

## **Minutes from the Meeting in Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Environment (BEAC WGE) October 9th 2008, Murmansk, Russia**

### **1. Opening of the meeting**

WGE Chair Ms. Anne Berteig, Norway opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. She thanked the Murmansk Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection for the assistance in arranging the meeting, and especially the excursion to the hot spots the previous day. The participants presented themselves (annex 1).

### **2. Adoption of the agenda**

The Agenda was adopted (annex 2).

### **3. The minutes from the meeting of BEAC WGE 18. June 2008.**

The enclosed draft minutes from the BEAC WGE meeting 18. June 2008 at Svanhovd, Kirkenes were adopted.

### **4. Information from the International Barents Secretariat.**

Ms. Anna Lund, International Barents Secretariat (IBS) reported from the meeting of BEAC CSO on 15-17 September at Solovetsky Islands (Arkhangelsk Region). The report from this meeting could be found the web-site [www.beac.st](http://www.beac.st). Here one would also find calendar-of-events, information on the work in the Barents Euro Arctic Co-operation and relevant links. The working groups were also invited to put their information there. Ms. Lund said that the Secretariat is prepared to assist the WGE also related to the planned seminar on climate change and other relevant matters. Ms. Lund informed on the following issues;

- A new WG was established on tourism. They will meet in Moscow later this year and discuss their mandate.
- An agreement on rescue-co-operation will be signed in Moscow in November.
- A restart of the WG on Energy. First meeting will be in Oslo in November. Mr. Johan Vetlesen, Norwegian Ministry of Petroleum and Energy, is elected chair of the group together with Mr. Anatoly N. Lukin, Arkhangelsk Region.
- The Ministerial Meeting next year with change of chairmanship from Russia to Sweden will take place in October 2009 in Murmansk.

The chair encouraged the subgroups to forward their adopted strategies and working programs to the chair for translation and publication on the official BEAC web-site.

Ms. Hanne Aronsen, Norway said she would contact WG on Energy when it was up and running.

### **5. Reports from the meeting in the WGE Subgroups, 8 October.**

The Subgroup on Cleaner production and Environmentally Sound Consumption;

Subgroup chair Ms. Hanne Aronsen, Norway presented the report from the subgroup (annex 3). There had been representatives from all the countries, as well as from NEFCO and the Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development Centre at the meeting. The Group's working programme had been finalized at their last meeting. At this meeting they had been reviewing the policy document. This document now made into a strategy and should be valid for more than 2 years. The subgroup has a short list with app. 15 projects, and would try to prioritize among them at their next meeting. A long list of projects already finalized is maintained in order to avoid overlap. They had also worked on a project documentation sheet, if needed. A long list of projects already finalized is maintained in order to avoid overlap. They had also worked on a project documentation sheet that will provide more detailed

information on each project. Mr. Alex Smirnov, Murmansk Region had given his view on the hot spots of Murmansk Region and proposed some new projects to the hot-spot-list (annex 4). Ms. Aronsen asked the Chair if the CPESC strategy document should be adopted by the Ministers, who replied that the Ministers in the Declaration only recommended that the subgroup should consider updating the strategy. Adoption by WGE would therefore be sufficient.

#### The Subgroup on nature conservation;

Subgroup chair Mr. Jan-Petter Hubert-Hansen, Norway informed about the subgroup's Strategy and Action Plan, which had been approved at their last meeting (annex 5). Mr. Hubert-Hansen presented 3 new prioritized projects from the Action Plan;

- The Treriksrøysa trilateral protected area and sustainable tourism project. A first meeting has been held in Tromsø, Norway September 29-30, 2008. A summary from the meeting will be circulated shortly.
- The Conference on Management of World Heritage Sites in the Barents Region to be held in Syktyvkar, Komi Republic in May 2009. The UNESCO Secretariat in Paris, The World Heritage Convention Authorities in the Barents countries, WH Site Managers and others as appropriate will be invited (app. 30-45 participant)
- The Barents Protected Areas Network (BPAN) – project to establish a representative and well managed network of protected areas in the Barents Region

Furthermore some information was given on possible new projects on forest and flyways and wetland issues. These potential new projects would be further discussed at the Fifth Meeting of the Habitat Contact Forum (HCF V), to take place in Umeå, Sweden October 15 – 16, 2008. The subgroup also maintains a long list of completed, ongoing and proposed projects (former project list of the International Habitat Contact Forum in the Barents Region).

Henna Haapala, Finland informed that the Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park has received EUROPARC's Transboundary Parks Certificate.

