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General update on activity in BEAC Working Groups 2010

Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC) and Barents Forest Sector Task Force (BFSTF)

Chair : Sweden, BFSTF Chair: Russia

The BEAC WGEC met two times during 2010, in March and September. Both meetings took place in the premises of the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications in Stockholm. The first meeting initiated the process on a new working plan. A preliminary list of priorities was discussed, including promoting entrepreneurship and SMEs, minimizing administrative impediments for enterprises especially in relation to customs and border crossing, platforms for exchanges between young entrepreneurs, and how to foster closer cooperation with the Regional Working Group on Investments and Economic Cooperation (RWGIE).

Before moving further, the group decided to await the result of the Barents ministerial meeting on competitiveness in Umeå 18-19 May, before presenting a new working plan.

The ministerial meeting in Umeå discussed a common basis for cooperation, with special focus on raw material, energy efficiency and renewable energy. The overall question addressed at the meeting was how to increase the region's economic competitiveness.

In preparation for the meeting, the WGEC had, in collaboration with the BEAC Joint Working Group on Energy, produced a draft meeting declaration text which was adopted by the ministers.

The Umeå Declaration which was agreed on at the meeting identifies the following priorities within the competence area of the BEAC WGEC:

- (1) Increased cross-border co-operation between business organisations,
- (2) Establishing platforms for exchanges between young entrepreneurs;
- (3) Minimizing administrative impediments for enterprises – especially in relation to customs and border crossing.

The Declaration ends by calling upon the WGEC to:

- (4) Promote sustainable use of natural resources;

- (5) Promote access to the global markets for the region's resources and thereby increase the region's interconnectedness for transport, promote entrepreneurship by increased cross-border co-operation; and
- (6) Expand sustainable tourism.

At the second meeting of WGEC, in September, the discussion was concentrated on the main results of the ministerial meeting in Umeå, and a draft working program of the BEAC WGEC. The final version of the BEAC WGEC Working Program for 2011 was finally adopted in November.

The implementation of the working plan's *action points* has begun. The proposed seminar on the Barents Region's importance in the field of non-energy resources at the European Parliament in Brussels is scheduled to take place on March 15. The event will be hosted jointly by the Swedish BEAC Chair and the European Parliament, along with representatives of the BEAC Members Russia, Finland, Norway and the European Commission. The seminar will be targeted at members of the European Parliament, officials of the European Commission, industry representatives, representatives of the Barents regions and municipalities, media, and other actors with an interest in the raw materials debate. Building on the outcome of the Umeå Ministerial Meeting, the seminar will discuss how the region can develop its position as a vital source of non-energy raw materials.

The additional action points below, included in the BEAC WGEC Working Plan, are planned to be addressed in the near future:

- Assemble information on the state of the current cooperation between the countries national surveys.
- Assemble information on the state of the current cooperation between key universities in order to find out if and to what extent there exists co-operation and what possibilities there are to start or develop such a co-operation.
- Look into if the mining industry have any specific problems with administrative impediments in relation to border crossing.
- Increase contact and cooperation with BEAC Working Group on Customs Cooperation and industry/enterprises.
- Assemble information on the state of the current cooperation between business organizations, such as chambers of commerce, in order to find out the current state of relation and what possibilities there are to start or develop such a co-operation.
- Investigate the possibilities to arrange a Barents Industrial Partnership conference in 2011 in close cooperation with regional authorities. Themes, purposes and list of participants to be decided later.

The next meeting in the BEAC WGEC is scheduled to February 16 2011 in Stockholm.

BFSTF

Chair: Russia

New Chair of the group Mr. Ivan Sovetnikov (Head of the Legal Department of the Federal Forestry Agency).

The first meeting of the BFSTF was on the 9th of December 2010 in Vologda (Russia). The main purpose of the meeting was discussion of further work plans, directions and forms of cooperation within the group in 2011. Russian, Swedish and Finnish specialists discussed their proposals on directions of future cooperation in BFSTF.

The participants decided that the main theme of the next meeting of the BFSTF should be “Forestry Economy”.

The next meeting of the BFSTF is scheduled for May 2011 in Sweden.

Working Group on Environment (WGE)

Chair: Sweden

Working Group on Environment meetings in 2010

In 2010 two meetings of the Working Group on Environment were held.

The first one in Kiruna, Sweden (in April). This meeting included a seminar on *Sustainability in City Development and Nature Resources Management in the BarentsRegion*. The seminar was held back to back with the meetings of the Working Group on Environment, Regional Working Group on Environment, Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption, Subgroup on Nature Protection.

