

**Protocol Agreement from the Statutory Meeting of the Regional Council of
the Barents Region (The Euro-Arctic Region)
Kirkenes, 11 January, 1993**

The changes in Europe and Russia have given a whole new reason for closer cooperation in the North. During the past years, a strong development in bilateral cooperation has occurred between the Northern parts of Russia, Sweden, Finland and Norway. In this regard and in order to give the developing cooperation a firmer organisational framework (at the regional level as well as at the national level), it is proposed to introduce a concept for the Barents Region: "The Euro-Arctic Region". In connection to the Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting in Kirkenes, Norway, on 11 January, 1993, the undersigned representatives met from Archangelsk County (Oblast), Finnmark County Council (Fylkeskommune), Lapland County (LΓᄁn), Murmansk County (Oblast), Nordland County Council (Fylkeskommune), Norrbottens County (LΓᄁn), the Sami Council and Troms County Council (Fylkeskommune).

The undersigned representatives are in agreement to the following:

1.

To support the initiative from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs to establish the Barents Region (The Euro-Arctic Region) to embrace the regions of the abovementioned administrative bodies, as well as to endorse the principles, goals and prioritised cooperation tasks which are stipulated in the Declaration from the Ministers of Foreign Affairs meeting in Kirkenes on 11 January, 1993.

2.

To work towards the expansion of regional cooperation in the Barents Region in collaboration with other co-operative partners.

3.

To establish the following goals as the foundation for the regional cooperation:

- to secure a peaceful and stable development in the Region.
- to strengthen and develop the cultural ties between the peoples of the Region.
- to encourage the establishment of new and the expansion of existing bilateral and multilateral relations in the Region.
- to lay the foundation for a strong economic and social development in the Region with emphasis on an active and sustainable management of the nature and resources.
- to contribute to a development which takes into account the interests of the Indigenous Peoples and arrange for their active participation.

4.

To establish the following bodies:

The Regional Council

The Regional Council consists of the leaders of the County Councils (Fylkekommune, Oblast and LΓᄁn) in the Barents Region. In addition, a joint representative appointed by the popularly elected Sami bodies of the Region will attend. The Regional Council constitutes itself. The Chairman is elected for a two year period. The Chairmanship rotates between the member countries. Resolutions are taken by consensus. The Regional Council decides the frequency of meetings. The Regional Council determines the annual plan and budget for the regional cooperation. The Regional Council appoints an Executive Regional Committee to prepare and establish future business for the Council and follows-up approved projects. The members of the Regional Committee attend the Regional Council meetings in the capacity of advisors to their superiors.

The Executive Regional Committee

The Regional Committee is the working organ for the Regional Council and consists of the appointed advisors for the eight permanent members of the Regional Council. The Chairmanship follows the leadership of the Regional Council. The Regional Committee, which meets frequently, will lead and coordinate the ongoing regional cooperation within the

framework defined by the Regional Council. The Regional Committee has responsibility for determining the activity plan and budget proposals for the Regional Council. The economic and professional follow-up tasks of the project groups is carried out by the Regional Committee. Resolutions of the Regional Committee are taken by consensus.

It is necessary to establish a Secretariat, directly under the Chairman of the Regional Committee, for the purposes of initiating and safeguarding the ongoing work. The Secretariat is connected to and financed by the leaders of the Regional Council. The undersigned parties are positive to the Norwegian offer of financing such a Secretariat in Kirkenes for the first two years.

5.

That the entire operational expenditures for the Regional Council and the Regional Committee is covered by the County Councils (Fylkeskommune, Oblast, ЛГДн) in connection to their respective participation in the work, unless otherwise decided.

6.

It presupposes that the national parliaments contribute greatly to financing the cooperation projects at the regional level of the Barents Region.

7.

That the project work can also, when it is considered necessary, be open to participants outside of the Barents Region.

8.

That each of the undersigned parties at any time can withdraw from the regional cooperation in the Barents Region with immediate effect. In such circumstances, the Regional Council decides how to follow-up the possible unfulfilled commitments that the outgoing party has undertaken within the framework of this Protocol Agreement.

9.

The undersigned parties recommend that the Republic of Karelia can become a member of the Barents Region pending submission of an application.

This Protocol Agreement is completed in Finnish, Norwegian, Russian, Sami and Swedish.

The establishment of the Regional Council for the Barents Region - The Euro-Arctic Region - is certified by the signatures hereunder.

Kirkenes, 11 January, 1993

Archangelsk County (Oblast)

Balaksjin

Murmansk County (Oblast)

Komarov

Sami Council

Ragnhild Nystad

Finnmark County (Fylkeskommune)

Erling Flotten

Nordland County (Fylkeskommune)

Sigbjorn Eriksen

Troms County (Fylkeskommune)

Gunn Langaas

Lapland County (Lan)

Asko Oinas

Norrbottens County (Lan)

Gunnar Brodin