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An Action Plan on Climate Change for the Barents Region

An Action Plan on Climate Change for the Barents Region was today adopted at the Barents Environmental Minister's meeting in Inari, Finland. It contains recommendations for concrete activities in most working groups under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council. One main purpose is to provide ideas and support for local and regional adaptation measures.

Climate change will have serious impacts on our societies and ecosystems in the Barents region and has been on the agenda of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council for several years. In the declaration of the 13th Session of the Council in Kiruna in 2011, the foreign ministers from Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia called for the development of an Action Plan on Climate Change, and encouraged all relevant sectors to contribute to this work.

The development of an Action Plan on Climate Change for the Barents Cooperation has been one of the main priorities of the Norwegian chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in the period 2011-2013, as well as of the Finnish chairmanship of the BEAC Working Group on Environment. The work has been lead by Norway, with input from the consulting company Carbon Limits and in close cooperation with the Working Group on Environment. Most BEAC working groups have been involved in proposing concrete projects to the Action Plan. The plan was endorsed by the Foreign Ministers of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia in their meeting of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Tromsø 29. October 2013.

The Action Plan contains a number of different projects under the headings *Mitigation, Adaptation, Research, observation, monitoring and modelling and Outreach*. The projects build on previous recommendations on climate change in the Barents region. They are supposed to give an added value to cooperation on climate change going on in other fora, such as the Arctic Council.

A key project in the Action Plan is the Working Group on Environments proposal to develop regional climate strategies in the whole Barents region, on the basis of experiences with climate strategies that are already developed in the Finnish counties of the Barents region.

In the meeting today, the delegates called for the follow up of the Action Plan on Climate Change by the working groups and the regions in the Barents cooperation. In addition, the International Barents Secretariat (IBS) in Kirkenes, Norway has been strengthened with an employee that will have the follow up of the Action plan as a main task.

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