The second WGE meeting was held in Petrozavodsk, Russia, (in November), gathering about 60 participants. The meeting included a half-day seminar on *Eco-efficient communities*, giving attention to the potential of the Barents environmental cooperation, including the hot spot exclusion, cleaner production, energy efficiency and nature protection highlighting the current situation in the Republic of Karelia. The meeting was arranged in close cooperation with the Administration of the Republic of Karelia and the Province of Västerbotten.

After the seminar the subgroup on hot spot exclusion, the subgroup on cleaner production and the subgroup on nature protection held meetings, as well as the WGE. A joint discussion between the subgroup on hot spot exclusion and the subgroup on cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption was also held, on how cleaner production measures can facilitate hot spot exclusion. The WGE also discussed how to actively contribute in the work of a development of an action plan on climate change for the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

Subgroup on Hot Spot Exclusion

The subgroup held several meetings in 2010, and the work programme has been adopted by the WGE. Focus is given to the launching of the hot spot exclusion procedure, where regional hot spot exclusion groups have been established in the regions of North West Russia to work on the exclusion of prioritized hot spots. In 2011 the subgroup on hot spot exclusion will work closely with the regional hot spot exclusion groups in the short listing and facilitation of actions. The information system database for hot spot exclusion on the www.beac.st is under development in close cooperation with NEFCO and the Arctic Centre University of Lapland.

Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption

The subgroup held several meetings in 2010 and the work programme has been adopted by the WGE. The subgroup activities include several thematic seminars on issues such as sustainable lifestyles, sustainable buildings and sustainable tourism (Marrakesh seminars). One seminar on Sustainable lifestyles for sustainable development was held in St Petersburg

11 November, with a great number of participants, and more seminars are to be held in 2011. The subgroup also develop a project on establishing a network of universities in the Barents regions strengthening education on cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption. The subgroup is also exploring the possibilities to facilitate the work on hot spot exclusion.

Subgroup on Nature Protection

The subgroup held several meetings in 2010, and the work programme has been adopted by the WGE. The subgroup arranged the 6th Habitat Contact Forum (HCF), May 31-June 1 Arkhangelsk, see www.beac.st, and are now planning for the next HCF meeting to be held in Norway. A priority project for the subgroup is the development of a Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN), and a BPAN steering group, including representatives from Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia, are now working on making the network operational, also including broad stakeholder involvement. An application has been submitted to the Nordic Council of Ministers for financial support for further development of BPAN.

Subgroup on Water Issues

The subgroup held several meetings in 2010, and the work programme has been adopted by the WGE. The work of the subgroup is closely coordinated with the work of the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE). The subgroup held a conference on water resource management in the Barents region, 30 November- 1 December 2010 in Archangelsk. The Conference gathered about 90 participants, including many experts from Norway, Finland and Sweden, and was followed by thematic workshops and discussions for project development. At the conference a comprehensive outlook on water issues in the Barents region was given, devoting special attention to the current situation in water management in Archangelsk and other regions in North-West Russia, including the current work on the implementation of the Russian Water Strategy. The conference, and follow-up expert workshops, gave the possibilities for a general exchange of experiences of the development and implementation of international, EU as well as national legal frameworks for water resource management, as well as give special focus to the exchange of experiences in the building of sustainable urban water systems, improved water monitoring and enhanced treatment of waste- and rain water. The subgroup, together with the Nordic Council of Ministers, is also planning a Conference on Climate change and water issues, to be held spring 2011.

Working Group on Environment meeting in Syvtyvkar, Russia, June 2011 (tbc) and Ministerial Meeting for Ministers of Environment

The WGE is planning to hold its third meeting under the Swedish Chairmanship in Syvtyvkar, Russia, in the spring 2011. The meeting will be arranged in close cooperation with the Republic of Komi. The WGE is planning the next meeting of the Ministers of Environment to be held in 2011. At the ministerial meeting the chairmanship will be passed on to Finland.

For more information see <http://www.regeringen.se/barentsenvironment>

Working Group on Customs Cooperation (WGCC)

Chair: Sweden

The following issues were discussed at the previous meetings of the WGCC (2009):

- Possibilities to conclude Agreements between the Customs Services on preliminary information of the customs administrations at cross-border points and seaports.
- Customs clearance of separate sorts of goods (including fish)

- Practical implementation of the "Concept of customs clearance and customs control in places adjacent to the border of the Russian Federation".
- Agenda of a meeting between the Heads of Customs Services.

