

Oslo, 5 March 2007

Dear Mr. Poli, Mr. Sparapani and Mrs. Løyning,

I read with interest your letter of February 14th regarding the project of opening in Longyearbyen a museum dedicated to the history of the airships expeditions in the Arctic.

There is no need to say that I find the initiative well worth attention and support. Rediscovering and recording the fascinating history of polar exploration is particularly valuable at this point in time when the Arctic is becoming more and more, and for many reasons, the new frontier: because of its resources, renewable and non, the climate and environment issues and the prospective new routes which shortly might be opened in the region.

The official opening of the International Polar Year a few days ago marks the increased attention that will be given at the international level to the polar region. It would undoubtedly be a good timing for your project to be concretely started during the International Polar Year when many initiatives will be carried out.

As you are well aware of, Italy has a long interest and tradition in the Arctic from the beginning of the last century when Italy with its pioneer expeditions was one of the leading countries in polar exploration - which I am sure the museum you plan to establish will be able to present - to today's many scientific research activities in which we take part.

I hope therefore that in the future we will have concrete opportunities of cooperation with the museum to better highlight Italy's role and history in the polar region.

Wishing you every success with the initiative, I send you my very best regards,

Rosa Anna Coniglio



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