



BARENTS REGIONAL YOUTH COUNCIL

# The Barents Regional Youth council

## BRYC

## Report 2006



## **The Barents Regional Youth Council**

### **Our mission**

We will strengthen the youth cooperation in the Barents region and empower young people to actively participate in the shaping of the Barents region and the society in which we live.

*-BRYC 2004*

## Preface

2006 has been a challenging year for the council. BRYC has used its time well, and gone through training-courses, helped form the youth program for 2007-2010, and taken part in the organizing of the Barents Regional Youth Conference in Tromsø.

As with most councils old members have moved on, and new blood has entered. It is always sad when members and friends make this decision, but at the same time it is good to meet new people who share an interest for the youth of the Barents. Recruiting new members also gives us a sense of security when all of them are just as dedicated as the ones leaving.

In 2006 also our Chairman, Petter Mahrs, left the council, and we will miss him greatly. He has done a fantastic job in BRYC, and has been doing so since the very beginning.

Throughout the year 2006 BRYC has been educating its members through different training-courses. Themes have been project management, funding and networking. Learning how the European Unions youth program works and what the Council of Europe has to offer in the means of funding are examples of concrete seminars.

As the Barents Youth Program for 2003-2006 came to its end, BRYC took the chance to propose a follow-up program for 2007-2010. When the Barents Regional Committee met in Petrozavodsk this spring BRYC asked for a continuance of its work, and emphasised the importance of a youth profile for the Barents Cooperation. The end-result was that BRYC would help in the forming of a proposal for new youth program for the aforementioned period. It was presented for the committee at the end of 2006, and was there adopted. This goes to show that the council's work has been noticed, and that alone gives us the incentive needed to continue.

In November the Barents Regional Youth Council was held in the city of Tromsø, Norway. During this weekend 100 youth from all the 13 counties were joined together to share thoughts and ideas for the future Barents Region. Over three days of hard work the participants produced 60 project proposals and over 70 political statements.

The BRYCs role in all of this was to find participants from the different counties, and again the BRYC was able to give an event a true multilateral dimension.

At the end of the year the board of BRYC was invited to meet, together with the Regional Working Group on Youth Issues, the Working Group on Youth Policy in Helsinki. Here BRYC suddenly got two representatives in a preparatory group working on a new youth conference. This conference is to be held in Rovaniemi in October/November of 2007. This is a great opportunity to further show the great competence that the council is, and will be in the future!

Thanks to all that have worked together with BRYC in 2006, and welcome to a new year of even better cooperation than ever before!

*Sindre Wolf*

Chairman of the Barents Regional Youth Council

## Introduction

At its meeting on 5 September 2001, the Barents Regional Council decided to draw up a youth programme for the Barents Region. This was done at the direct request of the Barents Regional Youth Forum, BRYF, which was represented at the meeting and called for concrete action. The present programme is based on the conclusions from the Conference "Face the Future", which was held on 12-16 May 2001 in Tromsø, Norway. BRYF ended its work in 2003.

In 2003 The Norwegian ministry for children and family affairs allocated 1 mill NOK per year for two years to support multilateral youth projects in the region. The Norwegian Barents secretariat got the responsibility of managing the fund. A youth coordinator was employed and the extra resources made a broader implementation of the program possible. The funding has continued until today and a new programme is developed.

## Background

The countries in the Barents region have many common challenges when it comes to youth issues and this invites to increased cooperation about these matters.

During an international youth seminar in Murmansk October 2003, the participants strongly signalled that young people want to participate more actively in the Barents cooperation. They concluded that the best way to ensure this would be to establish a new youth structure in the Barents cooperation, a council consisting of young people from the whole region.

## Establishment

The establishment meeting for the Barents regional Youth Council (BRYC) was held in Kirkenes during the festival Barents Spektakel 2004.

The council consists of one youth representative from each county, oblast, republic and okrug in the region and one representative for indigenous youths. The 14 members of the council will work towards a strengthening of the youth cooperation in the Barents region.

