



BEAC Joint Working Group on Education and Research **ANNUAL REPORT 2015**

JWGER membership and status: 14 Barents universities and research units acting as a network

Co-chairmanship by: Northern (Arctic) Federal University (Arkhangelsk, Russia) and University of Lapland (Rovaniemi, Finland)

Chairmanship period: 2013 – 2015

Chair: Marina Kalinina, NArFU Vice-Rector of International Cooperation

Co-Chair: Ms. Outi Snellman, UoL Director of International Relations

The annual report covers the period from January 1, 2015 till December 31, 2015 and is based on the previous interim reports/ newsletters and the member institutions' feedback.

In 2015 JWGER activities were coordinated by NArFU and UoL as co-chairs. The partner universities were committed to continue implementing the positive initiatives undertaken during the previous chairmanships aiming generally at strengthening academic cooperation in the Barents Region in response to growing local, regional and global challenges and needs in the field of human resources, research and innovation. In 2015 the JWGER overall performance and concrete actions were targeted to achieve the JWGER general tasks outlined in the JWGER Mandate with the special emphasis made on meeting the JWGER priorities stated in JWGER Action Plan for 2013-2015, in particular:

- Strengthening the JWGER membership and streamlining the strategy in response to new challenges and needs;
- Work in progress with BEAC Action Plan on climate change;
- Developing tools for academic mobility and academic cooperation in the Barents Region;
- Projects with other WGs of the BEAC to emphasize educational focus in their activities;
- Mapping-out synergy with other northern consortia and networks (e.g. the University of the Arctic, Northern Dimension Institute, etc.).

Major activities and outcomes:

1/ Compared with other Barents Working Groups organizationally the JWGER has a specific status in terms of (1) its membership represented by Barents educational and research institutions acting as a network on self-financing terms, (2) its operating on the national and regional level, (3) its co-chairmanship approach of the WG coordination by the two partner universities. In 2015 the JWGER co-chairs continued to take efforts to ensure organizational sustainability of the WG and involving new members. In total, 14 Barents academic and research organizations were involved in JWGER activities and information dissemination. The new member – Kajaani University of Applied Sciences – joined the group in November 2015 (see the JWGER members list at <http://www.beac.st/en/Working-Groups/Joint-Working-Groups/Education-and-Research>).

2/ **JWGER meeting** was held on June 4, 2015 hosted by Nordland University, Bodø, Norway. In total 15 delegates from 8 Russian and 2 Norwegian universities attended the meeting. The Head of International Barents Secretariat, was invited to the meeting as a keynote speaker. The meeting agenda priorities of the Barents cooperation, the role of the JWGER to respond the challenges of cooperation and provide expertise for the regional action plans, interim report of the group activities, the tools to expand academic mobility in the North, the contribution in the Finnish Communiqué on higher education and research cooperation, discussing the future JWGER activities (*for more details, please, see the JWGER meeting papers at BEAC web page*). The second JWGER meeting planned for November 2015 in Rovaniemi as a side event to Rovaniemi Process Conference was shifted to spring 2016 upon the decision of the hosting party (UoL) not to mix the agendas that was found reasonable by the WG coordinators. The next JWGER meetings has been scheduled for April 7th, 2016.

3/ Owing to the joint fundraising efforts undertaken by NArFU as JWGER Chair and University of Nordland as a partner institution that applied for the **joint Project Internationalization as a Resource of Barents Region Development** to the Norwegian Barents Secretariat and got co-financing, it became possible for 10 Russian members to participate in the *International Conference "Barents Region and Beyond: Internationalizing Higher Education"* held on June 2-3, 2015 in Bodø and organize the JWGER meeting as a side event to the conference. The JWGER members took an active part in the conference as speakers and attendees and participated in the debates on different aspects of internationalization i.e. the issues of diversity, intercultural communication, academic mobility, joint PhDs, globalization and internationalization from different perspectives with both theoretical and practical focus.

4/ The JWGER made a contribution to the Finnish Communiqué on BEAC Chairmanship Results (2013-2015) providing its results and future vision of cooperation.

