

Preface

The Arctic region plays an important role in regulating the world's climate and also is highly impacted by climate change, with average temperatures rising almost twice as fast as the rest of the world and sea ice melting much faster than previously predicted. These rapid changes will have significant impacts on human activity in the region and on the Arctic marine environment.

Recognizing the importance of these changes, the Arctic TRANSFORM project was developed to explore the roles of the EU and US in light of the changing climate and the region's political and legal complexities. The project sought to promote exchange between EU and US policymakers and stakeholders on approaches in the Arctic, provide comparative analyses of existing policies, make recommendations as how to strengthen cooperation between the EU and US, encourage dialogue, and thus improve conditions for further transatlantic policy development and more effective protection of the Arctic marine environment. The project was funded by the European Commission (formerly DG External Relations, now European External Action Service) and led by Ecologic Institute, along with the Arctic Center, the Netherlands Institute for the Law of the Sea, and the Heinz Center.

Four years later, this book begins where Arctic TRANSFORM left off, addressing the new and significant changes and developments in the marine Arctic with updates, new policy recommendations, and additional topics to better reflect the current governance environment.

Within four years, the Arctic region has undergone substantial changes. The impacts of climate change are swiftly altering the landscape and ushering in new activity and actors. Likewise, the policy environment has also undergone transformations, including modifications to adapt existing frameworks to the changed and changing Arctic conditions, as described in detail throughout this book.

A look to the future leaves little doubt that this rapid pace of change will continue—for the environment and policy. For instance, in May 2013—after the time of writing of this volume—the Arctic Council Ministerial Meeting in Kiruna is slated to take up a wide range of critical governance issues, including a legally binding agreement on marine oil preparedness and response, updating PAME's Arctic Marine Strategic Plan, and releasing reports for the Arctic Ocean Review and Arctic Biodiversity Assessment. Most important in the transatlantic

context, the meeting will also address the EU's application to become a permanent observer of the Arctic Council. In addition, in 2015, the US will assume chairmanship of the Arctic Council.

While such developments may continue to further alter the Arctic governance landscape, we believe that the background, principles, and discussion presented herein, do and will continue to promote better understanding of marine Arctic governance needs and options and help to lay a foundation for future effective environmental governance.

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E. Tedsen
S. Cavalieri
R. Andreas Kraemer

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Tedsen, E.; Cavalieri, S.; Kraemer, R.A. (Eds.)

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