

Barents Euro-Arctic Council

Eighth Meeting of the Ministers of the Environment

November 9, 2007, Moscow, Russian Federation

Declaration

1. The Ministers of the Environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and high representatives from Finland, Norway, Sweden and the Russian Federation convened their Eighth Meeting in Moscow on November 9, 2007 together with representatives from the European Commission and the BEAC Observer States and adopted the following Declaration.

2. The BEAC Environment Ministers

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, in Luleå in 2003, and in Rovaniemi in 2005,

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, to the decisions made at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg in 2002, and to the Millennium Development Goals,

welcomed the decisions and targets agreed at the 6th Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" in Belgrade, October 2007,

expressed their deep concern regarding the alarming speed of the reduction of the Arctic sea ice and the thawing of the permafrost in the tundra zone with increased methane leakage, and their negative impacts on the global climate system as well as on the Barents region, including economic costs and foreseeable threats to its biodiversity and ecosystems,

welcomed the progress in implementation of the commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity, including its program of work on protected areas,

welcomed the progress in implementation of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, in particular, in realization of the decisions of 1st and 2nd Conferences of Parties, *stressed* the importance of each country establishing and putting into force a National Plan for Implementation of the Convention,

noted the outcomes and decisions of the 24th session of the UNEP Governing Council/Global Forum of Environment Ministers and the launch of the UNEP's 4th Global Environmental Outlook and expressed their concerns that serious problems still remain, *highlighting* the need for continuous and strengthened actions and capacity building to forcefully address global challenges such as climate change, air and soil pollution, the pollution of the oceans by harmful substances from land-based sources, the deterioration of water resources, depletion of species and biological diversity,

welcomed the launch of the Russia-EU Dialogue on Environment under the Russia-EU Road map on common economic space taken place at the first Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council on Environment held in Helsinki in October 2006, and *encouraged* the continuation of the work at all levels including the Working Group and Subgroups of this Dialogue,

welcomed the adoption of the political declaration on the Northern Dimension by the EU, Iceland, Norway and the Russian Federation in November 2006 and entering into force of the Northern Dimension Framework Document since January 1, 2007, where BEAC is stated as a participant,

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

underlined that the environmental concerns of the Barents region call for further actions by all relevant sectors and increased cooperation across sectors,

welcomed the proposal on establishment of an International Barents Secretariat for the cooperation under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council in Kirkenes from January 1, 2008,

welcomed and endorsed the Report of the BEAC Working Group on Environment (WGE).

BARENTS ENVIRONMENTAL HOT SPOTS AND INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

3. *Welcomed* the report of the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) on progress on project development related to the Barents Environmental Hot Spots, funded in particular by the Barents Hot Spot Facility (BHSF) under NEFCO management and also by other bilateral and inter-regional programmes (including ACAP and NPA-Arctic), as well as by Russian budgetary means, and Russian sponsors and project owners.

4. *Noted with appreciation* that with reference to the NEFCO/AMAP Environmental "Hot Spots" List (the List) in the Russian Part of the Barents Region (2003), to date 36 sector studies, defined project development measures or implementation of projects have been approved for funding by the BHSF, as a major source for funding of development, preparation and promotion of investment projects aiming at eliminating Barents environmental hot spots.

5. *Emphasized* nevertheless that additional efforts are needed to achieve the target agreed by the Environment Ministers in Luleå in 2003 to launch relevant investment projects within 10 years in all of the Barents environmental hot spots with the aim of eliminating the hot spots. The efforts should include:

- to continue working on possibilities to provide efficient and relevant co-financing mechanisms for project preparation and implementation based on financial contributions from the Russian Federation (including resources of hot spots owners, federal, regional and local budgetary as well as non-budgetary sources) and financial support from international partners (including donor countries, international financial institutions, funds and facilities);
- to develop a dialogue between the WGE and NEFCO/BHSF and the hot spots owners as well as other local and regional stakeholders in the Russian part of the Barents region;
- to elaborate how, when and to which relevant Russian authority a transition of the general responsibility for the continued co-ordination and monitoring work concerning environmental hot spots of the Barents region should take place;
- to develop exchange of information related to the Barents environmental hot spots and the results achieved by NEFCO/BHSF in this area between the WGE and local and regional environmental authorities in the Russian part of the Barents region, to reflect these activities and changed circumstances in the annual reports on the state of environment of the federal and regional level, and to take into account the information contained in these reports in the working on the Barents environmental hot spots.

