

24 October 2011

Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) Annual report 2011

Background

The Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) was established as an Ad Hoc Working Group in 1999. Through a decision of the CSO in December 2002, the mandate of the group was prolonged and revised, and the group was transformed into a permanent working group, integrated in the structure of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The work of the WGYP was based on the Plan of Action adopted at the Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth Policy in the Member States of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Tromsø 14 -16 of May 2001. Following the recommendations from the Conference of Ministers of Youth Policy held in Murmansk in September of 2009, a revised action plan for the WGYP was developed and adopted in 2010.

Activities in 2011

During 2011 the work of the WGYP focused on the following activities:

Ordinary WGYP meetings

The WGYP held one ordinary meeting in Umeå on March 10-11th. The meeting was chaired by Eva Theisz of The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs. The agenda included handling of the ongoing activities of the WG as well as a discussion of a future merger with the Regional Working Group on Youth Issues (RWGYI).

In accordance with the request of the CSO, the Swedish chairmanship was present at the CSO meeting held in Jokkmokk on February 2-4th to inform about the WGYP activities during the previous year and the plans for 2011. The chair also attended chairmanship reference group meetings held by the Swedish Barents Secretariat to inform about developments within the Barents youth cooperation.

On October 10-11th the chairmanship was transferred from Sweden to Norway.

Merger with RWGYI

AS a result of the ordinary meeting in Umeå, WGYP decided to merge with RWGYI. The chairs of WGYP and RWGYI were assigned to draft the Terms of Reference for a joint working group called *Joint Working group on Youth (JWGY)*. The Terms of Reference are based on the current *Plan of Action* of WGYP and the *Regional Youth Programme* of RWGYI. The terms were adopted by both groups during the summer of 2011. Thereafter the merger was accepted by the CSO and RC at their respective meetings in October of the same year.

Meetings of the Barents Stakeholders in the youth field

The Swedish chairmanship also continued their work from 2010, enhancing the efficiency and synergies between the structures of the Barents youth cooperation. Two Barents youth field stakeholders meetings were held in 2011, which aimed at developing and coordinating ways of cooperation between NBS, IBS, BYCO, BRYC, RWGYI and WGYP in order to make cooperation even more fruitful and effective in the future. The meetings were held in Umeå on March 9th

and in Kirkenes on October 4-5th. The conclusions from the meetings were very positive. The group pinpointed several areas which needs development and enhanced cooperation in order to strengthen the Barents youth field.

The Swedish chairmanship conference

The Swedish chairmanship conference *From Passion to Action* was planned to be held in Umeå in May 2011. The conference aimed at promoting young peoples' real influence by creating a dialogue between young people, local/regional decision makers and civil servants throughout the Barents region. Preparatory meetings and work were done in cooperation with RWGYI, BYCO and BRYC. Unfortunately the conference was cancelled due to a low number of registered participants.

Steering and supporting BYCO

The structures for steering and supporting the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) were developed under 2011. This included a revised and prolonged contract for the BYCO as well as improved steering documents for planning and following up on activities. Meetings with BYCOs youth coordinator Ms Maria Petrova was held at regular intervals throughout the year.