The representation at the WGCC meetings has continued to be insufficient. The IBS has upon request from the Chair distributed the message of the importance to participate in the WGCC. Due to lack of representation the planned meeting on the 13 October, in Stockholm was cancelled.

The participating countries have shown much more interest for the customs cooperation concerning enforcement. On 20-22 September 2010, an enforcement-meeting was held in Luleå with participants from the customs administrations in Russia, Finland, Norway and Sweden. During the meeting several initiatives were taken, such as a bilateral meeting between Tromsø and Murmansk and the Swedish initiative to carry out a control operation in 2011.

2011: WGCC plans to meet on the 16 February, in Stockholm. Swedish Customs would like the meeting to discuss the role of the WGCC in relation to other relevant bodies such as the Council of the Baltic States (CBSS) and the EU-Russia Working Group on Customs Border Issues, and has therefore included this point in the proposed agenda. The Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation asks to tackle problems of improving the procedures for cross-border passing of medical equipment and is looking in to cooperation with the Group.

The previous Chairmanship (Russia) announced the intention to organize a meeting between the Heads of Customs Services of the member countries. This will not be taken further by the Swedish Chairmanship since no agenda items have been identified requiring such a meeting.

Barents Euro-Arctic Pan-European Transport Area (BEATA)

Chair: Sweden

Objectives of BEATA:

- Eco-efficient economy
- Coordination and integration with other forums such as the Northern Dimension and the Arctic Council. The launch of the ND Partnership on Transport and Logistics needs to take the BEATA agenda into consideration.

Program 2010 – 2011:

- Strategic High North study
- ROADEX road maintenance project

Steering Committee meeting in Tornio 16-17 June 2010

The meeting was attended by representatives from Russia, Sweden, Norway and Finland. Presentation of BEATA Program of the Swedish Chairmanship, Northern Dimension partnership on transport and logistics, Barents region as a hub for transport connections between Europe and Asia, Norwegian initiative "High North Study", Swedish investment plans 2010 – 2021 for infrastructure, Mining in Pajala/Kolari, Finnish national strategies, The Bothnian corridor and Northern Axis / Arctic – Central European Green Transport.

Joint Committee on Rescue Cooperation (JCRC)

2010: Norway

The Joint Committee planned to arrange two meetings during 2010, the first in Bodø in April. But due to the volcano eruption and volcanic ash-clouds from Iceland that meeting was cancelled. Time permitted only to arrange one meeting of the Committee which was held in the premises of the Joint Rescue Coordination Centre Northern Norway, Bodø on 16-17 September 2010. Participants from all four countries as well as the International Barents Secretariat were present.

An important aim for the Committee is to ensure that the **Agreement between the Governments in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region on Cooperation within the Field of Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response** (signed on 11 December 2008), enters into force. Sweden ratified on 2 February 2009, Norway on 17 March 2009 and the Russian Federation on 12 October 2009. The ratification process in Finland is pending to be completed during the spring 2011. It is a wish to see the entry into force of the Agreement before the next exercise Barents Rescue, to be held in Sweden in September 2011.

The Committee uses the evaluation reports and lessons learned from the **Barents Rescue exercises** to further develop the rescue cooperation in the region. The Committee has established a small working group with exercise experts to develop a strategic plan for the exercises Barents Rescue, hereunder identifying the risks in the Barents Region and incidents where international assistance might be required as well as possible scenarios for exercises in the region. In addition, the WG shall suggest forms of exercises (TTX, CPX, FTX etc).

The four Barents countries are carrying out regularly **communication tests** between the points of contact in the Barents Region. The aim of the communication tests is to ensure that the communication lines are working and to familiarize the rescue controllers with the points of contact, as well as the documentation related to notification and request for assistance in cases of emergency. In 2010 four communication exercises have been carried out, all of them satisfactorily.

It is of vital importance that **border crossing procedures** for response teams are as simplified as possible. The time factor is often essential when it comes to rescue operations. This item was discussed at the last Committee-meeting and it was also agreed that this was a complicated matter. All of the countries are dealing with different agreements and procedures related to border crossings depending on whether the neighboring country is an EU-member or not. There are also different procedures depending on the type of resources that are about to cross the border, e.g. state vessels or other resources.

There seemed to be a general consensus that the issue of border crossing needed to be exercised. It was also highlighted that article 8 in the Agreement needed to be communicated to the border crossing stations in question to ensure that they are made aware of the obligations that exists.

