



## THE BARENTS WORKING GROUPS

### ANNUAL REPORT

Name of the Working Group: **Working Group on Education and Research**

The current Chair and the Chairmanship period: **Norway 2019-2021**

#### **1. Priorities of the Chairmanship**

The Norwegian Chairmanship of the Barents Euro Arctic Council 2019-2021 has had the following key priorities: health, people-to-people contact and knowledge. Due to the pandemic physical meetings have been replaced with digital meetings.

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

In 2021 the WGER held one meeting in September. The meeting was organised after agreement in the CSO to revitalize the working group that had been inactive for some time. Participants agreed that there is a need for dialogue between central governments and local actors in the sphere of education and research through the working group. It was also agreed to include different stakeholders in this co-operation and to build on existing structures and coordinate rather than duplicate activities that are taking place in the Barents region and in a broader Arctic context. One vital issue is how to attract young people to stay and obtain education in the region. Long term synergies and continuity is important.

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

An online event High level Meeting on common efforts across borders for strengthened education and research was held on 18 October. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Norway, Minister of Science and Culture of Finland, Minister of Research and Higher Education of Norway, Deputy Minister of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation, State Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of Sweden and high-level officials and representatives attended the meeting. Cooperation on education and research, knowledge for a strong and resilient Barents region and best practices in university cooperation were discussed in the meeting.

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

The main outcome for the WGER in 2021 was to revitalize the working group and define the priorities for the cooperation. A new project idea focusing on the opportunities for sustainable development between different actors on the regions is under construction.

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

Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC) representative was invited to the meeting in September and Maxim Marchenkov from Arkhangelsk informed about the Barents Regional Youth Council in general. The importance of education for youth in the Barents region was emphasized and increased youth involvement is needed. Chair of the BRYC Daria Makhotina was invited to give a speech in the High level Meeting on common efforts across borders for strengthened education and research but unfortunately, she could not attend the meeting.

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

The WG had one meeting and one high level meeting concentrating on revitalizing the WG. The group will continue to find a common ground and interesting topics for the work during the Finnish Presidency.

The proposed base for the future emphasizes co-operation in human capital and knowledge. Education and research are the permanent parts of the Barents co-operation. Co-ordination between different councils, complement activities as well as members in different levels will be the future questions in the working group.

#### **7. Other**