

Plan of Action

1. General basis for the Plan of action

The starting point of cooperation in the Barents region stems from the Kirkenes Declaration in 1993 with the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council. A first step of cooperation in the youth field was taken in March 1999, where the meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Bodø included youth policy as one of its development areas. Furthermore, in 2001 the Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth Policy in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council decided on the first Plan of Action for the field of youth policy. In addition, in 2002 the CSO decision established the mandate of the WGYP, whereas the Murmansk Declaration of 2009, drew up principles, made proposals and recommendations in order to strengthen the cooperation in the field of youth policy in the Barents region.

The core messages from the Murmansk declaration were that realization of the capacity of young people is a fundamental precondition for a prosperous future for the Barents Euro-Arctic region. Young people are an important strategic resource and will, within the cultural, social and economic policies, contribute to a sustainable development of the region. Among the most valuable advantages of young people are their education and skills, their mobility, quick adaptation and creative potential. Thanks to those characteristics the youth has a unique opportunity to activate cultural, social and economical mechanisms of intensive innovative development of their countries and the Barents Region as such.

Following experiences gained from the first generation of Plan of action, a renewed Plan of action developed from a given mandate in Murmansk. This plan of action in the youth field builds on experiences gained in the cooperation since 1999, and related areas of policies; The Council of Europe Declaration *The future of Council of Europe Youth policy and Agenda 2020*, the European Council resolution on *Renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field 2010-2018*, The European Union Commission Communication on *Europe 2020- a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*. Also the working group should follow the developments within *Youth on the Move* flagship from the European Commission, especially focus on bringing in non-EU-member countries in relevant fields of cooperation...

2. Objectives of cooperation

The aim of the Plan of action is to meet the special needs of cooperation in the youth field, also taking into account indigenous young persons' reality in the Barents region.

The overall objective is to further strengthen cross-sectorial approach of youth issues, value young peoples' capacities and increase the good living conditions, especially focusing on the importance of youth participation and active citizenship of young people in the Barents Region. The target is to strengthen the cooperation and synergies with and between other working groups of the Barents Region.

Taking into account the above-mentioned general basis, the objectives for the cooperation are:

- Promotion of the cross-sectorial youth policy approach through sharing of experiences between policy makers, youth researchers, decision makers and young people in the region.
- Strengthening the dialogue between the young people and the decision makers in the Barents region
- Emphasising the role of the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) in providing information and guidance services for young people in the Barents Region and ensuring the continuation of its work also in the future
- Increasing the knowledge in the current youth issues in the region by promoting the cooperation between all structures of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council as well as all the other stakeholders dealing with youth affairs in the region

3. Activities

The objectives which will guide the cooperation will be realised through the following priority activities.

- Promote and strengthen the work of the Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC)¹.
- Support projects, institutions and structures that help to improve the living conditions of youth in the region, with a special attention of indigenous young people.
- Promote the cooperation between youth researchers and research projects related to the situation and living conditions of young people in the Barents region
- Act as an expert body to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council on all matters relating to youth policy and on questions of concern to young people;
- Take initiatives regarding, develop and coordinate the work on youth policy and other youth related cooperation of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council;
- Promote a cross-sectorial approach to working with youth issues within the structures of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and to cooperate with and assist the other bodies of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council when they deal with questions with a youth policy dimension;
- Function as a steering and advisory group for the coordinator/s for the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO)² in Murmansk and in addition consider the role and activities of the BYCO in a changing environment

• ¹ *BRYC: Barents Regional Youth Council* is an important cooperation partner to reach the target group of young people in the region. They will be consulted in planning activities and invited to all meetings within the youth field cooperation.

• ² *BYCO: the Barents Youth Cooperation Office*: As stated in the Terms of Reference (25 April 2002), BYCO shall provide information and guidance for youth groups, organisations and networks on national and international resources available for

- Cooperate with the Council of Senior Officials, Regional Council, especially with its Regional Working Group on Youth Issues, on issues regarding youth policy and other youth related matters. Furthermore investigate, in consultations with the regional working group, to establish one common working group responsible for promoting youth cooperation in the region
- Cooperate closely with other structures and organisations active in the youth field such as the EU, the Council of Europe, the Council of Baltic Sea States and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

4. Monitoring and evaluation

The WGYP will monitor work done, and report yearly to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Sami parliaments in Finland, Sweden and Norway as well as the relevant Ministries on the implementation of the Work programme.

Furthermore, a closer monitoring and follow up of BYCO and its activities takes place throughout the year.

funding projects; on education in project planning, implementation and follow-up; on possible cooperation partners nationally and internationally; and on planned and ongoing youth projects and meetings in the Barents Region.

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