Representatives of the Committee underlined that it is a national responsibility to ensure that the border crossings are as simplified as possible. The border crossing of rescue resources should be as quick as possible taking into account that the time factor often is of essential importance. It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda for the meetings to come and follow how this develops in the future.

With regard to suspension and exemption of customs duties, other duties and taxes for rescue resources, it is stated in the Agreement art. 9 that national legislation and international obligations applies. The Committee concluded that this was a national responsibility to ensure the fulfillment of this obligation in the Agreement. It was agreed to keep this item on the agenda for the meetings to come and follow how this develops in the future.

A **Joint Manual for operation purposes** has been printed and will be published to the relevant users in the Barents countries. It has been agreed to publish the Joint Manual on the Beac web-site, without the contact information included.

The Russian Federation will chair the Committee in 2011. The Committee is planning to arrange a meeting early spring 2011, as well as a meeting in the autumn 2011.

Work plan for 2011: the Barents Agreement – status of ratification; administrative matters; follow-up of the Barents Rescue exercise 2009 and Barents Rescue exercise 2011; Barents Joint Manual; possible projects (follow-up of the possible EU project "*Cold condition management in emergency situations in the Barents region*", *Joint training and exchange of experts*). The Committee shall further encourage initiative for common projects in the region.

Joint Working Group on Culture (JWGC)

Co-Chairs: Sweden, Archangelsk

Activities in 2010 were based on the Second Program of Cultural Cooperation in the Barents Region for 2008-2010: *New Winds in the Barents Region*. Cultural diversity and multicultural dialogue are seen as tools for regional, social and economic development. The challenge is to boost international visibility and to develop cooperation within the EU Northern Dimension Policy and the EU-Russia Cooperation Action Plan for Culture.

The Culture Competence Cluster 2008-2009 on development of culture management is one of the success stories of the cooperation on culture.

Meeting September 22-24, 2010, Umeå The JWGC agreed on a prolongation of the Mandate for 2011-2013. The IBS will finalize the administrative process and inform relevant bodies of BEAC/BRC. As the current one, this mandate will be assessed after three years.

It was decided that the next program of cultural cooperation in the Barents region "New Winds in the Barents Region" will form the basis for the next three-year program. The wish is to find cooperation possibilities with the NDPC, to state more clear priorities, to include some words on the importance of the independent networks of the cultural institutions in the region. A "task force" with representatives of one region from each country together with one national representative and an executive officer from the IBS was created. The purpose of the "task force" is to prepare a draft of the new program to be presented to the JWGC at the next meeting in Archangelsk in April 2011. One of the topics at the meeting will be finding synergy between the different regional structures in the Barents region. The same item would be at the meeting of the CBSS senior Officials group for Culture in Kirkenes 3 February.

Plans 2011:

- Creation of a new Barents Culture Cooperation Program for 2010-2013 to replace the old: *New Winds in the Barents Region* –
- Renewal of the mandate of the JWGC –

- To convene the next JWGC meeting in April 2011 in Arkhangelsk.

The Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS)

Chairs: Finland, Komi

The *Cooperation Programme on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region 2008-2011* has the following priority areas:

- Prevention and combat of communicable diseases
- Prevention of lifestyle-related health and social problems and support to children and youth at risk
- Development of primary health care, public health and social services

Projects and other activities of the sub-programmes on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Children and Youth at Risk (CYAR) are the most important.

The JWGHS and the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being are working in close cooperation with each other.

Meeting September 22, Syktyvkar

The meeting suggested to postpone consideration of a new program 2012-2015 for March 2011, during this time participants of the JWGHS should give offers and amendments. Children and Youth at Risk (CYAR), cooperation on tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS are supposed to be the basic directions of the new program.

The meeting decided to launch a new Barents Tuberculosis Programme which will have close contacts with Barents HIV/AIDS Programme, NDPHS Expert Group on Primary Health and Prison Health Systems and Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections.

The number of projects has also increased this year. In 2010 CYAR had meeting in April in the Republic of Komi, the second meeting was in November in Petrozavodsk. The spring meeting of the Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme took place in March; the following was in November, connected with the concluding seminar of the HIV project on developing low threshold services in the Murmansk Region.

Plans 2011:

JWGHS will have two meetings: **3 March in Saint-Petersburg** (Specific item is **developing the Co-operation programme on health and related social issues for the period 2012–2015**) and in autumn in the Komi Republic.

JWGHS will continue to follow up the TB, HIV/AIDS, CYAR and promote the general developments of the cooperation in health and social fields.

