



Protocol of the 33th meeting of the Working Group of Youth Policy of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Umeå 10-11 march 2011

Participants list

WGYP:

Ms Sanna Puura, Finland, Ministry of Education and Culture

Ms Seija Kähkönen, Finland, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment for Lapland

Mr Björn Jaaberg Hansen, Norway, Ministry of Children, Equality and Social integration

Ms Gerenzala Sangadzhieva, Russia, Ministry of Youth, Sports and Tourism

Ms Eva Theisz, Sweden, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

Observers:

Mr Alexander Solokov, National Youth Council Russia

Ms Maria Petrova, Barents Youth Cooperation Office

Ms Lotta Jarvenius Rössner, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs

Chair: Ms Eva Theisz

Secretary: Ms Lotta Jarvenius Rössner

10th of March

Opening of the meeting and Adoption of the agenda

The chair welcomed the participants and opened the 33th meeting of the Working group of Youth Policy of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The proposed agenda was adopted. The chair distributed the signed BYCO agreements 2011-2013 to all member states present.

Adoption of the protocol of the previous meeting

The protocol was circulated and agreed in the fall 2010, but was now formally adopted from the previous meeting (including change of names of organizations from Norway, Finland).

BYCO issues

Follow-up Activities 2010

Ms Petrova gave a presentation and overview on the activities/work carried out by BYCO in 2010, as also sent out in beforehand. Larger events, considered to be of high importance included *Barents Sea Youth Conference*, *Jokkmokk Winter Conference*, *Barents Passion Week* and *Barents Youth Film Festival*. All together around 2650 participants had been reached by information carried out by BYCO in 2010. For details, see annexes 1 and 2.

Information activities, including press contacts has been ongoing. The previous BYCO website was closed down, and now the website is maintained in cooperation with the NBS. Furthermore, social media usage has been developed. BYCO is also visible on the



Russian version of Facebook, vkontakte.ru and there are plans to establish a Facebook page as well during 2011. A booklet presenting possibilities, funding and project management development in RU/EN has been produced as well during 2010.

BYCO has continued its cooperation with RWGYP and in the regions. Visa and travel facilitations is also a substantial part of the work as well as consultation to youth organization interested in international cooperation. In 2010 the total amount of counseling was 385 hours. Identified challenges for 2011 include ensuring stable cash flow (in/out) related to BYCO. Also for the future, how to adopt to the changes, due to a possible merging.

The WGYP thanked for the well prepared documents and the great work done. The BYCO activity report 2010 reflects well the work carried out. Ms Kähkönen stressed the importance of Ms Petrovas role in facilitating visa issues etc, as this really is perceived as an obstacle for young person. Ms Petrovas work is very valuable also in finding suitable organisations/contacts in Russia. Mr Jaaberg Hansen would like to complement the annual report with a short result report summarizing the developments over time.

Conclusions: The Swedish chairmanship will make flow chart on how steering and feedback has been carried out during the 2 years, to facilitate transfers to the incoming chair in the fall of 2011. Ms Petrova will make the result report, which could be linked also with the future strategy of BYCO.

Follow-up Budget 2010

Mr Solokov from the Russian National Youth Council presented the accounting for BYCO in 2010. Funding is received from all 4 members of the agreement. Rubel exchanges at different times have provided different exchange rates; deviation between planned/carried out budgets was maximum 5%. Final results from 2010: a surplus of 980 Rubels.

In order to close the 2010 accounts each member state is requested by the Russian bank to sign, stamp a certificate/declaration which then can be used to close the accounts for 2010 by the bank. This certificate was disseminated at the meeting, and should be returned to BYCO as soon as possible.

Members of WGYP found it difficult in following spending/under spending in the budget as they are in rubels/euros. Furthermore questions were raised related to the 18% VAT for the international contribution, which is a change from the previous structure of Inter education to the National Youth Council.

Mr Solokov explained that due to Russian regulations VAT is to be included in the foreign contribution, exempted only organizations that are on a yearly decided list by the Russian government, on which foreign states are never included.