The Ministers *stressed the importance* of implementing the modernisation project in Pechenga-Nikel combined smelter - hot spot project M1.

6. *Welcomed* the development of the prototype database of the Barents Environmental Hot Spots that will contain information on each hot spot and related projects being underway including confirmed or potential financing sources, project contractors, environmental effects, etc.

7. *Called for* further efforts to develop procedures and criteria to assess the elimination of the hot spots as well as to review the effectiveness of the pollution reduction measures in the Barents Region. *Endorsed* the decision of the WGE to create an Ad-hoc Task Force on elaboration of procedures and criteria on excluding hot spots from the List with participation of all relevant stakeholders in its work. The Ministers *suggested* that the first report of the Ad-hoc Task Force is to be submitted for the next Meeting of Environment Ministers in 2009.

8. *Welcomed* the results achieved within the cooperation with the Arctic Council, especially with the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP) and the Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP), *encouraged* further joint project activities and *stressed* the need to use already achieved results on PCB, dioxines, obsolete pesticides and mercury. Further work should be coordinated with other activities in this field with the aim to reduce levels of persistent organic pollutants and heavy metals in the Barents region through joint efforts with the ACAP and NEFCO.

CLEANER PRODUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND CONSUMPTION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

9. *Welcomed* the activities of the Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption Subgroup (CPESCS) reflected in the the Report of the BEAC Working Group on Environment (WGE) and noted the progress made in implementing the National Action Plans on Cleaner Production.

10. *Noted with appreciation* the new mandate of the CPESCS given by the WGE that strengthens the environmentally sound consumption component and provides more comprehensive approach on sustainable consumption and production and *recommended* the WGE to revise the Cleaner Production Strategy and common Action Plan if necessary.

11. *Acknowledged* the need for involvement of the Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption subgroup in the environmental hot spots activities.

12. *Noted* the importance of supporting the United Nations agreement to develop a 10 Year Framework of Programmes on sustainable consumption and production (SCP), e.g. the Marrakech-process, and called for regional initiatives contributing to this process and therefore *welcomed* the call of the Declaration of the 6th Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, October 2007) for development of national programmes, strategies and implementation plans, sub-regional and regional partnerships on SCP.

13. *Suggested* to take into account the UNEP and European Environment Agency (EEA) report on SCP presented at the 6th Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, October 2007) in the work of the WGE and *called for* development of common projects on sustainable consumption, based on identified priorities especially focusing on issues such as bulk and building dismantling waste.

14. *Emphasized* the importance of enhancing the cooperation with the Energy Working Group, the Cleaner Production Centres, the regional Energy Efficiency Centres and NEFCO in order to find synergies and develop common projects.

15. Furthermore, *encouraged* exchange of information and best practices on eco-efficiency, cleaner production and sustainable consumption with UNEP, OECD, the Task Forces within the Marrakech Process, the EU-Russia Environmental Dialogue and the Arctic Council. In addition, Ministers *called for* promoting presentation of cleaner production principles in connection with the Barents Industrial Partnership.

16. *Welcomed* the development of the Cleaner Production Study programme for technical educational institutions in the Barents Region and *expressed the need for* further cooperation on education and training on cleaner production and sustainable consumption and production (SCP).

17. *Recommended* that the governments also promote BAT (Best Available Techniques) through cleaner production principles and regulatory instruments including exchange of experiences in the field of permitting and environmental pollution control.

18. *Emphasized* the need for further exchange of experiences on sustainable chemicals management, taking into account the existing multilateral environmental agreements in this field and implementation of the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management.

19. *Welcomed* the results and recommendations of the International Round Table "The Strategy of the Russian Federation to Transit to Cleaner Production and Sustainable Development" (the Yasnaya Poliana Agreement Experience), *requested* the WGE/CPESCS to promote further activities to disseminate experiences on regional level in Russia and in the Nordic countries.

NATURE PROTECTION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

20. *Noted* the improved possibilities to develop the Green Belt of Fennoscandia as a network of cross-border protected areas and *called for* further actions to promote this initiative including establishment of the Ingermanland nature reserve. This network will consist of existing and planned nature conservation areas between the Russian, Finnish and Norwegian borders.

