



## **Barents Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC) Meeting**

**Umeå, Sweden, 3–4 October 2019**

**Venue: Umeå Folket hus, Skolgatan 59**

### **Agenda**

1. *Opening of the meeting*
2. *Round of presentations*
3. *Adoption of the agenda*
4. *Welcoming words*
5. *Minutes from the Varanger meeting in April 2019*
6. *Information by the Co-Chairmanship*
7. *Meeting with Konstnärsguppen i Luleå on their pre-study*
8. *Meeting with Kaarina Williams, CBSS secretariat*
9. *Evaluation of the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation process*
10. *Information from the members*
11. *Reflections on the digitalisation workshop*
12. *Information from the incoming Co-Chairmanship*
13. *Any other business*
14. *Closing the meeting*

#### **1. Opening of the meeting**

The meeting was opened by the Co-Chair, David Ek.

#### **2. Round of presentations**

The JWGC members introduced themselves shortly.

#### **3. Adoption of the agenda**

The Agenda was adopted.

#### **4. Welcoming words**

The JWGC was welcomed to Umeå and Västerbotten by Camilla Thorn-Wollnert, Head of Culture, Region Västerbotten.

#### **5. Minutes from the Varanger meeting in April 2019**

The minutes were adopted by the JWGC.

#### **6. Information by the Co-Chairmanship**

David Ek, Co-Chair of the JWGC, presented information on behalf of the Co-Chairmanship, briefly informing about the plan for the Scholarship Ceremony.

#### **7. Meeting with Kaarina Williams, CBSS Secretariat**

Kaarina Williams from the Secretariat of the Council of the Baltic Sea States informed about the work and ambitions of the CBSS in the field of culture. Important topics for the CBSS are currently culture, youth, regional identity and higher education. CBSS

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are focusing on how to diminish cultural barriers and facilitate a vibrant cultural life in the Baltic region.

#### **8. Meeting with Konstnärgruppen i Luleå on their pre-study**

Ricky Sandberg and Jan Henriksson informed about their project *Diploma in Arts Management* in the Barents region. They explained that there is a need for an art management training programme, in order to facilitate the production of art and culture in the North. The Swedish Co-Chairmanship has granted Konstnärgruppen i Luleå funding for a pre-study on this project. Konstnärgruppen are now looking for partners in this project, and regions were invited to send a representative to the concluding project seminar in Boden in November.

#### **9. Evaluation of the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation process**

The JWGC discussed the 2019 process regarding the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation, the interest in continuing this venture, and the need to make any changes to the Scholarship Guidelines.

The question of continuing the Scholarship after the trial period was raised. The JWGC members agreed that the Scholarship is important and that it is a good way of showing what the JWGC works with and aims to promote. It was emphasized that if all Barents countries are not participating with candidates and funding, there would not be grounds for awarding a new Scholarship.

The possibility of identifying one arts field as a thematic focus for each Scholarship period was discussed. The JWGC members agreed that it would be better to keep the Scholarship open for different art forms, rather than restricting it to one field of art.

The question of evaluation was raised, concerning in what form the Scholarship recipients should report and how detailed such a report should be. The JWGC members suggested that the report be made simple, but mandatory. Reports should be made accessible on the Barents Cooperation homepage, as a means of promoting the Scholarship and showing its relevance, as well as promoting the Scholarship recipients and their work.

The requirement for Scholarship recipients to hand in a brief report was suggested to be made clear in the Scholarship Guidelines. Furthermore, it was suggested that the JWGC make a standard report form for the Scholarship recipients to follow.

The nomination procedures were discussed, and the following suggestions were made by some members pertaining to the *Scholarship Guidelines* ch. **4. Nomination and selection procedures**:

- Suggestion to change “*The countries will each select one candidate from each of the Regions under the Barents Cooperation to be presented as candidates for the final selection by JWGC*” to

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“The countries *have the possibility to select one candidate...*”, and to remove “... ~~to be presented as candidates for the final selection by JWGC~~”, as this is covered in later paragraphs.

