



EUROPEAN
POLAR BOARD

A year at EPB

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Editorial

Photo © Renuka Badhe

The activities presented in this Action Report highlight 2025 as a year of transition, strategic positioning, and continued engagement for the European Polar Board. Marking its 30th anniversary, EPB has maintained its role as a platform for coordination, cooperation, and dialogue across the European polar research community.

The relocation of the Secretariat to Umeå and the integration of the European Polar Coordination Office (EPCO) have reinforced EPB's role in enabling long-term coordination and collaboration. At the same time, direct engagement with Member institutions across Europe has strengthened connections with the community and ensured alignment with national priorities.

EPB remained active in contributing to policy and strategic discussions, particularly in relation to FP10 and the EU Multiannual Financial Framework, underlining the importance of polar research for addressing climate change and broader societal challenges.

At the same time, ongoing participation in EU-funded projects, dialogue with international partners, engagement in preparations for the Fifth International Polar Year and the UN Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences demonstrate EPB's continued commitment to coordination at both European and international levels.

The diverse activities of EPB Members, highlighted throughout this report, further reflect the strength and breadth of the European polar research landscape, showcasing scientific achievements, collaboration, and national developments across countries.

Together, these activities underline a consistent message: continuity, collaboration, and coordination remain at the core of EPB's work, even during a period of organisational transition.

Message from the Chair



Prof Peter Sköld

“As we mark thirty years of the European Polar Board, we are reminded that coordination has always been at the heart of our mission—but its meaning has evolved. Today, coordination is not only about connecting activities across countries and institutions; it is about ensuring that European polar science speaks with clarity, relevance, and impact in a rapidly changing world.

Over the past year, we have seen how the strength of our Membership, its diversity, expertise, and commitment, can be mobilised to address global challenges. From contributions to European policy discussions to preparations for the fifth International Polar Year, the EPB has demonstrated that coordinated science is essential to understanding and responding to change in the polar regions and beyond.

Looking ahead, our role is to continue strengthening these connections: between science and policy, between national priorities and international frameworks, and between disciplines and communities. In doing so, the EPB will remain a trusted platform for dialogue and a strategic actor in shaping the future of polar research in Europe and globally.”

Message from the Executive Secretary



Dr. Maria Grigoratou

“2025 has been a year of transition, but also one of opportunity. The relocation of the Secretariat to Umeå and the integration of EPCO have created space to reflect on how we work, engage, and support the European polar research community. Through direct exchanges, I have seen the depth and dynamism of EPB Members, and the importance of ensuring that EPB remains closely aligned with their evolving needs and priorities.

Over the past year, our engagement with international partners, policymakers, and decision-makers has highlighted the growing importance of a strong and coordinated European polar research voice. Through contributions to FP10 discussions, participation in international fora, and actions with EU-funded projects, we continue to emphasise the strategic value of polar research for Europe’s future.

Looking ahead, our role is to further strengthen cooperation and coordination, enhance visibility, and foster collaboration across the European and global polar landscape. Building on 30 years of EPB, we will continue to support a more connected, responsive, and impactful polar research community.”

A photograph of a massive glacier. The upper part of the glacier is white and heavily crevassed. The lower part, where it meets the water, is a vibrant blue color. The water in the foreground is calm and reflects the blue of the ice. A semi-transparent white box is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the text 'EPB Governance'.

EPB Governance



Prof Peter Sköld

EPB Chair

30 Years of the European Polar Board

In 2025, the European Polar Board marks thirty years of supporting coordination, cooperation, and strategic dialogue in European polar research.

Established in 1995 within the European Science Foundation, the EPB has grown into an independent organisation bringing together institutions, national programmes, funding agencies, research operators, academies, and universities from across Europe's polar research community.

Over three decades, the EPB has helped strengthen Europe's capacity in polar science by fostering coordination across organisations, disciplines, countries, and research infrastructures. Its convening role has supported alignment of European activities during key international initiatives, including the Fourth International Polar Year (2007–2008). Initiatives such as EuroPICS, PolarCLIMATE, Aurora Borealis, and EU PolarNet, along with strategic contributions to European research discussions, have demonstrated the value of coordinated approaches to advancing understanding of climate and environmental change linked to rapidly changing polar regions.

Today, with the integration of the European Polar Coordination Office (EPCO) into the EPB Secretariat, building on the legacy of EU-PolarNet2, in which the EPB and most of its member members participated and led activities, the EPB continues to strengthen coordination across the European polar research landscape.

As the community prepares for major international polar research initiatives, including the Fifth International Polar Year (2032–2033) and the UN Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034), the EPB remains committed to supporting dialogue, cooperation, and shared priorities across Europe's polar research community.

Further reflections on the EPB's achievements and future ambitions are presented in the Chair's Statement.



2025 EPB Plenaries

Spring Plenary Meeting – Umeå, Sweden

The EPB Spring Plenary Meeting was held on 8–9 May in Umeå, Sweden, hosted by Umeå University and the EPB Secretariat.

Representatives from EPB Member organisations gathered to discuss strategic priorities and ongoing activities supporting European polar research, and updates on major EPB initiatives such as Antarctica InSync. The meeting also featured dedicated sessions with invited guests Anil Mishra (UNESCO) on the Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034) and Henry Burgess (IPY-5 Executive Committee) on preparations for the Fifth International Polar Year (2032-2033), highlighting opportunities for collaboration and the importance of international coordination in addressing cryosphere-related challenges.



Autumn Plenary Meeting – Gebze, Türkiye

The EPB Autumn Plenary Meeting took place on 18–19 November in Gebze, Türkiye, hosted by the TÜBİTAK Polar Research Institute (KARE).

The meeting brought together representatives from EPB Member organisations to review ongoing activities, discuss strategic developments in polar research, and address key policy and funding topics relevant to the European polar community. During the meeting, the EPB formally adopted the EPB Code of Conduct following extensive consultation among members. The Plenary received updates from EC representatives on developments relevant to polar research, including the future Framework Programme (FP10), the Ocean Pact, and the EU Arctic Policy update. The programme additionally included engagement with the early-career research community through a presentation by APECS Türkiye. The Plenary also approved the request of Norwegian Polar Institute to join EPB as a new Member, effective 1 January 2026, and celebrated the 30th anniversary of the European Polar Board.



EPB Executive Committee

In 2025, the Executive Committee (EXCOM) saw two membership changes following the completion of full terms by outgoing members.

Dr. Daan Blok succeeded Dr. Marie-Noëlle Houssais (CNRS), senior scientist at the Laboratory of Ocean and Climate (LOCEAN, CNRS–Sorbonne University Joint Unit) and Prof. Peter Schweitzer succeeded Egill Thor Niélsson, Senior Adviser at the Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNIS).



Prof. Peter Sköld – Chair (Arctic Centre at Umeå University)

Professor of History at Umeå University. Peter's work focuses on Arctic history, Indigenous issues, and societal dimensions of polar research. He is internationally recognised for his contributions to Arctic social sciences and for advancing Indigenous and community-centred perspectives in polar research.

Prof. Carlo Barbante (PNRA, Italy)

Professor of Chemistry at Ca' Foscari University of Venice and EPB representative for Italy's National Programme for Research in Antarctica (PNRA). He is a leading scientist in ice-core and climate research.



Dr. Daan Blok (NWO, The Netherlands)

Programme Coordinator for the Netherlands Polar Programme at the Dutch Research Council (NWO). He represents the Netherlands in several international polar science bodies, including IASC, FARO, SCAR, and COMNAP.

Dr. Dragomir Mateev (BAI, Bulgaria)

Vice Director of the National Centre for Polar Studies at Sofia University. He manages logistics and projects for the Bulgarian Antarctic Programme and participates in Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings.

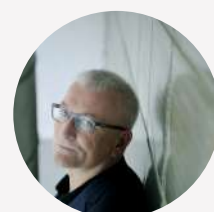


Dr. Miguel Ángel Ojeda (CSIC, Spain)

Deputy Director of the Marine Technology Unit of the Spanish National Research Council (CSIC), Deputy Manager of the Spanish Antarctic Programme in COMNAP, and Spanish delegate to the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting.

Prof. Peter Schweitzer (FWF, Austria)

Professor of Social and Cultural Anthropology at the University of Vienna and EPB representative for the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and internationally recognised for his work in Arctic social sciences and interdisciplinary polar research.



EPB Member Representatives

The European Polar Board welcomed several new representatives and alternate representatives from its member institutions, further strengthening the Board's expertise and strategic perspectives in polar research. M.Sc. Markku Heikkilä (Arctic Centre, University of Lapland) and Dr. Atilla Yılmaz (Polar Research Institute – KARE, TÜBİTAK MAM) assumed the role of EPB representatives after previously serving as alternate representatives for their respective institutions. The EPB expresses its appreciation for the dedicated service and contributions of the outgoing representatives Dr. Marie Noelle Houssais, Dr. Naimah Hussain, Dr. Johanna Ikävalko, Dr. Burcu Özsoy, Dr. Yan Ropert-Coudert, and Dr. Vito Vitale.

Representatives



M.Sc. Line Bekker Poulsen
(DASHE, Denmark)

EU Adviser on Global Challenges and European Industrial Competitiveness at DASHE, working on Denmark's engagement in European research and innovation programmes on climate and sustainability.



Dr. Gaël Durand (CNRS,
France)

Director of Research at CNRS, based at the Institute of Environmental Geosciences in Grenoble, specialising in modelling polar ice sheets and their contribution to sea-level rise.



