

PROTOCOL FROM THE FIRST SESSION OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL OF THE
BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC REGION AT KIRKENES ON 11 JANUARY 1993

The changes that have taken place in Europe and Russia have provided a completely new foundation for closer cooperation in the North. During the last few years the bilateral cooperation between the northern parts of Russia, Sweden, Finland and Norway has increased substantially. One of the measures proposed to help provide a firmer organizational framework for the growing cooperation at regional and national level is the introduction of the concept of a Barents Euro-Arctic Region. In connection with the conference between the Foreign Ministers at Kirkenes, Norway, on 11 January 1993, a meeting was held of the undersigned representatives of the Sami Council and of the following counties: Arkhangelsk oblast, Finnmark fylkeskommune, Lapplands län, Murmansk oblast, Nordland fylkeskommune, Norrbottens län, and Troms fylkeskommune.

The undersigned have agreed on the following:

1. to support the initiative taken by the Foreign Ministers to establish the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, comprising the areas covered by the above-mentioned administrative units, and to support the principles, objectives and cooperation priorities laid down in the Declaration by the Foreign Ministers at the Kirkenes Conference on 11 January 1993;
2. to work towards an extended regional cooperation in the Barents Region together with other actors;
3. to base regional cooperation on the following objectives:
 - ensuring the development of peace and stability in the Region,
 - consolidating and developing the cultural ties between the peoples of the Region,
 - expanding the present bilateral and multilateral relations in the Region and promoting the establishment of new ones,

- laying the foundations for sustainable economic and social development in the Region with an emphasis on an active and purposeful management of natural resources,
- contributing to developments in the Region that take account of the interests of the indigenous peoples and that involve their active participation;

4. to establish the following bodies:

The Regional Council

The Regional Council shall consist of the heads of the counties (fylkeskomuner, oblasti, länen) in the Barents Region. It shall also contain a representative appointed by the elected Sami bodies in the Region. The Regional Council shall appoint its own board. The chairman shall be elected for a two-year period. The chairmanship shall rotate between the countries. Decisions shall be based on a consensus. The Regional Council shall decide how often it should meet. It shall set up an annual programme and budget for regional cooperation. It shall appoint an executive regional committee that prepares and submits matters for consideration by the Regional Council and follows up decisions of the Council. The members of the Regional Committee shall attend meetings of the Regional Council as advisers to their superiors.

The executive Regional Committee

The Regional Committee shall be the executive body for the Regional Council and it shall consist of the appointed advisers to the eight permanent members of the Regional Council. The chairmanship shall follow that of the Regional Council. The Committee, which shall meet regularly, shall organize and coordinate current work on regional cooperation within the framework laid down by the Regional Council. The Committee shall be responsible for making proposals to the Regional Council for a working programme and budget. The Committee shall also be responsible for

following up the activities and economic dispositions of the project groups. Decisions in the Committee shall be made by consensus.

A secretariat will have to be established which is directly responsible to the chairman of the Regional Committee, to deal with the initial and current work of the Committee. The secretariat will be associated with and financed by the chairmanship of the Regional Council. The undersigned parties welcome the Norwegian offer to finance such a secretariat in Kirkenes for the first two years.

5. that the running expenses of the Regional Council and the Regional Committee be covered in their entirety by the counties (fylkeskomuner, oblasti, länen) in proportion to their respective participation in the work, unless otherwise determined;
6. that it is assumed that the national governments make sizable contributions to cooperation projects at regional level in the Barents Region;
7. that the projects may be open to participants from outside the Barents Region when appropriate;
8. that each of the undersigned parties may at any time withdraw from the regional cooperation in the Barents Region with immediate effect. In such cases the Regional Council will decide how any unfulfilled obligations that the withdrawing party has undertaken within the framework of this protocol should be discharged;
9. that the undersigned parties are prepared for the fact that the Autonomous Republic of Karelia may become a member of the Barents Region in the event of an application being submitted.

This protocol is written in the Finnish, Norwegian, Russian, Sami and Swedish languages.

The establishment of the Regional Council for the Barents Euro-Arctic Region is confirmed by the signatures below.

Kirkenes, 11 January 1993

Arkhangelsk oblast	Murmansk oblast	The Sami Council
Finnmark fylkeskommune	Nordland fylkeskommune	Troms fylkeskommune
Lapplands län	Norrbottens län	