



ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЬСТВО РОССИИ В
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The Barents/Euro-Arctic Council
Committee of Senior Officials

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A compilation of BEAC Working Groups and Joint Working Groups reports, containing information on and analysis of 2007 activities and preliminary plans and proposals for 2008 (or a longer period).

This compilation reflects the current state of affairs, i.e. the papers submitted to the Chair as of now and in the form they were received. Some additional papers, particularly on the future activities and strategies of the Working Groups, may be added at a later stage.

Some of the papers may be expanded and further developed.



**Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC)
Chair: Finland (Barbro Widing)
Annual report 2007**

The Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC) seeks to promote economic development of the Barents Region through co-operation between the countries involved. The WGEC also wants to make the economic potential of the Barents Region better known in Europe and the world and to facilitate trade in general. Improving business opportunities was the main goal of the Finnish chair. Especially co-financing over the Barents borders has been surveyed.

During 2007 the WGEC held two normal meetings and one Barents Industrial Partnership (BIP) meeting.

The 6th BIP Meeting

The 6th Barents Industrial Partnership meeting was held in Saariselkä on 18-19th of April. The theme of the BIP was: "Experiences in co-financing - focussing on the needs of SMEs in the Barents region". The two day event gathered together some 130 participants from the Barents region. Approximately one fourth of the participants represented private sector. Most of the participants were from Finland (roughly 85), number of Russian participants was around 30 and the rest of the participants were from Sweden and Norway. The event was organised in cooperation with the Finnish Ministry of Trade and Industry, Ministry for Foreign Affairs and the Nordic Investment Bank.

The BIP meeting was divided into two different sub-sessions. The first session was named "Access to finance for SMEs in the Barents region". Presentations were given by finance institutions such as the Nordic Investment Bank, NEFCO and private banks operating in the Barents region. The first BIP session acted as an introduction and structured background for the second session which theme was "Experiences in international co-financing" and it focused on practical examples and plans for finance and support SMEs in the Barents region.

The 6th BIP meeting was a successful event. The presentations given were excellent in quality. The number of participants was rather satisfactory. However, the question is how to further mobilize the private sector to participate more in these events. The BIP is a useful forum in the framework of Barents cooperation. It raises contemporary issues and promotes the general Barents awareness also in the capitals of the Barents region.

WGEC Meetings

The WGEC held its first meeting in 2007 in tandem with the 6th BIP in Saariselkä. During 2007 the WGEC continued to work on issues outlined in its Action Plan "Improving business opportunities" that was endorsed in March 2006 during the first WGEC meeting of Finnish Chairmanship. One of the main priorities of the Finnish WGEC Chairmanship was promoting information development. New open web-pages were established for the WGEC (www.barentsinfo.org/business) in 2006. In 2007 the pages included basic economic data

from each of the thirteen Barents regions. Collecting such economic profiles of the regions was a recommendation of the AIEKA ad hoc group report published in 2003.

The web-pages are a starting point for SMEs wishing to find up-to-date economic information about the Barents region. Discussions about widening the scope of the pages to include a resource bank, including an enterprise database to help businesses in partner finding, have continued during the WGEC meetings. The pages are maintained by the Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland and are being visited roughly 5000-7000 times monthly.

The second meeting of the WGEC was held in Helsinki on 5-6 September 2007. On the agenda of the meeting was the follow up of the 6th BIP. Presentations of the European Commission and the European Investment Bank (EIB) were also given to give fresh information about their activities and possibilities of co-financing economic cooperation projects in the Barents region. The meeting also discussed the business climate of the region.

Contributions to the Northern Dimension (ND) has been on the agenda of the WGEC during the Finnish Chairmanship. At the September meeting the representative of the European Commission suggested that their representative could attend regularly to WGEC meetings to inform about the proceedings of the ND and invited the BEAC-WGEC to contribute to the further development of the ND policy.

The WGEC has acted in close cooperation with other BEAC working groups, notably the Barents Business Advisory Group (BBAG) and the Working Group on Trade Barriers (WGTB) and the BEATA. Close exchange of information on activities has also been pursued with the CBSS/WGEC.

The WGEC welcomed the re-activation of the Regional Working Group on Investments and Economic Cooperation with satisfaction.

The status of the Barents Forest Sector Task-Force (BFSTF) has been discussed since the mandate of the Task-Force expired at the end of 2007. It has been suggested that integrating the BFSTF to the WGEC would be a natural solution and follow up of its work. Final decision about the status of the BFSTF will be made during the Russian WGEC Chairmanship 2008-2009 when also the enquiry of BASTUN (the Baltic Sea Trade Union Network) to attend the meetings as an observer will be on the agenda.

The first WGEC meeting during the Russian Chairmanship is planned to be held in Murmansk during Spring 2008. Russia plans to organise the 7th BIP meeting in Murmansk in 2008. Murmansk is also planning to organise the Murmansk Economic Forum in 2009.

Tentative Plan for the Working Group on
Economic Cooperation (WGEC) of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region Council

During the Russian Chairmanship (Sergei Goncharenko) in 2007 – 2009

Event	Prelim. Date	Venue
1. Meeting of the WGEC devoted to the Barents Forestry Sector with participation of the relevant Russian Agencies <and representatives of the Barents Forest Sector Task-Force>	(March – April 2008)	(tbc)
2. The 7 th Barents Industrial Partnership Meeting	(June 2008)	(tbc)
3. WGEC Meeting	(2 nd half of September – October 2008)	(tbc)
4. WGEC Meeting with the representatives of the BEAR Member-States' business-communities	(March – April 2008)	(tbc)
5. Meeting with the Barents Business Advisory Group (B-BAG)	(to be confirmed at a later stage)	(tbc)
6. Meeting with the regional Chambers of Commerce and Trade	(to be confirmed at a later stage)	(tbc)

Barents Forest Sector Task Force (BFSTF) 2007 Activity Report & 2008 plans

2007 Activity Report

General

BFSTF is a forum to promote development of the forest sector in the region. For the period 2006-2007 two broader themes were selected for networking activities:

- Business environment in forestry sector in the Barents region, covering overall acceptability of the business, trade and investment barriers, role of small and medium sized industries/enterprises, delivering industries, entrepreneurship, logistic chain, transparency, certification, etc.) and
- Cost-effective forest land use in the Barents region, covering intensification of forest production to fulfil various needs of the society, expansion of forestry know-how, development of forest management planning, model forests, value adding in the wood chain and bioenergy needs.

The actual work of the BFSTF is related to above topics and usually carried out together with other stakeholders and players due to limited resources available and also with the aim to avoid overlap.

Activities

Planning of Barents sector programme. Members of the core group have participated in the planning of Barents sector programme (including different industrial sectors, forest sector one) based on triple helix principle. There were three planning meetings in 2007. Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences has lead planning. Content / topic of possible proposal is not clear. Anyway if decision will be made to apply funding from the Neighbourhood / Interreg Programme and forestry issues are included, it would be important to get support from the WGEC.

WGEC. Chairman has participated and reported in the WGEC meetings 19.4.2007 in Saariselkä and 6-7.9.2007 in Helsinki about the BFSTF situation and activities.

National Barents group and CSO. Chairman has participated in the national Barents group meetings in Helsinki, as well as in CSO meeting 8-9.2.2007 in Helsinki and ministerial conference 14-15.11.2007 in Rovaniemi.

Facts and figures of the Barents forest sector report. Data for the report has been collected and content has been finalised. Report will be published in the Working papers of the Finnish Forest Research Institute in early 2008.

Barents Forest Forum. Major activity was preparation of the Barents Forest Forum that took place 8-9 November 2007 in Joensuu, Finland. Preparations started in early spring 2007 and organisers of the Forum were Barents Forest Sector Task Force, Finnish Forest Research Institute, Forestry Centre North Karelia, Forestry Development Centre Tapio, Joensuu Regional Development Company Ltd., North Karelia Chamber of Commerce, North Karelia University of Applied Sciences, and University of Joensuu. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Finnish Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Regional Council of North Karelia, Joensuu Regional Development Company Ltd., and City of Joensuu provided funding for the Forum.

Very actual topics for the future of the forest sector not only in the Barents Region but more broadly in the Northern Europe were highlighted in the Forum. Aim of the Forum was to raise discussion how to secure conditions for forest sector investments in the Northern Europe, including security of sustainable supply of raw material, energy and labor, well functioning logistics, application and development of new technologies in forest management and wood procurement, and development of value chains for wood and know-how in forestry.

Altogether 130 participants all over the Northern Europe (32 from Russia, 5 from Sweden, 2 from Norway and about 80 from Finland) participated, representing business, administration, financing, education, research and development organisations. Forum consisted of a high level morning seminar, three parallel afternoon seminars, excursion and business/company meetings. More information, including the conclusions and presentations are available from <http://www.metla.fi/tapahtumat/2007/barents/>.

BEAC. Report was prepared to the BEAC final report and also text to the Joint Communiqué of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 11th Session in Rovaniemi, Finland, 14 -15 November 2007. Text was included in the Economic Development section 8.

Future of the BFSTF. WGEC has asked the task force to clarify possible continuation as the mandate of the BFSTF is expiring end of 2007. This was discussed at the core group meeting on the 7th November 2007 in Joensuu. Task force as such maybe not necessary, and forestry issues could be included in the WGEC work. It was concluded that it is up to the WGEC to decide how to continue and how to keep forest sector issues on the agenda. It is not possible to continue task force without financial support, and also without right and real participation, preferably from respective ministries and / or nominations from the countries/regions.

2008 plans

No plans have been made. See above paragraph.

The BEAC Euro-Arctic Council

Report of the Working Group on Environment to the Eighth Meeting of Environment Ministers

1. Introduction

The Seventh Meeting of the BEAC Environment Ministers was held in Rovaniemi, Finland in 2005. The Ministers adopted a Declaration, endorsed the report from the BEAC Working Group on Environment (WGE) and gave a renewed mandate to the WGE. The Environment Ministers gave guidance to the WGE for further work in the fields of the elimination of hot spots, cleaner production, nature conservation, water issues, climate change issues and for regional and local actions. The chairmanship in the WGE was handed over to the Russian Federation for the period 2005-2007.

Before this meetings of the Environment Ministers have been organized in Bodø, Norway (1994), in Rovaniemi, Finland (1995), in St. Petersburg, Russia (1997), in Umeå, Sweden (1999), in Kirkenes, Norway (2001), and in Luleå, Sweden (2003).

During its chairmanship the Russian Federation has built its work on the guidance provided by the Ministers at the Meeting in Rovaniemi in 2005.

2. The Working Group on Environment

In Bodø, in 1994, the Environmental Task Force was established to advise the Barents Euro-Arctic Council on objectives, priorities and actions for environmental cooperation in the Barents Region. In 1999 the Environmental Task Force was reorganized as the Working Group on Environment or WGE. The purpose of the WGE is to develop and carry out the environmental work under the BEAC.

