



**Barents Euro-Arctic Council
Tenth Meeting of the Ministers of the Environment
9 November 2011 Umeå**

Declaration

Environment Ministers and senior representatives of Finland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the European Commission met in Umeå, Sweden, on 9 November 2011 for the Tenth Meeting of the Ministers of the Environment of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). The meeting was also attended by representatives of observer states, the Barents Regional Council (BRC), the Regional Working Group on Environment, the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples, the Nordic Environment Finance Corporation and other invited guests.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council Environment Ministers

recalled the commitments stated in the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Environment Action Programme adopted in Bodø in 1994 and followed up by subsequent Environment Ministers meetings, the latest in Tromsø in 2010,

acknowledged the developments and vitality of the Barents environmental cooperation and the uniqueness of this important regional environmental cooperation aiming at meeting the global environmental challenges in the regional level such as loss of biodiversity, pollution and climate change,

noted that the Arctic nature is under pressure, *urged* wise use of land,

welcomed the Joint Communiqué of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of BEAC, adopted in Kiruna, Sweden, October 2011, and *noted with anticipation* the focus area of green growth and the work on climate change,

stressed the importance of active co-operation between the BEAC Working Group on Environment, the Barents Regional Council the Regional Working Group on Environment and underlined the importance of International Barents Secretariat to strengthening this cooperation,

highlighted the importance of active engagement of indigenous people and youth in addressing environmental challenges and opportunities in the Barents region,

welcomed the Declaration of the Arctic Council Ministers, adopted in Nuuk in May 2011, and *stressed* the importance of strengthening the co-operation between the working groups under BEAC and the Arctic Council in order to utilise synergies and avoid duplication of work,

welcomed the developments under the Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council on Environment and *called for* considering synergies between the activities of the Working Group on Environment and of the respective working subgroups of the EU-Russia Dialogue on Environment,

welcomed the progress of the Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership projects in the Barents Region,

encouraged parties to seek synergies making bilateral cooperation projects between the Nordic countries and the Russian Federation mutually supportive to the Barents Environmental cooperation,

welcomed with appreciation the financial support from the Nordic Council of Ministers to cooperation projects, and the support of financial institutions, such as NEFCO,

acknowledged the importance of the UNECE environmental conventions for improving living conditions and state of the environment of the Barents region and welcomed the recent ratification of the Stockholm convention on POPs by the Russian Federation,

expressed appreciation of the work carried out in the Subgroups on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption, Nature Protection, Hot Spot Exclusion and Water Issues under the BEAC Working Group on environment and *endorsed* the Report of the BEAC Working Group on Environment on the activity in 2010-2011.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The Environment Ministers

1. *alarmed* by the new scientific findings on the speed of climate change in the Arctic, the Ministers *noted with concern* the impact of the climatic processes in the Arctic on the global climate system, increased economic losses and threats to nature and people in the Barents Region, in particular to indigenous peoples,
2. *welcomed* the important decision by BEAC to develop an action plan on climate change in the Barents region under the leadership of the Committee of Senior Officials,
3. *emphasised* that climate change issues must permeate the Barents cooperation both at the national and regional levels and *called for* co-ordinated action, involving indigenous peoples, to ensure that climate change is taken into consideration in all relevant working groups of the cooperation,
4. *encouraged* further work of Working Group on Environment and its subgroups, contributing to adaptation and mitigation and strengthening the resilience of the ecosystems to climate change,
5. *supported* the Arctic Council's increased attention to short lived climate forcers, including black carbon, and *encouraged* the exploration of synergies between BEAC, the Arctic Council and other organisations on this issue,
6. *acknowledged* the interlinked challenges between climate change and loss of biodiversity, and welcomed the initiatives to address these issues, such as the establishment of protected areas to preserve the large pristine forests, wetlands and peat lands in the Barents region,

7. *noted* the UN REDD programme (Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation) and *welcomed* an evaluation of the REDD+ project in the Komi region.