5/ JWGER made proposals to the Russian Federation Chairmanship Programme and Action Plan for 2015-2017. A number of events and initiatives were included in the working plan.

6/ Ms Outi Snellman, JWGER Co-Chair participated in BEAC CSO meeting held in Helsinki in February 2015 with JWGER interim reporting.

7/ In the reporting period the previously launched projects and initiatives with **other Barents WGs** were successfully developed and concrete results achieved, namely:

i) Joint Project with *Regional Working Group on Environment / Subgroup on Clean Production and Environmental Consumption* (funded by Swedish Environmental Agency)
Objective: **Introducing Clean Production Methodology into the Educational Process of Russian Barents Universities**

Coordinators: NArFU and Moscow Center for Clean Production

Project milestones:

– 2013-2014: a series of international workshops in Arkhangelsk, Syktyvkar, Petrozavodsk and Murmansk were held

– 2014: development of new interdisciplinary courses on CPESC in each Russian university involved (NArFU, MSTU, PetrSU, SyktSU)

- 2015: publication of academic materials, teaching process, sharing experience

The first stage of the project was finalized in autumn 2015, the interim results were presented at the JWGER meeting. Some funding was received for the next stage. The follow-up international conference is planned for spring 2016 to be held at NArFU, Arkhangelsk.

The cooperation between JWGER and RWGE/SCPEC under the above project can be considered as a good example of achieving the synergy and getting much benefit by using the existing networks and uniting the resources in order to meet the goals of the both groups. The experience is worth disseminating and transmitting to other WGs.

ii) Two projects carried out in coordination with the Joint Working Group on Youth (co-chaired by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports of Arkhangelsk Region).

The Project “**Russian North – the Solovetsky Islands**” (August 28th, 2015 – September 2nd, 2015) funded by the RF Youth Federal Agency “ROSMOLODYEZH” and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat / BRYC Funding Programme had the overarching goal to promote youth cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and getting the young Barents leaders acquainted with the Russian North. The project got together the representatives of the Barents Regional Youth Council from Norway, Sweden, NW Russia (Arkhangelsk, Petrozavodsk, Syktyvkar), students from Lapland University and NArFU.

The key project events included a study trip to the Solovetsky Islands, a workshop “Russian North – Solovetsky Islands”, a round-table “Best Practices of Barents Youth Governance”, visiting the Youth House of Arkhangelsk Region and a number of venues set up to mark the Day of Knowledge celebrating the beginning of the academic year in Russia (<http://www.beac.st/news/Barents-Young-Leaders-explore-the-Russian-North/fl0xwy2s/e5b4e6f6-f8e2-412c-ad01-c892b6ef3c54>).

iii) **III International Belomorskiy Students Forum** (November 23 – 27, 2015 Arkhangelsk) organizationally and financially supported by the RF Ministry of Youth Affairs, Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Honorary Consulate of Norway in Arkhangelsk, Arkhangelsk Region Government.

The Forum united over 250 young people from 6 countries and 14 Russian cities. The panel discussion was devoted to the issues of international youth cooperation with the main idea to promote the Barents Region to the young representatives from all over Russia and abroad as a successful model of cross-border cooperation and attractive destination for studying and living. The educational exhibition Barents EDU enabled the participants to have a closer look at academic mobility opportunities in the North and presented the Barents Region as an attractive educational destination. At the sum-up session the students presented their projects titled My Model of International Cooperation (for more information see <http://www.beac.st/news/Students-Forum-in-Arkhangelsk-has-become-a-real-celebrity-and-promotion-arena-of-the-Barents-Youth-Cooperation/9629/46cd50a7-d350-49f7-b379-021d2c5bd788>)

iv) The preparatory arrangements started in 2015 for planning the **Ministerial Meeting on Transport** (BEATA) in Arkhangelsk to be held in July 2016 and hosted by NArFU through negotiations with RF Ministry of Transport.

