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**Polish-Czech-Ukrainian cooperation for environmental research in polar regions**  
– identifying joint research priorities, good practices, and funding opportunities and bilateral instruments –

Location: Campus of the University of Silesia in Cieszyn, Bielska Street 62, Cieszyn, Poland

Date: 30–31 May 2025

## 1. BACKGROUND AND MOTIVATION

Scientists from Poland, Ukraine and the Czech Republic have been conducting research in the Arctic and Antarctic for decades. They operate year-round research stations, logistics centres and regional stations. They actively acquire research projects from national and European funding agencies. The land infrastructure is complemented by vessels operating in the seas in the southern and northern polar regions. The research topics cover a wide range of disciplines: glaciology, oceanology, climatology and meteorology, geology, atmospheric physics, ecology, microbiology, ecology and permafrost research.

In the era of increasing globalisation and growing tensions in the polar regions, it is crucial to strengthen scientific and logistical cooperation in the Arctic and Antarctic regions. The aim of this workshop was to:

- exchange information about the national strategies and priorities in the polar regions;
- share information about infrastructure;
- present the most important scientific achievements and implemented projects;
- finding common areas of cooperation;
- discussion on joint projects.



*Participants of the workshop in Cieszyn – group photo*

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## 2. REPORT

Conference participants were welcomed by Dr. Ela Łepkowska (*Executive Director of the Polish Polar Consortium Secretariat*), Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk (*President of the Polish Polar Consortium*), Dr. Evgen Dykyi (*Director of the National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*) and Dr. Pavel Kapler (*Manager of the Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*). Their opening remarks emphasized the importance of international cooperation in polar science, especially in the context of current environmental challenges and the growing need for integrated monitoring and shared infrastructure in the polar regions.

The first thematic session provided a strategic overview of the current directions and priorities of polar research in Poland, Ukraine, and the Czech Republic. On behalf of Poland, Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk, Prof. Mateusz Moskalik (*Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences*), and Agnieszka Kruszewska (*Administrative Director of Institute of Biochemistry and Biophysics of the Polish Academy of Sciences*) presented a coordinated vision for Polish research stations in the Arctic and Antarctic. From Ukraine, Dr. Evgen Dykyi and Olena Marushevskaya (*National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*) outlined NASC's priorities for Antarctic research, with particular attention on Vernadsky station and Noosfera vessel. From Czech Republic Dr. Pavel Kapler presented Czech Antarctic Research Programme and Dr. Marie Šabacká (*Charles University, Prague*) presented infrastructure and research focused mainly based on the Czech Arctic Research Station in Longyearbyen, Svalbard.

The second session was divided into four thematic blocks, reflecting the major domains of polar research: cryosphere, oceanology, atmosphere with hydrology and ecology. The cryosphere block was opened by Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk and Prof. Jacek Jania (*University of Silesia in Katowice*), who presented Poland's achievements in glaciological monitoring and long-term observations. Ukraine's contribution was delivered online by Ms. Natalia Shepel (*National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*), who discussed cryospheric observations around Vernadsky Station. Dr. Jakub Holuša (*Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*) presented the Czech Republic's activities in cryosphere studies. The session concluded with a moderated discussion led by Dr. Ignatiuk, during which the need for harmonized monitoring protocols and data sharing.

Prof. Mateusz Moskalik and Dr. Agnieszka Beszczyńska-Möller (*Institute of Oceanology, Polish Academy of Sciences*) presented Poland's oceanographic programs in the Arctic and Antarctic, emphasizing interdisciplinary observations of water mass dynamics and their links to climate variability. Ms. Natalia Shepel presented online the Ukrainian perspective on oceanographic data acquisition in the Southern Ocean. Dr. Pavel Kapler contributed a short overview of Czech marine projects. The discussion was moderated by Dr. Kapler and focused on methodological integration and the possibility of future joint cruises.

Dr. Tomasz Wawrzyniak (*Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences*) presented the Polish program for atmospheric and hydrological monitoring, including the results from the Polish Polar Hornsund Station. Ukrainian speakers Dr. Anastasiia Chyhareva (*National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*) and Dr. Andriy Zalozovski (*NASC, Radioastronomic Institute of the National Academy of Sciences*) presented complementary work on hydrometeorological observations and atmospheric modeling. From the Czech side, Dr. Jaroslav Urbář (*Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Czech Academy of Sciences*) and Dr. Jakub Holuša (*Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*) discussed recent developments in atmospheric measurements and hydrological studies in polar regions. This session, moderated by Dr. Urbář, emphasized the importance of coordinated long-term monitoring networks.

