



YMPÄRISTÖMINISTERIÖ
MILJÖMINISTERIET
MINISTRY OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Helsinki, December 19, 2005

**Barents Euro-Arctic Council,
Meeting of the Working Group on Environment (WGE)**

**30-31 August 2005
Helsinki**

MINUTES

1. Opening, presentation of participants and adoption of the agenda

The WGE Chair, **Ms Ann-Britt Ylinen** opened the meeting and welcomed the participants.

The agenda was adopted.

2. Adoption of the minutes of the last meeting

The minutes were adopted.

3. Cleaner production

The Chair of the CPTF **Mr. Markku Hietamäki** reported about the meeting of CPTF on 29 August. CPTF will report about its work to the Ministerial Meeting in October. Content of the report was determined in St. Petersburg in May 2005 and the second draft will be soon distributed to members of the task force. The report will include information about the national action plans and an assessment of the national action plans in relation to the common action plan. Proposals for the future work will be based on the conclusions drawn from the assessment. The task force proposes to add sustainable consumption in the new mandate of the CPTF.

The CPTF meeting also get information about the proposal to establish a cleaner production task force under ACAP. Finally, Finland informed about two projects: cleaner production (technology and economics) education cooperation between universities in Barents Region and a capacity building seminar in Petrozavodsk (September 2005).

4. Indigenous people

Mr Solbakken from Sámi University College informed about Environmental Impact Assessment Course with Indigenous Perspectives. Training course program aims at capacity building and participation of Russian indigenous peoples in the sustainable development of the Arctic. The future learning outcomes of the course will be students' ability to increase awareness of their rights and roles in and to analyze impacts in development projects, to become real partners in those projects and to further supervise other members of their community. The program is organized in cooperation with RAIPON and Sámi University College with support from UNEP/GRID-Arendal. The course plan has been prepared by the funding from the Ministry of the Environment of Finland and

from UNEP/GRID-Arendal. Although the program has already some funding, there is not enough funding to start the training program. The plan is to start the course in 2006.

5. Information about the BEAC 10th session on 9-10 November

Mr Olav Berstad informed about news related to CSO. On 14-16 September is the next meeting of CSO. The main issue on agenda is preparation of the BEAC 10th Session, draft Joint Communiqué, and documents on nuclear safety projects and climate issues. He shortly informed about the content of the draft Joint Communiqué and the environmental issues in it. Finland will take over the chairmanship of the BEAC after Norway.

He informed about the preparation of the document "Arctic climate change: Policy measures relevant for the Barents Region". The aim of this document is to clarify the issues specific in Barents region and instruments that already exists within BEAC and could be used to support the process. The aim is to endorse this document at the BEAC 10th Session.

He informed about the Barents Resque 2005 exercise which was held in September 2005, about the Economic Forum in St. Petersburg in June 2005. Contribution from BEAC to development of the future of the Northern Dimension. Proposal to NCM to enhance the cooperation, especially regarding economic cooperation, indigenous peoples, climate change and culture and history. Mr Berstad also presented organization chart of Barents cooperation.

Mr Kinnunen commented the organizational structure and noted that two parallel lines, working groups and regional working groups, are very resource consuming.

It was agreed that, if there are any additional comments to the climate document they will be sent via WGE or national representatives in the CSO.

6. Barents Environmental Hot Spots

Mr Forsström from NEFCO informed about the recent development within the Barents Hot Spot Facility. Discussions with Russian regional authorities and project owners were finalized in Komi and Nenets in Summer 2005. Findings from the last two visits were presented at the meeting. Based on discussions with Russian project owners and authorities NEFCO is producing a list of BHSF first targeted projects including projects in public and private sphere, and overviews and evaluations of most important industrial sectors. Mr. Forsström also presented general principles of NEFCO/BHSF which guide their actions when tackling various hot spots.

Next phase in the process will be evaluation and compilation of projects and priorities in dialogue with Russian counterparts. After that, preparation of terms of reference, selection of consultants as well as studies and project development in preparation for implementation will follow. Consultations with co-financiers will also be continued. On October 6 there will be a Donors' Steering Group Meeting where first allocations will be approved.

Mr Kinnunen informed about problems in getting monitoring data from Russia. Monitoring in Russia is very scattered and for this reason it is very difficult for financing bodies to verify what are the impacts of the investments in the state of environment. Attention to monitoring issues should be paid already at the launch of the projects.

Mr Forsström noted that in BHSF they have not forgotten monitoring. Monitoring is just not their primary task, but it will be integrated in the whole process. It is also important to start discussion on how to monitor and follow the progress regarding the elimination of the hot spots. In addition, the climate change is a new element in the process. The potential of Joint Implementation projects was not possible to assess when the hot spot report was prepared.

Mr Berstad noted the progress within the hot spots. During the year 2005 the discussions with the federal and regional authorities have been carried out. In June the hot spot cooperation was presented in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. The hot spot results will be presented and guidance for the future cooperation will be sought at the Meeting of Barents Environment Ministers in October and at the BEAC 10th Session in November. Co-financing and especially the Russian contribution is important for the successful implementation of the projects. He also noted the positive development regarding the cooperation with Arctic Council.