#### The Subgroup on Water Issues.

Mr. Jari Pasanen, County of Lapland presented the action plan from the subgroup (annex 6) on behalf of the chair. He highlighted actions on wastewater purification and proposed the participation from the subgroup in NEFCO's projects on these issues. Furthermore the environmental monitoring in the area of the Pechenganikel smelter will begin at New Year as a trilateral project. The new phase of the project will also look into the health aspects. WGE approved the strategy of the Subgroup on Water Issues preliminarily, but maintained that it should be formally adopted by e-mail-contact after the meeting.

Co-operation and coordination between the subgroups was discussed. The WG on Water issues will cooperate with the WG on nature protection on introduced species as indicators related to climate change. There was also a link to the cleaner production group on compliance monitoring and permitting. A survey on the co-operation between the subgroups should be developed.

A common description format for all the projects should be developed. The chair will in co-operation with the subgroups develop a common format, in which to put information on the projects out on the internet. The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency had a template which they use and offered to forward to the chair.

Subgroup meetings are presently held on the same day in parallel. This may not be the best solution since several persons would like to participate in more than one group. The Chair encouraged the members of the Working Group to e-mail proposals for a more efficient way to organize the meetings.

## **6. Information from the Meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE) by Ms. Tatiana Tiupenko**

RWGE-chair Ms. Tiupenko, Republic of Komi was happy to note that this RWGE-meeting had had representatives present from 9 of the regions. At the working Groups meeting they had approved the minutes from the last meeting and discussed new project ideas. Mr. Roar Høgsæt, County of Nordland informed about the project on prevention and clean-up of pollution from small and mediums sized ship-yards. The Komi and Murmansk Region might be interested to participate in the project. Ms. Haapala informed that work to reduce environmental pollution from harbours had been done in Helcom (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission) and proposed that the project leader contacted the Helcom secretariat to elaborate on a potential co-operation on this issue. Mr. Ruslan Bolshakov, Nenets Autonomous District, presented a project idea on a possible trilateral co-operation between Russian regions Arkhangelsk, Nenets and Komi on cross border protected areas.

Since this was Ms. Tiupenko's last meeting as chair of RWGE, she thanked everyone around the table for a very good co-operation. The Chair and WGE-members thanked Ms. Tiupenko for her untiring effort and wished the successors in Finnmark County good luck. (Report from Komi chair, annex 7)

## **7. European Neighbourhood Partnership Instrument (ENPI) and other finance possibilities**

Ms. Anna Lund, International Barents Secretariat (IBS) informed about ENPI and other finance possibilities relevant for projects in the Barents region. She underlined that one of IBS' tasks was to give advice about finance possibilities.

In addition to ENPI she mentioned the following finance instrument as relevant for financing projects in the Barents region:

- INTERREG 2007-2013, especially the programmes on "Cross border co-operation" and "Transnational co-operation".
- Kolarctic (ENPI CBC), especially the programmes on "Economic and social development", "Common challenges" and "People to people co-operation".
- Baltic Sea Region programme
- The Northern Periphery programme
- INTERREG NA North, without Russian participation. Relevant for Nordic co-operation.

The Kolarctic programmes will be opened for applications in late October or early November and last for three months. Projects must have a Russian partner.

All countries that can participate in Kolarctic programmes can also apply to the Baltic Sea Region programme. It is however necessary to have a Russian applicant and partners from at least two EU-countries.

Ms. Lund also informed about an initiative from Västerbotten (mail to regional representatives in October 2008) regarding possibilities for economic support to regional initiated project on sustainable environmental development from the Baltic Sea Regional programme. IBS will send out additional information regarding this initiative. Ms. Berteig

asked the representatives from the regions to look closer at this information to see if there could be possibilities for additional financing to projects in our working programmes.

### **8. Co-operation between ACAP and BEAC WGE**

Ms. Anne Berteig underlined that it was important to find a fruitful way to cooperate with ACAP. She mentioned that Mr. Peshkov, the chair of ACAP, had been invited to this meeting, but that it was not possible for him to participate.

Ms. Hanne Aronsen referred to the discussion on this issue in the Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption, and stressed that the Barents co-operation had a regional connection that could be of interest to ACAP. She also proposed that WGE could prepare an overview of treatment facilities for hazardous waste in the Barents countries, which could be of interest for the work ACAP is doing.

Ms. Henna Haapala, Finland underscored that there is no information available about environmentally sound facilities for final destruction of hazardous waste in Russia, only landfills which do not meet international standards on environmentally safe handling of hazardous wastes. She agreed that it was a good idea to produce an overview of treatment facilities. The recommendations of AMAP Oil and Gas Assessment provide important information on the cooperation possibilities in this field.