Steering Committee on Children and Youth at Risk (CYAR)

Chairs: Norway, Murmansk

The project has following purposes:

- The situation review in the BEAR
- Annual conferences
- Dissemination of knowledge about methods of working with children and youth at risk
- Information exchange

Four selected programmes targeted at children and youth at risk:

- “Incredible years” (children with behavior problems)
- Conferences «Family circle»
- Aggression replacement training (ART), ART in a family
- Restorative justice – Intermediary committees (for minor offenders)

The project is financed through Northern Dimension Partnership/Norway, for 2010-2012 has been allocated app. 1 million Euros.

The steering committee had two meetings: April 2010 in Syktyvkar and November 2010 in Petrozavodsk. App. 30 CYAR seminars/work-shops/meetings in 2010. A meeting with NDPHS EG on prison health in spring: a decision on regular participation in the NDPHS prison health EG meetings for sharing knowledge and information on related issues.

The Ministries of Justice of Russia and Norway have signed a co-operation programme for 2010-2012 in the field of children and youth at risk.

Protocol on co-operation between Norway and Archangelsk Oblast on minor offenders has been signed for 2010-2012.

Plans 2011:

The CYAR steering committee is planning to have two meetings in 2011: in April and in November. An expert conference will be organised in connection of one of these meetings. In addition, a cooperation meeting with the Working Group for Cooperation on Children at Risk CBSS is scheduled for 2011. Each of the sub-programmes mentioned above - "Incredible Years", Family Conferences, Aggression Replacement Training and Restorative Justice - will organise several trainings and seminars, which will mostly take place in Russian Barents regions. Special attention is planned to be paid to disabled children and their families.

Sub-programme on HIV/AIDS

Program aims at strengthening the national capacity to respond to the HIV epidemic. The objectives are set to improve situation among vulnerable groups: injecting drug users, sex workers, youth and people living with HIV.

At present there are 13 ongoing projects under the umbrella of the Barents HIV/AIDS programme, and 6 projects under consideration. All these projects are also considered to be under the umbrella of the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections.

Steering Committee meetings were held in Ivalo, Finland, in March and in Murmansk in November. Specific themes of the meetings were: co-infection of HIV and tuberculosis (Ivalo) and evaluation of the Programme (Murmansk).

The pilot project of the Programme, which has been developing low threshold services for drug users in order to prevent HIV in Murmansk Region, was completed in the end of 2010. The closing seminar was organised in Murmansk in November. The example of the pilot project will be used in further collaboration - e.g. in the new project started with the Leningrad Region in 2010.

Plans 2011:

As the Programme has been running since 2005, an evaluation by an external expert is planned to be organized during spring 2011. Other activities are planned as follows:

- Organizing of the Steering Committee meetings (1-2 times per year)
- Support to the Finnish chairmanship of JWGHS

- Organizing a combined study tour to Finland for experts from two or more regions of NW Russia *in case that the Russian participants will get financing from NCM.*
- Lobbying the low threshold service model of the pilot project for other NW Russian regions
- Commenting on project proposals and collecting comments from the members of SC
- Keeping close contact with the NDPHS and with the planned new Barents Tuberculosis Programme

Barents Tuberculosis programme

The JWGHS has established a tuberculosis expert group/network jointly with the NDPHS Expert Group on Primary Health and Prison Health Systems, which also will collaborate with the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme Steering Committee and the NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections.

A preparatory planning meeting was held in Arkhangelsk in March 2010, and a Logical Framework workshop in Repino, Leningrad Region, in June 2010.

The JWGHS meeting (on 22 September 2010) decided to launch a new Barents Tuberculosis Programme. A steering committee is established for the programme, the first meeting will be organized in spring 2011 and the second during autumn.

The Joint Energy Working Group (JEWG)

Chairs: Archangelsk, Norway

The JEWG had the last full scale meeting in September 2009, but since then there were two meetings of the co-chairs, one on the margins of the Ministerial meeting on Barents competitiveness (19 May, Umea). The chairs worked out several ideas for further cooperation. One of them is a work shop on energy efficiency (mid February, Murmansk or Archangelsk), it has got Nordic Council of Ministers funding and could be organized back to back with a formal WG meeting. The chairs noted the following lines of actions:

