



FINNISH CHAIR OF  
THE BARENTS EURO-  
ARCTIC COUNCIL  
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**FINNISH  
CHAIRMANSHIP  
OF THE BARENTS  
EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL  
2013-2015**



# WORKING FOR DYNAMIC, INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**The Barents region is going through major economic, environmental and social changes due to climate change and the increased demand for natural resources such as oil, gas and minerals. In addition, the gradual opening of the Northern Sea Route gives the region new economic prospects.**



For the past 20 years, Barents cooperation has provided an important framework for supporting sustainable regional development. Finland bases its BEAC Chairmanship on the achievements of the previous Chairs and on close cooperation with regional and local level actors. Finland is determined to promote economic cooperation and people-to-people contacts across borders. The accessibility of the region is a necessary precondition for dynamic economic development and mobility. We will continue work for a joint vision of how the transport network in the region should be developed.

Nature in the Barents region is unique and vulnerable. Regional cooperation can contribute to minimizing the negative effects of climate change. We must ensure that all economic activities take into consideration the environmental impacts and the interests of the people living in the region, including the indigenous peoples. The Finnish Chairmanship will pay special attention to young people and their possibilities to participate actively in building the future of their own region.

Barents cooperation has benefitted greatly from cross-border cooperation

programmes, especially the Kolarctic Programme, in implementation of concrete projects. Closer interaction between the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Northern Dimension and other regional political processes would enhance the impact of our joint efforts on the well-being of the citizens of the Barents region.

Erkki Tuomioja  
Minister for Foreign Affairs

# THE GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF THE FINNISH CHAIRMANSHIP

The Finnish Chairmanship has three guiding principles in its work for the dynamic, inclusive and sustainable development of the Barents region.



## COHERENCE

The impact of regional cooperation could be strengthened by increased cooperation between the different processes and actors. The Finnish Chairmanship will seek new ways to cooperate in relevant sectors with the Northern Dimension and the other regional cooperation councils, the Arctic Council, the Council of the Baltic Sea States and the Nordic Council of Ministers. The ENI Cross-Border Cooperation programmes in the region could be further aligned to the Barents cooperation.

## COOPERATION

Cooperation will be enhanced, paying special attention to the improvement of the communication and connections between various stakeholders in the Barents region. Moreover, closer cooperation between different Barents working groups will be encouraged.

## CONTINUITY

The Finnish Chairmanship will build on the work of the previous Chairs and on the guidelines set by the Kirkenes Summit Declaration of 2013. The challenges linked to extractive industries, transport connections and climate change continue to be high on the agenda. The active participation of the indigenous peoples in Barents cooperation will be encouraged.



# 20 YEARS OF BARENTS COOPERATION



Barents cooperation was launched in 1993 in Kirkenes, Norway, by the establishment of the intergovernmental Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the regional Barents Regional Council (BRC). The objective of Barents cooperation has been to promote sustainable development and to contribute to stability in the Barents region and in Europe as a whole.

In the Declaration of the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation in 2013 in Kirkenes, the Prime Ministers and other high-level

representatives of the members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council underlined the important achievements of Barents cooperation and reaffirmed their commitment to the principles of 1993. They discussed the future challenges and opportunities of the region and strongly supported the continued development of cooperation in all relevant areas, with the well-being of people of the region as the overriding goal.

**Members of the BEAC:** Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the EU

**Members of the BRC:** Kainuu, Lapland, Oulu, Finnmark, Nordland, Troms, Arkhangelsk, Republics of Karelia and Komi, Murmansk and Nenets Autonomous Okrug, Norrbotten, Västerbotten; Observer: North Karelia

# PRIORITIES OF THE FINNISH CHAIRMANSHIP



**Finland will pursue sustainable development in the Barents region with the following priorities:**

## **ECONOMIC COOPERATION, INCLUDING TRANSPORT AND LOGISTICS**

- Intensify economic and business cooperation to help to unlock the full economic potential of the region
- Promote sustainable mining and knowledge of clean technology
- Take further measures to strengthen the mobility and accessibility of the region, including follow-up of the Joint Barents Transport Plan

## **ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

- Promote the environmental sustainability of all economic and industrial activities
- Start implementation of BEAC Action Plan on Climate Change

## **YOUTH**

- Enhance cooperation in the field of youth participation and social inclusion
- Promote equal opportunities for education and work as well as youth mobility

## **OTHER IMPORTANT AREAS OF COOPERATION**

The Finnish Chairmanship will also work to promote tourism, cultural cooperation, health and social well-being, as well as emergency and rescue cooperation. The possibility of establishing a financing mechanism for the Region will be investigated.



## **Barents cooperation structure**

The Government-level Barents Euro-Arctic Council meets at Foreign Minister level every second year. In the meantime the work is organized by the Committee of Senior Officials representing the member countries and the European Union. The chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council rotates every second year between Norway, Finland, Russia and Sweden.

The Barents Regional Council (BRC) is the cooperation forum of the Barents regions. Arkhangelsk chairs the BRC in 2013–2015.

The work in different cooperation sectors takes place in working groups that are intergovernmental, regional or joint working groups. The indigenous peoples have an advisory role both to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and to the Barents Regional Council. The International Barents Secretariat located in Kirkenes, serves both the governmental and regional levels.

## **Contacts**

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