



Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Seventh Meeting of Environment Ministers

Declaration

19 October, 2005

1. The Ministers of the Environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) representing Denmark, Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation convened their Seventh Meeting in Rovaniemi on 19 October 2005 together with representatives from the European Commission and the BEAC Observer States and adopted the following declaration.

The BEAC Environment Ministers

2. a) *recalled* the commitments stated in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Environmental Action Programme adopted in Bodø in 1994 and followed up by Environment Ministers meetings in Rovaniemi in 1995, in St. Petersburg in 1997, in Umeå in 1999, in Kirkenes in 2001, and in Luleå in 2003,

b) *reconfirmed* the commitments in the Prime Ministers' 10-year Anniversary Declaration adopted in Kirkenes in January 2003 and the commitments of the 9th Session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Umeå in October 2003,

c) *welcomed* the entry into force of the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in February 2005 and the launch of a Testing Ground in the Baltic Sea Region on cooperation to utilise the Protocol's flexible mechanisms,

d) *welcomed* the entry into force of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants in May 2004,

e) *reaffirmed* their commitment to the decisions made at the UN Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 and to Agenda 21, and to the decisions made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002,

f) *reaffirmed* the targets agreed upon at the Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Kiev in 2003,

g) *stressed* the importance of the Barents Euro-Arctic Regional Council and its Working Group on Environment,

h) *welcomed* the investments in nuclear safety resulting from the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR),

i) *welcomed and endorsed* the report from the BEAC Working Group on Environment.

TEN YEARS OF ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION IN THE BARENTS REGION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

3. *Welcomed* the 10-year report on Barents environmental cooperation. The Ministers *acknowledged* the development of extensive environmental cooperation between the countries, the strengthening of the environmental cooperation between the regions and the concrete achievements, for example, in reducing pollution, promoting cleaner production and enhancing nature conservation cooperation efforts.

4. *Observed* that the progress in environmental investments and other protection measures should have been more expedient. The Ministers *emphasized the importance* of dialogue, a better common understanding of the underlying development needs, and the cross-sectoral networking between local and central authorities and also with the private sector, IFIs and NGOs. These provide a solid ground for further efforts and concrete environmental achievements.

BARENTS ENVIRONMENTAL HOT SPOTS AND INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

5. *Welcomed* the establishment of the Barents Hot Spot Facility (BHFS) by Finland, Sweden, Norway and Iceland within the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) in December 2004. The BHFS should be effectively used to select priority hot spots projects to be implemented, support project preparation and coordinate financing possibilities for the projects.

6. *Agreed* that the target is to launch relevant investments projects in all of the Barents environmental hot spots by 2013 with the aim of eliminating these hot spots. For successful fulfilment of this task it is necessary to provide financing for project preparation and implementation on the basis of a broad partnership between Russia and the international community. To create the most efficient co-financing mechanism it is extremely important to obtain Russia's financial contribution (including the resources of the hot spots projects owners; federal, regional and local budgetary sources and non-budgetary sources) and financial support from international partners (including donor countries, international financial institutions, funds and facilities). It is also important in this context to consider cleaner production and climate change aspects in relation to hot spots.

7. *Commended* the cooperation with the Arctic Council to identify and eliminate the hot spots, especially with the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Program (AMAP) and the Arctic Council Action Plan to Eliminate Pollution of the Arctic (ACAP). The first example of this cooperation is the successful analysis, repackaging and safe storage of obsolete pesticides in the Arkhangelsk Region implemented by the ACAP.

8. *Called* for further efforts to support monitoring networks to follow trends and the effects of pollution and to review the effectiveness of the pollution reduction measures in the Barents Region.

CLEANER PRODUCTION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

9. *Welcomed* the report of the Cleaner Production Task Force (CPTF) and the progress in elaborating and implementing the common Action Plan on Cleaner Production (2003) and, in accordance

with the action plan, the development of National Action Plans on Cleaner Production. The Ministers also *encouraged* the WGE to give a new mandate to the CPTF to enhance the implementation of the Cleaner Production Strategy and common Action Plan and to develop on a cleaner production basis more comprehensive sustainable consumption and production approaches.

10. *Recommended* that the governments also promote Cleaner Production principles through regulatory instruments, such as emission limit values, and enhance the use of new economic instruments.

11. *Emphasized* the importance of enhancing the cooperation with the Energy Working Group, the Cleaner Production Centres and the Barents Euro-Arctic Energy Efficiency Centres. Furthermore, cooperation with the Nordic and European working groups and the Arctic Council on Cleaner Production should be encouraged. In addition, cleaner production should be promoted in connection with Barents economic initiatives such as the Barents Industrial Partnership.