M.Sc. Markku Heikkilä (Arctic
Centre – University of
Lapland, Finland)

Head of Science Communications at the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, focusing on Arctic science communication and policy dialogue.



Prof. Giuliana Panieri (CNR –
ISP, Italy)

Director of the Institute of Polar Sciences at the Italian National Research Council and Professor of Geology at UiT – The Arctic University of Norway, working on extreme marine environments and their role in Arctic climate change.



Dr. David Renault (IPEV,
France)

Director of the French Polar Institute (IPEV) and Professor at the University of Rennes, specialising in polar ecology and the responses of organisms to environmental change.



Dr. Atilla Yılmaz (KARE,
TÜBİTAK MAM, Türkiye)

Principal Chief Researcher at TÜBİTAK's Polar Research Institute, working on environmental monitoring and marine pollution in polar regions.

EPB Member Representatives

Alternate Representatives



Prof. Jakob Abermann (FWF, Austria)

Associate Professor at Graz University and Vice President of the Austrian Polar Research Institute, working on glacier–climate interactions and environmental monitoring.



Dr. Sandro Carniel (CNR- ISP, Italy)

Research Director at the Institute of Polar Sciences, CNR, focusing on ocean–climate interactions, sea-level rise and emerging ocean observation technologies.



Prof. Sophie Opfergelt (FNRS, Belgium)

Professor at UC Louvain studying biogeochemical processes, chemical weathering and environmental change in polar regions.



Dr. Göksu Uslular (KARE, TÜBİTAK MAM)

Chief Researcher at TÜBİTAK's Polar Research Institute specialising in remote sensing, drone surveying and machine learning applications in Earth and polar sciences.



Dr. Elie Verleyen (FWO, Belgium)

Lecturer at Ghent University researching the evolution of polar aquatic ecosystems and microbial biogeography.

EPB Secretariat

In 2025 the EPB Secretariat moved to Umeå, Sweden, where it is now hosted by the Arctic Centre at Umeå University, an EPB Member institution. This move followed ten years of Secretariat hosting by the Dutch Research Council (NWO) in The Netherlands.

During the transition period until September, Secretariat activities were split across both locations while the Dutch EPB legal entity arrangements were finalized and the new hosting structure in Sweden was established.

The transition also included several internal changes within the Secretariat team. A new Executive Secretary, EPB Officer, and Administrative Officer joined the Secretariat in Sweden. At the same time, the former Executive Secretary Dr. Renuka Badhe, and the Communications Officer Eva Horovčáková and Project Officer Marije Tempel, who had primarily worked on EU-funded projects under the Dutch EPB entity, concluded their roles

following the closure of that legal structure.

An additional development during 2025 was the integration of the European Polar Coordination Office (EPCO) within the EPB Secretariat in January. EPCO continues the legacy of the EU PolarNet projects, the largest EU-funded initiatives dedicated to coordinating polar research in Europe. The European Polar Board was selected to host EPCO given its role as the only European bipolar coordination body, facilitating dialogue and sustained scientific cooperation across the European polar research community. Within this structure, the EPB Executive Secretary serves as Head of EPCO, while the EPB Officer supports EPCO activities as EPCO Officer.

The relocation and associated developments mark an important step in the continued evolution of the EPB Secretariat and its support to the European polar research community.



Dr. Maria Grigoratou
Executive Secretary, Head of
EPCO

Biological oceanographer and Executive Secretary of EPB, leading the EPB Secretariat and EPCO. She also serves as a lead author to the IPBES Monitoring Assessment.



Dr. Kylie Owen, EPB-EPCO
officer

Marine biologist, EPB and EPCO Officer, contributing to the coordination of European polar research and policy engagement.



Dr. Irma Olofsson, Admin
Support to EPB

Human geographer and Project Coordinator at the Arctic Centre at Umeå University, where she provides administrative support to the EPB.

Engagement Visits to EPB Members by the Executive Secretary

In 2025, the EPB Executive Secretary initiated a programme of visits to Member institutions, aimed at strengthening direct engagement with Members in their research environments. The visits provided opportunities to exchange views on national polar research priorities, explore avenues for cooperation, and gain first-hand insight into the infrastructures, programmes, and coordination mechanisms that underpin European polar science. They also reinforced EPB's role as a platform for dialogue and coordination across the European polar research community.

The Executive Secretary engaged directly with several EPB Member organisations across Europe. These included the **British Antarctic Survey** in the United Kingdom, the **Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique** in France, the **Marine Technology Unit of the Spanish National Research Council** and the **Ministry of Science and Innovation in Spain**, the **Swiss Polar Institute** in Switzerland, the **National Antarctic Research Programme** and the **Institute of Polar Sciences of the National Research Council** in Italy, the **Arctic Centre at the University of Lapland** and the **Thule Institute at the University of Oulu** in Finland, the **Institute of Marine Research** in Norway, the **Scientific and Technological Research Council of Türkiye** in Türkiye, the **Belgian Science Policy Office**, **National Fund for Scientific Research**, **Research Foundation Flanders in Belgium**, and the **Estonian Academy of Sciences** in Estonia.

Discussions during these visits covered a wide range of topics, including national polar research strategies, funding and evaluation systems, research

infrastructures and logistics, data management, and international cooperation.

Member organisations welcomed the Executive Secretary with a spectrum of engagements, including in-depth discussions with research leaders and institutional directors, targeted meetings with programme managers, open seminars and presentations for researchers and students, and in some cases dedicated workshops or mini-symposia bringing together representatives from across the national polar research community. These exchanges provided valuable opportunities to share perspectives on emerging scientific priorities, major international initiatives, and the evolving landscape of European polar research.

“During my visits to EPB Member organisations, I was struck by the strength and diversity of Europe’s polar research community. Meeting colleagues and exchanging ideas in their own work environments was truly inspiring, and these conversations will help shape EPB’s future priorities and collaborative initiatives.”

Dr. Maria Grigoratou, Executive Secretary

Across all visits, Members emphasised the importance of EPB as a trusted forum for coordination and exchange. The visits strengthened relationships between the EPB Executive Secretary and Member organisations, provided valuable input for EPB's strategic development, and helped ensure that EPB's activities remain closely aligned with the priorities of Europe's polar research community.

Engagement Visits to EPB Members by the Executive Secretary

The Executive Secretary met with EPB representatives Jane Francis and Henry Burgess at BAS, delivered an open seminar on EPB and EPCO to the BAS community, toured the BAS facilities, and learned more about the UK's research infrastructure in polar regions.

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France, March 31



The CSIC representatives Jordi and Miguel presented Spain's polar infrastructure and UTM's role in supporting polar missions to Maria and offered a tour of the facilities. Susana Diez Tagarro introduced the Spanish Polar Data Centre, and Dolors Vaqué presented the POLAR Connection initiative.

NCIN, Spain April 23



Maria met with EPB representatives Danièle Rod and Basil Fahlaender to exchange views on EPB developments and reflect on priorities for the organisation's future, including perspectives relevant to the next EPB Strategy. During the visit, Maria also met with staff from SPI and learn more about their activities.

British Antarctic Survey, UK, March 17



Jean-François Doussin, Deputy Director of CNRS Earth and Space, welcomed Maria Grigoratou and Marie-Noëlle Houssais to CNRS Headquarters, where they met with colleagues to present EPB and EPCO, discuss EPB activities and CNRS's polar research organisation and funding.

Marine Technology Unit, Spain April 22



The EPB Representatives of NCIN Antonio Quesada and Fernando Bohoyo organised a symposium for Maria's visit. Presentations covered the Spanish Polar Committee, the Spanish SCAR, the evaluation and funding system of the Spanish Polar Programme, APECS Spain, and Spanish Antarctic Stations, followed by in-depth discussions that provided a holistic view of Spanish polar activities and funding.

SPI, Switzerland, September 8



Engagement Visits to EPB Members by the Executive Secretary

PNRA and ISP, Italy, 15 September



CNR-ISP EPB Representatives Giuliana Panieri and Sandro Carniel organised a series of meetings during Maria's visit, including discussions with representatives from CNR, the Ministry of Research, and other national stakeholders on priorities for polar research and the role of the EPB in supporting European and national polar research activities. Maria also attended meetings at the Italian Parliament to exchange views on the importance of polar research for Europe and Italy. The visit concluded with a session at ISP introducing several research groups and projects working in polar regions.

Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Finland, 6 October



EPB representative and former EPB Chair Kirsi Latola organised an open seminar at the Thule Institute where Maria presented EPB and EPCO and engaged in discussions with colleagues on coordination activities and developments relevant to European polar research. Maria also held in-depth discussions with Kirsi on the Finnish polar research landscape, the history and future of EPB, and was given a tour of the university's facilities.

During Maria's visit, the PNRA EPB representative and EXCOM Member Carlo Barbante organised a seminar at ISP where Maria presented EPB's activities and exchanged views with colleagues on developments and opportunities in European polar research. The visit also included a tour of the ISP facilities and meetings with staff to learn more about the activities of PNRA and ISP.

CNR-ISP, Italy, 16-17 September



Representatives Johanna Ikävalko and Markku Heikkilä organised a one-day programme during Maria's visit, including an EPB seminar, meetings with several departments of the Arctic Centre, and a tour of the Science Centre's exhibition Arctic Opposites, which highlights Arctic research for a broad public audience. The visit also provided an opportunity to exchange views on EPB's objectives, the activities of the Arctic Centre, and the broader Finnish polar research landscape.