The members are chosen by their county administration based on the following criteria: - He or she must have an age fitting the category "Youth" (over 18 and under 30 years) and speak English, have knowledge about youth issues in their region and be interested in international cooperation

## Organisation

BRYCs secretariat is in the hands of the person responsible for the youth program at the Barents secretariat in Kirkenes. The Secretariat invites the members to the meetings, find suitable meeting dates and arrange travel and accommodation for the participants. The Barents Youth Cooperation Office (BYCO) in Murmansk have the responsibility to coordinate the participation of the representatives on the Russian side and make plans for travels, arrange visas and spread information BRYCs closest collaborator in the Barents cooperation is the Regional Working group on Youth Issues.

# ACTIVITIES

## *Council meetings*

The Barents Regional Youth Council with all representatives meets normally twice a year, but in 2006 there have been three meetings due to one meeting was held during the seminar Young In Europe in Kirkenes in addition to the planned meetings. Unfortunately all meetings were held in Norway, but next year we will meet in other countries.

### **Meetings in the council in 2006:**

*Alta 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2006 (enclosure 1) Annual meeting*

*Kirkenes 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2006 (enclosure 2)*

*Tromsø 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2006 (enclosure 3)*

## *Training courses*

In connection with the meetings in Alta in March and in Kirkenes in September there were arranged special training courses for the members of BRYC and other youth of the region. Many BRYC members also took part in the course Joint training course for cooperation and partnership that were arranged in Murmansk as a part of the "All different All equal" campaign.

### **TRAINING COURSE FOR BRYCers IN ALTA**

The first days of March 2006 the members of The Barents regional Youth Council participated in part three of the training course "Project management and International Youth cooperation" that was arranged in Alta in Norway

The main focus for this course was international youth cooperation with focus on Baltic Sea cooperation and the Barents cooperation, The EU and opportunities for funding and youth exchange. Furthermore The Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC) is participating in the implementation of the international Entrepreneurship project called YE! And therefore a special attention was given to innovation and entrepreneurship among youth. The group got one night in a mountain lodge, and even though it was very cold the participants had a great time with good food, skiing, scooter driving and sauna.

The last day was spent on group work where the participants focused on the content and the aims for a new Barents regional Youth Program 2007-2010. The main results from this work was that the program must give more attention to education opportunities in the neighbouring countries in the Barents region and increase the funding and possibilities for exchange programs. Furthermore, the youth cooperation in the Barents region must give more attention to youth participation and decision making, local governance reforms that involves youths and human rights.

The Council also arranged their annual meeting in the City hall and carried out their first ordinary BRYC meeting for 2006. During the annual meeting the regulations for BRYC were adopted together with a new action plan for 2006.

#### **JOINT TRAINING COURSE FOR COOPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP**

The Council of Europe and The Barents Secretariat together with many other partners arranged a training course to strengthen cooperation and partnership in the youth field in the Barents region. The Course was arranged the 13 – 17 October 2006 in Murmansk.

This joint training course was supported by Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe; Russian Ministry of Education and Science; The Norwegian Barents Secretariat; Barents Regional Working Group on Youth Issues; Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Working Group on Youth Policy; including Barents Youth Cooperation Office.

The aims and objectives of this joint training course was to strengthen the co-operation and partnership between non-governmental and governmental key actors in the development of youth policy in the Barents region and to contribute to the development of youth policy and youth work in the Barents region according to the principles of pluralist democracy and human rights.

Thirty participants from both governmental and non-governmental sectors (ie 15 from each sector) was invited. Participants from the non-governmental sector were young people actively involved in youth work within a youth NGO. Participants from the governmental sector were civil servants working in governmental structures.

The training course were run by an international team of experienced trainers and they used use a non-formal educational approach with theoretical inputs. Active participation, group and team work, discussions, good practices and learning-by-doing were the methodological foundations of this training course.

#### **SEMINAR ABOUT THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S YOUTH PROGRAMME**

The Norwegian National Agency of the YOUTH programme and the Norwegian Barents secretariat arranged a seminar to highlight the possibilities for youth exchanges, voluntary service and funding of local youth initiatives within the European commission's YOUTH programme in Kirkenes in September.