The WGE meets 1–3 times per year between the meetings of the Environment Ministers. The chairmanship of the WGE rotates in two-year periods between Finland, Norway, Sweden and Russia. Russia assumed the chairmanship of the Working Group on Environment (WGE) from Finland at the Seventh Ministerial meeting in in Rovaniemi in 2005. Norway is prepared to take over the chairmanship for 2007–2009.

Three meetings have been held under the Russian Chairmanship in Moscow – in May 2006, in May 2007 and in October 2007. All meetings were held back-to-back with the Cleaner Production Task Force (transformed during the Russian Chairmanship into Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption Subgroup) and the Regional Working Group on Environment of the Barents Regional Council.

At the 1st WGE meeting a new organisational structure of the WGE was proposed by the Russian side in order to increase the efficiency of the WGE activity for successful implementation of the 7th Meeting of BEAC Environment Ministers decisions. The proposed structure includes three WGE sub-groups: one sub-group based on the Cleaner Production Task Force, which is now called Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption Sub-Group, and two new sub-groups: Sub-Group on Nature Protection and Sub-Group on Water Issues. Climate change issues are going to be incorporated into activities of all Sub-Groups. The WGE promotes the environmental cooperation in the Barents Region including identifying priority areas of

activities, coordinates the environmental cooperation with other working groups of BEAC and BRC, and with other regional councils, governing and coordinating the Subgroups' activities, submits documents, proposals and recommendations to the Ministers.

This structure was adopted by the WGE.

The meetings of the Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption Sub-Group and Regional Working Group on Environment were held back to back with the WGE in order to improve coordination and to complete each others' work in a best possible way.

At the 2nd WGE meeting the draft Database on environmental hot spots prepared by NEFCO and Arkhangelsk Centre on Energy efficiency according to the decisions of the 1st WGE meeting was presented. The WGE decided to establish an ad-hoc Task Force on elaboration of criteria on excluding hot spots from the list, and requested all stakeholders to nominate their representatives in this Task Force. Joint WGE and Nordic Council of Ministers project "Impacts of climate change on Biodiversity and Ecosystems Goods and Services in the Barents Region" was introduced.

The 3rd WGE meeting was devoted to preparation to the Eighth Meeting of BEAC Environment Ministers in Moscow including discussion of inputs of the WGE members and other stakeholders.

As the result of three meetings mandates for the WGE and its Sub-Groups have been prepared. It is expected that these mandates will be specified and detailed during the next 2-year period of the WGE work.

3. Cleaner Production

The Cleaner Production Task Force (CPTF) was established in 2002 during the Swedish Chairmanship to produce a Policy Document, including an Action Plan on Cleaner Production in a Life Cycle Perspective. This document was adopted at the Sixth Barents Environment Ministers' meeting in 2003. The task of the CPTF is to achieve Cleaner Production through a life-cycle approach, implementation of education and training programmes enhancing cooperation and introduction of CP Policy. In 2004, during the Finnish Chairmanship, based on that common Action Plan on Cleaner Production, each country developed it's own CP Action Plan which was adopted for further work.

In May 2006, at the first CPTF Meeting under the Russian Chairmanship taking into account the Marrakech Process the Task Force got a widened Mandate and develop a more comprehensive approach on Sustainable Consumption and Production. The Task Force was hence renamed Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption Subgroup. The Subgroup has held three meetings in Moscow during the Russian Chairmanship period: in May 2006, in May 2007 and in October 2007.

Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden have reported on how they have progressed in carrying out their national plans.

In **Finland** a National Strategy on Sustainable development "Towards sustainable choices – a nationally and globally sustainable Finland" was adopted in December 2006. Recently, Guidelines for Implementation to the public sector has been developed. These Guidelines specify the policy definition of the Government Programme of April 2007 which indicates that "state administration is obliged and the local authorities encouraged to draw up sustainable

development programmes in relation to their activities". In 2006, a national programme to promote sustainable consumption and production: "Getting more and better from less" was approved. It was one of the first such national programmes to be launched anywhere in the world. Particular emphasis is made on eco-efficiency during the whole life-cycle and on finding new ways in addressing mobility, housing and food. Finland is going to establish an Eco-efficiency Centre in late autumn 2007. Ministry of the Environment is funding studies to identify key business sectors for improvement and a dialogue on eco-efficiency targets will be launched with key sectors. The government has recently made a decision to raise environmental and energy taxes by approximately 10%, launch a vehicle tax based on CO₂ emissions, direct more funding for public transport and investigate the possibility to launch a transport fee system based on location technology. Finland is also looking into setting an example in the public sector by adopting environmental management systems and green procurement policies. Finland is contributing to the Marrakech process for Sustainable Consumption and Production by hosting a Task Force on Sustainable Building and Construction (SBC).

The Oulu University developed a CP educational programme and conducted 2 training courses for teachers from colleges and universities of the NW Russia on the programme. Finland had inter alia EMS system projects in some installations in the Russian parts of the Barents Region. Capacity building project for the development of emission measurements in the administration is going on .

In **Norway** a Strategy on Sustainable Development has been presented in the autumn 2007, and will enter into force from January 2008. The strategy has focus on how Norway can contribute to sustainable development both on the global and national level. A special Commission on Low Emissions was appointed by the Norwegian government in 2005 with the task of preparing scenarios of how Norway can reduce its emissions of greenhouse gases by 50-80 percent by 2050. Their final report was presented in October 2006. In December 2006 the Norwegian Government presented a White Paper to the Parliament on the Government's policy for a non-toxic environment. In June 2007 the Norwegian Government presented a White paper on climate policy to the Parliament. The White paper contains proposals for reduction of greenhouse gas emissions in Norway and measures abroad. Since 2005 Norway has participated in and supported financially 12 cleaner production training programs in industry and municipal institutions in the Russian Barents region, and completed implementation of environmental management systems (EMS) in parts of two large Russian enterprises (Zvezdochka and Sevmash).

Sweden has developed a report on Sustainable Consumption and Production, presenting ongoing activities and measures for SCP, especially within the three sectors Food, Transports and Housing/building. It also describes additional needs for measures and cooperation with different actors and at different levels and to use a mix of tools. The report will constitute the bas for further work nationally and internationally and will be the point of departure for input to the European Commission in their work to develop an EU Action Plan on SCP. Sweden also hosted the the 3rd International Expert Meeting on SCP in June 2007. The main purpose of the meeting was to start identifying the elements in a 10 Year Framework of programmes agreed on in Johannesburg 2002. Within the Marrakech process, Sweden is leading an international Task Force on Sustainable Lifestyles. The Russian Federation has been invited to join the Task Force. In addition Sweden has established a Commission on Sustainable Development and a Delegation on Climate in order to strengthen the work to mitigate climate change. Furthermore, the Swedish EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is through its bilateral cooperation with Russia developing a project promoting the introduction of a system for integrated permit granting of industrial activities based on the principles of Best Available Techniques (BAT), with pilot projects and educational programmes taking place in Russia including the Barents region.

In **Russia**, there were 12 Cleaner Production training programmes carried out during the period, including 2 programmes in the Barents environmental hot spots. These were K2 (Nadvoitsy Aluminum Plant, Karelia) and A5 (Kotlas Pulp and Paper Mill, Archangelsk Oblast) hot spots. In fall 2007 two more CP programmes at environmental hot spots will start: K4 and K5 (Petrozavodsk Vodokanal, Karelia) and Ko1 (Greenhouse gas emissions to the atmosphere in the Vorkuta coal field, Komi Republic) and Ko2 (High air contamination in Vorkuta city, Komi Republic). In 2006 Solombala Pulp and Paper Mill (Archangelsk), environmental hot spot A1-1, successfully completed implementation of the CP project to prevent emissions of methylmercaptane, utilizing NEFCO loan.

In May 2006, Russian Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development Centre arranged and conducted an International Round Table "The Strategy of the Russian Federation to Transit to Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development as Applied to the Yasnaya Poliana Agreement Experience". The Round Table was held under auspices of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Ministry of Culture and Mass Media of the Russian Federation, Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, UNEP, Ministries of Environment of Finland and Norway, Ministry of Sustainable Development of Sweden, Tula Region Administration. About 70 specialists took part in the Round Table, represented Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and USA. This Conference was devoted to disseminate experience of sustainable development in Tula region throughout Russia. In spring 2008 it is planning to conduct second Round Table in Yasnaya Poliana as follow up of the SD on regional level.

In 2007 Russian Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development Centre initiated establishing of Municipal Waste Management System in the city of Severodvinsk (Archangelsk Oblast) as a pilot project in cooperation between WGE and ACAP.

In 2007 RCPSD Centre arranged with Norwegian support 2 workshops for college and university teachers in Petrozavodsk and Syktyvkar to introduce CP Methodology for graduate students to increase their competitiveness after graduation.

For future activities, taking into account new knowledge regarding pollution of the Arctic due to transfer of pollutants from other regions by water and air, we consider it necessary to disseminate CP programmes in the Arctic region of Russia in cooperation with ACAP.

NEFCO provides financing for projects aiming at cleaner production and sustainable development through its Cleaner Production Revolving Facility, as well as its Energy Savings Revolving Facility. During years 2006-2007 three street lighting projects have been implemented in the Barents region, substituting mercury lamps with energy saving sodium lamps. In addition, NEFCO has financed 14 small investments in the municipal sector, mainly energy saving measures in schools, kindergartens and hospitals. Through these investments in energy efficiency made in 2006-2007 leading to reduced consumption of mazut and coal, a yearly reduction of CO₂ emissions of approx. 20.000 tons has been achieved.

4. The Barents environmental hot spots

During the Sixth Meeting of the Environment Ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) in Luleå (Sweden), in 2003, the second report of the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP and Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) "Updating of Environmental 'Hot Spots' List in the Russian Part of the Barents Region" was presented.

In order to develop projects aiming at elimination of the Barents environmental hot spots the Barents Hot Spots Facility (BHSF) was set up in December 2004 by the Governments of

Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden with a capital of approximately 3 million euro, which is managed by Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO). The purpose of the BHSF is to contribute to the development of realistic projects related to the 42 “environmental hot spots” defined in the NEFCO/AMAP report, or to issues of a similar dignity in the Russian Barents Region. The Facility’s main task is to provide grants to finance technical assistance, typically key pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, business and financing plans, or environmental impact assessments.

In this respect, NEFCO reports to the BEAC WGE and strives to co-ordinate its work also with the RWGE as well as the WGE Sub-groups for Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption and Water Issues.

In Republic of Karelia and recently in the Komi Republic, special working groups have been organized at the regional government level to deal with the environmental hot spots on their territory.

So far, 36 projects or other specific measures have been approved for allocations from the BHSF.

