Regionalisation in North-Western Europe

Spatial Planning or Building a Frame for Development Co-operation

The Case of the Barents Region

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Modelling and Visualizing a Nuclear Accident's Short Term Impact on Transportation Flows
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- an Acknowledgement

Since the late eighties, CERUM has developed research with a focus on the shaping of and development within the Barents Region. Two specific features have characterised this research. First of all our ambition has been to develop research projects in close collaboration with international and especially Russian researchers. This has materialised as an exchange of researchers at conferences both in Sweden and in Russia. Secondly, our view has been that the Barents region must be analysed by researchers that represent a broad set of competences. Especially our ambition is to develop a deeper and more integrated collaboration between researchers from social sciences and arts on one hand and natural sciences on the other.

With the Swedish Board for Civil Emergency Preparedness (ÖCB) as the main financier, CERUM has for a couple of years developed research within the project “Nuclear Problems, Risks Perceptions of, and Social Responses to, Nuclear Waste in the Barents Region”.

This report is produced within the afore-mentioned project. The project deals with vulnerability as a response to the latent security questions associated with the existence of nuclear power and nuclear waste in the Barents region. Clearly there is within the project a large scope for an analysis with its roots in natural sciences of the size and dispersion of various types of waste from the region. The project also has produced a set of such papers. Those papers raise questions that immediately lead to other papers and a discussion with its roots in social sciences, of civil emergency preparedness in a broad and spatially delimited sense as well as a discussion of the need for an enlarged concept of safety. The pattern of spatial risk dispersion, which in this case not halts at the national borders, and the associated construction of governance in the Barents region also imply that trans-border negotiation, conflict, and cooperation become key words in the discourse.

Gösta Weisglas Lars Westin
Project leader Director of CERUM
The following paper stresses the development and the planning of the physical and infra-structural make-up in Northern Sweden, related to the fact that Sweden’s two northernmost counties do belong to the Barents region. Is a new regional entity being shaped and developed, an entity that really deserves to be denominated as a Region in its traditional geographic sense?

Or does the term Barents region instead apply to be a frame of reference that can be used in various contexts in the different member countries, i.e., when negotiating with EU-offices?

Can the formalised belonging to Barents region – and the complex environmental problems that an increased cross-border interaction will accentuate – be traced in the municipal and regional planning documents, or in attached policy statements? Or does the belonging to Barents region have its importance in a more abstract sphere, above the municipal every-day activities?

We want to express our gratitude to all those officials in regional and municipal offices in all the Barents countries that has helped us with statistics, publications and other sources of knowledge.

Fred Hedkvist, Gösta Weissglas
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This study has been conducted within the Barents research group at the Centre for Regional Science (CERUM) during spring 2000. Responsible for the study are Gösta Weissglas and Fred Hedkvist, Department of Social & Economic Geography and CERUM, Umeå University.

A number of people have played an important role when we have made our research either by letting us interviewing them or by guiding us to important document and reports which more or less deals with the building and forming of the Barents region. The people interviewed are so plentiful that it is impossible to thank all of them. However, there are some people that we should like to give a special thanks to. We have tried to group them to region or country in the following acknowledgement. First we would like to express our gratitude to Britta Ahlqvist, Member of Parliament and the Swedish Ambassador Helena Ödmark working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for their help in Stockholm.

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The people we met from Russia have meant a lot for us and they have helped us to get an idea of Russian thoughts and meaning on the Barents issue. We should like to give the following a special thanks: Dr.
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Umeå, September 2001
Fred Hedkvist, Gösta Weissglas
Introduction

To do an investigation of how the emergence of a new regional cooperation taking place in North Western Europe, with the objective to study how the present and planned land and resource use within the Barents Region (e.g., The Barents Euro-Artic Region – BEAR) might affect present as well as future risks and threats might at first look as a straightforward research issue.

That first look gives that the study area has well defined borders and the administrative units comprising the region are well known and accepted. The seven northernmost counties, in Norway (3), Sweden (2) and Finland (2) plus the NW area of Russia; the Karelian Republic, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblast and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug, are today the formal demarcation of the Barents Region.

The Barents Region thus covers an enormous area – 1.2 million square kilometres – which means it is as large as Spain, Portugal and France put together. Notwithstanding the large area, only some five million people are living here today. However, from a north Swedish standpoint this is quite a large population considering the small and decreasing number of people that are living in northern Sweden today.

Characteristic for all four states is that the northern periphery is witnessing a reduction in its population and that the inland is becoming more sparsely populated, with the exception for a few centres, usually along the coastal zones.

It is very obvious that the Barents Region is an area where many regions meet. The Barents region is either enclosed or engrossed by other regional concepts as well as by sharp political, economical and social defined “borders”. Thus, it comprises in itself a mosaic of smaller interest
areas. For the moment this kaleidoscopic area is called the Barents Region without showing up so much of the criteria commonly used when defining a region. So, if the Barents region might look as a cut and dry case if attention only is drawn to its extension, confusion might easily spread while looking more closely on the number of disparate and/or conflicting interests, both external and internal, that in other ways are influencing the area.

Located far up on the northern hemisphere between the 63 and 71 latitude on the Eurasian continent in such a way that its western parts has a pronounced maritime climate influenced by the Gulf Stream, while its eastern parts is characterized by the harsh Russian continental climate, the social conditions for community building are quite different for each sub-region.

The study of BEAR, its administrative and political development, interaction patterns, economic activities and resulting infrastructural development, has resulted in a picture showing a rather kaleidoscopic pattern.

One might use the metaphor of the Russian Babushka doll; layers of regions, draped over the present borders, and enclosing all or just parts of the Barents region are emerging. The Babushka doll can be pulled apart into a series of successively smaller dolls, entities in themselves, together seen as forming the bits and pieces of the mosaic that forms the substance of the Barents region of today.

How do these various spatial and/or organizational entities – or interest spheres – influence the development of BEAR? What impact on the future development do they have, impact which in its turn obviously more or less will affect the risk and threat scene in the Swedish realms of the Barents region. It is of vital importance to have a grip on these issues, not least because they form a frame for the development, aim and direction for civil emergency preparedness planning, not only for Northern Sweden but also for the whole country.

Hence, a vital question to be raised here is: Is there a Barents Region in reality, noticeable in the immediate action sphere of the average citizen or market actor – or is BEAR conceived only as just a creation on paper, only noticeable for politicians and public administrators? Is BEAR a framework for sector and bilateral interaction that can be used as a gateway to other interaction schemes?
Purpose of study

The questions above need to be raised, and consequently the aim of this report is to analyse some of the status- and functioning patterns of the BEAR by the turning of the millennium, seven years after its start in 1993. A strong focus is applied towards BEAR as a regional entity. How do various actors on the economical and societal arena perceive this cross-border area? Which spatial dimensions are the reference frames covering when decisions on travel enterprises, new infrastructure, and new economical and cultural interaction are being made? Is the belonging to BEAR a crucial factor in these cases? Located in the vicinity of the largest concentration of nuclear reactors, other nuclear devices as well as enormous amounts of nuclear waste one can ask: To what extent is this a factor which can be noticed to influence local or regional physical, social and/or spatial planning in the countries involved?

Thus, the main purpose of the study is to analyse a) to what degree BEAR can be considered as a spatial entity that deserves to be regarded as an independent regional unit/region and b) to analyse the structure-shaping and structure-inhibiting forces that operate in the area. Does for instance ecological and environmental issues affect the over-all planning in participating counties and municipalities? Is BEAR to be considered as a frame for a large number of realms on different levels, serving different and disparate interest groups? Is there an ambition to form an organization with over-all responsibility for the constructing of something entirely new? The main hypothesis is that todays BEAR mainly can be considered as a series of sector dominated micro-realms with the BEAR arena as a frame.

The presentation will also try to identify some of the areas that show either community of interests or conflicting interests. Many of the area objectives are directed towards a common goal; however, allocation of common development funds can of course be more or less favourable to the development in the Barents region.
A large part of the following research is based on secondary sources; inventories of research papers and studies, official documents as well as a literature inventory covering the theme Barents region. In addition studies covering the use of the regional concept in the area are discussed. The inventory on Barents literature are mainly restricted to those covering the subject during later years and with a strong connections to the Barents region development cooperation.

The county administrations in Sweden has of course been a natural starting point for the inventory as they for years have had people engaged in and informed of what is taking place in the BEAR area. A prime source in this respect has been the county administration in Norrbotten, which for a very long period have been engaged in related questions through the North Calotte programme. They have over the years collected and disseminated an enormous amount of data into manageable form and through their engagement in the Interreg II programme and other commitments have show to be a valuable source of information on the historical development of the Barents region development.

The engagement in the Barents cooperation for the county administration in Västerbotten comes in at a much later stage than for Norrbotten. However, they have also been a valuable source of information on the new development of the Barents region and its membership has given a new dimension to the importance of Västerbotten in this development work.

