

RESOLUTION

of the 10th Barents Parliamentary Conference

Hosted digitally by the Storting, 22 June 2021

The participants in the 10th Barents Parliamentary Conference underline the importance of the Barents cooperation for building trust, cooperation and friendship across national borders in the region;

We take into account the principles and provisions of the 1993 Declaration on Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (Kirkenes, Norway), which forms the basis for multilateral cooperation in the Barents region;

We recall the Resolution of the 9th Barents Parliamentary Conference (Haparanda, 2019), reaffirming the importance of promoting various forms of parliamentary cooperation in the Northern part of Europe;

We take into account the programme of the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2019-2021, focusing on health, knowledge and people-to-people cooperation;

We welcome the incoming Finnish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council for 2021-2023; focusing on sustainable development and healthy environment, people-to-people contact and transport and logistics, as well as the incoming Chairmanship of the Nenets Autonomous Okrug in the Barents Regional Council;

We note the need for interaction between intergovernmental Councils in the North of Europe, in particular, we draw attention to the potential for combining the interests of the current Russian Chairmanship of the Arctic Council and incoming Finnish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council;

We underline the importance of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council as the driving forces of the Barents cooperation;

We underline the importance of the cooperation between the Indigenous Peoples in the Barents region and *welcome* the conclusions from the third Barents Indigenous Peoples Summit on 8 June 2021;

We recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples and their representation [Working Group of Indigenous Peoples] in the Barents cooperation, and *take into account* the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples;

We take into account the declaration from the 14th Meeting of Environment Ministers in the Barents region on 5 February 2020;

We strongly support the ongoing work to establish a financial mechanism for funding projects in the Barents cooperation as an important instrument to strengthen predictability for the partners and projects;

With representatives of the **national parliaments** of Finland, Norway, Russia, Sweden, the European Parliament, and representatives of the **regional parliamentary** bodies of the Barents region, the Nordic Council, the Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, the Parliamentary Association of the North-West of Russia and the Sami Parliamentary Council.

Youth cooperation

Cross-border cooperation is especially important for young people as an investment in friendships and partnerships for life. In the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, we must make sure that young people can start to meet again in person.

Call on the national and regional governments of the Barents region to:

Make sure that the **Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC)** has the sufficient means to facilitate cross-border cooperation.

Ensure that **young peoples' voices** are heard at all levels in the Barents cooperation.

Support youth **cooperation across the borders** and ensure a meaningful engagement of the Barents youth in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

Strengthen the funding of **mobility programs** especially directed at young people living in the Barents region.

Realize the need to create **attractive local communities** for young people, as recommended in the Youth Panel's report presented in connection with the new White Paper on Arctic Policies in Norway.

Biodiversity and land use

The loss of biodiversity is a threat to the future of our planet and is amplified by climate change. The Barents region has unique natural areas, especially water systems, where cross-border cooperation is essential to stop the loss of nature.

Call on the national and regional governments of the Barents region to:

Strongly support the **Barents Biodiversity Initiative** and strengthen their joint effort in the preparations for COP 15 under the UN Convention on Biodiversity in October 2021, and encourages further cooperation in this area.

Strengthen the work on climate change, especially on **black carbon and adaptation** to climate change, in the work with the updated Action Plan for Climate Change in the Barents region to be presented at the Barents Ministerial Meeting on 26 October 2021.

Strengthen the importance of **biodiversity** when developing new projects connected to infrastructure and business development. The sustainability of projects should be documented in all aspects of the concept; ecological, economic and social.

Innovative sustainable development

The Arctic is warming **three times as fast** as the global average. The circular economy is crucial for reducing the use of the world's resources, stopping the loss of biodiversity and cutting the greenhouse gas emissions. Governments and the business sector should work together to promote cross-border cooperation to stimulate green economy initiatives in the Barents region.

Call on the national and regional governments of the Barents region to:

Strengthen the cooperation with the business community to promote **new innovative solutions** to reduce emissions of CO2 and black carbon and stop the loss of biodiversity.

Renew and increase their 2015 Paris Agreement commitments at the Conference of the Parties (COP 26) in Glasgow, with the understanding that climate change is a critical threat to our planet.

Strengthen the knowledge base and improve scientific cooperation with a **new International Polar Year** Initiative. In close cooperation with relevant scientific partners focus on extensive interdisciplinary and multilateral scientific programs that include Northerners and Indigenous peoples in the planning and conducting of scientific activities.

Highlight and support projects connected to the **circular economy**.

Covid-19 and health cooperation

Human health is closely connected to a healthy and clean environment. As the Norwegian Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation has placed health high on the agenda of the Barents cooperation, the Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to improve digital health services.

Call on the national and regional governments of the Barents region to:

Strengthen the current momentum in digitalisation towards developing and improving **innovative cross-border health services** in a more digital society.

Acknowledge that **indigenous peoples** have especially suffered from closed national borders during the Covid-19 pandemic, and explore new ways of providing high quality health services to the indigenous peoples in the Barents region.

Recognize the importance of **people-to-people** contact in the Barents region for people's health and prioritize cross-border contacts as soon as borders open up.

Note the efforts of the Murmansk Region to organize three international sessions on the theme “**Barents Euro-Arctic region against coronavirus**” in which representatives of the Barents cooperation shared practical experiences in the combating the pandemic.

Ambitiously follow-up the conclusions from **the Barents Health Summit** on 12 November 2019, especially connected to mental health and communicable diseases.