



2008-05-13

## **Minutes from the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Joint Working on Health and Related Social Issues in Arkhangelsk, Russia, on 27 March 2008**

### **1. Opening of 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 WGHS opened the meeting and informed the participants that this WGHS meeting is being held at the same time with the big conference organised by the Pomor University under the financing of SIDA. The conference is devoted to the role of international cooperation on increasing of territory living standard.

### **2 Presentation of the participants of the meeting**

There were quick presentations of the participants at the meeting. The list is attached to these minutes.

### **3 Adoption of agenda**

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

Ms. Laila Dalhaug, Adviser from Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes, made a proposal to include into the agenda the report on the results of the research on the project data base. It was agreed to include this information in item 10b).

The proposed agenda was adopted.

### **4 Approval of Report from the WGHS meeting held in Murmansk on October 17, 2007**

The report was approved.

### **5. Information about the latest developments of the Barents co-operation.**

#### **Mr. Anton Vasiliev, Chairman of the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials (CSO):**

Since November 2007 the Russian Federation is the Chair of BEAC. Much has been done during the period of Barents cooperation (in January 2008 we celebrated 15-year anniversary of Kirkenes declaration). We have presented BEAC organizational structure and explained the relationships between its different divisions. At present we are studying the reports of the Working Group for year 2007. Judging by the results the WGHS should be acknowledged as one of the most efficient. The Programme for the period of the Russian Federation co-chairmanship in BEAC is represented on the BEAC web-page ([www.beac.mid.ru](http://www.beac.mid.ru)).

The Programme's priorities are the stable development of the Barents Region with emphasis on social and economical sectors; solving the environmental problems and support of ingenious

people. The priorities in health care are: strategy development and introduction of preventive actions on forming healthy lifestyle; improvement of medical care accessibility, prevention and combat against socially significant diseases (TB, HIV); arrangement of conferences and round table discussions of questions concerning improvement of health and social conditions.

In January 2008, in accordance with intergovernmental agreement, the International Barents Secretariat was established in Kirkenes (Norway).

At present there are only 2 persons on the Secretariat's staff: Alexandr Ignatiev (Russia) and Anna Lund (Sweden). There are plans to add new appointments and one representative from Norway. Establishment of Secretariat allows carrying out the work on a higher level. At the same time we should realize that secretarial work of all working groups can not be done only by 2 persons.

The nearest activity in the framework of Barents cooperation is the meeting of the Senior Officials Committee which will take place in Moscow on the 8-9th of April, 2008. During this meeting the participants are going to solve the concrete issues, consider the possible relations between the Working Groups and Secretariat, determine Secretariat's role.

Mr. Vasiliev invited the co-chairs of the Working Group to participate in this meeting. For the present moment Secretariat has renovated the web-page. Secretariat is expected to carry out informational work, accumulate all news, reports, notices and plans of the Working Group. This work will be implemented on a regular basis.

In conclusion Mr. Vasiliev wished every success to WGHS and noted the importance of implemented projects for all regions. It was emphasized that during the realization of all the plans both the individuality of each region and the community of interests of the people living in the Barents Region are taken into account. Another positive aspect of WGHS work is cooperation with other international organizations – WHO, Northern Dimension, EU, since it's important to use all available resources when we are looking for the financial sources.

#### **6 a) The new Co-operation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region 2008 – 2011. Mandate of the WGHS.**

**Ms. Tatyana Likhno, co-Chair, informed that the new Cooperation programme was welcomed at 11<sup>th</sup> ministerial meeting held in November 2007 in Rovaniemi. In future work members of the WGHS will follow the Programme recommendations in accordance with the Mandate (2.7.2.)**

#### **6 b) WGHS Work programme for 2008.**

**Ms. Kerstin Odman, Swedish Chair of the WGHS, presented the work programme to the participants:**

**Meetings****WGHS**

- in Arkhangelsk 27 March 2008
- in Arkhangelsk November 2008

**Steering Committee for HIV/AIDS Programme**

- in Oslo 10-11 March 2008
- (prel.) in Komi in October 2008

**Steering Committee for the Framework Programme on Children and Youth at Risk**

- in Arkhangelsk 27 March 2008 (preliminary Steering Committee)
- in Arkhangelsk in November 2008, preliminarily combined with a Conference in support of the programme

