

Envoys & Events

New EU political head sees Arctic collaboration

SNEH DUGGAL

Diplomatic Circles



Another four years in Ottawa means Manfred Auster might have the chance to experience the bitter cold of one of the Canadian capital's harsher winters.

"The last three [winters] were a bit too mild; they were not what people were telling us about," Mr. Auster said, sitting in his new office at the European Union Delegation to Canada, on Sept. 12.

The German diplomat started work at the beginning of September as the head of the delegation's political and public affairs section.

But he is not new to Ottawa. His three-year stint in Canada since 2009 has been an evolving one—Mr. Auster spent the past two years as the head of the economics section at the German Embassy in Ottawa.

There, he focused on the Canada-EU trade deal, and the state of Canada's banking sector and the economy, among other things. Before that, he worked for one year as a German exchange diplomat with the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade's circumpolar affairs division.

He found the experience to be a useful one.

"It gives you very good preparation for what you do then at the embassy. You set up your networks, you know the way that DFAIT and the government as a whole is working," he said.

"To have this kind of crash course into the dealings, the feelings, the dynamics of the Canadian government is very valuable indeed."



Manfred Auster, the new head of the political and public affairs section at the EU Delegation to Canada.

He said given that EU foreign security and defence policy and values are closely aligned with Canada's, there shouldn't be any hesitation to open up to someone from the European side—and there wasn't.

During his time at DFAIT, there were several things going on with Canada and the Arctic—Canada was developing its Arctic foreign policy paper, it hosted a meeting for foreign ministers of the five Arctic Ocean coastal states, and talks were also starting

up at the Arctic Council about a number of observer status applicants.

The Arctic is one file that will follow Mr. Auster to his new role at the delegation. He said the Arctic is high on the political agenda between Canada and the EU and would be something to follow closely in the next few years.

The EU is currently applying to become a permanent observer at the Arctic Council. But Canada has battled the EU over the sale

of seal products, and that battle has in the past leaked into the debate over Canada's potential support for this observer status.

Mr. Auster said the EU has territory in the Arctic with countries like Finland and Sweden and would be able to contribute to discussions at the council.

"The union itself and also the member states do a lot in Arctic research and can contribute to the work of the Arctic Council with that research," he said.

The EU also has indigenous people living in the northern regions, he noted.

"Supporting the indigenous people of the North is something that is not outlandish to the EU, but we already do that with our own people—we'd also like to engage and do engage with the other indigenous people... on the Arctic Council."

Another focus will be explaining Europe to the public. This includes what the EU and its member states are doing to deal with the debt crisis, the decision-making process in Europe, and what the EU is doing on the international scene.

The debt crisis has put Europe in the headlines during the past few years, he said, but argued it has also helped raise awareness of how integrated Europe is and how it's acting together.

Overall, Mr. Auster said he was excited to be working at the delegation.

He said his initial involvement with a transnational youth organization and then his work with the German foreign service provided him with insight into the European institutions.

"I always had the feeling that direct engagement for the European Union was something that I would like to do."

Before starting at the delegation, Mr. Auster spent a few weeks filling in as consul general at the German consulate in Montreal.

Over the years, Mr. Auster and his family have enjoyed the great outdoors of Ottawa and Gatineau. They often go rowing and sailing locally, or cross-country skiing in Quebec.

"I think it's a very exciting opportunity in the sense that I don't have to move houses, the kids don't have to change schools, [I'm] doing something new, which is still up to a certain degree familiar for me in a city that I know and like."

sduggal@embassymag.ca

OTTAWA Listings

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 19

John Baird to Address Canadian Club of Ottawa—Minister of Foreign Affairs John Baird will address the Canadian Club of Ottawa at a luncheon. 12 p.m. Fairmont Chateau Laurier Ballroom, 1 Rideau St. www.canadianclubottawa.ca

Canada-EU Law Lecture—Markus Gehring, University of Ottawa, will discuss "The Role of European Union Law in the Global Green Economy." 1-2:30 p.m. Presented by the Centre for European Studies at Carleton University. Senate and Alumni Rooms, Robertson Hall, 6th floor, Carleton University, 1125 Colonel By Dr. RSVP to www.carleton.ca/ces

The Intellectual Origins of the New Asia—Author Pankaj Mishra will discuss his new book, *From the Ruins of Empire: The Revolt Against the West and the Remaking of Asia*, with IDRC President David Malone. 2-3:30 p.m. Free. Hopper Room, IDRC, 150 Kent St., 8th floor. RSVP to www.idrc.ca/lectures-mishra

THURSDAY, SEPT. 20

Top Down, Bottom Up: Bridging Global Policy and Practice—The United Nations Institute for Water, Environment and Health presents a panel discussion "Top Down, Bottom Up: Bridging Global Policy and Practice." 9-11 a.m. Free. Laurier Salon, Ottawa Marriott Hotel, 100 Kent St. Contact: Kate Cave at 905-667-5775.