The necessity to introduce proper criteria and procedures for the elimination of environmental hot spots has been addressed in the WGE. The WGE decided to establish an ad-hoc Task Force on elaboration of criteria on excluding hot spots from the list, and requested all stakeholders to nominate their representatives in this Task Force. NEFCO was requested to chair this group and manage this important task on behalf of the WGE. Other expected participants are the RF Ministry of Natural Resources, Rostekhnadzor, Roshydromet, Rospotrebnadzor, the Barents Regions, the Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development Centre. The aim of the ad-hoc task force would be to present a first preliminary report on intended methodologies and possibly even initial proposals.

The Group should report to the WGE, concerning principal issues as well as proposals on concrete procedures and criteria. The funding of the Task Force’s work has not been specified.

A prototype of a database covering the Barents environmental hot spots has been developed on NEFCO’s behalf. Based on further feedback from the WGE stakeholders, NEFCO will continue to develop the data base and fill it with contents. A selected Barents Energy Efficiency Centre will act as main editor (and translator) of the data base, with each EEC in charge of the data collection and compilation within its region, with the regional environmental authorities as the main sources of input. NEFCO has secured funds for the operation of the data base in the short term. Its long-term funding remains to be addressed by the WGE.

Special sector studies on hot spots issues have been prepared for the paper & pulp sector, the mining & metallurgical sector, and for the general potential to develop JI project in relation to the Barents environmental hot spots. The study on the mining industry includes an investigation of the Umbozero ore mine as a potential additional hot spot, and will be complemented by a special study on the energy efficiency potential in the sector. A study concerning the large CHPs in Arkhangelsk and Severodvinsk (A2 and A3) and the general energy situation in Arkhangelsk Oblast has been done, and another one is underway on general waste management issues in Arkhangelsk Oblast and Nenets AO that will provide a needed framework for development of waste and landfill management projects in Arkhangelsk city and other places.

The main purpose of these studies is to serve as a basis for NEFCO’s further strategies and priorities in the areas concerned. Only to a certain extent they may also be shared in a wider circle for more general reference.

The practical work on the Environmental hot spot Franz Josef Land began on Summer 2007. It started with the investigation of the three most polluted islands (Graham Bell Island, Hoffmann Island, Alexandra Land) including air photography, taking samples, chemical analysis. After that the demonstration project on the pollutants utilization and rehabilitation of the territory will be developed. The Polar Fund is the executive organization of the project.

Needless to say, important actions and investments as well as other contributions towards the elimination of the Barents environmental hot spots are made by actors that are unrelated to NEFCO and its work in this field. Such actors include other bilateral and inter-regional programmes, as well as Russian budget organisations on various levels, and Russian sponsors and project owners. Some of them are related to investments in the private sector companies concerned, in particular in the metallurgical, paper and power industries. Usually, such investments do not have specific environmental targets but provide ecological improvements as a side effect to the economic benefits.

5. Nature Protection and Climate Change

The International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region (Habitat Contact Forum, HCF) was established in 1999 to promote the cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Nordic countries.

During 2005-2007 HCF has been working on or taking part in several projects aiming at nature conservation. Yugyd Va project supports development of management plan and a sustainable tourism by using an ecosystem approach in Yugyd Va National Park that is mainland Europe's largest Protected Area and World Heritage Site (Virgin Forests of Komi). This is a HCF project funded by the Komi Republic, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Norwegian Directorate of Nature Management, the Finnish NW Russia Nature Conservation Programme and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. A fact-finding mission to Yugyd Va in Komi was prepared and launched in August 2006.

The progress has been achieved on the Kolguev Model Area of the ECORA project that is one of three model areas of the ECORA project – “An Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation in three selected Model Areas in the Russian Arctic”. It is a GEF funded project of the Arctic Council with in all 13 cofounders including Russian Federation, Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Nordic countries. The overall objective of the Kolguev Model Area of the ECORA project is the adoption and implementation of Integrated Ecosystem Management (IEM) strategies and action plans for the Kolguev Island. In 2006 field excursions on sea-birds and reindeer husbandry, education in environmental legislation and the opening of an information centre at Bugrino took place. In addition an international seminar has been arranged in Naryan-Mar (Nenets Autonomous Okrug) in October 2006.

The fifth HCF conference will take place in Umeå, Sweden in 2008.

During 2007 the discussions were going in the WGE on the possibility of including the HCF cooperation in the official structures of the cooperation in the Barents region, in particular in the WGE or its recently established Subgroup on Nature protection. As a result the WGE expressed its intention to cooperate closely with the HCF. More concrete ways of the cooperation between the WGE and HCF will be determined during the next 2-year period of the WGE work.

Climate change issues had arisen on the agenda of the WGE after the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment report was published by the Arctic Council in November 2004. After that the report “Arctic Climate Change: Political Measures in the Barents Region” was prepared by the BEAC CSO and presented at the BEAC Ministerial Meeting in Harstad, Norway in 2005.

At the BEAC CSO meeting in Helsinki in 2006 the BEAC and the Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) agreed on cooperation in different sectors including climate change. According to this decision the project proposal named “Impacts of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystem goods and services in the Barents Region” was submitted to the NCM for consideration. The project was approved by the NCM in the beginning of 2007 and therefore will be co-financed by Finland, Norway, Sweden and the NCM. A major aim of the project is to evaluate the impacts of climate change on species, habitats and ecosystems in the Barents Region, and to give assessments and guidance in this regard. A network lead by Umeå University will perform the work.

6. Water Issues

Issues of sustainable water management, quality of drinking water and water pollution were discussed during all meetings of the WGE in the context of intensifying efforts in this area. The WGE agreed that poor quality of drinking water remained a substantial environmental and health problem for many people in the Barents Region, that quality of drinking water is often connected to waste water management and therefore development of waste water management requires more efforts, both at industrial and municipal levels, that further cooperation on transboundary waters is needed.

The WGE welcomed the work done by the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE) on spring and autumn flood. This project aims at assuring cooperation in flood risk abatement including creating a common flood management network of the Northern countries and exchanging information on flood risks and flood abatement measures.

According to the intention of the WGE to promote more practical work by the means of establishing the Subgroup on Water Issues a special meeting of water experts was organised in October 2007 in Moscow to discuss the possible areas of activities of the Subgroup.

With the aim of synergy with the activities of the RWGE it was discussed to focus on the following areas: sustainable management of water resources and water use, transboundary water bodies, issues dealing with high quality of drinking water, study of correlation of the climate change and condition of water bodies and wetlands, other projects on mitigation and adaptation to climate change, projects on prevention and reduction of the pollution of water bodies and marine environment. It was also highlighted the value of realizing small scale projects at the regional level.



FINNISH CHAIR OF THE
BARENTS EURO-
ARCTIC COUNCIL
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WGTB Chair: Finland
Mr. Pasi Toivanen
14 December 2007

Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Trade Barriers (WGTB) in the Barents Region

ANNUAL REPORT 2007

Annual Report of the Working Group on Trade Barriers (WGTB) in Barents Euro-Arctic Region, based on the adopted Action Plan 2007.

The Working Group on Trade Barriers (WGTB) was established as Task Force II in 1999. By decision the CSO meeting 29 June – 1 July 2004 in Hammerfest Norway, Task Force II was changed to WGTB (Working Group on Trade Barriers) and it was conformed to a permanent working group which now reporting directly to CSO. Finland assumed the chairmanship of the WGTB in November 2005 after Norway.

In 2007 the Working Group on Trade Barriers has met three times. Once in Finland (Oulu) and two times in Russia (St. Petersburg and Vyborg).

The work has in large followed the adopted Action Plan 2007 and the meetings have always been documented by minutes.

The www -subgroup consisting of customs and IT experts has met once in 2007.

In addition to the Working Group meetings there have been other activities in form of obligatory participation in seminars and forums arranged by business life and other official bodies. These activities have mostly involved the chair.

To give some ideas about important co-operation in the purpose of marketing the work of WGTB, the following activities are highlighted:

1) BIP

The chair represented the WGTB at the 6th Barents Industrial Partnership meeting in Saariselkä in April 2007.

The theme of BIP meeting was "Experiences in cross border financing – focusing on the needs of SMEs in the Barents region". Financing issues of SMEs, especially how national mechanisms can support the realizing of co-finance projects, were highlighted at the BIP meeting.

2) BEATA

BEAC/WGTB has kept in touch with BEATA on regular basis. In spite of the fact that it is not easy for the both groups to find any common interface in their main activities, they support each other in creating new infrastructure solutions for logistics, for example, a transport corridor – N.E.W.

3) CONFERENCE OF THE CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE OF FINLAND AND NORTH-WEST RUSSIA

In September 2007 a regular conference of Chambers of Commerce of Finland and North-West Russia was held in Rovaniemi. The main issues of the conference were the possible Russian Federation WTO accession and its consequences; logistics and transport; Finnish-Russian economic co-operation and co-operation within the Barents region. 80 people from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia participated in the conference.

4) OTHER MATTERS

4.1 Barents Twinning Programme

An exchange of customs officials was not included in Action Plan 2007. Nevertheless it took place in January 2007 at Vartiuss – Lytta and Kuusamo – Suopera within Action Plan 2006 implementation. It was focused on the customs challenges at the new Kuusamo – Suopera border crossing stations. The main objective of the exchange was the improvement of co-operation of supervising authorities at the border crossing stations in question.

4.2 Implementation of Action Plan 2007

Action Plan 2007 implementation has not met the expectations. The parties have taken an active part in the WGTB meetings, but the commitment of the Customs administrations to the projects realization has not been enough. A short report on separate 2007 BEAC/WGTB projects is given below.

4.2.1 Logistical chain

It was planned to start processing of goods description in February in Oulu, but because of insufficient participation of specialists, this arrangement was cancelled. The other studies of processes were also cancelled.

4.2.2 Continue the development of an open Forum for Chambers of Commerce, BBAG and other Business representatives to meet Customs Authorities/representatives and exchange information once a year

Co-operation with Chambers of Commerce has been intensive, especially with Chambers of Commerce of Petrozavodsk and North-West of Russia and in Finland with Chambers of Commerce of Oulu, North Karelia and Lapland. This co-operation will be developed also in future.

4.2.3 *Continue the co-operation between WGTB in BEAC and comparable group of experts in the CBSS, e.g. Customs Liaison Committee (CLC)*

There has been no concrete co-operation between BEAC/WGTB and CBSS this year, but BEAC/WGTB has been informed of the CBSS activities. BEAC/WGTB was also presented at the CBSS meeting held in Stockholm on the 10.-11.05.2007. Co-operation with CBSS will be continued and developed in future.

4.2.4 *Seminar for Border Authorities to solve practical problems*

Arrangements of a seminar for border authorities have already been in Action Plan for several years. The importance of the project is beyond question, but at the present moment there are no necessary prerequisites for the seminar. The seminar arrangement will be of current importance only when the process of supervising border crossing authorities' reduction is over and their work is stable. BEAC/WGTB follows the process.