- Some members argued that the nomination procedures could be more openly formulated, so that regions may decide among themselves on one common candidate.
- Still, it is important to ensure that all regions are actively engaged in looking for good candidates for the Scholarship.

The Chairmanship will explore how flexibly this paragraph can be formulated.

A suggestion was made that the JWGC include in the Scholarship Guidelines that the Scholarship Ceremony should take place in conjunction with the Ministerial Meeting. This would provide a permanent arena to show the importance of the Scholarship. Another suggestion was made on stating in the Scholarship Guidelines that the Scholarship is now in a prolonged trial period.

No decisions were taken by the JWGC on this agenda item. The possibility was presented to send in additional written responses on the topic for further discussions during the next meeting.

### **10. Information from the members**

A tour de table was made where the JWGC members presented news from their field that could be of interest to their JWGC colleagues. Special focus was put on possible points of cooperation between the regions. To this agenda item, there were several ongoing projects presented from all countries.

In Russia, 2019 is the year of the theatre, an event reflected at both regional and national levels. Other events included a cinema festival (Arkhangelsk), puppet theatre festival (Murmansk) and a Northern Theatre Festival focusing on youth theatre (Komi).

In Finland, the Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum has recently been held, focusing on traditional culture as a basis for new trends, and facilitating museum dialogue between Russian and Finnish museums in order to develop new exhibitions.

In Sweden, a Nordic project focusing on indigenous languages is taking place within the framework of the UN Year of Indigenous Languages. Furthermore, a project focusing on dance and choreography, called “Dancing in the margins of climate change”, is taking place in Norrbotten. In Västerbotten, there have been efforts to improve infrastructure for Sámi culture. A new plan for regional culture is also ready soon.

In Norway, the Norwegian-Russian Cultural Days recently took place in Bodø, focusing on performing arts. For the thematic collaboration between Norway and

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Russia in the North, the themes for the new collaboration period 2019-2021 are performing arts and indigenous peoples' arts. A new white paper is being made on youth culture. In Nordland, a project on Soviet POWs in Nazi-German Camps during WWII is ongoing, which will result in the resurrection of a memorial. Bodø has also been awarded status as European Capital of Culture for the year 2024.

Finnmark and Troms informed the JWGC about the latest developments in the regional reform process, where Finnmark and Troms counties will be merged into one county effective 1 January 2020.

### **11. Reflections on the digitalisation workshop**

The JWGC shared reflections on the digitalisation workshop arranged in Umeå. From the workshop, it became evident that there is a need for more young voices in this work. It was suggested that the JWGC works closer together with JWGY/BRYC and try to find young individuals who are already working with creating art through digital platforms.

### **12. Information from the incoming Co-Chairmanship**

The Västerbotten-Norway Co-Chairmanship informed briefly about their plans for the upcoming Chairmanship period.

### **13. Any other business**

There was nothing added to this agenda item.

### **14. Closing the meeting**

The Chair declared the meeting closed and welcomed the incoming Co-Chairmanship of Västerbotten-Norway.

#### **Other programme activities**

On 3 October, the previous and the new scholarship recipients presented their work. Photographer Jaakko Heikkilä, Bente Andersen (Samovarteateret) and writer and poet Mona Mörtlund presented their projects and talked about their work since they received the Scholarship.

The new Scholarship recipients, Paavo J. Heinonen from Kaltio magazine, saxophonist Ola Asdahl Rokkones, Ilya Kuzubov from the Taibola art group, and the embroidery group FIMBRIA presented their work and the projects they plan to work with after receiving the Scholarship.

On 3 October, the Scholarship Ceremony was held in Väven, Umeå. The Scholarship was handed out by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the Barents countries.

On 4 October, a digitalisation workshop was held where the Scholarship recipients, youth representatives from the Barents region, as well as members of the JWGC

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were challenged on how to develop and promote culture through digitalisation. Thoughts on the digitalisation workshop were shared under agenda item 12.

*Nina Merete Austad wrote the minutes.*

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