12. *Welcomed* the recommendations of the International Conference "Cleaner Production as a Contribution to Sustainable Development" held in Moscow in December 2004 and requested the WGE take into account the findings of this conference in its work.

13. *Emphasized* the importance of sustainable chemicals management in the Barents Region and the need for further exchange of experiences in this field, taking into account the existing multilateral environmental agreements and the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management. In particular, the Ministers *welcomed* the Arctic Council's projects for monitoring persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals of importance in the region and for reducing the sources of such pollutants.

14. *Encouraged* enhanced education on sustainable development, especially on cleaner production and environmental economics at the university level in order to create a solid base for know-how on cleaner production in the Barents Region.

NATURE CONSERVATION AND SUSTAINABLE FORESTRY

The BEAC Environment Ministers

15. *Welcomed* the recommendations of the 4th HCF meeting and requested the WGE to take actions to promote these recommendations.

16. *Agreed* that cooperative efforts are needed to create a representative network of nature conservation areas in the Barents Region and *encouraged* further development of the existing and planned cross-border protected areas networks, such as the Green Belt of Fennoscandia, including trilateral nature conservation cooperation in Pasvik-Enare.

17. *Noted* that there is a need to improve the management of and the capacity to protect biodiversity in the existing protected areas, and to engage in nature-related activities in terms of nature conservation. The interests of local and indigenous peoples are important in all decision-making concerning the use of natural resources.

18. *Underlined the importance* of the interaction between the protection of nature and the cultural heritage. A good example of this kind of cooperation is seen in the Kenozero National Park.

19. *Underlined* the need to continue the important work initiated by the Forest Sector Task Force (FSTF) and *recognized* the need to continue the development towards sustainable forest manage-

ment through the inclusion of biodiversity aspects into model forest processes, the facilitation of market-based forest certification systems, and measures to prevent illegal logging.

20. *Recognized* the need to strengthen cooperation with the Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) Working Group of the Arctic Council, especially with regard to the Circumpolar Protected Area Network (CPAN) process.

WATER COOPERATION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

21. *Expressed concern* about the quality of and accessibility to drinking water. Poor quality drinking water is a significant environmental health problem for many people in the Barents Region, especially those living in the Russian part of the Region. A prerequisite for investments in safe drinking water is to clarify the permission systems and to remove obstacles to project implementation.

22. *Encouraged* the implementation of small-scale water projects to improve the quality of surface water, the use of ground water, and waste water treatment measures, especially in order to guarantee a safe drinking water supply.

23. *Suggested* that initiatives at the regional level be supported and the results of such initiatives be disseminated, and that training and capacity building in the sphere of water management be developed and the capacity of local administrations to enforce regulations be enhanced.

24. *Encouraged* further work on transboundary water cooperation and the establishment of water-basin management, also applying cleaner production principles.

25. *Agreed* that there is a need to enhance cooperation in order to promote the management of the Barents and Baltic Seas according to the ecosystem approach, based on scientific advice.

26. *Recognised* that many water ecosystems have high ecological quality and that there is a need to protect them and use the water resources in a sustainable manner.

CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IN THE ENERGY SECTOR

The BEAC Environment Ministers

27. *Stressed* the importance of the findings and recommendations of the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA), presented at the Ministerial Meeting of the Arctic Council in November 2004. *Encouraged* cooperation with the Arctic Council on climate issues and actions be taken in all relevant sectors in the Barents Region to meet the recommendations of the ACIA.

28. *Encouraged* the promotion of projects aimed at improving energy efficiency and the greater use of renewable energy sources (such as biofuels and wind) in cooperation with the BEAC Energy Working Group and the Barents energy efficiency centres and the following of the cooperation within the Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation to develop Joint Implementation projects in the Barents Region.

29. *Called* for further efforts to strengthen the monitoring networks and improve the dissemination of information, and to enhance cooperation in capacity building on legislation and administration in order to promote compliance with the Kyoto Protocol.

30. *Expressed* support for the initiative of the Regional Working Group on Environment to start cooperation on flood protection.

31. *Encouraged* enhanced cooperation on implementing environmental impact assessment procedures and on enforcing high environmental standards for pipelines, tankers and harbours in order to minimize the environmental and biodiversity risks of increasing oil and gas production and transportation.

32. *Suggested* enhanced cooperation with the related international fora, such as Baltic Sea cooperation on oil transportation issues and Arctic Council activities (especially the Arctic Council Assessment on Oil and Gas Activities in the Arctic).