- a) The minister and regional representatives at the meeting clearly agreed that concrete actions with RE and EE would gain the region and that there was a lot to gain from sharing national experiences in the promotion of projects and programmes in this area.
- b) One way to strengthen the focus could be to increase the visibility and to strengthen the role of the energy efficiency centers already established over the last 10-15 years.
- c) The EE centers were established by stakeholders in the Barents Region. The ministers of BEAC clearly underlined that the BEAC countries and regions should reap the benefits from these centers and use them in organizing actions and events.
- d) Experiences and challenges in BEAC-region and NW Russia were addressed. It was noted that Energy efficiency is a major topic and the new Federal Law on EE in RUF is an important framework condition for further regional BEAC initiatives.
- e) Best practice experience in promoting EE and RE would be a valuable contribution to achieve overall objectives of the cooperation.
- f) Best practice should be exchanged between national agencies and regional entities in the whole BEAC region.
- g) It would be better with fewer more transparent projects than numerous activities which would be difficult to undertake.

- h) A workshop on EE in the Murmansk region could be a logical follow up to the September 2009 Arkhangelsk event.
- i) A workshop in Murmansk on a selected EE topic has achieved Nordic Council of Ministers funding and could be organized back to back with a formal BEAC JWGE meeting.
- j) How to activate local and regional actors has to be considered at the next meeting in BEAC JWGE since this is a “joint” group embracing national and regional/local actors.

Working Group of Indigenous Peoples (WGIP)

Chair: Sweden

WGIP has based its activities on the *BEAR Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples, 2009-2012*.

WGIP arranged the first Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress in Kirkenes in February 3rd 2010. This was executed in cooperation with Gáldu – Resource Centre for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. The resolution from the Congress calling for granting the Nenets, Saami and Vepsian peoples status as Permanent Participants to the BEAC and the BRC has been sent to the CSO and RC for consideration.

The WGIP has had three meetings during 2010: Kirkenes 15 June, Stockholm 14 October, Helsinki 15 December. The main issue of these meetings has been the resolution from the Barents Indigenous Peoples Congress. The WGIP has awaited reactions from both the regional and national level of the Barents Cooperation before taking further steps in this issue. This will be discussed on the next WGIP meeting. On its meeting in Helsinki in December the WGIP chose Mr. Lars-Anders Baer, representative of the Saami Parliament of Sweden, as new chairperson. Future activities were also discussed, i.e. participation with a side event on UN Permanent Forum of Indigenous Issues and the 2nd Barents Indigenous Peoples Congress, which will be held in February 2012 in Kirkenes, Norway.

WGIP has maintains a higher level of activity thanks to funding allocated by the Swedish and Norwegian MFAs. Requests on funding were sent also to the Finnish and Russian MFAs.

The Indigenous Entrepreneurship project - a part of the BEAR Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples - was started in June 2010. It is being implemented by the IBS, SSR (Saami Association of Sweden), NSR (Saami Association of Norway) and SSG (Saami Association of Finland).

WGIP has together with Canadian and Russian partners started a pre-project for the establishment of a Nenets radio station based in Naryan-Mar. This is a cooperation between WGIP, Yasavey (Public Association of Nenets People in the Nenets AO), Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Barents Secretariat.

During 2010 the WGIP has been working actively with the Kola Saami Radio project.

The Chair of WGIP participated in the 12th Meeting of the Northern Dimension Steering Group held in Oslo 23September to present how the Northern Dimension could involve indigenous issues in their work. The Chair will follow the development of this issue.

Plans 2011:

- Next WGIP meeting: Tromsø, February 21-22

Joint Working Group on Tourism (JWGT)

Co-chairs: Russia, Lapland (Finland)

The Joint Working Group on Tourism was established in 2008 to develop tourism business in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and to promote ecologically, socially and culturally sustainable tourism. In practice this means promoting multilateral co-operation and joint projects, networking and exchanging information and best practices.

The JWGT was established in December 2008 and officially approved by the CSO in February 2009. The Russian Ministry of Tourism was appointed as the chairman of the working group and Finnish Lapland as the regional co-chair.

The JWGT works on both national and region levels. The national level will provide information on the current state policy in this sphere, plans, programs, national legislation and amendments. The regional level is implementing the co-operation in practice.

JWGT's activities in 2010

During the first action year 2009 the JWGT identified the need to collect together the tourism research and data from the BEAR level. This was necessary in order to define the relevant development actions in the future, and plan their implementation. Therefore it was clear already from the start that the JWGT needed more personnel resources and networking in order to effectively contribute for the tourism development.

The BART project (Public – Private Partnership in Barents Tourism) was planned as a practical tool for the tourism co-operation and the JWGT's work. The project application was submitted to the ENPI CBC programme in April 2010, and the funding was granted in December 2010.

