



**Draft Report on Barents Joint Committee Meeting in Helsinki, Finland  
17 December, 2009**

1. Participants

Mr. Timo Viitanen (chair), Ministry of the Interior, Finland  
Ms. Julia Fredriksson, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, Sweden  
Mr. Alexander Ignatiev, the International Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes, Norway  
Mr. Olle Jonsson, Ministry of Defence, Sweden  
Ms. Kristiina Jokelainen, Finnparents, Finland  
Mr. Vladimir Kazakov, Emercom of Russia, Murmansk region  
Mr. Jukka Metso, Ministry of the Interior, Finland  
Ms. Bente Michaelsen, Ministry of Justice and the Police, Norway  
Mr. Viktor Minailov, Emercom of Russia, Murmansk region  
Mr. Harri Paldanius, Regional Rescue Department of Lapland, Finland  
Ms. Inna Ponomareva, Emercom of Russia, Moscow

2. Opening of the meeting; welcoming remarks

The chair welcomed participants and briefed shortly on the history of the House of Estates, the site for the meeting. The chair also wished Sweden a successful presidency for the Barents Euro-arctic Council taken over in October 2009.

3. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted. No items were proposed for AOB (point 9).

4. Barents Agreement

*Review*

As notified by the Ministry for Foreign affairs of Sweden, Depository for the agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the Field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response, signed in Moscow on 11 December 2008, the following Parties have ratified the Agreement: Sweden on 2 February 2009, Norway on 17 March 2009, and Russian Federation on 12 October 2009.

Ratification process in Finland is pending to be completed during the first part of the year 2010.

5. Joint Committee

*Terms of reference - acceptance*

The Committee had a detailed discussion on the draft Terms of Reference of 20.11.2009. A common understanding was reached and the draft was reformulated during the meeting. The chair circulates the meeting version for possible final adjustments.

The Committee also discussed its relationship with the CSO within the BEAC cooperation. In the view of the Committee, being based on an Agreement between states, the status of the Committee is not similar to the working groups of the BEAC. The Committee is independent and only informs the CSO and the BRC of its work. The Committee proposes

that the International Barents Secretariat updates the organizational chart of the BEAC cooperation to reflect the view of the Committee.

6. Barents Joint Manual – final reading, conclusions

*Points of contact, possible other adjustments*

Mr. Kjell Johansen, Norway, had circulated the checked Barents Joint Manual version with the blank-form for telefax communications and a proposal for communications tests between the Barents alarm centres. Earlier comments were noted, and since no additional changes were made, the Manual was accepted for use in the cooperation of Barents region rescue services authorities and emergency response centres. Also the principle to use regional emergency response centres as primary points of contacts, as defined by national authorities of contracting parties, was accepted.

It was agreed that the Joint Manual should not be posted on the BEAC-website as some of the contact information is not public.

Communications tests are to be carried out regularly as proposed by Norway, starting on 1 January 2010 (Finland organises).

7. Barents Rescue Exercise 2009

*Results of evaluation conference*

Russia briefed on the results of the evaluation conference, held in Murmansk on 25 November 2009. The Joint Committee also saw a 30 minutes DVD-film commented by Mr Viktor Minailov.

Mr. Minailov also suggested that an exercise should only have 1-2 scenarios, with more complex scenarios. Exercises should also exercise the different levels (e.g. local, regional, national).

The Russian Federation also commented on the railroad accident between Moscow and St. Petersburg and the inaccessibility of the accident site. The problem of hypothermia is an important question related to rescue services in the area.

The Joint Committee expressed its satisfaction about the exercise and took note of the next exercise that Sweden will organise in 2011.

The Committee also agreed to include the proposed work group for the planning of exercises (see the proposal in the Barents Rescue 2009 Final Exercise Report p. 16) into the work of the Joint Committee with the additional specialists as required. The specialists of this proposed work group would be invited to the next meeting of the Joint Committee in Norway.

8. Project Updates

*Cold condition management in emergency situations in the Barents region - the status of ENPI*

Ms. Kristiina Jokelainen, Finnparents, informed that the Kolarctic program was by now accepted by all partners (Norway, Sweden, Finland, Russia) and the European Commission. The program is a part of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument 2007 - 2013 for cross border cooperation between EU member states and neighbouring countries.

The program period makes the financial support possible even for three years time. Period for applications expires on 9 April 2010 which means the necessity to organise the work fast to agree on the principles of the project and each participants role and responsibilities. Decision on projects to be financed would be based on competition and made in August - September 2010 by a "Selection Board" of representatives of the Kolarctic parties. Expectations from the multidisciplinary project's point of view seem favourable with all the four countries taking part in it.

The State Provincial Office of Lapland (Ms. Marjatta Kihniä) had asked each country to nominate two representatives for the Steering group. Ms. Jokelainen informed on the Provincial Office's proposal to organise the kick-off meeting in Murmansk on 27 - 28 January in connection with the opening of the ENPI Kolarctic program on 26 January 2010. These dates would be proposed to the steering groups members.

Based on the question of Ms. Jokelainen, the JC had a discussion of its own role in the project. The JC would not be able to act as the Steering Group or take any active role without additional experts and numerous meetings. Leaving project administration to the proposed Steering Group as already seen reasonable, the JC did not decide to take such a role.

#### *Web update*

The chair checks the current contact information and updates if necessary, providing the Secretariat also with meeting documents, such as the Terms of Reference, evaluation report of the exercise Barents Rescue 2009, information of the coming exercise Barents Rescue 2011 and the meeting reports of the Committee.

## 9. Way ahead

### *Ministerial meeting, follow up*

The Ministers in the Joint Communiqué of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's 12<sup>th</sup> session in Murmansk 15 October 2009 commended the enhanced cooperation between emergency and rescue services in the Barents Region and welcomed the signature of the Agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the Field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response as a significant milestone in the development of practical cooperation between the authorities concerned with the view to improving the security and safety of the people living in the region. The Council highlighted the importance of the Barents Rescue Exercise 2009 organised by Russia.

The Council also took note of the active role of the Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation in its work aimed at improving preconditions for mutual assistance in case of emergency in any of the participating states. The Council encouraged the Joint Committee to continue facilitation of the provisions for mutual emergency and rescue services in the region.

### *JC report of 2009, plan for 2010*

International Barents Secretariat reminded, with reference to the BEAC Administrative Manual, that the annual reports of 2009 and plans for 2010 are to be submitted in January 2010. IBC wished to receive the documents by 20 January to be able to circulate them for the CSO meeting on 1-2 February 2010 in Stockholm. The chair will circulate a draft report to the JC representatives in due course, and the commencing chair (Norway) will do the same for a draft plan for 2010.

*Next Joint Committee meeting*

According to the Barents Agreement Norway will be responsible for the chairmanship of the JC for 2010. Ms. Bente Michaelsen is going to take over and will inform later on the time of the next meeting, which would take place in Bodø.

10. Any other business

No other items were dealt with.

11. Closure of the meeting

Closing the meeting the chair thanked the participants for their active role and a constructive meeting wishing everybody a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.