Thule Institute, University of Oulu, Finland, 7 October



Engagement Visits to EPB Members by the Executive Secretary

EPB alternate representative Geir Huse organised a meeting with colleagues leading polar research activities at the institute, where Maria presented EPB and EPCO. Maria engaged in discussions on IMR's Arctic research, fisheries, the upcoming International Polar Year, and major Norwegian initiatives such as the Arctic Ocean 2050.

TÜBİTAK Marmara Research Center - Polar Research Institute, Türkiye, November 20



Maria met with EPB representatives David Cox, Bruno Delille, Sophie Opfergelt, and Philippe Huybrechts. Discussions included updates on EPB and EPCO, the history and development of polar research funding landscape, research priorities, and infrastructure in Belgium across the federal level, regions, and the three organizations.

Estonian Academy of Sciences, Estonia, December 1



Institute of Marine Research, Norway, 30 October



EPB representative Atilla Yılmaz hosted Maria at the institute, arranging a tour of the facilities and meetings with colleagues from the Polar Research Institute. Discussions focused on the development of Türkiye's polar research and infrastructure, current research priorities, and the institute's strong emphasis on outreach and youth engagement, as well as its support for APECS Türkiye.

Belgian Science Policy Office, National Fund for Scientific Research, Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium, November 24



Representative Maarja Kruusmaa convened a meeting at the Estonian Academy of Sciences with representatives of the Estonian polar research community. The discussion provided Maria with insights into the history and development of polar research in Estonia, the active participation of Estonian scientists in EU projects, and perspectives on how the broader geopolitical context is influencing polar research and cooperation.

An aerial photograph of a small, dark-colored motorboat with a red stripe, navigating a narrow river. The riverbed is composed of numerous light-colored, angular rocks of various sizes. The water is dark and reflects the surrounding environment. The boat is positioned in the lower-left quadrant of the frame. A large, semi-transparent white rectangular area is overlaid on the top half of the image, containing the word 'POLARDEX' in blue, bold, sans-serif capital letters.

POLARDEX

Photo © Oleg Vassilev

POLARDEX

INTERACTIVE POLAR INFRASTRUCTURE DATABASE

The Polardex Interactive Polar Infrastructure Database has been added to the [Registry of Polar Observing Networks \(RoPON\)](#), a catalogue of systems and organisations that coordinate or track observing activities and infrastructure in the polar regions.

RoPON was created to provide a comprehensive overview of polar observing systems for science planners, network managers, funding agencies, researchers, data managers, educators, and community members. Its overarching goals are to clarify the status of observing activities and identify gaps, optimise the use of limited resources, facilitate collaboration, and support informed decision-making for polar research. With funding from NOAA and SAON, RoPON is a collaborative effort by the Sustaining Arctic Observing Networks (SAON) initiative, the Arctic Portal, and the Polar Observing Assets Working Group (POAwg).

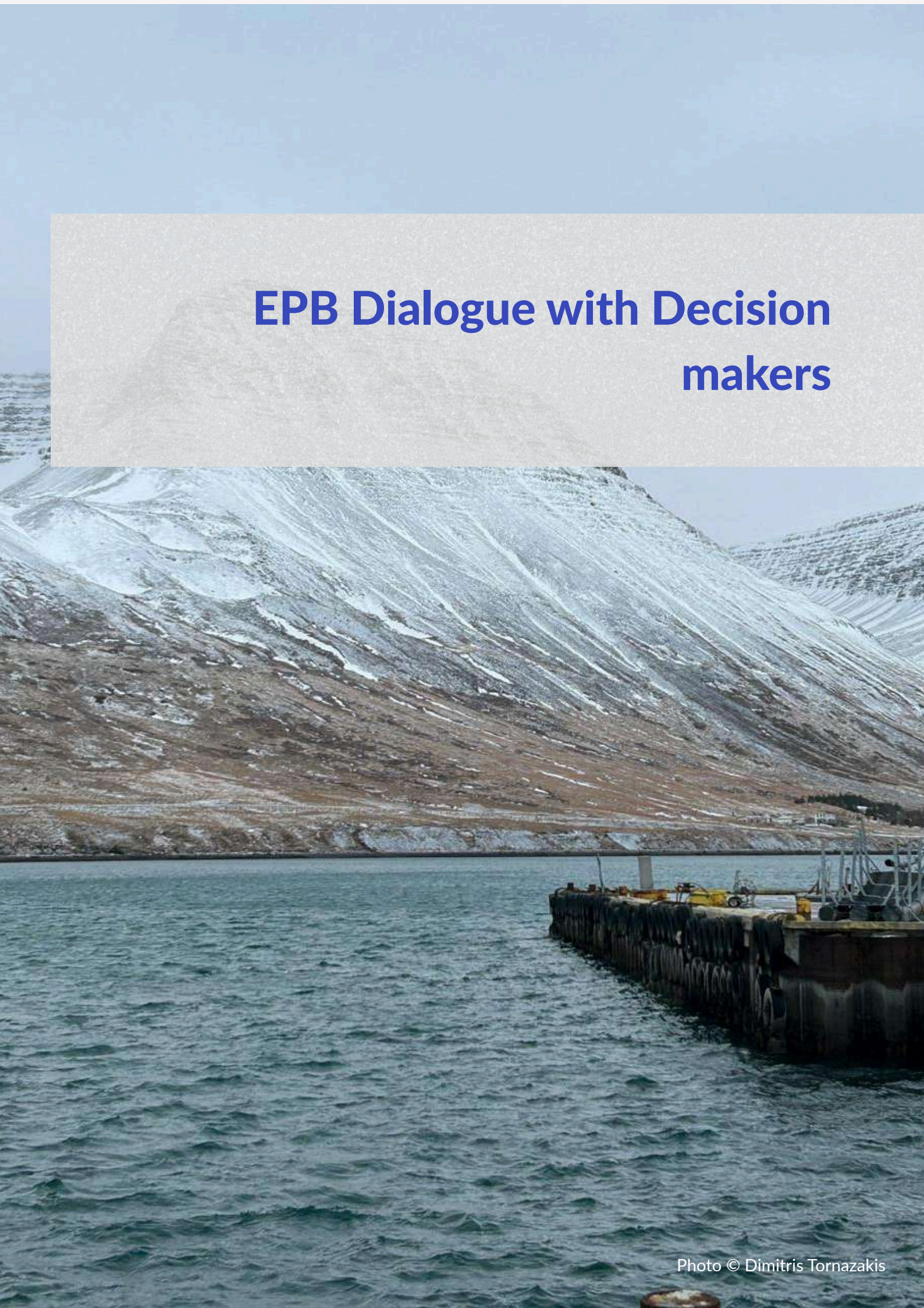


Throughout the year, the EPB Executive Secretary and the Action Group on Research Infrastructure engaged with Polardex users and SOOS to gather feedback and identify priorities for further development. Discussions included how Polardex could support planning activities for initiatives such as Antarctica InSync. In light of the transition and changes within the Secretariat, further development activities for Polardex are planned to continue in 2026.

Polardex in a nutshell:

Polardex is an online platform to support the discovery and planning of polar research infrastructure and logistics in both the Arctic and Antarctic. POLARDEX, developed by Blue Lobster IT Ltd, has been a collaborative effort, led by the [EPB Action Group on Infrastructure](#), chaired by Miki Ojeda, and key contributors including [SOOS](#), [SIOS](#), [INTERACT](#), [EU-PolarNet 2](#), [COMNAP](#), [IAATO](#), [Isaaffik](#), [ARICE](#), [EUROFLEETS](#), [AWI](#), [BAS](#). It provides centralised information on research stations, field camps, laboratories, vessels, aircraft, and other facilities, along with details on their capabilities and access opportunities. A key component of Polardex is the integration of DueSouth, a system developed by the Southern Ocean Observing System (SOOS) that maps Antarctic field activities, research cruises, and logistical routes. By incorporating DueSouth data, Polardex helps researchers and logistics providers identify planned activities, coordinate field operations, and explore opportunities for collaboration. Together, these tools improve transparency and efficiency in polar research logistics and support better coordination of infrastructure use across the polar regions.

EPB Dialogue with Decision makers



Meetings organised by the Host – Arctic Centre, Umeå University

EPB engages with policy and governance stakeholders across Europe and beyond to promote polar research.

In 2025, through initiatives of EPB Members, the EPB Chair and Executive Secretary engaged with the Canadian Ambassador to Sweden, representatives of the French Embassy in Sweden, governmental and parliamentary representatives in Italy, Estonia, and the European Parliament, as well as Arctic envoys and ministry officials in Italy and Spain.

Meetings organised by the Host – Arctic Centre, Umeå University, Umeå, February- March

The Arctic Centre at Umeå University, which hosts the EPB Secretariat, maintains dialogue with local authorities, diplomatic missions and the international research community. At the invitation of the host institution and EPB Member representative Dr Keith Larson, EPB Chair Prof. Peter Sköld and Executive Secretary Dr Maria Grigoratou participated in meetings with visiting diplomatic and scientific delegations, providing opportunities to exchange views on polar research, policy developments, and international cooperation.

In February, EPB representatives met with [Canadian Ambassador to Sweden Jason LaTorre](#) and [Counsellor Meghan Lau](#) to discuss Canada's Arctic Foreign Policy and opportunities for strengthening collaboration between Canadian and European polar research



communities, including through international initiatives such as the International Polar Year and the UN Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences.

