



1st Barents Industrial Partnership Meeting Stockholm, 21 January 2004

Chairman's conclusion

This meeting was the result of a joint initiative by the chairmanships of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (Norway) and the Barents Regional Council (Västerbotten).

The economic sector is crucial in the effort to further advance co-operation in the Barents Region. Today's conference, which included participants from central and regional authorities and key industrial actors, has provided fresh insight into the opportunities and challenges facing major industrial sectors, and the very important role played by large companies in promoting economic growth in the Region. Such growth must, of course, also be sustainable in an environmental and social context.

The meeting has confirmed the great importance of well-functioning east-west communication and transport in the Barents Region in order for industrial co-operation to flourish.

The Barents Region is exceptionally rich in natural resources, including petroleum, metals and forests. These are decisive factors for sustainable development. Continuous and additional political attention, and the attention of the relevant industries should be directed at key issues in these fields. The Barents Council, and its working groups for economic co-operation, energy, transport and environment, and the Barents Regional Council, including the "Barents 2010" project under its auspices, provide excellent arenas for this.

This first Barents Industrial Partnership Meeting will therefore be followed up by a new meeting in Norway, tentatively end of 2004. Before the second meeting, specialised workshops should be held, e.g. within the framework of the "Barents 2010" project, on new and strengthened models for industrial co-operation in the Region, particularly in the fields of energy, mining/metallurgy and forestry. New working models of co-operation might be developed, such as the proposed concept of a Barents *Forest Industry* zone from the Atlantic Ocean to the Ural Mountains, or e.g. a Barents *Mining and Metallurgy* Region, and a Barents *Energy* Region.

The workshops might discuss strengthened co-operation, e.g. between manufacturers, research institutes, engineering companies and other relevant industries in the Region, for the purpose of satisfying a larger part of the demand for equipment and services of the petroleum and processing industries.

Industrial partnership meetings should aim at enhancing the partnership between central and regional authorities and key economic actors in the Region, and should promote the SME and service sectors of the economy, encourage political and administrative decisions in favour of new investment and infrastructure, and the elimination of existing barriers to trade and investment.

The enhanced partnership in the Region should also aim at developing effective models for the mobilisation of new capital for investment in industry, infrastructure, technology development and environmental protection.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council recognise the importance of a strengthened dialogue with economic actors in the Region. This Industrial Partnership Meeting has provided an excellent basis for further effort in this direction and will be followed up as soon as possible.