**Sub-programmes**

- Barents HIV/AIDS programme
- Barents Framework Programme on Children and Youth at Risk (CYAR) will be decided at the WGHS meeting on 27 March 2008

**Development of the situation in the health care and social sector**

- Follow-up of the situation in the countries and regions in the Barents area
- Follow-up of international co-operation in the Barents area

**Database/webpage**

- Further development of the database and webpage jointly with the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)

The work programme was adopted.

**The framework programme "Children and Youth at Risk", CYAR****7 a) Presentation of amendments, discussion and adoption of the programme**

The framework programme "Children and Youth at Risk" was sent to the participants before the meeting for comments and proposals. Only Swedish partners sent their comments.

**Ms. Kerstin Odman, in capacity of representative of Sweden, informed the participants about Swedish proposals for amendments.** They were adopted by the meeting. There were some additions suggested by the participants:

**Mr. Bjarne Store-Jacobsen, Chairperson WGIP,** suggested to include indigenous peoples into the programme.

**Mr. Göran Carlsson,** Executive Director East Europe Committee of the Swedish Health Care Community, suggested to rearrange in section 10 of the Programme the UN bodies in the list of cooperation initiatives to read: "UN organizations including but not limited to WHO and UN-ICEF programme in the Russian Federation etc....."

**Mr. Lars-Gunnar Lööf,** Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS), Children's Unit, Working Group of Cooperation on Children at Risk (WGCC), suggested to add to point 6 two more paragraphs:

- 1) All activities within the CYAR programme shall take into account gender differences, i.e. the different circumstances facing boys and girls in the region.
- 2) Children and young people themselves shall as far as possible be involved both in developing the CYAR programme in its implementation and in the projects run under the programme.

The meeting adopted the suggested proposals.

### **7 b) Decision on the structure for the implementation of the programme.**

**Ms. Kerstin Odman** informed the meeting about the Co-Chairs' Proposal on the structure for the implementation and running of the Framework Programme on Children at Risk

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At present there seem to be no financial resources available to such an extent that a permanent "Children's Unit" or other daily co-ordinating body can be financed. The Co-Chairs therefore consider it unrealistic to include such a body in the decision on the programme at present.

We would therefore like to propose a more gradual establishment and development of the programme. This would first of all make it possible for the programme to start, and furthermore, a start would facilitate the gradual identification of resources and support.

A Steering Committee is proposed for the co-ordination and management of the programme. It should start the implementation of the programme in a limited area to be identified by the Steering Committee itself and develop the cooperation during an initial period. It should report back to the WGHS with proposals on how to further develop the implementation of the programme and what resources would be needed.

The work to be done would have to be shared among the participants of the Steering Committee. In addition, they are expected to share information concerning the situation in their region/country.

Members of the Steering Committee should come from the Barents partners. Also other relevant organisations should be invited to participate, such as the Council of Baltic Sea States Working Group on Co-operation in Children at Risk, and relevant local/regional and international NGOs.

The participants approved the proposal.

### **7 c) Adoption of a mandate for a programme Steering Committee**

**Ms. Kerstin Odman**, presented Proposal for a temporary mandate for the Steering Committee for the Framework Programme on Children and Youth at Risk (CYAR)

After the discussion it was adopted in the following version:

### Tasks

- Adopt a work plan with priorities for the gradual implementation of the CYAR programme with tasks and responsibilities
- Develop the co-operation in accordance with the resources of the Steering Committee
- Identify development and funding opportunities
- Co-ordinate with other relevant international bodies
- Report to WGHS

### Members

- Chair
- Co-chair
- Representatives of the Barents Partners

Further, the Steering Committee may invite as advisory members:

- Representatives from co-funding countries and/or agencies
- Representatives from the major projects/implementing agencies
- Representatives of similar programmes in the same or neighbouring area
- Representatives of local, regional and international NGOs active in the Barents Region

The Chair clarified that Indigenous Peoples are included in the notion of “Barents Partners”.