Interviews and discussions have also been conducted with a number of administrators and researchers on the Norwegian side and together with the Norwegian Barents secretariat in Kirkenes and the administration in Finnmark fylke-commune and the Sami administration in Karasjokk, many of the questions raised on the Barents cooperation could be answered.

On the subject of risk awareness mirrored in planning and the way in which Barents issues are met in the continuance municipal and regional planning documents, the analyses also are mainly based on secondary sources. However, in addition primary sources as telephone interviews have been conducted with responsible authorities on the Finnish side. The scrutinizing of the plan-preparedness in Finland and its actual planning status eventually linked to BEAR comprises Kainuun Liitto (Kainuu alliance of municipalities), Lapin Liitto (Lapland alli-

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1. Rune Rautio at the Barents secretariat in Kirkenes.
3. Roger Kalstad, Sametinget.
Methods

An electronic questionnaire has been sent out to the coordinators in charge of the projects falling under the Northern Periphery umbrella. The main objective with this questionnaire has been to identify possible Swedish partners.

The identification of the twin town exchange that is taking place, either as initiated by Swedish municipalities in Norrbotten and Västerbotten counties or as a response to foreign contacts, has been conducted partly through sending out a question through e-mail, through telephone contact with some of the municipalities and county administration and through an inventory of the database set up by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities on town-twinning in Sweden. The monitoring of the twin towns has been successful, as all concerned municipalities have responded to the inventory.

During the study a clear picture has emerged that there exists a number of intermingled interest spheres that either directly enclose whole of the Barents region, while other only include parts of the region. An extensive inventory has been made on the Internet by searching for documents and organisations that in one way or the other refers to the Barents region. Those of interest for the study have been identified and documented. Structures embracing the BEAR areas have been classified as Macro realms, while interest realms that are included in BEAR are classified as Micro realms.

As can be seen in the following presentation, much of the discussion relies on secondary sources, so that the presentation has passed through several lenses before reaching the present pages, with all the potential for distortion that this implies. The main justification for this approach is that secondary sources themselves isolate the main elements, whereas the enormous amount of primary sources is in general too detailed.

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4. Regional Council consists of an alliance of municipalities, roughly corresponding to a county. For Kainuu: Planeringschef Heino Hiltunen and planarkitekt/planchef Paula Qvick. For North Ostrobothnia Landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Martti Hannula. For Lapplands Landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Ossi Repo and experten Tiemo Molander.
To begin with, a short background to the BEAR cooperation, its members, place in the European Union and main objectives are presented. The background information discusses its formation and the extension that has taken place since its emergence as well as issues that were seen as of great importance in the beginning of its operation.

The background chapter is followed by a discussion of how one should look on the usage of ‘region’ – as a concept – in the BEAR. The standpoint here is that the ‘region’ in this case more or less should be seen from a normative standpoint as almost all the ingredient for a functional as well as homogenous region are more or less missing.

The discussion of the regional concept leads us over to the identification of the many larger or smaller ‘interest spheres’ which here have been named ‘Macro or Micro realms’. Initially the discussion is based on the various Macro realms that we can identify. In this section the presentation of ‘interest realms’ that either are engulfing the BEAR or just touching the BEAR are discussed.

Following that presentation comes the presentation of the Micro realms. Examples of Micro realms within the BEAR are the Barents Road, the Botnia Arc, the Murmansk corridor, the fishing areas outside the coast of Norway and Russia, the Blue Highway, plus a number of infrastructure project – roads as well as railways – and a few projects concerned with the indigenous peoples cultural issues. The identification of the various ‘interest spheres’ or Micro realms are demarcated and, where so has been possible, also presented on a number of maps.
BEAR is an enormous complex feature, not least as a result of the dramatic events on the war- and conflict arena during the 20th century. During the Second World War (WW II) northern Norway was occupied by Germany. From bases there, Germany attacked the Kola Peninsula, while Finland attacked the Soviet Union from various locations along the Karelian-Finnish border, in year 1941, a borderline established only a year earlier when the Soviet Union had attacked Finland. Three years later Finnish troops attacked the German troops in Northern Finland and forced them over the border to Northern Norway, while Russian troops advanced westwards from Kola over to Norwegian areas in the Kirkenes area and westwards.

The German troops engaged in the military activities had important transport links for provisions through Sweden, despite its neutral status. The Russian troops advancing into northern Norway, were largely seen as liberators until the positive atmosphere disappeared. The cold war emerged, and Norway became an important link in the NATO military network. In the geopolitical order of the cold war, Finland experienced great difficulties reinforcing its role as a neutral country between East and West. While large areas, buildings and vast infrastructures in Russia, Finland and Norway were extremely destroyed during the WW II, almost none of the infrastructures elements was damaged in Sweden.

The relations within the BEAR area was during a long period after the World War characterized by a stalemate. The North Calotte program, initiated by County Governor Ragnar Lassinantti can be seen as one attempt to break it up.

In Sweden strong defence systems were built up, not least in the Northern parts, up to the end of the eighties. During the whole period of the Cold War, Russian-Finnish joint infrastructure units such as roads, customs stations and cross-border railway connections were held at a minimum. Even ten years after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, there are established every-day interaction points only at a very few places along the border. Also along the Norwegian-Russian border the presence of interaction nodes are very restricted.

Today the most intense cross-border interaction seems to be between Russia and Norway within what is called The Barents Corridor and between Finland and Russia at the Wärtsilä – Nirala border crossing.

Bo Svensson refers to the establishment of BEAR as a recent example of how regionalisation is used as a political strategy to handle problems ans opportunities related to the Post Cold War reality of East-West relationship in Europe.
Markku Heikkilä maintains that the idea of a new regional cooperation in this part of Europe started already some thirteen years back in the very north town of Murmansk, when at that time the Secretary General Mihail Gorbatjov held a speech on all the difficulties and obstacles that one is meeting in the progress of building up a socialist society. Much of his speech touched on historical aspects but at the end it took a rather new direction. He started to talk about the artic regions, which so far had been strictly a military business moulded in the shadow of the cold war without any prospect of international cooperation. Without any notice he started to present suggestion after suggestion, which if they were accepted would change the artic scene completely.

The speech was read and double read in many quarters both in Finland, Sweden and Norway but also by other states with an interest in the artic regions. The issue that caught the interest of most was the suggestion that one should start up an international cooperation within the environment sector.

The result of this creation came to be the Artic Council – today almost forgotten by the public. Apart from the eight artic countries – the Nordic countries, Russia, Canada and the United States – a second level of so-called permanent member was created.

The second level consisted of representatives from the indigenous people, the Sami council, Inuit’s, and the organisation for the “Minority people” in Northern Russia. This was a first step in the process where the indigenous people in the north were allowed to give voice to questions that concerns those living in the area. During the years to come, this led to a situation where the indigenous people have been given an exceptional strong and active role in the artic cooperation.

“The end of the Cold War marked a turning point in international relations” claims Peter Bröms in his book Crossing the threshold: The forming of an Environmental Security regime in the Arctic North. For a few years, the idea of a “new world order” was at the centre of the international agenda, and many states put forward suggestions regarding how security would be organised at the end of the 21st century. A series of new plans and proposals for the security of the Nordic countries were introduced. Stimulated also by “an ever-increasing regionalisation”, BEAR was formally in place in January 1993.

Seen from a Swedish horizon, the end of the Soviet Union and the Cold War of course opened new perspectives. The economic crisis in Sweden starting in the very beginning of the nineties had put a heavy shadow not least over the peripheral northern parts of the country not least concerning the local labour market. At the same time as diminishing activities within the defence- and military activities in the North

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8. Ibid.
was clearly seen as a dominant part in the regional scenarios, joint or parallel activities with the neighbouring regions, including Russian regions seemed tempting and attractive. One might say that an east-west going interaction as a complement to the north-south-domination interaction patterns suddenly seemed to be a part in a plausible future. A geographical area that mostly had been seen as a possible scene for disastrous military activities all of a sudden became an arena for economic, cross-cultural and cross-national societal interaction.

The years went on and some of the early interests died and the problems in the arctic regions simmered gently for the first years in the early 90ies. Parallel to this, some new initiatives were started. The Canadians saw this as an opportunity to find their identity by pleading the importance of the arctic questions. However, the Americans showed little interest and the questions nearly died away again.

A next phase came when the Barents cooperation was taken up. The story goes that the Barents idea came up at the Norwegian Ministry for Foreign Affairs. It started when the Norwegian Foreign Affairs Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg launched his ideas of how one should create peace, stability and prosperity by creating a region based on cooperation over old dividing lines in Europe. Later the Russian and Norwegian Ministers for Foreign Affairs discussed it during the Helsinki meeting of the CSCE in 1992.

Barents Euro Arctic Region (BEAR) as the formal name is, was originally composed of the counties /equivalents/ north of or touched by the Arctic Circle. The so called North Calotte Cooperation and some bi-lateral cooperation schemes on different levels were thus the starting point when the Ministers of Environmental protection from the Nordic countries and the Russian Federation met in Kirkenes on 3–4 September 1992. They signed a joint declaration on principles and priorities of future cooperation on environmental protection and sustainable development, referring in particular, to the Barents region. Four months later, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Norway, Finland, the Russian Federation, Iceland and the European Commission of the European Communities signed the Declaration on cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic region in Kirkenes on 11 January 1993.

