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Outcomes of the 6th International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” — 2025

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Abstract. The article summarizes the key outcomes of the 6th International Arctic Forum (IAF, the Forum) “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”, held in Murmansk on March 26–27, 2025. The IAF became a platform for international dialogue on such issues as development of the Northern Sea Route, enhancing investment and entrepreneurial potential in the Arctic Zone, as well as environmental, humanitarian, and cultural cooperation. The Forum primarily focused on discussions of the state policy in the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), aimed at the comprehensive development of the Far North and improving the well-being of the region’s residents.

Keywords: *Russia, Arctic, Roscongress Foundation, Murmansk, AZRF, Northern Sea Route*


Introduction

The 6th International Arctic Forum (IAF, Forum) “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” was held in Murmansk on March 26–27, 2025. The initiative to hold this event was put forward by the Governor of the Murmansk Oblast A.V. Chibis at the 27th St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, which was held in St. Petersburg on June 5–8, 2024. The decision to hold the event was made at the end of January 2025. The Forum was organized by the Roscongress Foundation with the support of the Russian Government. This event marked the start of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of Russia’s development of the Northern Sea Route. The International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” has been held since 2010 and is the largest platform for joint discussions with foreign partners of current problems and development prospects for the Arctic region. The previous 5th International Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” was held six years ago in St. Petersburg in April 2019 [1, Zhuravel V.P.].

The 6th International Arctic Forum was attended by about 1,300 participants and media representatives from 21 countries (Russia, Argentina, Great Britain, Venezuela, Vietnam, Germany, India, Kazakhstan, Qatar, China, UAE, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Korea, USA, Serbia, Singapore, Turkey, Finland, France, Switzerland, Japan), as well as about 230 representatives of Russian and foreign business from more than 110 companies, 305 media representatives from Russia and 9 foreign countries (Great Britain, Venezuela, Vietnam, Germany, Qatar, Serbia, Turkey, Finland,

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France). The co-organizer of the Forum is the State Corporation Rosatom, the strategic partner is PJSC Rosseti, the strategic scientific partner is the National Research Center “Kurchatov Institute”, the communications partner is the Media Holding MAER, the business program partners are VTB Bank (PJSC), PJSC NOVATEK, PJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel, PhosAgro, the business partner is VEB.RF. The Forum was held under the motto “To live — in the North!”¹

The Arctic zone accounts for more than a quarter of the territory of the Russian Federation. Almost two and a half million of our citizens live and work here, making a significant contribution to the country’s progress. According to the President of the Russian Federation, “the Arctic accounts for seven percent of Russia’s gross domestic product and about eleven percent of exports. The most important area is strengthening the transport and logistics contour of the Arctic”².

The IAF has become a platform for international dialogue on such issues as development of the Northern Sea Route, increasing the investment and business potential of the Arctic zone, as well as environmental issues, humanitarian and cultural cooperation. The main focus of the Forum was on discussing state policy in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation (AZRF), aimed at the comprehensive development of the Far North and increasing the well-being of the region’s residents.

This article is a continuation of the scientific articles by the staff of the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences, which provide an annual analytical review of Arctic issues within the framework of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum [2, Zhuravel V.P.; 3, Zhuravel V.P.; 4, Timoshenko D.S.; 5, Zhuravel V.P.; 6, Nevskaya N.A.] and are published systematically in the journal “Arctic and North”.

Business, cultural and sports program

The business program included 20 sessions. Numerous discussions were held within the framework of four thematic blocks: “The Arctic and the NSR: how to win in the competition of global routes”, “The Arctic and the NSR: a pole for attracting investments”, “The Arctic and the NSR: development of supporting settlements”, “International cooperation and ecology”. More than 150 speakers from federal and regional authorities, business and expert community — researchers from leading scientific and educational institutions in Moscow, St. Petersburg, Arkhangelsk, Murmansk — took part in the discussions.

An important event at the Forum was a joint meeting of the commissions of the State Council of the Russian Federation on the development of the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route, which united five commissions of the State Council: “The Northern Sea Route and the Arctic”, “In-

¹ The results of the International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” - 2025 are summed up. URL: https://www.vedomosti.ru/press_releases/2025/03/28/podvedeni-itogi-mezhdunarodnogo-arkticheskogo-foruma-arktika--territoriya-dialoga--2025 (accessed 30 March 2025).

² Vladimir Putin spoke at the plenary session of the 6th International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/76554> (accessed 30 March 2025).

ternational Cooperation and Export”, “Energy”, “Youth and Children”, “Efficient Transport System”. There has never been such a practice before.

The session “The Arctic: bridges of cooperation between peoples and states” summarized the results of the 8th International Scientific and Practical Conference “Polar Bear Universe: Effective Cooperation in the Arctic”. For the first time, the IAF hosted a special session dedicated to the role of women in the development of northern regions, the “Arctic Living Room”.

The cultural and sports programs were rich and varied. The Forum’s cultural program focused on demonstrating the uniqueness and achievements of the Arctic regions, as well as Russia’s leading role in the development of the Arctic. It combines a historical retrospective, modern trends and the image of the future of the Far North. Special attention is paid to the culture, traditions and customs of the indigenous peoples of the North.