### 7 d) Appointment of Chair for the Steering Committee

**Ms. Berit Sunnerö**, Director of Social Affairs of County Administrative Board of Norrbotten, Sweden, suggested Lisbeth Wiklund from Lulea Social Service Administration, Sweden,

**Ms. Elena Viktorova** also supported the proposed candidate.

Member of the WGHS adopted Lisbeth Wiklund to be the Chair of the Steering Committee.

### 8. Report from the Barents HIV/AIDS programme Steering Committee

**Ms. Outi Karvonen**, Barents HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, reported about the projects' implementation.

In 2007 there were 2 meetings of the Steering committee held in Helsinki and Murmansk.

By the end of 2007 the programme had had: 16 on-going projects, 9 projects are in the list of consideration and 4 completed projects. In September 2007 the pilot project aimed at the development of Low Threshold Services in Murmansk was evaluated. It received a very positive estimation due to its effectiveness and proper organisation.

#### 1. Activities in 2008

##### Coordination of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme

- SC meetings in Oslo (March 10-11) and in the Republic of Komi (in October)
- Change of the Chair in March 2008, now the Chair is Mr. Arkadii Rubin from Murmansk region
- Monitoring of the Programme (May-June 2008)
- Study tour to Finland from Leningrad Region

#### 2. Further Development of Low Threshold Services in Murmansk and Kandalaksha.

To carry out educational seminars for PHC staff. To edit and distribute the information materials.

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

**Mrs. Nadezhda Kuznetsova, Arkhangelsk Oblast** informed about the realization of about 20 international projects in the framework of this Programme on the following directions:

- prevention and combat against infectious diseases;
- prevention of medical and social lifestyle-related problems and promotion of healthy lifestyle;
- development and integration of primary health care and social welfare,
- projects in psychiatry, diagnostics and treatment of neuromuscular diseases, pediatrics and rehabilitation.

In the framework of the Russian-Norwegian project the system of antibiotic resistance observation is now under development with attracting representatives from other regions in the northwest of Russia.

In the framework of Russian-Swedish project we carry out the study and implementation of such method on qualitative improvement of family medicine as the audit on arterial hypertension which allows Arkhangelsk region to get into the system of audit implementation together with other regions in the northwest of Russia, Baltic and Scandinavian countries.

In perspective of collaboration within the Cooperation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region the Arkhangelsk Oblast intends to pay attention to the disease prevention and the use of informational technologies for health education and promotion of healthy lifestyle and behaviour, especially among youth in the framework of special programmes.

We will continue our collaboration in the following directions:

- development of primary health care, establishment of the center for medical and social care;
- restructuring of hospital and special care;
- development of emergency medicine and high-tech types of medical care;
- development of human resources (education and retraining of medical specialists, establishment of the Institute for Public Health, carrying out population investigations).

**Mrs. Elena Savchenko, Murmansk Oblast:** stated that the priority directions of international collaboration in Murmansk Oblast are: protection of maternity and childhood; drug addiction; primary health care; mental diseases; infectious diseases and HIV/ AIDS. One of the main directions in the collaboration is the project with Norway on childbirth registers.

High level of maternal and child morbidity is being observed on the territory of Murmansk oblast. Standard questionnaires are being filled in; database on health status is being collected, the data are being analyzed and the actions on protection of women's reproductive health are being implemented.

Another important direction is the rehabilitation of children and teenagers with impaired development.

Together with Sweden we realize the joint project on prevention of HIV and drug addiction among the youth. The important aspects of this project are publishing informational-practical materials, magazines, support of target groups, groups of mutual help, arrangement of festivals on healthy lifestyle promotion, education of psychologists, social specialists, demonstration of video-clips on TV.

