

**Joint Committee on Cooperation within the Field of Emergency Prevention,  
Preparedness and Response in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region**

**Annual Report 2013**

Finland took over the chairmanship of the Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation (JCRC) for the year 2013 from Sweden. The activities of the Committee during the Finnish chairmanship were two Joint Committee meetings organised in Finland, the first one in Helsinki 8-9 April and the second one in Levi 2-3 December, Alarmex 2013 alarm and communication test, updating of the Joint Manual and as the main activity the Barents Rescue 2013 exercise organised by Norway 17-19 September.

The Joint Committee meeting in Helsinki was represented by all the four Contracting Parties, but in Levi Russia was not represented. Norway, as the next country in alphabetical order, took over the chairmanship for 2014.

Items discussed at the Committee meeting in Helsinki in April 2013:

- Information and reports of the Contracting Parties on the recent national events, activities and accidents.
- The Joint Manual. The Manual was to be renewed by Norway by the next meeting.
- Alarming and the Alarmex 2013. The Committee agreed that the aim should be to have only one Point of Contact (POC) in each country. As this seems not to be a realistic prerequisite in every country, the POCs should be included in the Joint Manual in an appendix describing the national alarming arrangements.
- The role of the Committee in the exercise planning. Further discussion on this item was postponed to the next meeting in December.

The chair of the Joint Committee attended the CEO Meeting in Oslo on 5 September 2013, reporting about the activities that had been carried out in the Committee so far.

The next meeting in Levi in December was arranged back to back with the Barents Rescue 2013 Post Exercise Discussions. This arrangement allowed many of the Committee representatives to participate in the discussion and evaluation process of the exercise and thus to get directly informed about the lessons learnt.

Items discussed at the Committee meeting in Levi:

- Information and reports of the Contracting Parties on the recent national events, activities and accidents.

- An update report by the BEAC Secretariat on general development and BEAC activities. The Committee agreed that it should get more information about the activities going on in the other BEAC Working groups.
- The renewal of the Barents Joint Committee Manual presented by Norway, and especially the changes, proposed by Finland, to the fax sheet
- Barents Rescue 2013 exercise, presented by Norway. Norway organised the exercise in Lyngen near Troms 17-19 September 2013. A massive landslide formed the backdrop for the scenario. Rescue teams from Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia participated in the exercise. The Joint Committee was not directly as an entity participating in the planning process, but many Committee members participated in the exercise or attended the different observers' programs. The next Barents Rescue exercise will be organised by Finland in 2015.
- Future exercise formats and the role of the Joint Committee in exercise planning. It was agreed that the JC must have a more active role in the rescue exercise planning and that there is a need for the JC to be represented at the planning meetings/conferences. There is also a need to rethink the way to exercise, particularly to find new forms for exercising together instead of the huge field exercise every second year. The Task Force on exercises will submit a report on the issue to the next meeting of the Committee.
- Forthcoming activities and strategic discussion. It was agreed that there is a need for a more strategic discussion on the role of the Committee as well as a need to strengthen links between the Committee and other processes connected to the substance handled by the committee, especially other regional cooperation (CBSS, AC) and EU level strategies. The strategic discussion will be added to the agenda of the next meeting.

The next meeting will be organized by the Norwegian chairmanship in Norway during the spring 2015.