The Forum hosted the “Taste of the Arctic” gastro-festival, where a joint team of restaurateurs and chefs from the subjects of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation presented a menu of regional cuisine, which widely uses products from the northern seas and local producers. From March 25 to 30, the event was attended by over 25,000 guests who tried over 12,000 servings of food and over 7,000 drinks³. This holiday was organized using extra-budgetary funds invested by the partner companies. There was the “Sami Village” and the “Taste the North” ice bar, which was a 25-meter tunnel with ice engravings dedicated to the 500th anniversary of the development of the Northern Sea Route. There was an Arctic crafts fair. The regional museum of local history offered excursions for the Forum participants, telling about the uniqueness of the Murmansk Oblast. Thematic exhibitions were dedicated to the IAF. There was an exhibition of paintings about the development of the Arctic and the Northern Sea Route from the collections of the Murmansk Regional Art Museum. A ceremony of donating works of art to the Murmansk Oblast and the opening of the exhibition “H2O+. Art about water and more...” took place. In addition, participants had the opportunity to visit the icebreaker “Lenin”, the world’s first vessel with a nuclear power plant, which provided navigation along the Northern Sea Route for about 30 years. The icebreaker has guided thousands of ships through the Arctic and traveled a total of 654,400 nautical miles. Now it has become a “carte-de-visite” of the Murmansk Oblast and one of the most visited tourist sites. The Murmansk Drama Theatre hosted an Art Cocktail, during which the audience saw the performance “Prologue about the Murmansk Oblast” and a concert by the Pacific Fleet Ensemble. As part of the project “Soul of Russia. Arctic” in partnership with Roskino, seven films were screened, including “North Pole” and “Widows’ Village”, which were timed to coincide with the Year of the Defender of the Fatherland and the 80th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Participants discussed the contribution of creative industries to the growth of the economy of the northern territories, the use of the wealth of national cultural traditions to create unique brands.

³ More than 25 thousand people visited the festival “Taste of the Arctic” in the center of Murmansk. URL: <https://bport.com/news/311422> (accessed 30 March 2025).

The sports program included 8 events. Arctic team building, tie-exercises, ice floating, alpine skiing and snowboarding, snow fights, as well as introduction to traditional sports of the peoples of the North were organized for the Forum participants. The final and largest event of the sports program was the 51st Murmansk Ski Marathon. On March 29 and 30, 2.5 thousand athletes took part in the 25 and 50 km races at the Dolina Uyuta sports complex.

Joint meeting of the commissions of the State Council of the Russian Federation

On the first day of the IAF, a joint meeting of the commissions of the State Council of the Russian Federation was held on the issue “Integrated approach to the development of the Arctic: formation of the national project ‘Arctic and the Northern Sea Route’”.

It was attended by N.P. Patrushev, Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the Maritime Board of the Russian Federation; I.E. Levitin, Advisor to the President of the Russian Federation, Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for International Cooperation in the Field of Transport; A.G. Dyumin, Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation, Secretary of the State Council of the Russian Federation; A.O. Chekunkov, Minister of the Russian Federation for the Development of the Far East and the Arctic; A.V. Chibis, Governor of the Murmansk Oblast, Chairman of the State Council Commission on the Northern Sea Route and the Arctic; A.V. Tsybulskiy, Governor of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, Chairman of the State Council Commission on International Cooperation and Exports; A.S. Tsydenov, Head of the Republic of Buryatia, Chairman of the State Council Commission on Efficient Transport System; A.S. Nikolaev, Chairman of the State Council Commission on Energy, Head of the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia); D.A. Artyukhov, Governor of the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Chairman of the State Council Commission on Youth and Children; A.E. Likhachev, General Director of Rosatom State Corporation, as well as heads of regions of the Russian Federation, federal agencies, corporations and companies.

The meeting began with a ceremonial start of the celebration of the 500th anniversary of the beginning of Russia’s development of the Northern Sea Route. N.P. Patrushev, Assistant to the President of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the Maritime Board of the Russian Federation handed over to A.V. Chibis and Director General of the Rosatom State Corporation A.E. Likhachev statuette, which during the anniversary year will be consistently passed from region to region, uniting the territories of the Arctic zone of Russia and the Far Eastern Federal District in perpetuating the historical memory of the events of the Great Northern Expedition of Russia, as well as in the design and creation of the Arctic of the future. It will complete its journey in Vladivostok at the Eastern Economic Forum ⁴.

Key theses of the speakers.

A.G. Dyumin: “The Arctic is a huge resource base and a promising transport corridor. On this basis, it is necessary to determine the prospects, timing, volumes of development of minerals

⁴ IAF-2025: participants of the joint session of the Russian State Council support the initiative to create a comprehensive Arctic and Northern Sea Route development project, which may receive national status. URL: <https://gov-murman.ru/info/news/543870/?ysclid=m8qbics4zn806281647> (accessed 30 March 2025).

in the Arctic zone, and consider the NSR in conjunction with the development of Arctic territories, promptly respond and redistribute resources to key areas of development that will help Russia consolidate its position as a leader in the development of the Arctic.”

N.P. Patrushev: “In the current military and political situation, the Arctic is increasingly acquiring strategic importance for Russia — both for strengthening the international positions of our country and for its internal development.”

“Without the introduction of advanced developments in Russian science, the use and development of the Northern Sea Route would be impossible.”

“Over the past 30 years, the fleet has become obsolete and has been reduced to a critical minimum. The average age of vessels is about 34 years. The ships are worn out by more than 80%. Their operation is significantly more expensive than modern foreign analogues.”

“It is necessary to coordinate the efforts of government bodies, business and society in the most important key areas, including ensuring national security taking into account the development of the international situation, the development of resources and spaces in the Arctic region, the development of the Northern Sea Route as a national transport route and ship management system, the construction of icebreaker and Arctic fleet, the organization of scientific research, ensuring environmental safety and protecting ecosystems in the Arctic zone of the Russian Federation.”