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Prof. Krzysztof Zawierucha (*Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań*) presented online Poland's ecological research in the polar regions, with special focus on microbiological diversity in extreme environments. Ukraine's contributions were presented by Dr. Maria Pavlovskaya (*National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*) and Dr. Ivan Parnikoza (*National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*), who discussed microbiological research at Argentine Islands and Vernadsky station. From the Czech Republic, Dr. Oleksandr Bren (*Institute of Botany CAS, Centre of Polar Ecology, University of South Bohemia*) and Dr. Anton Puhovkin (*Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP) & National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*) discussed geomorphological and ecological studies on James Ross Island and nearby regions in the Antarctic Peninsula. Prof. Josef Elster (*Institute of Botany of the Czech Academy of Sciences*) also presented cyanobacteria and microalgae ecology research conducted in Svalbard. The discussion, moderated by Dr. Karel Janko (*Institute of Animal Physiology and Genetics, Czech Academy of Sciences*), pointed out the need for integrated approaches linking ecology, climate change, and microbial sciences.

After the scientific sessions, participants enjoyed a guided walk through the historical town of Cieszyn, providing an opportunity to explore the cultural heritage of the Polish-Czech borderland. The day concluded with a networking dinner at the Winowajcy Restaurant, fostering an informal exchange of ideas and establishing personal connections among the researchers.

The second day of the meeting was devoted to a roundtable discussion titled "How to foster long-term scientific collaboration? Developing a joint project proposal". The session opened with an introductory talk by Dr. Marzena Oliwkiewicz-Miklasińska (*National Science Centre in Poland (NCN)*), who outlined the funding mechanisms and opportunities for international cooperation – an overview from Polish perspective. Particular attention was paid to the possibility of financing Polish-Czech cooperation within the Weave programme and Polish-Ukraine cooperation within IMPRESS-U. Moderated by Dr. Ela Łepkowska, the roundtable brought together panellists from Poland (Agnieszka Kruszewska, Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk), Ukraine (Dr. Evgen Dykyi, Dr. Ivan Parnikoza), and the Czech Republic (Dr. Pavel Kapler, Dr. Marie Šabacká). Panellists discussed ways to enhance trilateral cooperation by addressing key questions related to shared research priorities – common scientific goals and overlapping interests in polar research; logistics and organization – potential for joint infrastructure, fieldwork, and data sharing and long-term collaboration – ideas for co-writing proposals, securing joint funding, and building sustainable partnerships. The session concluded with agreement on the importance of regular communication and coordination. Discussions also included the potential establishment of a trilateral collaboration for data sharing, research planning, and outreach activities. As a result of the discussions, the areas where there is the most urgent need for coordination of activities and cooperation were mapped:

### **1) Logistics and Infrastructure**

Securing the operation of Antarctic stations requires continued cooperation and coordination of logistical activities. This includes the joint use of shared equipment and infrastructure in the Antarctic, such as the Ukrainian research vessel *Noosfera*.

### **2) Harmonisation of Environmental Monitoring**

It is necessary to define common measurement protocols and data-sharing standards to ensure consistency and comparability across Antarctic research programmes. A working group should be established for the first joint monitoring activity, which will serve as a case study for developing and testing such common protocols. To support this process, regular meetings will be organised to bring together experts, coordinate efforts, and finalise shared methodologies.

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The harmonisation process will begin with a joint pilot project focused on monitoring tidewater glaciers in the Antarctic Peninsula (around all Antarctic research stations). The project, developed under the working title Antarctic Peninsula Cooperative Monitoring of Tidewater Glaciers (APTIGlac), will be led and coordinated by the University of Silesia in Poland. It supports the goals of the 5th International Polar Year and aims to expand glacier monitoring efforts at Antarctic research stations. A key part of the project is the involvement of early-career researchers and PhD students, particularly through cooperation with [the International Environmental Doctoral School](#).

### **3) Data Sharing and Exchange of Best Practices**

Following the principles of FAIR data (Findable, Accessible, Interoperable, and Reusable), cooperation will focus on data sharing and the exchange of best practices to enhance transparency and interoperability across research programmes. Particular attention will be given to contributing to and further developing the SIOS (Svalbard Integrated Arctic Earth Observing System) database as a shared platform for Arctic research data.

As part of the planned activities, it was decided to create a Polish-Czech-Ukrainian contact list to support communication, as well as an institutions overview to better understand which organizations are involved and what they do.

The key to continuing the cooperation that has been initiated is the involvement of more scientists (bottom-top approach) in the cooperation.

The workshop in Cieszyn was the first meeting of its kind, providing a platform for establishing initial contacts, exchanging ideas, and exploring opportunities for future collaboration in polar science among Central and Eastern European partners. It marked an important step toward building a stronger regional network by identifying complementary expertise and laying the groundwork for joint initiatives. To build on this, further meetings focused on specific topics will be organized, helping scientists connect more closely, exchange knowledge, and develop joint projects.