In 1998 BEAR was enlarged with Västerbotten County in Sweden and Uleåborg County in Finland. Already before the additions, BEAR had an area larger than the areas of France, Spain and Portugal put together.

The natural contrasts in the area are great: Polar bears feel comfortable in the cold Arctic climate, yet the relatively warm summers make it possible to grow vegetables in the region. In cold winter nights the Northern Lights can be seen flashing through the dark skies, and during warm summer days the beaches can be swarming with people. The Region’s northernmost coasts at the North Cape or Murmansk are as far north as the northernmost coastal strip in Alaska. Here, there should

have been ice-covered seas without possibilities for agriculture and normal human activities, but the Gulf Stream brings in warm water from the coast of America and creates a unique climate. The average temperature in the Region in the summer is +10 degrees Celsius. During the winter, it can vary from around 0 to -50 degrees Celsius, depending on where you measure\textsuperscript{10}.

Taken as a whole, there are now over 4.5 million inhabitants in the area, of which more than 50\% in the Russian parts. As an average, there are four inhabitants per square kilometre. It is interesting to notice that in the official presentation of the BEAR 1996 it is stressed that important indicators for BEAR are that many minorities live in the area, and that the area is very rich in natural resources. An important role for BEAR is to ensure the environment and living conditions for the indigenous people, to ensure a sustainable development harmonizing with their perspectives and demands. It is also regarded as important to exploit the abundance of natural resources in the area: forests, minerals, hydrocarbons in different shapes etc.

A very brief study of the spatial distribution of these natural resources shows that it is a rather difficult task to combine both these aspects on the future use and development of the area. Land-use conflicts are to be expected in the near future as well as further on.

Superimposed on this trans-national system is EU, with its different programmes for stimulating regional development. The Intergreg-programme engages Northern Sweden in three different areas: \textit{Kvarken-Mittskandia}, consisting of Helgeland in Norway, Västerbotten County in Sweden and Vasa County in Finland. \textit{Nordkalotten}, The North Calotte region, comprises counties in three countries: Norrbotten, Lapland in Finland and Finnmark/Troms in Norway. To this pattern one also can add the EU-programme Northern Periphery, started recently with strong Finnish support. Among other things, this project wants to stimulate the development of service-functions and employment in sparsely populated areas and de-population areas. Spatially it is delimited to the Northern parts of Scotland, Norway, Sweden and Finland.

In the area there also are several other “layers” consisting of private and semi official constellations having more or less influence on the development of the BEAR and naturally trying to fulfil their expectations, which implies that their realms are more or less visible. We will return to these issues later.

An important ingredient in the formation of the new Barents region was of cause that the EU Commission was one of the founding members. A more intensive phase took place when both Finland and Sweden became members and joined the EU in 1995. This meant that more funds could be secured through the Tacis- and the Intergreg-programme and hence were made available for various projects in the Barents region.

Swedish BEAR

**SITE AND POSITION**

In each state, respectively, there are few societal and economic indicators that can be described or is regarded as exotic or even remote in the northern counties. Historically, there have been various forms of colonisation and urbanisation activities taking place in all counties belonging to the Barents region, which up to the late 60ies has resulted in a dramatic increase in population. During this period very modern and smooth functioning societal structures have been built up, and many times not in any way inferior to those in the more central parts of each country. However, starting with the second half of the twentieth century, most of the countries in the BEAR area have suffered from depopulation. The depopulation of peripheral areas during the last decades is to a dominating extent due to labour market deficiencies and the restructuring of the national and global economy.

In addition to the last decades’ population development, there is also a causal connection to the defence- and military structures; defence systems, regiments and other military activities are rapidly diminishing in size, even in Russia, something that has drastically affected the economy of the area.

The word “peripheral” should be used in a very careful and restricted way. “Peripheral” is also a very relative concept. The northernmost parts of Norway are of course distant from Oslo, but very close to the fishing grounds and the petrochemical activities in the North Atlantic and Barents Sea. The Kola Peninsula is a front area towards the NATO and Barents Sea world. Northern Finland – even its agricultural activities – is an integrated part of the Finnish economy in a much more complex way than the case is in Sweden as Finland’s southern border does, so to say, “stop” at the same latitude as Stockholm.

One might say that the peripheral situation of the Swedish BEAR counties is – relatively seen – the most pronounced. An interesting angle of this could be seen in one of the large Swedish daily newspapers in spring 2000, when a series of articles were directed towards what was called “The cracking-up Sweden”\(^\text{11}\). A scenario was described, where the Oresund area more and more independently was seeking its economical and cultural connections towards Denmark and Germany, the West-coast area towards England, and the Stockholm area towards the Baltic Sea countries. What was left was Norrland, which was seen as less needed by the rest of the country.

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The need of a new interface towards the changing surrounding world is perhaps more noticeable in the Northern parts of Sweden than in any other parts of the country. Close to the former Soviet Union, close to a large amount of very substantial Russian military units and their equipment, close to Russian military infrastructure concerning land-air and sea warfare. Close to large but very poor and malfunctioning storage facilities for radioactive waste, close to ready-to-use nuclear warheads, close to an enormous assembly of mobile nuclear reactors. Close to a large nuclear power plant, equipped with reactors of Chernobyl-type. Close also to the Norwegian and Russian oil-and gas deposits, and also to very diversified Russian and Finnish raw-material resources as forests and ores.

Notwithstanding all the above mentioned ‘closenesses’ the BEAR area belonging to Sweden can be looked upon as being relatively more peripheral than the two other countries, Finland and Norway. It is physically separated to Norway by a massive mountain range with very few communication links. The interaction with Northern Finland is also low due to its sparse population and limited market potential of interest for Northern Sweden.

Also the physical borders between three different economical systems are located in the vicinity of North Sweden: The EU system, The Russian system and the Norwegian, at least formally outside the EU system. The Russian system is suffering from gigantic shortcomings. Substantially Finland has reached deeper into integration with EU than corresponding situation is for Sweden. The Norwegian economy has undergone a remarkable improvement after the revenues for the oil industry started to flow in to the country.

**Risk and Threat**

Risk and threat are concepts, which almost always crop up when conditions in the northernmost part of Europe are being discussed, especially if the discussion concerns the Kola Peninsula. For a long time, the threats have been military ones: hostile attacks from the east, threats of invasion, and streams of refugees as a result of acts of war. Consequently, our own preparations have been to build and maintain lines of defence; to take other physical and defensive measures to prevent or, at least, delay an attack or planned destruction; to mobilise different kinds of expertise within the Total Defence; and to exert an internal influence within the framework of the Psychological Defence. The national border has in itself been a risk factor as well as something that should be defended at any cost.

Then, in the 1990s, there were some radical changes in the political situation abroad, accompanied by changes in the general threat picture. At the same time, knowledge of the conditions on the Kola Peninsula was becoming more widely spread. Furthermore, the widened concepts of threat and defence are now more and more dependent on actions to meet, deal with and avoid threats and risks in peacetime.
In connection with this development, rather vague ones have replaced the rather obvious and clear threats of the past. It is a question of threats with clear environmental over-tones. It is true that these threats are still mostly linked with Russian military activities, but they are not directly linked with the fear of attacks against Sweden or our Nordic neighbours, in accordance with the old “ordinary” scenarios.

When following today’s general debate, one gets the impression that it is mainly a question of some sort of leftover from the military activities on and around the Kola Peninsula, which were admittedly comprehensive, but certainly not primarily aggressive. One might think that the international cooperation that gradually came about after the Kursk wreckage is some indication of this situation.

As far as domestic politics is concerned, ‘environment’ and ‘environmental considerations’ have become increasingly important political expressions and ingredient in Swedish planning, ever since the time of National Physical Planning at the start of the 1970s. There is surely no political party today, which does not have its own programmes for recycling, environmental considerations, economising with natural resources and for the preservation of a high quality of water and air. Furthermore, there are few things that people are more aware of than the consequences of a release of nuclear material, not least in northern Sweden. The general conception is the following: now that there is no longer an acute threat of war or real war preparations, there is a fair chance of arguing for, and perhaps also achieving, a change in the present circumstances through politics and other activities aimed at rousing public opinion.

That is roughly how the picture looks today. This picture also includes the concept of the Barents region, which, to our mind, is a concept, which is somewhat difficult to grasp, not least, because the word ‘region’ is so value-loaded and is used in so many ways.

Within the EU, the principle of subsidiarity is fundamental, i.e., that important decisions are to be made at the lowest possible level. If linked to another important EU principle, that of consistently promoting and stimulating the Europe of Regions, a rather interesting picture is discernible: namely, that there is a risk/tendency/possibility that the unity within the national states will gradually be weakened because the economy is developing so differently within many countries, not least in Sweden. One example of this has already been mentioned; last spring, one of our main newspapers published a series of articles about a disintegrating Sweden.

