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**DRAFT WGEC Minutes, February 16 2011, Stockholm**

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**Location:**

The Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, Stockholm.

**Participants/members:**

Mr. Sebastian Stålfors, chair, Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications, SE

Mr. Tor Berntin Naess, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, NO

Mr. Veijo Kavonius, Ministry of Employment and the Economy, FI

Mr. Mikhail Vinogradov, Ministry of Regional Development, RU

Mr. Sergey N. Goncharenko, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RU

Mr. Nikolay Shpikalov, Embassy of the Russian Federation, RU

Mr. Vladimir Karaoglanov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, RU

**1. Opening of the meeting**

The chair opened the meeting by welcoming the participants to the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting during the Swedish chairmanship. A special welcome was directed to three participants that has not been on the previous meetings; Mr. Naes, Mr. Kavonius, and Mr. Vinogradov.

**2. Adoption of the agenda**

The agenda was adopted.

**3. Update on the implementation progress of the working program**

**for the WGEC**

The chair recapitulated on the two previous meetings during the Swedish chairmanship. The March 2010 meeting aimed at preparing for the Ministerial meeting in Umeå and the Umeå Declaration, whereas the September 2010 meeting aimed at preparing the WGEC's Working plan, taking into account the results of the ministerial meeting in Umeå and the declaration. The final Working Plan was

adopted in November 2010 and has been in progress of being implemented thereafter. The aim of this, the third, meeting was to discuss the status of the implementation of the Working Plan.

Thereafter, the nine action points in the Working Plan was discussed in more detail.

Some of the action points was left as they are since no action has been taken since November. Other action points was modified due to progress in implementing the tasks, one point was removed from the Working Plan due to lack of interest in pursuing it further.

Action points: (for further explanation on the each action points see the Working Plan for the BEAC WGEC 2010-2011).

*1. BEAC Chairmanship: Explore the possibility to promote the Barents Region and its mineral industry in EU by arranging a seminar in Brussels on these topics.*

The chair informed the members that the conference will take place in the European Parliament on March 15, hosted by the EP and the Swedish BEAC Chairmanship. The discussion was primarily concentrated to specific details in the conference program.

*2. BEAC Chairmanship: Assemble information on the state of the current cooperation between the countries national geological surveys.*

Based on information from the member state's national geological surveys, it was concluded that the cooperation between the surveys are working well. No further action was considered to be needed.

Decision: No further action is currently needed. Could be followed up later.

*3. BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Assemble information on the state of the current cooperation between key universities in order to find out if and to what extent there exists co-operation and what possibilities there are to start or develop such a co-operation.*

This action point refers to co-operation between universities within subjects related to the raw material industry. The chair informed that according to Luleå Technical University it exist a close cooperation

between them and Oulu University with focus on the mining industry. These universities have created a joint initiative in education in geology, mineral and engineering. This initiative is called Nordic Mining School (NMS). NMS has begun negotiations with Norwegian University of Science and Technology in Trondheim in order to start a co-operation.

Since no information on Russian universities have been reported, Mr. Goncharenko will look into existing co-operation between Russian universities and universities in the Barents region and report to chair.

Mr. Goncharenko also suggested that this action point should be broadened and also include other subjects not linked to the raw material industry; such as technology, IT and innovation, as well as subjects related to Indigenous peoples. The other members agreed to this proposal.

Decision: The members of WGEC should inform themselves on the co-operation between universities in their countries and their counterparts in other countries within the Barents Region, based on the above mentioned subjects and report to chair.

*4. BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Look into if the mining industry have any specific problems with administrative impediments in relation to border crossing.*

The chair informed the members that he has been informed by the BEAC Working Group on Customs Cooperation that this group has not identified the mining industry, or the raw material industry in general, as areas particular effected by administrative impediments in relation to border crossing.

Decision: The chair suggested that this action point should be removed from the Working Plan. The members agreed to this.

*5. BEAC WGEC: Increase contact and cooperation with BEAC Working Group on Customs Cooperation.*

The chair informed the group that informal discussions has taken place between himself and the chair of Working Group on Customs Cooperation (WGCC), Mr. Jan Sixten Pekkari. According to Mr.

Pekkari, there is currently no need for any deeper co-operation between our working groups.

Decision: Change of wording of the action point: “Continued exchange of information between BEAC WGEC and BEAC BEAC Working Group on Customs Cooperation”.

*6. BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Assemble information on the state of the current cooperation between business organisations, such as chambers of commerce, in order to find out the current state of relation and what possibilities there are to start or develop such a co-operation.*

No action has been taken on this action point.

Decision: The members will contact their local business organisations in their respectively countries in order to be informed on the extent of co-operation with their counterparts in the Barents Region. This will be reported to the chair.

*7. BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Establish a contact with the BEAC Working Group on Investments and Economic Co-operation in order to examine possible ways to cooperate in the future.*

The chair informed the members that he has talked to the new chair, Mr. Kjell Hjelm, of the BEAC Working Group on Investments and Economic Co-operation (WGIEC). Mr. Hjelm has not yet made any plans of action for the WGIEC and have not met with his working group. Although Mr. Hjelm says he is very interested in co-operation with the WGEC, he wants to await the discussion on the group’s priorities before continue the discuss with the WGEC.

Decision: To await the process in the WGIEC and begin co-operation when this groups are ready. Change the wording of the action point to: *BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Develop a workable co-operation with the BEAC Working Group on Investments and Economic Co-operation in order to examine possible ways to cooperate in the future.*

*8. BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Establish a contact with the Working Group on Youth Policy in order to examine possible ways to cooperate in the future.*

No action has been taken.

Decision: To let this action point be left in the Working Plan as it is. The WGEC should try to come up with ideas for future co-operation, perhaps within the area of “young entrepreneurship”.

*9. BEAC WGEC Chairmanship: Investigate the possibilities to arrange a Barents Industrial Partnership conference in 2011 in close cooperation with regional authorities. Themes, purposes and list of participants to be decided later.*

The chair informed the members that discussions has begun with the County Administration Board of Norrbotten on this issues. The County Administration Board of Norrbotten has suggested to arrange the Barents Industrial Partnership in Haparanda in June. However, since not all details have been agreed upon, no final decision has been made on arranging the conference.

Decision: The chair will inform the members on the progress.

#### **6 Any other business**

No other business was brought up for discussion.

#### **7. Closing of the meeting**

Next meeting was not decided upon, but will be held within the Swedish chairmanship if needed.

The chair thanked the members and closed the meeting.