Mr Aleksandrovskiy confirmed the commitment of Russia to the results of the visits to the regions and NEFCO's approach. He noted that it will be very important for Russia to provide its own contribution to the financing of Barents hot spot projects. This means allocation of federal, regional and local financing along with the all hot spot owners financial resources to invest in the above projects. Mr. Aleksandrovskiy proposed close cooperation with other financiers in issues concerning hot spots. He also noted that these first targeted projects can be used as a framework for further cooperation. These priority projects could be implemented by getting funding from Russian budget and Russian sponsors, GEF, Arctic Council, and BHSF. He also proposed that the Russian Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR), WGE, NEFCO and ACAP could prepare a joint letter to GEF in order to propose a cooperation in hot spots, namely: to elaborate and implement relevant joint project in Barents region.

In addition, Mr. Aleksandrovskiy informed about a proposal by MNR to Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs before the last CSO Meeting. MNR informed them about the progress on hot spots and they proposed to arrange a broad partnership on that matter, to prepare and submit to the Government in accordance with established procedure the relevant applications for the next years state budget from the concerned federal, regional and local executive bodies and also to develop a special federal target programme on cleaner production and elimination of hot spots in cooperation with other relevant Russian ministries. In addition, a partnership conference should be arranged. Mr Aleksandrovskiy also proposed to develop cooperation with the UNEP/GEF Russian NPA Arctic Programme and informed with reference to the Russian Finance Ministry representative's statement about the possible additional 10 M€ pledge by Russia to the NDEP Special Fund to implement a large number of "environmental window" projects applications currently accumulated in NDEP project portfolio.

Mr. Dyer informed about the cooperation with ACAP. He informed about the current status of cooperation within ACAP regarding the pesticides, mercury and dioxins. The working group on mercury is currently selecting Phase II project. Hot spot project on mercury containing lamps is one of the proposed projects. ACAP has an ongoing cleaner production project regarding dioxin emissions of the pulp and paper mills in Arkhangelsk. He proposed cooperation to carry out a cleaner production programme in some of the pulp and paper mills. There will be an ACAP Dioxins/Furans Working Group Meeting at the Arkhangelsk Pulp and Paper Mill in November.

The Chair confirmed the important progress regarding the cooperation with ACAP and proposed that this issue will also be reported for the Barents Environment Ministerial Meeting. It is important to note that the established dialogue with ACAP has guaranteed the change of information and duplication of efforts has been avoided. In addition, joint cooperation projects has been identified and it is important to continue to develop project cooperation.

The Chair welcomed the information by Russia regarding the development of the partnership and national cooperation to enhance the hot spot process. She proposed to continue developing and following this process during the Russia's chairmanship period.

Mr. Sychev informed about a study of PCB pollution on Graham Bell Island in Franz Joseph Land Archipelago done by AMAP. Graham Bell Island is one of the most contaminated sites in Franz

Joseph Land Archipelago. Study shows that more than 30% of soil samples have the PCB content level exceeding the acceptable concentration. The highest PCB concentrations exceed more than 10 times the limit level set by Arctic Council. On the grounds of this study AMAP recommends a comprehensive survey in order to get information about high PCB concentration areas. AMAP also recommends developing project proposals for surface cleanup of the island and rehabilitation of its contaminated areas.

7. Preparations for the 7th Meeting of Barents Environment Ministers

The chair informed about practical arrangements of the meeting. Invitations have been sent to the participants of the meeting. Finland, Russia and Sweden confirmed that their Ministers will participate in the meeting.

The draft declaration was discussed in detail. The comments will be reflected at the next version of the declaration. The next version will be sent for comments at the beginning of the September and the goal is to have the final draft prepared by the end of September. The draft Report will be sent for comments by the September 15.

The draft report on the Barents 10 years' environmental cooperation was distributed and comments were presented at the meeting. After this meeting the report is not anymore open for drafting.

8. Any other business

The Chair informed about the preparation of the Report on water related projects in the Russian Barents areas. This Report will be produced to serve as a background document on the water cooperation projects and needs.

Next RWGE meeting will take place at the beginning of October in Kiruna. The aim is to continue project identification in order to prepare one project/region for implementation. In addition, the Action Programme of Barents regional level cooperation will be prepared.

Russian-Norwegian Cleaner Production Centre informed about the change of date regarding the Round Table 'The Strategy of the Russian Federation to Transit to Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development as Applied to the Yasnaya Poliana Agreement Experience'. The new date will be at the second half of May, 2006.

9. Next Meeting

Mr Aleksandrovskiy informed that the next WGE meeting is planned to take place in December this year or in February next year. It will be either in Moscow or in St. Petersburg.

The Chair closed the meeting and thanked the participants for the active cooperation. She welcomed the WGE members to Seventh Meeting of BEAC Environment Ministers in Rovaniemi, on 18-19 October.