If this development should lead to a situation where the construction of the Barents region changes from being at a rather tentative phase, as is the case at the moment, to being something that the northernmost areas in Sweden actively try to strengthen and to develop – perhaps through their instinct of self-preservation – then we will have a very complex situation. The environmental threats up in the northeast area will then suddenly be a central factor to be considered in the planning of counties and county councils, of local sectors and authorities, of traffic planners, chambers of commerce and human relations activities. In contrast to what has actually happened so far, it will then be a matter

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of both planning and building a great deal of new infrastructure. But we are not there yet. Much of the work we have noticed so far can be characterised as 'soft money', i.e., mainly through project proposals and reports by consultants, feasibility studies.

The planning of an area – block, village, municipality, and region – demands cooperation and consensus in many issues. That is the essence of the Swedish Plan and Building Legislation, PBL, and so is also the case with the corresponding legislation in our neighbouring Nordic countries. It is difficult to know Russia’s policy on these matters. There are ambitions to plan in a western way there too, but, of course, a hierarchic structure where the interests of the Armed forces are given high priority and are partly autonomously located, is a complicating factor.
Environment problems

As mentioned earlier, in the research agreement with the OCB, it is decided to pay special attention to how security and safety issues, related to environmental disturbances — especially nuclear waste — affects (and is affected by) the development of society and the preparedness against civil security threats in the countries concerned. Within the parts of Barents region research programme conducted at The Defence Research Establishment in Umeå, Sweden, professor Ronny Bergman is summing up the environmental and radio ecological problems as follows.

The precarious condition of several radioactive sources, and the aggravating situation with regard to how nuclear waste is accumulating without adequate storage and maintenance capacity on and along the Kola peninsula have lately become recognised world-wide. Several major problems are related to the military sources, albeit those of a civil origin definitely also need consideration.

The actual and potential risks, associated with these sources for radioactive contamination and significant radiological consequences, in some cases mainly affects the conditions at local and regional levels, yet in other appear to be far reaching, and of considerable importance for the whole Arctic region, or large parts of Europe.

Nuclear weapons testing have been performed on and close to the Novaya Zemlya islands during 1955–1990. A large part of the present worldwide radioactive contamination is due to transfer from atmospheric nuclear explosions occurring prior to the test ban in 1963. The dumping in Arctic seas practised in Russia since the middle of the 50’s has only lately became better known. The amount of activity present in the radioactive waste dumped in the Barents and Kara seas (before the present stop for dumping) exceeds the total amount from all other sources of dumped activity anywhere else in the oceans.

The revelation of substantial release of radioactivity from nuclear facilities along the Siberian rivers Ob and Yenisey also has augmented the concern for environmental pollution, particularly in the Kara and Barents Seas.

Other causes of concern stem from the use of nuclear reactors, primarily on submarines – in operation as well as on those awaiting decommissioning – and on icebreakers. The big amounts of spent nuclear fuel accumulated from this use, in addition to liquid and solid radioactive waste, are presently in storage on and along the coast of Kola. On the peninsula there is, furthermore, a nuclear power plant with four reactors. A common observation is that poor maintenance practices, as well as technical weaknesses due to reactor design, contribute to the safety hazards at this power plant. In particular, this applies to its two oldest reactors.
Nevertheless, beside the contributions due to the nuclear weapons testing (primarily the atmospheric explosions at Novaya Zemlya), the present environmental contamination in the Kola-Barents region mainly reflects the transfer from sources outside this region, namely:

- discharges from the reprocessing plants at Sellafield (UK) and La Hague (France) carried northwards by the Atlantic currents;
- discharges from Russian nuclear installations in Siberia (at Chelyabinsk, Tomsk, Krasnoyarsk) into the Siberian rivers;
- radioactive deposition after the Chernobyl accident (to a large extent reflecting a transfer of contaminated water from the Baltic to the Atlantic Sea);
- atmospheric nuclear explosions in other regions contributing to the global component of the radioactive fallout.

It is notable that the present levels of radioactivity, as well as the corresponding external radiation on the Kola Peninsula do not exceed that expected to result from the general background in the environment at these latitudes. Similarly, the Barents and Kara Seas largely exhibit very low concentrations of radioactive contamination. An increase of the amount of radioactive contamination around the Norwegian waters during the winter 2001 turned out to be discharge coming primarily from Sellafield in England. At certain sites on land and in the sea, however, significant contamination has been recognised – but mostly confined to local environments – as a result of explosions, accidental emission or problems at radioactive waste depositories.

The main areas of Kola and the adjacent seas are thus at present very clean in comparison to other parts of Europe. The principal radiological hazard for the region, as well as for more distant areas, is consequently the potential future risk of radioactive pollution from accidents and mismanagement. The Kursk accident in the Barents Sea during the autumn 2000 emphasises this in a very distinctive way. And a sudden release of radioactive material will very probably affect parts of Sweden, regardless of its membership in a trans-border regional cooperation such as the BEAR.

Some initiatives – primarily involving Russia in bi- or trilateral co-operations with Norway, USA or EU have already been taken to institute some urgent actions focused on improvement of the management of waste and spent nuclear fuel on Kola – i.e. those factors that presently constitute a critical “bottleneck” also for the submarine decommissioning issue.

The region as a normative concept

When looking on the common usage of the word ‘region’ within the BEAR concept it is quite obvious that one must ask the question what type of region one is referring to. To begin with one can observe that it is neither a functional nor a homogenous region even in its wider application. Rather the usage applies more to what one would consider as taking normative standpoint to the region concept.

This is probably due to the fact that it more or less expresses the expectation that the BEAR will emerge into something which in the future might be termed as a functional or homogenous region. Hence, a question to raise here is: Is there a Barents Region in reality – or is this just a creation only on paper?

Fundamental questions concerning regional scientific analysis are the following: How are objects, people and processes arranged in space? Can spatial systems be distinguished; can geographical space be defined? What is the spatial result of structure shaping decisions? How does the administrative and spatial shaping of a social entity affect the result of spontaneous, planned and un-planned, regulated and un-regulated streams of interaction? Social scientists have always been interested in the concept of ‘region’ and how it can be used as a tool. In 1969, the Stockholm geographer\(^{13}\), Staffan Helmfrid, published an article labelled “The Use and Abuse of the Concept of Region”. There he attacks rather strongly the usage of the word ‘region’ as well as words derived thereof. He concludes, “…they have become very frequently used by people keen to debate our planned society. Through building legislation for regional planning schemes and the concept of regional development policies, they have gained importance to a degree which even our most astute masters in this field could not have foreseen at the time when they still believed in the existence of the Region, the natural region, as a specific object for geographical research.

Going back to Helmfrid’s somewhat acid formulations, regional geography, a sub discipline which is associated – at least by the older generation – with traditional geography teaching in schools, had its origins in what can be called “postulated” regions. For example, it might concern Africa, the Scandinavian countries or Sweden. Their characteristics were analysed and the emphasis was usually placed on geography, trade and industry, and the population. These studies were based on ideas influenced by natural determinism. One common notion was that the temperate climate of Western Europe had promoted diligence and enterprise and thereby also the industrial breakthrough of the 19th century. Another example was that the warmth and exuberance of the

\(^{13}\) Helmfrid 1969.
tropics created people characterized by idleness and irresponsibility, and was therefore the main cause of disorganised societies. Behind these ideas lay not least Montesquieu's climate theories, where the influence of climate on the personalities and behaviour of people was given a geographic-climatic dimension.

In the past, of course, natural geographical features formed regional boundaries. Lakes, watercourses and primitive roads in valleys and on plains brought areas together while mountainous areas and forests kept them apart. In old days of the ethnical and cultural regional identity was often created within such natural barriers. These boundaries served to mark off both similarities and a sense of community within the area and differences from those outside the area.

In the early regional geographical literature of the 19th century, the natural region is focused. It is regarded as being naturally formed because of its topographical shaping. In the regional geographical research from the turn of the century, regions defined in this way form a sort of framework for a number of possibilities. The active decision maker can choose to realise these possibilities or choose not to do so — that is what we call possibilism today.

Regional identity is based on the assumption that people themselves define the region that they identify with. People decide who to include in "we" and thereby also who are the excluded outsiders, "they". In accordance to that, ethnicity becomes a concept that rests on the dichotomy "we – they". Too much emphasis on such a dichotomy can easily lead to disastrous consequences. The incidents in former Yugoslavia in the 1990s are a clear illustration of this.

During the period between the two World Wars, old ideas of an organic psychological relationship between man and geographical space were revived. It was claimed that "lebensraum" regions could be distinguished and asserted together with economic functions, which the right-wing dictatorships of the 1930s and 40s frequently referred to. It was in this context that the Swede, Rudolf Kjellén, introduced the concept of geopolitics, which was intended to embrace the notion of unity and dynamics between territory, state and people, so cherished by the dictatorships of that time.

