

**JOINT STATEMENT
OF MINISTERS OF CULTURE
OF THE BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL MEMBER-STATES**

**Moscow,
9 November, 2016**

Ministers of Culture, representatives of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) Member-States and the EU representative gathered for their Meeting in Moscow on 9 November 2016, discussed options for fostering regional cultural cooperation in the Barents region, and hereby declare the following.

I. In the contemporary world the role of regional cooperation continues to grow. Over a long period of time, the Barents Euro-Arctic region has remained a dynamically developing region, with a diverse and active cultural sector and a rich cultural and natural heritage, intangible as well as tangible.

Culture offers a powerful mechanism to address social, economic, environmental and other challenges for the benefit of sustainable development in the Barents region. Regional cultural cooperation helps to promote intercultural communications, people to people contacts and provides access to the arts, culture and cultural heritage across borders.

In this context, the BEAC creates favorable opportunities for developing interaction in the Barents region. Activities of other northern regional organizations, such as the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Nordic Council of Ministers, Arctic Council, as well as the Northern Dimension Policy, in particular the ND Partnership on Culture are also of great importance in promoting dialogue among members of the cultural community.

The participants in the Meeting express their readiness to contribute to further prosperity of the Barents region, support the efforts aimed at enhancing cultural cooperation, expanding cultural exchanges with a view to strengthening mutual understanding and good-neighborliness, and deeper appreciation of the unique social and cultural fabric of the Barents region.

II. The Ministers of Culture, representatives of the BEAC Member States and the EU representative:

- *reaffirm* their commitment to the common goals of cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region stipulated in the Kirkenes Declaration of 1993 aimed at promoting stability, security, wellbeing and sustainable development in all spheres;
- *stress* continued relevance of the Declaration summarizing the results of the BEAC heads of state meeting (Kirkenes, June 2013) to mark the 20th anniversary of the cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region, and noting that culture is an important element of the Barents cooperation, making an invaluable contribution to rapprochement among people;
- *support* the fundamental principles of cooperation in the field of culture reflected in the Joint Communiqué of the 15th Ministerial Session of BEAC adopted in Oulu, Finland, on 15 October 2015, and aimed at advancing the “Barents Identity” and

enhancing links between the civil society and cultural organizations;

- *emphasize* the high importance of cultural and creative industries for the social and economic development of the Barents region;
- *note* the importance of maintaining and promoting the cultural diversity of the Barents region by means of expanding exchanges, including among the youth, promoting intercultural dialogue and placing particular focus on the rights of and active participation by the indigenous peoples of the region;
- *stress* that the work at the local and regional levels constitutes the base for successful co-operation between the BEAC states at the national level;
- *point* to the need for closer coordination between the northern regional organizations active within cultural cooperation in order to maximize synergies and avoid duplication of efforts and responsibilities.

III. Ministers of Culture, representatives of the BEAC Member States and the EU representative, while appreciating considerable efforts of the Joint Working Group on Culture in developing the Statutes on Scholarship for artists with a significant record in the sphere of inter-regional cultural cooperation, hereby declare the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic regional Scholarship for Cultural cooperation into which interested BEAC members may contribute.

IV. Ministers of Culture, representatives of the BEAC Member States and the EU representative express their appreciation to the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation for organizing and successfully holding the Meeting.