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Snapshots from the Polish-Czech-Ukrainian Polar Workshop

### 3. WORKSHOP AGENDA

#### *Day 1 – Friday, 30 May 2025*

**10:00 – 10:30** | Welcome and opening remarks

Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk, President of the *Polish Polar Consortium*

Dr. Evgen Dykyi, Director of the *National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC)*

Dr. Pavel Kapler, Manager of the *Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*

**10:30 – 12:00** | Session 1: National polar strategies and environmental research priorities

Poland - Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk, Prof. Mateusz Moskalik, Agnieszka Kruszewska

Ukraine - Dr. Evgen Dykyi, Olena Marushevskya

Czech Republic - Dr. Pavel Kapler

**12:00 – 12:20** | Coffee Break

**12:20 – 13:10** | Session 2: Presentation of the most important projects and ongoing monitoring

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## **CRYOSPHERE**

10 min: Poland:

Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk, *Polish Polar Consortium*

Prof. Jacek Jania, *University of Silesia in Katowice*

10 min: Ukraine:

Ms. Natalia Shepel, *National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASCI)*

10 min: Czech Republic:

Dr. Jakub Holuša, *Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*

20 min: Discussion (moderator: Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk)

**13:10 – 14:10** | Lunch Break

**14:10 – 15:50** | Session 2: Presentation of the most important projects and ongoing monitoring

## **OCEANOLOGY**

10 min: Poland:

Prof. Mateusz Moskalik, *Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences*

Dr. Agnieszka Beszczyńska-Möller, *Institute of Oceanology, Polish Academy of Sciences*

10 min: Ukraine:

Ms. Natalia Shepel, *National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASCI)*

5 min: Czech Republic:

Dr. Pavel Kapler, *the Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*

20 min: Discussion (moderator: Dr. Pavel Kapler)

## **ATMOSPHERE and HYDROLOGY**

10 min: Poland:

Dr Tomasz Wawrzyniak, *Institute of Geophysics, Polish Academy of Sciences*

10 min: Ukraine:

Dr. Anastasiia Chyhareva, *National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASCI)*

Dr. Andriy Zalozovski, *NASCI, Radioastronomic Institute of the National Academy of Sciences*

10 min: Czech Republic:

Dr. Jaroslav Urbář, *Institute of Atmospheric Physics, Czech Academy of Sciences*

Dr. Jakub Holuša, *Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)*

20 min: Discussion (moderator: Dr. Jaroslav Urbář)

**15:50 – 16:10** | Coffee Break

**16:10 – 17:00** | Session 2: Presentation of the most important achievements and ongoing monitoring:

**ECOLOGY** (Microbiology, Chemistry, Terrestrial, Geomorphology, ect.)

10 min: Poland:

Prof. Krzysztof Zawierucha, *Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań*

10 min: Ukraine:

Dr. Maria Pavlovska, *National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASCI)*

Dr. Ivan Parnikoza, *National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASCI)*

10 min: Czech Republic:

Dr. Oleksandr Bren, *Institute of Botany CAS, Centre of Polar Ecology (University of South Bohemia)*

Dr. Anton Puhovkin, *Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP) & National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASCI)*

20 min: Discussion (moderator: Dr. Karel Janko)

**18:00 – 19:30** | Guided walk through Cieszyn

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Discover the historical and cultural heritage of the twin-town on the Olza River

**19:30** | Dinner

Networking dinner at the Winowajcy Restaurant

### **Day 2 – Saturday, 31 May 2025**

**09:30 – 11:30** | Session 3: Roundtable discussion: How to foster long-term scientific collaboration? Developing a joint project proposal. Hands-on collaborative session based on shared research priorities

Introduction talk: Dr. Marzena Oliwkiewicz-Miklasińska

Panellists:

Poland: Agnieszka Kruszewska, Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk

Ukraine: Dr. Evgen Dykyi, Dr. Ivan Parnikoza

Czech Republic: Dr. Pavel Kapler, Dr. Marie Šabacká

Moderator: Dr. Ela Łepkowska

**11:30 – 12:00** | Coffee Break

**12:00 – 13:00** | Closing Remarks

**13:00 – 14:00** | Lunch Break

#### **4. ORGANISING COMMITTEE:**

##### **Poland – Polish Polar Consortium**

Dr. Dariusz Ignatiuk, *University of Silesia in Katowice* - President of the PPC

Dr. Ela Łepkowska, *University of Silesia in Katowice* - Executive Director of the PPC Secretariat

##### **Ukraine – National Antarctic Scientific Center**

Dr. Evgen Dykyi, National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC) - Director

Dr. Ivan Parnikoza, National Antarctic Scientific Center (NASC) - Head of the Biology Department

##### **Czech Republic – Czech Antarctic Research Programme**

Dr. Pavel Kapler, Manager of the Czech Antarctic Research Programme (CARP)

#### **5. PARTICIPANTS CONTACT LIST**

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