Barents cooperation structure

Barents cooperation was launched on 11 January 1993 in Kirkenes, Norway, at a conference of foreign ministers who signed a declaration establishing the intergovernmental Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). At the same time the county governors, together with representatives of the indigenous peoples, signed a protocol that established the Barents Regional Council (BRC). The objective of Barents cooperation is to strengthen peace, stability and sustainable development by improving opportunities for cooperation across the region’s borders.

Members of the BEAC: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Russian Federation, Sweden and the European Commission.


Observer states: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Poland, the United Kingdom and the United States of America.

The International Barents Secretariat (IBS) in Kirkenes, Norway, established in 2008, serves both governmental and regional level.

The Working Group of Indigenous Peoples has an advisory role to both Councils and cooperates closely with them.

Between the biannual foreign ministers meetings, the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) organises and leads the work. Practical cooperation takes place in one of the 15 working groups, which are intergovernmental, regional and joint working groups.

The area of the Barents Euro-Arctic region is approximately 1 755 800 square kilometres. With a population of five million, it is the most densely populated area above the Arctic Circle. The region is characterised by its harsh climate and vast natural resources. It is one of the world’s most vulnerable regions in terms of environmental degradation and climate change impacts.

Barents region

Swedish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council 2017–2019
Regional sustainable development for the future

Contact information

Ministry for Foreign Affairs
Department for Eastern Europe and Central Asia
Email: ud-ec@gov.se
Internet: www.government.se

The International Barents Secretariat
Kirkenes, Norway
Email: ibs@barentscooperation.org
Internet: www.barentscooperation.org
Facebook: www.facebook.com/InternationalBarentsSecretariat
Twitter: www.twitter.com/barents_bear
“Keep all pathways open for potential encounters”

I believe that this Sami saying encapsulates the spirit of life in the Barents region: how positive interactions between humans and nature make life better.

These interactions in our Nordic region and between our countries have persisted for centuries. The current challenge of climate change is making such interactions and cooperation more necessary than ever.

During the Swedish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), we will pursue an agenda based on sustainable development, respect for human rights and gender equality. In each of these areas, the emphasis will lie on enhancing people-to-people contacts, especially for the younger generation.

The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreement will provide the basis for our work.

Barents cooperation is unique, with stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, including societies of indigenous peoples – the Sami, the Nenets and the Veps – in all Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) bodies. The representation of the indigenous peoples in all areas of BEAC activities is a unique feature of Barents cooperation.

Barents cooperation is unique, with stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, including societies of indigenous peoples – the Sami, the Nenets and the Veps – in all Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) bodies. The representation of the indigenous peoples in all areas of BEAC activities is a unique feature of Barents cooperation.

In 2018 Barents cooperation will work with stakeholders at all local levels, including societies of indigenous peoples – the Sami, the Nenets and the Veps – in all Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) bodies. The representation of the indigenous peoples in all areas of BEAC activities is a unique feature of Barents cooperation.

Barents cooperation is unique, with stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, including societies of indigenous peoples – the Sami, the Nenets and the Veps – in all Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) bodies. The representation of the indigenous peoples in all areas of BEAC activities is a unique feature of Barents cooperation.

In 2018 Barents cooperation will work with stakeholders at all local levels, including societies of indigenous peoples – the Sami, the Nenets and the Veps – in all Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) bodies. The representation of the indigenous peoples in all areas of BEAC activities is a unique feature of Barents cooperation.

Barents cooperation is unique, with stakeholders at national, regional and local levels, including societies of indigenous peoples – the Sami, the Nenets and the Veps – in all Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) bodies. The representation of the indigenous peoples in all areas of BEAC activities is a unique feature of Barents cooperation.