



**The Barents Euro-Arctic Council**  
**Sixth Meeting of Environment Ministers**

**DECLARATION**

- 1.** The Environment Ministers of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) representing Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation convened their Sixth Meeting in Luleå 28 August 2003 together with representatives from the European Commission and the BEAC Observer States and adopted the following declaration.
- 2. The BEAC Environment Ministers**
  - a)** **recall** the commitments made in the Kirkenes declaration in 1993 and followed up by Environment Ministers meetings in Bodø in 1994, in Rovaniemi in 1995, in S:t Petersburg in 1997, in Umeå in 1999 and in Kirkenes 2001,
  - b)** **guided by** the commitment in the Prime Ministers 10 years Anniversary Declaration adopted in Kirkenes on January 11 2003 emphasizing that the environmental dimension must be fully integrated into all activities in the Region,
  - c)** **stress** the importance of the Barents Regional Council and its Working Group on Environment,
  - d)** **welcome** the work in the framework of the EU second Action Plan for the Northern Dimension and the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership,
  - e)** **welcome** the signing of the Multilateral Nuclear and Environmental Programme in the

Russian Federation (MNEPR),

- f) **reaffirm** the commitments made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg and targets agreed upon at the Ministerial Conference in Kiev,
- g) **note** with concern the possible impacts of climate change in the Barents Region and will co-operate closely to implement mitigation measures and to adapt to the effects of climate change,
- h) **agree** that all countries in the Barents Region are committed to the implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and to the goals of the Kyoto Protocol and look forward to the launch of a Testing Ground in the Baltic Sea Region on co-operation to utilise the Protocol's flexible mechanisms, when the Protocol has entered into force,
- i) **welcome and endorse** the report from the BEAC Working Group on the Environment.

### **Industrial pollution**

3. Pollution from industrial, municipal and agricultural sources has to be further reduced in the Barents Region. More information and better analyses of environmental effects of pollution from major point sources and waste hot spots are still needed for project identification. It is important for projects to be based on regional initiatives and having been discussed in regional forums. The update of the NEFCO/AMAP Hot Spot list in close co-operation with the Russian Federation gives a good basis for further activities.
4. Production and transport of petroleum as well as other hazardous substances are expected to increase in the future. As a consequence it is necessary to follow high environmental standards in combination with intensified use of environmental impact assessments.
5. The BEAC Environment Ministers welcome
  - a) the update of the NEFCO/AMAP Hot Spot list, endorse the recommendations therein and emphasise the need to make effective use of existing as well as new and emerging

financing possibilities, such as the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Fund,

- b)** capacity building in environmental management and strengthened international co-operation to meet the necessary requirements for safe transportation at land as well as at sea in order to ensure effective protection of the inland, coastal and marine environment,
- c)** the positive examples of environmental investments in the Barents Region, such as modernisation of the Pechenga Nikel Smelting Combine and emphasise the need for a continued follow-up and monitoring of the environmental impacts,
- d)** the follow-up of the Kola River Environmental Project which has been developed under the auspices of the BEAC,
- e)** the co-operation on improvements in water supply, water quality and sanitation in the Region and emphasise the need to strengthen this co-operation with due respect to the Millennium Development Goals and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation, taking into account the work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development and targets agreed upon at the Ministerial Conference in Kiev.

### **Cleaner production**

6. In striving for sustainable development there is a need to change production and consumption towards sustainable levels and address unsustainable trends such as depletion of natural resources and changes in climate as well as diffuse emissions of hazardous chemicals and increased quantities of waste. These environmental aspects relate to a large extent to production and use of products and to the environmental impact from different stages of the life cycle of products. A focus on cleaner production and implementation of environmental management systems can provide win-win effects such as resource savings, cost reductions, improvements in income generation and reduction in pollution.
7. The BEAC Environment Ministers agree on

- a) a policy document including an action plan on Cleaner Production in a Life Cycle Perspective in order to develop a platform for co-ordinated development of sustainable environmental activities in the Barents Region and to promote a more systematic and comprehensive programme for cleaner production and programmes for different levels.

**8. The BEAC Environment Ministers welcome**

- a) further efforts to establish closer co-operation between Cleaner Production Centres and Barents Euro-Arctic Energy Efficiency Centres and the Working Group on Environment.

**Nature protection and biodiversity conservation**

**9. The Barents Region is of special importance in Europe and in a global perspective with regards to the protection of its pristine nature and healthy eco-systems influenced primarily by traditional human activities. Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is essential in order to reach the targets decided on in Johannesburg and Kiev.**

**10. The BEAC Environment Ministers agree that**

- a) there is a need to continue and intensify the work with identification of priority areas for biodiversity conservation in the Region and with supporting the development of protected areas and the work with establishment of eco-regions,
- b) based on the progress made by the Arctic Council Programme on Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) to establish a representative Circumpolar Protected Areas Network (CPAN), a similar network - including both terrestrial and marine areas - should be aimed at for the Barents Region,
- c) particular focus and efforts are needed to establish special protected areas to secure the last remaining old growth forests in Europe,

- d) for the conservation of biodiversity and some of Europe's last wilderness areas identification of tools and actions to minimize further habitat fragmentation in the Barents Region is needed using and continuing the work of CAFF,
- e) co-operation should be encouraged on co-ordinated bio-diversity and pollution assessment and monitoring with AMAP, CAFF, IUCN and relevant non-governmental organisations, such as WWF, for the protection of the Barents Sea and terrestrial ecosystems,
- f) the work by the Regional Working Group on Environment with preparing a strategic plan covering water quality and biodiversity is an important tool at regional level to improve the environmental situation in the Barents Region,
- g) it is important to continue to implement the required measures to maintain or restore marine biological resources in the Barents Sea to sustainable levels,
- h) co-operation should be enhanced to support the Russian initiative for implementation of the programme "Natural heritage of the Barents Region: Management in the interests of future generations".

