



THE BARENTS WORKING GROUPS

ANNUAL REPORT

Name of the Working Group: **Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation in the Barents Region**
The current Chair and the Chairmanship period: **Ministry of the Interior, Finland, under 2021**

1. Priorities of the Chairmanship

Climate Change Preparedness in Barents Rescue Cooperation

The challenges are common to all countries in the region so common sharing of information and joint planning is welcome. The Joint Committee as a major facilitator of preparedness has made efforts to assist in endeavors aimed at better preparedness.

Assuring uninterrupted cross-border rescue assistance in all circumstances is an on-going task of the Joint Committee

Cooperation with other organizations in the Barents region

As Finland also chairs of Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2021-2023 a special attention has been paid on following the work of the Council with its priorities: People-to-people contacts, Sustainability and Transport & Connectivity.

2. Meetings (meetings held, main topics and outcomes of the meetings)

There were two meetings planned for 2021. The first one was held on 23rd. August as an online meeting due to the Covid-19 Pandemic restrictions. The other one is planned to take place on 14th of December again as an online meeting. In addition, several of the JCRC members were able to meet in Bodø Norway face-to-face in November during the Main Planning Conference (MPC) of incoming Barents Rescue exercise 2022.

3. Other activities (projects, events, programmes etc.)

The main activity was the MPC of 2022 Barents Rescue Exercise where many of the issues of interest were addressed and discussed. In addition, the Members of the JCRC have had national meetings.

Barents Rescue is an international rescue exercise between the countries in the Barents region: Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The exercise is held every three years, and its main goal is to improve preparedness and cooperation between the participating countries.

4. Results of the year (decisions, new initiatives, improvements)

The results have been meager due to the Pandemic so not much new initiatives have been agreed upon but the JRCR has been able to fulfill its main duties of keeping the cooperation living.

5. Youth involvement (how has the working group included young people or worked with youth issues during the year)

The Barents 2022 includes a Barents Youth theme as well.

6. Evaluation of the work (What went well, what needs improvement)

In general, the cooperation continues to be constructive and pragmatic with active participation from all Barents countries.

The Pandemic has obstructed the work too much. The main reason has been that everybody has expected that “during the next meeting” everything is back to normal and not enough has been done to take full advantage of working online.

7. Other