

The UAB Opens New Arctic Research Centre



Credits: Françoise Breton / UAB's CER-ARCTIC

On 1st December 2017, UAB inaugurated its new Arctic Research Centre (CER-ARCTIC), unique in Spain in this area and innovative in research that is respectful to local Arctic communities. Directed by UAB Emeritus Professor Françoise Breton, the centre will focus on the global changes and their impact on local population.

The Arctic is currently undergoing political, economic, social and environmental changes, which very likely will be irreversible. These global processes have an impact on the societies of the region, the daily lives of the population and on their welfare. CER-ARCTIC, the new Arctic Research Centre of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (UAB), will generate cutting-edge research and provide scientific assessment as a way of contributing to the quality of life of Arctic populations, as well as to the sustainability of their environment. Based on a multidisciplinary approach, the research centre will study rights and social justice issues in relation to the use of resources, conduct comparative studies of the Arctic and other regions, such as the Mediterranean, and promote sustainability and governance to foster well-being and human development in the region.

[The opening of the UAB's new CER-ARCTIC research centre](#), presented by the director of the centre Dr. Françoise Breton, included the attendance of renowned researchers such as Dr. Brynhildur Davíðsdóttir, professor in Ecological Economics at the University of Iceland; Dr. Níels Einarsson, director of the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Iceland; and Dr. Melody Brown Burkins, associate director of the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding Dartmouth College in the USA, on behalf of the Institute of Arctic Studies of Dartmouth College. Mr. Rune Fjellheim, director of the Sami Parliament in Norway, also participated in the opening.



Credits: Miquel Such / UAB's CER-ARCTIC

Among its objectives, CER-ARCTIC will conduct comparative studies of the Arctic, viewed as a sea surrounded by a diversity of countries and cultures, and the Mediterranean region. Both share a high level of vulnerability to global changes, not only climatic, but also political, economic and cultural, with negative effects for the indigenous and local communities.

“The new centre will bridge the Arctic with the Mediterranean, Africa and Antarctica, given that all these regions are related and face similar changes”, says the CER-ARCTIC’s director Dr. Françoise Breton. “There are global phenomena such as tourism and urban changes which greatly affect local populations. That is why CER-ARCTIC will conduct Responsible Research, with priority research lines which will be agreed upon with the people living in these regions”, Dr. Breton continues. She points to the fact that the large super-powers increasingly see the Arctic as a “warehouse of resources”, more than “a territory in which people live”.

During the first phase, the CER-ARCTIC will include researchers from different UAB departments and other Spanish Centres as well as four affiliated researchers from the University of Tromsø in Norway, the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Iceland, and the University of Iceland. The number of researchers will gradually increase with the incorporation of new members.

At the end of the event, the premiere of documentary film *Learning from the Whales, Húsavík, Iceland*, by Miquel Such and John Grothier was screened.

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Membership of the CER-ARCTIC Scientific Advisory Board:

- **Dr. Níels Einarsson**, Chairman of the CER-ARCTIC Scientific Advisory Board. Director of the Stefansson Arctic Institute, Iceland.
- **Dr. Oran Young**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Institutional and International Governance, Environmental Institutions, Bren School of Environmental Science & Management, University of California, USA.
- **Dr. Ross A. Virginia**, Director of the Institute of Arctic Studies, Dickey Centre, Dartmouth College, USA.
- **Mr. Rune Sverre Fjellheim**, Director of the Sami Parliament in Norway.
- **Dr. Olga Ulturgasheva**, Lecturer in Social Anthropology, School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester, UK.
- **Dr. Marta Sobrido**, Lecturer in Maritime Law and Arctic Fisheries, Department of Public Law, University of A Coruña, Spain.
- **Dr. Yves Hénocque**, Senior Adviser on Maritime Policy and Integrated Coastal and Ocean Management, Institut français de recherche pour l'exploitation de la mer (IFREMER), France.
- **Dr. Brynhildur Davíðsdóttir**, Professor in Ecological Economics, Department of Economics, and Department of Life and Environmental Sciences, University of Iceland.
- **Dr. Puri Canals**, Chairman of the Mediterranean Marine Protected Areas Network (MEDPAN), France.

Experts in Arctic communities meet in Barcelona



Credits: Françoise Breton / UAB's CER-ARCTIC

The UAB's CER-ARCTIC Research Centre organized the past 24-27 April 2018 in Barcelona the 1st ARCTIC Research Week, with the participation of renowned experts in Arctic communities. The week began by a CER-ARCTIC internal meeting, followed by 2 days of visit to the Garraf and Barcelona Coast, and finalized with the First International Conference on "Indigenous Peoples in cold Climates" on the 27th April, an event for the promotion and dissemination of scientific activities on the Arctic in Barcelona.

1st ARCTIC RESEARCH WEEK

CER-ARCTIC Meeting

At the 24th April meeting, researchers and collaborators of CER-ARCTIC discussed the preparation of potential research proposals with other Arctic institutions. They also discussed the organization by the UAB's Arctic Research Centre, of several international conferences and CER-ARCTIC meetings in 2018 and 2019, with the aim of strengthening the collaboration with the international network of Arctic centres and other polar research institutions.

