



EUROPEAN POLAR BOARD

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Dear Honourable Members of the European Parliament, President of the European Commission (EC), President of the European Union (EU) Council, Commissioners and Directors-General of the EC's Directorate-General Budget, Regional and Urban Policy, Research and Innovation, Maritime Affairs and Fisheries, Agriculture and Rural Development, Environment, Defence Industry and Space, Prime Ministers and Governmental Representatives of the EU Member States and non-EU European countries associated to the EU's HORIZON programmes,

As the negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) proposal and the future of EU research funding are now underway, I am writing to you on behalf of the European Polar Board, an organisation with 31 Member Institutions from 22 countries across Europe, representing European polar research and operations.

We respectfully urge your support for securing dedicated funding for EU polar research within Framework Programme 10 (FP10), recognising its strategic value for the EU, its Member States, Associated Countries, and society.

Polar regions are at the heart of the climate-ocean-biodiversity nexus. Climate and environmental changes in the Arctic are unfolding much faster than elsewhere, driving sea-level rise, shifts in weather patterns and ocean circulation that amplify extreme events. In Antarctica, warming and rapid ice loss is accelerating global sea-level rise and resulting in implications for Europe's coasts, climate stability, and future security. At the same time, growing geopolitical tensions and resource interests make the polar regions increasingly critical to Europe's future economy, security, and societies.

Through previous Framework Programmes, the EU's investment in polar research has generated knowledge that contributed directly into EU strategies and policies such as the European Green Deal and Arctic Policy. The knowledge generated by EU funded projects has also contributed to global assessments, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) and the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES). This investment has also **strengthened Europe's scientific readiness by ensuring that theoretical understanding is translated into practical applications that serve Europe's strategic interests**. Europe's leadership in polar science means that the EU benefits from a rich pool of expertise that can address climate, environmental, and geopolitical challenges that occur as a result of polar change. From climate resilience and security to sustainable management of marine resources, Europe's leadership in polar science is essential to advancing the policies and strategic objectives of the MFF and FP10, including the Arctic Policy, Ocean Pact, Blue Economy, and the Competitiveness Fund.

The EPB is closely following developments related to the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and Framework Programme 10 (FP10). In May, the EPB launched an [open call advocating for targeted polar research investments in FP10](#), which remains active and has already gathered more than 900 signatories.

In early June, the EPB also sent a [letter accompanied by a three-page information document](#) to all Members of the European Parliament, Members of the European Commission, Prime Ministers, and governmental representatives of EU Member States. This communication highlighted the benefits and strategic value of sustained, dedicated EU investment in polar research for Europe's long-term resilience, competitiveness, and global leadership.

Building on the above activities, this statement provides a high-level overview of how EU investments in polar research are directly linked to the implementation of the strategic priorities in the MFF and FP10, as well as other EU policies and initiatives linked to them such as the Ocean Pact, Copernicus, Destination Earth, and the Digital Twins of Earth and Ocean.

We urge you to consider what is at stake as you weigh the decisions shaping the MFF and the EU's long-term research landscape. Continued investment by the EU in polar research is not a luxury. **These investments are strategic to develop foresight, regional stability, and provide Europe with a competitive advantage.** The groundwork has been laid. The coordination mechanisms and partnerships are in place. **The European polar research community stands ready to provide the answers Europe and the rest of the world needs.** By investing in polar research today, Europe maintains its leadership in discovery and innovation, builds resilience and helps secure its environment, economy, and communities for decades to come.

Respectfully,

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Information Document

Title: Investing in the Future: European Polar Board Statement on a Sustainable Polar Research Funding Mechanism to Support MFF (2028-2034) and FP10 Priorities.

Author and Date: European Polar Board, 23 September 2025

Prepared for: Members of the European Parliament, the European Commission (EC), Governmental Representatives of the European Union Member States and Associated Countries in Europe in front of the MFF (2028-2034) and FP10 negotiations.

Executive Summary

The Arctic and Antarctic are at the heart of the climate-ocean-biodiversity nexus. Research in these regions provides early warning signs of global change, and the opportunity to develop the forecasting and innovation tools needed to safeguard Europe's and the world's environmental, economic, and societal resilience.

The European Polar Board (EPB) calls for a dedicated EU funding mechanism for polar research under the upcoming Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2028–2034 and Framework Programme 10 (FP10). This investment is essential to maintain Europe's leadership in climate science, strengthen data sovereignty, and ensure evidence-based decision-making across policies.

