

Annual report, the Joint Working Group for Culture, JWGC, 2013

The JWGC has held two meetings in 2013, April 18-19, Sortavala, Karelia, Russia and September 19 -20, in Bodø, Nordland, Norway.

Since 2012 the working group has been chaired jointly by Norway (The Ministry for Culture) and Norrbotten, Sweden, by Sverre Miøen and Elisabeth Lax respectively.

The working group worked in particular with the following issues:

- Barents culture prize

At the request of the BEAC chair, the working group discussed the issue of establishing a Barents culture prize.

The matter was discussed in the April meeting. There were different views - new point of views since the meeting before in November 2012 - and opinions regarding the establishment and possible organization of guidelines for such a prize (positive promotion of Barents cooperation , recognition of successful cooperation, encouragement for further work, vs. risk of national, competitive focus , bureaucracy , challenge with financing, retrospective recognition rather than focus on future work).

The group prepared a draft policy which was submitted to the CSO, who discussed the matter at a meeting in Oslo on September 4-5, 2013. The CSO requested a more detailed draft.

At the September meeting, the JWGC concluded on discouraging the establishment of a Barents culture prize. Instead it was recommended that the BEAC consider some sort of Barents scholarship scheme and that the working group may set up draft guidelines for such a scheme.

The chair briefed the CSO on the discussions and conclusions of the working group meeting at the CSO meeting in Oslo 8 October. The CSO took note of this, and requested that "the JWGC to work out a draft ToR for a Barents Culture Scholarship Scheme and to look into the possibilities of establishing a Barents Culture Prize."

- JWGC mandate and strategy for the Barents Cooperation 2014-2018

It was agreed that no great revision of the existing program "New Horizons in the Barents Region" be needed. Initial drafts have been discussed and a wish to change the

name from program to strategy and also amend period in accordance to the Barents program 2014- 2018. A new strategy document will be adopted in the spring of 2014. It was agreed that the Mandate should be updated accordingly. A draft for a new mandate will be presented to the CSO for formal approval.

- Follow ENPI

The ENPI- project “New Horizons” with 12 member regions and 25 partners and a result from the collaborations within the JWGC, started in January 2013. It has been a successful project within the fields of music, art, museum work, forum for meetings and young entrepreneurs.

The JWGC has been kept updated on progress and content of the work on the various projects within the ENPI program.

Also discussed during the meetings:

- the new Kirkenes declaration and the Barents Programme 2014- 2018 following some recommendations to the CSO.