

**ANNUAL REPORT 2016 ON THE WORK OF
THE JOINT WORKING GROUP ON CULTURE (JWGC)**



**During Kainuu Chairmanship (2016-2017) in Barents Regional Council and Committee and
Russian Chairmanship (206-2017) in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.**

Written by the JWGC Co-chair 2016-2017, Helena Aaltonen, Regional Council of Kainuu.

1. The Basis of JWGC politics and operations

The "Barents Programme 2014-2018" and the Strategy "Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Region 2014-2018" outline the vision, mission and priorities of policy planning and regional cooperation in the sphere of culture.

The Strategy highlights the importance of capacity building and exchange, facilitating and promoting networking, creating different kinds of new cultural meeting places, focusing on the strong relationship between culture and cultural and creative industries, creating new international opportunities for strengthening the competitiveness of the cultural operators in the Barents Region.

The Strategy encourages the development of contacts and synergies with other relevant structures such as the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC), the Senior Officials Group on Culture of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and others.

In addition, the Russian Chairmanship has set [their own priorities](#) for BEAC co-operation in 2015-2017, some of them for the field of culture, and the BRC has in October 2015 approved the [Chairmanship Priorities of Kainuu Region](#) for the upcoming chairmanship 2015-2017.

The JWGC has been co-chaired on the period by Alina Ivashchenko, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, and Helena Aaltonen, Regional Council of Kainuu.

2. Review of the activities in 2016

Kajaani Meetings on May 30th and 31st 2016

1. Meeting of JWGC

- a) The group got the reports of previous work and made action plans for 2016-2017.
- b) The group prepared the Guidelines for Barents culture cooperation scholarship.

2. The Joint meeting of WGTL, JWGT and JWGC discussed "Visit Arctic Europe" –vision of Tourism – the working groups continue to prepare cooperation plans in Visit Arctic Europe.

3. Joint Barents Seminar with over 120 participants discussed the cooperation in Transport and Logistics, in Data channels, in Tourism and even with Japan and the Arctic area.

Moscow meeting on October 13th 2016

- a) The group finalized the Barents Culture Cooperation Scholarship guidelines.
- b) The group elaborated the Draft Agenda for the Meeting of the Ministers of Culture of the BEAC Member-states to take place on 8-9 November in Moscow.
- c) The group discussed the Final Document for the Meeting of Ministers of Culture of BEAC Member-states.

Moscow meetings on November 8th 2016 and 9th 2016

1. Meeting of JWGC on November 8th

- a) The group made the last remarks on the Guidelines of Barents Culture Cooperation Scholarship.
- b) The group made the last remarks on the Final Document for the meeting of Ministers of Culture of BEAC Member- states.

2. Meeting of Ministers of Culture of BEAC Member-states on November 9th

- a) Statements of the Heads of the Delegations and Regional Representatives
- b) Announcement of Establishment of the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation
- c) The Joint Statement was adopted.

Reports of JWGC to CSO

- a) The state of the Guidelines of the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation was reported at CSO March 2016 meeting in Archangelsk by Alina Ivashchenko and Helena Aaltonen.
- b) Different agreements of financing the Barents Scholarship for Cultural Cooperation in member regions and states and the annual report of the JWGC were reported to the CSO in Naryan Mar on 14th December 2016 by Helena Aaltonen.

Barents Cooperation Forum in Helsinki 8th December 2016

- a) The [Barents Forum](#), including a seminar, joint workshops & forum & bilateral meetings, with 150 persons took place. The presentations and other materials are available on the web site.
- b) Main target of the event was to bring people together and to enable larger projects, measured by the area, by number of partners and by funding volume
- c) Thomas Lind from Sweden conducted the workshop on Culture. The participants told about their ideas for cross border projects.
- d) The interactive framework and the enthusiastic atmosphere indicated that the forum will create new partnerships and project ideas and will serve as a kick-start for similar events in the future. The forum was funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland and was one of the key events of the Kainuu Chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council and Committee 2015-2017.



The main Result of the Working Group on Culture in 2016 was to finalize and get announced the Guidelines for the Barents Culture Cooperation Scholarship.

The regions will select their candidates for scholarship in the beginning of 2017. The Joint Working Group on Culture will award the scholarships, one for each BEAC country, in May 2017.