

RESOLUTION
8th BARENTS PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCE

Naryan-Mar, June 8, 2017

By the invitation of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation, the elected representatives of the parliaments of Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and regional legislative bodies of these states, members of the Barents Regional Council, Nordic Council, Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference, the Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region, Parliamentary Association of Northwest Russia, as well as Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), assembled June 7-8, 2017, in the city of Naryan-Mar, the capital of the Nenets Autonomous District, Russian Federation, at the 8th Barents Parliamentary Conference, which took place under the motto of the Russian BEAC Chairmanship: “Working Together for Innovative, Smart and Sustainable Barents region. Trust, Transparency, Tradition.”

The main topics on the agenda were building up co-operation in the Barents Region, international and regional co-operation, economic wellbeing of the Barents region, development of transport infrastructure, environment conservation under climate change, ways of preserving cultural values, protecting the rights of indigenous people, social challenges, development of education, science and sustainable tourism in the region.

Parliamentarians of state-members of the Conference,

Being committed to the common cause of co-operation in Barents Euro-Arctic Region, stipulated in the Kirkenes Declaration, adopted January 11, 1993, and reiterated in the Declaration on the 20th Anniversary of the Barents Euro-Arctic Cooperation, adopted in June 2013 in the city of Kirkenes at the meeting of the heads of government of the members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, as well as principles and provisions that laid the foundation for multidimensional co-operation in the Barents Region aimed at strengthening stability, wellbeing and sustainable development in all spheres.

Acknowledging the essential role of the Barents Regional Council, with the Kainuu region as its present chair and the upcoming chairmanship of the Norwegian province of Finmark becoming the Chair in 2017; *noting* that international co-operation and close interaction among national and regional levels is an inherent element of co-operation; *welcoming* the implementation of the Barents Programme 2014-2018,

Emphasizing the uniqueness of the Barents region in terms of climate, population, industrial activity and indicators of social and economic development indicators, including GDP per capita, and the fact that the Barents region spans modern cities and advanced industry to rural areas and indigenous people’s communities,

Taking into consideration the programme of the Russian Chairmanship in Barents Euro-Arctic Region 2015-2017, proclaiming that the main objective is to ensure sustainable development of the Barents Region with a premium on the development of socio-economic factors coupled with the monitoring of how environmental requirements are met, as well as support for indigenous peoples;

Taking into consideration the resolutions of previous Barents Parliamentary Conferences, reiterating the significant role of the parliamentary dimension in the development of this part of the European continent, and taking into account the 7th Barents Parliamentary Conference, was held in Helsinki in September 2015,

Acknowledging that a balanced integration of economic, social, environmental components and respect for democratic values, lack of discrimination, gender equality and the minority rights, including indigenous peoples, are a premise for dynamic, inclusive and sustainable regional development,

Underlining the role of interaction with the civil society, cultural exchange and people-to-people contacts, as well as support for engagement of NGOs within respective areas of the Barents co-operation,

Welcoming measures at the level of the working group of Barents co-operation designed for more harmonization and synergy within the framework of regional and cross-border co-operation between various forums such as the Arctic Council, Council of the Baltic Sea States, the Nordic Council of Ministers and Northern Dimension,

proceeding from geographical and cultural unity, economic interdependency and common challenges of regional states and peoples,

reiterating its commitment to further strengthen the Barents Region as a peaceful, stable, vibrant and prospering region on the European continent,

acknowledging the need for additional measures to support indigenous peoples residing in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, strengthen social and economic livelihoods, and protect national traditions, cultures and languages,

call on representatives of national parliaments and regional legislative bodies, as well as all national, regional, and local authorities in their activities to

support measures ensuring sustainable development of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, placing special emphasis on developing its transport infrastructure, social, economic, and environmental factors, as well as comprehensive improvement of living conditions of the region's indigenous population, and thus, in the following areas, **recommend to:**

Transport infrastructure development:

recognize the important role of cross-border transport connections for economic development and welcome the intention to continue working on the proposal for a Joint Barents Transport Plan, as well as to provide guidelines and recommendations for the development of all modes of transport in the border-crossing corridors, including motor vehicle transport;

welcome the outcomes of the meetings of the Ministers of Transport of the BEAC member states on 21 June 2016 in Arkhangelsk;

facilitate development of the future potential of the Northern Sea Route which would benefit the Barents Region and provide economic and business opportunities to all member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council,

support activities aimed at creating an effective transport system in the North of Europe that would reflect the needs of the local population, climatic and geographical features, as well as enterprises and transport operators, including the efforts within the framework of the Joint Barents Transport Plan;

recommend continuing joint work aimed at improving safety and reliability of transport, and training specialists for the transport sector in the Arctic, including maritime transport, and for the tourism sector.

Protecting the unique environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and responding to climate change:

urge the Barents Region countries to contribute to the implementation of the outcome document of the High-level Plenary meeting of the U.N. General-Assembly on the Sustainable Development Goals in September 2015 entitled as "Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, including sustainable development goals, as well as the Paris Climate Agreement and the global 10-Year Framework Program on Sustainable Consumption and Production;

call for improved resource efficiency and to emphasize the importance of a circular and green economy;

To support priorities of the BEAC Working Group on Environment, i.e. studying climate change and its consequences, as well as adaptation to and mitigation of the change; reducing pollutant emissions and managing waste; preserving biodiversity, protecting natural habitats and expanding the network of natural reserves; facilitating implementation of the "cleaner production" principles; managing water resources;

take into account the outcome of the meeting of Ministers of Environment of the BEAC nations in Sortavala on November 25, 2015;

join environment protection efforts with the Arctic Council and other regional organizations;

create conditions for implementation of measures for exclusion of the Environmental Hot Spots in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region;

continue cooperation in the area of environmentally sustainable production and consumption as well as in protecting water resources;

welcome environmental education and exchange of the environmental best practices;

facilitate implementation of the Barents Protected Areas Network project;

facilitate further implementation of the BEAC Climate Change Action Plan;

commend the cooperation among emergency and rescue services in the Barents Region and note the success of the regular Barents Rescue exercises, and *facilitate* improvements needed for enhancing operational efficiency and measures of prevention and response to natural and man-made disasters.