In March, the Executive Secretary met with [Yan Pautrat, Attaché for Scientific and Academic Cooperation, and Victor Ducret from the French Embassy in Sweden](#). Discussions focused on European polar research coordination, the EPB Strategy, and the role of the EPCO in strengthening collaboration across the European polar community.



Meetings organised by CNR-ISP, Rome



On 16 September, EPB representatives of CNR-ISP Giuliana Panieri and Sandro Carniel organised a series of meetings in Rome during the visit of the EPB Executive Secretary. Discussions at CNR brought together the CNR Director of the Department of Earth System Science and Technologies for the Environment, Francesco Petracchini, Italy's Special Envoy for the Arctic Agostino Pinna, representatives from the Ministry of Research (MUR), and members of Italy's Research Infrastructure Committee to exchange views on national priorities in polar research and the role of EPB in supporting European and national activities, including perspectives related to the 2028-2034 EU Multiannual Financial Framework and FP10.

Later the same day, Maria also participated in meetings at the Italian Parliament with Alessandro Giglio Vigna, President of the EU Policies Committee of the Chamber of Deputies, and Marco Simiani, PD Group Leader in the Environment Committee, where discussions highlighted the importance of polar research for Europe and the strategic role of polar research initiatives for Italy, and the role of EPB in strengthening coordination within the European polar research community.



Estonia- Antarctica Day: Polar Science, Environment and Politics



The **Estonian Academy of Sciences**, the **Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs**, the **Estonian Ministry of Climate**, and the **Estonian Polar Club** jointly organised a half-day conference titled “**Antarctica Day: Polar Science, Environment and Politics**” to highlight the role of science, environmental protection, and international cooperation in Antarctica.

Opening remarks were delivered by Prof. Maarja Kruusmaa (Estonian Academy of Sciences), EPB representative. Associate Prof. Kati Lindström (KTH Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden), EPB Alternate Representative, moderated the session “Antarctic Environmental Protection, Climate Change and Europe.”

The EPB Executive Secretary was also invited to participate in the panel discussion “Polar Power Games: Geopolitics in the Frozen Frontiers,” bringing the science perspective alongside **Ambassador Belén Sapag Muñoz de la Peña** (Chile), **Urmas Paet** (Member of the European Parliament), and **Marko Mihkelson** (Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Riigikogu), moderated by **Ambassador Toomas Lukk** (Special Envoy for the Arctic, Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs).





EPB, EPCO and the EU environment

EPB Actions for the MFF 2028–2034 and FP10: Positioning Polar Research as a Strategic Investment for Europe’s Future

In 2025, the EPB undertook a focused and coordinated set of actions to support the positioning of polar research within the forthcoming [EU Multiannual Financial Framework \(MFF\) 2028–2034 and Framework Programme 10 \(FP10\)](#). This included an [open call launched in May](#) and two targeted [letters and statements to EU decision-makers in June and September](#). Together, these actions highlighted the strategic importance of polar research for Europe and underscored that the Arctic and Antarctic are critical regions for understanding global change, with direct implications for Europe’s climate, environment, economy, and societal resilience.

A central message across EPB’s contributions was the importance of maintaining continuity in European polar research through adequate and well-structured funding.



EPB emphasised that long-term investment enables the operation of essential research infrastructures, observing systems, and collaborative networks, while also supporting the delivery of high-quality, policy-relevant knowledge. [In this context, polar research was positioned as a key contributor to broader EU priorities, including climate action, sustainability, and preparedness, as well as to emerging initiatives such as digital representations of the Earth system.](#)

The EPB statement further contributed to the broader European dialogue, being referenced in related calls for polar research within FP10 by the [Arctic Six](#) and the [EU Polar Cluster](#).



These messages were reinforced through the open call, which has already been supported by more than [900 signatories](#) from across the research community, highlighting the value of past EU investments and the need to keep polar research visible, properly supported within FP10, and well coordinated at the European level.

EPB contributions to EU Projects

The EPB is a partner in three EU-funded projects, Arctic PASSION, OCEAN:ICE, and POLARIN, and contributes through communication, coordination, dissemination, and policy engagement. EPB staff are actively involved in the projects, participating in meetings across Work Packages, the Steering Board, and the General Assemblies.

Arctic PASSION (2021–2025) aimed to develop a coherent, integrated Pan-Arctic Observing System of Systems (pan-AOSS) to improve access to Arctic Earth observation and information services. In 2025, the EPB contributed to legacy planning deliverables, supported EU Polar Cluster coordination, and co-organised a cluster booth and networking session at the Arctic Science Summit Week and Arctic Circle Assembly. EPB staff contributed to the final symposium and discussions on Arctic observing coordination.



Arctic PASSION 2025 Symposium participants. Photo: Olivia Rempel

OCEAN:ICE (2022–2026) investigates interactions between ice shelves and the ocean, with a focus on the Southern Ocean and Greenland. EPB supported outreach and policy engagement by organising a series of webinars promoting ocean–ice research. The EPB Chair and Communications Officer also



OCEAN ICE webinar series organized by the EPB

engaged in policy events, strengthening links between science and decision-making.

POLARIN (2024–2029) provides transnational and virtual access to a network of 64 polar research infrastructures to foster interdisciplinary research across polar regions. As lead of the outreach and engagement work package, in 2025 EPB developed communication strategies and activities, established content guidelines and set up the POLARIN Ambassadors Programme. POLARIN and EPB also supported the EU Polar Cluster activities in 2025.



POLARIN videos for the Ambassador Programme prepared by the EPB

The Executive Secretary attended the annual **BioEcoOcean** meeting in Sopot, as a member of the Advisory Board. EPB also participated in the consortia of two new EU Horizon Europe polar project proposals, **Beyond Arctic PASSION** and **SYNCHRONY**, submitted under the 2025 Work Programme.



European Polar Coordination Office

The [EU-funded EU-PolarNet projects \(2015–2024\)](#) constituted the largest coordinated polar research initiative implemented as an EU project, bringing together 25 leading institutions from EU Member States and Associated Countries with established Arctic and Antarctic programmes aiming to translate scientific knowledge into tangible impact by informing policy decisions. The EU-PolarNet2 also developed the [European Polar Coordination Office](#) (EPCO) as the permanent structure to sustain collaboration and strategic direction in polar research.

As a network hub, EPCO coordinates key platforms such as the [EU Polar Cluster](#) and the [Polar Catalyst Platform](#) and aims to promote collaboration, support knowledge exchange, and strengthen integration across the European polar research landscape, while facilitating the flow of scientific insights to policymakers and engaging the public through outreach and events.

EPCO is integrated within the EPB Secretariat, with the EPB Executive Secretary serving as Head of EPCO and an EPB officer acting as a part-time EPCO Officer. To guide its activities and the implementation of its work plan, EPB established an [EPCO Action Group](#) chaired



by [Dr. Nicole Biebow](#), EPB representative and former EU-PolarNet 2 coordinator. Since its launch, EPCO has been actively promoted through EPB activities, engaging stakeholders, decision-makers, and the international scientific community, while also establishing dialogue with European Commission representatives. Key examples include the ASFF and FARO 2025 business meetings at ASSW, the launch of the UN Decade of Cryospheric Sciences at UNOC in Nice, the EU Arctic Forum and Indigenous Peoples' Dialogue in Kittilä, the 2025 AAORIA meeting in Brussels, and the Arctic Six annual meeting in Umeå. Additionally, EPCO conducted in-depth consultation discussions with EU Polar Cluster projects on the cluster's future, co-organized with EPB and the British Antarctic Survey EU Polar Cluster sessions and booths at ASSW and ACA, and welcomed new projects into the network.

EPCO facilitated coordination among [EU Polar Cluster projects for the publication of a joint letter on FP10](#), highlighting the value of polar research and the essential role of polar science in advancing European preparedness, sustainability, and security goals.



[Dr. Maria Grigoratou](#)
EPB Executive Secretary
Head of EPCO



[Dr. Kylie Owen](#)
EPB-EPCO officer

EPCO participation in EU-related events

EPCO at the EU Arctic Forum



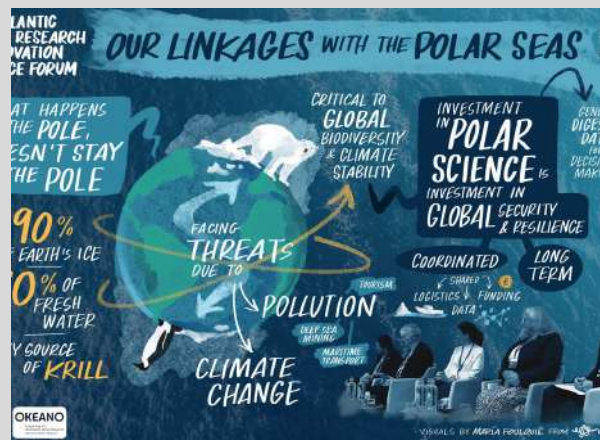
The [EU Arctic Forum 2025](#), held in Kittilä, Finland, convened policymakers, researchers, Indigenous representatives and youth to discuss Arctic cooperation, sustainability, and the role of research and innovation in addressing regional and global challenges. Key themes included climate change, governance, sustainable development, and the integration of Indigenous and youth perspectives into EU Arctic policy.

Dr. Maria Grigoratou (EPCO Head / EPB Executive Secretary) contributed to two panel discussions: “Researching networks: Cooperation and funding possibilities for Arctic researchers” and “Research, science and innovation that works for the Arctic and the world”, both highlighting the importance of science, cooperation, and informed decision-making in the region.

