



## **Report on the work of the Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC) during Finnish Chairmanship (2013-2015) in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council meeting**

### **National and Regional Chairmanships in 2013-2015**

Finland received the chairmanship in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council from Norway in November 2013. The chairmanship lasts for two years. The JWGC is chaired from national level by Ms Maija Lummepuro/Finnish Ministry of Education and Culture and from regional level by Mr Lev Vostriakov/Veronika Yanichek/Minister of Culture of the Arkhangelsk region.

During the Finnish Presidency in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as well as in the Council of the Baltic Sea States (2013-2014), Finland enhances three guiding principles - coherence, cooperation and continuity - when planning its regional activities.

### **The Joint Meeting of three Regional Working Groups, May, 21, 2014, Kotka**

The Joint Meeting was organized in order to promote the guiding principles of the Finnish Presidencies. Barents Joint Working Group on Culture, CBSS Senior Officials Group for Culture and Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture Steering Committee took part in the joint meeting. Joint Meeting made following main recommendations:

- to convene at least once in two years in the joint format to discuss and up-date cultural and creative industries strategies in the region.
- that the secretariats (CBSS, IBS and NDPC) would help in coordinating future joint meetings in cooperation with the rotating chair of the regional councils and the NDPC's steering committee and find suitable meeting places with added-value.
- to strive towards continued self-evaluation and in the long run to create flexible working methods for the regional working groups, which would encourage groups to creation of the integration mechanisms on the basis of structural changes or thematic work regarding cultural and creative industries issues.

Barents JWGC supported the increasing of contacts with three regional working groups to exchange the information on state-of-play in the field of cultural cooperation in order to avoid the overlapping activities. At the same time the JWGC proposed that the joint meetings should be thematic, covering the themes of mutual interest that would benefit all parties.

## **Mandate and Strategy**

JWGC renewed its mandate and strategy for the years 2014-2018 at the beginning of 2014. In the new Strategy important areas of regional cooperation are defined as creative sector, capacity building, competence, people-to-people and artistic co-productions.

New Strategy takes into account wide possibilities to enhance cultural policy dialogue and practical cooperation with the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC), the Senior Officials Group on Culture of the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) as well as with the relevant EU structures such as Creative Europe: the support programme for Europe's cultural and creative sector from 2014 and the European Neighborhood Instrument and its Cross-Border Cooperation programs. With this approach, the JWGC wants to strengthen the impact of regional interaction by actively taking part in cooperation between the different processes and cultural actors.

## **Barents Cultural Scholarship**

The JWGC continued its work and further elaborated proposal on the Scholarship in 2014. The JWGC decided to ask for the clarification and the final approval of the proposal from the national representatives. The national representatives are to clarify with the regional representatives the proposal, organizational procedures, financial possibilities and specific practical questions regarding establishment of the Scholarship. The official decision is to be presented by the national representatives to the first JWGC meeting in 2015.

During 2015 the small working group was set up to with a view to prepare the final guidelines / terms of reference of the scholarship. The small working group comprises of national and regional representatives: Chairperson of the JWGC, Ministry of Culture of Norway, Region Västerbotten, Lapland, Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. The small working group set up guidelines for the scholarship and indicated the conditions of funding. The draft was distributed for comments before the JWGC meeting in Arkhangelsk. Scholarship proposal was further discussed at meeting in Arkhangelsk in October 2015 with following main conclusions:

- The scholarship amount should be 10 000 Euro – equal for each country. The sum should cover the expenses for the recipient to take part in the common scholarship holder event.
- Art forms eligible for the scholarship should be divided to the large categories.
- The recipients of the scholarship should be individuals, artist groups, NGO, but not institutions.
- The requirement for candidates to be residing in the Barents region should not be restrictive. The focus on Barents cooperation should be valued.
- One time the recipients got scholarship, in 2 years they are invited to the scholarship holder event for the feedback.
- The common scholarship holder event should be organized in connection to JWGC meeting. 4 scholarship holders and 4 new recipients are to take part in the event.

- JWGC can use experts in choosing procedure if needed.
- The IBS should administer the process of among the national candidates choosing the recipients and also be responsible for communication and publicity regarding the scholarship.

On the base of the comments and suggestions the small working group was to prepare the final guidelines / terms of reference (in 1 or 2 pages) till the beginning of December 2015. The final guidelines will be distributed to the JWGC before the next meeting. CSO will be informed thereafter.