Strategic Achievements and Opportunities

A sustainable EU polar research funding mechanism in the 2028-2034 MFF will:

- Secure continuity of polar observing systems, infrastructures, and flagship projects.
- Strengthen Europe's global leadership in science and innovation.
- Advance climate mitigation and adaptation strategies across fisheries, agriculture, energy, and maritime sectors.
- Enhance resilience and security against environmental, economic, and geopolitical risks.
- Support cross-policy integration, bridging science, society, and decision-making.
- Deliver trusted climate and ocean projections through Digital Twins and Earth system models.
- Secure Europe's strategic autonomy through data sovereignty and reduced reliance on external sources.
- Secure Europe's leadership in major international initiatives such as the 5th International Polar Year (2032–2033) and the UN Decades of Ocean (2021–2030) and Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034).

Sustained polar research investment is both a scientific necessity and a strategic responsibility for the European Union. By establishing a dedicated, long-term funding mechanism in MFF 2028–2034 and FP10, the EU builds resilience and helps secure the future of Europe's environment, economy, and communities for decades to come.

Full Statement

The Arctic and Antarctic, while geographically remote, are the heart of the climate-ocean-biodiversity nexus. They are the environments where many of the earliest signs of planetary disruption emerge, but also where knowledge generation, innovation, and global cooperation can help to safeguard the stability of our climate and ocean systems.

Polar research underpins many of the European Union's objectives addressed in MFF 2028-2034, extending far beyond Arctic communities to the entire European population. Through the last Framework Programmes, the EU's investment in polar research **strengthened Europe's scientific excellence and strategic capacity by ensuring that theoretical understanding is translated into practical applications that serve Europe's strategic interests**. From climate resilience and security to sustainable management of marine resources, Europe's leadership in polar science directly underpins policies and strategic objectives such as the Arctic Policy, Ocean Pact, Green Deal, Blue Economy, and Competitiveness Fund. Today, Europe benefits from a rich pool of expertise that can address climate, environmental, and geopolitical challenges in its lands and waters that are connected to polar regions.

The European Polar Board (EPB) recognises the critical importance of polar research, observation, and forecasting in addressing the societal, economic, and environmental challenges. Now, more than ever, sustained EU leadership in climate science and polar research is indispensable not only for Europe's future, but for global resilience. **A sustainable EU funding mechanism for polar research within the MFF 2028-2034 is essential to deliver reliable observations and data sovereignty, strengthen predictive capabilities, and support evidence-based decision-making across multiple sectors at a European and global level. It will also enable the EU to maintain its leadership in discovery and innovation, and to respond confidently, collaboratively, and with foresight to the evolving challenges of a changing world.**

The EPB is advocating for sustained polar research funding in the 2028–2034 MFF and FP10. The EPB [open call advocating for targeted polar research investments in FP10](#) has already gathered over 900 signatories, and in June 2025 a [formal communication was sent to EU leaders](#) underlining the strategic value of dedicated funding for polar research. Building on these actions, this EPB statement provides a high-level overview of how EU investments in polar research are directly linked to the implementation of the strategic priorities in the MFF and FP10, as well as EU policies and initiatives such as the Ocean Pact, Copernicus, Destination Earth, and the Digital Twins of Earth and Ocean.

Linking Polar Research to European Priorities

1. Data sovereignty and trustworthy predictive tools

EU investments for sustained polar observing systems are key for data sovereignty and for developing trustworthy predictive tools. EU-funded polar projects have already delivered field data, data management tools, and infrastructures that support the evaluation of satellite data and enhance services such as Copernicus. Accurate observation and modelling of polar regions are essential for understanding global ocean circulation, which drives climate patterns affecting Europe, including heatwaves, wildfires, flooding, and land-use pressures. Changes in polar ice dynamics and temperature influence species distributions, fisheries productivity, and the health of ecosystems that support Europe's Economy, including the **European Green Deal and Blue Economy**. Without comprehensive polar data, the EU cannot develop credible Digital Twins of the Earth and Ocean and build confidence in future climate scenarios for supporting informed decision-making. **Filling knowledge gaps in polar processes strengthens Europe's leadership in science, directly supporting the EU's 35% climate and environment spending target and the research and innovation priorities.**

2. Supporting Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Polar research is the backbone supporting informed and trustworthy climate mitigation and adaptation strategies. It directly supports fisheries management, aquaculture development, tourism, and maritime activities, all of which are critical to economic activity and livelihoods in coastal regions. By integrating polar data into national and EU policy frameworks, investments in observing systems and data management tools help ensure that climate-related policies are based on robust evidence.

A sustainable EU polar fund would facilitate the consistent mainstreaming of climate and biodiversity objectives across EU policies, building on lessons and successes from the 2021–2027 MFF. It would strengthen observing and modelling actions to ensure accurate tracking of expenditure and outcomes in support of climate mitigation, biodiversity protection, and environmental health.