Maria emphasized the importance of science-based policy decisions in the Arctic, the value of diverse knowledge systems, and Europe’s diversity. She also highlighted the need for stronger coordination, which EPCO aims to support, building on the legacy of EU PolarNet EU-funded projects.

EPCO representation at the AAORIA 2025 meeting and the EPB-AWI side event, September 25, Brussels

The EPCO officer Dr. Kylie Owen participated in the panel discussion “Our linkages with the polar seas” at 2025 [All-Atlantic Ocean Research & Innovation Alliance](#) forum, highlighting the planetary connections of the polar regions, their influence on the Atlantic Ocean, and the importance of coordinated science for international cooperation and evidence-based decision-making.



visuals © Maria Foulquié García, Visuality

Kylie also presented EPCO at the Polar Side Event “[Polar Oceans and Climate: Advancing Synergies for Long-Term Global Collaboration](#),” organised by the EPB and the Alfred Wegener Institute, Helmholtz Centre for Polar and Marine Research. The event brought together scientists, policymakers, and organisations to emphasise the role of polar research in the Atlantic and global climate systems, and concluded with a Call for Action urging stronger investment and coordination in polar science.

EPB participation in EU-related events

EPB at the EMODnet Conference

The [EMODnet Open Conference 2025](#), held in Brussels on 25–26 November as part of EU Marine Knowledge Week, brought together policymakers, scientists, and data providers to discuss the future of Europe’s marine data landscape. The conference highlighted EMODnet’s role as the EU’s marine data backbone, supporting policy implementation, the European Ocean Pact, and the development of the European Digital Twin Ocean, while advancing data sharing and service evolution towards its Vision 2035.

Within this context, the EPB Executive Secretary was invited to join a panel discussion on the evolution of EMODnet. Maria highlighted the critical importance of the polar oceans and marine cryosphere for Europe’s climate, biodiversity, and sea-level stability, and called for improved access to near real-time polar data and stronger coordination with the polar research community, positioning EMODnet as a key platform to better support science, policy, and decision-making by 2035.



EPB at the Ocean R&I strategy



The EPB Executive Secretary participated in the [first stakeholder consultation on the European Ocean Research and Innovation Strategy](#), held in Brussels on December 2, 2025. The event brought together a wide range of stakeholders to contribute to shaping the future EU Ocean R&I Strategy, with discussions focusing on Europe’s added value in ocean science, ocean health, the blue economy, and ocean technologies.

Through this engagement, the EPB contributed a strong polar perspective to the discussions, highlighting the importance of polar regions for understanding global ocean processes and climate change. The intervention emphasised the need to ensure that polar research is fully integrated into the European Ocean R&I Strategy, including sustained investment in long-term observations, research infrastructures, and international collaboration across ocean and polar domains.



**EPB actions for the 5th International
Polar Year and UN Decade of Actions
for Cryospheric Sciences**

EPB and the 5th International Polar Year (2032- 2033)

The European Polar Board has maintained strong engagement across **International Polar Year (IPY)** initiatives, having been active during IPY-4 and being active in preparations for **IPY-5**. As a member of the IPY-5 Planning Committee, EPB has contributed from the early stages of its development, providing a unified European perspective. The Autumn 2025 EPB Plenary formally endorsed the establishment of an EPB Action Group on IPY-5 to strengthen European coordination and engagement.

EPB has also been actively involved in international discussions and events related to IPY-5. The EPB Chair and Executive Secretary participated in panel discussions at key international fora, including Arctic Frontiers, Arctic Circle Assembly, and national meetings where they shared EPB perspectives on IPY-5.

At the Arctic Science Summit Week, the EPB contributed to the organisation of the “Joint Meeting of National/Regional Polar Organizations towards IPY” meeting led by the US Polar Research Board and with contributions from Polar Knowledge Canada, and the Asian Forum on Polar Sciences. On 7 May 2025, the EPB with its Members Arctic Centre at Umeå University, and the Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic at Luleå University of Technology and the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat organized a high-level event at Umeå University titled: “European Polar Research in Focus: Enhancing Impact and Presence in the International Polar Year and the Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences” reinforcing the importance of coordinated European engagement (page 31).

Through its active involvement, EPB aims to provide a collective European polar voice within IPY-5 and support its members in navigating participation, aligned with official guidance. It also aims to serve as a communication bridge between IPY-5 developments and the diverse EPB membership, offering structured updates while recognising varying national priorities. Additionally, EPB aims to foster collaboration through dedicated discussions at plenaries, develop awareness and engagement activities with a strong bipolar focus, and contribute to member-led IPY-5 initiatives where appropriate.



In collaboration with the European Polar Coordination Office (EPCO), EPB aims to strengthen European visibility and coordination in IPY-5. Joint efforts will focus among others on promoting the European polar voice, enhancing the presence of EU-funded projects, co-organising cross-cutting initiatives with IPY-5, UN Decades for Ocean and Cryosphere, and international partners, supporting research prioritisation and collaboration, and promoting the active participation of early-career researchers.

EPB and the UN Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences (2025- 2034)

The EPB has closely followed the development of the [UN Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences](#) since January 2025, engaging in key discussions and contributing to its early shaping. In March 2025, an EPB delegation, including EXCOM member Miki Ojeda, participated in the [UNESCO Brainstorming Session](#) in Paris, contributing to initial exchanges on the Decade's scope and priorities.



On 7 May 2025, the EPB with its Members Arctic Centre at Umeå University, and the Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic at Luleå University of Technology and the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat organized a [high-level event](#) at Umeå University titled: “European Polar Research in Focus: Enhancing Impact and Presence in the International Polar Year and the Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences” reinforcing the importance of coordinated European engagement (page 31).

At the Spring 2025 Plenary, EPB invited Anil Mishra, Chief of Section for Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation at UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme (IHP), to present the Decade. The Plenary subsequently agreed that the EPB Secretariat would closely follow

developments and provide regular updates. The [Executive Secretary](#) also attended the official launch of the Decade at the [United Nations Ocean Conference at the 3rd UNOC in Nice](#) and contributed to UNESCO-led panel discussions at the [Pavillon de la Cryosphère](#).



EPB joined the UNESCO [Ad Hoc Committee](#) tasked with advising on the Decade's governance and structure, participating in its meetings, including the session held in December where members reviewed and refined the draft strategic framework, discussed thematic priorities and working group structures, and contributed to shaping the Decade's governance, participation modalities, and roadmap towards its operational launch.

Looking ahead, EPB aims to contribute by providing a collective European polar voice, supporting members in engaging with the Decade, and acting as a communication bridge between international developments and the EPB community. Through coordination with EPCO, EPB will seek to foster collaboration, enhance the visibility of European activities, and support targeted actions aligned with its mandate and the interests of its Members.

European Polar Research in Focus: Enhancing Impact and Presence in the International Polar Year and the Decade of Actions for Cryosphere Sciences

The **European Polar Board** with its Swedish Members, **Arctic Centre at Umeå University**, and the **Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic at Luleå University of Technology**, and the **Swedish Polar Research Secretariat** organized a high-level event on May 7 at Umeå University titled: ***“European Polar Research in Focus: Enhancing Impact and Presence in the International Polar Year and the Decade of Actions for Cryosphere Sciences”***.

The event set the scene by bringing together perspectives from science, governance, policy, and Indigenous communities to highlight the growing importance of polar regions in a rapidly changing climate. Contributions focused on Europe’s role in polar science, the global impacts of environmental change in the Arctic and Antarctic, and the need for stronger coordination in light of major upcoming initiatives such as the ***Fifth International Polar Year (IPY-5, 2032–2033)*** and the ***UN Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034)***.

Across the programme, a clear message emerged: polar regions are central to understanding global challenges, and Europe has both the responsibility and the opportunity to strengthen its scientific and strategic engagement.



Building on this foundation, discussions explored how Europe can move towards a more unified, yet diverse, polar voice, capable of responding to complex societal and environmental challenges. Emphasis was placed on enhancing collaboration, improving the integration of science into policy, and ensuring the continued relevance of research to society.

The importance of inclusive approaches, such as embedded Indigenous knowledge, supporting early career researchers, and fostering interdisciplinary cooperation, was highlighted as key to strengthening resilience and trust. At the same time, the need for stronger coordination across European and international initiatives was underscored, positioning polar research as a critical contributor to global efforts addressing climate change, sustainability, and future preparedness.



EPB and International Scientific Community



Dialogue with scientific partners

In 2025, the European Polar Board continued to strengthen its engagement with key partners while expanding its network to include new collaborations across related scientific domains. The Executive Secretary held discussions with long-standing partners, including [SCAR](#), [IASC](#), [SOOS](#), [ESA](#), and [Polar Knowledge Canada](#), focusing on organisational updates, ongoing cooperation, and the exchange of perspectives on polar coordination in the context of the upcoming [International Polar Year \(IPY-5, 2032-2033\)](#) and the [UN Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences \(2025-2034\)](#). In parallel, EPB maintained regular dialogue with colleagues from the [European Commission](#), particularly DG RTD and DG MARE, addressing strategic topics such as the future of polar research in [FP10](#), developments related to [EPCO](#), the [Ocean Act](#), and the [EU Arctic Policy update](#).