I.E. Levitin: “If we want to develop the Arctic zone, develop our production, invite people to live here, then there should be a single project under the auspices of the President of Russia at least until 2050, where private money and investments will be allocated.”

A.O. Chekunkov: “... the mechanisms of state support should be improved for the accelerated development of the macro-region, the implementation of investment projects, and the improvement of quality of life. Based on the results of the implementation of the first stage of the Arctic development strategy until 2035, proposals will be prepared to update this fundamental document. The new joint decisions developed during today’s meeting will be an important contribution to the further development of the Russian Arctic.”

A.V. Chibis: “The trans-Arctic transport corridor already accounts for 15% of GDP, according to the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East. And this is definitely the future of our country’s economy.”

A.V. Tsybulskiy: “...we may need some separate organizational and legal structure that would be the main operator of the entire complex of activities for the development of the Arctic zone. Maybe it will be Rosatom, if they have enough forces for this, so to speak. Maybe it will be the Ministry of Transport. In my opinion, this is important.”

Likhachev A.E.: “We should understand that, given the difficult northern conditions and long cycles of project implementation, turning them into purely commercial projects using modern lending principles means putting an end to their development. There should be a whole range of measures aimed at attracting investors and securing companies in different areas of activity.”

The speakers noted that the powerful development of the Arctic region requires a clear, comprehensive and understandable long-term plan of measures that should be interconnected, as well as an appropriate structure that will coordinate the development of the Arctic.

President of Russia V.V. Putin “...the northern vector of development is in the foreground, it is our sovereign, historical choice”

The main event of the Forum was the speech of the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin at the plenary session, where he announced a number of fundamental decisions for the socio-economic development of the Arctic. At the beginning of his speech, he noted the importance of the Forum venue: “Murmansk is the capital of the Russian Arctic, a hero-city that is developing dynamically today, like our other northern cities and regions of the Federation, and launching projects that are significant for the entire country”. Speaking about the role of the Arctic in the life of our country, he noted that “the Arctic zone accounts for more than a quarter of the territory of the Russian Federation. Almost two and a half million of our citizens live and work here, making a significant contribution to the country’s progress. According to estimates, seven percent of Russia’s gross domestic product and about eleven percent of exports are formed in the Arctic. At the same time, we see enormous prospects for the further comprehensive development of the region. The most important area is strengthening the transport and logistics contour of the Arctic.”⁵ The Murmansk Oblast is noted positively among the Arctic regions for its implementation.

The first part of the presidential report was devoted to issues of international cooperation in the Arctic, where he emphasized that Russia “is ready to work together not only with the Arctic states, but with all those who, like us, share responsibility for a stable, sustainable future for the planet and are capable of making balanced decisions for decades to come”.

The speech highlighted the existing problems of international cooperation in the northern latitudes: in previous years, many Western states took a course towards confrontation; economic ties with Russia were severed; scientific, educational and cultural contacts were terminated; dialogue on preserving Arctic ecosystems was curtailed.

The confrontational position of the West has had an extremely negative impact on the situation in the northern latitudes, which previously traditionally remained a space of peace and cooperation, a zone of low tension, outside the political situation [7, Danilov D.A.]. It was noted that the Arctic Council has degraded [8, Usova L.S.]. At the same time, V.V. Putin pointed out that “Russia did not refuse to communicate in this format — it was the choice of our Western partners, Western states. As they say in such cases: if you don’t want it, you don’t have to. We will work with those who want it.”⁶ It should be noted that the Chairman of the Committee of Senior Arctic Officials, Norwegian diplomat Morten Høglund addressed the participants of the Arctic Forum with a

⁵ Vladimir Putin spoke at the plenary session of the 6th International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/76554> (accessed 30 March 2025).

⁶ Ibid.

video message as part of the session “The Arctic: bridges of cooperation between peoples and states”. He emphasized that “the strength of the Arctic Council lies in its unique composition — an association of Arctic states, permanent participants and observers, bound by a common commitment to addressing emerging challenges and seizing new opportunities. The issues facing the Arctic are of global importance, and only through international cooperation and collective action we can achieve a sustainable and bright future for everyone.”⁷ While agreeing with such a high assessment of the Arctic Council, it should be noted that during its entire chairmanship (2023–2025), Norway was unable to provide Russia with the conditions for full participation in the events of its chairmanship. V.V. Maslennikov, Director of the Department of European Problems of the Russian Foreign Ministry, senior official from Russia in the Arctic Council, participating in the discussion at the session, noted: “The relevance of establishing a mutually respectful and pragmatic dialogue in the North, building bridges of cooperation between countries remains at any geopolitical situation. Our country has always viewed the Arctic as a territory of peace and cooperation, advocated the absence of dividing lines in high latitudes, the reduction of tension, and the search for responsible political and diplomatic solutions to issues on the regional agenda. Firmly defending its national interests in the North, Russia will continue to maintain its readiness to cooperate with all constructively minded countries, both Arctic and non-Arctic, including our BRICS partners.”