At present we are accomplishing the project on prevention of HIV / AIDS in the framework of Barents cooperation. This project pays attention to the most vulnerable groups such as drug addicts using drugs intravenously, prostitutes and so on. These groups are provided with free medical examination.

Together with Finland we implement a project on phthysiology in order to improve diagnostic facilities, control of medicaments usage, and competence of medical staff.

In the framework of Russian-Swedish projects we educate medical staff, exchange our experience, and implement different actions on motivation of doctors and nurses, educate on the basics of management in psychiatric services.

In the future we are planning to realize projects on prevention and treatment of FILHA, on development of Pomor Programme.

The main idea of all projects is investment into the intellect.

Projects directions concur with the priorities of the state policy.

International cooperation is carried out mainly in the framework of bilateral projects. NGOs participation is scarce. The majority of the projects are implemented through the state institutions and establishments.

**Mr. Pål Christian Bergstrøm, senior adviser, Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Northern Norway**

Some information on collaboration between Norway and northwestern part of Russia was represented:

- realization of the long-term project with Republic of Karelia and Murmansk Oblast on prevention of problems related with children's behavior;
- continuation of activities on long-term rehabilitation – social adaptation, decrease of aggressiveness, work with troublesome children.

We have signed an agreement with Republic of Karelia and Murmansk Oblast for 2008 – 2010. Norwegian side expects the Programme “Children and youth at risk” to be paid a great attention.

**Mrs. Elena Viktorova, deputy chairman of the Committee of labour and social development of the Murmansk Oblast**

She informed participants about implementation of projects in co-operation with Regional Office for Children, Youth and Family Affairs, Tromsø. One of them is “Unforgettable years”. Methods developed by Norwegian colleagues have become very popular with the families at risk therefore some positive results have been obtained. A project on increasing qualification of specialists working in the centers of support of families and children is being implemented (Kirkenes and Murmansk). Both sides are satisfied with results. In the framework of Russian-Norwegian project “Children's villages” there were established three institutions for post hostel adaptation of young people (18 – 23 years old, graduates of hostels). The project enjoys a great popularity. There are a lot of people wishing to participate. Together with organization “The Norwegian help” the project on prevention of violence towards children and women in the family is going on; trainings and meetings on this problem are being arranged.

Furthermore, the work with handicapped children and members of their families is being carried out. In December 2007 15 persons representing social institutions took part in the conference in St. Petersburg under the aegis of Nordic Council of Ministers. As a result, new ideas were obtained and the ways of further development were outlined.

In the framework of the Russian-Swedish project there was opened a new division for work with handicapped children and young disabled people in one of the regional institutions.

Murmansk Oblast puts great hope on the Programme “Children and youth at risk”. There have been chosen the following priorities: mothers under age, families upbringing handicapped children, children with deviant behaviour. The main goal is the increasing the competence of social workers.

**Mr. Jørgen Kaurin, Senior adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Health**

A lot of work is done in the framework of joint projects with Murmansk and Arkhangelsk regions. And this work is acknowledged by Norwegian powers. Evidence is the fact that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has appropriated about 2 mln euro for strengthening of collaboration between Norway and northwestern part of Russia. A half of these means was directed to financing of applications received. In 2 weeks there will be the second round for applications. The main part of financial means will be turned to funding the projects in the Barents region. We have several joint projects with St.Petersburg. Some of them have paramount significance. And the one is an educational program "Public health care" realized together with the Arkhangelsk region. This program includes collaboration of several countries such as Finland, Sweden, Norway, NCM. There is a hope on involving Republic of Komi in Russian-Norwegian collaboration. The Russian-Norwegian collaboration was evaluated. And the work of joint projects was estimated as effective. The report on evaluation could be found on the web-page of the Northern Dimension Partnership. It should be acknowledged that collaborative sides use different approaches, and that it's very interesting perspective – to develop a new programme together. For receiving concrete knowledge we should study each system separately. Because we have similar problems, but the ways on how to solve them are different. And we should take them into our consideration during the exchange of information about our systems.

