Fifth report of the Intersessional Contact Group on Education and Outreach

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Working Paper submitted by Bulgaria, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Portugal, Spain and UK

***Summary***

At ATCM XLIII (2021) in Paris, Parties decided to continue the work of the intersessional contact group (ICG) on Education and Outreach, following a number of Terms of reference related to Education and Outreach. This paper aims to provide a summary on the discussions within the ICG and recommends considerations by the ATCM of the outcomes of the intersessional work. Overall, there are 7 posts (from

October 2021 up to end of March 2022) from 4 Parties, Observers and Experts comprising 149 views within the forum, particularly on national and international education and outreach activities.

***Background***

The ICG on Education and Outreach was established during ATCM XXXVIII (2015) in Sofia and it was followed by a very successful workshop in which ninety-seven participants from thirty-seven Parties, Observers and Experts took part. During ATCM XXXIX (2016) in Santiago, Bulgaria introduced WP 24 *First Report on the Intersessional Contact Group on Education and Outreach,* jointly prepared with Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The ATCM recognised the contribution of Parties and the usefulness of the ICG’s work. Parties were advised to continue to use and promote the forum on Education and Outreach to share information on Education and Outreach activities and events with each other. Contributions to Education and Outreach activities from an Antarctic Treaty Perspective remains within the Multi-Year Strategic Work Plan of the ATCM.

As stated in the final report of ATCM XLIII (2021) in Paris, paragraph 144, the Meeting expressed its support for continued use of the ATCM forum on education and outreach issues and agreed to continue the ICG on Education and Outreach for another intersessional period, with the following terms of reference:

* Foster collaboration at both the national and international level, on Education and Outreach;
* Identify key international activities/events related to education and outreach for possible engagement by the Antarctic Treaty Parties;
* Share results of education and outreach initiatives that demonstrate the work of Antarctic Treaty Parties in managing the Antarctic Treaty area;
* Emphasise ongoing environmental protection initiatives that had been informed by scientific observations and results, in order to reinforce the importance of the Antarctic Treaty and its Protocol on Environmental Protection;
* Promote related education and outreach activities by Experts and Observers, and encourage cooperation with these groups;
* Discuss the possibility for the creation of an Antarctic Education and Outreach section on the Antarctic Treaty System (ATS) website.

Furthermore, the Meeting decided (paragraph 145) to add the “contribution to nationally and internationally coordinated education and outreach activities from an Antarctic Treaty perspective” into the Multi-year Strategic Work Plan and was included as Priority 2.

Belgium, Bulgaria, Brazil, Chile, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom will continue to form the Core Group which will moderate this forum.

***Method of Operation***

The ICG operates using the online ATCM Discussion Forum, under the topic ‘ICG on Education and Outreach’. The discussion is open to all Parties, Observers and Experts. Currently there are 38 points of contact listed as participating in the ICG. Of these 4 parties and observers and experts (up to 27.04.2022) have participated in the forum. The ICG began work in October 2021. The work plan was arranged in two stages:

* Stage 1: Requesting parties to provide initial comments, proposals and sharing information on ToR issues;
* Stage 2: Preparation and submission of Working Paper report of the ICG for ATCM.

***Discussions***

There are 7 posts (up to 28 of March 2022) from 4 parties (Bulgaria, Chile, Portugal and UK). There are 7 topics and 149 views within the forum: *Results of POLAR WEEK Set 2021- Portugal; 30 Anniversary of Madrid Protocol celebrations - 4 Oct. 2021; Activities from Polar Educators International – 2020; 30th Anniversary of the Madrid Protocol Commemorative Online Event organized by Chile and Spain; Seminar for the 30th anniversary of the Madrid Protocol organised by Bulgaria and Spain; UK - educational engagement during a global pandemic 2020; Bulgarian Antarctic Program - Educational and Outreach activities 2021-22.*

As in the previous intersessional period, the pandemic coronavirus disease COVID19 required most of the reported activities to be carried out online or in accordance with the pandemic restrictions in different countries.

Several countries (Bulgaria, Chile, and Portugal) reported activities celebrating the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Madrid Protocol and related to this important date events.

In one of the posts there is detailed information about the official celebration of the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Madrid Protocol in Madrid (4th October 2021). At the High-Level meeting there were representatives of 31 countries, which recognise and appreciate the importance of the Protocol and the recent declarations adopted during the ATCMs in Santiago and Paris. A “Declaration of Madrid” was adopted, recognising the role of Antarctica as a place for peace and science which must be protected.

Another post reported a virtual event hosted by Chile and Spain, celebrating the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Madrid Protocol. The event was in two parts – commemorative session and scientific panels (with the participation of senior and young polar researchers).

The third post reports about two events in in relation with the 30th anniversary of the signing of the Madrid Protocol: a seminar organised by the Embassy of Kingdom of Spain in Bulgaria and the Bulgarian Antarctic Institute. It took place in December 2021 in hybrid model. There were presentations from both official guests and scientists. The event was followed by an exhibition later in the period.

Some Parties (Bulgaria and UK) shared an overview of the main Education and Outreach activities during the intersessional period.

POLAR WEEK celebrations were reported. Numerous online activities were presented, aiming to share polar science to educational institutions and to the public. A total of 2902 students, 20 scientists and 133 educators were engaged.

A number of collaborative activities were reported. Polar Educators International (PEI) reported the update of the Polar Resource Book, participation in online conferences and a few individual members activities.

There are reports on number of specialised conferences, seminars and activities aimed towards including teachers and educators.

***Recommendations***

The ICG recommends that the ATCM

* Recognises the usefulness of the Forum on Education and Outreach and support the work of the ICG during one more intersessional period;
* Advises the Parties to keep promoting the usage of the Forum to provide information of their activities related to Education and Outreach;
* Encourage key international activities/events related to education and outreach that Parties can engage;
* Advises the Parties to continue to promote not only Antarctica and Antarctic research through their Education and Outreach Activities but the Antarctic Treaty and Environmental Protocol itself.