4.2.5 *Continue the development and maintenance of the Barents Customs InfoBase: (www.barentscustoms.org)*

It was generally agreed that the web pages do not meet the requirements any longer and it is reasonable to close them. During the last year there were 48.000 visitors to the site, but it is difficult to allocate resources for constant update of the data. Besides, all the necessary information is available on other sites.

The web site (www.barentscustoms.org) maintenance agreement will not be prolonged after its period of validity expiration at the end of 2007.

4.2.6 *To continue the publishing of a North West Customs information catalogue*

Customs North-West catalogue 2007 has been issued. In 2007 contact information of the customs authorities of neighbour countries has been added to it.

Final words

Working Group on Trade Barriers is grateful for all support in the valuable work given from all Ministries, Authorities and other officials from respective countries as well as support from business life and their organizations in general and especially their representatives in the Barents Region.

Pasi Toivanen
Chairman WGTB 2007
During The Finnish Presidency

Progress Report
on the Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European Transport Area
(BEATA)

To Be Submitted by the Chairman of the BEATA Steering Committee
to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the European Commission

Steering Committee:

Mr. Mikko Ojajärvi

Mr. Kjell Rosanoff

Mrs. Kerstin Lokrantz

Ms Elena Kushnirenko

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Finland, Chairman

Ministry of Transport and Communications, Norway

Ministry of Industry, Employment and Communications, Sweden

Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation

European Commission, Directorate-General for Energy and Transport

The Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European Transport Area (BEATA) is a multi-modal transport area established in the Pan-European Transport Conference in Helsinki in 1997. The BEATA covers the northern provinces of Finland, Sweden and Norway, as well as the northwest part of the Russian Federation: the Republic of Karelia and Komi, the Oblasts of Murmansk and Archangelsk, and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug.

Progress Report

The Finnish Chairmanship 2006-2007

In 2007, two Steering Committee meetings have been held in Helsinki, Finland; the first meeting was on March 29 and the second meeting on October 30. Both of these meetings were held jointly with the STBR II Steering Committee.

Evaluation of the BEATA Steering Committee work

The agenda of the Finnish Chair has called for the evaluation of BEATA cooperation and making proposals for improving the Committee's work. The evaluation was done in 2006, but discussion has continued in 2007 focusing on two issues:

1. How to organise the BEATA work so as to make it more efficient and effective, particularly taking into consideration two important parallel developments: the Northern Transport Axis and the Transport and Logistics Partnership between Russia and the EU. It is believed e.g. that the current situation within BEATA will improve by bringing regional transport authorities into cooperation as equal partners.
2. The system of project cards, which could be used to show the overall status and development needs of any sub-corridor or selected subject matter in the BEATA countries.

These matters have been discussed in the two BEATA Steering Committee meetings in 2007. In its October meeting the Steering Committee decided that:

- The BEATA cooperation continues at the ministerial level
- The BEATA continues to report to (1) BEAC and (2) the Commission in a fashion that will be reasonable after the Northern Axis cooperation framework has been set up
- The roles of the regional transport authorities will be strengthened in the cooperation
- The work on project and program/corridor cards should be started.

Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region, STBR Phase II

In 2007, one of the main focus areas of the BEATA Steering Committee has been to support and monitor the implementation of the second phase of the Interreg IIIB project, *Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region, STBR II*. The STBR II project has addressed all the modes of transport (road, rail, air and sea). At the conclusion of the project, recommendations have been produced for concrete measures with regard the future development of the transport system in the Barents Region.

The second phase of the Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region (STBR II) started in 2006. It strived to implement the recommendations from the first STBR (2003-2005) phase at a concrete level. It has meant considerable focus on freight transport, but still not forgetting fast passenger traffic. STBR phases I and II were carried out in four work packages (WPs), which all consisted of one or more sub-projects. The WPs and sub-projects of STBR II were the following:

WP 1 Regional Aviation

- Marketing support for operational air route between the Nordic Countries and Russia; Luleå-(Oulu-Rovaniemi)-Murmansk
- Barents Aviation Focal Point Network, which is a working group between aviation administrations, airport officials, flight operators and tourism companies.

WP 2 Barents Port Association, which will address the common problems and emerging issues of winter operations, EU regulations, safety and security issues, sustainable transport and the environment and training, and adopt joint measures to promote Barents port services

WP 3 Heavy Transport on Rail

- Pilot project and an operation model for freight transport between Russia and the Nordic Countries. The project includes identifying and solving obstacles (technical, administrative, legislative and institutional) of cross-border transport using real, full-scale test train hauls. In addition, an operation model will be developed for improving cross-border freight transport
- Study of the N.E.W. Railway Corridor/Barents Link in the Barents region, which provides information for further deliberations between the EU, Nordic and Russian decision makers

WP 4 Road Transport

- Establishing the future road corridors of the Barents region by an investigation of the main industries' demand for road transport
- Second phase of the heavy vehicle winter safety project, which analyzes and recommends measures for safer heavy goods vehicle transport
- Road Information Exchange System (Barents Road Database). The subproject makes the existing Nordic road databases accessible over the Internet to all road authorities.

STBR II was completed in December 2007.

Change of chairmanship

The Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communication handed the chair of the BEATA Steering Committee over to the Ministry of Transport of the Russian Federation in the 30 October 2007 meeting in Helsinki. The Russian chairmanship term lasts for two years.

Mikko Ojajärvi
Chairman of
the BEATA Steering Committee
Helsinki, December 31, 2007

Martti Miettinen
Secretary of
the BEATA Steering Committee
Helsinki, December 31, 2007

**The program of the Russian Federation chairmanship (Elena Kushnirenko)
in the Steering Committee of the Barents Euro-Arctic transport region
(November 2007-November 2009)**

The Russian Federation suggests to carry out during its chairmanship cooperation in the following priority directions:

1. Working out joint actions to eliminate bottlenecks, congestion and other obstacles in provision of transport services by business entity of the Parties in the BEAC region¹.

2. Taking into account the transport security situation, the Parties should undertake steps to coordinate efforts in this area.

3. Information sharing on measures to prevent pollution of the northern seas by oil and oil-products while field development on the coast or on the shelf, or during its sea freight. The readiness of the Parties to implement measures to eliminate accidental spills of oil and oil-products.

4. As BEAC covers several regions of the Russian Federation, Sweden, Norway and Finland, Parties take efforts to promote cooperation between these regions.

5. Bearing in mind that transport issues are discussed in other international institutions, the Parties will seek to establish active and constructive dialogue with other international organizations and regional institutions with the view to avoid duplication and coordinate actions to achieve common goals.

6. Information sharing on the state of transport infrastructure in the region, traffic flow, waiting time at the border with a view to work out joint measures to eliminate the related administrative and technical obstacles (physical barriers).

7. Information sharing on the existing national transport strategy and planned modifications of them, as well as on the projects of developing transport infrastructure, which are either implemented or are planned to be implemented, in order to coordinate their activities in development of transport infrastructure in the region on a mutually advantageous basis.

8. Information sharing on new legal acts governing the provision of transport services, on planned amendments to existing legislation.

¹ In particular, the improvement of maintenance of roads in wintertime at selected patches, shortening time of scrutinize a documents for receipt of visas for drivers, etc

9. Information sharing on tenders on the projects of development of transport facilities, so that the entrepreneurs of other Parties, if they wish to do so, could participate in such tenders.

10. Parties will support further implementation of the STBR II project.

For realization of the above mentioned objectives Parties will formulate a plan of cooperation for the next two years.

The Russian Chairmanship plans to hold meetings of the BEATA Steering Committee in the 2nd quarter of 2008 (Murmansk), 4th quarter of 2008 (Moscow), 2nd quarter of 2009 (Archangelsk) and 4th quarter of 2009 (Moscow).



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, FINLAND
Youth Policy Division

17 January 2008

**Barents Euro-Arctic Council's
Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP)
Annual report 2007**

Background

The Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) was established as an Ad Hoc Working Group in 1999 upon a Finnish proposal. By a decision of the CSO in December 2002, the mandate of the group was prolonged and revised, and the group was transformed into a permanent working group, integrated in the structure of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The work of the WGYP is based on the Plan of Action adopted at the Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth Policy in the member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Tromsø 14 -16 of May 2001.

During the Finnish chairmanship 2005-2007 special importance was placed on promoting the active citizenship of young people. The work of the WGYP focused on the following activities in 2005-2007:

- Implementing the Tromsø Plan of Action;
- Cooperating with other bodies of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Regional Council, as well as with international organisations and relevant regional structures;
- Steering and supporting the the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) activities;
- Preparing an agreement on the activities and on a common financing of the BYCO in Murmansk for the period of 2007-2008 (the agreement was concluded in 2006)
- Producing an evaluation of the WGYP and the BYCO activities;
- Organising two seminars on the active citizenship of young people in the Barents region promoting the priorities of the Finnish chairmanship (the first one was held in 2006)

Activities in 2007

The WGYP held two ordinary meetings (29-20 March and 14 October) and one extra meeting (4-5 December) chaired by Ms Seija Kähkönen, State Provincial Office of Lapland, Finland.

The WGYP assigned Dr Julia Zubok from the Institute for Socio-Political Research at the Russian Academy of Sciences to conduct an **evaluation of WGYP and BYCO activities**. The evaluation was completed in November and the report was presented to the WGYP at the extra meeting in December.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Seminar "Youth in the Barents Region - a lottery win or bad luck? Part II" was held in Rovaniemi in 12-15 October. It focused on young people's own initiatives and was organised in close cooperation with the Barents Regional Working Group on Youth Issues (RWGYI), the Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC) and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes. The participants to the seminar consisted primarily of young people representing BRYC, national youth councils in BEAC countries, local and regional youth networks and fora and indigenous people, but also of representatives of national, regional and local authorities and youth researchers as well as representatives of the RWGYI and the Council of Europe.

At the seminar, eleven project ideas were selected, discussed and considered as feasible initiatives for youth cooperation in the Barents region. The youth participants also elected five persons to deliver their joint statement to the BEAC Foreign Ministers meeting (Rovaniemi 14-15 November). The statement, presented by the five youth representatives, received a positive response from the Foreign Ministers.

Interim Joint Committee – Rescue co-operation in the Barents region
Chair: Norway (Ms. Bente Michaelsen)
Annual report 2007

The most important task within the rescue co-operation in the Barents region has been to finalize the draft “Agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the Field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response”.

There have been two negotiation meetings in 2007, in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Moscow on 20 September and in the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police in Oslo on 18 December.

At the meeting in Oslo, it was agreed upon a text that was acceptable to all Parties present at the meeting. It will now be necessary to translate the Agreement into all the required languages; e.g. Finnish, Russian, Swedish and Norwegian. The translated text will then have to be circulated to all Parties. All Parties will have to process the Agreement in accordance with internal national procedures. As the Russian Federation is the new chair of the BEAC, it was the wish of the Committee that a signing ceremony is to take place in Russia. The Russian Federation needs to propose a date for the signing ceremony. As agreed in 2006 regarding the level of signature, it is the wish that State Secretaries/Vice-Ministers sign the Agreement.