THE BARENTS ENVIRONMENTAL “HOT SPOTS”

The Environment Ministers

8. reaffirmed that the Barents environmental “hot spots” listed in 2003 are regarded as the most urgent areas of concern related to pollution in the Barents region and noted with appreciation the co-operative efforts to reach the target agreed to launch environmental measures in all of the “hot spots” by 2013,

9. *assented* to the exclusion of the following Barents environmental “hot spots” from the list: Mercury containing waste (Murmansk M-8), Stocks of obsolete pesticides (Karelia K-10), Stocks of obsolete pesticides (Arkhangelsk A-10); and *anticipated* further exclusions by the next ministerial meeting,

10. *noted with appreciation* the co-operative efforts and achievements made for implementation of the Hotspots Exclusion Procedure approved at the ministerial meeting in Tromsø 2010, in particular that regional hot spot exclusion groups have now been established in the Russian part of the Barents Region: The Republic of Komi, The Republic of Karelia, Murmansk Oblast, Nenets Autonomous District, Arkhangelsk Oblast, and *underlined* the importance of continued efforts of Russian authorities on both federal and regional level in the process of excluding the “hot spots” from the Barents Hot Spot list,

11. *noted with appreciation* the progress made under the criteria and procedures of the hot spot exclusion and *pointed out* the particularly important role of cleaner production in the process of exclusion of “hot spots”,

12. *encouraged* the continued work of the subgroup on Hotspots Exclusion to facilitate the process of “hot spots” exclusion based on the approved criteria and procedure. The group will be co-chaired by the Russian Federation and the Chairmanship of the BEAC Working Group on Environment in close cooperation with the Regional Hot Spot Exclusion Groups,

13. *invited* the WGE to consider revising and up-dating the AMAP/NEFCO Hot Spot Report to be presented at the next Ministerial Meeting, describing the state of all 42 original environmental hotspots,

14. *welcomed* the contribution of the NEFCO Barents Hot Spot Facility in the work on “hot spot” exclusion, and *encouraged* further exploration of possibilities for synergies within the framework of BEAC WGE and the Arctic Council, including its Project Support Instrument, and other sources of financing,

15. *acknowledged* the need for raising the awareness about the Barents environmental work on “hot spots” and welcomed the progress made in the development of the Barents Environmental Hot Spots Information System as part of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council’s web site by the end of 2011.

CLEANER PRODUCTION AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND CONSUMPTION

The Environment Ministers

16. *emphasised* the importance of applying methods on cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption to promote pollution and waste prevention, green economy, resource efficiency and mitigation of climate change, and *welcomed* activities carried out by the subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption (CPESC) in accordance with the group work program,

17. *encouraged* the efforts to strengthen the link of Barents region to the global work on Sustainable Consumption and Production, building on the Marrakesh Process,

18. *invited* the enterprises acting in the Barents region to improve their environmental, social and economic performance,

19. *Underlined* the need for further work on information and education in order to disseminate knowledge on sustainable consumption and production (SCP) tools, best available technologies (BAT), best environmental practices, authorities and civil society in order to promote a shift to sustainable consumption and production, including behavioural changes.

20. *called for* coordinated efforts between the BEAC Working Group on Environment, the Regional Working Group on Environment, and the Joint Energy Working Group on identifying and implementing projects on energy efficiency, renewable energy, and cleaner production and consumption.

NATURE PROTECTION

The Environment Ministers

21. *reaffirmed* the commitments made under the meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Nagoya 2010 and acknowledged the importance of activities under the Barents environmental cooperation in meeting relevant targets under the Convention,

22. *underlined* the importance of identifying and establishing a representative and appropriately managed network of protected areas in the Barents Region (BPAN), *welcomed* the preliminary results from and continuation of the BPAN project and noted the need for more effective ways and means for promoting preservation of natural habitats in the Barents region,

23. *noted* that climate change is a stressor to regional biodiversity and therefore acknowledged the preliminary results and *welcomed the* continuation of the joint project of the Nordic Council of Ministers and BEAC on the effects of climate change on biodiversity and ecosystems goods and services in the Barents region,

24. *underlined* the need to both protect and secure the last remaining pristine forests in the Barents Region,