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ACTIONS

The BEAC Environment Ministers

33. *Welcomed* the work done by the Regional Working Group on Environment within the water and biodiversity components of the Barents 2010 project and *suggested* that the recommendations regarding the environmental cooperation in the Barents Region be supported.

34. *Encouraged* enhanced cooperation between the national and local levels, especially on capacity building for environmental administrators and environmental training for other sectors. There is a need to develop the cooperation on the use of environmental impact assessment, especially in trans-boundary contexts, and the use of environmental policy tools and economic instruments in environmental protection.

35. *Acknowledged* the activities of the 2005 Indigenous Peoples Year in the Barents Cooperation declared by the Regional Council. The Ministers also *noted the importance* of ensuring the effective participation of indigenous and local communities in decision-making and policy planning, and the importance of people-to-people cooperation. Furthermore, the Ministers *encouraged* the support of initiatives by indigenous peoples and environmental non-governmental organisations with regard to environmental protection and the use of natural resources.

36. *Noted* the need to develop tourism in an environmentally and socially sound manner and *encouraged* the implementation of the guiding principles on biodiversity and tourism of the Convention on Biodiversity.

COOPERATION WITHIN THE BEAC AND WITH OTHER REGIONAL COUNCILS

The BEAC Environment Ministers

37. *Encouraged* the continued cooperation to strengthen environmental protection and sustainable development with other Working Groups of the BEAC, especially

- with the Energy Working Group on climate change mitigation measures and cleaner production,

- with the Economic Working Group in order to include environmental and cleaner production issues in the economic cooperation,
- with the Committee of Senior Officials to promote the implementation of hot spot projects utilizing a cleaner production approach, to promote the ACIA, and to continue the dialogue on oil and gas issues, and
- with the Forest Sector Task Force to promote environmental considerations within forestry.

38. *Took note* of the development of the cooperation between the BEAC and the Arctic Council, and *encouraged* the further enhancement of cooperation between the two councils.

39. *Recognized the need* to cooperate with the Council of Baltic Sea States, especially on bioenergy and energy savings in relation to cooperation under the Kyoto Protocol.

40. *Encouraged* the involvement and partnership with the Nordic Council of Ministers in relevant BEAC activities, including areas such as nature conservation, climate change, sustainable production and consumption, and hazardous chemicals.

41. *Suggested* that the positive role of financing institutions be promoted, NEFCO in particular, in providing expertise in project preparation and financing issues.

STREAMLINING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESSES IN THE NORTH

The BEAC Environment Ministers

42. *Welcomed* the development of the EU-Russia relations on the basis of the agreed four common spaces, and especially *noted* the wide platform for environmental cooperation it provides.

43. *Emphasized* the importance of developing the Northern Dimension and its partnerships and *noted with satisfaction* the new pledges by the European Union, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Finland and Denmark to the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership Fund. Especially the environmental window of the NDEP requires strengthening. The NDEP should provide further funding opportunities for the hot spot projects in the Barents Region.

44. *Suggested* the promotion of the further ratification and coordination of local work with the implementation of international environmental conventions (such as the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UNECE Convention on Transboundary Environmental Impact Assessment and the UN conventions on chemicals management) and the follow-up to the findings of the Millennium Assessment Report.

45. *Encouraged* the support of the commitments of the Environment for Europe process and *stressed the importance* of enhancing the management of transboundary waters by taking into account the ECE Convention on the Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes, the Main Development Directions of the Water System Management Complex of Russia until 2010, the EU Water Framework Directive and the EU Water Initiative in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia.

46. *Suggested* that the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development in 2006-2007 be followed, especially the work on energy for sustainable development and climate change.

FUTURE WORK

The BEAC Environment Ministers

47. *Expressed* their vision of a Barents Euro-Arctic Region where major sources of pollution are adequately addressed and sustainable management of natural resources is achieved. The aim is to maintain ecosystems in an unimpaired state and establish good living conditions in local communities, taking into account gender equity and the interests of indigenous peoples. This will require further sectoral integration, the application of cleaner production methodology, including the precautionary and polluter pays principles, and the implementation of eco-system and life-cycle approaches.

48. *Renewed* the mandate of the Working Group on Environment to continue the work on:

- the elimination of hot spots
- cleaner production
- nature conservation
- water issues
- climate change issues

in close cooperation with other regional bodies, taking into account the relevant international processes. The Ministers also *requested* that the Working Group report on their work at the next Barents Environment Ministers Meeting.

49. *Were pleased* to accept the offer by Russia to assume the chairmanship of the Working Group on Environment for 2005-2007. The chairmanship thereafter rotates from Russia to Norway, followed by Sweden.