The objective of the BART project is to create development mechanisms in long term public-private partnership for the tourism industry. Main result from the first phase of the project will be an Action plan, which will define the goals for development and the roles and tasks of the different actors in a tourism field (developers, funding organizations, educational organizations, entrepreneurs, destination organizations etc.) (check attachment: BART project presentation).

The lead partner in BART project is Rovaniemi University of Applied Sciences. Other partners are mainly educational institutions from Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia. The project period is two years and the total budget 921 500 €.

The activities of the BART project include establishing R&D peer review group and creating the Action plan. The implementation of the Action Plan will take place in the second phase of the project, BART2, where the tourism entrepreneurs will also be involved.

The JWGT will act as an active participant of the R&D peer review group to support the development of the Action Plan. In order to ensure the flow of information some of the JWGT members are also invited to participate to the project's own groups, like e.g. R&D peer review group.

The JWGT meeting was organized on the 12th of May 2010 in Rovaniemi. The main themes in the meeting were the tourism development and economical situation, the BART project and status of the tourism business in a development work. It was considered important to supervise the interest of tourism business so that it could have all the same development opportunities than other fields of industry.

In the meeting it was also decided to develop the JWGT's action by networking with other WGs and trying to find common interest and co-operation.

Actions for the 2011

The BART Kick Start seminar will be arranged in March (week 11) in Rovaniemi. The JWGT's meeting will also be arranged this week. The International Tourist Forum will take place in Archangelsk on the 25.-26 May. This year's second JWGT meeting is planned to be arranged in association with this Forum.

Joint Working Group on Education and Research (JWGER)

Chair: Russia (Petrozavodsk State University), co-chair.....

In 2010 there were **3 meetings of JWGER**.

The first one was organized on-line in January, 15th. At the meeting the activities plan for the period of 2010 – 2011 was adopted. The financial possibilities of the joint projects were discussed.

The second meeting was held in April 16, 2010 in Syktyvkar, Russian Federation

Main issues under discussion

- Discussion on the implementation of the Barents Programme 2009 – 2013.
- Discussion on the Barents Action Plan on Climate change.

The 3d meeting was held in September 16-17, 2010, in Arkhangelsk

Main issues under discussion:

Business-university cooperation in the Barents region

Participants of the meeting:

- stressed the fact that the creation of a knowledge-based society plays a determining role in creating and sustaining a competitive economy in the Barents Region today.
- noted with satisfaction that the Barents Region universities play a significant role in new knowledge creation, transmission of such knowledge to the public by education and training, dissemination of information by communication technologies, and adaptation of the new knowledge in new industrial procedures, products or services.
- stated that there are many examples of successful co-operation between Universities, research institutes and industry in the Barents region.

Collaboration with other WG and networks

Other important issue of the JWGER activities is cooperation with other working groups and networks. During the reported period JWGER collaborated with:

- The Working Group on Environment
- The Working Group on Youth Issues
- University of Arctic.

JWGER members are traditionally active in the Barents cooperation. Their contribution to network development in academic and research spheres and exchange of international cooperation experience among the higher educational and research institutions of the BEAR is quite significant.

Some of the meaningful events which were initiated and organized by the participating Universities are the following:

- Legal systems of Barents Euro Arctic Region, conference in Archangelsk, April, 2010
- Days of Norway in Archangelsk 16-18 September, 2010
- Annual International Workshop on Advances in Methods of Information and Communication Technology, AMICT'2010 with Finnish Universities in Petrozavodsk, May, 2010
- Water biological resources development in Arctic and international cooperation, seminar in Murmansk in September, 2010
- International students conference “ Actual issues of ecological security” in Murmansk in April, 2010
- International medical school of public health organizing in Northern State Medical University, Archangelsk, 2010
- Meeting of working groups of Barents Cross-Border University in Murmansk in November , 2010
- and other

In spring 2011 PetrozavodskUniversity is planning to delegate the chairmanship to another BEAR University in accordance with the Mandate's of the JWGER amendments concerning the rotation of the chairmanship. Still the BEAR issues are given priority and the main directions of the future work are suggested to be the following:

Main directions of future work

- To promote networks crossing the borders in the Barents region; to involve new partners into the network;
- To increase cooperation in fundamental and applied research in the Region;
- To intensify cooperation in academic and research spheres and exchange of international cooperation experience among the higher educational and research institutions of the BEAR;
- To facilitate networking for the selected projects;
- To develop further cooperation in education and research in the BEAR in interaction with other international structures.
- To appoint a co-chair of the JWGER from one of the Nordic Universities to facilitate the cooperation and to coordinate the Group's activities including fund-raising more efficiently.

