



## JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BARENTS REGIONAL COUNCIL

**On the occasion of the XVIII Session of the Barents Euro Arctic Council ministerial meeting  
26 October 2021, Tromsø Norway**

The Barents Regional Council convened on 25 October 2021 in Tromsø, Norway under the Chairmanship of Västerbotten.

The Barents co-operation is unique as it combines both national and regional co-operation between Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway.

The Barents member regions share a significant number of similarities, most notably the Arctic climate, sparse population, vast natural resources, high exposure to the consequences of ongoing climate change and long distances within the region as well as to the markets. These characteristics impose both challenges and opportunities for local and regional development and cooperation.

The Barents Regional Council:

**Reaffirms** its commitments to the priorities and goals included in the Kirkenes Declarations of 1993 and 2013 and the Barents Program 2019-2023.

**Underlines** that the dynamics between the regional and the national levels are what makes the Barents cooperation unique. When representatives from national, regional and local levels together with the indigenous peoples and the youth are sitting at the same table, it creates a unique environment and spirit.

**Reckognizes** that the Norwegian and Västerbotten chairmanships had to adapt to the Covid 19 situation and developed new ways to meet and cooperate. By developing new interactions, the Barents Cooperation will emerge stronger from this situation. Note that the Barents region has differing vaccination certificates that are currently not compatible.

**Emphasises** that the Barents cooperation rests on a stable foundation that has emerged throughout the years and that we continue to build upon. The strength of Barents the cooperation lies in the people of the region, their knowledge, experience, cultural expressions, diversity and heritage. The future of the Barents region relies in continued efforts and investments in youth, culture, health and social issues, education and research.

**Welcomes** the work completed under the Norwegian chairmanship on approving the financial mechanism. The mechanism will contribute to development of the Barents region and strengthen international Barents cooperation in line with the objectives set in the Kirkenes Declaration of 1993 to enhance stability, sustainable development and people-to-people contacts. More specifically it will provide the working groups a mechanism for improved co-operation.

**Welcomes** the Barents Youth Program 2021-2024 and acknowledge that the young people are the most valuable resource and have a beneficial interest in the future development of the Barents Region. An active Youth Policy in the Barents Region is required to secure sustainable population in the region.

**Underlines** the importance of the indigenous peoples' increasing role and participation in the Barents cooperation and welcome the voiced ambitions in this respect, expressed in Barents Indigenous Peoples Summit 2021 held online.

**Notes** that the environment and climate have no boundaries or borders. Environmental and climate change challenges concern everyone in the Barents region and affect all fields of cooperation. The environmental cooperation has a significant role in the Barents region and the Barents Regional Council welcomes the adoption of the updated Action Plan on Climate Change.

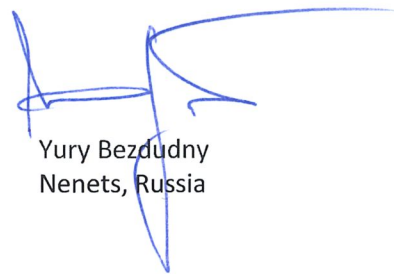
**Emphasises** that the Barents region faces demographic challenges as aging population and outmigration. At the same time large investments in the North demand more workforce to be recruited from other regions. Thus there is a need to create an attractive living environment in order to make people to move to, stay in or return to the region.

**Believes** that gender equality is a prerequisite for regional prosperity and development and to make our region attractive we must make it attractive for women to live and work here.

**Expresses** gratitude to Chairmanships of Västerbotten in the Barents Regional Council and Norway in the Barents Euro Arctic Council and welcomes Finland and Nenets Autonomous Okrug as incoming chairs.



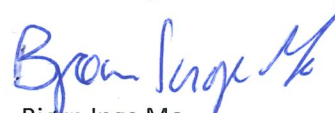
Helene Hellmark Knutsson (Chair)  
Västerbotten, Sweden



Yury Bezdudny  
Nenets, Russia



Lotta Finstorp  
Norrbotten, Sweden



Bjørn Inge Mo  
Troms Finnmark Norway



Stig Olsen  
Nordland, Norway



Mika Riipi  
Lapland, Finland



Pauli Harju  
Oulu, Finland

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Markus Hirvonen  
North Karelia, Finland



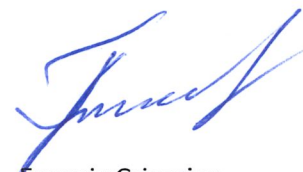
Pentti Malinen  
Kainuu, Finland

Approved Digitally

Andrey Chibis  
Murmansk, Russia

Approved Digitally

Vage Petrosyan  
Arkhangelsk, Russia



Evgeniy Grigorjev  
Komi, Russia

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Vikotr Svirskiy  
Karelia, Russia