Building on this foundation, EPB initiated new exchanges with organisations working across ocean, hydrology, and climate research to strengthen connections between polar regions and the broader ocean-climate-biodiversity nexus. This included a meeting in Paris between the Executive Secretary and colleagues from the [Intergovernmental Oceanographic Committee \(IOC-UNESCO\)](#),

as well as the [Chief of Section for Hydrological Systems, Climate Change and Adaptation of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Hydrological Programme \(IHP\)](#). Discussions highlighted the importance of polar regions and polar science within both the [UN Ocean Decade \(2020-2030\)](#) and the [UN Decade of Actions for Cryospheric Sciences \(2025-2034\)](#), alongside exchanges on EPB activities and membership.



Further engagement with the [European Marine Biological Resource Centre \(EMBRC\)](#) enabled mutual exchange on infrastructures and initiatives such as EMOBON and EU-funded project for Southern Ocean observations TRICUSO. EPB also engaged with [Mercator Ocean international](#), exploring cooperation on polar observations and forecasting in support of key European initiatives, including the Copernicus Arctic Hub and Digital Twins of the Ocean. In addition, a meeting with the [European Climate Research Alliance \(ECRA\)](#) provided an opportunity to exchange updates on respective activities, including ECRA's Polar Climate Insights and Impacts programme, and to identify areas of mutual interest in advancing understanding of polar climate processes and their global implications.

EPB at national and international meetings

The **EPB Chair represented EPB at several key events**, contributing to discussions on IPY-5 and polar research coordination at Arctic Frontiers, the 2nd European Science Diplomacy Conference, and other high-level fora, thereby ensuring EPB's visibility in strategic dialogues. Furthermore, the **Chair of the Action Group on Environmental Impacts of Polar Research** presented the Group's synthesis report at the SIOS workshop, demonstrating the relevance and tangible outputs of EPB's thematic work.



The new EPB Executive Secretary, in her role of engaging with the polar research community and key stakeholders, undertook an extensive programme of participation in international meetings and events. This increased level of engagement reflected a deliberate effort during the year to strengthen connections, **raise the visibility of EPB and EPCO**, and establish direct dialogue with partners across science, policy, and funding communities. While this level of participation exceeded usual representation, it provided valuable opportunities to strengthen EPB's presence and build momentum with key actors.

Through participation in a wide range of conferences, workshops, and high-level meetings, the **EPB consistently presented its activities, including EPB actions on promoting polar science as a strategic investment in FP10 and the MFF, as well as EPCO**. Examples include the ASFF and FARO business meetings at the Arctic Science Summit Week and UNESCO events at the Pavillon de la Cryosphère during the third United Nations Ocean Conference. These engagements reinforced EPB's role as a connector across communities, linking national programmes, European initiatives, and international processes such as the International Polar Year (IPY-5) and the UN Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences. Several of these EPB participations were facilitated through invitations from EPB Members, including events such as the Swiss Polar Day, Be-Polar Conference, the Forum for the Arctic and Antarctic, and Estonia's high-level event "Antarctica Day: Polar Science, Environment and Politics, December" highlighting the strong support and active involvement of the EPB network.

Additionally, The EPB participated in the **[Antarctica InSync International Planning Workshop in Frascati](#)** and continues to closely follow developments of the Antarctica InSync initiative, recognising its importance for coordinated international Antarctic research.



EPB Members Highlights 2025
(Presented in alphabetical order by country)





Austrian Science Fund (Austria)

Austrian polar research in 2025 combined scientific excellence with strong engagement at the science–society interface. Birgit Sattler, Director of the Austrian Polar Research Institute (APRI) since 2024 and Professor at the University of Innsbruck, was awarded the title [Austrian of the Year in the Climate Initiative](#) category at the Austria Gala in October 2025. The award recognises her long-standing contributions to glaciology and microbiology and her commitment to climate protection, with particular emphasis on the global importance of glaciers in the context of the United Nations International Year of Glacier Conservation 2025.

In parallel, the Austrian Polar Research Institute (APRI) organised the exhibition [Changing Planet: Polar Regions and High Mountains in the Anthropocene in Innsbruck](#). The exhibition brought together researchers and artists affiliated with APRI to present scientific instruments, macro-photography of ice structures, and artistic interpretations illustrating the vulnerability of ice in polar and high-mountain environments and the global consequences of glacier retreat.



Belgian Federal Science Policy Office (BELSPO), Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS), Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) (Belgium)

Belgian polar research continued to demonstrate strong coordination across institutions and disciplines. The [Belgian Polar Conference 2025](#) took place in Brussels in September and was organised by the RESIST project in collaboration with BELSPO, APECS Belgium, the International Polar Foundation and BNCAR. The conference highlighted the diversity of Belgian polar research and its relevance to broader scientific and societal challenges. BELSPO also funded five new research projects at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica Station, with a total budget of three million euros under a dedicated call of the Policy 4 Science research programme.

The Fonds de la Recherche Scientifique (FNRS), while not operating a dedicated polar programme, continues to support Belgian polar research and contributed to the organisation of the Saroma Sea Ice School 2026 which provides early-career researchers with advanced training on key Arctic and Antarctic sea-ice processes. FNRS also participated in the Arctic Futures Symposium in Brussels, strengthening links between science and policy communities. They also contributed to the international [science planning workshop for Antarctica InSync in Frascati](#) in November 2025.

The Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) continues to support polar research through competitive funding instruments rather than a dedicated polar programme. Its current portfolio includes five PhD fellowships, four postdoctoral fellowships and three research projects distributed across Arctic and Antarctic regions. Research themes include terrestrial and marine biology, palaeoclimate studies in blue-ice areas near Princess Elisabeth Station, ice-sheet modelling and climate dynamics, and space science contributions to the IceCube Neutrino Observatory. FWO also supports Belgian participation in the Belgian–Indian–Japanese STAPLES project on Antarctic lake sediment drilling to study East Antarctic Ice Sheet dynamics, with fieldwork conducted at the Indian Bharati research station. Additional projects focus on long-term Greenland ice sheet–climate interactions in collaboration with the University of Liège.



Bulgarian Antarctic Institute (Bulgaria)

Bulgaria completed its [33rd Antarctic Expedition](#), the largest in the country's history, involving 27 scientific projects and more than 60 participants, including researchers from Colombia, Greece, Romania, Montenegro and the United Arab Emirates.

Fieldwork was carried out at the Bulgarian Antarctic Base on Livingston Island and aboard a research vessel. The station operated for more than 120 days between November 2024 and April 2025.

A major scientific outcome of the expedition was the creation of a large-scale digital topographic map of South Bay, with an electronic version planned for release in 2026. Infrastructure development at the base continues under the National Roadmap for Scientific Infrastructure, including the construction of a new laboratory module and modernisation of existing facilities. The 2025–26 Antarctic season has already begun, with the base hosting 23 research projects and more than 45 scientists. Bulgaria continues to maintain strong logistical cooperation with Spain, Türkiye, Portugal and Colombia in the South Shetland Islands.

MUNI



Czech Antarctic Research Programme, (Czech Republic)

The [Czech Antarctic Research Programme](#) (CARP) concluded the 2024–25 Antarctic season with extensive international collaboration, notably with the Portuguese and Spanish Antarctic programmes. During this period, the programme hosted researchers from Slovakia and Ukraine and supported Spanish-led projects through the COMNAP Fellowship Scheme.

In 2025, the Masaryk University/CARP became a member of POLARIN, reflecting its increasing engagement with European research infrastructures. From the 2026–27 season onwards, the Johann Gregor Mendel Czech Antarctic Station (JGM) will offer international access, expanding opportunities for collaborative research. Planned activities include the deployment of a 18-person team to the JGM station in January 2026, supported by the Chilean Navy, followed by an eight-person field camp on Nelson Island in February 2026, with logistics jointly supported by Türkiye, Ukraine and Chile. Most Czech Antarctic projects are terrestrial in focus and are well positioned to contribute to land-based science components within Antarctica InSync.



***National Centre for Scientific Research,
Institut polaire français Paul-Émile Victor
(France)***

The National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) coordinated the first [French dual-pole polar strategy](#), representing a major step in aligning national Arctic and Antarctic research priorities. The prospective study, entrusted to CNRS as a leading national actor in polar science, identifies 15 key scientific challenges for the coming decade and is closely aligned with the launch of the UNESCO Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences 2025–2034.

The Decade was [officially launched on 8 June](#) at a high-level event co-hosted by UNESCO during the Third United Nations Ocean Conference in Nice, by the President of France and the President of Tajikistan, bringing together world leaders, UN representatives and scientists.

Scientists affiliated with French universities and research institutions, including CNRS, are actively engaged in Antarctica InSync and participated in the international [science planning workshop in Frascati](#). In addition, Jennie L. Thomas, CRiceS co-coordinator and CERTAINTY coordinator, led the [EU Polar Cluster initiative to publish a joint letter](#) to European decision makers calling for a strong and visible polar science component in the 10th EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (FP10) and the 2028–2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF), in alignment with the European Polar Board’s position letters.

IPEV will continue to provide logistical and operational support for Arctic and Antarctic research under Ifremer, ensuring continuity of services to the scientific community. It will conclude its membership in the European Polar Board from 2026 and the French representation within EPB will be maintained through the Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS). These changes represent an adjustment in institutional representation rather than a shift in scientific priorities, and cooperation between IPEV and the wider polar research community will continue through established partnerships and shared infrastructures.