Parallel to these "lebensraum moods", new ideas developed about the nature of the world, and about how geographical space can be structured. Thus, in the 1930s, a new type of region was "discovered", the so-called nodal or functional region. The German, Walter Christaller, was a pioneer in this field, both in methodology and conceptionally. His work constituted the starting-point for a fundamental methodological reorientation within the social geographical part of the discipline of geography. Such regions were defined not by similarities and differences in their natural surroundings, but by ties to different centres in a place hierarchy.

After WW II, the idea of "region" as an operational phenomenon developed as a means of analysis and theory, for surveys and information. To a large extent, it was now a matter of creating methods to make objective definitions, which were adequate for the purpose of dividing up regions according to functional principles.
The shaping of today's municipalities in Sweden is a good example of this. In the 1950s, there were more than 1100 municipalities in Sweden and when these were to be reduced in number to less than one third of that, the whole arsenal of region and hinterland definition methods was used. The model municipality consisted of one dominant main town and its functionally defined hinterland. The municipality's borders were drawn where the influences from adjoining main towns were as strong as all the influences of its own main town.

Concurrently with the development of social geography as an applied science, there was a growing need for another region concept. It was now a matter of the “applied” region, the region for planning and for making decisions. Thus, when “planned Sweden” developed during the 1950s and 60s, the divisions into sector functional regions grew enormously. There was now a need for spatial-functional ways of defining everything, from work commuting hinterlands to catchments areas for primary medical care and primary schools, and mobile shop bus services in the rural areas. In this context, the following matters are essential. Once the applied, functionally defined regions have come into use, i.e., been rendered spatial form as administrative regions, they usually have a deep and complicated effect on both the spatial structure of society and on our way of creating mental maps of the surrounding world.

Economic geographical regions were also created on a large scale in Sweden during the 1960s and 70s, not least as a framework for the production of statistics. A-regions and K-regions are examples of these. In the latest regional policy report\footnote{SOU 2000:87. Regionalpolitiska utredningens slutbetänkande.}, Local labour market areas are introduced as a unit of statistics and planning. They consist of single municipalities and of aggregates of municipalities.

Another aspect is that during the 1960s and 70s, interest in carrying out behavioural science studies of the perception and definition of space grew rapidly. The ‘perceived region’ became an interesting phenomenon, which many studies were devoted to. Here, expressions like Sense of Place and Mental Maps appeared in the vocabulary of planning during the 1970s. Inspired by the social geographer, Torsten Hägerstrand, a distinction was made between the concepts of range and reach. Range refers to technical range, i.e. the possibilities of moving available material, people and information at any given moment. Reach refers to people’s biological and mental capacity, i.e. the ability to include the outside world in a mental sphere of interest. If, by region, one means the region where “I” as an individual belong, the perceived region will be the combination of range and reach that constitutes the mental map.

To make matters even more complicated, within the discipline of political science, there is a tradition of using the concept of region when referring to large so-called Macro-region. This is, of course, quite correct within that discipline’s set of concepts; they use expressions like the Mediterranean Region, the Pacific Region and the Baltic Region. Consequently, there are terms like sub regional cooperation or sub regional
level which are used to distinguish the type of geographical area like, for instance, the Barents cooperation from the larger macro-regions.

Today, when the term "regional level" is used in Sweden, it is the county level that ordinary people are referring to. At the same time, the word 'region' has today become more and more interesting from a political point of view. For example, "the Europe of regions" is a central theme within EU-politics, but what many people are actually asking for is a clearly defined area, which is accessible for measures.

In modern social development, there is tension between global and local forces. Unlimited networks, widened spheres of interest and constantly increasing mobility allow us to imagine a society characterized by ever-increasing interaction with global dimensions. At the same time, regionalisation is a trend, which points in a different direction. It implies that people and enterprises are and remain tied to their local or regional surroundings.

The Lund geographer, Gunnar Törnqvist, maintains that between these two trends, there is a field of tension that creates a pressure of transformation15. Within this field of tension, three types of territorial magnitudes can be distinguished. Firstly, sovereign states, which are, at present, regarded as the most important territorial units. Within their boundaries, political life is organized; they are carriers of people’s identity and they form the framework of reference for economy, social life and thought. Secondly, he mentions supranational structures. As far as Sweden is concerned, the EU is the closest and most obvious example of such supranational integration. And thirdly, there are self-assured and provocatively acting regions, which are regarded as territorial units, roughly equal to districts or provinces.

Furthermore, autonomous networks, which have in various ways broken away from the traditional political, territorial, economic and social framework, are becoming more and more common.

Törnqvist and many others argue that there is a growing tension and a risk of interest conflicts between, on the one hand, power structures that embrace territories, and on the other hand, interests related to networks. Moreover, it is not at all self-evident that old territories with decision-making capacities coincide with problem areas where such things as the need for technical changes, new production forms and an altered usage of resources are predominant. Building up a region peacefully is another kind of regionalization. This can be done by focusing a desired line of development on tangible new physical features of infrastructure, such as the bridge between Denmark and Sweden in Öresund. The Finnish geographer, Anssi Paasi, has, so to speak, written a recipe of how to do it16.

Firstly, you stipulate the territorial form, i.e. you define boundaries. Secondly, you allow the concept of the region to become established in people’s minds. Thirdly, joint institutions are created and fourthly, a regional identity is developed.

Of course, joint infrastructural investments belong to this picture. Incidentally, it is obvious that the building of railways is a central ingredient of region building in Sweden today, for example, the Mälar railway, the Svealand railway, and perhaps the Bothnia railway.

If something that the surrounding world regards as attractive is defined and created, you can expect the people in this arena to be keen to see their own area incorporated into this new, interesting community or into what is expected to be a community. Thus, there is yet another definition of the concept of region: the region as a club, as an organisation that people would like to join.

One way of achieving regionalisation from above is, of course, to decentralize and to delegate power and authority, which have formerly been at the national level to the regional level. In contrast to this, there is regionalism with separatistic overtones. Such things can be seen every day in our surrounding world: in Basque, in the Russian sphere of interest, and in former Yugoslavia.

As far as Sweden is concerned, in this era of democracy, practically no thought has been given to the handling of intraregional trends and alternatives. When the word region has been mentioned, it has mainly been as a compound word, regional politics, i.e. with ‘region’ as a geographical area and as the object of national welfare policies. On the other hand, ‘region’ as a subject has been invisible or, at least, depreciated. It has rarely been a matter of regionalism as an ideology or as a regionally based protest movement.

But today, there are good examples of regional mobilisation, not least in northern Sweden, in the attempts to coordinate within counties, for instance, in the form of growth agreements, or in the form of county-based decision groups for the distribution of the money in the EU structural funds.

In the supranational perspective, e.g. that of the EU, the region is often a kind of instrument, which is constructed when needed. Thus, there is a marked pragmatic view of the phenomenon of region — a framework is provided to build regional structures whose purpose is to facilitate certain objectives and goals — economic development, the easing of tension and cultural interaction. The region building, thereby, often differs considerably from the regionalism that can be seen in Basque or along the borders of Russia towards the Caucasus.

Within the EU there is an explicit goal to stimulate growth and development on a sub national level, preferably in a form of transnational cooperation. The Europe of Regions is a phrase, which is often heard, and here one can certainly talk about region building. A memo from Brussels, dated 12 October 2000 and addressed to the committee for institutional questions, says “… the chairman of the European commission stated that the decentralization of the fields of responsibility within the EU is a reformatory measure that should be given top prior-
ity, and it was thought necessary to delegate a great number of European issues to national, regional and local levels.\textsuperscript{17} 

In an article in 1995, the Umeå geographer, Ulf Wiberg, discusses the peculiar nature of the transregion. By ‘transregion’, he means “… a constructivistically defined region formation crossing one or several national borders. Such a transregion may, though not necessarily, have a functional character … the most important thing is its anchorage in people’s minds.”\textsuperscript{18}

Another driving force behind the formation of a transregion is to regard the defining of a region as a means of solving problems, which are shared on both sides of the border. As an example, Wiberg mentions environmental problems, which can spread through water systems or by prevailing winds.

An important conclusion of the above analysis is that the Barents region can certainly fall under the concept of “region building”. All the ingredients from Antti Paasi’s recipe are there, and in the background there is the desire of both the peripheral counties and the counties suffering from depopulation to join a constellation that may stimulate growth, for instance, through large transnational infrastructural investments.

At the same time, there is also a mixture of fear and excitement about building a structure in which areas of Russia are to be included. Excitement because there is certainly a feeling of solidarity towards a neighbouring country which is going through a tough period; fear because, among other things, north-western Russia, especially the Kola peninsula, has one of the largest stocks of radioactive material in the world, including nuclear submarines which are fit for the scrap yard, nuclear power stations similar to that of Chernobyl, leaking radioactive waste repositories and live nuclear weapons.


\textsuperscript{18} Ulf Wiberg. Regionfunktioner och Nordeuropeiska integrationsperspektiv. Nordisk Samhällsgeografisk Tidskrift 21/95.
BEAR and Spatial Planning

ESDP is a generally accepted, somewhat normative, concept developed within the EU. It is argued that from a planner’s view, that local, regional, or even national spatial plans are crucial for achieving spatial equity. “Spatial equity is the overriding concept for uses to land and for distributing public funds or subsidies over a territory. Spatial equity was also a synonym for social and economic equity.” Planners tend to favour ‘hard’ technocratic top-down approaches to reach their visionary, missionary, illusionary goal, and they exert control over spatial development to counteract inequity in space.