As the focus has been on the finalization of the EPPR-Agreement, the Interim Joint Committee (IJC) had only one meeting in 2007, which was held in the Norwegian Ministry of Justice and the Police, Oslo on 19 December 2007. 12 participants from Finland, the Russian Federation, Sweden and Norway attended the meeting.

As the Committee had not met since August 2006 and had some new members it was important to give the participants an overview of the ongoing work of the Committee. The Committee did not conclude regarding important items, but continued the discussions and work on already started issues. The meeting had a positive and enthusiastic atmosphere.

Several members of the Committee attended the Exercise Barents Rescue 2007, as well as the planning and evaluation processes. There are areas of improvement in the rescue co-operation, especially in how to notify other Parties and to request assistance. The Committee will take this on board and further develop the alarming procedures between the four countries. It was further the opinion of the Committee that we should be a part of the planning process regarding exercises and should be involved in developing exercise strategies. The Committee should therefore be invited to such exercises in the future.

The Committee has received very little information regarding the Exercise Barents Rescue 2009 to be held in Russia. The importance of the planning process has been underlined and that earlier experience has shown that at least an 18 months planning process is required.

A draft BEAC Exercise Planning Guide has been developed after the exercise Barents Rescue 2005. The post exercise discussions in 2005 recommended Norway to take the responsibility to develop a more “civilian” exercise-planning guide. The aim is to finalize the guide as soon as possible after April 2008 and to see an agreed document being used for the planning of the BR 09 exercise.

Hypothermia is a challenge for the rescue services in the Barents Region and a part of the daily work. The Committee discussed how we could deal with the issue and it was suggested to start a project regarding Arctic Conditions/Hypothermia and to apply for finances through the Interreg-programme. This idea will be elaborated and discussed at the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee will continue to develop the electronic maps of the Barents Region, which identify the location of rescue resources, as well as the Barents Rescue Manual.

The question of ways of financing projects within the work of the Committee was discussed at the last meeting and will also be a topic at the next meeting. It was agreed that applications, if any, needed to be forwarded during summer 2008. It was also needed to develop a plan for possible projects. The cold protection/hypothermia is one issue that can be formulated into an application for Interreg-money. Other projects could also be formulated into applications for financial support, such as training and exercises. In the opinion of the Committee, it would be possible to start a financed project in 2009.

The Committee will start to develop aims and objectives of the Joint Committee. In this process it will be useful to clarify the role of the new Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes.

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Committee should take place in the beginning of April, preferably in Kirkenes, Norway where it would be possible to visit the new Barents Secretariat.

Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC)
Joint Chair: Russia (Natalia Dikova) and Tromsø (Ellen Ostgard)
Annual Report 2007

The mandate of the Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC) was adopted in 2007. The Regional Working Group on Culture, which was subordinate to the Barents Regional Council, became a Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC) of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and Barents Regional Council (BRC). The new mandate consolidates the status of culture in the Barents cooperation structures and engages governments more closely in the cooperation. In addition to the regional cultural administrations, the JWGC includes the representatives of the Finnish, Norwegian, Russian and Swedish ministries responsible for culture and of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples.

According to the mandate the aim of the JWGC is to strengthen Barents cultural identities, and the impact of Barents culture, and to increase knowledge of arts and culture both in the region and outside of it. The means to this end include multilateral and bilateral projects. In order to develop better skills and knowledge, the JWGC encourage new networks, exchange of best practices and information on cultural co-operation.

In 2007 the JWGC was chaired by the Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and the Murmansk Regional Administration Committee of Culture and Arts. The first meeting of the JWCG was held in Helsinki, Finland, in June 2007. At its first meeting the working group outlined priorities for cultural action. The second meeting was held in Lulea, Sweden, in November 2007 where the Programme of Cultural Cooperation 2008-2010 "*New Winds in the Barents Region*" was adopted by the JWGC. The programme is the framework for inter-regional cultural cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. It is structured in two parts: Cultural Policy Programme (Part A , which defines the main directions of cultural policy and priorities of the cultural co-operation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) for 2008-2010), which is implemented by means of the Action Plan and projects (Part B; this part is aimed at the practical realization of Part A). The overall objective of the Programme is to further strengthen cultural cooperation and thus increase the impact of culture in the Barents Region. The aim is to promote cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue and culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development and to create new cultural meeting places. The challenge is to boost international visibility and to develop joint projects with partners from outside the Barents Region in the framework of the EU's Northern Dimension Policy and the EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan for Culture in interaction with other international structures.

"*New Winds in the Barents Region*" is the second Cultural Programme since the Barents cooperation in the field of culture started in 1993. The first Programme "*Voices in the Barents Region*" was implemented in the period of 2003-2006. In 2007 the JWGC started preparing a report on the first programme. The report will be finalised in 2008.

In 2007 the Barents Cultural Cooperation was presented at the Conference on the Northern Dimension and Culture in Kajaani in October 2007 where representatives of the Nordic Baltic countries, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the EU Presidency Portugal, the European Commission, the Russian Federation, other regional councils and different cultural networks convened to discuss the prospects for establishing a Cultural Partnership in the framework of

the renewed Northern Dimension. The aim of the conference was also to contribute to the Nordic Council of Ministers' strategy document Priority Area: Cultural Cooperation with Northwest Russia and to the EU-Russia Action Plan on Culture.

In June 2008 the Ministerial meeting (possibly a “round table”) is planned to be held in Arkhangelsk. Within the framework of it a regular meeting of the JWGC will take place.



"NEW WINDS IN THE BARENTS REGION"

2nd Programme of Cultural Cooperation 2008-2010

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE BARENTS REGION AND COOPERATION STRUCTURE

Barents Region
Cooperation structure

PART A CULTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME 2008 - 2010

1. General basis for the Programme
2. Objectives for cooperation
 - 2.1. Cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue
 - 2.2. Culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development
 - 2.3. New cultural meeting places
3. Activities
4. Monitoring and evaluation
5. Funding

PART B ACTION PLAN AND PROJECTS

www.barentsinfo.org, www.barentsculture.ru.

ANNEX

- Mandate of JWGC
- Kirkenes Declaration 1993
- Arkhangelsk Communiqué 1998
- Oulu Communiqué 2002

INTRODUCTION

"Cultural sphere, in the full sense of it, includes social experience and a concept as well as economic, legal, scientific, moral and ethnical values Culture includes not only culture and arts, but also the way of life and system of values. In this sense culture becomes the major power for intellectual renewal and human perfection» (the European Council Report on European Cultural Policy)

Culture plays a fundamental role in human and regional development in the Barents Region. The Programme of Cultural Cooperation 2008-2010 *"New Winds in the Barents Region"* is the framework for inter-regional cultural cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. It highlights cultural diversity and the importance of culture and cultural industry as a unique tool for the development of the region. The cultural potential must be recognised and utilized to the full.

This is the second Cultural Programme since Barents cooperation in the field of culture started in 1993. The first programme *"Voices in the Barents Region"* was implemented in the period of 2003-2006. The objectives set in the first programme have been achieved. Cultural cooperation and exchanges are as lively and vibrant as ever and the Barents region with its culture has also gained more visibility in the European context.

Changes in the cooperation environment have raised new challenges. The international and EU processes will offer new opportunities and challenges for future work. The new mandate approved for the Working Group during the Finnish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Republic of Karelia Chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council in 2006-2007 opens new possibilities for further developing cooperation in the cultural field and for enhancing the visibility of Barents culture.

The overall objective of the Programme of Cultural Cooperation 2008-2010 is to further strengthen cultural cooperation and thus increase the impact of culture in the Barents Region. The aim is to promote cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue and culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development and to create new cultural meeting places.

It is important to increase cooperation between the cultural sector and other sectors such as education, youth, business and industry. The challenge is to develop cooperation as a part of the implementation of the EU's Northern Dimension Policy and the EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan for Culture in interaction with other international structures, in particular the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Europe.

Taking into account the aims defined by the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council, the Programme will also contribute to strengthening of the horizontal level objectives of the Barents region.

The Programme is structured in two parts: Cultural Policy Programme (Part A), which is implemented by means of the Action Plan and projects (Part B). The means of cooperation include multilateral/bilateral projects, networks, exchange of best practices, capacity building and improvement of information exchange.

The whole Programme of the Cultural Co-operation 2008-2010 "*New Winds in the Barents Region*" (Parts A, B) will be found from the following web-sites: www.barentsinfo.org, www.barentsculture.ru.

The Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC) is responsible for developing, coordinating and monitoring the Programme implementation.

The Programme will be implemented during a three-year period from 1 January 2008 to 31 December 2010.

BACKGROUND OF THE BARENTS REGION AND CO-OPERATION STRUCTURE

Barents region

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) is Europe's largest area of interregional cooperation, including the following 13 northernmost areas:

Finland: Lapland, Oulu, Kainuu

Russia: Nenets, Komi, Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Karelia

Norway: Nordland, Troms, Finnmark

Sweden: Norrbotten, Västerbotten



*"My first joy is the appearance of spring.
From under the snowdrifts come the happy slushy waters.
The forest wakes from a cannonade of ice drifts.
The sun is high.
Sky and clear distances..."*

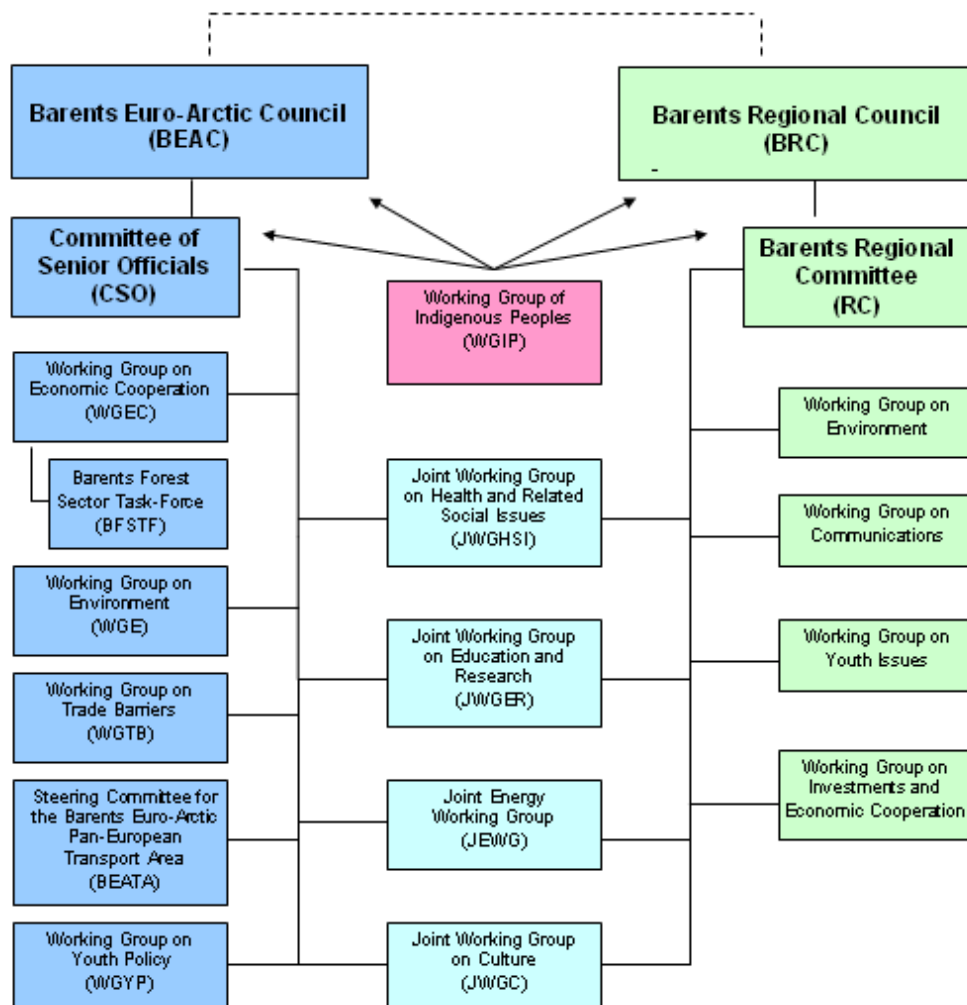
Oktyabrina Voronova, Saami poet, Lovozero, Murmansk Region

