

JointWorking Group on Culture (JWGC)

Co-Chairs: Sweden, Archangelsk

A new, third Program of Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Region entered into force in 2011 – *New Horizons in the Barents Region*. The overall objective of the Programme of Cultural Cooperation 2011-2013 is to further strengthen cultural cooperation and thus increase the impact of culture in the development of the Barents Region. The aim is to promote cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue and culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development and to create new cultural meeting places.

The program stresses the importance of increasing cooperation between the cultural sector and other sectors such as education, youth, business and industry. The challenge is to develop cooperation as a part of the implementation of the Northern Dimension Policy and the envisaged EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan for Culture in interaction with other international structures.

The objectives for the cooperation are to promote culture as a tool for regional, social and economic development – focusing on the strong relationship between culture and cultural and creative industries. Additionally, developing contacts and synergies with other relevant structures such as the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC) and between the regional councils in order to avoid overlapping work is underlined.

Meeting March 31, 2011, Archangelsk

The 3rd Program of Cultural Cooperation – *New Horizons in the Barents Region* was approved. The participants made presentations of current projects and issues and an exchange of and discussions on future projects were held. At the meeting a presentation was made by the IBS on funding possibilities and project application.

As a side-event, the seminar “Cultural and Creative Industries in the Barents Region – finding synergies with regional structures in the Barents/Northern Dimension area” took place the day after the JWGC meeting. Mr Andrew Erskine, Senior Associate of Tom Fleming Creative Consultancy had been invited by the Swedish co-chairmanship to lead the seminar.

Among other things, it was concluded that there is a common recognition of the importance of the cultural and creative industries as a driving force of development. In order to gain from the experiences, networking and cooperation, cross-over contacts between arts and business, promotion of local creative clusters or places as well as regional thinking are desirable.

Plans 2012:

- To convene the next JWGC meeting in February 2012 in Kirkenes.