The Arctic Research Week began the 24th April at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona with the attendance to the meeting of visiting researchers Dr. Tanja Joona (Arctic Centre of Lapland University in Finland) and Dr. Níels Einarsson (Stefansson Arctic Institute in Iceland). The meeting helped to strength the collaboration among the CER-ARCTIC researchers and collaborators. Several main research lines were identified to prioritize the work at the Centre:

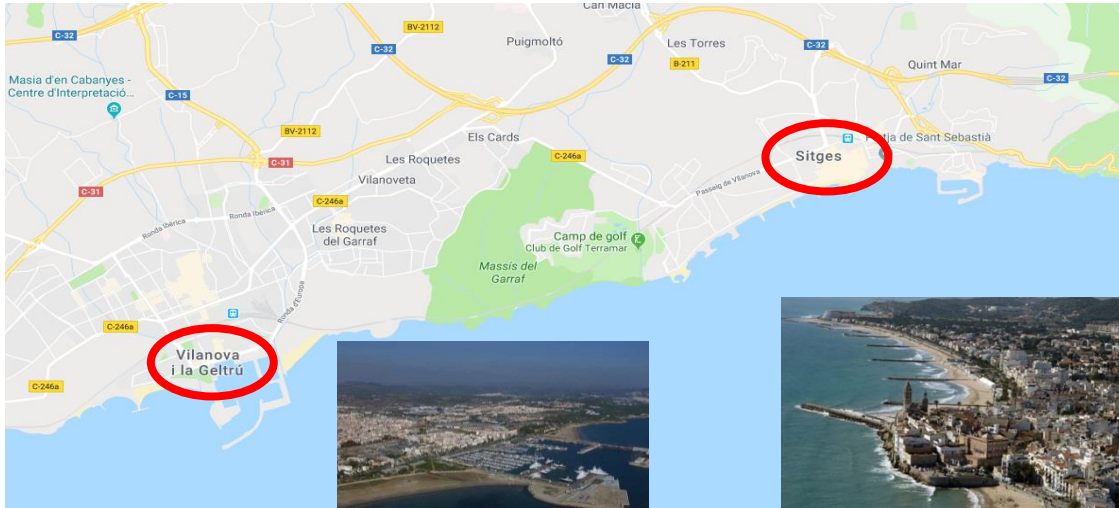
- Ocean management and governance (fisheries, quotas, co-management, whales images and whale watch, MPAs and sanctuaries, tourism, cruise ship impacts...).
- Paleosols, climates and landscape, soil biodiversity, thawing of permafrost and the impacts on people.
- Archaeology and ethnology in the relations between marine mammals and local communities.
- Synergies between climate change and global change, comparing the south and the north, connecting local communities.
- Indigenous rights on territory and animals, gender and youth questions, facing societal and cultural transformations.
- Arctic representation in the European Union and global institutions.



Credits: Alexey Seafare, Ash.B and Adwo / shutterstock.com

Field Trips

On April 25th and 26th, the events of the Arctic Research Week continued with the organization of visits to the harbours of Vilanova i la Geltrú, but also in Sitges and the Garraf coast, where have been made repeated whale sightings of the specie *Baleanoptera physalus*, the common Rorqual, connecting the Mediterranean with the Arctic.



Credits: Google Maps / Vilanova i Geltrú town hall / Guia de Sitges



Credits: edmaktub Report 2017

In Barcelona, a visit organized in the harbour allowed to meet different fishermen and take contact with Cristina Caparrós for further collaborations on fishermen's heritage. As well, a number of interviews were programmed to explore the role and function of women in the fisheries, comparing the Mediterranean and the Arctic. The visits were coordinated by the Director of CER-ARCTIC Dr. Françoise Breton, and featured with the participation of visiting researchers Dr. Níels Einarsson and Dr. Tanja Joona.

First International Conference on "Indigenous Peoples in Cold Climates" as closing event of the 1st Arctic Research Week

The UAB's Arctic Research Centre CER-ARCTIC, in collaboration with the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Iceland, the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland in Finland, and the Sustainable Development Advisory Board of Catalonia (CADS) of the Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya, organised the 27th April the [First International Conference on "Indigenous Peoples in Cold Climates"](#). The event took place at the Doctor Melcior Colet Museum and Centre for Sports Studies in Barcelona (Carrer de Buenos Aires 56).

The conference focused on experiences in social realities, marine and land rights, the "commons" and the relationships with nature among indigenous peoples and other communities living in the Arctic. According to the organisers, "there are still many aspects about the Arctic which remain unknown in Western societies, and it is an honour to give visibility to those who during centuries have lived in these cold climates, and who often do not have a say in climate change and the global impacts affecting their land".



Credits: Tanja Joona and Niels Einarsson

The event was attended by the Vice-Rector of Research and Transfer of the UAB, Dr. Armand Sánchez, and they participated, among others, guest speakers included renowned experts such as Dr. Isabel Pont, member of the Sustainable Development Advisory Board of Catalonia (CADS), Government of the Generalitat de Catalunya; Dr. Montserrat Ventura, Head of the Social and Cultural Anthropology Department of the UAB; Dr. Tanja Joona, researcher of the University of Lapland in Finland; Dr. Alfredo Prieto and Jorge Gibbons, researchers of the University of Magallanes, in Chile; and Dr. Niels Einarsson, Director of the Stefansson Arctic Institute in Iceland.



Credits: Sílvia Gómez and Françoise Breton / UAB's CER-ARCTIC

The weekly magazine 'El Temps' covered the conference and published an [article](#).

At the end of the international conference, a lunch for the guest speakers and other invited attendees was organized by the Stefansson Arctic Institute and closing the events of the 1st Arctic Research Week.