It was noted at the Forum that, along with the growing role and importance of the Arctic for both Russia and the world, unfortunately, geopolitical competition and the struggle for positions in this region are intensifying. This increases the demands on security issues. S.A. Vakhrukov, Head of the Department of the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation for National Maritime Policy, stated in his speech at a joint meeting of the commissions of the State Council of the Russian Federation that “the struggle for the Arctic is serious, and it will grow. The resources that are concentrated there attract a huge number of countries and states. Interests intersect. It is extremely important and obligatory for us to ensure security in the broad sense of the word.”⁸

The situation in the Arctic is also complicated by the plans of the United States of America to annex Greenland, continuing to keep the issue of the Danish island’s ownership in their field of vision for a long time. At the same time, V.V. Putin indicated that this “concerns two specific states and has nothing to do with us”⁹. But it should be taken into account that the United States is trying to monopolize its influence in the Arctic and become the largest Arctic power. The United States, although not a party to the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, nevertheless, using

⁷ Morten Høglund, Chair of the Arctic Council's Senior Arctic Officials Committee, sent greetings to the participants of IAF 2025. URL: <https://www.mvestnik.ru/news/ent/predsedatel-komiteta-starshih-dolzhnostnyh-lic-arkticheskogo-soveta-morten-hglund-napravil-privetstvie-uchastnikam-maf-2025/> (accessed 30 March 2025).

⁸ Vakhrukov: Arctic development is possible only if its security is fully ensured. URL: https://tass.ru/politika/23514033?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzenn.ru%2Fnews%2Fsear (accessed 30 March 2025).

⁹ Vladimir Putin spoke at the plenary session of the 6th International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/76554> (accessed 30 March 2025).

its provisions, lays claims to Arctic territories where there are deposits of oil, gas and rare earth metals.

The President of the Russian Federation expressed concern that NATO countries as a whole are increasingly designating the Far North as a springboard for possible conflicts, practicing the use of troops in these conditions, including by their “new recruits” — Finland and Sweden, with whom Russia had normal relations earlier.

In this regard, the statement of V.V. Putin at the plenary session of the forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue” that Russia has never threatened anyone in the Arctic is of fundamental importance, while he said that we are closely monitoring the development of the situation, building an adequate response line, increasing the combat capabilities of the Armed Forces and modernizing military infrastructure facilities ¹⁰.

Due to climate change in the territory of the Russian Arctic, biological security risks arise 2–2.5 times faster than in other regions of the Russian Federation due to the release of viruses that are so successfully stored in the depths of permafrost. In these conditions, the prevention of epidemiological threats in the Arctic is an important factor in maintaining the country’s biological security.

All sessions at the IAF were related to the Northern Sea Route to one degree or another. Speaking about the growth of cargo traffic along the Northern Sea Route, V.V. Putin set the task for the NSR to become “a key section of the Trans-Arctic Transport Corridor, which will run from St. Petersburg through Murmansk to Vladivostok. It is designed to connect the world’s industrial, agricultural, energy centers and consumer markets via a shorter, safer, and more economically advantageous route” ¹¹. The problem of developing the Trans-Arctic Transport Corridor was clearly and convincingly voiced by the President, which, in our opinion, requires legislative consolidation and active study by representatives of the expert community in modern conditions. At the same time, we should proceed from the President’s thesis that the very idea of building the Trans-Siberian Railway across the entire country to the Pacific Ocean serves as an example of a strategic vision of the future, when not only current needs and circumstances are taken into account, but also the interests of the country for centuries to come.

The second part of the speech by Russian President V.V. Putin at the International Arctic Forum was devoted to the priority tasks of developing and exploring the Russian Arctic. Five such problems were identified.

Firstly, the further development of the icebreaker fleet, which is the largest in the world. Here we are talking about the commissioning of new generation icebreakers, including nuclear ones. Four of them — the newest 22220 series — are already performing tasks in the Arctic. It was noted that three more nuclear-powered icebreakers of this series are under construction — Chu-

¹⁰ Russia has never threatened anyone in the Arctic, Putin said. URL: <https://ria.ru/20250327/putin-2007785722.html?ysclid=m92mufmdll835976236> (accessed 30 March 2025).

¹¹ Vladimir Putin spoke at the plenary session of the 6th International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/76554> (accessed 30 March 2025).

kotka, Leningrad, and Stalingrad, as well as the super-powerful 120-megawatt icebreaker Rossiya, which will allow more efficient navigation of large-tonnage vessels in high latitudes throughout the year.

Secondly, Russia, as a sovereign power, needs its own merchant fleet in the Arctic, including cargo and rescue vessels that will provide transportation both along the northern seas and along the inland waterways of the Arctic regions. Only domestic shipbuilding capacities are not enough to fulfil this task. The President recommended “acting in all directions: acquiring and ordering ready-made vessels, establishing cooperation with global manufacturers, and generally building the entire system of Russian shipbuilding based on the strategic tasks that we face”. The government needs to support our shipbuilding and ship repair enterprises, which are modernizing and expanding production, building international production chains, and to work out the issue of building new shipyards in Russia, modern, complex, high-tech production facilities.

Thirdly, given that Russian shipping companies that transport oil products and liquefied natural gas are already successfully operating in the northern seas, it is necessary to promptly create conditions for the growth of effective domestic operators that will engage in the transportation of containers, coal, bulk and other cargo through the Arctic. For this purpose, it is possible to create joint ventures; international logistics operators could profitably invest in such companies not only with capital and technology, but also with part of their merchant fleet.

Fourthly, it is necessary to increase the capacity and turnover of our northern ports at an accelerated pace and do this on the basis of modern, environmentally friendly solutions, including unmanned and automated cargo handling technologies. Thus, the capacity of the Murmansk transport hub should be increased by at least three times in the coming years due to the construction of new terminals and the expansion of railway approaches. It is positive that our partners from Belarus, China, the United Arab Emirates and other countries are showing interest in this project and in the development of the Arctic transport infrastructure in general, as this is very interesting work from a business point of view.

