

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

The Joint Committee is established according to article 4 of the Agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the field of emergency prevention, preparedness and response (“The BEAR-Agreement”)

Annual Report 2015

The Russian Federation took over the chairmanship of the Joint Committee for the year 2015 from Norway. There have been only one meeting of the Joint Committee during 2015. The meeting was held in Saint Petersburg on 08 of December. All four Contracting Parties were represented during the meeting.

Barents Rescue 2015 Exercise was held in October 2015. The results of the exercise are summarized in the Barents Rescue 2015 Evaluation Report.

Items presented/discussed at the Joint Committee meeting in Saint Petersburg in December:

Implementation of the Barents Agreement in 2015.

Information and reports from the Contracting Parties on recent national events, activities and accidents relevant to the Agreement were present.

Preliminary evaluation of the Barents Rescue Exercise 2015.

This topic was also discussed during the Barents Rescue 2015 Post Exercise Discussion conference, which were held in the same premises.

Brief information about the planning process of the “Barents Rescue 2017” exercise which will be hosted by Russian Federation.

The Joint Committee was informed that exercise will take place in Karelia republic in September, 2017. The initial planning conference will be held in Petrozavodsk in June, 2016.

Strengthening of Joint Committee role in exercises planning and follow-up of exercises.

After extensive discussions it was decided that during the year 2016 new format of Barents Rescue Exercise should be developed and implemented. The task to prepare draft proposals of the new formats were given to the Exercise Working Group.

Possible information exchange exercises between the crisis management structures of the Barents countries. Testing of VTC-communication channels.

Mr. Guyfullin and Mr. Umanets from National Crisis Management Center of EMERCOM of Russia presented the proposals to conduct regular VTC training sessions between the crisis management structures of the Barents countries. Such training sessions could be used as reliable and not expensive tool to improve and facilitate crisis communication in real emergency situations.

It was agreed that this proposal could be actually implemented and should be kept in mind as one of the possible ways for cooperation and training. Actual testing of VTC-communication channels were successfully conducted during the second day of the Barents Rescue 2015 PXD conference.

Updating of the Joint Manual.

Several topics were discussed and implemented to the Joint Manual to be in par with recent changes.

The Swedish chairmanship in the Joint Committee under 2016.

Sweden, as the next country in alphabetic order, is taking over the chairmanship for 2016. The next meeting will be organized by the Swedish chairmanship during the spring of 2016.