

Arctic futures – global relevance

Organizer: Jukka Käyhkö (jukka.kayhko@utu.fi), Department of Geography and Geology, University of Turku

General discussion regarding the Arctic has been recently in a steep increase. Climate warming makes the northern polar region more accessible due to melting of ice caps sea ice. A mere 4 million people live in the Arctic. The proportion indigenous people is estimated to be about 10 percent of this total population. As the Chair of the Arctic Council in 2017–2019, Finland has underlined the vulnerability of the Arctic and the UN sustainable development goals (SDG) as the key themes. Scientific understanding is needed now more than ever of the northern ecosystems, human systems and their interaction, as well as of global connections and geopolitics. What processes and interconnections are active in the ecosystem due to the warming? What kind of balance should be considered between natural resources extraction, tourism, nature conservation, military actions, urban development, indigenous peoples' rights and numerous other issues in the opening Arctic? Who are the decision makers? Will there be a new era of 'cold war' in a true sense? Should the Arctic be declared a sanctuary, or opened as the 'Wild North'? This transdisciplinary session welcomes presentations from all aspects of Arctic, Sub-Arctic or northern issues that help building a coherent science-based picture of the potential futures of the Arctic.