Proposal put forward from Mr Jaaberg Hansen to present budget and contribution in Rubels (i.e. contribution also in Rubels) or alternatively to weigh the different rates from the Nordic contributions, whichever is more suitable.

Explanatory note is requested by SE, NO; FI from the Russian partner, explaining the taxation system on contribution, also in terms of arguing for a future raise of contributions. This includes the clarification of rules from Russian ministry, which has increased the VAT taxes on foreign contributions. Mr Solokov will provide with an explanatory note shortly, sent within a week.



Decision: Financial report Accounts 2010 were approved by WGYP.

BYCO work plan 2011

Ms. Petrova presented the BYCO work plan and calendar for 2011. A development strategy for 2011 has been drafted, including a log-frame with proposed indicators to measure set targets, which also were shortly presented. Following a discussion in WGYP, several members expressed their skepticism towards indicator systems, including validity of measurements, which will not be pursued further.

WGYP clarified that BYCO could be considered to be the operational body for the WGYP, which should be reflected in the strategy or background papers. Main purpose for BYCO is to stimulate dialogue, finding partners, facilitate participation (visas, travel arrangements) etc. BRYC activities, own planned events, chairmanship events etc. are to be included in BYCOs core activities, as well as publicity work, visibility and promotion of BRYCs work is regularly presented at information sessions, workshops which are seen as are good arenas for visibility. Travels outside of regions are not so many due to budgetary constraints.

Conclusions: The WGYP is not interested in pursuing indicators, but rather another follow up system, with current calendar and quarterly follow up of activities.

When designing the yearly work plan, WGYP proposal is to take up priorities from the action plans, and then concretize the actual activities for each year. BYCO should strive for a three year overview, combined with a one year plan with concrete activities. Concretely, Ms Petrova is asked to update the work plan for 2011 based on the 2010 plan, following the same structure for this year. An overview will be done together with the chair to develop new planning instruments for 2012.

BYCO budget 2011

Mr Solokov presented the total budget for BYCO 2011, which is 2.394.000 Rubels. Conclusion on the current proposal is a deficit of 20.000 EUR, mainly due to following: raise of salary by Ms. Petrova, agreed in October 2010, and higher employment tax (26% -> 34%). Solutions are either to cut down costs or increase contributions. Russia is willing to increase contribution to 15.000 EUR. Finland would need explanations on increase of costs (i.e. VAT) to negotiate higher contributions than before (Note will be sent out by Russia on this). Norway is willing to contribute around 12500 or 15000 EUR. If Russian federation is willing to increase contribution, then Norway will find it possible to increase as well. Argument would also be that activities have increased as well, hence motivation for increased funding.

Overview Contributions

BYCO is in immediate cash flow shortage, and would need transfer of funds as soon as possible.

The state of play in the different members states are following:

FI - need to evaluate the closing of previous accounts as well as clarification on whom to be responsible for the accounting, before making decisions.

NO - could transfer funds as long bank accounts are clear.

SE -is not able at this stage to increase contribution from Swedish side. Sweden cannot send funds before the National Borad of Youth Affairs have received requisition.

The working group agreed on a practical approach to solve the immediate cash flow situation: 10.000 EUR could be signed and paid as soon as possible, as this is the minimum agreed contribution by all the countries. If SE does not increase funding as



other partners are willing to, blocking will be made by RU, and most likely by FI. NO could have voluntary contributions, in addition to the agreed funding by each partner.

Change of Hosting organization - Accounting

Due to time constraints in the current "hosting organization for accounting", the Russian federation has proposed to transfer accounting responsibility to another organization from 2011 onwards. Furthermore, the Russian bank need "contracts" with contributing organizations, including funding, to be signed by each contributor, in order to accept international funding contributions to arrive at accounts.

Mr Solokov presented the proposed organization to take over the accounting of BYCO from the Russian Youth Council. The name is "Foundation for support and development of international cooperation".