The seminar has gathered 30 Youth workers and voluntaries engaged in youth work from all the Barents countries.

The participants learn that the YOUTH programme offers various opportunities for cooperation with Partner Countries (a number of defined countries outside of the EU/EFTA/pre-accession countries). In supporting youth activities with these countries, the European Commission's main aims are to build long-lasting and solid partnerships, as well as promoting the exchange of youth work expertise and know-how between non-governmental and governmental structures in the European Union and Partner Countries.



The main aim for the seminar is to stimulate to and enable participants to implement future YOUTH exchanges within the Barents region. As our closest neighbours outside of the EU, the Russian regions of the Barents area are prioritised within the Partner Countries Cooperation of the YOUTH programme. To increase the activity and the quality of projects within the area, the Norwegian National Agency of the YOUTH programme organises this seminar for potential beneficiaries in the region.

This is good news for a region with a lot of interest for exchange and cross border activities. The participants will see new opportunities and get a lot of ideas and even partners for future projects.

### **Board for BRYC**

One contact person from each country, plus the indigenous representative are represented in a board for BRYC. The personal compositions board have differed in terms of the tasks, to ensure that the team always had interest in the particular task they are working on at the time. The board is elected every year during the annual meeting.

#### **Meetings in the Board for BRYC 2006:**

*16. - 19. Juni 2006 Board meeting in Luleå, Sweden (enclosure 4)*

*11.-12. December 2006 Board meeting in Helsinki (enclosure 5)*

### **Youth Initiatives 2006**

BRYC is once a year responsible for one large youth arrangement. In 2006 the Youth Council focused on youth participation and took part in the preparatory work and the implementation of The Barents youth Conference in Tromsø.

#### **BARENTS YOUTH CONFERENCE 2006**

The Barents Youth conference 2006 was arranged in Tromsø 8th-12th of November and resulted in 56 suggestions for international youth projects, 60 political statements and many new friendships across geographical and cultural borders.

Young people from all 13 administrative units in the Barents region were gathered in three days to discuss and find common areas for cooperation in the high north. Participants from NGOs like The Red Cross, Nature and Youth, Amnesty International, Students alliance, different political parties, Sáminuorra and other young enthusiasts contributed and made the conference one of the most fruitful Barents youth events ever.

There were more than 50 project proposals within areas ranging from Barents TV, environmental activist camps, human rights education and youth exchange to new business proposals within tourism, design and fashion. It is important to facilitate the realisation of selected projects to make sure that there is visible results from the conference and that the young enthusiasts are given the possibility to realise some of their ideas.

The Barents Secretariat and TVIBIT is, together with the process leader of the conference Thorsten Gejl, looking into the possibilities for inviting the most eager participants in the conference to a Barents Builders education starting in February

2007. The school will give the participants the tools they need to develop their project idea, sell it to the bureaucrats to ensure the necessary funding, implement the project and in the end evaluate and report.

The conference was an important event during the Barents days of Tromsø Municipality. The conference was arranged by Troms County Administration, The Barents secretariat, BYCO, The Barents Regional Youth Council, Tromsø Municipality and TVIBIT. The Event was financed by The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tromsø Municipality and The Norwegian Barents Secretariat. In addition The Troms County Council contributed with valuable administrative recourses.

#### **BRYC S WELFARE INITIATIVE**

The Finnmark County Administration allocated 30 000 Norwegian Kroner to The Barents Regional Youth Councils social project in 2006. The aim was to give a helping hand to disadvantaged children and youths in Murmansk. Tommy Berg and Petter Mahrs from Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC) visited Murmansk the 1<sup>st</sup> of September to do something good for socially disadvantaged children and youths of Murmansk.

As an anti HIV initiative, they bought condoms which were distributed by the Board for youth affairs of Murmansk region to youth health centers. The children of the orphanage in Kildinstroy got special toys to stimulate to more physical activities and creativity. They also got equipment for school.

