



THE BARENTS WORKING GROUPS ANNUAL REPORT

Name of the Working Group: Joint Working Group on Culture

The current Chair and the Chairmanship period: Norway/Västerbotten, 2019-2021

1. Priorities of the Chairmanship

The Norwegian Chairmanship focuses on the areas of health, people-to-people contact and knowledge, with a view to building a stronger and more resilient Barents region.

The horizontal priorities for the Västerbotten regional Chairmanship are environment and climate, youth, gender equality, indigenous people and visibility.

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

During 2020, JWGC arranged only one meeting. Under the circumstances, the meeting was held online.

The meeting decided on updated guidelines for the *Barents scholarship for culture and cooperation*. Furthermore, the meeting focused on updates on the covid-19 situation in the regions, and its effect and consequences for the active cultural creators.

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

During the year, the JWGC worked on revising the guidelines for the scholarship.

The regions have started their processes for the year 2021, when the scholarship will be awarded for the third time.

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

In 2020, JWGC unfortunately reports few results. This is mainly due to the pandemic situation, which has meant fewer meetings than usual. The members of the JWGC, as well as the rest of the cultural sector, have been hit hard by Covid-19.

The work with the Barents Scholarship is nevertheless a concrete result of the group's efforts during the year.

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

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

2020 was a difficult year for cooperation within the Barents region. Travel restrictions and closed borders have significantly reduced the opportunities for cooperation and the establishment of new contacts.

However, despite all the negative that the pandemic entails, it also forces the active within the cultural field (as well as JWGC) to think in new formats for meeting and cooperation. The experiences from the year can hopefully lead to good things and development in the near future.