The President noted that the plans include the creation of large multimodal hubs that will become key logistics centers of the Trans-Arctic Corridor. They will not only form convoys of ships, handle Russian and foreign cargo, but also, very importantly, will provide industrial sites for manufacturing industrial products. In order to increase the logistics sustainability of the Trans-Arctic Corridor, the Government of the Russian Federation has been instructed to define plans for expanding the capacity of existing seaports in the Arctic, creating new ports on the Arctic coast and intensively developing the adjacent infrastructure, i.e. connecting seaports with the country's railway network.

In this regard, fifthly, by analogy with the Eastern Polygon, which includes the BAM and the Trans-Siberian Railway, it is proposed to implement a project to develop the Arctic Polygon of Railways, including the modernization of the Northern Railway in the Komi Republic and the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug. At the same time, the regions of Siberia, the Urals, and the North-

West of Russia will receive direct access to the north, to the Arctic ports, which will make it possible to unload the Trans-Siberian Railway and effectively use sea transportations. In addition, the North-South corridor, which connects us with the states of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf, will have new access points to the Arctic. In order to develop the Trans-Arctic Route, it is necessary to unlock the potential of the inland waterways of the Arctic at a new technological level: Lena, Yenisei, and Ob rivers, which will, among other things, strengthen the “northern delivery” system, so that the Arctic residents will be reliably supplied with food and other goods.

V.V. Putin concluded that to implement these and other major initiatives it is necessary to:

- combine the resources of the state, regions, and businesses, including both state-owned and private banks;
- use the capabilities of the domestic stock market to attract capital to the Arctic infrastructure;
- attract our foreign partners, guarantee them long-term investments with a good return.

It was emphasized that infrastructure projects (icebreakers, merchant ships, ports, large multimodal hubs, railways) are complex, expensive, and have a long payback period, but they are the ones that ensure Russia’s transport sovereignty at a new level. Therefore, these projects cannot be postponed for later — they need to be launched and implemented now, as quickly as possible. The Russian government was asked to prepare proposals for the creation of a special project office under the auspices of the VEB development institute, which will be responsible for supporting transport, logistics, and infrastructure projects in the Arctic, as well as urban development projects in the region. It was emphasized that a potential investor should receive the necessary support from these structures by contacting them directly. The President also instructed the Government — with the participation of Rosatom, VEB, and the relevant State Council commission — to approve the financial, economic, and organizational model for the development of the Trans-Arctic Transport Corridor by August 1, 2025.

Using the capacity of the resource base, it is important to open enterprises with deep processing of raw materials in the Arctic regions, preserving the unique nature of the Arctic, to create production with high added value in oil and gas chemistry, in the field of rare earth metals, and in other industries related to mechanical engineering, the production of complex technology and industrial equipment. An example of this approach, according to V.V. Putin, is the Center for the Construction of Large-Capacity Offshore Structures in Belokamenka in the Murmansk Oblast, where localization of technologies for liquefying natural gas is underway, and the most advanced, in-house, developments in this area are used. It should be noted that this project is being implemented by NOVATEK.

It should be noted that the Prirazlomnaya offshore ice-resistant stationary platform is also successfully operating in the Barents Sea, which has produced and shipped 30 million tons of the

unique Arctic Oil (ARCO) since 2013. It is successfully operated on the Arctic shelf at temperatures down to -50°C ¹².

In his speech, the Russian President paid a lot of attention to tourism as a promising area for the development of the Arctic. In 2023, the Arctic received more than 1.2 million guests, 97% of whom were completely satisfied with the trip, and every third of them returns to the Arctic ¹³. As new projects, he named an Arctic tourism center with a ski resort in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and an aqua-thermal resort and an all-season hotel complex in Karelia, and called for support for such initiatives that open up new facets of the Arctic and work to increase interest in this region. He also proposed to include the development of the White Sea tourist infrastructure in the federal project "Five Seas and Lake Baikal".

Undoubtedly, the issue of transport accessibility is important for the development of mass tourism: from the repair and construction of roads to the development of air traffic. V.V. Putin recalled that preferential rates for air tickets to Arctic cities were extended. In 2024, about 800,000 passengers took advantage of this opportunity; this year, subsidized tickets can be purchased for more than seven dozen air routes. He emphasized that the airports of the Far North, especially small ones, need to be updated. In the coming years, 16 airfields in the Arctic zone will be modernized within the framework of the specialized national project, including in Salekhard, Arkhangelsk, Naryan-Mar and Vorkuta. The President set the task of maintaining an extensive airport network in the Arctic: from large and medium-sized airfields to small landing sites. This will ensure year-round accessibility of populated areas and the operation of air ambulances.

In his speech, the Head of State noted the completion of work on the preparation of master plans for the agglomerations of the Arctic zone, which are a comprehensive document of strategic and territorial planning for the socio-economic and spatial development of cities and towns, where the latest urban planning solutions will be applied while preserving the original appearance of populated areas, based on proposals from residents themselves, public associations, including organizations of indigenous peoples of the North. He recalled that these are not only large cities such as Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. The master plans cover Kirovsk, Apatity and Monchegorsk in the Murmansk Oblast, Kem and Belomorsk in Karelia, Vorkuta in the Komi Republic, Bilibino, Pevek in Chukotka, Naryan-Mar in the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Salekhard, Labytnangi, Novy Urengoy and Noyabrsk in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug, as well as Tiksi and Naiba in Yakutia, Norilsk, Igarka and Dikson in Krasnoyarsk Krai. Their list was previously approved by the Govern-

¹² Prirazlomnaya produced and shipped 30 million tons of oil. URL: https://www.korabel.ru/news/comments/mlsp_prirazlomnaya_dobyla_i_otgruzila_30 mln_tonn_nefti.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fsearc (accessed 30 March 2025).

