



THE BARENTS WORKING GROUPS ANNUAL REPORT

Name of the Working Group: Joint Working group on Youth.

The current Chair and the Chairmanship period: Joint chairmanship between the Swedish agency for youth and civil society and the county administrative Board of Västerbotten (Sweden)
Period: 2017-2019.

1. Priorities of the Chairmanship

One of the overall priorities for the Swedish national chairmanship was to focus on youth perspectives, and it permeates the entire chairmanship programme. Thus, it was decided to restart the JWGY-working group after inactivity for a few years. The task was given to the county administrative board of Västerbotten to restart the group in close cooperation with the Swedish Agency for youth and civil society.

The conference *25 Years of Barents Cooperation: Youth Perspective for the Future*, held in April 2018 in Luleå, gathered 60 young persons from Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Based on those discussions and suggestion, the outcomes from this conference formed the tasks and priorities for the working group. JWGY is to work primarily with the incorporation of youth perspectives in all Barents working groups.

2. Meetings (meetings held, main topics and outcomes of the meetings)

The working group has arranged three meetings in 2018. In April in Umeå, in June in Stockholm (held in cooperation with CBSS) and in November in Kirkenes.

As the working group has been inactive for a couple of years the working group has had to get to know each other again, and to restart working together. All the regions were invited to nominate a representative to the JWGY, and as of the end of 2018, there are representatives from most of the

regions and national levels from the participating countries. To gain momentum in the cooperation, the JWGY chose to increase the frequency of the meetings, which has been quite high for the first year.

The topics for discussion during the year have been to establish a mandate for the working group, to re-establish a closer cooperation with the Barents regional youth council (BRYC), as well as following up the implementation of the outcomes of the 25-year anniversary of the Barents cooperation.

As far as outcomes are concerned, the new mandate for the JWGY was approved by the CSO in December 2018, the cooperation with BRYC has increased and the working group has met with seven other working groups to discuss youth perspectives.

A task force has been established to map the selection of BRYC members in each region. It has become evident that this procedure differs from region to region and some clarification regarding this is valuable for both BRYC and the working group.

3. Other activities (projects, events, programmes etc.)

The working group worked together with the Swedish Karelian Business and information center to write an application for a youth project with a climate change topic. The application was sent to EuropeAid, an European union programme. However, the application was not approved. The idea lives on nonetheless and with some more projects participants from the Barents region it might be successful in a future call.

4. Results of the year (decisions, new initiatives, improvements)

- Restarted an inactive working group.
- Increased cooperation with the Barents regional youth council.
- Approved mandate.

5. Evaluation of the work (What went well, what needs improvement)

The joint working group has had more representation on regional levels from Sweden, Norway and Finland, but have not yet managed to get all the nominated representatives at national levels to take part in the meetings yet. Hopefully, this can improve for the next year. Also, Russian regional representation has so far been from Archangelsk, which has showed great interest and devotion of the cooperation. The working group would like to see more regions from Russia to take part in the JWGY in the coming year.

6. Other

Upcoming plans for 2019 include visiting remaining working groups, mapping of the selection BRYC representatives in each region and finalizing the recommendations to be presented at the BEAC meeting in Umeå.