

In 2017 Finland is the Chair of the Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation in the Barents Region. The first meeting of the Finnish chairmanship was held 4 - 5 April 2017 in Oulu, Finland. Participating countries were Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia.

In the meeting Finland presented the current situation of the work of the subgroup PEWG (Planning and Evaluation Working Group) and its work ahead. All participating countries shared information on recent activities, changes in law/practices etc. The representative the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Secretariat gave an update on current issues in the BEAC.

Aspects on climate change for Barents Rescue preparedness and the cooperation between the Arctic Council and the Joint Committee were also under discussion in the meeting. Updates to the Barents Joint Manual were discussed and all participating countries agreed to make some changes in the telefax request for assistance notification annex. A new column was added to the type of message to divide for information only / early warning into two separate columns.

The Russian representatives went through the situation of the Barents Rescue 2017 -exercise preparations. Finland presented the issue on the working platform for information sharing, but it was agreed that is not possible to proceed with the matter at the moment.

The next meeting of the Joint Committee will be held 30 November - 1 December in Stockholm as a back-to-back meeting with the Post Exercise Discussion hosted by Sweden on 28 - 30 November. Evaluation of the Barents Rescue Exercise 2017, Update on current issues by BEAC and Arctic Council (EPPR) - Barents cooperation will be on the agenda.