



2009-02-23

Minutes from the 9th meeting of the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWHGS) in Arkhangelsk, Russia, on the 13th November 2008

1. Opening the meeting

Ms. Kerstin Odman, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, and Tatyana Likhno, Health Care Department of Arkhangelsk Region Administration, the Co-Chairs of the JWHGS, opened the meeting. The participants of the meeting presented themselves. The list of participants is attached to these minutes.

2 Adoption of agenda

The draft agenda was sent to the participants for comments in advance. No comments were received before the meeting. The agenda was adopted.

3 Approval of Report from the JWHGS meeting held in Arkhangelsk, Russia, on the 27th March 2008

The report was approved.

4. Information about the latest developments of the Barents co-operation.

Ms Anna Lund, International Barents-Secretariat, informed about the coming ministerial meeting in Murmansk on the 14-15th of October 2009 at which the new programme for cooperation in Barents region will be approved. Russia will hand over the chairmanship to Sweden. Ms Lund noted that at present the database of Barents cooperation is being improved and suggested that brief reports concerning the JWGS activities and programmes "Children and youth at risk" and HIV/AIDS should be placed in the database. Furthermore, an opportunity for internal communication between the members of the JWHGS could be used on the website www.beac.st, if so wished. She also mentioned that the regions are now working on an application to the Interreg programme which also might be of interest to the JWHGS.

5 Report from Steering Committee for Barents HIV/AIDS Programme

Ms Outi Karvonen, programme coordinator, presented the report from the Steering Committee concerning Barents HIV/ AIDS Programme. An external evaluation had been implemented preliminary indicated very positive results. The JWHGS took note of the report. The presentation has been posted on www.beac.st.

6 Report from Steering Committee for Barents Programme “Children and youth at risk”(CYAR).

Ms Elena Evgenjevna Viktorova, deputy chairman of the Committee for Labour and Social Development in Murmansk Oblast, CYAR Programme coordinator, presented the report from Steering Committee for Barents Programme “Children and youth at risk”(CYAR). The Steering Committee will be searching the sources for financing the Programme “Children and youth at risk” in the regions and in the EU programme “European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument Kolarctic” (ENPI – Kolarctic) as well as in other organizations. The Chairmanship will arrange a meeting with International Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes to assess what assistance can be given for information purposes and promotion of the CYAR Programme. The Chairmanship will arrange the meeting with the Working Group of the Committee of the Baltic Sea Countries on Children for Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC), in order to make an agreement of systematic co-operation between the SC and WGCC. The Chairmanship will elaborate the presentation of the CYAR Programme for promotion and information purposes. If available resources allow it the Steering Committee should work with updating information on ongoing international projects on CYAR in the Barents region. The SC will arrange a conference on the issue of CYAR in 2009 given that necessary funding is guaranteed. The next meetings of the Steering Committee are planned to take part in Komi Republic in March 2009 and in Arkhangelsk in autumn 2009.

6a) Appointment of the chairman of the Steering Committee for Barents Programme “Children and youth at risk”(CYAR).

Pål Christian Bergstrøm, senior advisor, International cooperation in Barents region, Regional office for Children, Youth and family Affairs in Northern Norway was appointed the chairman of the Steering Committee for Barents Programme “Children and youth at risk”(CYAR).

7. Co-operation in the Barents region concerning health and social issues.

7a) Situation as regards to the TB situation in the Barents region. Reports by regional health administrations. Discussion on the need for initiatives of the JWGHS. (5-years’ assessment of the following up the Prime Ministers’ Declaration in Kirkenes in 2003 according to which the Barents authorities are to gain full control of the tuberculosis situation in the region within 10 years, i.e. 2013)

The meeting followed up a declaration by the Prime Ministers from 2003 aiming at gaining full control of the tuberculosis situation in the region within 2013.

TB expert and WHO-representative Mr. Andrei Maryandyshev, Northern State Medical University, reported that the results from the efforts in North West Russia on reducing new cases and using modern methods of the diagnostics and cure of the TB patients are positive. As an example, the number of new cases per 100 000 inhabitants in Arkhangelsk dropped from 73 in 2006 to 59 in 2007 compared to 82 and 83 in Russia as a whole.

