

Polar treaties and scientific committees, 2013

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The accompanying table gives a pragmatic indication of current national interests in polar research and other activities through association of states with four international agreements. Two of these are inter-governmental treaties and the two committees are non-governmental scientific organisations. One of each pertains to the Arctic and the others to the Antarctic. Each agreement has two classes of association, which are indicated in the table.

The two treaties, the Spitsbergen Treaty (covering the Svalbard Archipelago and Bjørnøya) made in Paris in 1920 and the Antarctic Treaty (covering land and ice shelves south of 60°S) made in Washington in 1959, have many analogous aspects. Common provisions include remedies for disputed sovereignty (although by different methods), giving freedom of access to citizens of adherent states, controlling exploitation of biological and mineral resources, and providing for conservation regulations and reserved areas. The Spitsbergen Treaty had 14 original adherents and provision was made for the admission of Russia (then involved in revolution). Subsequently 27 other states have joined making a total of 42. The 50 states presently acceding to the Antarctic Treaty include 29 consultative parties involved in substantial research in the region. These have voting powers not held by the 21 other adherents.

The Scientific Committee on Antarctic Research (SCAR) was established, in Den Haag in 1958, by scientific academies from the 12 states that later made the Antarctic Treaty. Others were admitted to full membership directly until 1986 when provision for associate membership was made. Presently there are 31 full members and 6 associate members (Colombia joined in 1990, withdrew in 1995, Estonia joined in 1992, withdrew in 2002). The International Arctic Science Committee (IASC) was established, at Resolute Bay in 1990, by the 8 states with territory north of the Arctic Circle, subsequently another 13 also involved in Arctic research, have joined.

Names and designations of several states have changed after these agreements were made and some are currently in transition. Germany acceded to the Antarctic Treaty and joined SCAR when divided into the BRD and DDR; both had the same membership status on unification. Czechia and Slovakia succeeded from former Czechoslovak accessions. Estonia resumed representation in the Spitsbergen Treaty after regaining independence from the Soviet Union. Russia assumed representation of the Soviet Union after the latter disrupted. Ukraine and Belarus acceded independently to the Antarctic Treaty. Saudi Arabia acceded to the Spitsbergen Treaty as Hedjaz. After acceding to the Spitsbergen Treaty the Kingdom of Serbs Croats and Slovenes became part of Yugoslavia which succeeded as an adherent. Its subsequent disruption, beginning in 1991, has left the status of the separate states not yet clear (Serbia and Montenegro is listed as the successor). Undoubtedly more such changes and conundrums will occur.

There are many sources for these data. Most have been summarised from publications and websites of the organisations concerned. The Treaty Section of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, has also been of assistance. This compilation was first published in **Polar Record** in 1993 when 52 countries were listed.

The table is up to date on December 2013:

- + indicates a Consultative Party to the Antarctic Treaty, a full member of SCAR, an original adherent of the Spitsbergen Treaty, or a founder of IASC.
- # indicates a non-consultative party to the Antarctic Treaty, an associate member of SCAR, a subsequent adherent of the Spitsbergen Treaty, or a member of IASC without Arctic territory.

	National adherents to polar agreements			
	Antarctic Treaty	SCAR	Spitsbergen Treaty	IASC
Afghanistan			+	
Albania			+	
Argentina	#	#	+	
Australia	#	#	#	
Austria	+		+	
Belarus	+			
Belgium	#	#	+	
Brasil	#	#		
Bulgaria	#	#	+	
Canada	+	#	#	#
Chile	#	#	+	
China (Beijing)	#	#	+	+
Colombia	+			
Cuba	+			
Czechia	#		+	+
Denmark	+	+	#	#
Dominica (Santo Domingo)			+	
Ecuador	#	#		
Egypt			+	
Estonia	+		+	
Finland	#	#	+	#
France	#	#	#	+
Germany	#	#	+	+
Greece	+		+	
Guatemala	+			
Hungary	+		+	
Iceland			+	#
India	#	#	#	+
Italy	#	#	#	+
Japan	#	#	#	+
Korea (Pyongyang)	+			
Korea (Seoul)	#	#		+
Malaysia	+	#		
Monaco	+	+	+	
Netherlands	#	#	#	+
New Zealand	#	#	#	
Norway	#	#	#	#
Pakistan	+	+		
Papua New Guinea	+			
Perú	#	#		
Poland	#	#	+	+
Portugal	+	+	+	
Romania	+	+	+	
Russia	#	#	#	#
Saudi Arabia			+	
Serbia and Montenegro				+
Slovakia	+		+	
South Africa	#	#	#	
Spain	#	#	+	+
Sweden	#	#	#	#
Switzerland	+	#	+	+
Turkey	+			
Ukraine	#	#		
United Kingdom	#	#	#	+
United States	#	#	#	#
Uruguay	#	#		
Venezuela	+	+	+	
∑ 57	50	37	42	21
# +	29 21	31 6	15 27	8 13