



Minutes of the BEAC Joint Working Group on Tourism Meeting Online 18 June 2020

19-6-2020

1. Opening of the online meeting and approval of the agenda

The JWGT Chair Hilde Bjørkli from Visit Northern Norway (Nord-Norge Reiseliv) opened the first JWGT meeting under the Norwegian Chairmanship on 18 June, using the Microsoft Teams platform. She introduced herself as a new Chair and presented how COVID-19 affected tourism sector in Northern Norway. She also welcomed opening the border between Norway and Finland on 15 June, as it opens new possibilities for Finns to visit Troms of Finnmark counties by car this summer.

The Agenda was approved with no additions.

2. Introduction of Working Group members

The following participants introduced themselves:

Tuomo Tahvanainen (Kainuu), **Demyan Smilevets**, **Gvantsa Parulava** (Russian Agency for Tourism), **Konstantin Baranov**, **Natalia Makarova** (Komi), **Tatiana Leonidova**, **Alexey Tigushkin** (Karelia).

Also, **Anna Tyutrina** from Arkhangelsk region was following the meeting, but was not able to speak.

3. Concise report by the International Barents Secretariat

Roman Gokkoev from the IBS introduced Barents Cooperation (slides are attached to the Minutes).

4. Covid-19 impact on tourism industry in the region

Each member was invited to give a short update. **Tuomo Tahvanainen** presented the situation with COVID-19 in Kainuu (presentation attached to the Minutes). **Demyan Smilevets** from the Russian Agency for Tourism presented the situation in Russian Barents Regions and measures to support the tourism entrepreneurs in Russian, as well as recovery plans for tourism industry (the text of his speech is attached to the Minutes). Brief reports were also given by Komi (Baranov) and Karelia.

5. Plans of Russia to introduce e-visas in 2021

Demyan Smilevets from the Russian Agency for Tourism briefly presented this initiative, expected to be introduced all over Russia in January 2021. E-visas will be valid for single-entry travels of up to 16 days. The cost for e-visa is expected to be not more than 50 USD.

6. Open discussion

Tuomo Tahvanainen presented Karelia CBC funded project TourSME between Kainuu and the City of Kostomuksha ([a leaflet is attached to the Minutes](#)). Konstantin Baranov of Komi expressed a wish to convene face-to-face next time. No other business was discussed.

7. Next meeting

After the summer the JWGT Chair will come up with a proposal to convene face-to-face depending on the travel restrictions by the end of the year (JWGT could visit possible events in tourism sector or some Interreg/CBC development projects).