



TROMS fylkeskommune

ROMSSA fylkkasuohkan



Chair of the Barents Regional Council – Mrs. Pia Svensgaard

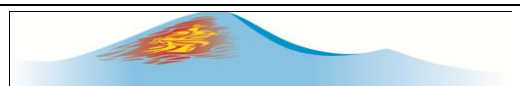
Closing remarks in the EU Parliament – 2011-04-13

First of all I would like to thank the speakers for their good contributions. It was also very interesting to hear the comments from the Members of the European Parliament and to follow the debate.

As the Barents Regional Council said in their statements to the EU Arctic Forums draft report on a sustainable EU policy for the High North do we welcome the interest in Arctic policy from the European Parliament within the framework of existing international laws, agreements and conventions.

As chair of the Barents Regional Council I am also very pleased for the political dialogue we now have between the European Parliament and the Barents-Euro Arctic Cooperation. Here represented by EU Arctic Forum and the Barents Regional Council. I think this dialogue will prove to be valuable for both parts. As the Barents cooperation continues to develop both in depth and range, on national and regional level, I believe that the voice of the Barents will be an even more important voice in the future when it comes to shaping and making policies for the high north, or the Arctic if you want. I therefore hope that this is the first of many events and meetings between bodies in the Barents Cooperation and EU Arctic Forum.

For less than a month ago there was another event here in the European Parliament concerning Barents. The Swedish chair in the BEAC cooperation on national level, Mr. Carl Bildt, held a seminar about the importance of raw materials from the Barents region. I totally agree with the statement from Mr. Vladimir Chizhov, Ambassador of the Russian Federation to the EU, “that the Barents must not be looked upon as a warehouse for the rest of the Europe”.



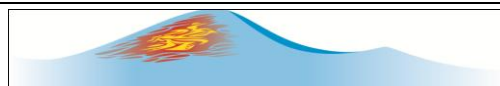
As I already have stated several times today there must be developed a policy that encourage local processing of the raw materials, not only extraction. We have a lot of top end industrial knowledge and know-how in the region, not to mention our universities and technical colleges. This is an excellent basis for an innovative industrial development in the raw materials sector in the Barents. Another very important aspect is to secure a sustainable use of the resources. Local processing will reduce the need for energy and transport in this sector significantly. That said, transportation of the resources is one of the main obstacles for fulfilling the potential in the region to secure added value for the whole of Europe. There is a need for major investments in infrastructure both on national and EU level. Last, but not least, industrial development within the Barents area will be an important factor for the regional development in the Barents region.

Or to say it in other words. Only by securing local embedded industrial development can we secure smart, green and inclusive growth.

I must say that I did find Mr. Rukshas presentation very interesting. The opening of the Northern sea route and increased traffic in the region in general also creates new challenges.

In Monitoring of Environment and Security in the Arctic, Tromsø has grown the last decades to be a central actor, with world class capacity, infrastructure and competence. From basic and applied research at the University of Tromsø and Fram-centre to development of and service provided, by private businesses and institution, Tromsø can cover all of Arctic, in the air, on the sea or ice and in the ocean.

Companies and institutions in Tromsø are participating in a broad range of national and international projects regarding monitoring and surveillance in the north. Important services for Europe and the European Union is the European Oil Spill Services for European Maritime Safety Agency, the new ICEMAR-project for the GMES bureau of the Commissions, that has been established to deliver sea ice information to support increasing activity in ice-covered waters in the Arctic. For The European Space Agency, Tromsø is participating in the large GMES projects My Ocean and Polar View and Tromsø is also the location of the Norwegian governments new national projects for monitoring and surveillance in the high north



called BarentsWatch. Tromsø therefore support the idea of establishing a EU Arctic Information Centre and Tromsø wants to be a important part of this centre in the future.

As earlier mentioned do we have a number of working groups under the umbrella of the BEAC cooperation, both on national and regional level. In the framework of the working groups stakeholders can meet, discuss and develop common projects. EU does play an important part in many of the working groups projects. I hope that the EU Arctic Forum will work for a continued involvement in the working groups.

On behalf of the whole Barents Regional Council, I would once again like to thank Birgit, Steffen and the rest of the EU Arctic Forum for hosting this event. I will also like to thank The Barents regional Committee, with the chair Oddgeir Danielsen, and North Norway European office for organising both our very interesting roundtable discussion earlier today and this seminar. I really hope that the dialogue between the EU Arctic forum and the Barents Regional Council will develop, also when North Sweden take over the chair in October. I will also like to use the opportunity to invite Birgit and the other MEPs to visit the Barents region and learn more about the great opportunities we have.

Thank you all who came here today and I hope that we can continue the discussions during the reception.