However, more than once their honest visions and efforts result, sooner or later, in frustration and cynicism. They have to realize that actors, ministries, institutions or agencies just do not wish to be coordinated. “… Nobody likes to loose power over his or hers own life or ‘heimat’. Hence, spatial equity at whatsoever tier of spatial decision-making has become the unsatisfied dream of the socially minded planning community.”

The concept of ESDP (European Spatial Development Perspective) has been widely spread as an attractive planning formula. This formula is especially well adapted to the EU policy of regionalization and also for the legitimisation of EU action and coordination and the establishing of an abundance of regional, structural, cohesion, urban and rural funds.

The quotation above can be found in an article published 1998 in International Planning Studies. However, the author also claims that large-scale structural visions like the metaphor of the European “banana”, stretching from Manchester via London, Benelux, Rhine-Ruhr, Rhine-Main to Milan already is obsolete, and that the most widespread vision to-day more lies in the Metaphor of “bunch of grapes”; where each grape is a regional unit well connected and well defined in relation to the other grapes.

A most interesting thing connected to this view on the necessity of regionalism are the arguments for the stimulation and the emergence of such regions: “regionalism: history, culture and identity (heimat) as potentials for human life spaces and regional economic development. In times of global communication and world-wide information networks, and considering the massive indoctrination of value systems my Disney and McDonald market philosophies, regional identity, values culture and regional life spaces are increasingly rediscovered as local counter-forces to the alienation of the regional populace.”

20. Ibid.
21. Ibid.
How could this be obtained? Well, not by top-down traditional planning, but by a combination of formulating a vision and the support of a few sustainable regional development concepts of exemplary character demonstrate locally how the overall concept could work.

Bearing this in mind, we have studied documents on regional development and regional planning from the two northernmost counties in Sweden. A large-scale conference with widespread participation from public bodies, industry, politicians and the universities discussed in June 1998 development possibilities in Northern Sweden. Also, high officials from EU-directorates concerned, participated.

It was extremely interesting to notice that cooperation in the fields of medical technology, IT, railway technology, transports and tourism were regarded to be very important within an area with nodal points in Umeå, Skellefteå, Luleå, Rovaniemi and Uleåborg: a strong-belt along the Bothnian coast, crossing the Swedish, Finnish border. Not as an integrated corner stone of the BEAR, but as a separate realm, with reference to BEAR, but nothing more.

In practice, not in theory, most of the development efforts in this region are based on a co-financing arrangement involving both the EU and a local national co-finer.

Financed by EU structure Funds, the Objective 1-region Northern Norrland (Norra Norrland) consists of the 29 municipalities in the two northernmost counties in Sweden. The abbreviation SPD stands for Samlat Program Dokument, a set of over-all guidelines for the handling of available funds, and thus forms both a formal and a “basis-of-value” reference frame for the handling of Objective 1 in Sweden during the period 2000–2007.

The so-called Growth Agreement is a form for agreement between the central administrative and political level and the different countries. Agreements concerning the magnitude, the aim and direction of the total support allocated for regional development are decided upon. A main principle is that funding which cannot be regarded as co-financing to Objective 1, Objective 3 or an Interreg-project, should not be recommended.

Thus, the Growth Agreements and the SPD taken together are seen as important documents when investigating whether the BEAR affiliation is present as a spatial or a functional dimension of Spatial planning on this level and magnitude.

We will return to these matters later, however, already now it can be seen that this is not the case. Vague, and non-obligatory formulations as the following quotation are frequently to be found:

“Environment-oriented profile and efforts to achieve environmental quality is profitable and also necessary if the aim is to succeed in the competitions, regionally, nationally and internationally. Northern Norrland is the only region in Sweden bordering two countries. The cooperation with Finland and Norway has a long historical tradition. The liberalization in Eastern Europe has also strengthened the value of having a border in the...”

east. The region therefore should, in its efforts to develop the economy, use the internationalisation to overcome problems connected to the existence of a limited local market.\footnote{23}

In this context it is important to draw attention to the fact that no explicit formulations concerning SPD-consequences of the belongingness to BEAR are to be found in any of the Growth Agreements presented for the two Swedish BEAR counties.

\footnote{23} SPD for Objective 1, Northern Sweden.
Risk awareness mirrored in local and regional planning

BEAR has existed as an administrative and political phenomenon for almost eight years when this is written. Counties and municipalities in each participating country has – at least formally – joined this new frame for planning, interaction, migration and economic development.

It is a reasonable assumption that this situation has affected and left its traces in the local and regional planning documents; one might for instance expect to find structures like corridors for infrastructure development, indications or even decisions of land use change, new interaction patterns and new relations between central places, the existence of restriction areas and buffer zones, systematically measures to avoid various manifestations of different environment disturbances etc. One might also expect to find active planning measures directed toward facilitating the interaction between the indigenous people and their economies, not least related to environmental restrictions and obstacles.

Is that the case? Has the existence of BEAR had any traceable effects on the local and regional planning? What does risk awareness look like within the sphere of planning and planners, regarding the risks and threats being successively revealed as BEAR grows up?

The existence of nuclear-related environment problems in the Kola Peninsula is of course not anything especially new. New are eventually their magnitude and the instability of the storage facilities and the storage systems. To this also comes the routine handling of nuclear materials, the lack of reliability in technical standard and also the weakened mode of functioning and quality standard within the Russian Armed Forces. To this can also be added the fact that present today are a number of new factors and actors on the Arena, Swedish as well as emanating from other nations, inviting to start increased interaction, not least with the Russian BEAR-areas.

The new conditions for interaction being supplied by the emergence of BEAR provide space for action and stimulation for actively influencing the accessibility of the environmentally hazardous material and the mere existence of it, for actors within as well as outside Russia.

Also risks that can be connected to those matters – and to its altered accessibility – ought, during the passed eight years, to have put ‘traces’, possibly in the form of preparations, changes in interaction patterns etc. So, can anything of this be traced in plans, planning material, documents or in other materials or action programmes?

Important questions to ask are thus the following:
Are serious environmental threats or other serious threats related to the composition of BEAR taken into account, in planning documents on the regional/county and local/municipal level? To what extent?

If so is the case, are releases of radioactivity among those identified threats?

Does the over-all planning (region plans, municipal master plans, comprehensive plans etc.) reflect any form of present or future cross-border cooperation related to BEAR?

Does the belonging to BEAR leave any traces in planning documents like Municipal plans?

For Norway, Sweden and Finland comprehensive plans at the Municipal level (ÖPL) have been analysed in respect to the questions above. In addition available plans on the regional level – Transportation plans, Yearly action plans etc., has also been studied, and responsible officers have been interviewed.

Independent regional and municipal planning, equivalent to spatial planning in Norway, Sweden and Finland, does not exist in Russia. There one can find amazingly frank openness to local environment problems, but to get a deeper view of ongoing comprehensive planning is at least a very complicated thing. On the local level, risk and safety measures are planned and carried out in close cooperation with respective companies. Each company, with any kind of hazardous activities, has its own responsible section, answering for planning and implementing safety measures. The section mentioned is directly connected to MChS.

One could say that the Norwegian material shows an abundance concerning different forms for investigations, declarations of intention, formulations around strategies, and various forms for economic and cultural exchange, especially linked to the Murmansk area. Practically no planning documents or declarations gives reference to the fact that the Norwegian-Russian cooperation also is placed in the frame of a cooperation in a larger scale, on a higher systems level – BEAR.

Significant is also the title of an important work in this context, the former Russian Consul General in Kirkenes, Anatoliy Smirnov’s book on The Russian-Norwegian cooperation in the Barents region. Also significant here is the dependence of resource-strong consultants.

Within the municipal and regional planning, not much – as in the Swedish and Finnish material – is to be found, regarding visible BEAR-effects. But there is a plethora of very large consultant-studies, that very clear and convincingly sketches and gives argumentation about future ‘necessary’ infrastructure projects like roads, border passage stations, new customs stations, transit terminals. Other examples are enlargement of the harbour in Kirkenes, upgrading of airports, new railway

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24. ÖPL. For Sweden: all municipalities in BD and AC counties.
26. To be seen in a number of reports presented by Storvik & Co.
lines resulting in a railway line covering the whole distance between Murmansk and Kirkenes.

With regard to nuclear threats, not much is written about those in the planning documents, regarding internal Norwegian matters. They are mainly emphasised as a Russian problem, not a Norwegian one. In Northern Norway, BEAR obviously is about – as it is mirrored in the planning – and official reports – the present and visible cooperation around the Varanger Peninsula and the Russian Barents Sea shore-zone. There seems to be no public awareness about the fact that BEAR spreads all the way down to Ångermanland in Sweden and Oulu in Finland. One easily gets the impression that the long time tradition of Norwegian-Russian cooperation and interaction along the Barents Sea coast acts as a cradle for long time active, and less project-orientated new structures, compared to the Interreg cooperation schemes.

