

In 2021, the world community celebrated the 160th anniversary of the outstanding polar explorer, F. Nansen. After the drift of the “Fram” in 1893, he repeatedly visited Russia for scientific, commercial, diplomatic and humanitarian purposes, was elected an honorary member of the Russian Geographical Society, maintained friendly relations with Russian polar explorers, and was awarded Russian orders and medals. Then he often attracted Soviet researchers to his projects.

The continuation of the Nansen traditions of people diplomacy in the Russian Arctic began in 1995, when the International Scientific Arctic Committee (IASC) was created, and under it the Working Group "International Scientific Initiatives in the Russian Arctic" (ISIRA). It includes representatives of all eight Arctic states, as well as the observer countries of the Arctic Council. Annually at ISIRA meetings the problems of cooperation in the Russian Arctic are discussed. Up to 200 international projects in various fields of science were implemented. New trends in international scientific cooperation in the Russian Arctic were highlighted: the creation of regional research centers; support for international projects; development of cooperation in the Russian Arctic northern universities; expansion of marine expeditions; activities of international Arctic scientific laboratories in Russia; development of polar stations network, researches in Svalbard and in the Western sector of the Russian Arctic, scientific cooperation with Asian countries in the Russian Arctic.

Despite the covid pandemic and interstate relations' tension, the Russian Arctic retains its status as an arena of scientific cooperation, which can be seen as an example of people scientific diplomacy.