This is an NGO, initially created by 5 persons, all of them previously working with international activities. The foundation was established 3 years ago. Organization has been cooperating on projects of the Ministry for sport, tourism and youth affairs of RF. They have good experience of managing large projects in cooperation with state authorities; last large project was with the Council of Europe and European Commission. BYCO mission is close and would be within the mission of the foundation, so it would be easy to integrate its work. Currently there are 4 persons staff of the actual foundation, in addition project staff is employed on project basis. Yearly turnover of the Foundation is 500 000 eur.

Ms Sangadzhieva, Russia, will ensure to send out a letter of recommendation on the proposal of change of structure of accounting organization, within two weeks.

Mr Solokov, also representing the new organization, will send out contracts to all the contributors to fill out before submitting funding to BYCO 2011, upon the banks request.

Adoption of the Plan of Action for the WGYI

The plan of action was adopted, as agreed by e-mails by the end of 2010. Mr Jaaberg Hansen reminded that the Plan of Action should be a living document, with possibilities of revisions and follow up continuously. Proposal to follow up the different activities at least on an annual basis, to be continued by the incoming chair.

RWGI Work plan 2011

Adopted as agreed, Norway confirms that they will host the next WGYI in the fall of 2011, dates to be decided.

Joint session with RWGYI

Mr Utsi, chair from RWGYI, welcomed the groups to this joint session. At the first information point, the members of BRYC were also present.

Information from BRYC

BRYC are presenting a selection of six different projects as follows:

- Julia (Komi) present *Barents stories*, photo project uniting youngsters around Barents region but to show what we have, international project – facilitating non-linguistic. Photos, photo book, exhibition to follow.



- Marina (Nenets), new member, planning *youth cooperation center* in her region, summer activities for children to teach youngsters (9-10 years) English and performances.
- Zhanna (Murmansk) Project *Demo-crazy*, to highlight democracy, open-minded, overcoming difficulties on human rights and cooperate in the region, methods include art etc, starting point is democracy. This is in the development stage.
- Svetlana (Archangelsk): *Team 29*, creating businesses, youth mass media, youth international section, participatory techniques, brainstorming etc. – looking for Norwegian partners for exchanges.
- Halvard (indigenous), *Barents Passion Week II*, October, now with more professional artist and making the programme tighter. Aiming for an annual event, professional stage for artist from the four counties.
- Ylva (Norrbotten): *Chicks in Sapmi*, 3 year program (1 year now), mentoring program for Sami girls in Sweden, connecting young Sami girls with older mentors. Networking, developing methods, methodology and ideas to be shared in all the countries. Too many mentors and girls that want to participate, great interest.

BRYC aims to build up Barents spirit from meetings between young persons in the local environment as from where each of the members are situated, local grass root level contacts with international twist.

Information from BYCO

Ms Petrova presented the general work done by BYCO; counseling, advice, also supporting conferences, facilitating visas/travels etc. for primarily Russian contacts. Vast range of support identified and carried out. Information work, brochure on project resources made available, advice on project management etc. has been created.

Information from RWGYI

Mr Utsi presented the RWGYI work. The working group gathers representatives from regions about youth issues, reference group of Barents secretariat and its funding for Youth activities etc. Youth programme developed recently for 2011-2014.

Information from WGYP

Ms Theisz presented the WGYP work briefly.

Information about the Swedish chairmanship event

Ms Theisz informed about the upcoming chairmanship event to be held in Umeå 11-12 May 2011. Sweden wishes help to identify participants from the regions, young persons, decision makers on policy and civil servants. Purpose is to enhance dialogue at regional level. Invitation sent out to the national working groups, their responsibility to select the representatives from each of the 13 regions. The regional groups present at the conference will develop concrete action plans to further improve life in the high north. The Chair will invite BRYC; RWGYI, WGYP for the activity, including highlighting each partners role, and its support. The chair together with the trainer will continue to finalize content, entertainment etc for the conference.

Discussion on possibilities of closer cooperation between RWGYI and WGYP

Mr Utsi presented the comparative document between the RWGYI/WGYP, updated after the 2nd Barents Stakeholders Meeting (of 2011-03-09). The chairs stressed that there would be transition period in the merging process, where cultures from the different working methods should be considered and necessary documents could be adapted.