¹³ Development of the Arctic territories is impossible without effective development of their resources. URL: https://rg.ru/2025/03/31/zhit-na-severe.html?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fsearc (accessed 30 March 2025).

ment of the Russian Federation¹⁴, subsequently, by order of the Government of the Russian Federation dated August 13, 2024, No. 2164-r, two municipalities were added to the list: the city of Polyarnye Zori in the Murmansk Oblast and the Bilibino municipal district of the Chukotka Autonomous Okrug, which will become the basis for the development of mineral resource centers that ensure the development of the metallurgical industry.

In order to successfully continue work on the implementation of master plans for agglomerations, V.V. Putin drew the attention of the Government of the Russian Federation to:

- acceleration of work on adopting a schedule for the implementation of Arctic master plans and their financing;
- inclusion of separate Arctic sections in national projects;
- involvement of business representatives and strategic investors who work in the Arctic or plan to work here in the implementation of master plans;
- creation of special competence centers where municipal and regional employees will improve their skills in the field of urban development and learn the best methods of master planning;
- participation in the all-Russian competition of projects to create a comfortable urban environment, providing budget support for the winners from the Arctic regions for the development of embankments, pedestrian zones and playgrounds, parks, squares, etc.;
- extension of the program for renovation of military towns, closed administrative-territorial entities in the Arctic until 2030 with an annual volume of financial support from the federal budget of at least ten billion rubles, this is also connected with the strengthening of the military component in this region — the number of military personnel here will grow;
- identification of new industries and jobs, including those tied to the Trans-Arctic Corridor, where schools and kindergartens, clinics and hospitals, roads and networks will be built, where residential buildings will be constructed. It is important for the Ministry of Defense, together with the Ministry of Construction and the regions, to work out all these issues on an object-by-object basis, so that it is clear what specific resources should be allocated within what timeframe to support this task;
- taking into account the fact that construction is carried out in conditions of permafrost, which means special requirements for the design, construction of buildings and structures, and their reliability. In view of climate change, it is important to see the dynamics and take into account potential risks. The President proposed creating a special scientific center for monitoring permafrost, involving leading federal and regional institutes in this

¹⁴ Order of the Government of the Russian Federation No. 3377-r dated 28 November 2023. URL: <http://publication.pravo.gov.ru/document/0001202312040019?ysclid=lpxylna3k3201068961> (accessed 30 March 2025).

work, so that their research becomes the scientific basis for technologies for adapting Arctic infrastructure to permafrost thawing processes;

- dissemination of the register of best construction practices in the Arctic through Arctic multifunctional centers, when social and administrative institutions, sports complexes, service organizations are located “under a common roof”, in one building;
- taking into account the opinions and requests of citizens, the northerners themselves, on the creation of the so-called service economy in Arctic cities and towns, that is, leisure facilities, places for family recreation and children’s entertainment, cultural and educational sites that need to be developed, including on the initiative of entrepreneurs;
- adjustment of the special program for supporting small and medium-sized businesses in relation to the regions of the Far North, expansion of the list of industries to which it is extended, creation of additional opportunities for small companies to attract preferential loans [9, Leksin V.N.; 10, Pilyasov A.N.; 11, Porfiryev B.N., Eliseev D.O.].

Master plans of supporting settlements could be revised and measures for the resettlement of emergency housing, as well as for the development and modernization of communal and other infrastructure could be added to them. This opinion was expressed by A.N. Lomakin, First Deputy Minister of Construction, Housing and Utilities of the Russian Federation. In particular, it is necessary to update the master plans of the Arkhangelsk Oblast, which have a large volume of tasks to resettle people from dilapidated housing, but this is not provided for ¹⁵.

In his speech, V.V. Putin drew attention to the problems of healthcare in the Arctic and ensuring the environmental well-being of its residents. He asked to speed up the preparation of proposals to improve the accessibility of medical services in the North and the development of a special mechanism for financing medical care. In order to preserve the health of residents of the North, it is necessary to use digital technologies, equip mobile paramedic stations with artificial intelligence tools that allow both remotely and directly on site diagnosing a person’s health, identifying certain diseases and giving recommendations for their treatment. At the session “Favorable habitat is the key to successful development of the Arctic”, the Head of Rospotrebnadzor A.Yu. Popova said that the agency is ready to create a standard for preventing diseases among the population of the Arctic ¹⁶. In 2025, a pilot project was launched in the Murmansk Oblast to monitor patients with cardiovascular diseases (the main cause of death in the region) and diates.

¹⁵ What is being talked about at the IAF: a digest of the topics discussed - from master plans and northern imports to the law on permafrost and inventions for the Arctic. URL: <https://goarctic.ru/politics/o-chem-govoritsya-na-maf-daydzhest-obsuzhdaemykh-tem-ot-master-planov-i-severnogo-zavoza-do-zakona-o/> (accessed 30 March 2025).

¹⁶ Popova said she is ready to create an Arctic standard of preventive health care. URL: https://tass.ru/obschestvo/23525775?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fsear (accessed 30 March 2025).

It is expected to help reduce mortality from these diseases by 20% and the number of hospitalizations by 20–25%¹⁷.

