

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

One year after its first event, this Symposium on the future of the Arctic has fully proven its relevance and usefulness.

I would therefore like to thank the co-organisers, who along with my Foundation have made it possible. And I would like to pay particular tribute to the members of the International Polar foundation and of course, their President, Alain Hubert.

A year ago, I stressed the need for a determined and concerted mobilisation of all goodwill, given the imminent dangers that threaten the Arctic. Today, in a global context which has unfortunately not improved, I am first of all delighted that this mobilisation has progressed.

The proof, in addition to your presence, is the resolution by the European Parliament on a sustainable policy in the far north, adopted on 20<sup>th</sup> January. With this important resolution, the European Parliament has indeed made a clear and specific declaration of the need for a concerted vision for the region's future. But it has also done more.

It has proven its commitment to the far north and its determination to create the conditions for sustainable development of the Arctic. And it has reaffirmed the necessity to consider the populations as a priority, by working together in a spirit of dialogue and peace.

You know that the European Union is the largest consumer of the Arctic's natural resources. But Europe and its States are also the primary providers of funding for research on the Arctic.

That is why they fuel high expectations, especially when their willingness to make a commitment responds to a new awareness of the challenges related to the Poles.

Throughout the world, a new spirit is dawning, driven by the welcome mobilisation of the major powers, themselves subject to the growing pressure of public opinion.

In many countries which previously had very little to do with the subject, we are seeing a new concern. Donations for polar research are increasing. And States like South Korea, China, Italy, Japan and Singapore now want permanent observer status on the Arctic Council.

Of course, we are well aware that this interest is related to the business opportunities that are increasingly emerging in the region.

Should we deplore this? I personally prefer to be pleased to see that these ambitions manifest themselves in the context of multilateral proceedings. And I continue to believe that the economy is not necessarily the enemy of ecology.

Because, like it or not, the Arctic's economic development prospects are undeniable.

Of course, the dream of an Arctic safe from men may seem attractive. But it would be dangerous to ignore the reality that the growth of commercial activities in the Arctic, whether fishing, transportation or the exploitation of natural resources is now inevitable.

This is why it is imperative that we support and supervise it, rather than purely and simply condemn it.

For while the development of economic activities in the Arctic obviously carries significant risks, it is also rich in opportunities that must not be ignored. By causing the major powers to be interested in the Arctic, by arousing the attention of public or private economic bodies, it can indeed allow us to obtain new political and economic resources, provided that we can control them.

And besides, by asking the practical questions here and now, we are compelled to accelerate a decision making process which is often too long and too involved. It reminds us that it is still up to us to choose our future, before it is too late and our apathy makes any reaction impossible. In this respect, I believe that it can help us to progress in a useful way.

Proof of this was the meeting of the Arctic Council held on 22<sup>nd</sup> May.

As you know, in Nuuk, the eight Arctic States took an important step in signing a cooperation agreement for air and sea search and rescue missions.

This agreement may seem secondary. However, I believe that it is a decisive advance, since it is the first legally binding agreement negotiated under the Arctic Council.

In doing so, it shows us the benefits of a method based on gradual experimentation and the implementation of practical solutions. I am convinced that this is how we must move forward, by concentrating on issues that may seem limited, but which have important consequences.

Faced with a challenge as vast and complex as that of the Arctic and moreover, involving States with ambitions that are sometimes divergent, it would indeed be dangerous to want to proceed too quickly.

We will not find a single solution for the Arctic, capable of ensuring not only the welfare of its people, but also protecting the natural resources and the development of economic activities.

So rather than embark on negotiations for a hypothetical Arctic Treaty, we should therefore progress on a case by case basis, looking for solutions that work and bearing in mind the need to be useful.

This does not mean that we must abandon an improvement in the governance of the Arctic. Given the urgency, our first duty is to progress, albeit modestly.

Isn't this the way in which Europe itself was built, using Jean Monnet's famous "small steps" method?

It is therefore up to us to take the small steps that once led to the emergence of an idea as innovative as that of Europe, for the Arctic.

In this respect, I would like to say a few words about marine protected areas that we covered too quickly last year, and which I think, are the very example of these "small steps", seemingly insignificant but with major consequences.

To me, these areas are a meaningful example of what a concerted approach to economic needs and environmental requirements can produce in respect of local realities.

I remind you that their success is due to three factors. Firstly an ecological benefit through the protection and regeneration of the natural heritage. Secondly, an economic relevance, the creation of underwater reserves closed to fishing helps to increase not only the number of fish, but also their size and reproductive abilities. Finally, these areas have a cultural attraction related to the scientific, tourism and educational activities that develop.

These protected areas therefore make it possible to reconcile the conflicting hopes and needs of men, while protecting the future.

That is why I work as much as I can on the development of marine protected areas, particularly in the arctic regions, which need more saving than others. We need only think of the disastrous and probably irreversible consequences, that a serious industrial accident would have on the Arctic.

Here, more than elsewhere our role is therefore to protect as large an area as possible from the economic process. However, this does not prevent the organisation of supervised activity in other areas. It means developing, alongside the economic process and in partnership with it, another process, that of sustainable development.

It was this approach that I recently had the opportunity to discuss in Arkhangelsk with our Russian friends and in particular Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

With them, I advocated the creation of marine protected areas in former militarised zones that remain relatively untouched by commercial activities. I believe that this would be a beautiful symbol of a world where tension and rivalries gradually fade in favour of dialogue and the search for common goals.

Other solutions should also be considered of course, and we must be bold and imaginative in order to undertake collective and ambitious work on this subject.

This is also why I have started a consultation on this subject involving political, scientific and business leaders as part of the Monaco Blue Initiative.

Faced with a challenge combining economic ambitions and ecological objectives, it is indeed imperative to act through dialogue, involving all those concerned, as we are doing here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Friends,

As Jean Monnet said, “we only have the choice between the changes we are forced to make and those we wanted and were able to achieve.”

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For us all, the urgency today is to do everything we can to remain masters of the changes that await us.

To do everything is firstly to increase the experiments and solutions, while remaining aware of the need for effectiveness.

To do everything is also to encourage debate and consultation, while remaining aware of the need for dialogue.

To do everything, is last but not least to be bold and inventive, while remaining aware of the need for openness.

I know that you share these beliefs and I thank you.