Regarding Sweden, a search through the municipal plans shows that the belonging to BEAR has not left any recognizable trails. There are, however, agreements of cooperation, on the regional level as well as on the municipal.

Swedish railway (SJ) is a sectorial actor showing a strong interest in BEAR. In mapping out the economic potential for the whole area, a sketch for a future railway network is presented. Recently a joint transport study for the six northernmost counties in Sweden was published.

A very limited part of the study is dealing with the relations with the surrounding countries; to a very large proportion the overview seems to stop at Torne River and the western mountain range. In the county Transportation Plan for Västerbotten County a short paragraph dealing with comprehensive transportation needs the following can be quoted: Strategies for developing the own region are becoming more important. Here, the cross-border cooperation with other regions has its granted position.

Other examples from Västerbotten are various Interreg projects like Kvarken-MittSkandia and the Atlantic-Karelian development corridor. Another example is the cooperation between Norrbotten County and Västerbotten County, of which a joint Brussels Office is a result.

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29. OPL for all municipalities in AC and BD counties.
32. NOT
33. Länsstyrelsen, meddelande 6-98. Regional Transportplan, sid. 30.
The scrutinizing of the plan-preparedness in Finland and its actual planning status eventually linked to BEAR comprises Kainuu Liitto (Kainuu alliance of municipalities), Lapin Liitto (Lapland alliance of municipalities) and Pohjois-Pohjanmaa Liitto (North Ostrobothnia alliance of municipalities).

Information has been gathered through interviews with responsible officers for planning in each of the concerned Regional Councils.

The interviews have been structured around the following questions:

1. Are there any environment threats or any other serious threats met by measures in the comprehensive plans?
2. Is release of radioactive material among those threats?
3. Does present planning material or on-going planning activities reflect any form of actual or future cross-border cooperation?
4. Has the affiliation to BEAR left any traces in the planning documents?

There are no signs in the planning documents that specific environment threats that can be linked to the nuclear situation are influencing the municipal — or any other type of comprehensive planning. General guidelines saying that regional planning also must include a protection plan (Kainuu) are to be found. According to the law system that gives the frame for planning and building, there are of course regulations saying that there must exist good accessibility to shelters in the near vicinity of the dwellings.

In North Ostrobothnia there are regulations saying that the environment aspects must penetrate all planning; any specific threats connected to the geographic position are not regarded. Concerning Lapland’s Regional Council, the interviewed officers claim that they of course are aware of the existence of nuclear materials on the Russian side of the border, as well as the risks that are connected to this situation. But it has not affected the comprehensive planning, or traditional local physical planning.

Regarding questions 3&4, the picture for Kainuu is as follows: The plan material is reflecting that, what is referred to as the “Russian dimension,” is present in many circumstances, not least regarding the Interreg II-programme. A result is a joint map for planning purposes for Northern Karelia North Ostrobothnia and the Russian parts of Karelia. The map has been compiled by the Russian administration.

After the action phase of Interreg II-programme, there is a lack of plans for forthcoming projects. The present discussion concerns road traffic in Russia, gas deposits, culture exchange and general environment protection. Has the association to BEAR left any traces in planning? Yes, on a general level. Mostly, one is referring to what might be

34 Regional Council consists of an alliance of municipalities, roughly corresponding to a county. For Kainuu: Planeringschef Heino Hiltunen and planarkitekt/planchef Paula Qvick. For North Ostrobothnia landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Ossi Repo and experten Tuomo Molander.
called the invisible topography: networks between individuals and organizations in the area are growing up.

In the area of North Ostrobothnia, one can spot the following features: The Interreg-programme has resulted in a rather large cooperation scheme concerning straight-forwards cross-border issues. The association to BEAR has not added much to the general picture; it is mostly a question of mainly cultural exchange programs. The interviewed officers does not exclude that the BEAR-association will affect planning and also other activities further on, but to-day not much is to be found.

Also in Lapland’s alliance of municipalities one refers to the Interreg-programmes. Within Interreg III, there are a large number of sub-projects, which all shows a “Russian dimension”, more or less. Interviewed officers emphasize the on-going North-Calotte cooperation, and also what is referred to as “vicinity area” cooperation with Murmansk. Within the field of environmentalism, it is more a question of exporting own know-hot to Russia, and less a question of integrating emergency preparedness in their own planning activities.

To the Finnish picture belongs a project comprising three Finnish Alliances of Municipalities, bordering to Russia: North Ostrobothnia, Kainuu and North Karelian. This project is mainly aiming at having a close cooperation with regard to issues dealing with land use and planning issues involving the Interreg-Interreg Area and the Russian republic of Karelia. The project started in 1997, comprising the so-called development zones of Arkhangelsk and Karelia. An important goal for the project is to compile a map and blueprint for the Euregio-Karelia area. Main themes stressed in this plans will be tourism, culture, environment and infrastructure 35.

Conclusions

We are back to the main question for this study regarding the involvement of committed planners and other actors.

✓ What is the actual outcome of the expected impact of BEAR if you look at it really close?
✓ Is it a frame used for easing up bilateral, sectorial built-up projects?
✓ Does the mere existence of the BEAR concept generate projects that otherwise would not have started?
✓ Is there an emergence of new, coordinated activities and structures aiming towards a common development goal for a future Barents region?
✓ Can BEAR be considered to be a way of handling the very severe latent threats to the environment in the whole area, and hence directly towards people’s health, that the nuclear deposits constitute?

To what extent can BEAR be said to influence the societal situation in Northern Sweden in such a way that it affects present visible and invisible structures, as well as the organization handling programs for the civil emergency planning?

For the time being, not much of the Sweden being a part of BEAR can be traced in general planning, planning documents and in planners’ awareness of risks, environmental disturbances, or impact on civil emergency preparedness. This is a bit disturbing in the sense that so much of the activities going on within the BEAR sphere is carried out as separate projects, mainly as bilateral schemes, as EU-spin off effects or more or less as private activities. Hence, such fractional activities can, in themselves, constitute a fragile, non-resilient society if not coordinated and monitored correctly.

One gets the impression that – regardless of what is studied – it is a question of projects, activities covering a short time-span of a few years. In other words we are talking of short term planning activities. One finds very seldom a long-term goal oriented, structure-shaping element within the frame of the present comprehensive planning.

Furthermore, there are no planning activities showing preparedness against pollution and/or other disturbances from the nuclear activities on the Russian side. The projects are mostly bilateral, and very often one gets the impression that there is a question of as much as possible join the process of actively making use of time-restricted external resources, not a searching for possible long-term financing, sustainable development, resilience and lack of vulnerability. In that sense, it is possible that a large number of actors regard BEAR mostly as a frame for possible projects, conceived in and for another context.
To have an understanding of what causes changes and what causes continuity is a good way of understanding development. What is stable over time and what is changing over time has always been a mystery. What is happening in our society today with regard to regional build-up has by some researchers been coined a crises of territories, by others a development of democracy. A prime issue still is as follows: Can we in to-days global world with the eternally rattled mantra of globalisation, start to think of democratic systems that are true independent of territories? The territory is by some said to be the ultimate determining factor for democracy. It is often said that all the power belongs to the people; on the other hand, it is the territory and its boundary that decides who the people are.

By the resurrection of the territory, implied by its traditional local scale, that one could avoid the disadvantage of compartmentalisation, is by many seen as being detrimental to progress. To increase the size of the territory is not always the best solution for good governance. Notwithstanding this, a great deal of the thoughts behind the new municipal reforms introduced in the late sixties and early seventies in Sweden rested on the belief that ‘big is beautiful’ meaning that for economic, administrative and strategic reasons it would be wiser to merge into larger territorial units. A large chunk of these basic thoughts are still kicking and alive today. Much of the thoughts brought forward in the Growth agreements produced during the late nineties are examples of applying these train of thought in practice.

Counteracting the need to expand the territories has been a parallel force to development namely the increase in mobility opportunities for the people. technological development together with economic improvement and mobility freedoms among the people of the free world has during the last half-century lead to a travelling population. The increased mobility has let us expand our formal as well as informal network contacts, both in public and in private life. Influenced by what in the beginning primarily took place among individuals, one can now discern a pattern where public as well as private organisations, municipalities and counties, military authorities and others are establishing more intensive networks and operational territories. These are future action spaces – territories, interest regions, operation areas – where they (the actors) believe they can make a profit or where they think they can operate more efficient and rational compared to the old arena. Concurrent with the above trends follows the plentiful of cross-municipal co-

operations when it comes to rescue work, the fire brigade, energy solutions, garbage and waste handling and in certain instances also one of today's burning questions the school issue and the service to the old and needed. Another way of solving the resting problems has been to suggest 'out-sourcing' of the services or activity in order to speed up the solution to a presently unsolved problem.