### **Sustainable forestry**

- 11.** Sustainable forest management is a precondition for an economically, socially and environmentally sound forest-based business activity and for livelihood at the local level. A sustainable forestry policy should take into account an eco-system approach and environmental considerations in forest management.
- 12.** The BEAC Environment Ministers agree that
  - a) further work to strengthen the environmental dimension within existing programmes and activities such as the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme and the work of the WGEC Forest Sector Task Force is of high priority, including its work on developing model forests and have adopted a common approach to strengthen environmental considerations in the forestry co-operation in the Barents Region,

- b)** there is a need to encourage the development and implementation of market based schemes for certification of sustainable forest management.

### **Climate change and renewable energy**

- 13.** Climate change will provide challenges for the economic activity and welfare of people in the Barents Region. The fragile ecosystems in the Arctic region are particularly vulnerable to climate change. Enhanced monitoring and active exchange of information on likely climate change effects in the Region are necessary in order to support action. Close co-operation with the Arctic Council should therefore be established.
- 14.** Energy efficiency measures and promotion of renewable energy sources are important in order to achieve a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and to follow-up the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Sustainable use of energy and energy resources is of vital interest for the future of the Barents Region.
- 15.** The BEAC Environment Ministers agree that
  - a)** the Working Group on Environment (WGE) should continue to work closely with the Energy Working Group to promote the use of renewable energy, such as bio-energy,
  - b)** it is vital to identify good examples as well as barriers to project implementation and to develop Joint Implementation projects with regard to bio-energy and other renewables,
  - c)** The Barents Energy Working Group (EWG) is a forum for co-operation in the field of energy efficiency in the Barents Region. The Baltic Sea Region Energy Co-operation (BASREC) is a natural platform for increased co-operation in this field between the Barents and Baltic Sea Regions.

## **Regional and local actions**

**16.** Activities and projects to improve the environment in the Barents Region are mainly performed at the regional and local level. Capacity building and co-operation at the local level should continue to be a key priority for the WGE.

**17.** The BEAC Environment Ministers welcome

- a)** enhancement of political attention of key political decision-makers and civil society in the Barents Region countries and increase municipality-to-municipality co-operation and environmental education of children and youth, and further encourage and endorse this activity with the aim of promoting sustainable development in the Barents Region,
- b)** co-operation on methods and projects for preservation of cultural heritage and to stimulate utilisation of the potential for eco-tourism in the Region through community- to-community co-operation,
- c)** the work on developing an eco-tourism quality certification system adopted to the Barents Region by e.g. combining the results from the UN eco-tourism conference in Hemavan with national and international eco-tourism labelling schemes, such as “Nature’s Best”,
- d)** the effort to strengthening trilateral co-operation between the protected areas of Pasvik-Enare with the aim of developing the concept of the Fennoscandian Green Belt as part of the European Green Belt.

## **Future work**

**18.** The Johannesburg Plan of Implementation calls on regional and sub-regional institutions and bodies to effectively pursue the implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development. The BEAC Environment Ministers fully endorse this approach and are committed to work towards all the goals agreed in Johannesburg.

**19.** The BEAC Environment Ministers underline the need for continuation of the work of the Working Group on Environment, and request this Working Group to

- a)** a continuing process in implementation of the NEFCO/AMAP Hot Spot list, lead by the Working Group on Environment, in collaboration with NEFCO and relevant federal, regional and local partners, in order to develop actions within ten years aimed at eliminating these Hot Spots,
- b)** promote effectively the implementation of the Barents Region Cleaner Production Strategy and the prepared Action Plan with an aim to also improving chemicals management,
- c)** collaborate with the Barents Regional Council in work with co-ordination of environmental projects and programmes,
- d)** contribute to the climate change co-operation in the Barents Region, and to attach special importance to achieving multiple environmental benefits through Joint Implementation projects,
- e)** seek means to strengthen the co-operation in the field of water supply and water quality,
- f)** further strengthen the co-operation in the field of sustainable forestry with the WGEC Forest Sector Task Force, including protected areas and conservation of bio-diversity, taking into account the work of the International Contact Forum for Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region and the Barents Regional WGE,
- g)** promote co-ordination and collaboration regarding environmental activities
  - within the framework of the Northern Dimension policies of the EU and the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership,
  - with regard to other bodies of the BEAC, especially the Working Group on

Economic Co-operation and the Energy Working Group,

- with regard to the environmental activities of other regional bodies, such as the Arctic Council, Council of Baltic Sea States and the Nordic Council of Ministers and of international events,
- with regard to the Environmental Partnerships declared at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, the Environment for Europe process and the follow up of the Ministerial Conference in Kiev, report to the Seventh Meeting of the BEAC Environment Ministers on the above issues.