

Agreement
between the Government of the Republic of Finland, the Government
of the Kingdom of Norway, the Government of the Russian Federation
and the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden
on the Establishment of an
International Barents Secretariat for the
Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region

The Governments of the Republic of Finland, the Kingdom of Norway, the Russian Federation and the Kingdom of Sweden, hereinafter referred to as the Parties,

Considering that the establishment of an International Barents Secretariat will make the Barents cooperation more coherent and efficient, and

Taking into account that this Agreement is supported by the Barents Regional Council,

Have agreed on the following:

Article 1

An International Barents Secretariat, hereinafter referred to as the Secretariat, shall be established to provide technical support for the multilateral coordinated regional activities within the framework of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council.

The Secretariat shall be located in Kirkenes, Norway. The Secretariat shall be operative as of January 2008.

Article 2

The Secretariat shall possess a legal personality in Norway. It shall have such legal capacity as may be necessary for the exercise of its functions and the fulfilment of its purposes, including the capacity to contract, to acquire, hold and dispose of movable and immovable property and to institute and participate in legal proceedings.

Article 3

The Secretariat and its property and assets shall enjoy on the territory of Norway such privileges and immunities as are necessary for the exercise of its functions.

The permanent staff members of the Secretariat shall enjoy on the territory of Norway the privileges and immunities necessary for the exercise of their functions in connection with the activities of the Secretariat.

A separate agreement with regard to the legal capacity of the Secretariat, its privileges and immunities and its permanent staff members shall be concluded between the Secretariat and the Kingdom of Norway as the Host State.

Article 4

The functioning of the Secretariat shall be governed by the Terms of Reference adopted by the Committee of Senior Officials of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council.

Article 5

The Secretariat shall have an operating budget for each calendar year.

The parties shall finance the budget through assessed contributions based upon the following payment scheme:

Finland	12.5%
Norway	12.5%
Russia	12.5%
Sweden	12.5%
Norway (as the Host State)	50.0 %

The Parties shall make their assessed contributions available to the Secretariat by 31st March each year.

Article 6

The Secretariat shall be led by a Head of Secretariat, who shall be selected among qualified individuals and be a citizen of a Party to this Agreement. The decision of appointment shall be made by the Committee of Senior Officials of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council after a selection process involving also the Regional Committee of the Barents Regional Council.

Article 7

Any dispute on the interpretation or application of this Agreement shall be resolved through negotiations between the Parties.

Article 8

Each Party shall notify the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway through diplomatic channels of the completion of the national measures necessary for the entry into force of the Agreement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway shall inform the other Parties of the receipt of each notification.

Article 9

This Agreement shall enter into force on the thirtieth day following the date on which all Parties have notified the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway of their acceptance of the Agreement. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway shall inform the Parties of the date of entry into force of the Agreement.

Article 10

The Agreement may be amended by mutual agreement among the Parties. Such amendments shall be proposed through diplomatic channels in writing and shall enter into force in accordance with the procedures described in Article 8 and 9.

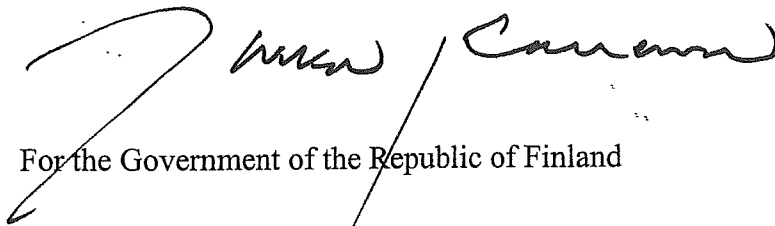
Article 11

Any Party may withdraw from this Agreement by a written notice. The withdrawal shall take effect one year after receipt of the notice by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. In this case the remaining Parties shall consult on the future existence and structure of the Secretariat.

This Agreement is produced in a single copy in the English language, which shall be deposited in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Norway shall transmit certified copies of the Agreement to all the Parties.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Agreement.

Done at Rovaniemi this 15th day of November 2007



For the Government of the Republic of Finland



For the Government of the Kingdom of Norway



For the Government of the Russian Federation



For the Government of the Kingdom of Sweden