A serious problem is the increasing cases world wide of multi resistant strains of TB bacteria. It is also at the very center of the attention of international cooperation and a reason for continued focus on TB in the Barents Cooperation, Maryandyshev explained. He listed four emergent needs of this work:

1. The threat of extensively-drug resistant (XDR) TB
2. The need of Molecular-genetic research
3. The need of a base of data on multi drug resistant TB in the Barents Region
4. The strengthening of cooperation on services in the penitentiary institutions

Professor Maryandyshev suggested that the goals on TB within the framework of the Barents Co-operation 2003-2013 should be:

1. Cure no less than 85% of the new TB multi resistant (*MDR*) cases including results of the treatment of the *MDR* TB patients
2. Identifying no less than 70% of cases of infection by methods using smear microscopy samples from patients
3. Preventive measures against cross border transmission of infection especially *MDR* and *XDR* TB

All the work on TB control should be done on the international level. The question rises concerning the establishing the Working group on TB issues. (The presentation has been posted on www.beac.st).

The JWGHS noted that important progress had been achieved, but at the same time much more needed to be done and that continued co-operation was necessary. It was decided to discuss this at the meeting of the Joint Working Group on Health and Socially Related Issues in Umea, Sweden on the 5 May 2009. Up to that meeting the co-chairs, together with Professor Maryandyshev are to elaborate proposals based on his recommendations and proposals made in the discussion. Relevant bodies were to be consulted.

7 b) Information from regional and national representatives on current and future co-operation in other areas. Further steps to encourage co-operation

Ms Nadezhda Fedorovna Kuznetsova, Centre for Medical Statistics, presented the information on the project being implemented in the Arkhangelsk region within Barents cooperation. There are about 20 projects altogether. The main results of international collaboration are the establishment of regional net of telemedicine, development of high-tech medical aid in cardiology, improvement of the quality of psychiatric aid, development of nursing, the work of “Arkhangelsk bus of trust”(prevention of HIV and STI among youth and vulnerable groups), establishment of the rehabilitation unit for patients with multiple sclerosis and stroke in Arkhangelsk Regional clinical hospital. International projects play a vital role in professional growth and competence-building as well as in research and introduction of the new methods of work.

Ms Svetlana Eduardovna Presnova, Ministry of Healthcare, Murmansk region presented the information on the activities of Ministry of Healthcare in Murmansk region on coordinating international projects. Implementation of international projects not only allows to get acquainted with

achievement in medicine and improve material and technical base of medical-preventive institutions, but also to introduce new modern medical-preventive and organizational technologies in healthcare institutions. Besides, international project running in Murmansk region are closely interrelated with current reforms in the healthcare system of Russia. The priority of international cooperation is given to the following directions:

- Protection of motherhood and childhood
- Preventive drug-addiction and HIV
- Chronic obstructive lung disease
- Primary healthcare
- Improvement of medical services for indigenous population
- Rehabilitation

Ms Maria Waltari, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland, briefly presented the information on international collaboration in Finland. The main sphere of international collaboration are infectious diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyle among youth, decreasing of alcohol and drug addiction, improving of social well-being of the population. Since the budget for neighbouring area co-operation for 2009 is lower than that for 2008, new projects are not planned. It is important to continue and accomplish the on-going projects. Ms Waltari emphasized the importance of project evaluation and information exchange. Finland will provide financial support to the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being.

Mr Arnt Uchermann, special advisor, Northern Norway Regional Health Authority, presented information on participation of the Northern Norway in the international collaboration. He noted that important events happen in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions, Arkhangelsk and Tromsø being the most active participants of cooperation. The meeting of health authorities from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions and Northern Norway on the 26-30th June 2008 was a kind of evaluation of the international activity in these regions. The following projects are planned: preparation of postgraduate education of GPs, treatment and rehabilitation of stroke patients. Not so many financial means are allotted to medical research, the finances go mainly to practical aspects. There are negotiations with Murmansk region on patient transportation and mutual help in accidents happening at the border territories.

Mr Magne Johnsen, director of medical service, University Hospital in Northern Norway, informed of the coming meeting of health authorities from Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions and Northern Norway on the questions of international collaboration, and prevention, diagnostics and treatment of cardiovascular diseases in Tromsø on 11th December 2008.

Ms Kerstin Odman, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden, informed that there are not many projects with Sweden's participation now. Among them is the planned 4th Barents conference on Psychiatry in Luleå on the 17-19 March 2009. Ms Odman underlined that Sweden is still interested in continuing the cooperation, but on other terms. At present there is no possibility to allot huge financial means as well as take part in bilateral cooperation. Ms Odman believes that cooperation of universities in the field of research and teaching can be continued. Due to decrease in financing the international projects it is important to use the resources of European Union and to search for new ways of cooperation.

