



**JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BARENTS REGIONAL COUNCIL**  
**On the XIV SESSION OF THE BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL**  
**29 October 2013, Tromsø, Norway**

Members of the Barents Regional Council (BRC) met in Tromsø 28 October 2013 under the Chairmanship of the County Administration Board of Norrbotten. The BRC reaffirms the validity of the Agreement from the Statutory Meeting of the BRC held in Kirkenes on January 11, 1993. The BRC also reaffirms the commitment in the Declaration on the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation in Kirkenes in June 2013.

The main priorities set out during the Norrbotten chairmanship were to promote the strategic role that the Barents Region could play internationally; to favour increased cooperation between universities on the one hand, and representatives of trade and industry on the other hand; to invite a broader representation of young people on all levels of Barents cooperation.

The working groups in the Barents cooperation have a strategic role to further develop the regional cooperation. The BRC takes note of the positive development within these working groups and the synergies to be developed between them.

*FINANCIAL MECHANISM*

The BRC highlights, after 20 years of cooperation, the importance of establishing a financial mechanism for the Barents cooperation. Therefore, the BRC welcomes a financial mechanism that would strengthen the development of the regional Barents cooperation. At the BRC meeting in Kirkenes on June 3, 2013, the Council adopted a new Barents Programme, our strategic guidance for the period 2014-2018. The establishment of a fund to initiate pre-studies and other processes, so called seed money, is strategically important to achieve the goals of the Barents Programme. The regional level of the Barents cooperation could thus guide regional project initiatives towards relevant financial programs, such as the Kolarctic ENI CBC program. As a result, synergies for regional development could be captured.

*ECONOMIC COOPERATION, TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS*

The BRC welcomes a strengthening of the economic cooperation to fully expose the economic potential of the Barents Region. Functioning transport networks is a prerequisite to achieve a

dynamic economic development where there is mobility of goods and people for sustainable cross border cooperation.

The BRC emphasizes strongly that the importance of the regional level has to be highlighted and will stress the working processes to better accessibility (East-West) in the Barents Region. The BRC welcomes the work on the Joint Barents Transport Plan.

#### *PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE COOPERATION*

The BRC welcomes stronger efforts to promote tourism, cultural cooperation, health and social well-being, as well as emergency and rescue cooperation in the Barents Region.

#### *ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE*

The BRC finds it of utmost importance to secure an environmentally sustainable development of the region, and will particularly consider the climate changes

#### *YOUTH*

For the future development of the Barents Region, an active inclusion of young people in society, education, labour markets and in people-to-people cooperation is highly important. To boost the situation for young people in Barents Region, the BRC emphasizes the valuable work of the Barents Youth Council (BRYC) and Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO).

#### *EDUCATION AND RESEARCH*

The BRC welcomes the increased and stronger cooperation between the universities and other scientific organizations towards a joint research platform, especially for the EU framework programme for research and innovation, Horizon 2020. The BRC also calls for a synthesis in the scientific cooperation with other development areas in the region, especially with consideration of the indigenous peoples' livelihood.

The BRC welcomes the establishment of a Barents Summer School.

#### *INDIGENOUS PEOPLE*

The BRC underlines the importance of an active participation of indigenous peoples in the BRC and the RC, to secure indigenous people's rights, foundation for trade, society, culture and language.

The BRC expresses its gratitude to the outgoing Chairmanship of BEAC, the Kingdom of Norway, and to the outgoing Chairmanship of the BRC, the Region of Norrbotten, Sweden, as well as to the other parties for their excellent work.

The BRC welcomes the incoming Chairmanship of the Barents Euro Arctic Council, Republic of Finland, and of the BRC, the Arkhangelsk Region of the Russian Federation. The BRC looks forward to mutual synergies between the Chairmanships of the two Councils.