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Arctic Centre- Lapland University, Thule Institute (Finland)

Finland strengthened its interdisciplinary Arctic research capacity through strategic academic recruitments at the Arctic Centre (Lapland University), including a Professorship in Arctic Geopolitics and Security and a Professorship in Sustainability and Just Green Transition, alongside several research positions focusing on Arctic livelihoods, climate impacts and societal transitions.

The Arctic Spirit Conference 2025, organized by the Arctic Centre was held in Rovaniemi and provided a broad forum on resilience, preparedness and cooperation in the Arctic. Under the theme Elements of Arctic Security, discussions addressed transportation, infrastructure, climate and environmental change, and updates from the Arctic Council, including perspectives from outgoing and incoming chairs Norway and the Kingdom of Denmark. The next [Arctic Spirit Conference will take place in May 2027](#), with a flexible theme reflecting evolving Arctic priorities.

In 2025, the Thule Institute led two Transnational Access calls under the EU-funded POLARIN project and supports selected projects through logistics and coordination. The Institute also contributed to UArctic activities and preparations for the UArctic Congress in 2026. Thule Institute took in 2025 the co-directorship of regional Arctic Six University Alliance, which functions as Northern Nordic research hub with extensive collaboration also with stakeholders, businesses, industry and cities. Two main areas are particularly being addressed are cross-border energy and Arctic security (total defence) and Thule will host and organise an Arctic Security Forum in June 2026 in Oulu, Finland.



Danish Agency for Science and Higher Education (Denmark)

Denmark assumed the [Chairship of the Arctic Council](#) for the 2025–2027 period under the Kingdom of Denmark, encompassing Denmark, Greenland and the Faroe Islands. The Chairship places strong emphasis on Indigenous Peoples and local communities, sustainable development, ocean and climate issues, biodiversity, and the strengthening of knowledge-based cooperation across the Arctic, with science playing a key role in supporting informed decision-making and long-term regional stability.

In addition, Denmark hosted the [2nd European Science Diplomacy Conference](#) in December 2025 in Copenhagen, bringing together policymakers, scientists and stakeholders to discuss the role of science diplomacy in addressing global challenges and fostering international cooperation in a fragmented geopolitical landscape.



Helmholtz Association (Germany)

Within the Helmholtz Association, the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research underwent a governance transition in 2025, with Maarten Boersma serving as Interim Director following the move of Antje

Boetius to the Monterey Bay Aquarium Research Institute.

Germany continues to contribute to major international initiatives associated with preparations for the Fifth International Polar Year, including participation in the Arctic Pulse project and the Antarctica InSync programme. AWI serves as a lead coordinator of [Antarctica InSync](#), an endorsed UN Ocean Decade programme aimed at advancing coordinated Antarctic science. Science planning for Antarctica InSync progressed following an international workshop in November 2025 co-organised with the European Space Agency. Contributions from the scientific community are being consolidated into a joint science plan to be published in cooperation with the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research. The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), in collaboration with Antarctica InSync, invites the Antarctic and Southern Ocean research community to provide feedback on the [draft Antarctica InSync Science Theme White Papers](#) until January 31, 2026.

The EU-funded [POLARIN project](#) continues to advance, with the second Transnational Access call attracting 104 applications and proposal evaluations currently underway.



Estonian Academy of Sciences (Estonia)

The Estonian Academy of Sciences continues to act as a bridge between research and policy. In 2025, Estonian polar research was characterised by strong activity in atmospheric sciences and aerosols, primarily in the Arctic, alongside research on pollen, microplastics, robotics, glaciers, and marine sustainability in both polar regions. Substantial work in the social sciences and humanities also continues, including anthropological research conducted in collaboration with northern communities. Increased attention is being given to Arctic polar law, reflecting the evolving legal and governance context of the region.

Together with the Estonian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Academy organised a [high-level event on Antarctica Day on 1 December](#), focusing on polar science, environmental protection and geopolitics. The event brought together researchers, diplomats and members of the Estonian and European Parliaments, with particular attention to the Antarctic Treaty and its Madrid Protocol.



Icelandic Centre for Research (Iceland)

At the beginning of 2025, the [Stefansson Arctic Institute was merged with the University of Akureyri](#), embedding Arctic

research more firmly within the university's institutional framework. During the Arctic Science Summit Week in March 2025, it was announced that the Secretariat of the International Arctic Science Committee will be hosted in Iceland until at least the end of 2031.

The national project to [strengthen Arctic research cooperation in Iceland](#) organised workshops in May and September 2025 on climate change adaptation and ocean issues and international scientific cooperation. These workshops aimed to bring together researchers to discuss research needs, capacity building and collaboration opportunities, supported by the University Collaboration Fund and with Rannís as a project partner.



Institute of Polar Sciences of the Italian National Research Council, National Antarctic Research Programme (Italy)

Italy marked several important milestones in 2025. Milan hosted the [Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings in June and July](#), and the [Italian Antarctic Programme celebrated 40 years of continuous research activity](#). The Italian National Research Council coordinated preparations for the [Polar Dialogue Forum](#) to be held in March 2026 and established a dedicated national group to coordinate Italian contributions to the International Polar Year 2032–33 across both polar regions.

Italy's first [Arctic conference organized by the Ministry of Defense](#), emphasizing the growing convergence of defense, security and scientific agendas in the polar regions.

The [Institute of Polar Sciences of the Italian National Research Council \(CNR-ISP\)](#) joined [UARctic](#) as a Non-Arctic Member in June 2025. Scientists led by the Director Giuliana Panieri of CNR-ISP also contributed to major international scientific achievements, including the [discovery of the deepest known gas hydrate cold seep during the Ocean Census Arctic Deep EXTREME24 expedition](#), with implications for Arctic governance and sustainable development. The 41st Italian Antarctic Expedition is currently underway under the coordination of the National Antarctic Research Programme (PNRA). The season involves multidisciplinary research activities across geosciences, climate, biology and environmental monitoring, supported by Italy's Antarctic infrastructures and sustained international logistical cooperation.

November 2025 marked the [final drilling campaign of the EU-funded Beyond EPICA Oldest Ice project](#) at Little Dome C, involving twelve research institutions from ten European countries.

Italy continues to increase international access to its polar infrastructures through POLARIN and is actively engaged in Antarctica InSync.

Italy developed its national Arctic Strategy, establishing a coherent and forward-looking framework to guide Italian research, international

cooperation, and policy engagement in the Arctic and to align scientific priorities with broader geopolitical, environmental, and societal challenges in the region. Italy continues to support Antarctic and Arctic research programs: the [PNRA](#) and [PRA](#).



Luxembourg's Polar Programme (Luxembourg)

In 2025 Luxembourg's Polar Programme-[polar.lu](#) continued its public outreach activities by participating in numerous events in Luxembourg, on a national and local level; such as the national scientific days in March, the science festival in November, and during the summer with specific events during the Luxembourg Garden and environment exhibition (LUGA). These activities received positive feedback by the public, the media, as well as the schools, the scientific community and the respective government departments. Some of our members participated in research projects in the Arctic and Antarctic. The national APECS group is becoming stronger and young scientists are active in all our events. Polar.lu is also restructuring its internet and social media presence.

Polar.lu and its representatives also participated in several European events in 2025.



Dutch Research Council (The Netherlands)

The Dutch Research Council [launched a major cooperative funding call](#) jointly with the Alfred Wegener Institute, reflecting the long-standing Dutch–German partnership in polar research. The call focused on Arctic research with a total budget of 4.5 million euros and included dedicated opportunities for early-career researchers.

In addition, the forthcoming [Triple-Polar call](#) under the Dutch Research Agenda will address interconnected challenges related to climate change, environmental pollution and biodiversity loss across the polar regions, with a total budget of 9.5 million euros.

The annual NL Polar Day continues to serve as a national meeting point for researchers, policymakers and stakeholders, [attracting more than 200 participants in 2025](#). The next NL Polar Day will take place in April 2026 in Amersfoort.



The Research Council of Norway



Research Council of Norway, Institute of Marine Research (Norway)

In 2025, the Norwegian government demonstrated strong commitment to the [Fifth International Polar Year](#) by mandating the establishment of a national coordination structure.

The Research Council of Norway was assigned responsibility for hosting a national secretariat, while the Norwegian Polar Institute was tasked with chairing the scientific committee. These mandates were formally approved in August 2025, and committee members have been nominated, with activities expected to begin in early 2026.

In 2026, Norway will launch [Arctic Ocean 2050](#), a ten-year interdisciplinary research programme aimed at supporting sustainable management of a rapidly changing Arctic Ocean. The programme involves 18 Norwegian partners from government, academia and the private sector and is recognised as an IPY-5 contribution, with strong international collaboration envisaged.



Polish Academy of Sciences (Poland)

Poland inaugurated the new [BERA logistics and research centre in Longyearbyen](#), Svalbard, strengthening national and international operational capacity in the Arctic. Modernisation of the [Henryk Arctowski Polish Antarctic Station](#) on King George Island continues, with a new modular facility planned for completion in 2027.

The Polish Academy of Sciences leads the EU-funded LIQUIDICE project, with its kick-off meeting held in February and initial fieldwork conducted in Svalbard in April.

Poland also hosted several major national and international polar meetings in 2025, including the [37th COMNAP Annual General Meeting and 21st Symposium](#) in Warsaw, the [Cryospheric Ecosystems Conference](#) in Poznań, and the [40th International Polar Symposium](#) in Puławy.