Health and social wellbeing:

welcome the adoption of the Barents Cooperation Program on health and related social issues, which focuses on prevention of communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases, promotion of healthy lifestyle and development of primary healthcare systems and social services, as well as on working with the children and youth in the risk group,

support the Children and Youth at Risk sub-program that aims to enhance capacities of the regional administrations and social welfare agencies to support the children and youth at risk and specific projects aimed, among other things, at facilitating integration of ex-offenders into the society,

support the implementation of the AIDS/HIV sub-program aimed at enhancing the national potential to withstand this evil, as well as specific projects aimed at decreasing the propagation of AIDS/HIV,

continue working on implementation of the task set by the Summit Declaration on the 10th Anniversary of the Barents Cooperation in Kirkenes in 2003 to establish full control over propagation of tuberculosis in the region within the nearest 10 years, and, in order to achieve that, to *support* the sub-program to fight tuberculosis and the concurrent HIV infection, which will ultimately drive down the mortality rate, improve the demographic situation and decrease the economic burden on the society,

recommend the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS) to continue cooperation with the Northern Dimension on Public Health and Social Well-being.

Encourage the activities ensuring presence of a stable population in the High North as a factor that ensures stability in the Barents Region,

Youth policy, cultural cooperation, education and tourism:

welcome the outcome of the meeting of Culture Ministers of the Council of Barents/Euroarctic Region in November 2016 in Moscow;

acknowledge the importance of work for the empowerment and social inclusion of young people in the Barents Region;

welcome the initiatives aimed at expanding the knowledge base on the living conditions of youth in the Barents Region, and call for further efforts to facilitate cross-border mobility and people-to-people contacts within the region;

pay special attention to the protection and social inclusion of vulnerable groups in the region;

recognize the development of healthcare and social security as being vital for the society in general, as

well as individuals;

acknowledge the central role of cultural cooperation in promoting the Barents identity and contacts between civil society and cultural institutions;

welcome meetings of the core regional cultural institutions with a view to devising recommendations on promoting synergy and a comprehensive approach on the regional level;

commend efforts to establish the Barents Culture Scholarships and take note of the new Barents Cultural Initiative Incubator project;

recognize the importance of the cultural sector and creative industries as drivers of social and economic development in the Barents Region;

promote cultural cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region with other international structures;

support measures aimed at promoting academic and research cooperation and mobility among regional educational and research institutions, use the available international instruments and programs to this effect, approve direct contacts between educational institutions as part of the so-called cross-border universities, and recommend that they be expanded;

facilitate the holding of regular Barents Euro-Arctic Region Educational and Research Forums with a focus on specific objectives in healthcare, social security, environment, culture, and issues faced by the youth and indigenous people; *contribute* to cultural diversity, exchanges and inter-cultural dialogue with a view to expanding people-to-people contacts, as well as preserving the Barents Region cultural and ethnic heritage;

note the growing appeal of the Barents Region as an international travel destination, *recognize* the importance of cooperation within the Barents Region to promote environmentally, socially and culturally sustainable tourism, and *create* conditions for the development of tourism-related goods and services, including ecotourism that sustains the wellbeing of the local population;

Supporting indigenous people

acknowledge the interests of the indigenous peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region as a priority area of cooperation in the North, requiring special attention and new approaches for supporting the indigenous peoples to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development, with the assistance of legislative and executive bodies, regional councils and other cooperation frameworks;

note the activities of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples to establish closer dialogue between the indigenous people, regional authorities and governments of BEAC member states;

welcome the outcomes of the first Barents Indigenous Peoples' Summit held on April 28, 2017 in Moscow for highlighting topical issues for the indigenous people of the Barents Region in terms of social and economic development, improving living standards, preserving the cultural heritage, native languages and traditional economic activity;

reaffirm the commitment by BEAC member states to protect and promote the rights of indigenous people to participate in decision-making at all levels on issues affecting them through their own representative institutions, as well as the right of the indigenous people to freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development;

facilitate printing and publishing of media and literature in the languages of indigenous peoples, also in digital formats;

The participants of the 8th Barents Parliamentary Conference

reaffirm their commitment to cooperation in order to consolidate and further develop the Barents region as a peaceful, stable, innovative and prosperous part of Europe;

welcome the upcoming Swedish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2017-2019;

welcome the presidency of the Riksdag – Parliament of Sweden in the 9th Barents Parliamentary Conference in the year 2019.

in view of the forthcoming 25th anniversary of the BEAC, *welcome* the initiative of the Russian chairmanship in the BEAC, supported by member states of the Barents Cooperation, to establish a high-level regular regional forum (“The Barents Davos”) for discussion of the entire Barents agenda with an emphasis on sustainable social, economic and environmental development of the region.