

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear friends,

First of all I would like to thank the organisers of this debate, since the angle you have chosen – the direct link between energy, the climate and the Arctic – is in my opinion particularly relevant. Indeed it establishes a direct causal link between the choices we make today and our long-term prospects, between our individual behaviour and our collective future...

Free from the doubts that only a few years ago might have explained the difficulty in implementing action, we are faced with our clear responsibility. Will we be able to accept this link, highlighted by the name of this meeting, between the use we make of energy, its consequences on the climate and the future of the Arctic regions – and beyond them of course of our entire Planet?

This link is first and foremost political, in other words it entails complex decisions with many unknown factors, which unfortunately will not suffer any unequivocal response. It won't be enough to convince our contemporaries of the hazards of hydrocarbons in order to save the Arctic permanently. We will need to provide answers to specific and sometimes contradictory questions.

The matter of our energy future, first of all, with the exploitation of new resources in the Arctic. Will this soon become profitable? Is so, when?

We cannot answer these questions solely from the point of view of the economy. Because what is at stake is the general interest of humanity, which depends partly on the Arctic. In this respect, would the profits related to such exploitation be higher than its costs and risks? Many factors lead me to believe the contrary, whether it be the technological dangers, their environmental consequences or our political difficulties in taking action in the region ...

Consequently, it is our responsibility to lay down guarantees. We can do this by regulating these activities in the region, by taking strict multilateral decisions – and I must emphasize this point because we cannot leave things to the sole discretion of oil companies and because State sovereignty is not an argument opposable to the widely trans-boundary impact of an environmental disaster.

The second element of our response is that we need to develop new sources of energy quickly and use those we have at hand more effectively, with more restraint and greater energy efficiency.

This is the true crux of the matter: to provide our contemporaries the energy they need! In this respect, the sea can help us a great deal, not only thanks to offshore wind power, but also everything we can harness from the waves and the currents.

The region where we are shows us to what extent, with innovation, an economy can be based on renewable electricity and in addition we can use this electricity for mobility, as for example does Norway which – after Monaco I would like to point out – is the country where the highest density of electric vehicles exists.

Finally, the future of the Arctic raises the question of the international status of this region which must be considered a common heritage of humankind. Ideally we need to establish a treaty in line with the Antarctic Treaty, which for over fifty years has proven its worth – even though the Arctic has a far more complex geography which we need to take into account.

In particular we need to find mechanisms which will enable us to define, especially in the high seas, specific economic exclusion zones, and to ensure that any new activity undergoes a stringent and independent scientific assessment.

These are, very briefly, the points I wanted to mention at the opening of these debates, in order to address the issue brought before us today: the future of the Arctic against the current political and energy backdrop.

Thank you.