Foundation for Science and Technology (Portugal)

The Portuguese Antarctic Campaign PROPOLAR 2024–25 included six research projects involving 15 scientists working across different Antarctic regions. The [13th Portuguese Antarctic Flight](#) in January 2025 transported 99 scientists and technicians between Punta Arenas and King George Island, followed by a second flight in February in collaboration with the Spanish Polar Programme.

Portuguese researchers continue to rely on strong international logistical partnerships with countries including Bulgaria, Chile, Spain and South Korea. In 2025, the Foundation for Science and Technology opened a national [call for polar research projects](#) covering all scientific disciplines.

The [17th Portuguese Conference on Polar Sciences](#), held in Lisbon, focused on human dimensions of polar research. Portugal will host the Arctic Science Summit Week in Porto in 2028.



Council for Scientific Research, Ministry of Science and Innovation (Spain)

Spain continued to advance its national polar strategy, with [polar regions explicitly included in the Spanish Foreign Action Strategy 2025–2028](#), particularly in relation to biodiversity and ocean protection. In December 2025, Spain began its [39th Antarctic Research Campaign](#), involving 28 scientific projects supported by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities. During 39th Antarctic campaign, for the first time, three Spanish oceanographic vessels: BIO Hesperides, BO Sarmiento de Gamboa and BO Odon de Buen served in the scientific activity and met in Port Foster, Deception Island. Also the Minister of Science, Innovation and Universities, accompanied by the President of the Spanish Polar Committee visited the Spanish Antarctic Stations and the oceanographic vessels during their scientific activities.

A new laboratory module was completed at the Gabriel de Castilla Antarctic Station, including the Iberian Clean Atmospheric Laboratory, developed jointly with Portugal and one of only three such facilities in Antarctica. Spain remains active in Arctic research in Greenland, Svalbard, and Iceland, and its national committees for Antarctica, InSync, and the International Polar Year are operational or in formation.



Arctic Centre at Umeå University, Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic, Luleå University of Technology, Swedish Polar Research Secretariat (Sweden)

The Swedish government designated [polar research as one of eight new Strategic Research Areas](#), allocating 66.5 million SEK for the period 2027–28. The Swedish Research Council awarded 40 million SEK to the University of Gothenburg for a new [polar research school](#). In November 2025, Stockholm University hosted the 2nd annual [Forum for the Arctic and Antarctic](#) at the Swedish Museum of Natural History, organised jointly by several national research institutions, including the Arctic Centre at Umeå University, the Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic (Luleå University of Technology) and the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat.

Umeå University joined the EU-funded POLARIN programme in 2025. The Arctic Centre of Umeå University led the development of the [Antarctic Research Trends Report 2025](#). The Centre also supported the transition of the EPB Secretariat to Umeå and continues to contribute to [APECS Sweden](#), Arctic Six activities, and the organisation of the [Arctic Food forum](#) “Food, transitions and traditional knowledges – finding new pathways towards resilient societies in the North” that will take place in Umeå on March 2, 2026.

The [Arctic Arts Summit](#) is also scheduled to take place from 16 to 18 June 2026. The Arctic Centre at Umeå University and the Centre for the Arctic and Antarctic (Luleå University of Technology) are actively engaged in [Arctic Six](#) activities and launched their new round of two-year [Arctic Six Fellows](#) for early-career researchers. On the 7th of May 2025, the European Polar Board, the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat, Luleå University of Technology, and Umeå University jointly organized a [High Level Event](#) to mark the welcoming of the European Polar Board to Sweden and Europe’s coordinated presence in the 5th International Polar Year (IPY-5) and the UN Decade of Action for Cryospheric Sciences 2025–2034.

The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat led major Arctic expeditions aboard the [icebreaker Oden in collaboration with Canada](#), including extensive training for early-career scientists. Similar expeditions are planned for 2026 and 2027. The Secretariat is also a partner in the [Polar Connect initiative](#) and will assume responsibility for the [Kristineberg Marine Station](#) in 2026. The [iQ2300 2025-2026 programme](#) commenced in November 2025 with field activities at Wasa Station and the Riiser-Larsen Ice Shelf.

SWISS POLAR INSTITUTE

Swiss Polar Institute (Switzerland)

The Swiss Polar Institute issued a [comprehensive suite of funding opportunities in 2025](#) supporting Swiss-based polar and remote high-altitude research. Calls included SPI Flagship Initiatives, inviting multi-annual, multidisciplinary programmes with substantial field seasons and international cooperation; SPI Technogrants for development and adaptation of technologies tailored to extreme environments; SPI Exploratory Grants to launch new projects and collaborations; and continued support for Polar Access Fund awards and participation in field and summer schools. The SPI, in collaboration with Pro Helvetia, furthermore issued a call for proposal in the context of PolARTS, fostering arts and science collaborations. These instruments encourage innovation, cross-disciplinary engagement and sustainability in polar research.

The [Swiss Polar Day 2025](#) brought together the national polar research community at ETH Zurich on 5 September, featuring keynote talks, field updates and discussions on geopolitics, science and international opportunities alongside the Prix de Quervain award ceremony for high-altitude research. The [Swiss Polar Festival](#) took place 26–29 November in Sion, expanding the Swiss Polar Class outreach initiative with lectures, school activities and family-oriented events to engage diverse audiences with polar themes.



POLAR RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

TÜBİTAK Polar Research Institute (Türkiye)

The Polar Research Institute of the TÜBİTAK completed the [9th National Antarctic Expedition in March 2025](#), involving 20 projects and hosting international researchers from several countries, with logistical support from Bulgaria and Spain. The Institute is now a member of the International Arctic Science Committee and signed a memorandum of understanding with Argentina, Colombia, Malaysia and United Arab Emirates on polar research and logistics cooperation.

The [Fifth National Arctic Scientific Research Expedition](#) was completed in October 2025, involving researchers from Türkiye, Argentina, Bulgaria and Ecuador. Türkiye also hosted the 9th National Polar Symposium and the 5th Polar Festival in November, with a strong focus on youth and outreach. Türkiye will host the [31st United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2026 \(COP31\)](#).



STATE INSTITUTION
NATIONAL ANTARCTIC
SCIENTIFIC CENTER
Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine

National Antarctic Scientific Center (Ukraine)

Despite the ongoing Russian invasion, Ukraine successfully completed its fourth Antarctic season of 2024–25, and the ice-class research vessel Noosfera began its fifth Antarctic season, expected to be a record year for international cooperation. [Research activities](#) on board include geological, biological, meteorological, oceanographic and geophysical studies, conducted in collaboration with partners from Colombia, the Czech Republic, Mexico, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States.

During the 30th Ukrainian Antarctic Expedition, six oceanographic buoys were deployed as part of the EU-funded OCEAN ICE project, and simultaneous atmospheric radiosonde measurements were conducted from Vernadsky Station and the Noosfera. Glacier meltwater samples were also collected for microplastics research.

Ukrainian scientists reported [unprecedented temperature anomalies near Vernadsky Station](#), with seawater temperatures remaining above freezing throughout the year and no permanent ice cover forming around the Argentine Islands. These observations are consistent with long-term warming trends in the Antarctic Peninsula and contribute important evidence to climate change research.

In the temporarily occupied Crimea, Russian authorities have arrested Ukrainian marine biologist and Antarctic researcher Leonid Pshenichnov. He has been charged with state treason and causing economic damage to Russia and is reported to be the first political prisoner in the history of Antarctica-related research.

The case is linked to Dr Pshenichnov's opposition to intensifying exploitation of the Southern Ocean from Russian industrial fishing. In particular, his support for the establishment of marine protected areas has been portrayed as restricting industrial fishing activities and limiting control over a strategically important region of the global ocean.

Dr Pshenichnov has more than 20 years of experience in Antarctic and Southern Ocean research. His contributions were recognised by CCAMLR in 2021.

The National Antarctic Scientific Center of Ukraine invites the global scientific and environmental community to stand up for this Ukrainian researcher of international importance. In 2021, CCAMLR recognised Leonid's more than 20 years of contribution in its own commemorative materials, and now the scientist is in prison. Pshenichnov recently turned 70 and has many health problems. Any delay in his release could be critical.

<http://uac.gov.ua/en/political-prisoner-because-of-antarctica-russia-put-in-jail-the-ukrainian-scientist-for-opposing-its-plans-on-the-southern-ocean/>



UK Research and Innovation- Natural Environment Research Council and British Antarctic Survey (United Kingdom)

The Natural Environment Research Council and the British Antarctic Survey (BAS) continued major infrastructure upgrades at Rothera Research Station, with construction of a new support building nearing completion. Renovation of the Arctic Research Station in Svalbard is also approaching completion.

The Advanced Research and Invention Agency (ARIA) supports high-risk, high-reward research through its [Forecasting Tipping Points programme](#), with British Antarctic Survey scientists contributing to projects on climate tipping points and geoengineering in polar regions. UK researchers remain strongly engaged in Antarctica InSync and the Beyond EPICA Oldest Ice project, contributing to international efforts to reconstruct long-term climate records.

BAS was able to undertake its longest Antarctic season ever due to the lack of winter sea ice around the west side of the Antarctic Peninsula. The RRS Sir David Attenborough reached the Peninsula region in November 2024 and stayed throughout the summer until winter (mid June) near Rothera research station, where it undertook a science project on carbon cycles during winter darkness. The ship spent midwinter's day near Elephant Island at the tip of the Peninsula.

The decline in the extent of winter sea ice, if consistent each year, will lead to new marine science opportunities all year round in future.



**EUROPEAN
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