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**Cooperation of Romania with Australia,
China, India and Russian Federation
within ASMA No. 6 Larsemann Hills, East
Antarctica**

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Information Paper submitted by Romania

Summary

This paper gives a brief report on the Romanian cooperation with Australia, China, India and Russian Federation in the Larsemann Hills area, East Antarctica. The paper also states the willingness of Romania to continue this scientific, logistical and environmental cooperation with these Parties in the Management Group of *Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA) No. 6 Larsemann Hills*.

Introduction

Romania participated, in 2006 and 2007, along with Australia, China, India and Russian Federation in the elaboration of the Management Plan based on which the Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA) No. 6 Larsemann Hills was designated under *Measure 2 (2007)*, following a proposal by Australia, China, India, Romania and the Russian Federation. Romania became a member in this *ASMA 6 Management Group* as an operator, along with Australia, of the Law Base in East Antarctica, based on the “*Memorandum of Understanding concerning the Joint Use of Law Base at Larsemann Hills, Prydz Bay, East Antarctica*”, between the Australian Antarctic Division and the Romanian Antarctic Foundation, signed on June 15th, 2005 and valid for ten years (2005-2015). During 2007-2012, Romania elaborated along with the other states in the ASMA 6 Management Group the respective annual “*Report of the Larsemann Hills Antarctic Specially Managed Area (ASMA) Management Group*”¹.

Romanian activities in Larsemann Hills area

Romania conducted expedition activities of scientific exploration and research in Antarctica since 1998, within certain cooperation with the Russian Federation (the Russian Expeditions in Antarctica 1998 and 2007), China (CHINARE 2002-2003 and 2005-2006) and Australia (at the Law-Racovita Base in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007). Since June 15, 2005, due to the *Memorandum of Understanding* concluded and signed between Australia and Romania for a period of ten years, Romanian researchers benefited from the access to the *Law Base* in Larsemann Hills, East Antarctica.

The *Law Base*, by this memorandum was denominated *Law-Racovita*, in honour of the first explorer of Larsemann Hills area (1958), the Australian scientist Phillip Garth Law (1912-2010) and of the first biologist in the world that studied life in Antarctica within Belgica Expedition (1897-1899), the Romanian Emil Racovita (1868-1947). The *Law-Racovita Base* was inaugurated on February 20, 2006, in the presence of the representatives of the Member States in the area (Australia, China and Russian Federation).

Research carried out at *Law-Racovita Base* within such cooperation, led to the development of some Romanian scientific projects dedicated to the International Polar Year IPY 2007-2008, financed by the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research and the Romanian Academy, involving Romanian researchers and 10 foreign partners. In 2009, an international team (Australia, Austria, Estonia and India) worked in Larsemann Hills for an inter-hemisphere, Joint Project of 13 states, coordinated by Romania (Project Manager - Eng. Teodor Gheorghe Negoita, Ph. D, the Leader of the *Law-Racovita Base* at that moment). The base was redenominated, on December 9, 2011, *Law-Racovita-Negoita*, in recognition of the contribution of Dr. Negoita (1946-2011) to the progress of Antarctic sciences. This base name was valid until June 15th 2015, when the a.m. Australian-Romanian Memorandum of Understanding expired

¹CEP IX, WP 008, CEP 7; CEP X, WP 008, CEP 7a; CEP XII, IP 054, CEP 7d; CEP XIII, IP 040, CEP 7a; CEP XIV, IP 079, CEP 7a; CEP XV, IP 061, CEP 7a

The representative scientific organism of Romania in the Antarctic Treaty System is, since 2012, the *National Commission for Antarctic Research* (NCAR) within the *Romanian Academy*. Some NCAR members were previously involved in activities of scientific research in Larsemann Hills and environmental activities related to the Management Group of Larsemann Hills ASMA 6, along with Australia, China, India and Russia. NCAR elaborated the *Romanian Antarctic Science Strategic Plan 2013-2020*, that was communicated within ATCM XXXVI, 2013, Agenda item 13, by IP 071 rev.1.

The Romanian Strategic Plan for Antarctic Research 2013-2020 was structured considering four main research themes:

- Theme 1. Antarctic ecosystems: biodiversity and vulnerability, preservation and bioprospecting
- Theme 2. Cryo-geo-climatic Processes in the Antarctic System
- Theme 3. Antarctica as a platform of astronomical, astrophysical and climate observations
- Theme 4. Frontier Science: Antarctica as analogous space

National Commission for Antarctic Research of the Romanian Academy intends, as previously communicated within ATCM XXXVII, 2014 by IP 98 (Agenda item CEP 9f), to resume its activities in Antarctica as an active Party in the Management Group of ASMA 6 Larsemann Hills. Romanian activities will be performed in accordance with the four research themes of the Strategic Plan for Antarctic Research 2013-2020 established by NCAR in relation to the SCAR Programs. To implement the Strategic Plan for Antarctic Research, the Romanian Ministry of Education and Research founded the *Arctic and Antarctic Research Department* within the National Institute of R&D for Biological Sciences, Bucharest.

Romanian_Academy, the National Antarctic Operator by its NCAR, took steps to conclude a new scientific cooperation agreement with the Australian Antarctic Division (AAD), that would enable Romanian researchers the access to the Law Base in Larsemann Hills. Discussions of the Romanian and Australian delegates to ATCM XXXVI, Brussels, 2013, ATCM XXXVIII, Sofia, 2015 and ATCM XXXIX, Santiago, Chile, 2016, as well as the documents exchanged between Romanian Academy and AAD revealed, in 2015-2016, the possibility of signing a scientific cooperation agreement, based on the common interest scientific fields and research themes stipulated in the Australian and Romanian Antarctic Strategic Plans, respectively. Romania (NCAR) communicated at ATCM XXXIX, 2016, a list of eleven research projects proposed by Romania to be developed in Larsemann Hills area in the next 5 years, in cooperation with Australia and the other Parties in ASMA 6. (ATCM XXXIX, Agenda item 15, IP 125 rev.1 - *Prospectives of Romania cooperation with Australia in Antarctica*, including the “*List of Romanian Proposals for the cooperation with Australia in Antarctica, in the common interest scientific fields*”). NCAR is developing its Group of expedition operational planning, logistical and strategic planning.

Conclusion

Romania, as previously communicated, reaffirms its willingness to resume its activity of scientific research in cooperation in the ASMA 6 Larsemann Hills area, for the following five years, and implicitly to reactivate its position in the ASMA No. 6 Management Group.

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