2011: Next meeting of the group will be defined later (tent. spring 2011).

Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP)

Chair: Sweden

The on-going work of the WGYP is based on the Plan of Actions adopted at the Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth Policy, Tromsø, May 14-16, 2001. The last ministerial conference was held in September 2009 in Murmansk. A new Plan of Action is under development that will replace the Plan of Action from 2001.

The Agreement on the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) is prolonged for the period of 2009-2010.

WGYP met in Stockholm 7– 8 October. Representatives from RWGYI and BRYC also participated in the meeting. BYCO work plan and budget and the new Plan of Action were discussed. The upcoming Swedish Chairmanship event in May 2011 was also handled.

The chairmanship has also initiated a first Barents youth field stakeholders meeting which aimed at developing and coordinating ways of cooperation between NBS, IBS, BYCO, BRYC, RWGYI and WGYP in order to make cooperation even more fruitful and effective in the future. The meeting was held November 29 in Oslo.

A closer cooperation between WGYP and RWGYI will be more concretely discussed on the next meeting, which will be arranged jointly.

Plans 2011:

- Joint meeting WGYP and RWGYI in Umeå at the beginning of March
- Report to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Sami parliaments in Finland, Sweden and Norway as well as the relevant ministries on the implementation of the Plan of Action
- Steering and supporting the BYCO activities based on the work plan for 2011.
- Promoting a cross-sector approach and coordinating youth issues within the Barents structures
- Acting as an expert body to the BEAC on all matters related to young people
- Cooperating and consulting with Barents workings groups and with youth organisations in the Region and with other structures: EU, CoE, CBSS, the NCM, AC

Regional Working Group on Youth Issues (RWGYI)

Chair: Adviser on Indigenous Issues (IBS)

The RWGYI has had three meetings in 2010: 24 February in Luleå in relation to the RC meeting, 11 June in Tromsø in connection with the RC and BRC meetings and 28 October in Kirkenes in connection with the annual BRYC event. The meeting in Luleå was a joint meeting with WGYP and the meeting in Tromsø was a joint meeting with BRYC.

The indigenous representative appointed by WGYP, Mr. Lars Miguel Utsi, has taken over the chairmanship of the RWGYI meeting held in Kirkenes.

RWGYI and BRYC are involved in several youth projects, among others the Barents Reggae, Rock and Rights tour, Barents Pilots, Young Entrepreneurs 2, Barents Builders, Niejda – Chicks in Sápmi, and the Barents Passion Week. Recently Tromsø Kommune has contacted the RWGYI to help them find partners for a project called Young Scientists in the Barents Region.

The main task for RWGYI in 2010 was to develop the Barents Regional Youth Programme 2011-2015. This has been done in close cooperation with WGYP and BRYC. The Barents regions have been able to give inputs to the programme. The final draft has been approved by the BRC, but the issue of funding is still pending.

A Youth Issues Stakeholders meeting was held in Oslo on 29 November discussing a closer cooperation between the different youth structures within the Barents cooperation.

Plans 2011:

- 10-11 March Joint Meeting with WGYP in Umeå, Sweden.
- 11 – 13 May Participation in WGYP Chairmanship Event

REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON INVESTMENTS AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

Chair: Sweden

New Chair of the group Kjell Hjelm (Norrbotten office of the Swedish Federation of Business Owners) was appointed by the Regional Committee on 10 June in Tromsø. The group is forming with new members, but it still lacks representation from Norway.

Plans 2011:

- Spring Meeting with RWGIEC
- 15 – 17 June May Barents Industrial Partnership

REGIONAL WORKING GROUP ON COMMUNICATIONS

Chair: Finland

The Working Group restarts with new chair Hannu Heikkinen (Finland) who was formally appointed at the RC meeting in Arkhangelsk on 16 September. The WG should continue where Sustainable Transport in the Barents Region (STBR) project have stopped. The WG has got the mandate at the RC meeting in Kajaani on 10 of November. The mandate stipulates e.g. for working out a regional reflection on the Barents transport strategy, which should summarize and coordinate all the national and regional initiatives and thus serve as a guideline for the development of a sustainable and well functioning multimodal infrastructure in the region. The members of the WG have been nominated in the beginning of January 2011. The WG will have the first meeting and start to work in a few weeks.

See www.beac.st for more information on the Barents working groups' activity

Update is based on information received from the working groups by 28 January 2011

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