

17 January 2011

Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) Annual report 2010

Background

The Working Group on Youth Policy (WGYP) was established as an Ad Hoc Working Group in 1999 upon a Finnish proposal. By a decision of the CSO in December 2002, the mandate of the group was prolonged and revised, and the group was transformed into a permanent working group, integrated in the structure of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The work of the WGYP is based on the Plan of Action adopted at the Conference of Ministers responsible for Youth Policy in the member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Tromsø 14 -16 of May 2001. Following the recommendations from the Conference of Ministers of Youth Policy held in Murmansk in September of 2009, a revised action plan for the WGYP has been developed.

Activities in 2010

During 2010 the work of the WGYP focused on the following activities:

- Revising and implementing a new Plan of Action plan for WGYP to replace the previous Tromsø Plan of Action;
- Cooperating with other bodies of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Regional Council, as well as with international organisations and relevant regional structures;
- Steering and supporting the Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) activities. This includes a revised and prolonged contract with BYCO and the funding member states.
- Exploring and enhancing cooperation with various stakeholders in the Barents region involved in youth issues.

The WGYP held two meetings in 2010:

- 24-25 February in Luleå, ordinary meeting chaired by Mr Björn Jaaberg Hansen, Ministry of Children and Equality, Norway, due to sick absence of the chair
- 7-8 October in Stockholm, ordinary meeting chaired by Eva Theisz, The Swedish National Board for Youth Affairs.

In addition, preparatory meetings for the planned Swedish chairmanship event to be organised in the spring of 2011, were held as follows:

- March 22, 2010 in Stockholm, meeting including Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC), Barents Regional Working Group on Youth Issues (RWGYI) and WGYP SE chair. First discussion regarding the event – ideas, dates etc
- April 15, 2010, Umeå – checking of venue and draft aims/objectives/target group together with representatives from RWGYI
- October 29, 2010, Kirkenes, joint planning with representatives from RWGYI, BRYC, BYCO, International Barents Secretariat (IBS) and Norwegian Barents Secretariat (NBS), including planning of methodologies, invitations to be sent out and time planning.

Furthermore, a representative from WGYP has been present at the RWGYI meeting held in Kirkenes October 28th, and at BRYCs annual event of Barents Passion Week October 27-31, 2010 in Kirkenes.

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 on the November 29th in Oslo.

Meetings with BYCOs youth coordinator Ms Maria Petrova has been held at regular intervals throughout the year. The chair has also attended chairmanship reference group meetings held by the Swedish Barents Secretariat to inform about developments within the Barents youth cooperation.

Plans for 2011

The Swedish chairmanship together with the members of WGYP will together with the current chairmanship of RWGYI and its members seek the ways of intensifying the cooperation between the two working groups. Joint meetings and agendas are planned to continue the discussions of the cooperation possibilities.

The Swedish Chairmanship event will be carried out in May 2011 in Umeå, which will be planned, executed and evaluated in close cooperation with BRYC and RWGYP.

2 WGYP meetings and joint meetings with RWGYI and BRYC, in Umeå (March) and /Norway (Autumn)

1-2 Barents stakeholders meeting(s) to strengthen cooperation and complementarities between actors in the region to enhance and maximize resources to be used in an efficient way.