3. Enhancing EU Resilience and Security

The polar regions are strategically vital for Europe's security and resilience, with the Arctic increasingly shaping energy stability, trade routes, access to critical resources, and broader geopolitical dynamics. Environmental degradation, accelerated climate change, and extreme weather events contribute to economic losses and regional disparities. Sustainable and reliable polar observation systems enhance early warning capabilities, help mitigate climate-related risks, and support EU resilience against natural hazards and strategic threats, including challenges to critical infrastructure (e.g., energy grids or transportation infrastructures and networks).

Furthermore, polar research strengthens Europe's capacity to respond to global crises by aligning internal priorities with external action. By understanding polar-driven climate impacts on carbon storage, ocean systems, biodiversity, extreme weather and land use, the

EU can enhance economic security, energy stability, and food security, while supporting peace and sustainable development. **These contributions directly support European Parliament's thematic discussions** (e.g., 2023 In-Depth Analysis “Antarctica: What role for the European Union?” Requested by the AFET Committee), **reinforce the Ocean Pact, the EU Arctic Policy, and the MFF's sustainability objectives.**

4. Polar Research for People and Policy

A sustainable EU polar funding mechanism, building on existing EU investments, will support the roadmap for research priorities with emerging topics and ensure that knowledge generated by EU-funded research effectively contributes to cross-policy alignment across social, agricultural, fisheries, climate, and environmental priorities. Member States and Associated Countries, together with regional authorities and relevant stakeholders, can identify key investments that address national and regional needs while reinforcing EU-wide objectives.

5. Sustain Europe's Polar Research Excellence

Over the past decades, the European Union has consistently invested in polar research through its Framework Programmes. These long-term commitments have paid off: Europe is now a **global leader in polar science**, home to world-class expertise and a thriving community of early-career researchers. **No other funding model in the world has matched the EU's ability to connect diverse disciplines, nations, and generations of scientists and deliver both cutting-edge science and real-world societal impact.** It is this unique European model that secures both competitiveness and sovereignty, ensuring the EU remains a true polar research powerhouse.

The European polar research community stands ready to provide the answers Europe and the world need. Continued, dedicated funding for polar research is essential for enhancing Europe's ability to address polar changes at regional and global levels. It will also reinforce and strategically position its leadership in international polar initiatives such as the 5th International Polar Year (2032–2033), and the UN Decades of Ocean (2021–2030) and Cryospheric Sciences (2025–2034). **Without targeted funding for polar research under FP10, the EU and its Member States risk losing its established momentum and strategic position, becoming less competitive in polar regions at a time when the stakes are higher than ever.**

A sustainable dedicated fund for polar research in the 2028-2034 MFF and FP10 will enable Europe and the EU to:

- **Strengthen Europe's world-leading scientific expertise** to generate knowledge from the polar environments, which are at the heart of the climate-ocean-biodiversity nexus, recognising that their fate is not only vital for the people and ecosystems of the poles but for all of Europe and the globe.
- **Maintain and strengthen Europe's global leadership** in polar research and support collaboration across disciplines, ensuring the generation of knowledge and tools needed to address climate change, protect ecosystems, and build a sustainable future.

- **Promote Europe's values of openness, inclusiveness, and shared responsibility**, making it a trusted partner globally. Applying these values in polar research supports the vision of a European Research Area, overcomes barriers to interdisciplinary and international cooperation, and strengthens global partnerships.
- **Support reliable climate action** through mitigation, adaptation, and ecosystem management strategies, while reducing pollution and safeguarding fragile environments.
- **Enhance resilience** against environmental, economic, and security risks linked to polar and global changes.
- **Secure data sovereignty** by reducing reliance on external sources, enabling dual-use applications.
- **Bridge science, society, and policy** by translating research into actionable knowledge for decision-makers and communities.
- **Enhance Digital Twins of Earth and Ocean** with polar data to deliver trustworthy projections for all of Europe, as polar change drives global climate and ocean circulation.
- **Streamline funding and foster strategic alignment**, ensuring long-term, mission-driven research with strong policy impact, while also providing sustained support for the European Polar Coordination Office.
- **Guarantee continuity of flagship projects**, research infrastructure, observing and data systems, and the effective integration of Copernicus with other space-based polar monitoring efforts.

Conclusion

Sustained investment in polar research is not only a matter of scientific advancement but a strategic priority for Europe's environmental, economic, and societal well-being.

Europe's continued leadership at the front line of climate science, biodiversity protection, and polar knowledge is not optional. It is a strategic responsibility and a unique opportunity for the EU to shape global outcomes. By investing in polar research today, Europe builds resilience and helps secure its environment, economy, and communities for the decades to come.

EPB

September 23, 2025