### **Barents cultural project cooperation**

Two large ENPI Kolarctic CBC projects have been realized during past two years. One of them was cross-sectorial project “New Horizons 2013/2014” and another was in the field of visual arts “Northern Beauty”. “New Horizons 2013/2014” has been noted among the flagship ENPI projects 2013-2014. The cultural program “BEART: exhibition and concert” held in Murmansk on December 4, 2014 was announced as the closing event for the “New Horizons 2013-2014”. The project was prolonged till Autumn 2015 by the ENPI Managing Authority and the JWGC supported the initiative as contributing to the regional cooperation. Earlier in September 2014 at the Murmansk Art Museum took place closing Art exhibition and symposium of the “Northern Beauty” project.

All in all since early 90ies there have been hundreds of projects running in different fields of art and culture, for example, between artists, libraries, museums, festivals and theaters in the Barents region.

In the second half of the 2014 the JWGC started the planning how to support the generation of a new Barents project initiatives. Working group decided to launch in the beginning of 2015 a project “Barents Cultural Initiative Incubator”. This project would help to create a meeting place for cultural operators where they can start planning larger projects and apply for possible financing from European Neighborhood Instrument and its Cross-Border-Cooperation programs or from other financing sources. The project aims to create meeting place, promote the people-to-people connections, the exchange of ideas and best practices, creation of new partnerships and the creation of new project proposals. Project was also presented to the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture Steering Committee and included to the Action plan 2015 in order to enhance the exchange of information and synergy between regional players in the cultural sphere.

In May 2015 in Rovaniemi 44 participants from all Barents regions took part in the kick-off session, in which the participants were invited to present project ideas in order to activate cooperation in creative sector for development of multilateral projects for the upcoming ENI CBC programme and other financing programmes. Expert jury selected five projects for further development of their project plans: 1. Barents Artists Mobility Platform project, 2. Sami Design Archives project, 3. Mining our Mind & Culture in Mining project, 4. The Industrial Age museum project, 5. Environmental art to tourism's sites cultural tourism project, 6. Arts unites people art education project. All together 37 participants took part

in the incubator's 2<sup>nd</sup> session. Project succeeded to provide innovative environment and good practical tools for project planning. Although all projects didn't achieve all preliminary plans set in the beginning of the project, participants were able to amend their project schemes and in both sessions organizers observed great enthusiasm and motivation to work together also in the long run. Feedback received by the organizers was very positive and the project was acknowledged as an important and very supportive one. Organizers felt that they managed to create an important meeting place for many creative people in the North. Project was accomplished in the end of the year 2015.

### **Meetings and Conferences**

In 2014 JWGC has convened in City of Umeå, Sweden, on Feb, 27, 2014, in City of Kotka, Finland on May, 21, 2014 and in City of Murmansk, Russia on Dec 4, 2014 and took part in following conferences:

- ENPI Kolarctic CBC "New Horizons 2013/2014": Barents Forum for strategic cultural planning and policy implementation, Feb, 28, 2014, Umeå, Sweden. First Barents Forum was held in connection to the JWGC meeting, Members of the JWGC had the opportunity to contribute to the new ENI Kolarctic program.
- Second inauguration of the European Capital of Culture 2014, Umeå, Sweden, Feb, 28, 2014
- Baltic Sea Cultural Routes – Eastern Viking Forum II, Kotka, Finland, May, 20-21, 2014 in the framework of the Finland's CBSS Presidency 2013-2014
- International Forum on Cross-Border Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Region "Culture of Barents Euro-Arctic Region: New Horizons of Development Strategy", Murmansk, Russia, Dec, 5, 2014 in the framework of Russian Year of Culture 2014 and the ENPI Kolarctic CBC "New Horizons 2013/2014" project.

In 2015 JWGC has convened in Rovaniemi, Finland, on May, 21, 2015 and in Arkhangelsk, Russia, on October, 13, 2015.

### **Review of the activities during Finnish Chairmanship of the BEAC 2013-2015 and Arkhangelsk region Chairmanship of the BRC**

In 2013-2015 JWGC achieved concrete results:

- New Horizons and Northern Beauty ENPI projects were finished;
- Barents Cultural Initiative Incubator was realized till the end of the year;
- Elaboration of the Barents culture cooperation scholarship was continued.

Finnish Chairmanship of the BEAC 2013-2015 coordinated by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland achieved the concrete results:

- 1) Joint study on financing was done. The report was published (distributed at the JWGC meeting in Arkhangelsk);
- 2) Barents countries agreed on the support for the Barents Working Group of Indigenous people.