arctic Council nations and the European External Action Service (EEAS), as well as a hosting a panel of leading scientists discussing key Arctic research topics, the 2014 Arctic Futures Symposium for the first time featured a roundtable discussion between representatives from the circumpolar Arctic indigenous communities and a Member of the European Parliament, Jens Nilsson from Sweden.

Those following the Arctic Futures hashtag (#ArcticFutures) were updated on salient points brought up during the symposium.

In the coming weeks, speaker presentations from the symposium will be published on the International Polar Foundation's Speaker Deck account. The official proceedings of the symposium will be published on the Arctic Futures Symposium website in a few months.