Cooperation structure

Intergovernmental Barents cooperation was formalised in 1993. The Foreign Ministers of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation and a representative of the European Commission signed the Kirkenes Declaration that created the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). At the same time the county governors and their equivalents in the Barents Region, together with the representative of the indigenous peoples, signed a Cooperation Protocol that established the Barents Regional Council (BRC). The two forums have the same objectives: to support and promote cooperation and sustainable development in the Barents region. The representatives of the three indigenous peoples, the Sámi, the Nenets and the Vepsians, are also members both in the BEAC and the BRC.

Cross-border regional cooperation in the field of culture is an integral part of the Barents cooperation. The cooperation was initiated in 1993, when the first meeting of cultural ministers was held in Kirkenes and the Barents Cultural Committee was set up. In 2001 the Committee became the Barents Regional Working Group on Culture under the aegis of the BRC and in 2007 it was replaced by a Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC), which works under the aegis of the BEAC and the BRC. The JWGC has representatives from all 13 Barents regions. In addition to the regional cultural administrations, the JWGC has the representation of the Finnish, Norwegian, Russian and Swedish ministries responsible for culture and of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP).

Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation



PART A

CULTURAL POLICY PROGRAMME 2008-2010

1. General basis for the programme

The Programme "*New Winds in the Barents Region*" is based on the recommendations of the Conferences of the Ministers of Culture (Kirkenes 1993, Arkhangelsk 1998 and Oulu 2002) and the objectives set out in the Mandate of the Joint Working Group on Culture adopted by the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council in 2007².

The Conferences of the Ministers of Culture have stressed the importance of strengthening the common identity in the Barents region and emphasised the need to support the development of regional identity and cultures and the cultural heritage of the indigenous peoples. The core message has also been to integrate cultural and economic development and to develop cultural cooperation in interaction with other international structures.

The Programme has been informed by the experiences gained in the implementation of the previous programme "*Voices in the Barents Region*" and the report on the Barents Cultural Co-operation 2001.

It also takes into account the Joint Communiqué issued by the Barents Euro-Arctic Council at its 11th Session in 2007 and the strategy for the Barents Region (Barents 2010) adopted by the Regional Council.

The aims out in the Political Declaration and the Framework Document on the Northern Dimension Policy, the EU-Russia Culture Action Plan, the Commission Communication on a European agenda for culture in a globalizing world and the Action Plan for Nordic Cultural Cooperation with North-West Russia 2007-2009 have been taken into account as well.

2. Objectives for cooperation

The aim of the Programme is to meet the special needs of cultural cooperation in the Barents region. The overall objective is to further strengthen cultural cooperation and thus increase the impact of culture in the Barents Region. The target is to strengthen the cooperation with and between other working groups of the Barents Region.

Taking into account the above-mentioned general basis, the objectives for the cooperation are to promote:

- cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue, thus increasing tolerance and interaction;
- culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development;
- the creation of different kinds of new cultural meeting places where people interact, particularly youth.

2.1. Cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue

The Barents region is a unique area in terms of both its history and its culture. It is a region with many cultures and languages. The wealth of the region is its cultural diversity and the cultural cooperation increases mutual understanding and respect.

² The Conference Documents and the Mandate is in the Annex.

In order both to increase visibility of culture and cultural heritage of the Barents region and to recognise the contribution of all cultures present in the region it is important to foster cultural diversity in a context of openness and cultural exchange, especially promoting intercultural dialogue and competence, including the promotion of the traditional cultures of the indigenous peoples in the region.

2. Culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development

The cultural and creative sectors contribute substantially to regional, social and economic development in the Barents region. It is important to explore and promote the role of culture in supporting and fostering creativity and innovation in the region.

An essential aspect of the cooperation is to increase contacts and develop creative partnerships between the cultural sector and other sectors such as business and industry, research and education. For instance the film industry and tourism represent great potential in the cultural sector. In the constantly growing tourism industry, culture is an increasingly important attraction factor for tourists seeking authenticity and experiences. It is important to develop cultural tourism in ways which ensure that the indigenous and other local cultures are respected.

2.3. New cultural meeting places

People-to-people interaction is an important part of the Barents cooperation. Education, culture, sport, child and youth work and volunteer activities are some of its key components. Opportunities for people to come together in joint activities will foster mutual understanding and trust, which again will foster stability and development in the Barents region. Cultural contacts promote understanding and communication. Cultural activities create meeting places and networks, build trust and often lead to cooperation in other areas.

Ensuring good living conditions for young people in the Barents region is not just a question of providing employment and health services; equally vital are good cultural services and opportunities to participate in the development of society. Promoting cultural entrepreneurship among young people and encouraging children and young people to take part in different activities will help to strengthen civil society and democracy in the Barents region.

Due to the fact that the Barents region is a geographically large and sparsely populated area, there is a special need to strengthen cultural cooperation and to create meeting places where cultural actors can convene to develop cooperation projects.

3. Activities

The objectives, which will guide the Barents cultural cooperation in the future, will be realized through the following priority activities:

- networking;
- capacity building (training programmes for cultural actors in the Barents Region);
- cooperation and exchange in the fields of arts and culture
- developing information exchange both internally and externally using of new technology.

- creating different kinds of new cultural meeting places where people can interact, particularly youth. All activities shall be open for and contain participants of both genders.

The aim is to encourage joint projects and other forms of cultural cooperation, to promote contacts between areas, municipalities and cultural actors and the participation of other structures, for example Barents International Secretary/IBS, the North Calotte Council, in the realization of the Programme. The importance of involving young people in the cultural activities is stressed.

All objectives of international cooperation will be realized through priority-oriented multilateral projects (cultural festivals, forums, conferences, exchange programmes, exhibition projects, research projects) and bilateral projects on the regional and local areas.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

The JWGC will monitor the Programme on the basis its objectives. Progress in and evaluation of the action plan and projects (Part B) and other activities will be reported by the regional administrations at JWGC meetings.

The JWGC will submit an annual report of its activities both to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council.

3.5. Funding

There are a wide variety of ways to finance Barents cultural cooperation. The JWGC will keep in contact with and seek to obtain support for projects from existing national, Nordic, EU and international sources of financing. The responsibility for realizing and funding the projects rests with the implementers of the projects. The projects will be analyzed, including the financial resources, in the annual progress reports.

ANNEX

Mandate for the Working Group on Culture

Introduction

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region is characterised by a rich cultural diversity. The development of cultural life serves social and economic development in the Region. The achievements gained in Barents cultural cooperation are not only felt in the Region but also spreading all over Europe, increasing interest in the Region.

A formal cultural cooperation in the BEAR started in 1993 when the Ministers responsible for Culture convened for the first time in Kirkenes. Responsible for the activities has been a Barents Culture Committee. In 2001 the Culture Committee was converted into a permanent Regional Working Group on Culture. Based on the recommendations of the Ministerial

Conferences (Kirkenes Declaration 1993, Archangelsk Communiqué 1998 and Oulu Communiqué 2002) the Group has defined objectives for cultural cooperation.

The need to focus on Cultural cooperation as a key issue in developing mutual understanding and pave the ground for a welfare society in the whole Region is still most valid. In addition to considering the role of culture as a stimulating factor for the development of the Barents Region and in order to further develop the cultural cooperation and networks the Regional Working Group of Culture will be transformed into a joint working group within the structure of the BEAC and within the structure of the Barents Regional Council with the following mandate:

Objectives and tasks

The Joint Working Group on Culture shall take over the tasks previously performed by the Regional Working Group on Culture and further develop multilateral/bilateral interdisciplinary cooperation in the Barents Region.

The objectives and tasks of the Working Group will be:

- to strengthen cultural identities in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) and ties between the regional entities, with due respect to its historical tradition
- to further develop cultural cooperation in the BEAR as part of the implementation of the Northern Dimension Policy
- to further develop cultural cooperation in the BEAR in interaction with other international structures, in particular the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Europe
- to promote culture as a tool for regional and economic development
- to promote and develop cultural diversity and cross-border cultural cooperation between local and regional stakeholders: cultural institutions and organisations, indigenous peoples, individual artists, cultural experts and authorities
- to encourage new networks in order to develop better skills and knowledge in the field of arts and culture
- to contribute to organizing of meetings of Ministers of Culture, when/if appropriate
- to encourage close cooperation with the other sectors of Barents cooperation

Composition and chairmanship of the Working Group

Members and alternate members of the Working Group should be nominated by:

- each of the regional entities, which are members of the Barents Regional Council
- the competent national and federal authorities of the countries which are members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council
- the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples

In addition, regional or international organisations may be represented in the Working Group upon invitation.

The Members of the Working Group may invite specialists to assist them during meetings or other activities whenever necessary.

In order to enhance an active participation between the different actors in the Working Group, a shared chairmanship should be practised. The chairmanship shall follow the rotation of the BEAC and the BRC, unless otherwise decided, with a central government representative and a representative of a regional authority or administrative entity working together.

Methods of Work

The Working Group shall choose the working methods, which are the most appropriate in order to meet a particular objective and which are in line with financing possibilities. This may include a number of different actions such as appointing consultative experts groups / Task Forces, using experts, organising conferences or seminars and involving educational and scientific institutions, cultural and non-governmental organisations etc.

The Working Group shall meet at least once a year. If desired, sub-groups or task forces may be formed in order to manage tasks between meetings of the Working Group or perform special activities.