**Mr. Konstantin Sazhin, Chief of the Agency on social development of Republic of Komi**

We tried to introduce a service on post-hostel adaptation but without any success. So the report about such service presented by Murmansk Oblast has provoked our special curiosity. We can't solve the problems in the framework of CYAR Programme only by means of treatment, diagnostics, setting the necessary medical conditions. Top position should belong to information with the purpose of forming healthy life style, family ideology and love to children. It's necessary to place children into families. And the role of health care sector is essential only at the beginning.

**Mr. Göran Carlsson, Chief Executive of SEEC** presented the information on the projects realized together with Arkhangelsk and Murmansk regions and the Republic of Karelia. In March 2009 (week 11 or 12) we are planning to arrange a huge Barents conference for the increase of competence of young psychiatrists. Several years ago there was a conception to develop a virtual Arctic Institute for family medicine. This concept could be revived again and be transformed into the idea of creating the Barents system on family medicine. SEEC has a very good experience in the creation of the system of antibiotic resistance supervision which could be used by our Russian partners working on the same problem.

**Mrs. Tatiana Likhno, WGHS Co-chair (Arkhangelsk Oblast)** considers it important to think over the possibilities on the collaboration in this sphere. As for the Arctic Institute for Family Medicine it should be mentioned that thanks to the attempts on its establishment the instruments on collaboration between GP Centers of Russian Federation and Sweden have been developed.

**Mr. Olli Kuukasjärvi, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Social Affairs and Health of Finland,** supposes that Barents collaboration is very important for Finland. Everybody understands that during cooperation of different structures certain difficulties can arise. But such organizations as Nordic Council of Ministers, Northern Dimension Partnership, and Council of Baltic Sea Countries collaborate in different ways combining their forces in order to obtain positive results. For example, one of the results obtained is the Programme on HIV / AIDS.

300000 euro were allotted on this Programme for year 2008. Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland has also endowed in the development of this Programme. On the whole our collaboration has



such directions as prevention of infectious diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyle, struggle against alcoholism, tobacco smoking and so on. Finland collaborates mainly with the Republic of Karelia and Murmansk Oblast, without involving Arkhangelsk Oblast and the Republic of Komi. But it's not our economical or political priority. It's a practical approach because Finland shares the border with these regions. Since the main part of the Finnish population lives in the south of the country and the main part of the means circulates there, our collaboration with the Republic of Karelia and Sankt-Petersburg is closer. Thanks to the Barents collaboration, Northern Dimension Partnership we gain more possibilities. For details on concrete programmes visit the web-page of Ministry for Foreign Affairs in Finland.

**Mrs. Tatiana Likhno, WGHS Co-chair (Arkhangelsk Oblast)** thanked participants for the expressed opinions on the projects implemented. The collaboration has been noted to develop not only quantitatively, but also qualitatively. At present we can see the processes of integration of health care, social protection, labor services.

#### **10 a) Information on recent developments of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS)**

##### **Mr. Jørgen Kaurin, Senior adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Health**

The question on the legal capacity of Partnership Secretariat will be solved in the nearest time. Expert groups of the Partnership (on HIV / AIDS, primary health care, SIHLWA) work effective. Secretariat, represented by 2 persons, works in Stockholm. New web-page of the Partnership has become a very important instrument of our work. Two important things are represented on the web-page: database and the projects line for integration of partners. Financing of the projects line is carried out only by one donor, Finland which allotted 1,5 mln euro. We hope that we will have more sponsors in the future. An expert group is working in the framework of Northern Dimension Partnership. Percentage of projects realization in the Barents region is high. Canada is also interested in the collaboration. Collaboration in the Barents region is one of the most important components of the Partnership. It's very important to inform each other about the positive results of collaboration. Participants were informed about the meeting of the Committee of Senior Representatives of the Partnership which will take place in Brussels in April 2008. The next Partnership Annual Conference (PAC) will take place in Canada in November 2008. During this meeting it's planned to discuss questions on improvement of health care for indigenous people.