21. *Welcomed* the progress achieved in cooperation in Russian-Finnish Park Druzhba. The Ministers *called for* further efforts on the development of cooperation on the cross-border reserves based on the model of well functioning cross-border cooperation between Paanayarvi National Park (Russian Federation) and Oulanka National Park (Finland). The Ministers also *welcomed* the establishment of the Kalevala National Park in the Russian Federation, as well as the Russian-Finnish-Norwegian trilateral cooperation in the Pasvik Inari area on nature management, research and and sustainable nature tourism, in order to establish the Inari-Pasvik Friendship Park and to obtain a Europark Certificate.

22. *Welcomed* the progress of the Nordic-Russian project to develop management plan including ecotourism of the Yugyd Va National Park (Russian Federation) as well as progress regarding the ECORA project.

23. *Welcomed* the establishment of the Subgroup on Nature Protection as well as the mandate given by the WGE.

24. *Acknowledged* the cooperation of the Habitat Contact Forum on management of the existing protected areas and promotion of the establishment of new ones and other measures relevant for

habitat conservation and therefore *welcomed* the planned meeting of the forum in Umeå, Sweden in 2008. *Encouraged* the WGE to cooperate more closely with the Habitat Contact Forum and consider the possibility of its integration into activities of the Sub-group on Nature Protection.

25. *Noted* the importance to assess the representativeness and development needs (gaps) in the protected areas network and the need for further efforts to develop a Barents Protected Areas Network (BPAN) as a follow up on the 2010 Biodiversity Target including Russian-Finnish cooperation on establishment of the National Park Onezhskoe Pomorie and Russian-Norwegian cooperation on establishment of the National Park Russian Arctic.

26. *Emphasized* the need to further develop and introduce biosphere and ecosystem approaches in nature protection and use of natural resources with an aim of sustainable management in all sectors having impact on land and sea and to take into account the interest of local and indigenous people in all decision-making in these areas.

27. *Recognized* the connection of biodiversity conservation issues with the cooperation on sustainable forest management in areas such as development of model forests (including biodiversity conservation aspects), forest certification and prevention of illegal logging. Ministers in particular welcomed the Nordic-Russian Conference on "The last intact forests in NW Russia; protection and sustainable use", to be held in Steinkjær, Norway, December 4-8, 2007.

28. *Welcomed* nature protection and biodiversity conservation related initiatives of the Arctic Council and encourages participation in the implementation of the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP) and in the preparation of the Arctic Biodiversity Assessment relating to the global 2010 Biodiversity target.

WATER COOPERATION

The BEAC Environment Ministers

29. *Noted with concern* that poor quality of drinking water is still a major environmental health problem for a lot of people in the Barents Region. *Emphasized* that the quality of drinking water is often connected to waste water management and therefore development of waste water management requires more efforts, both at industrial and municipal levels. Removal of obstacles for project implementation, clarification of permission systems as well as training and capacity building are needed to promote projects to improve safe drinking water supply and implementing high standard sewage treatment. This is also a precondition for improving the marine environment in the seas affected by the Barents Region, the Barents and the Baltic Seas.

30. *Recognized* the special need for small scale projects on improving water quality in the scattered settlements in the Barents region as well as pilot projects and dissemination of the results of local level activities in this area.

31. *Encouraged* further cooperation on management of transboundary waters and monitoring of water bodies in order to improve the information base for decision-making and promote measures to improve the state of the water bodies.

32. *Welcomed* the Russian-Finnish-Norwegian cooperation in the border area of the Pasvik river on the current state of the environment and the effort on harmonization and standardization of monitoring and assessment methodology. *Encouraged* further cooperation in this field.

33. *Emphasized* the need for cooperation on flood management including the development of measures on prevention and adaptation to floods, exchange of information on flood risk.

34. *Welcomed* the establishment of the Sub-group on Water Issues in the framework of the WGE and its mandate given by the WGE. *Called for* close collaboration between the Sub-group on Water Issues and the Regional Working Group on the Environment.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The BEAC Environment Ministers

35. *Welcomed* the progress in implementation of the commitments under the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by its Parties and their efforts on the execution of the national policies and programmes aiming at prevention of climate change and its negative impacts, limitation and reduction of greenhouse gases emissions from anthropogenic sources, protection and improving the quality of greenhouse gases absorbents. *Reaffirmed* the commitment expressed in the Declaration of the 6th Ministerial Conference "Environment for Europe" (Belgrade, October 2007) to actively and constructively participate in the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Indonesia in December 2007 with a view to achieving a comprehensive post-2012 agreement that should include all major emitters which should be complemented by the end of 2009.