Mr Jaaberg Hansen welcomed the proposal of merging as the two WGs have more or less the same aims and objectives. For further reflection, it would be valuable to have background papers on the functions from other joint working groups. Mr Jaaberg Hansen also noted that:

- DK, IS are also members of the National working group and they should be consulted
- BYCO is not the secretariat for the national WG, but the chair and this should be kept
- Steering work of BYCO could be joint, but financing responsibility should continue to be national responsibility.
- The consensus approach or voting issues needs to be included in the reference documents.

Ms Östensson pointed out that financing BRYC is included in the Barents Regional Youth programme, which should be taken into consideration and also needs to be secured for the future.

Ms Theisz has contacted with Swedish side of CSO, no formal pathway indicated, but information CSO and Regional Committee to be included in information flow. Mr Utsi, at the IBS will also look further into the contacts, and possible already existing terms of references from other joint working groups to start from.

Decision: both working groups have approved a pathway of merging the two groups.

11th of March

Conclusion - closer cooperation between RWGYI and WGYP, a way forward?

Timing further on: The two chairs are responsible of drafting the Terms of Reference for the new joint working group in consultation with the incoming chair. The Terms of Reference, including separate sections on financial aspects, should be adopted next meeting and then sent to Regional Committee and CSO for information.

Any other business

Ms Theisz pointed out the success of the upcoming chairmanship conference is dependent on each representative responsibility to recruit participants in their respective country and to support them financially.

Ms Jarvenius Rössner reported from the CSO meeting in Jokkmokk held 2-4/2, where also several chairs from working groups were present. Main message was the conclusions from the annual report 2010 as well as the work plan for 2011. CSO was informed about the possibilities to look into a merging as well as general questions on BYCO and its role.

Swedish chair will ensure a draft annual report for Jan-Oct 2011 to be handed over to Norwegian chair. If a national report from the chairmanship to be compiled, the Swedish chair will make a draft to be circulated to the working group for feedback and comments before finalization.

Mr Jaaberg Hansen gave a briefing about the current situation of the preparations of the up coming Norwegian Barents chairmanship. Currently a white paper is being drafted to be presented in the Norwegian parliament. So far, people-to-people contacts are highlighted in the coming chairmanship, but no decisions are made yet.



The Norwegian ministry is currently looking for generational replacement to take over Barents issues in the department. Hopefully such a person could attend in the conference in May. There has been restructuring in the NO ministry, where 3 sections are changed into 9 groups. International issues are separate, which takes some time to figure out the connections at national level and find generational change for the future.

Joint session with RWGYI

Closer cooperation between RWGYI and WGYP - next steps?

The chairs of the working groups will check with those representatives not present (RWGYI- FI and RU, WGYP-IS and DK). The groups agreed that ToR should be drafted and approved by the two working groups at the next meeting. Following this information will be sent to the CSO and the Regional Committee for the state of play. The agreed approach is one thing at the time, first ToR to be developed and then later on looking at whatever needs for new work plans, action plans etc.

Date and venue of the next meeting

RWGYI proposed in conjunction with the BRYC Rovaniemi event in October. The incoming chair Mr Jaaberg Hansen proposed early November in Oslo as an alternative not to be colliding with the BRYC event.

Conclusion: Next joint meeting will be held in Oslo early November, dates to be confirmed.

Other information from the joint meeting

Ms Dalhaug informed about the next Barents Passion Week II which will have creative workshops, planning for Rovaniemi around 17-18 October preliminary, as well as a meeting. The plan is to make a musical together.

Ms Dalhaug also presented the new BRYC board, Julia Lapshina (RU) is the new chair person, deputy chair Isa Tolonen (FI), Ylva Pavval (SE), Halvard Rundberg (Indigenous), Jon Asle Somby (NO) are the other members of the BRYC board.

Thanks: Thanks for Mr Utsi and Ms Theisz for the work to prepare the meeting and the merger documents. A special thanks to Ms Östensson as the local host at Länsstyrelsens premises.

The meeting was then closed.