The mandate of the Working Group of Culture will be assessed after three years of its duration. On the basis of this assessment the mandate can be amended, prolonged or re-evaluated.

Oulu Communiqué 2002

The Ministers of Culture in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, convening in Oulu from 9 to 10 September 2002 to discuss cultural co-operation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region,

Having regard to

- the Kirkenes Declaration of 11 January 1993 on the basis of which the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council were established,
- the Declaration of the Conference of Ministers of Culture in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in Kirkenes from 31 August to 1 September 1993,
- preparatory work for and the Communiqué of the Ministerial Conference on Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in Arkhangelsk from 9 to 10 September 1998, especially as concerns the aim to develop the Barents Euro-Arctic Region as a dynamic and open cultural area, and the decision to review cultural cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, its economic resources and obstacles to cooperation,

Expressing their support and acknowledgement of 10 years' cultural cooperation, and appreciating its positive effects within all the artistic and cultural fields.

Considering the economic impact of culture in the development of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and, correspondingly, the role of the culture in economic development.

Having received the *Report on Barents Cultural Co-operation* (September 2001) compiled by the Barents Regional Cultural Committee at the request of the Ministerial Conference on Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in Arkhangelsk on 9 - 10 September 1998.

Thanking the Barents Regional Cultural Committee for drafting the first *Action Programme for Cultural Co-operation in the Barents Region 2003-2006*. **Being aware** of the need for support at national and regional levels for cultural initiatives in the Region, and at the same time **emphasising** two important aspects: cooperation between equal partners and co-financing of activities.

Recognizing the work carried out by the Barents Regional Cultural Committee and the importance of structured organisation of cultural cooperation in the Region.

AGREE

1. **To promote** local and regional cultural identity and inter-regional cultural production based on historical tradition in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.
2. **To support** the strengthening of cultural identity and the preservation of cultural heritage of indigenous peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.
3. **To continue to support** the work of individuals, local and regional institutions and nongovernmental organisations and the cooperation among them
4. **To further develop** cultural cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region as part of the implementation of Northern Dimension policies, with the aim of
 - ensuring that the needs of cultural development in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region be taken into account in the European Union policies and Community programmes, especially in the next Action Programme for the Northern Dimension for years 2004 - 2006, as well as in the implementation of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and the Russian Federation,
 - strengthening multilateral cultural and artistic cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in interaction with other international structures, in particular the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Council of Europe, as well as national and other actors and organisations representing ethnic and linguistic minorities in the Region.
5. To support **the creation of** a Barents cultural portal, with the aim of
 - raising the awareness of the culture of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and improving prerequisites for networking between cultural actors both within the Region and in a wider context,
 - strengthening the cultural dimension in information society development in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (i.a. Northern eDimension, eEurope and eRussia)

6. **To invite** the Barents Regional Cultural Committee, in cooperation with relevant national and regional bodies and as a part of the ongoing work on the Barents Regional Council Information portal, to start preparations for the creation and launching of a Barents cultural portal.

Thank the Government of Sweden for its kind offer to host the next Conference of the Ministers of Culture in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, at a time and place to be decided upon.

The outcome of this conference will be reported to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

Arkhangelsk Communiqué 1998

The Ministerial Conference in Arkhangelsk on September 10, 1998,

developing the basic ideas for cultural cooperation in the Barents Region stated in the Kirkenes Declaration of January 1993 and the Declaration of Ministers of Culture of September 1993,

taking into account other generally recognised statements in the field of cultural cooperation adopted by international organisations, in particular, the Council of Europe and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation,

taking note of the increasing importance of cultural cooperation as one of the means to promote a cultural identity in the Barents Region based on historical tradition,

considering the role of culture as a stimulating factor for the development of the Barents Region at large,

having discussed questions related to results and priorities of the Barents cooperation in the field of culture and specifically the common cultural heritage and identity as well as obstacles to the cultural cooperation,

states,

that the forming of a new cultural policy, "Northern Renaissance", is the principal goal for common activities on the threshold to the XXI Century.

This new cultural policy requires a willingness from all parties to work actively for increased cooperation under the guidance of two main principles:

- from culture towards economic development
- from economic development towards culture.

The new cultural policy should:

- give priority to cross-border and regional contacts
- support cultural activity aiming at joint long term programmes and projects

- introduce the Barents culture in different contexts and strengthen international cultural relations
- develop the Barents Region as a dynamic and open cultural area.

The Ministerial Conference was aware of the need for different kinds of support at the national and regional level for cultural initiatives in the Barents Region.

The Ministerial Conference stressed that regular meetings between regional and national authorities are desirable in order to facilitate cultural cooperation in the region.

The Ministerial Conference emphasized in particular the need for support for development of the regional cultural identity and for the culture and cultural heritage of the Sami, Nenets and other indigenous people in the Barents Region.

The Ministerial Conference acknowledged the work of local and nongovernmental organizations and the cooperation between individuals, regional institutions and NGOs.

The Ministerial Conference decided to chart the results and experience from cultural cooperation in the region, existing financial resources as well as obstacles in order to facilitate cultural contacts and exchanges and render the performances more effective.

The Ministerial Conference underlined that priority should be given to future projects aiming at:

- the exchange of experts, art students and teachers on long-term basis,
- the building of computer networks and a common information environment.

The Ministerial Conference acknowledged the role of the Nordic Council of Ministers and considered the Nordic Plan of Action in the cultural field for the adjacent areas as a promising basis for their work in the Barents Region.

The Ministerial Conference stressed as well the importance and achievements of the Regional Barents Cultural Committee. The Conference thanked the Government of the Russian Federation and the Administration of the Arkhangelsk oblast for a particularly useful and well organised Conference.

The Ministerial Conference stressed the importance of strengthening the common identity in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. They recommended that the next conference of the Ministers of Culture should be held within the next few years.

Kirkenes Declaration 1993

We, the Ministers of Cultural Affairs, meeting in Kirkenes, 31 August to 1 September 1993,

1. Referring to the declaration from the meeting of Ministers of Foreign Affairs in Kirkenes, 11 January 1993, which established a formal cooperation within the Barents Euro-Arctic region, where the general aims with regard to cooperation within different sectors are drawn up, including cultural cooperation,

2. Recognising the close historical and cultural relations between the peoples of the regions and states which participate in the cooperation within the framework of the Barents Euro-Artic Council and the Regional Council of the Barents Region, with special attention to the bonds which always have existed among the Sami population in this region,
3. Expressing our hope and intention of extending and reinforcing the cultural cooperation within the region, bearing in mind the importance of close relations in this area of Europe for regional development and international stability.
4. Declare our mutual intention of:
 - a) Enhancing cultural cooperation in the Barents region within the framework of the mandate of the Barents Council and the Barents Regional Council. In this context culture is to be understood in the widest sense of the concept,
 - b) Emphasising the role of the educational and scientific institutions within the cultural cooperation,
 - c) Encouraging cultural exchange which aims towards increased knowledge of culture and society and a better understanding between the peoples of the region,
 - d) preserving our cultural heritage and important cultural monuments and objects, and through cooperation preventing the destruction of common and irreplaceable values,
 - e) promoting further cultural cooperation amongst the indigenous peoples of the Barents region.
5. Propose the following guidelines for cooperation:
 - a) The cooperation should take into account the characteristics of the different regions, be based on existing cultural objectives and rooted in the cultural activities of the region.
 - b) Projects should be initiated in the regions and be managed by or in close cooperation with regional cultural authorities.
 - c) Relevant national authorities should contribute in creating conditions enabling regional cultural cooperation to take place.
 - d) Cooperation should be organised through local and regional bodies and institutions, thus preventing the establishment of new institutions and unnecessary duplication of existing administrative bodies.

Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (WGHS)

Joint chair: Norway (Toril Roscher-Nielsen) and Murmansk (Igor V. Kovalev)

Annual report 2007

ACTIVITY REPORT 2007 SUBMITTED BY THE NORWEGIAN CHAIR

Meetings of the WGHS and other groups

The WGHS met on June 5-6 2007 in Oslo, and on October 17 in Murmansk, with participation from Norway, Sweden, Finland, Murmansk and Archangelsk, Komi, regional representatives from Norway and Sweden, and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat. Both health and social authorities were present.

The Barents HIV/AIDS programme is administered by a steering committee with Norwegian chair and representatives from the Barents countries and regions. The Steering Committee had two meetings in 2007, in Helsinki in March 29-30 and in Murmansk in October 17.

Co-operation Programme 2004-2007 and 2008-2011

The guiding documents of the WGHS was the Co-operation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region 2004 – 07 and the mandate of the working group.

The goals according to the programme are: prevention and combat of communicable diseases, prevention of lifestyle related health and social problems and promotion of healthy lifestyles and development and integration of primary health care and social services. A sub-programme on HIV/AIDS has been established. Further, the Joint Communiqué adopted by the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Harstad in November 2005 called for development of a similar sub-programme for young people and children at risk.

The working group should promote broad exchange of information on activities in order to facilitate the identification of possible overlapping projects and of areas insufficiently covered. Better information should also stimulate dialogue and co-operation between the bilateral and multilateral actors.

Co-operation should be promoted between international, national, regional and local authorities for the planning and implementation of joint projects. The main aim in 2004 –07 was to stimulate and strengthen multilateral co-operation in the Barents region. Bilateral co-operation should continue and also be encouraged.

At its October 2007 meeting, the WGHS adopted a draft proposal for a Co-operation Programme 2008-2011, including a mandate for the WGHS. It is to be adopted by the bodies of BEAC and the BEAR. The new programme is briefer and focused, but follows the main priorities of the previous programme. It states that the HIV/AIDS subprogram should continue, along with a subprogram to be adopted on Youth and Children at Risk (CYAR). The programme and its sub-programme on HIV/AIDS is clearly linked with the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing (NDPHS).

Sub-program on HIV / AIDS

The HIV/AIDS –problem in the Barents region was selected at the WGHS meeting in March 2004 as the first area in which to set up a multilateral programme by the WGHS. The programme was adopted in 2005, and began with its project “Development of Low Threshold Support Centre in Murmansk Region”. This project is copied to Archangelsk. The programme is supported by a programme coordinator financed by the Finnish government. .

The programme aims at reducing the spread of HIV in the Barents region through multi-sectoral action. The programme aims at strengthening the national capacity to respond to the epidemic. The programme will contribute to the following as overall objectives: 1) scaling up and accelerating the national response to HIV/AIDS to reduce the spread of HIV, 2) providing support to activities in the priority areas of prevention and mitigation of socio-economic impact at individual, household, and community levels. This programme is aiming to assist

the Russian National HIV/AIDS Programme truly multisectoral by mainstreaming HIV/AIDS control into the action plan of every Local Government Authority.

