

Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC) Annual Report 2010

Joint Chairmen : Mikael Schultz (replacing Pia Erson), Sweden
Lidia Butorina (replacing Irina Gubina), Arkhangelsk

The group - JWGC – held one meeting during 2010: September 22-24 in Umeå, Sweden

In addition to the regional cultural administrations, the JWGC includes the representatives of the Finnish, Norwegian, Russian and Swedish ministries responsible for culture and one member from the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples.

Activities are based on the Second Program of Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Region for 2008-2010: *New Winds in the Barents Region*. Cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue are seen as tools for regional, social and economic development. The challenge is to boost international visibility and to develop cooperation within the EU Northern Dimension Policy and the EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan for Culture.

The Culture Competence Cluster 2008-2009 on development of culture management is one of the success stories of the cooperation on culture.

The JWGC agreed on a prolongation of the Mandate for 2011-2013. The secretariat will finalize the administrative process and inform relevant bodies in BEAC/BRC. Some few updates in the current mandate should be made. As the current one, this mandate will be assessed after three years.

It was decided that the second program of cultural cooperation in the Barents region “New Winds in the Barents Region” will form the basis for the next three-year program. The intent is to build on the existing program as much as possible and adjust where needed. The wish to find cooperation possibilities with the NDPC, to state more clear priorities as well as to integrate the part B into part A were items that were discussed and decided to be guiding the concrete wordings of the new program. The role of the IBS will be added including the need for information on basic research/new knowledge in the region. It is also important to include some words on the importance of the independents networks of the cultural institutions in the region. A “task force” with representatives from one region from each country together with one national representative and an executive officer from the IBS was created. The purpose of the “task force” is to prepare a draft of the new program to be presented to the JWGC at the next meeting in Archangelsk in April 2011.

Of interest for the JWGC the Northern Dimension Partnership on Culture (NDPC). The EU, the Russian Federation, Norway and Iceland are partners in the Northern Dimension (ND) policy. Within this framework a work on creating a partnership on culture was initiated in 2007. The purpose of NDPC is to promote cultural cooperation and creative industries in the ND. A Memorandum of Understanding for NDPC was signed at a Cultural Forum in St Petersburg in May 2010. The NDPC steering committee is now preparing an Action Plan for 2010-2013 and is consequently discussing possible concrete projects to include in the activities.

The EU recently published a green paper on cultural and creative industries – something which clearly illustrates that the topic lies high on many countries' agendas. An ND Ministerial meeting in Norway in November took the final decision in order to put NDPC into place with a small secretariat starting in the beginning of 2011.

It was concluded that there are many common interests for the JWGC and NDPC. Therefore, the JWGC will work for finding fruitful cooperation with NDPC in the future as well as jointly finding synergies with other regional structures as NDPC, NMC, CBSS and AC.

Plans for 2011:

- Creation of a new Barents Culture Cooperation Program for 2010-2013 to replace the old: *New Winds in the Barents Region*
- Renewal of the mandate of the JWGC
- To convene the next JWGC meeting in April 2011 in Arkhangelsk.

Updates from WGIP and regions

Working Group of Indigenous People (WGIP)

Jevgenij Jushkov (The Barents Indigenous Peoples Office – BIPO) presented the Action Plan (2009-2012), adopted by the Working Group of Indigenous People (WGIP) in January 2009. Within the area of culture the WGIP agreed on three priorities:

- The establishment of scholarships and support of exchange for indigenous artists
- The establishment of scholarships and general support of sports activities for indigenous people
- Support for meeting arenas such as annual festivals, seminars etc.

The Republic of Komi

Vladimir Yurkovskiy presented current issues and projects in the region. The Republic of Komi has been very active within the Barents cooperation network. Komi has participated in BEAC and has established contacts between theaters and libraries as well as contacts within the field of virtual communication. In 2008, representatives of Komi participated in the Barents Regional Council on Culture in Arkhangelsk which resulted in three bigger projects.

The Ethno Culture Centre of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug

Valentina Zganich presented current issues and projects. Reindeer herding is the traditional livelihood of the Nenets people. The Ethno Culture Centre of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug tries to preserve traditional culture. Traditional singing, language and reindeer herding are the main areas for the preservation efforts. Professional art is not yet very developed in the region. The Culture Center tries to arrange seminars and workshops as well as invite specialists from other regions and introduce more modern methods in handicraft.

The Center has been in contact with Sami people in the Murmansk region to develop traditional handicraft and has plans to contact Sami in Norway also. The Center also negotiates with various Sami education centers. Both Sami and Nenets are reindeer herding

people. If a cooperation project is implemented the traditional raw materials can be used in a more effective way and it can bring more income to the reindeer herders.

Another project focuses on traditional singing. One of the issues at hand is that young people do not want to study the Nenets language. The Center tries to influence young people to learn the language through traditional singing. A small music festival was recently organized in Arkhangelsk and there are ideas to arrange another festival in Nayan Mar. Through these efforts the young people can be involved in Nenets culture.

The Republic of Karelia

Yaroslava Borozdina presented current issues and projects in the region. A new governor as well as a new government has been elected in Karelia. One of the priorities is to preserve traditional culture. This year Karelia celebrates its 90 years anniversary and in connection to this there will be a “Cavalcade of Art” in cooperation with Oulu and Lapland. In 2011 the project of a Craft Business Incubator creation in Karelia is under way. The goals of the project are: business consulting and education, teaching of craft and souvenir production technologies, expert examination and enhancement of the projects, souvenirs production.

