



Meeting of the Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation, 29 April 2020, VTC chaired by Sweden

1. Welcome from Sweden

Cecilia Looström, Head of Department at the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) welcomed the meeting participants.

2. Opening of the meeting

Chair Cecilia Looström, MSB Sweden, opened the meeting. The participants presented themselves (list of participants is attached).

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

4. Priorities under the Swedish chairmanship in the Joint Committee in 2020

Julia Fredriksson, MSB presented the Swedish priorities. Sweden set two priorities for the chairmanship in the Joint Committee:

- Evaluation, follow up and development of the new Barents Rescue cooperation concept
- The importance of climate changes for the Barents Rescue cooperation

BR 19 evaluation report will be the focus for the meeting the 29 April. Autumn meeting will focus on climate changes issue. SE welcomes suggestions from countries regarding the agenda issues and presentations on climate topic.

5. Presentation of the BR 2019 evaluation report, discussion and recommendations

Maria Jontén, MSB presented the evaluation report and recommendations (presentation attached). JC took note on the report.

Sweden proposed that JC approves the following recommendations

Based on the positive experiences from Barents Rescue 2019 Event Week and in addition to the conclusions in the Evaluation Report the Barents Joint Committee recommends:

- **Encourage to apply the After Action Review (AAR) methodology for evaluation of future Barents Rescue Events**
- **When appropriate, continue to organise the Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) exercise in future Barents Rescue Events**

JC approved recommendations through the silent procedure.

6. Barents Joint Manual, needs for changes

Russia updated contacts in Attachments 1 and 6 of the manual. The revised version of the manual with Russian updates will be distributed to the JC.

Based on lessons identified and recommendation in the BR 19 evaluation report regarding the manual; it was agreed that Sweden will prepare a proposal for changes in the manual and present to JC during the next meeting.

7. Brief information from all countries and from the International Barents Secretariat on recent or planned activities, etc.

Finland informed that all exercises and other activities postponed due to COVID-19 outbreak. At the same time it's a serious situation with preparedness for floods in Lapland, which are expected at the end of May.

Norway informed about structural changes: two response centres in Sola and Bodo merged in one. New system is in place from 1 February 2020 but this fact doesn't bring any practical changes for Barents cooperation. Norway also informed that new Security minister and new Director General at DSB employed. Bodö is heavily involved in transportation of COVID-19 patients by helicopters. Norwegian Army Forces support this task with two helicopters in Tromsø and Kirkenes.

The map of helicopter bases in Northern Norway is attached. There is also risk for floods in Northern Norway due to a lot of snow. Bodö presented SAR table-top exercise organised in January 2020, presentation is attached. DSB is working with planning of three exercise: 2020 digital exercise, 2021 exercise with the nuclear scenario and 2022 BR.

Russian Federation informed that many activities postponed due handling COVID-19 outbreak. In Murmansk registered an outbreak at the major construction site, EMERCOM is involved in handling of the situation. The exchange of experts from rescue services in Finland and Murmansk, Russia planned for autumn 2020 and might be postponed.

Sweden informed about the Swedish strategy for handling of COVID-19 based on trust between the citizens and authorities/government. Citizens are being entrusted with the task of taking their own well-informed decisions, based on guidance and recommendations provided by the expert agencies. According to the Public Health Agency, there is currently seeing a stabilization of the spread in Sweden, but it is too early to evaluate the strategy. There is however a strong public support for the responsible agencies as well as for the Swedish government.

Sweden also informed about preparation to the forest fire season, which is up and running due to low levels of precipitation, mild winter etc. A number of firefighting equipment depots in full capacity, ten helicopters and two aircrafts are/will be available in the country for forest fire season 2020.

Situation in Norrbotten with COVID-19 is under control, the number of infected not high. Worse situation can be relevant in the middle of May. Administrative county board is involved in distribution of medical resources in Norrbotten and other activities. At the same time, there is an ongoing dialogue with Finland as a part of preparations for the floods at the border.

IBS informed that the call for proposals in water protection measures programme is open. High interest from all Barents countries to predators seminar organised in Arkhangelsk in the beginning of 2020. CSO will have online meeting the 12 May, working groups also organise meetings online.

8. The Barents Rescue Exercise 2022 in Norway

Anders Gundersen, DSB presented the first plans for BR22 (presentation attached). Focus will be on strategic leadership challenges and border crossing. More detailed presentation will be prepared for the next JC meeting. Russia proposed to include the issue on handling the cross border emergency during the pandemic outbreak on the agenda; the proposal received positive response from JC.

9. Next meeting of the Joint Committee

Sweden plan to organise the next JC meeting (hopefully physical meeting) autumn 2020 and will be back with proposal for the dates.

10. Other business

Maria Jontén, MSB informed that BR19 evaluation report will be downloaded at the BEAC website.