In terms of ensuring the environmental well-being of the Arctic region's residents, the President of the Russian Federation positively assessed the activities of the "general cleaning" of the Arctic from scrap metal, residues of fuels and lubricants and other garbage, which united thousands of volunteers and public organizations. He emphasized that we will definitely continue this work, ensure comprehensive environmental protection of the Arctic zone of Russia, including solving such an acute problem as clearing the water areas from sunken ships. We will remove industrial waste and reclaim territories with a focus on tidying up cities and towns, the so-called revitalization of abandoned territories, buildings, lands, that is, their re-involvement in circulation in the interests of residents of Arctic cities. Speaking about these measures, the Head of State emphasized that, in fact, we are repaying the debt to the Arctic, we cannot accumulate new debts to its unique nature, it is very important to ensure a balance between the use of natural resources and the preservation of the environment.

In order to test new nature-saving technologies in the Polar Urals zone, it is planned to create the scientific and educational station "Snezhinka" in the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug by the end of 2028. Here, an international team of scientists and researchers will, as they say, work out "green" technologies for the Arctic "in the field", their application in the sphere of life support, telecommunications, medicine and the industry of new materials.

The key, integral goal of Russia's plans in the Arctic is to improve the quality of life for people, to create modern conditions for study and work, for recreation and for raising children in this harsh region, which has an amazingly powerful attraction. The Arctic is a territory of enormous opportunities for specialists of various professions, for entrepreneurs, for young people, for families who have lived here for generations or have only recently moved here and are planning to settle down, buy or build their own home. It should be noted that this task is being actively developed and promoted at the Institute of Europe of the Russian Academy of Sciences, within the framework of the activities of the V.P. Fedorov Arctic Research Center and Arctic Seminars. V.P. Fedorov suggested that resettlement to the Arctic should be organized on a mass scale. He called it the own Russian megaproject "Give us the Arctic!" [12, Fedorov V.P.].

In order to solve the problems of improving the quality and standard of living of people, the Arctic mortgage program at a rate of 2% per annum has been extended until 2030, and the conditions for borrowers have been softened. Thus, pedagogical and medical workers who would like to take out a loan to buy housing are no longer subject to the requirements for work experience in the North. The Arctic mortgage can also be used by participants of special military operations and employees of the defense industry.

¹⁷ 10,000 people in the Arctic will be examined in depth to study adaptation to the North. URL: https://www.murmansk.kp.ru/daily/27678/5067537/?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fsearch (accessed 30 March 2025).

In order to make the solution to the problem of emergency housing long-term and stable, the President of the country instructed the Government of the Russian Federation to develop a plan of specific actions designed for at least ten years. He also proposed to expand the Affordable Rental Housing program to Arctic supporting settlements to make rental housing more affordable for those who start their working careers in the region and who want to live and work here. The program should start operating in the Arctic as early as 2026. V.V. Putin proposed to extend the Muravyov-Amurskiy — 2030 management training program to the Arctic regions.

The President of Russia proposed to establish special grants in memory of the outstanding researcher, polar explorer and scientist Artur Nikolayevich Chilingarov and to focus them on supporting youth initiatives within the framework of environmental, educational and scientific projects in the Arctic.

Concluding his speech at the IAF plenary session, Vladimir Putin pointed out, “Today, the northern vector of development is in the foreground, it is our sovereign, historical choice. This means that the tasks that we set and solve in the Arctic, the projects that we implement here, should be of an appropriate, historical scale, with a perspective for decades, perhaps even centuries. We will do everything to strengthen Russia’s global leadership in the Arctic, and, despite all the current difficulties, complexities, we will ensure the comprehensive development of this region and create a solid foundation for future generations. It is difficult to assess the significance and importance of this address to the residents of the country now, but it will undoubtedly become a call for the development and advancement of the Arctic.”¹⁸

Conclusion

The forum made a significant contribution to a comprehensive understanding of the real situation in the Arctic and the formulation of specific proposals for its development. The country’s leadership and governors understand that this region is an important and promising territory of our state. In this regard, systematic work is required to form Arctic consciousness and involvement in great Arctic affairs among Russian citizens. During the event, government officials, renowned scientists and experts comprehensively and substantively discussed the possibilities of ensuring security and cooperation in the region, supporting breakthrough energy, infrastructure and environmental projects, and exchanged views on the prospects for implementing relevant research and cultural programs.

The working visit of Russian President V.V. Putin to Murmansk was extremely eventful. It began with a visit to the memorial complex “To the Defenders of the Arctic”, where the Head of State laid flowers at the monument “To the Defenders of the Soviet Arctic during the Great Patriotic War”. On the territory of Atomflot, he took part via video link in the ceremonial launch of the new nuclear submarine cruiser Perm, got acquainted with the work of the Headquarters of

¹⁸ Vladimir Putin spoke at the plenary session of the 6th International Arctic Forum “Arctic: Territory of Dialogue”. URL: <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/76554> (accessed 30 March 2025).

Marine Operations, which provides support for safe navigation on the Northern Sea Route, talked with the participants of the “Icebreakers of knowledge” — Rosatom’s children’s scientific and educational expeditions to the North Pole. He held a meeting on the development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and the Arctic Transport Corridor. During the IAF, the governors of the Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblasts, the Yamalo-Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Krasnoyarsk Krai presented master plans for supporting settlements to V.V. Putin. In the video conference mode, he took part in the ceremony of starting the shipment of the first batch of coal from the Lavna transshipment complex. The President inspected the central command post of the cruiser “Arkhangelsk”, the crew cabin and weapons storage areas, and talked with the personnel.

