



Joensuu Statement 2023

In accordance with the Terms of Reference for the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, and in recognition of the objectives and commitments expressed in the Kirkenes Declaration on the Establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and subsequent Ministerial Declarations, the members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council met in Joensuu on 24 October 2023 and issued the following statement:

Acknowledging the achievements of the past 30 years and **recognizing** the efforts of the people who have contributed to building the Barents cooperation since the signing of the Kirkenes Declaration in 1993,

Noting that Russia on 18 September 2023 unilaterally decided to withdraw as a member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council,

Acknowledging that the establishment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in 1993 has been commemorated decennially by holding a Barents Summit, and **noting** that a Barents Summit was exceptionally not held in 2023,

Acknowledging the Joint Statement of 9 March 2022 of Finland, Denmark, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the European Union regarding Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, which **condemns** in the strongest possible terms Russia's military aggression against Ukraine and **suspends activities** involving Russia in the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, **noting** that Russia's unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law which undermines European and global security and stability.

Recognizing the historic and unique role of the Barents cooperation and the close interaction between national, regional and local levels, and **emphasizing** the fact that the Barents Euro-Arctic Council has adapted to developments and changing circumstances affecting the region and will continue to do so in the future,

Recognizing the important role of the International Barents Secretariat (IBS) in Kirkenes, **noting** with satisfaction the efficient functioning of the secretariat in supporting activities in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and its working groups, and **expressing** continued support for the secretariat's work,

Recognizing the rights and the vital role of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic cooperation, **noting** the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous peoples and **welcoming** the Summit of Barents Euro-Arctic Indigenous Sámi People organized in March 2023,

Acknowledging the important role that young people play in the Barents cooperation and **welcoming** the Youth Summit organized in October 2021 in Tromsø and the Generation Barents youth events organized in April 2023 in Bodø and in October 2023 in Joensuu,

Acknowledging the 11th Barents Parliamentary Conference organized in Rovaniemi on 25-27 September 2023,

Acknowledging the need to establish guidelines for the interim Trio Presidency to ensure a well-functioning Chairmanship,



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Reaffirm our conviction of the enduring value of the Barents cooperation,

Welcome the incoming interim Trio Presidency of Finland, Sweden and Norway for a one-year period unless otherwise decided, and **encourage** them to drive the Barents cooperation forward,

Express gratitude for the Chairmanship of Finland in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the efforts by the Region of North Karelia to lead the work of the Barents Regional Council in “Friends of the Future Presidency” format since March 2022, and **welcome** North Karelia’s continued leadership in the context of the Barents Regional Council.