



XXV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting Warsaw, 2002



“Gromada” Conference Center. *Photograph by M. Dziewiński.*

The Antarctic Treaty was signed in Washington by 12 states on December 1, 1959. The Treaty entered into force on June 23, 1961. Within the next 4 decades, additional 33 States joined the Treaty, bringing the total to 45 states that represent more than 80% of the world's population. During that period, the Antarctic Treaty Consultative Parties (ATCPs) adopted numerous regulatory measures to provide for the effective management and governance of Antarctica. By these means the Antarctic Treaty along with the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty (“Madrid Protocol”, 1991), and together with two separate conventions dealing with the Convention on Conservation of Antarctic Seals (CCAS, London 1972), and the Convention on Conservation of the Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CAML, Canberra 1980) – has successfully guaranteed that this vast continent remains dedicated to peace, international co-operation and scientific endeavor, which is the main goal of the Treaty.

Poland joined the Treaty in 1961 and since 1977 – as a country carrying out substantial scientific research activity in Antarctica, and having there its own scientific polar research station (the *Arctowski* Station on King George Island) – it was accorded a special, Consultative Party

status. This status brings privileges and obligations. One of these obligations is to organize annual consultative meeting of all state-parties to the Treaty. The Consultative Parties organize Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meetings annually, according to the alphabetic order of the names of the states. The purpose of these Meetings is to monitor, to manage and to govern all kinds of activity in Antarctica. Some governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are invited to take part in ATCMs as experts or observers in order to enrich and broaden scientific and legal scope of the Antarctic Treaty System. Here, in particular, the contribution of the Committee of Environmental Protection (CEP), the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR), the Council of Managers of the National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP), the Commission of the Convention on the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR), the International Union of Conservation of the Nature (IUCN), International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) should be noted.

The XXV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting (XXV ATCM) took place in Warsaw, from September 10–20, on the premises and modern facilities of the “Gromada” Conference Center. It was the first ATCM ever organized by Poland. Delegations of 27 Consultative Parties, of 16 Non-Consultative Parties, and representatives of 7 international organizations participated in the Meeting. More than 270 delegates took part in the proceedings of the XXV ATCM. The conference materials presented for discussion by the Parties consisted of 47 working papers and 104 information papers (provided in English, French, Spanish, and Russian). In order to handle the enormous organizational work the Secretariat of the XXV ATCM had been created in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Secretariat team consisted of the Foreign Ministry officers and of a group of scientists from the Department of Antarctic Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences chaired by Professor Stanisław Rakusa-Suszczewski. The head of the Secretariat was Ambassador Ryszard Sarkowicz. The work of Secretariat was supported by help and advice of several governmental and scientific institutions (*e.g.* the Committee of Scientific Research, the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Committee on Polar Research).

For more efficient distribution of the Antarctic Treaty materials and better communication between participants of the XXV ATCM, the official website of the Meeting (www.25atcm.gov.pl) has been created and will be maintained until April 2003. After that, the website will be taken over by Spain – the organizer of the next Consultative Meeting (June 2003).

To promote Polish science and culture among the participants of the XXV ATCM, several cultural events were organized by the Secretariat, moreover two exhibitions of the achievements of Polish polar scientists. Among them; one prepared by the Committee of Polar Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the other by Mr. T. Janecki from the Department of Antarctic Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences. A concert of Polish classical music and songs organized in Łazienki Królewskie (King’s Bath), was enthusiastically received by the participants.

To emphasize the importance Poland attaches to the Antarctic Treaty System, the Meeting, at its opening, was addressed by Leszek Miller, the Prime Minister of Poland (the address was delivered by Professor Tadeusz Iwiński, Secretary of State in the Chancellery of the Prime Minister).

The work of the Warsaw meeting was performed by four working groups (Liability WG, Legal and Institutional Matters WG, Operational Matters WG, WG for Secretariat), by meetings of the Committee of Environmental Protection, and by plenary sessions. Their work resulted in several measures, decisions and resolutions.

The ATCM in Warsaw adopted a decision on an emblem for the Antarctic Treaty, by converting the symbol used hitherto in practice into the formal emblem of the Treaty to be used by the ATCM, and the Antarctic Treaty Secretariat, once established. Revised Guidelines for Document Translation and Distribution were also adopted. These allow the use of modern means of communication in the preparation for future meetings. Several recommendations aimed at streamlining the work of the ATCM were also agreed on (*i.e.* on the long-term planning of the

agenda and the working groups, and on the consultations between the previous and the present chairman of the meeting). The meeting examined ways to shorten the time between the adoption and the entry into force of the measures (under Article IX of the Treaty) by the possible means of a fast-tracking mechanism. Discussion on this topic will be continued at the forthcoming XXVI ATCM in Madrid. The XXV ATCM has also adopted a measure on the management plans for 13 Antarctic Treaty Protected Areas (Measure 1/2002), whilst the naming and numbering of Antarctic Specially Protected Areas was changed by means of Decision 1 (2002).

The Meeting also continued work on the establishment of the Secretariat of the Antarctic Treaty. Draft instruments on the decision on the provisional establishment of the Secretariat, a measure on the establishment of the Secretariat and a draft of the Headquarters Agreement, were prepared. These texts, although not yet the subject of consensus, will be discussed at the informal meeting in Buenos Aires (April 2003) and then taken forward to XXVI ATCM to be held in Madrid. It is hoped that consensus will be achieved there on the conclusion of these modalities for the establishment of the Secretariat.

The Committee for Environmental Protection (CEP) has extensively contributed to the XXV Antarctic Treaty Consultative Meeting providing opinion, advice, expertise and formulating recommendations on the implementation of the Madrid Protocol, moreover drafting measures, resolutions, and decisions for adoption by the XXV ATCM.

During the XXV ATCM several international organizations presented their annual reports: the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR); the Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR); the Council of Managers of National Antarctic Programs (COMNAP), the International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO), the Antarctic and the Southern Ocean Coalition (ASOC) and the International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The XXV ATCM noted that the "Question of Antarctica" is to be discussed at the 56 session of the United Nations General Assembly. The delegation of the United States of America circulated a draft text of the Antarctic Treaty Parties statement to be finalized by missions in New York. The meeting agreed that Poland, as the host country of the XXV ATCM, will coordinate the work on the final version of the statement and then it should present the statement to the UN General Assembly.

Mr. Włodzimierz Cimoszewicz, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland delivered the closing address to the XXV ATCM.

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