According to the Northwest District AIDS Centre, St. Petersburg, the cumulative number of HIV infected people in Northwest Russia was 63,924 by December 31, 2007. Altogether, 5878 HIV infected people have died, and thus amount of PLWHA is 58,046.

The amount of new cases continued to increase in NW Russia during year 2006. In 2006, the majority of new HIV cases were due to injecting drug use (74.4%) even though sexual transmission was increasing. 35% of the new infections were detected in women. The majority of newly infected persons were between 15 and 29 years.

Projects

In the end of 2007, totally 16 projects were ongoing, 9 proposals reviewed and four projects completed within the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme:

List of projects being implemented (update 7.12.2007)

1. "Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Partnership Programme Regions in 2005–2007" Coordination of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme and support to EG on HIV/AIDS for the ND partnership. Coordination: STAKES, Finland. Approximate budget - 715 000 EURO (3 years). Financier: Finnish Government.
2. "Development of Low Threshold Support Centre in Murmansk region". Pilot project of the above mentioned programme. Coordination: STAKES (Finland) and Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre. Approximate budget 300 000 EURO (3 years). Financier: Finland
3. "Workshop of workers in LTC sites for IDUs". Coordination: National Public Health Institute, Finland. Approximate budget- 20 000 EURO. Financier: Finland
4. "Territory of Life. Mobile unit work for prevention of HIV in Murmansk Region" (B521) Coordination: Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Norway. Approximate budget – 270 000 NOK. Financier: Norway
5. "Cross action between STI Clinic in Archangelsk and Olafia Clinic in Oslo" (B504). Coordination: The Olafia Clinic, Norway. Approximate budget: 190 000 NOK. Financier: Norway. Continuation applied.
6. "HIV/STI and Drug preventive efforts in Murmansk, Archangelsk and Karelia". Coordination: Sweden - Noaks Ark Barents. Approximate budget – SEK 980 000
7. "Only for you". The ConTact Bus- Murmansk Region (B606). Coordination: Norway. Approximate Budget 34 700 USD
8. "Youth education Program - HIV/AIDS and Drug Abuse - Murmansk region". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget - NOK 549 779
9. "The ConTact Bus – Arkhangelsk Region". Coordination: Norway. Approximate Budget: 280 000 NOK
10. The Clinton HIV/AIDS initiative and Russia. Exchange of Russian and Norwegian clinicians". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget - NOK 460 000
11. "The Bus" for Republican AIDS Centre, Petrozavodsk. Approximate budget 250 000 NOK. Financier: Norway (Humanitarian Fund of Crown Prince Haakon and Crown Princess Mette-Marit)
12. "Prevention of HIV infection in the Republic of Karelia in 2007–2009". Coordination: Finland. Approximate budget 300 000 EURO (3 years). Financier: Finland
13. Education program for pedagogical personal and health specialists in the field of "Healthy lifestyle" and prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug addiction (B705).

- Murmansk Region. Coordination: Norwegian Church Aid. Approximate budget 257 000 NOK. Financier: Norway.
14. Youth peer education in Murmansk related to HIV, STI and communication skills (B710). Coordination: Pertinax Group, Norway. Approximate budget 90 000 NOK. Financier: Norway.
 15. "Love your neighbor". Arkhangelsk region. Coordination: Norway. Approximate Budget 330 000 NOK
 16. Assistance in development of palliative aid in Archangelsk Region 2007. Approximate budget 230 000 NOK.

List of projects under consideration (update 7.12. 2007)

17. "Prevention of HIV infection among young people through advocacy, support, development of policies and actions in Murmansk region". Coordination: Norway.
18. DanChurchAid "Prevention and Management of HIV/AIDS and Opportunistic Infections in North-West Russia". Project proposal. Partially financed. Financiers: Danish sources, applied from Norway (for the component of capacity building) and Finland (for the component of prevention activities).
19. HBV vaccination of prison personnel in the Leningrad oblast. Coordination: Russia, approximate budget 30 000 Euros, Financiers: open
20. "Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Partnership Programme Regions. Phase II." Coordination: Finland. Proposal 2008–2010.
21. "Strengthening of intersectoral action to fight drug abuse and drug related harm in Murmansk Region 2008–2010". Coordination: Finland. Project proposal.
22. "Vera". Development of international network of interaction between organisations dealing with women and adolescents, involved in commercial sex business and trafficking victims. Coordination: NGO Stellit, Russia (Pro Sentret, Norway). Applied from Norway.
23. "HIV: to be aware means to live". Coordination: Norwegian Church Aid, partner: Rassvet, Arkhangelsk Region. Applied from Norway.
24. Educational project "New view". Coordination: Norwegian Church Aid, partner: New Beginning, Murmansk Region. Applied from Norway.
25. Youth peer education in Archangelsk related to HIV, STI and communication skills. Coordination: Pertinax Group, Norway, three partners in Archangelsk Region. Applied from Norway.

List of completed projects

26. "AIDS Alarm in North-West Russia". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget NOK 151 000. Financier: Norway
27. "Sexual and reproductive Health of Adolescents in Northwestern Russia" Coordination: Sweden, RFSU. Approximate budget - SEK 16 091 000 (1997–2007)
28. "Development of network interaction between organizations of NW Russia, Finland and Norway, dealing with CSW". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget: 45 000 NOK. Financier: Norway.
29. "Activate patients at Murmansk Municipal HIV/AIDS Centre". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget NOK 16 000. Financier: Norway

Development of a program targeted at young people and children at risk

The WGHS agreed at its meeting 7 December 2006 on the principles for a frame programme for Children and Youth at Risk (CYAR). The WGHS decided that the work with developing a CYAR-programme shall continue in accordance with the presented framework.

In order to secure a broad participation in the further developing process, the WGHS decided to establish a Project Group on the CYAR programme consisting of 8 members, from Norway, Sweden, Finland and each of the Russian regions. This group presented a draft programme to the WGHS meeting in October 2007.

Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council is a Partner of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Wellbeing. The chair of the WGHS has represented BEAC at partnership Committee of Senior Representatives meetings and reported about the activities within the WGHS.

The priorities and targets of the WGHS co-operation programme are in line with those of the Partnership. The Barents working group forms a regional and functional tool for the Partnership.

Following a decision in 2005, the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme is expanded into the Northern Dimension area. The programme would be enlarged also into adjoining areas in Northwest Russia not included in the Barents region. Further, the Partnership would initiate the planning process of a new but similar programme for Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland through the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV / AIDS.

Database and website

Information on projects and the activities of the WGHS can be found on the Barents website which has been up-dated and contains information on projects as well as the Co-operation Programmes on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Region 2004 – 07 and 2008-2011, and on the website of the NDPHS

The websites can be found under the addresses: www.barentshealth.org. and www.ndphs.org.

Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region

Chair: Mr. Bjarne Store-Jakobsen, Norway

Annual report 2007

1. **The period** of this annual report is from 01.01-31.12.2007. This annual report concerns status and activity for the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP) in BEAR.
2. **WGIP** held two (2) **meetings** during 2007.
 - April 17th – 18th, Oslo
 - October 31st – November 1st, Kirkenes
3. **WGIP** consisted in 2007 of five (5) members until September 15th.

Members:

Mr. Bjarne Store-Jakobsen is appointed of the Saami Parliament of Norway and Ms. Kirsti Guvsám is the substitute member.

Mr. Per Labba is appointed of the Saami Parliament of Sweden.

Mrs. Irja Seurujärvi-Kari is appointed of the Saami Parliament of Finland and Maria Sofia Aikio is the substitute member.

Mrs. Zinaida Strogalschikova is appointed of the Vepsian Cultural Organisation and Mrs. Marina Zarubalova is the substitute member.

Mr. Alexander E. Belugin is appointed by the Nenets organisation “Yasavey” and Mrs. Galina Arteeva is the substitute member.

Mrs. Valentina Sovkina was appointed by the Regional Sámi Consultative Council of Murmansk Oblast on September 15th 2007 and Mr. Andrey Ageev is the substitute member.

4. The Indigenous Peoples' representation in the Barents cooperation

Barents Euro-Arctic Council: Mr Bjarne Store-Jakobsen represented the indigenous peoples in the BEAR at the BEAC meeting in Rovaniemi, November 15th 2007. The Head of the WGIP made a statement at the BEAC meeting.

Committee of Senior Officials: Mr Bjarne Store-Jakobsen has represented the indigenous peoples in the BEAR at the CSO meeting during 2007.

Regional Council: Mrs Zinaida Strogalschikova is appointed representative for the indigenous peoples of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region for a two (2) year period in the Regional Council, according to WGIP decision 35/2005

Regional Committee: Ms Christina Henriksen (secretary of the WGIP) represented the indigenous peoples of the BEAR during 2007.

Barents Regional Working Group for Youth Issues: Ms Siri Wernberg and Ms Vivian Aira from the Saami Parliament of Norway have been the indigenous youth representatives in 2007.

5. Secretariat

Two (2) secretaries, Ms Christina Henriksen, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes and Mrs. Anna Prakhova, Head of Barents Indigenous Peoples Office (BIPO) in Murmansk until October 1st, serve WGIP. Mr Jevgenij Jushkov entered upon the position on October 8th and is situated at the BIPO in Lovozero.

6. Representation of leader, members and secretaries of WGIP

Mr. Bjarne Store-Jakobsen:

- Barents Euro-Arctic Council
 - November 15th 2007, Rovaniemi
- Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) in Helsinki
 - February 8th-9th 2007
 - September 4th-5th 2007
 - October 8th 2007
- Regional Council
 - November 14th 2007 (substitute for Mrs Zinaida Strogalschikova)
- Meeting with Mr. Yamshikov A.A., the 1st deputy administrator of the Department of Legislation Drafting and Local Government Reforming in Murmansk Oblast
 - January 2007, Murmansk
- Meeting with Mr Andrey Ageev, Head of the Centre of Indigenous Peoples of the North, Murmansk Oblast
 - January 2007, Murmansk
- Meeting with the Association of Kola Saami
 - January 2007, Murmansk
- Two (2) meetings with OOSMO (Public Organisation of Saami in Murmansk Oblast)
 - January 2007, Murmansk

- February 2007, Lovozero
- Joint meeting with representatives from all registered obshinas in Murmansk Oblast
 - February 2007, Lovozero
- Meeting with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign affairs
 - June 2007, Oslo
- Joint meeting between the Sámi Parliament in Norway and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat
 - May 23rd 2007, Karasjok
- The Nordic Sámi Conference on Gender Equality
 - April 19th - 20th 2007, Oslo

Mrs. Irja Seurujärvi-Kari:

- Joint meeting concerning the Joint Pilot Projects between BEAC and NCM, Helsinki, November 2nd 2007
- The Nordic Sámi Conference on Gender Equality, Oslo, April 19th-20th 2007

Ms. Christina Henriksen:

- Regional Committee
 - March 20th 2007, Naryan-Mar
 - September 5th 2007, Tromsø
 - November 13th 2007, Rovaniemi