CADSII Networking Luncheon—Michael E. Doucet, chief information officer for the RCMP, will address members of CADSII at a networking luncheon today. 11:30 a.m., \$25 members; \$30 non-members. Air Force Mess, 158 Gloucester St. www.defenceandsecurity.ca

ASEAN in Asia's Rise: Southeast Asia's Place in an Asian Strategy for Canada—Surin Pitsuwan, ASEAN secretary general, will give a talk on "ASEAN in Asia's Rise: Southeast Asia's Place in an Asian Strategy for Canada." Presented by IRDC, 3:30-5 p.m. Free. IDRC, W. David Hopper Room, 150 Kent St., 8th floor. Register to www.idrc.ca/lectures-surin

Challenges to the UN: Russia, China, Syria and the Responsibility to Protect—The CIC National Capital Branch presents a talk with Paul Heinbecker, former ambassador to the UN, and Errol Mendes, of the University of Ottawa and a former visiting professional at the International Criminal Court, on "Challenges to the UN: Russia, China, Syria and the Responsibility to Protect." 5:15 p.m. O'Connor Room, Sheraton Hotel, 150 Albert St. Register to 613-903-4011 or ottawa@opencanada.org

FRIDAY, SEPT. 21

Armenia celebrates its Independence Day. It gained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. For information on any celebrations, please call the embassy at 613-234-3710.

Belize celebrates its Independence Day. It gained independence from the UK in 1981.

Malta celebrates its Independence Day. It gained independence from the UK in 1964.

Mali marks the Proclamation of the Republic. It gained independence from the Mali Federation in 1960. For information on any celebrations, please call the embassy at 613-232-1501.

Warriors of the Rainbow: Seediq Bale—The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Canada presents a screening of this award-winning film. Director: Te-Sheng Wei; Taiwan, 2011. An epic that depicts the native Seediq tribesmen and the violent uprising against their Japanese oppressors. With English subtitles. 7 p.m. Free. Auditorium, Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. 613-231-4203.

Intel Wars: The Secret History of the Fight Against Terror—Speaker Matthew Aid, intelligence historian and author, will discuss "Intel Wars: The Secret History of the Fight Against Terror." Presented by CIPS at the University of Ottawa. 2 p.m. Social Sciences Building, 120 University Street, Room 4004. <http://cips.uottawa.ca>

SATURDAY, SEPT. 22

NAC Gala with Lang Lang—Piano phenom Lang Lang will perform at this year's NAC Gala. \$95 and up. NAC, Southam Hall, 53 Elgin St. www.nac-cna.ca

24th Annual Chelsea Wakefield Studio Tour—Visit the studios of 24 visual artists and craftspeople, whose works include ceramics, wood, and public art. Sept. 22-23, 29-30. www.tourcw.com

SUNDAY, SEPT. 23

Saudi Arabia celebrates its National Day. It celebrates the unification of the kingdoms Nejd and Hejaz in 1932. For information on any celebrations, please call the embassy at 613-237-4100.

Guinea-Bissau celebrates its National Day. It gained independence from Portugal in 1973.

MONDAY, SEPT. 24

Music and Beyond Wine Auction—Music and Beyond is hosting a fine and vintage wine auction. 6:30 p.m., registration; 7 p.m., live auction. Ottawa Marriott, Summit Room, 100 Kent St. www.musicandbeyond.ca

Will to Intervene Day: A Discussion on Preventing Mass Atrocities—Mayor Jim Watson will designate today as "Will to Intervene" Day in Ottawa. The proclamation appeals to the civic duty of Canadians to help prevent mass atrocities. A group of experts will assemble to critically discuss Canada's role in preventing mass atrocity crimes. The event will feature Senator Romeo Dallaire, former ambassador Paul Heinbecker, former MP David Kilgour, and Deputy Mayor of Ottawa Steve Desroches. 10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Free. Room 12102, Desmarais Bldg., University of Ottawa, 55 Laurier Ave. E. To register visit <http://cips.uottawa.ca/event/will-to-intervene-day-2/>

The 3rd Annual Easter Seals Drop Zone
Ottawa—The 2012 Easter Seals Drop Zone, presented by Morguard will challenge participants to raise a minimum of \$1,500 per person in pledges to rappel down the 18-storey north tower of The National Ottawa Hotel & Suites in downtown Ottawa. Participants will raise much-needed funds for kids with physical disabilities. National Hotel and Suites, 361 Queen St.

Amazing Food Routes—The Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture celebrates 70 years as an institution and a milestone for Canada, which joined IICA 40 years ago. This exhibition features popular foods that originate in Latin America and the Caribbean. Until Dec. 14. Canada Agriculture Museum, 861 Prince of Wales Drive, Building 76. For questions, contact office@iicacan.org

TUESDAY, SEPT. 25

Maintaining Trust and Engagement in Canadian Elections: A Call to Action—Canada's Chief Electoral Officer Marc Mayrand speaks to the Economic Club of Canada about the decline of democratic engagement among Canadians. 11:45 a.m.-1:30 p.m. \$79. The Westin Ottawa, 11 Colonel By Dr. www.economicclub.ca

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 26

Chinnari Mutha (Mutha, the Golden Boy)—The film is about a poor village boy whose latent talent soon attracts the interest and attention of an entire town by the unexpected encouragement he receives from a sports teacher. Director: T.S. Nagabharana; India, 1993. With English subtitles. Part of the 9th India Film Festival presented by the CFI. 7 p.m. Auditorium, Library and Archives Canada, 395 Wellington St. <http://www.cfi-icf.ca/>

Embassy Listings is edited by listings editor Alia Heward who can be reached at 613-232-5952, ext. 200. Information regarding events should be sent to listings@embassymag.ca with the subject line 'Embassy Listings' by Friday at 5 p.m. Send in your event in a paragraph with all the relevant details. Our fax number is 613-232-9055.

listings@embassymag.ca