##### **Mr. Göran Carlsson, Chief Executive of SEEC**

informed the participants about the activity of expert group of NDPHS on primary health care. Sweden is a chairman in this group. The Swedish Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, together with the Lithuanian Ministry of Health had invited high level decision makers in the Northern Dimension region, among others the Heads of the regional health administrations in NW Russia, to a seminar on Primary Health Care, also co-organised by the WHO-EURO. One of the items for discussion would be a presentation of a comprehensive report on the status and perspectives of primary health care on the territory of Northern Dimension including situation analysis and future recommendations for the countries of Northern Dimension. Experts from Lithuania, Russia and Byelorussia have worked on this report. It's not accomplished yet. The Seminar will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania, on the 23rd of May, 2008.

##### **Mr. Anton Vasiliev, Chairman of the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials (CSO):**

emphasized the importance of the possibility to inform each other. High effectiveness in the Barents cooperation can be achieved through information exchange. There is still much to be done, for example, creating databases on health care issues suggested by Northern Dimension. We use it in practice but not so widely. Russian representative office of the Barents cooperation has devel-

oped its own web-page. This web-page is available; specially for the Russian participants and regions it has a Russian version: [www.beac.mid.ru](http://www.beac.mid.ru). We invite you to use its sources in your activity. We can also put the links to the web-pages of our partners. In their turn they can put the link to our web-page. For example, our web-page has a link to the web-page of Northern Dimension.

#### **10 b) The Barents project database and the NDPHS database – update. Discussion.**

**Laila Dalhaug, Adviser, Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes**, has presented the information on the research into the projects included into the database of Norwegian Barents Secretariat. Their number is 278. The projects are being carried out on the following directions:

Combat with infectious disease – 94 projects

Disabled people and their rehabilitation – 28 projects

Children and youth – 22 projects

Lifestyle – 21 projects

Perinatal care and gynecology – 17 projects

Primary health care – 12 projects

Public health – 12 projects

As well as projects in nursing, psychiatry, cardiosurgery, telemedicine, research and other spheres. Projects targeted on indigenous populations have been noted to be scarce. Deadline for application for financing of the projects with the first sum up to 50 000 NOK, now 75 000 NOK, is not limited. Since the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2008 applications only from Norwegian partners are accepted. University and the University hospital in Tromsø realizes 61 international projects, the majority of them being implemented with Arkhangelsk Region. 75 different organizations and institutions serve as coordinators responsible for the projects realization. The Institute of Public health is involved in more than 40 projects within the northwest of Russia.

**Ms. Outi Karvonen**, Barents HIV/AIDS Program Coordinator, commented that Finnish projects have not yet been included into the database. Together with the Secretariat there was a discussion on what can be done. At present the Finnish projects going on since 2006 are represented in the English language on the webpage of the Finnish Ministry for International Affairs. We need a person who would include these projects into the database of Barents Secretariat.

**Mr. Jørgen Kaurin**, Senior adviser, Norwegian Ministry of Health, added that while speaking on the projects the key problem is including them into the database. The existence of project line where the projects are being directed in electronic version simplifies the whole procedure. At present there are two project lines ([www.barentshealth.org](http://www.barentshealth.org) and [www.ndphs.org](http://www.ndphs.org)). The importance of maintaining Barents identity in the project lines and database has been stressed out.

#### **11. Any other business**

#### **12. Next meeting**

**Ms. Tatyana Likhno, co-Chair**, announced that in accordance with plan the next meeting will be held in November 2008 in Arkhangelsk together with the meeting of the Steering Committee of the Barents programme “Children and Youth at Risk” and with conference.

#### **13. Closing of the meeting**

**The Chairs** thanked all the present for their participation in the 8<sup>th</sup> meeting of WGHS and announced the meeting closed. The Swedish Co-Chair Kerstin Ödman thanked the Arkhangelsk host for their warm welcome and the excellent organization of the meeting.

