



BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL

BARENTS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Mandate for the Joint Working Group on Youth (JWGY)

1. Introduction

The Conference of Ministers responsible for youth policy in the member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, met in Tromsø, Norway, 14 – 16 May 2001 and adopted a Plan of Action which formed the Working Group on Youth Policy.

A youth conference was organized parallel to the Conference of Ministers responsible for youth. The participants of the youth conference were recruited from 13 regions and young indigenous peoples and was the start of the Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC).

At the meeting of the Barents Regional Council in September 2001, it was decided to draw up a youth program for the Barents Region. The first Barents Regional Youth Program was adopted in 2002 and as a result the Regional Working Group on Youth Issues was established in April 2003.

The two working groups established a close cooperation and during the Swedish Chairmanship (2009-2011), the two were merged into the Joint Working Group on Youth (JWGY). The first meeting of the Joint Working Group on Youth was held in Oslo 2 – 4 November 2011.

At the 25-year anniversary in Luleå in April of 2018 a set of ideas and suggestions to enhance youth perspectives were put forth. The Joint Working Group on Youth was selected to coordinate the process of developing the ideas from the conference into recommendations. This Mandate replaces the former documents Plan of Action and Terms of Reference.

2. Priority areas of cooperation

The Joint Working Group on Youth will promote youth engagement in all areas of the Barents cooperation. The overall aim is to stimulate co-operation between the governments and regions within the Barents region, with a view to developing youth policies which are likely to ensure young people's successful integration into society, with reference to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The objectives and tasks of the Working Group are to:

- Enhance the cross-sectorial youth policy
- Strengthen the dialogue between the young people and the decision makers
- Increase the knowledge in the current youth issues in the region by promoting the cooperation between all structures
- Promote and support multilateral cooperation between youth groups and non-governmental youth organizations in the region

To achieve the objectives, the Working Group has to develop and promote the following fields of action:

Enhance the cross-sectorial youth policy in order to spread the information with in the region and young people

- increase the knowledge of the current situation of young people in the region;
- promote the living conditions of young people in the region;
- strengthen the rights of indigenous young people and minorities;
- encourage young people to stay in the region or return to the region after completing their education;
- facilitate the transition from education to employment;
- facilitate internships and stimulate entrepreneurship of young people, and innovation

Strengthen the dialogue between young people and decision makers in order to

- promote the freedom of expression to all young people;
- strengthen the civil society development and democracy in the Barents region;
- encourage young people to play an active role in the society
- establish and further develop connections between the Barents Regional Youth Council members and local and regional authorities.

Increase the knowledge in the current youth issues in the region by promoting the cooperation between all structures

- make greater use of the synergies with and between other working groups and structures of the Barents region

Promote and support multilateral cooperation between young people and youth organizations in the region in order to

- promote people-to-people contacts;
- take all possible measures to facilitate cross-border mobility of young people;
- foster positive involvement and interaction at the national and international levels;
- enhance cultural and educational exchanges;
- support the development of skills and competencies of young people necessary for active citizenship

An important actor towards the active involvement of young people in the Barents cooperation is the Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC). The youth council has an important role to secure the participation of youth. Support from all regions to their respective representative in BRYC is crucial for the future of this youth forum, and the Joint Working Group on Youth shall promote and support BRYC as a whole.

3. Method of work

The Joint Working Group on Youth shall choose the working methods, which are the most appropriate in order to meet a particular objective and which are in line with financing possibilities. This may include a number of different actions such as appointing consultative experts groups/task forces, using experts, organizing conferences or seminars and involving educational and scientific institutions, cultural and non-governmental organizations etc.

The Joint Working Group on Youth shall meet twice a year, held in parallel with the meetings of BRYC, where possible. In the event of a need for additional meetings, such meetings may be held via Skype or similar means. Other means of exchanging information about current issues can be used as a complement to meetings. If desired, sub-groups or task forces may be formed in order to manage tasks between meetings of the Working Group or perform special activities.

The meetings of the Joint Working Group on Youth are preferably held in the chair country of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. However, in case it would bring synergies to arrange related back-to-back meetings outside the chair country this could also be an alternative.

All relevant documents should be published at the BEAC website.

The Joint Working Group on Youth shall report on its activities to the Committee of Senior Officials and the Barents Regional Council annually.

The chairs of the Joint Working Group on Youth set up the necessary secretariat functions, in order to secure solid and efficient working methods at and in between the meetings.

4. Decision-making

All decisions shall be made by consensus and be included in the minutes of the meeting.

5. Language

The working language of the Joint Working Group of Youth is English.

6. Membership

Members of the Joint Working Group on Youth should be nominated by:

- each of the regional entities, which are members of BRC
- the competent national authorities of the countries which are members of BEAC
- the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples

The following bodies may send representatives as observers to the JWGY meetings:

- the International Barents Secretariat (IBS)
- the Norwegian Barents Secretariat
- Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC)

In addition, regional or international organizations may send observers to the Working Group upon invitation.

The Chair may invite experts and cover related costs, where needed, to assist the JWGY during meetings or other activities.

7. Chairmanship

In order to enhance an active participation between the actors in the Joint Working Group on Youth, the Chairmanship should be jointly shared between national and regional levels. The chairmanship shall follow the rotation of BEAC and BRC, unless decided otherwise, with a national government representative and a representative of a regional authority or administrative entity working together.

8. Financing

Travel and accommodation is paid by each member of the working group. All other costs related to the meetings is paid by the Chairmanship.

Apart from JWGY meetings, the group should make use of EU financing instruments, such as the Erasmus+ programme, and other funds, e.g. the Council of Europe Youth Foundation and the Nordic Council of Ministers financing instruments, NORDBUK and others, whenever possible. The annual work plan for the working group should also include an indication about the financial sources of the planned activity.

9. Communication

The Chairmanship communicates regularly on the activities (meetings, projects) to the IBS and informs the IBS on any changes in the composition of the WG.

Upon invitation the Chairmanship will regularly report the Working Groups activities at the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials' meetings and the Regional Committee meetings

Upon invitation the Chairmanship will attend information exchange meetings for the Chairs of the Working Groups together with the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials and the Regional Committee Chairmanships.

Updated information for the website will be provided to IBS for publishing.

When communicating youth issues in social media the working group will use #barensyouth.

10. Reporting

The Chairmanship is responsible for submitting the annual report of the Working Group to the IBS by the end of December each year and before the biennial Ministerial Meeting. In case the Chair has changed during the year, the vice-chair or the person who acted as the Chair most of the year is responsible for submitting the report.

The annual report should describe the activities, which have been undertaken during the past calendar year. The focus should be on the issues discussed, the results achieved, possible challenges encountered by the group as well as a work plan for the next calendar year. The report ahead of Ministerial Meetings should describe activities and results during the Chairmanship period.

The Chairmanship should submit all meeting reports and other reporting documents to IBS for inclusion in the internal document archive.

11. Duration

The mandate of the Joint Working Group on Youth will be reviewed at least once in every five years. On the basis of this assessment the mandate may be amended, prolonged or re-evaluated.

12. Amendment and review

The Joint Working Group of Youth will review its mandate at least once in every five years and make the needed amendments. The revised mandates should be approved by the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials and by the Regional Committee

This mandate has been approved and accepted by **NAME.** on the **DATE.**