The Barents Regional Youth council also gave a huge contribution to children who start school this year. About 400 children going to school for the first time got very nice "school start kits" with colors, pens, pencils and albums.

The event was supported by Barents Youth Cooperation Office in Murmansk, and Murmansk Regional Board for Youth Affairs.

#### ***Information and other activities***

The representatives of BRYC have informed local and regional NGOs in their Counties about larger Barents Youth events. The information flow has a great potential for improvement and all members are now building up their own list of addresses in their mailbox to be able to forward messages and links. In 2006 three Barents Youth Newsletter was made and are enclosed.

#### **OTHER REPRESENTATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS**

Sindre Wolf presented BRYC and the importance of developing a new youth programme for the **Barents regional committee in Petrozavodsk** 7<sup>th</sup> of June.

Petter Mahrs presented the draft of a new youth programme 2007-2010 for the **Barents regional committee in Oulo** 23<sup>rd</sup> of November

Barents Regional Youth Council was represented at a four-day **conference in Turi** with the theme young entrepreneurship in April 2006. Tommy Berg and Petter Mahrs, both members of the councils Board, gave a brief summary of the project Young



Entrepreneurs in Barents, which has loads of ideas, possibilities and problems in common with the Innovation Circle project that arranged the event.

Petter Mahrs took part in a **conference for youth from rural areas**- "Ung i utkant" in January. This was a Nordic conference for youth living in rural areas of northern Europe and it was held in Inderøy, Norway.

BRYC have supported the project **Young entrepreneurs** in the Barents region and Petter Mahrs have informed about it to the regional council and the regional committee.

Petter Mahrs took part in the seminar "**Young in the Barents region- A lottery win or bad luck?**" arranged in Rovaniemi in august.

## MAJOR CHALLENGES AND FUTURE PLANS

### *Turnover*

The turnover among the members in BRYC is high due to the migration of youths out of the region. This creates a situation that makes it necessary for the counties to look for potential future members constantly. The different youth structures in the counties also make difficulties for recruitment of members. Some members are appointed while others are elected.

### *Information*

More effort must be done to ensure the information flow to regional NGOs, politicians and media to show the activities within the youths sphere in Barents. The website [www.barentsyouth.org](http://www.barentsyouth.org) has been developed in 2006 and will also be translated into Russian language during 2007.

### *Training*

To increase the member's skills for international cooperation and coordination of activities, BRYC is arranging project management and leader training seminars. They also take part in courses arranged by others.

### *Special focus in 2007*

BRYC will in 2007 focus on active citizenship and concentrate on getting closer cooperation with the other youth structures in the Barents region. In October the council will together with WGYF arrange a seminar in Rovaniemi called "Young in the Barents region; A lottery win or bad luck" witch is a follow up of the fist part held in Rovaniemi in august 2006

### *Youth participation*

The UNs Convention on the Rights of the Child states that children and youths have the right to be heard in all matters that concerns them. This demands that the adults take the responsibility to crate the structures and arenas where this takes place.

The Convention acknowledges that children and youth have the right to express their opinions and to have those opinions heard and acted upon and that they have the right to take part in decisions. It is of major importance that we show that we take this seriously and that we show and act according to our attitudes whether it comes to rights of the child, human rights or equality of genders in the Barents cooperation.

Youth are a priority group in the Barents cooperation and it is about time that BRYC is invited to all the arenas where decisions are made- The Regional committee and the Barents regional council. Furthermore it is important that the youths have a vote there to make sure they have real influence and don't participate only as observers.

#### Enclosures:

1. Alta 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> of March 2006
2. Annual meeting 2006
2. Kirkenes 10<sup>th</sup> of September 2006
3. Tromsø 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2006
4. Luleå 16. - 19. Juni 2006
5. Helsinki 11.-12. December 2006
6. Plan of action 2006
7. Regulations for BRYC
8. The Barents Youth Newsletter February 2006
9. The Barents Youth Newsletter May 2006
10. The Barents Youth Newsletter September 2006
11. [www.barentsyouth.org](http://www.barentsyouth.org)

## BRYC Members in 2006

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