

Draft Youth Recommendations from the Barents Cooperation Working Groups

The youth perspective is a top priority of the Swedish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2017-2019. And the programme underlines that “the future of the Barents region relies on continued efforts and investments in the youth”.

In Luleå in April last year we organised the conference *25 Years of Barents Cooperation: Youth Perspective for the Future*. Fruitful discussions were held between young people and politicians, policy makers, and regional stakeholders on possibilities and challenges to the region. Following the conference, the Joint Working Group on Youth was tasked by the Swedish Chairmanship to coordinate a process developing youth oriented recommendations to be presented to the Foreign Ministers at the Ministerial meeting in Umeå on 3 October 2019.

Below you will find a first draft of the recommendations, prepared by the working groups during the spring of 2019. The aim of the Luleå follow up seminar on 12 June is to give young people from the region an opportunity to provide valuable input to the draft recommendations. The final version of the recommendations will be presented to the foreign ministers at the Ministerial meeting in October.

Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC)

The JWGC will involve young people more into the activities around the Barents scholarship. The first of these events will take place in Umeå in October, where young people and the Barents scholarship holders of 2017 and 2019 are invited to a joint workshop with the JWGC on what possibilities digitalisation may bring for cultural exchange, consumption, production and creative business in the Barents region.

Goal

Until November 2021, there should be at least two events arranged, where young people and the Barents scholarship holders can meet and exchange experiences and ideas.

Timeline

June 2019–November 2021

Working Group on Environment (WGE)

The WGE proposes that the recommendation focuses on youth participation at the Habitat Contact Forum that is organized every 2nd year in one of the Barents regions.

The County Administrative Board of Västerbotten will organize a bus trip for youth from the Nordic Countries to the HCF in Murmansk in June 2019, so steps to increase youth participation will already have started and can be reported to the BEAC Foreign Minister meeting in October. The proposed recommendation is to further increase the active participation of young people in the Habitat Contact Forum (HCF), both as speakers and as participants.

Goal

The participation of youth in HCF should have increased in 2021 in relation to 2019.

Timeline

June 2019 - June 2021

Barents Forest Sector Network (BFSN)

BFSN identifies the need for labour supply within the forest sector in the Barents region.

To stimulate interest among young people for forest-related education and career, young people are invited to participate in Forest Forums and similar events arranged by the BFSN.

The long-term ambition is to increase young people's employability for the forest sector in the Barents region.

Goal

Number of participants between 18-30 years at BFSN events.

Timeline

Indefinite period

Regional Working Group on Investments and Economic Cooperation together with Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC)

During 2019 the Regional Working Group on Investment and Economic Cooperation, supported by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, contributed to increased focus on youth and entrepreneurship through the Arctic innovation challenge ICE (Innovate Cool Experiences) and vocational education competition Arctic Skills. These events enhance cooperation between educational institutions and the business sector, showcase the possibilities the region has to offer, promote cross-border knowledge and experience sharing, and create regional networks. As such they proved to be great successes with 60 participants in ICE from Finland, Russia and Norway, and more than 120 participating in Arctic Skills. The working group thus recommends to continue ICE and Arctic Skills during 2020.

Goal

Contribute to recruitment of Swedish participants for ICE.

Timeline

2019–2020

Steering Committee for the Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European Transport Area (BEATA)

Sweden is host for the next global ministerial conference on road safety in Stockholm, 2020. The aim is to propose new goals for road safety. One of issues that will be considered is that the main cause of death among those aged 15–29 years is road accidents. This could also be given a Barents perspective.

Goal

Decrease the number of dead youths in road accidents.

Timeline

Indefinite period

Joint Working Group on Education and Research (JWGER)

The Swedish Chairmanship of the JWGER proposes two youth recommendations:

Blended Barents Campuses

Higher education is a key factor for a well-developed labour market in the Barents region, and the northern universities need to win synergies from the development of educational cooperation and compatibility. The main priorities focus on a new innovative curriculum and development methods of training courses. The overall solution is conceptualized in the Arctic education model where international cooperation is very important and met with a blended campus offering an extensive network of associated partners and collaborative opportunities in many regions of Europe and outside the continent. This in turn contributes to the priority quality and relevance of higher education partner countries and the quality improvement of institutions. Through Umeå University an application will be sent in to the EU call for proposals 'European Universities' to receive project funding to realize this concept of blended Barents campuses.

Goal

The Blended Barents Campus will establish a transnational university alliance which will answer to the needs and through joint efforts ensure that Europe is equipped with highly skilled, globally competitive and qualified individuals with Barents knowhow and expertise. The campus will open up improved opportunities for young students to take part in mobility programs, and to build a curriculum based on courses from a variety of Barents universities. The campus will in 3 years' time be ready to be launched at full scale.

Timeline

The deadline to apply for funding is February 2020. Should the application be successful a four-year implementation phase will follow.

Sustainable Development

The Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) has top international priority. The BEAC Declaration of October 2017 highlight these ambitions and they match the priorities of the Swedish Chairmanship of BEAC (environment, economic cooperation, and social issues). There are good reasons to investigate how well the SDGs and their sub-goals and indicators match the situation in the Barents region. The Swedish Chairmanship of the JWGER therefore proposes that the working group takes inventory of current research about the SDGs in Barents and organizes a workshop based on the findings and the SDGs from a Barents perspective with the participation of youths and indigenous peoples.

Goal

The goal is to create an inventory of research about the SDGs in Barents and to engage youths and indigenous peoples in discussions about the SDGs from a Barents perspective.

Timeline

For improved knowledge a member survey on ongoing SDG related activities is proposed to be performed during autumn of 2020, with a possible workshop arranged when the critical mass of engaged researchers has been shaped.

Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation

The Joint Committee recognises the importance of involving young people in the cooperation. The Committee will ensure that the youth perspective will be considered during the planning of future Barents events.

Goal

Ensure the youth perspective in future events.

Timeline

Indefinite period

Joint Working Group on Youth (JWGY)

The JWGY proposes that all the working groups in the Barents cooperation invites a representative from the Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC) to take part in working group meetings on a regularly basis and in an advisory role. This will also help formalizing the role of the BRYC within the cooperation.

The JWGY further proposes to add a question to the working group annual report template.
Q: In what way has the working groups included the youth perspective or worked with youth issues during the year.

Goal

BRYC representation at every working group meeting and that every working group reports on its youth related activities in their annual report.

Timeline

Indefinite period

JWGHS

WGIP

JWGT