On 21 May 2012, the Institute for European Studies hosted a policy forum, organized by the Environment and Sustainable Development cluster, in cooperation with the Vrije Universiteit Brussel faculty department *Internationaal en Europees Recht* (IERE). The event focused on the current and future interest and involvement of the EU within the Arctic. Prof. Dr. Erik Franckx (VUB) was assigned as moderator.

Mr. Ramon Van Barneveld, Policy Officer with DG MARE opened the policy forum by giving a comprehensive overview of the objectives and efforts of the EU within the Arctic, both now as for the future. He highlighted the importance of current developments and provided some insight as to what will be expected from the upcoming EU Arctic Communication.

Ms. Anastasiya Kozubovskaya-Pellé, Legal project manager for the Aurora Borealis – European Icebreaker project presented us with a thorough overview of this interesting research project. The Aurora Borealis icebreaker is conceived as one of the most advanced research icebreakers in the world and will act as a multi-disciplinary all season research platform. Ms. Kozubovskaya-Pellé explained why this research vessel is a true opportunity for both Europe and the Arctic.

Mr. Steffen Weber, Secretary-General of the EU Arctic Forum, was the third and final speaker for the event. Mr. Weber built upon the presentations of the previous speakers and further highlighted the potential of the EU in the Arctic. As Secretary-General of the EU Arctic Forum he was able to share his knowledge from both the institutional and industry perspective.

During the discussion following the presentations, questions were raised by the audience about whether climate change in the Arctic is taken for granted and therefore accepted to be exploited. How, if any, concessioning will be handled in the future and how the peoples from the North will profit from the Aurora Borealis project.