

## A difficult infrastructure

Greenland is the world's largest island. 56,749 people are spread over 70 settlements on a coastline of more than 40,000 kilometres. The northernmost point of Greenland, Cape Morris Jesup, is only 740 km from The North Pole. Cape Morris Jesup is the northernmost land area in the world.

Greenland's southernmost point, Nunap Isua (Cape Farewell), is located on the same latitude as Oslo in Norway. The distance from north to south is 2,670 km. The distance from east to west is at its widest point 1,050 kilometres.

Any expert of logistics will by now be worried. But what if the supply to this small population has to be transported by ship or airplane more than 3,000 kilometres from another continent, and then distributed to the many small settlements on the coast? It is actually what is taking place in Greenland.

About once a week a containership from publicly owned shipping company Royal Arctic Line arrives to Greenland from Aalborg. Aalborg is located in Denmark in Europe, 3,300 kilometres as the crow flies. In all kinds of weather conditions the Royal Arctic Line's ships cross The Atlantic Ocean week after week the year round.

Some items may be transported to Greenland from The Copenhagen Airport. Fresh milk, fruits and vegetables are very expensive in Greenland.

The export from Greenland comprises mainly of shrimps and fish. Royal Arctic Line sails the commodities to Denmark in large freezer containers. Most of these commodities are sold to consumers in Europe.

Such a difficult logistics make a strain on the economy of the world's largest island. Greenland gets a block grant from the Danish state in approximately 590 million US dollars every year. In addition, the Danish government handles some services in Greenland, and the Greenlanders have certain rights in Denmark, for example access to the Danish educational system.

Are there alternatives? A current political issue in Greenland has been the pattern of settlements. The fewer settlements, the better economic conditions for the common economic development. A lot of people move to the cities, but the existing settlement pattern will be a reality for several decades to come.

The nearest major port on the continent of North American is St. John. St. John is located about 2,000 kilometres as the crow flies from the capital of Greenland, Nuuk. But Royal Arctic Line has the concession for transportation to and from Greenland. The concession currently offers no scope for alternative supply of goods from the American continent.



*Mary Arctica in the port of Nuuk, May 2008*