In his speech at the Forum, Russian President V.V. Putin stated that Russia, as the largest Arctic power, supports equal cooperation in the region, including scientific research, biodiversity protection, climate issues, emergency response, and economic and industrial development of the Arctic. Work within the framework of traditional international dialogue platforms in the Arctic, including the Arctic Council, has currently been stopped. Thus, scientific cooperation with the International Council for Science and the International Arctic Science Committee has been significantly limited; in September 2023, Russia withdrew from the Barents/Euro-Arctic Council. Nevertheless, there is potential for both restoring constructive interaction with Arctic countries and expanding cooperation with extra-regional states.

It is important to note the thesis of the Head of State that by maintaining peace and stability in the Arctic, ensuring long-term socio-economic development of the region, improving the quality of life of people and preserving the unique natural environment, Russia will have more opportunities to launch global international projects in the Arctic with the participation of friendly states, and possibly even Western states, if they show interest in working together. The appeal to Western states is an important signal from Russia to normalize international relations and not only on the Arctic track. From another point of view, we are talking about joint large-scale projects in the Arctic. Taking into account the statement of the US President about the interests of their country in the Arctic, it is important to clearly define the format of this participation. The main thing is that environmental standards are observed and this brings Russia additional income from this sector of the economy. It is essential that foreign companies have the appropriate experience, technology, and finances. Given the importance of the Arctic as a special territory and the vulnerability of its ecology, such a decision should be enshrined, in our opinion, in the form of an appropriate draft law.

The motto of the current forum “To Live — in the North!” fully reflects one of the key priorities for the development of Russian Arctic territories — comprehensive renewal, improvement of cities and towns, the quality of people’s life. First of all, due to the creation of modern jobs, further growth of the economy and social sphere, improvement of the transport framework of the region, as well as the organization of year-round navigation along the Northern Sea Route.

Currently, the NSR is a key section of the Trans-Arctic Transport Corridor, i.e. it should be safe and profitable for shippers, attractive both in terms of quality of services and price. In particular, the fee for icebreaker escort of vessels should be competitive, justified and acceptable for the market. This should be the most important condition to guarantee the utilization of the route and to make it attractive for business. In recent years, the volume of cargo flow along the Northern Sea Route has been growing. Thus, “in 2024, the volume of cargo transportation amounted to almost 37.9 million tons, which is over 1.6 million tons more than in 2023. It is important to note that cargo traffic along the eastern route of the NSR increased by 69% by the end of 2024, and transit — by 44%.”¹⁹

At the International Arctic Forum, Russia confidently declared its ambitions in the Arctic region. In the foreseeable future, according to experts, economic projects such as Yamal LNG or Arctic LNG-2 will become the main ones. In these conditions, it is important to actively involve our closest allies in the EAEU in the problems of the Arctic.

It was noted at the Forum that the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation needs a comprehensive project for information support of socio-economic development, which will ensure an influx of residents to the Arctic regions, interest investors, and increase tourist attractiveness²⁰. Currently, each region solves such problems separately.

The event became a key platform for discussing topical issues of socio-economic development of the Arctic territories, elaboration of multilateral mechanisms for joint disclosure and effective exploitation of the powerful resource potential of the Arctic region.

Addressing the Government of the Russian Federation and the regional authorities, the Head of State noted that it is necessary not only to propose, and there are many such proposals, especially from the Ministry for the Development of the Russian Far East, but also to effectively fine-tune the tools for supporting investment and business activity in the Arctic, including tax incentives, administrative preferences, infrastructure preparation of land plots, and so on. For example, it is necessary to strictly implement plans for the gasification of the Murmansk Oblast (the work should be completed by 2030), the solution of this problem will mark a move away from fuel oil dependence. Preparations for the IAF were carried out in record time, and the Murmansk Oblast and Murmansk proved that they are capable of hosting international events at the highest level. The IAF brought more than 300 million rubles to the entire sector of the Murmansk Oblast economy during the days of its holding²¹.

¹⁹ Freight traffic along the Northern Sea Route set a record high. URL: <https://rosatomflot.ru/press-centr/novosti-predpriyatiya/2025/01/09/11644-obem-gruzoperevozok-po-severnomu-morskomu-puti-ustanovil-rekord/?ysclid=m5s56axj7s955086607> (accessed 10 January 2025).

²⁰ Deputy Director General of TASS: The Arctic needs a comprehensive information project. URL: https://tass.ru/obschestvo/23524993?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fse (accessed 30 March 2025).

²¹ IAF brought more than 300 million rubles to the entire sector of the Murmansk Oblast economy. URL: https://bport.com/news/311425?utm_source=yxnews&utm_medium=desktop&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fdzen.ru%2Fnews%2Fse (accessed 30 March 2025).

Based on the results of the Forum, an analytical report entitled “Results of the International Arctic Forum 2025” will be prepared, which will be available in electronic form in the Information and Analytical System of the Roscongress Foundation roscongress.org.

Expert and analytical support for the Forum was provided by experts representing the country’s leading scientific and educational centers conducting research on a wide range of topics on the Arctic agenda, including the Murmansk Arctic University, the Northern (Arctic) Federal University named after M.V. Lomonosov, the St. Petersburg State University of Economics, the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), the NRU Higher School of Economics, the G.P. Luzin Institute for Economic Studies of the FRC Kola Science Centre of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Institute for Regional Economic Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and others.

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