Mr. Henrik Forsstrøm, NEFCO informed about the work on hot spots pertaining to hazardous waste in Karelia. Consultants will be engaged with the aim to get a better overview of the situation in the waste sector also beyond Petrozavodsk. NEFCO's Barents Hot Spots Facility has assigned money to this work. He underlined that it was important to broaden the work now started in Karelia. The studies in question will also evaluate the potential for such cross border transport to proper treatment facilities that was demonstrated by the destruction of Karelian pesticides at Ekokem in Finland earlier in the summer.

The chair stated that it was important to update the list of projects conducted in co-operation with ACAP. She will also inform the ACAP chair about our proposal to prepare an overview of existing treatment facilities for hazardous waste in the Barents countries.

### **9. Environmental hot spots in the Barents region**

Mr. Henrik Forsstrøm, NEFCO informed about NEFCO's board decision to replenish the Barents Hot Spots Facility (BHSF) by one million EUR. Further replenishment might be feasible, if need be in the future. Through this decision, Denmark now also indirectly contributes to the BHSF, which means that Danish consultants will also be shortlisted for hot spot projects. Due to lack of capacity the work with the task force on criteria & procedures for hot spots elimination as well as on the hot spots data base has been delayed. The Norwegian Ministry of the Environment has proposed to look into the possibility of assigning a person to support NEFCO in the work with the hot spot data base. Both these tasks are important for future work with the hot spots.

Mr. Forsstrøm gave an overview of NEFCO's work with environmental hot spots in the various Russian regions participating in the Barents co-operation (NEFCO BHSF-report annex-8). Karelia is the region with the highest activity to date, also relating to the waste sector. Medical waste issues have come into focus in the region following a study on the Arkhangelsk region.

Bundling of smaller heat boiler projects is one project in Karelia with an interesting potential demonstration effect for the region.

Also in the Murmansk region waste is an increasingly important issue, including among other things dioxin concerns at the Murmansk waste incinerator and contaminated oil sludge and the lack of proper treatment for such sludge. The Murmansk environmental authorities also presented a list of priorities on hot spots at the meeting, with some new proposals. These proposals will also be taken into consideration by NEFCO.

The situation related to energy and environment at the Solovetsky Islands is a particular challenge. NEFCO has proposed to prepare and co-ordinate an integrated project on sustainable energy production and distribution coupled with water, wastewater and solid waste issues. Co-operation with the new Energy working group is foreseen on this project. NEFCO has a similar project on the Kolguyev Island in co-ordination with ECORA. NEFCO has also signed an agreement concerning contributions to a project in Kenozero National Park with good demonstration potential for small-scale water and sewages treatment. This project is also on the project list of the water group.

Furthermore, NEFCO is working with hot spot issues such as revegetation at old mining spots to reduce spreading of dust, clean up at Franz Josef Land, and various measures against oil pollution.

NEFCO is co-operating with ACAP on mercury both in Murmansk and Nenets regions. They are also involved in the work the Russian integrated hazardous waste strategy, where the lack of treatment facilities is one of the main challenges. Finally Mr Forsstrøm informed about up-start of an assignment on how to deal with hot spots, using cleaner production technology.

#### **10. Climate Change Network – conference**

Ms. Irene Bauer, Norway presented the plans and scope of the conference so far. The Norwegian institute CICERO will be given the main responsibility for conference. The BEAC countries and the Regional working group were asked to appoint contact persons as soon as possible.

Ms. Henna Haapala, Finland informed about a positive response on the conference idea from the chair region of The Barents Regional Council (the Council of Oulu Region 2007-2009), and indicated that adaptation to climate change should be an important issue at the conference. The Finnish Ministry of the Environment is also positive to the initiative, and is waiting for a more concrete programme. Henna Haapala will be the Finnish contact person.

#### **11. Overview of upcoming events**

The chair will shortly send out the calendar on e-mail for comments (annex 8).

#### **12. Meeting plan for the Barents WGE 2009**

Sweden is chairing the EU next autumn, and in Norway the parliamentary election will take place next September. The chair therefore, at Sweden's request, proposed to postpone the ministerial meeting to early February 2010. This was supported by the other members of the working group. Time and place for the ministerial meeting will be decided later.

The next meeting of the working group will be arranged in Norway in the first half of March and the meeting after that in late autumn 2009. Proposed dates will be circulated on e-mail.

#### **13. Any other business**

The chair thanked all participant and, interpreters and closed the meeting.