



JOINT STATEMENT OF THE BARENTS REGIONAL COUNCIL on the XV SESSION of the BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL

15 October 2015, Oulu, Finland

The Barents Regional Council meeting was convened on October 14, 2015 in Oulu, Finland under the Chairmanship of the Arkhangelsk Region, Russian Federation.

The BRC notes that interregional collaboration is to a maximum extent approached to the needs of the people in the region, contributing to the development of the Barents area. An active collaboration on both national and regional levels are further highlighted by the sectors of the region.

CROSS-BORDER MOBILITY

The process of promoting industrial development, business and tourism in the Barents region confirms the relevance to continue contacts between the BEAC countries' Foreign Ministries on further simplification of border crossing procedures for the people living in the Barents region.

ECONOMIC COOPERATION AND TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS

The BRC emphasizes that economic development is of utmost importance for all the Barents regions. A new period of Barents cooperation is to be focused on active creation of preconditions for companies, scientific and business community to release the full economic potential of the Barents region. Indigenous entrepreneurship should be supported in order to secure growth in indigenous communities throughout the Barents Region.

The BRC focuses attention on the importance of further cooperation between Barents region universities, local authorities and companies in the sphere of biotechnologies, technological innovations in timber processing industry, wood and non-wood forest product industry, renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency.

TRANSPORT

The BRC maintains the work on active implementation of the Joint Transport Plan in the Barents region, laying emphasis on the transport corridors between Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway. Transport infrastructure should fully meet the needs of the Barents region people, conforming to a great extent an increase in business activity in the North of Europe.

The BRC underlines that the participation in the development of the communication systems during the joint search and rescue operations in the Barents region is creating favourable conditions and extending possibilities in cargo and passengers transportation along the Northern Sea Route.

FINANCIAL MECHANISM

The BRC appreciates the work of the BEAC Ad-Hoc Working Group on Financial Mechanism Study in Barents cooperation. The analyses of the existing financial resources and recommendations will contribute

to realize most of the significant project initiatives in the region. The BRC considers it important to discuss a possibility to add an expert to the IBS staff on economy issues.

The BRC confirms the importance of the Cross-Border Cooperation Programs “Kolarctic” and “Karelia” to be discussed as one of the main financial sources for Barents cooperation.

ECOLOGY

The BRC maintains the work on active implementation of the Action Plan on Climate Change for the Barents cooperation adopted in 2013.

The BRC underlines the importance of ecological and social responsibility in all the spheres of economic activity in the Barents region, particularly in the development of natural resources, oil and gas extraction, mining industry, forestry and other types of commercial use of natural resources. Further collaboration based on exchanging advanced experience on the issues of ecology, sustainable use of natural resources and development of regional climate strategies is supported.

TOURISM

The BRC notes with satisfaction an increasing attractiveness of the Barents region for international tourism and recognizes the importance of Barents cooperation through joint projects, networking and exchange of best practices in developing sea cruise products and tourism infrastructure development.

The BRC underlines the importance of strengthening joint efforts to promote and market the Arctic and Barents as distinct tourism areas.

YOUTH AND SCIENTIFIC-EDUCATIONAL COOPERATION

The BRC notes the importance of Barents youth cooperation in the implementation of the Barents Program 2014-2018 and the necessity to expand a number of youth programs and projects. The BRC highlights successful cooperation of universities and scientific centers; the latter is to be strengthened by fundraising for joint scientific-research projects in the Barents region.

INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

The Barents Regional Council emphasizes the importance of indigenous peoples’ participation in the activity of all the operating bodies of BEAC and BRC – particularly in decision-making on the issues exerting influence on indigenous peoples’ rights and livelihood.

The BRC underlines the significance of the Barents region for international cooperation in the North of Europe, particularly on the issues of maintaining peace and stability, good-neighbor relations and mutually beneficial partnerships.

The BRC expresses its gratitude to the outgoing BEAC Chairmanship of the Republic of Finland and the BRC Chairmanship of the Arkhangelsk Region, Russian Federation, as well as to the other parties for their excellent work.

The BRC welcomes the incoming BEAC Chairmanship of the Russian Federation, and the BRC Chairmanship of the Region of Kainuu, Republic of Finland. The BRC looks forward to successful work and mutual synergies between the Chairmanships of the two Councils.

Members of the BRC