

## OULU REGION'S BARENTS REGIONAL COUNCIL CHAIRMANSHIP PRIORITIES 2007- 2009

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region offers remarkable forum for cooperation of the member countries and regions. Preconditions of the successful cooperation are functional cooperation relations between different levels and concrete common activities. It is especially important to find the added value for the multilateral cooperation in cross-border cooperation in regional level.

The coordination of the renewable cooperation and new possibilities of the new EU programme period mark the chairmanship of Oulu Region. These challenges are aimed to be answered by activating Barents cooperation in the national level.

The priorities of the chairmanship of Oulu Region are:

- implement the reorganisation of the Barents cooperation
- start the sector programmes according to the Barents strategy
- add visibility of the Barents cooperation and integrate it to other regional and EU-level cooperation, including EU financing programmes

### **Implementation of the reorganisation**

The implementation of the proposals of the ad-hoc group will be emphasized in the chairmanship period. It is especially important to start and coordinate the work of the national and international secretariats. The secretariats will be important support for the chair regions in the active and wide implementation of the Barents cooperation. The challenge of the chairmanship period is to create active working model for the Barents Regional Committee to steer the work of the International Barents Secretariat. In the national level the role of the Finnish Barents Secretariat will be supported to activate different actors in our Barents Regions.

In addition to the reorganisation the attention will be paid to the work of the working groups in different levels. Work is aimed to activate by increasing dialogue. Special attention will be paid to the work of recently established Working Group on Economic Cooperation.

### **Implementation of the Strategy**

Common development strategy was created for the Barents Region in the Barents 2010 project. Activity of the all member regions is emphasized in the implementation of the strategy. The sector programmes will be started during Oulu Region's chairmanship. Barents 2010+ and single development projects will help in the implementation.

The EU programmes will be emphasized in the implementation of the Barents strategy during the chairmanship period.

### **Adding the Visibility of the Barents Cooperation and Activating the Cooperation**

Adding the visibility of the Barents cooperation and activity of the actors in the region is important. The role of the chair as a leading and activating actor will be developed. By the changing chairmanship the functional continuum is aimed to be created with the help of information cooperation, national and international secretariats and the work of the Barents Regional Committee.

The visibility and role of the Barents cooperation is aimed to add in the Baltic Sea Region, in the Northern Dimension and especially in the use of EU financing programmes.

The visibility of the Barents Region in EU level will be stressed. Energy and natural resources are the central strengths from the European point of view. Logistical questions are essentially connected to this. At least one meeting of the Barents Regional Council is aimed to be held in Brussels in cooperation with the EU institutions during the Oulu Region's chairmanship.