Ms Nadezhda Fedorovna Kuznetsova, Centre for medical Statistics, Arkhangelsk, noted that the long-term collaboration of the Arkhangelsk Region and Sweden in the field of primary healthcare was successful. At present the final seminar within the Russian-Swedish project "Educating

young psychiatrists in management” is being held. At the support of the Swedish government two more projects continue, namely the internet communication of GPs from Sweden and the Arkhangelsk Region and the Russian-Swedish project on introducing clinical audit into general practice. All this contributes to professional growth of the medical personnel, improvement of the quality of medical and preventive aid.

Mr. Pål Christian Bergstrøm, senior advisor, International cooperation in Barents region, Regional office for Children, Youth and family Affairs in Northern Norway, presented the information on the current international projects in the social sphere. There about 30 projects, most of which are short-term. Among the long-term projects Mr. Bergstrøm mentioned the project “Incredible years” which started in Republic of Karelia in 2004, and now covers both Karelia and the Murmansk Region for the period. The project aims at creating and functioning of the “Murmansk Centre of social support to family and children” – the centre of educating parents having children aged 3-8 years with behaviour problems. The programme aims to strengthen parental skills, decreasing behavioral problems in children and preventing children’s neglect. Even at the early stage the programme showed wonderful results, and by 2009 the project is planned to be spread in 9 cities of the North-West of Russia. Another large project is directed at the development of residential care of children with behavioral problems. Since 2006 in the Republic of Karelia the project on competence exchange in aggression replacement goes on. In 2008 30 specialists of correctional facilities will finish their education. In January 2009 there begins a programme on help to adolescents with behavioral problems. Other regions in the North-West of Russia express their interest, too. Unfortunately, in 2007 the long-term cooperation of foster families finished. It is one of the important directions of collaboration in the Barents Region and Norway is open to suggestions on further interactions in this field.

Mr Oddvar Larsen, special advisor, Northern Norway Regional Health Authority, remarked that international collaboration is based on time-limited projects. The development of long-term cooperation and implementation of the results of the project into practice after the projects are finished is of particular importance. It is necessary to plan long-term financing of the projects.

8 a) Report on the progress of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being.

Ms Vibeke R. Gundersen, senior advisor, Ministry of Health and Care Service, Norway, presented the report on development of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being. According to the external evaluation of Partnership, the work done over 2008 is vivid and well-organized. At the same time the question raises the question of the future strategy and direction of the Partnership. At the meeting of the Committee of Senior Representatives in Germany in September, main issues were the evaluation, the annual work-plan and the budget. The Partnership Annual Conference (PAC) was to take place on 19 November 2008 in Canada. Next year’s PAC is planned in Oslo on the 25th of November 2009, with a side event most probably focusing on prison health (including topics like HIV/ AIDS, chronic diseases, and primary healthcare in prisons). The PAC in Canada will be devoted to evaluation of the current events and planning the activities for 2009. A side event on indigenous people’s health will be arranged.

8 b) The Barents project database and the NDPHS database – update.

Ms Vibeke R. Gundersen informed that information on the activities of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being is placed on the web-page of the Partnership. Funding from the Norwegian Barents Health Programme is now channeled through the project pipeline on the Partnership's webpage.

Ms Gundersen noted that the Russian partners can apply for financing through the pipeline provided there is also a Norwegian partner in the project.

Ms Maria Waltari, senior officer, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, Finland, noted that the database of Barents Secretariat merged with the database of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being. However the database of Barents Secretariat contains outdated information, which needs to be updated.

9. Any other business

Ms Anna Lund, informed about a letter to the IBS from a doctor living in Kirkenes concerning the organization of a unified system of patient and medicaments transportation over the borders in accidents. Medical staff at the border territories should know the language. Ms. Lund also noted that tourism is increasingly developing in the Barents Region, the number of transborder tourists is growing.

Mr Janove Sehlin, medical doctor, Professor in the Department of IMB, Umeå University, noted that cooperation between Norway, Sweden and Russia and the educating programmes in the field of traffic accidents already exist. In particular, there are programmes on educating anesthesiologists in Kirkenes. Such cooperation could be extended.

Ms Svetlana Eduardovna Presnova remarked that at present in the Ministry of Health in the Russian Federation a unified standard of delivery of the medical aid on all kinds of nosologies, including resuscitation and anesthesiology, is being developed. In any case, cooperation in this field could be continued in the Barents Region

10. Next meeting

The JWGHS agreed to hold its next meeting in Umeå, Sweden, on 5 May 2009.

11. Closing of the meeting

The co-chairs thanked all those present for the participation in the 9th meeting of the Joint Working Group on health and Related Social Issues and announced the meeting closed. Ms Kerstin Odman expressed her gratitude to the Arkhangelsk hosts for their warm welcome and excellent organization of the meeting.

Joint Working group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS) meeting in Arkhangelsk on 13 November 2008

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