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Meeting of the Joint Committee on Barents Rescue Cooperation, 23rd August 2021, 13-15, VTC chaired by Finland

Participants Mikko Jääskeläinen, Alexey Skantsev, Anders Gundersen, Bente Jonassen, Hannu Rantanen, Harri Paldanius, Helge Skinnes, Joni Henttu, Maria Jontén, Sveinung Torgersen, Vladimir Kazakov and Nina Vienonen

1. Welcome from Finland

Chairman welcomed all participants to the meeting.

2. Opening of the meeting

Chairman opened the meeting at 13.02

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda for the meeting was adopted.

4. Adoption of the minutes from the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting was adopted.

5. Priorities under the Finnish chairmanship in the Joint Committee in 2021

Chairman presented the topics of Finland's Joint Committee chairmanship:

- Climate Change affects in Barents Rescue Cooperation
- Assuring uninterrupted cross-border rescue assistance in all circumstances
- Cooperation with other organizations in the Barents region

6. Barents Joint Manual, needs for changes

It was suggested that it would be adequate to have a list of the members of the committee. List should contain names of the members and also their contact information. It was noted that such list already exists on the Barents secretariat website. Everybody was encouraged to keep the website list up to date.

7. Brief information from all countries on recent or planned activities, etc.

Norway: Parliament election will be held on September. Norway has had conservative government before, that might change now. Elections are keeping public officers busy these days.

In the end of December 2020, Norway had a landslide accident near Oslo. Ten people were deceased and many more were hurt. Such accident is extremely rare and it was a national catastrophe. Rescue operation was complex and it took 5 days. Landslide accident was



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significant for Norway's rescue services, Sweden gave support and Russia offered support. Now the rescue services need to be re-evaluated and its services has to be developed. Overall, the rescue mission during landslide accident was carried out extremely well.

Norway and Russia will have their annual Oil Spill exercise. This year the planning committee was re-organized. More people were involved in planning of this exercise and it was rewarding. This year's exercise will have more vessels, helicopters, drones and more virtual elements. There is still a language barrier.

On 2nd of June Norwegian and Russian preparedness resources were exercising together in the Barents Sea, practicing rescue at sea and oil spill accident. A report of this exercise has been published.

Russia: Firstly, Russia wanted to thank the existing civil protection in Barents region. Russia has carried out the regular Barents alarm test at Crisis Management Center in Moscow. Feedback has been positive. Sweden, Norway and Finland answered on time to Barents joint manual enquiry. On September Russia will have a second test at Murmansk.

Finland: Health and social services reform is ongoing at the moment; political decisions are still awaited. Information about reform is given on the next meeting. However, the Health and social services reform is not going to have significant impact on Barents work. Covid-19 situation in Finland has postponed or diminished some exercises. Half of the population already has both vaccines.

Sweden: Maria Jonten joined the meeting at 13.47. Covid-19 situation is still severe and restrictions are ongoing. Sweden is supposed to be opened step by step. National Barents meeting is coming in the near future. Sweden is also participating in planning of Rescue exercise in Norway. Sweden had lots of floods and forest fires during summer.

8. Latest info of the Barents Rescue Exercise 2022 in Norway

Anders Gundersen presented the plan for Barents Rescue Exercise 2022 that will take place in Bodo, Norway. Anders told that Bodo fits very well for this exercise. Bodo is by the sea, there are long tunnels, lots of risks for landslides and an airport. Tunnels in Bodo are excellent for gas, radiation and liquids exercises. Also, Bratten and Kvalvika are near Bodo so some of the exercises will take place there. Basecamp will be Geitvågen, which is a great area for gatherings, camping and also for ceremonials.



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Sveinung Torgersen said that the exercise is well planned and all the Covid-19 restrictions has been taken to account. Government supports the exercise.

9. Next meeting of the Joint Committee

Next meeting will be held 14.12.2021. Hopefully meeting will be face-to-face meeting in Helsinki.

10. Any other business

No other matters were presented.

11. End of the meeting

Chairman ended the meeting at 13.57.

Chairman

Mikko Jääskeläinen

Keeper of minutes

Nina Vienonen