36. *Recognized* the importance of further actions to intensify implementation of recommendations of Arctic Climate Impact Assessment (ACIA) as well as of the document: "Arctic climate change: Policy measures relevant for the Barents Region" and *stressed* the importance of actions by all relevant sectors of the Barents cooperation to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

37. *Noted* the potential to develop Joint Implementation (JI) projects and energy efficiency as well as renewable energy projects in the region, and *called for* further efforts to enhance the implementation of JI projects and regional cooperation on small-scale climate-friendly projects, noting the particular experience attained by the Testing Ground Facility (a multilateral carbon fund managed by NEFCO) to decrease greenhouse gas emissions in the Barents Region and to facilitate the elimination of environmental hot spots.

38. *Being aware* of the challenges of implementing ambitious Climate Change policies and managing natural resources in a sustainable manner, given e.g. the region's large assets of natural resources, thereby *recognised* the need for measures to safeguard that the use of these resources do not lead to an increased load on the global and regional climate, taking also into account the negative climate effects of natural methane leakage and the increasing speed of melting of the ice in the Arctic.

39. *Welcomed* the cooperation between the Nordic Council of Ministers and the WGE on studying impacts of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems goods and services in the Barents Region.

40. *Called for* the development of projects relevant to the Barents regions in the area of:

- consequences of climate change for the carbon cycle in the Barents environment including projects relating to the importance of land and natural resources use;
- increased knowledge on changed living conditions for the people in the region and their possibilities of adapting to climate change through a dialogue among experts, national, regional authorities and civil society with the aim to develop mitigating measures.

REGIONAL AND LOCAL ACTIONS

The BEAC Environment Ministers

41. *Welcomed* the work done by the Regional Working Group on the Environment (RWGE) including the preparation of the final report on the water resources and biodiversity under the "Barents-2010" project and of the list of joint ecological projects implemented in the period 1995-2007.

42. *Welcomed* as well the decision of the WGE to cooperate closely with the RWGE including holding joint meetings of the WGE and RWGE as such cooperation guaranties the national back-up for the work, helps to identify needs and generate smaller scale projects, which should be coordinated, promoted and screened at the national level, tackles obstacles to project implementation and provides access to the knowledge and expertise of the regional level experts on local problems and *stressed* the importance of participation by regional representatives at the meetings of the RWGE.

FORMAT OF WORK AND COOPERATION WITH OTHER STRUCTURES

The BEAC Environment Ministers

43. *Supported* the new organizational structure of the WGE aiming at increasing the efficiency of the WGE activity. This structure includes the establishment of three subgroups namely the Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption, Subgroup on Nature Protection and Subgroup on Water Issues. The WGE is the Ministers' instrument in promoting environmental cooperation in the Barents Region as well as coordinating of the Subgroups' activities. The Ministers *requested* the WGE to evaluate the functioning, structures and mandates of the Subgroups during the coming 2 years period and report to the next Ministerial Meeting.

44. *Encouraged* to strengthen cooperation in the field of environmental protection and sustainable development with the Arctic Council and its Working groups and Programmes, the Nordic Council of Ministers and its Working groups and Programmes, other Working Groups of the BEAC, in particular with the Energy Working Group, the Economic Working Group and the Forest Sector Task Force.

45. *Suggested* to take note of the experience of the Council of Baltic Sea States and the Helsinki Commission where the areas of activities are similar and encouraged co-operation wherever feasible and to exchange information on experience related to management of the marine environment of the Barents and Baltic Seas.

46. *Suggested* to cooperate closely within the framework of the Northern Dimension to which the BEAC is a participant. Welcomed the inclusion of NEFCO in the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership (NDEP) Steering Group (pending Assembly approval) and developing synergies between the NDEP and NEFCO on project activities in North-West region of the Russian Federation.

FUTURE WORK

The BEAC Environment Ministers

47. *Agreed* that in its future work the Working Group on the Environment should focus on the following issues:

- elimination of the Barents Environmental Hot Spots;
- introducing and disseminating the principles of cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption;
- nature protection and biodiversity conservation;
- projects in the field of mitigation and adaptation to climate change;
- water management and protection including quality of drinking water;
- projects on elimination of hazardous substances.

48. The Ministers also *requested* that the Working Group on the Environment reports on its work at the next Barents Environment Ministers Meeting.

49. *Were pleased* to accept the offer by Norway to assume the chairmanship of the Working Group on the Environment for 2007-2009. The chairmanship will thereafter rotate from Norway to Sweden.