The Republic of Arkhangelsk

Lidia Butorina presented current issues and projects in the region. In the Arkhangelsk national park prioritized areas are nature protection as well as protection of villages and their traditions. Project priorities are Children and Youth. An international reading forum for these groups is under development. An open invitation to participate was made.

A new Northern (Arctic) University has been established in Arkhangelsk. It will be Russia’s center for education and research on the Arctic. The main motives for the establishment are protection of Russia’s geopolitical and economic interests in Northern Europe and the Arctic. Rural areas should be prioritized in the New Barents Culture Program.

Troms

Eirin Gjelsås presented current issues and projects in the region. Agreements on culture have been signed with many cities in the Barents region. Opening of the Norwegian Honorary consulate in Arkhangelsk in September this year. Norway wish to extend the regional cooperation between Norway and Russia. Northern Norway was represented by 30 representatives at the Russian - Norwegian Cultural Forum in Arkhangelsk. There is a lot of cooperation with Arkhangelsk. High North Artist in Residence program – new program started between Troms – Arkhangelsk. To be extended in order to cover the whole Barents Region. An ongoing literature exchange between the two regions has been established. Cooperation between northern Norway and northern Finland is desirable. The organisation and adaption of infrastructure is crucial for cooperation. Other Barents related projects are: Ordkalotten – Tromsø International Festival in October, every year authors from the Barents Region participate. Tromsø International Film festival has visited all cities in the Barents region; a Youth Film festival with participants from the whole Barents region and the Indigenous festival that celebrates its 20th year Anniversary. The Indigenous festival is a significant festival in Troms that will open an office in Moscow. Insomnia is a festival for innovative electronic music – which means music created with electronic contraptions. Tromsø is renowned for breeding innovative artists within the electronic music field. Large

participation from - among others - Barents Region. It's a focuses on creative industries. Entrepreneurship connected to young people shows good results. Two examples to highlight are Arctic Young Art Connection and Barents Film Academy Barents Film Academy – both new potential multilateral project.

Nordland

Nina Badendyck and Randi Lervik presented current issues and projects in the region. Cooperation has been concentrated to St Petersburg in Leningrad region. Film and contemporary visual arts are prioritized areas in cooperation and cultural agreement in northern Norway. Nordland is working with two strategies. Cultural heritage and tourism is one project where they try to include entrepreneurship. The region also focuses on creative industries. In the future, entrepreneurship connected to young people is a possible area of development as a strategy to make Nordland attractive for young people. They want to vitalize the library cooperation that has worked very well and also work more with theater projects. Next year there will be a project on visual art: “Big art in small places”.

Finnmark

Karoline Andreassen presented current issues and projects in the region. The region has a lot of small projects and individual initiatives working across the borders. For example, Finnmark has a good library cooperation with Murmansk. The region also organizes “Finnmark days” in Murmansk and vice versa. In September of 2010, a Finnmark delegation visited Arkhangelsk to sign an agreement. One of the major projects in 2011 will be “Stage Finnmark”. The government has provided the region with one million NOK for the project.

Lapland

Katja Rakkolainen presented current issues and projects in the region. Cultural activities and exchanges are very dynamic areas in the region. Lapland has a lot of cooperation between cultural institutions. Lapland has many bilateral and multilateral projects with Sweden and the Russian Federation. For example a puppet theater tour, a film project with Komi, an Indigenous People’s project that is an educational project with Sweden and Murmansk, “the Barents Veteran Project” and “the Barents Fine Art Project”.

The region is planning to organize an international event with northern writers in 2012 in Kajaani. The JWGC will be kept informed.

Oulu

Kimmo Suortamo presented current issues and projects in the region. Oulu has a long and productive cooperation with Karelia. In the future the region will have a bigger project called 11*12 and they are in the process of planning the details. Oulu is starting a cooperation with the Barents Literature Center and hopes that the Center will be a center for the whole region. “Music on top” is a youth project with Norrbotten that has been going on for two years. In October of 2010 there will be a decision from EU about financing a dance project with dancers from Finland, Norway and Sweden. The project proposal is to offer a performance in each country.

Finland

Maija Lummpuro added some information to what the Finnish regions had presented. The XI International Finno-Ugric Literatures Congress was held in Oulu 26–28 August 2010. In the beginning of October 2010 Finland will host the 11th Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum that focuses this year especially on library cooperation. Over 300 participants are expected.

Norrbottn

Kerstin Hamre presented current issues and projects in the region. “Music on top” is a successful cooperation. A new application for three more years is being put together. In October 2010 a new project called “Dance and Performing Arts” will begin. “Barents route 3” is a project with the Murmansk region, Arkhangelsk and others. A three year interregional project has been implemented. Norrbotten, Norway and Finland are cooperating to have mobile exhibitions. The Swedish government is changing the system of the allocation process of state funding of arts and culture giving more responsibilities to the regions. From January 2011 there will be five regions in Sweden that will launch this way of working and Norrbotten is the northernmost region. In this process, Norrbotten focuses on the Barents region and have made an inventory on culture in the County of Norrbotten. Norrbotten County Council has showed an interest in establishing a center for culture. There are suggestions to make this a center for culture in the Barents region.

Västerbottn

Anette Sundbom presented current issues and projects in the region. From January 1st, 2011, most areas of the Department of Growth and Regional Development which includes the office of Cultural Affairs will move from the County Council to the Regional Association of Västerbottn. Two Barents projects were presented by the project managers; “Reggae Rock and Rights Tour” and “Rock Art in Sápmi”. The first project is a Barents youth project that aims to raise awareness about youth rights, share different cultures, strengthen the Barents identity and empower youth in their communities. The main objective of the second project is to raise awareness of northern cultural traditions and in different ways transfer this knowledge into the present time and consequently learn more about each other.