25. *noted with recognition* the outcome of the Sixth Habitat Contact Forum held in Archangelsk June, 2010, *looked forward to* the next meeting of the forum, to be held in Norway in 2012, which will focus on protection and management of marine and coastal habitats, boreal forests and wetlands,

26. *stressed* the importance of further development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia-network of existing and planned protected areas from the Gulf of Finland to the Barents Sea, supporting ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable transboundary co-operation between Russia, Norway and Finland,

27. *acknowledged* the long lasting and successful trilateral cooperation in Pasvik-Inari area and further *support* the implementation of the action plan for Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park,

28. *acknowledged* the results of the project Integrated Ecosystem Management Approach to Conserve Biodiversity and Minimise Habitat Fragmentation (ECORA) and called for the dissemination of results in the Barents region,

29. *welcomed* the exploration of the trilateral co-operation on nature protection and ecotourism in the Treiksröset area,

30. *welcomed* the recommendations from the Conference on wetlands and flyways in the Barents region and the Green Belt of Fennoscandia, held in Murmansk in September 2011, and *looked forward to* the follow up on the results from the conference.

WATER COOPERATION

The Environment ministers

31. *stressed* the importance of continued co-operation on transboundary waters and river basin systems for harmonising monitoring methods and preventing pollution according to international standards, like EU's Water Framework Directive,

32. *noted* activities carried out by the working group in the field of Water Issues and *emphasised* the need for improving the quality of drinking water in the Barents Region, and also recognised the relation between clean water, health and socio-economic factors and highlighted small scale drinking water projects based on shared information and knowledge,

33. *underlined* the need for further studies on the correlation between climate change and the condition of water bodies with respect to mitigation and adaption to climate change, including issues such as flood prevention, water regulation, drinking water and sewage treatment facilities and infrastructure,

34. *noted* the importance of the follow up work and project implementation with the joint trilateral monitoring and management of the Pasvik(Paz) river basin area linked to the climate change adaptation and water regulation,

35. *encouraged* the subgroup on water issues to further stimulate the exchange of experiences between regions in the Barents region, also between regions in the Russian Federation, especially as to facilitate investments and capacity building contributing to the hot spot exclusion,

36. *welcomed* the Conference on Water Management Resources held in Arkhangelsk 2010 and the Conference on climate change and water management – meeting the challenges in the Barents region in 2011 in Arkhangelsk. *Encouraged* continuation of the plans on a comprehensive water project in Archangelsk as well as further co-operation and development of projects to improve the water quality in the Barents Region,

37. *welcomed* the ongoing work to implement the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/World Health Organisation (UNECE/WHO) Protocol on Water and Health in the Barents region of the Russian Federation.

COOPERATION WITH THE REGIONAL LEVEL AND FUTURE WORK

The Environment Ministers

38. *supported* close cooperation between the Regional Working Group on Environment and the Working Group on Environment, and *encouraged* further measures to promote participation of regional representatives in WGE activities, *recognising* that participation of the regional level is a unique quality of the Barents cooperation and a precondition for success in the Barents co-operation,

39. *gave recognition* to the work of the Regional Working Group on Environment including the preparation of an Action Programme and *welcomed* regional activity in such fields as surface and drinking water protection and improvement, biodiversity conservation, sustainable management of natural resources, increasing environmental knowledge and consciousness, as well as regional efforts with regard to the Barents environmental “hot spots”,

40. *welcomed* the regional projects on migration of Atlantic Salmon in the Barents region, aiming at merging modern science with traditional knowledge in order to improve the future management of Atlantic salmon in the Barents region,

41. *welcomed* the regional projects on environmentally sustainable small enterprises in the Barents Region,

42. *expressed* commitment to contribute to the Rio+20 conference and encouraged the Working Group on Environment to follow up its results in the Barents Region,

43. *requested* the Working Group on Environment to report on its activity to the next meeting of the Barents Environment Ministers,

44. *were pleased* to accept the offer by Finland to assume the chairmanship of the Working Group on the Environment for 2011-2013, whereupon the chairmanship will pass from Finland to Russia.