8/ In 2015 it was viewed crucial to further develop Barents cooperation in the field of education, research and innovation by facilitating further internationalization of HEIs, enhancing students and staff exchanges, developing international educational programmes, summer schools, organizing discussion arenas and meeting points. In line with the Kirkenes Declaration 2.0 tasks, in 2015 the Barents universities continued to expand the students and staff academic mobility. In particular, in August, 2015 the **Barents PhD School** was organized in Umeå University (Abisko, Sweden) and hosted the young researchers from Tromsø of University – the Arctic University of Norway, Oulu University, NARFU, Umeå University, Northern State Medical University.

9/ Participation of Barents HEIs in Intergovernmental Working Groups on Education, in particular, Russian-Norwegian Intergovernmental Working Group on Education, Russian-Finnish Intergovernmental Working Group on Education and Research provided academia active role in decision-making on recognition issues, academic mobility, joint programmes and bilateral academic cooperation enhancement. The WG co-chairs have been involved into the UArctic feasibility study project to develop further the North-to-North program, Barents Plus program as well as to find additional resources through communication with the Arctic countries governments, to facilitate development of circumpolar mobility.

10/ The JWGER Action Plan defines the **WG contribution to implementation of Barents Action Plan on Climate Change** as a priority. The WG considers important to continue the activities towards increasing collaboration in the related applied interdisciplinary research projects to address climate challenges timely and in a proper way. The Barents HEIs are committed to further provide the related expertise within the on-going and future projects. However, some serious barriers are pointed out by the members that hinder the activities, namely: (1) lack of financing: the projects and activities in process are mostly carried out within on-going projects financed by universities. That would be reasonable to establish a special fund for implementing concrete tasks of the Action Plan on Climate Change; (2) insufficient interaction with Working Group on Environment for concrete joint actions (projects, conferences, workshops); (3) absence of data-base on BEAR research.

11/ The work was continued to further strengthen the links with existing networks, institutions and associations in the North and encourage the exchange of information, approaches and best results with other international cooperation models and consortia, like the working groups of the Arctic Council, the University of the Arctic, EU Northern Dimension partnerships.

On the basis of synergy approach and coherent regional mandates, a lot was achieved by networking within the **University of the Arctic** under joint events, initiatives and concrete projects, namely: UArctic Council meeting and UArctic Thematic networks, where most of the Barents HEIs actively participate, expertise for the Arctic Council Scientific Cooperation Task Force, expertise for ICARP III, The North-to-North+ Project, Rovaniemi Process Conference and some others.

EU Northern Dimension and its structures viewed as important instruments for expanding a dialogue of Barents Region with Baltic Sea Region and EU in general by means of such tools as on-going and future projects (Erasmus+, Kolarctic CBC 2014-2020, NCM, Horizon 2020); proposals to Kolarctic CBC Programme 2014-2018 strategic document; participating in Kolarctic CBC workshops, sharing best practices. **The Northern Dimension Institute**

co-coordinated by NArFU (Russia), St-Petersburg State University of Economics (Russia) and Aalto University (Finland) is expected to provide an added-value to JWGER activities through establishing a link with Baltic Sea Region academic institutions and facilitating networking and academic exchange, fund-raising and project work, promoting cooperation and coherence in the areas of mutual interest.

Possible cooperation areas: membership of the Barents HEIs in NDI, expertise to ND Partnerships, experience exchange between Baltic and Barents regional models, fund raising for joint projects.

12/ JWGER acted as a cooperation partner in the IBS application to NBS for the project on improving the cooperation of the Barents working groups called **BEAC Communication Development Project**. As a partner JWGER (NArFU, Arctic center of Lapland University, Syktyvkar State University, Kainuu Regional Council) have been involved into the project activities, project methodology development and outcomes analysis. The project was approved for funding, cooperation started in December 2015.

13/ **JWGER activities visualization**: JWGER is in close contact with IBS for placing the news at the JWGER web-page and News Section. An article on JWGER activities was submitted to the Barents Saga NewsLetter issued by International Barents Secretariat. The JWGER press releases were placed on NArFU, UoL, UArctic and NDI web-pages.

Marina Kalinina
BEAC JWGER Chair

Date: March 3rd, 2016

Place: Arkhangelsk