The origin of these plentiful 'temporary functional regions' is in many instances to be found in either an administrative, political or an economic environment. The reason why they have been created is usually very simple. One tries to solve an immediate emerging problem and the best way to do that is to delimit the 'region' where one should operate – which to a large extent is a causal effect.

The 'interest regions' are created in a spur of the moment and they are usually declared dead as soon as they have fulfilled their purpose and stop to be effective. Some of them are short lived others are experiencing longer life spans. Many of these built-up network-regions are only created for one thing; the objective with the creation is either to speed up the changes in the organisation or streamlining the handling of the issue at stake. Optimising the utilisation and increasing the cooperation between municipalities are common solutions in these constellations.

However, with the rationalisation changes taking effect the boundaries of the temporary territories are constantly changing. A good example of this is how the military organisations in Sweden have forced the 'action' territories within the nation to change many times due to reorganisation drives during the last 10–20 years. It is not uncommon that a newly taken decision on restructuring the organisation has barely been accepted by the decision maker in the society when it is decided that a new reorganisation should be considered, at least one should consider a new investigation of how one should tackle the future changes in society. This can in itself become a sort of a perpetual mobile.

A negative aspect said of these 'temporary regions', is that they are very thin and superfluous. They are also short lived and they can easily be terminated and made obsolete. The positive with this type of short-lived 'regions' is that they are seen as very flexible and very suited for the new IT-technology. They are also seen as modern expression of democracy today with cross-border implications, which on the other hand could facilitate the creation of new 'regional constellations'. Of course this is one of the prime objectives with the EU. However, leaving the international scale and looking at the municipal level, the multitude of intermingling network regions could mean a new way of organising life at the grass-root level. A possible traction of development is toward "territories" built-up on flexibility and a manifold of thinly established networks.

The discussion of the concept of region leads us to have a look on and also identify the many layers of larger and smaller 'interest spheres', superimposed on each other, more or less visible and further on referred to as 'Macro or Micro realms'. The division in the following section is based on the presentation of 'interest realms' that either are engulfing the BEAR or just touching it.
To begin with, a brief resume is presented of a series of realms that are encompassing the Barents region: Macro realms. The Arctic Council is here seen as a good example of a Macro realm.

Following that presentation comes a presentation of the Micro realms. Examples of Micro realms within the BEAR are the Barents Road, the Botnia Arc, the Murmansk corridor, the Blue Highway, and some other projects concerned with the indigenous peoples cultural issues.

Also various ‘interest spheres’, either Macro- or Micro realms, have been identified, either through its active members, ‘member area’ or, where so has been possible, demarcated and presented on maps.

**The Arctic Council Realm**

The Arctic Council is a high-level intergovernmental forum that provides a mechanism to address the common concerns and challenges faced by the Arctic governments and the people of the Arctic. International Arctic co-operation started in the field of environmental protection, in accordance with the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) adopted in Rovaniemi, Finland, in June 1991. Based on this “Rovaniemi process”, the Arctic Council was established by a Declaration of eight Arctic states at their Ministerial Meeting in Ottawa in September 1996.

![Figure 1](Image)

*Figure 1*  The Arctic Council Realm.
With the establishment of the Arctic Council, environmental issues and sustainable development became key elements in the Council's sphere of activities. The Arctic Council has eight member states: the five Nordic countries, Canada, the Russian Federation and the United States.

For bodies representing indigenous peoples the Council has a separate category of Permanent Participants. Representatives of indigenous peoples sit at the same table with the member states' representatives, participating in the proceedings but without power of decision-making.

Moreover, the Council has Observers: states, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. At present, Germany, Great Britain, France, the Netherlands, and Poland are Observer states. According to the Ottawa Declaration, the Arctic Council is a high-level forum for the Arctic states charged with promoting Arctic issues, particularly sustainable development and environmental protection. Moreover, the Council distributes information, encourages education and stimulates interest in Arctic questions.

**Background to Arctic Council – the AEPS**

A Finnish proposal to convene a conference on the protection of the Arctic environment led to preparatory meetings in September 1989 where the 'Rovaniemi Process' was initiated. In June 1991 Environment Ministers from the Eight Arctic Rim countries (Canada, Denmark/Greenland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Soviet Union, and United States) met in Rovaniemi, Finland, for the First Arctic Ministerial Conference.

Important outcomes of this conference were the Rovaniemi Declaration and the adoption of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS), the objectives of which were:

- to protect the Arctic ecosystems, including humans;
- to provide for the protection, enhancement and restoration of environmental quality and sustainable utilization of natural resources, including their use by local populations and indigenous peoples in the Arctic;
- to recognize and, to the extent possible, seek to accommodate the traditional and cultural needs, values and practices of indigenous peoples as determined by themselves, related to the protection of the Arctic environment;
- to review regularly the state of the Arctic environment;
- to identify, reduce and, as a final goal, eliminate pollution.

The AEPS also formally recognized the importance of the active participation in the process of groups representing the indigenous peoples of the North. In order to be able to fulfil the goals set up under the AEPS for four working groups were established. The four programmes established in 1991 under the AEPS were:
Arctic Monitoring and Assessment Programme (AMAP) with responsibilities to monitor the levels of, and assess the effects of, anthropogenic pollutants in all compartments of the Arctic environment, including humans. Up to date covering some 20 programmes.

Conservation of Arctic Flora and Fauna (CAFF) with responsibilities to facilitate the exchange of information and coordination of research on species and habitats of Arctic flora and fauna. Up to date covering some 16 programmes.

Emergency Prevention, Preparedness and Response (EPPR) with responsibilities to provide a framework for future cooperation in responding to the threat of Arctic environmental emergencies. Up to date covering some 9 programmes.

Protection of the Arctic Marine Environment (PAME) with responsibilities to take preventative and other measures, directly or through competent international organizations, regarding marine pollution in the Arctic, irrespective of origin. Up to date covering some 7 programmes.

Further AEPS Ministerial conferences were held in Nuuk, Greenland in 1993 (Nuuk Declaration) and in Inuvik, Canada in 1996 (Inuvik Declaration). These conferences reviewed the progress of the above-mentioned groups and further developed their tasks and responsibilities. A fifth group was also established:

Sustainable Development and Utilization (SDU) with responsibilities to propose steps governments should take to meet their commitment to sustainable development of the Arctic, including the sustainable use of renewable resources by indigenous peoples. Up to date covering some 8 programmes.

The Fourth AEPS Ministerial Conference in Alta, Norway, June 1997 marked the point at which the AEPS was subsumed under the Arctic Council, which is now responsible for continuing the work initiated under the AEPS. This includes overseeing and coordinating the future work of the programmes established under the AEPS, including AMAP. The Arctic Council held its first Ministerial Meeting in Iqaluit, Canada, in September 1998 (Iqaluit Declaration) and falls under the responsibilities of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs in the eight Arctic countries.

A majority of the more than 60 projects falling within the sphere of one of the above-mentioned working groups deals to a large extent with issues which a covering what is called the Circumpolar region or the more specific region which in many cases concerns the situation in North-West Russia and a neighbouring country as Norway.

However, the funding of projects varies from strictly national – Norway, USA, Canada etc. – to a more general participation – EU 5th Framework programme, Nordic Council of Ministers (NMC), UN-ECE, CIP, WMO, GEF, Barents Secretariat, etc. In addition to the main funding bodies, local counterparts also fund many of the programmes.
Two projects addressing the situation concerning specifically the Barents region are to be found in the Sustainable Development Working Group (SDWG). One of the projects deals with Freshwater Fishery Management in the Barents Region and goes over the period 1998–2000. The goal of this project is to provide Sami with a broad picture of the current status of the affairs and to identify steps to be taken to increase Sami involvement in the management of fisheries.

In addition, a representative steering committee for sustainable freshwater fisheries in the Barents Region would be established which would have Sami representation. The Sami Council has identified four issues regarding the Sami freshwater fishery for study: historical; socio-economic; co-management models; and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK). To address these four issues, the Sami Council proposed a two-year multidisciplinary program whereby the current management regimes for freshwater fisheries across the Barents Region are analysed in the light of their impact on Sami.

The other project directly dealing with Barents region is the Comparative Analysis of Coastal Fishery Management Systems. The goal of the project is to identify how best to incorporate Sami Traditional Ecological Knowledge into managing coastal fish resources and what institutional steps need to be taken in order to ensure Sami representation. Fishery management arrangements in three fjords in Northern Norway will be taken as an example.

Lyngen, Tana and Tysfjord, and their arrangements will be compared to selected coastal fisheries in the Kola Peninsula, northern Canada, Greenland and Alaska. Levels of co-management in all fisheries will be examined and their applicability to the Sami coastal fishery will be ascertained. The project will also document the extent of Sea Sami knowledge and involvement in the coastal and fjord fisheries of the regions they inhabit. Most importantly, the project will best illuminate what institutional arrangements need to be made in order to incorporate Sami knowledge and skill into the coastal fishery management regime.

To summarise, one must admit that the five working groups have produced a considerable amount of research material, since the beginning of the nineties when they started, and which to a great extent is made available to the public on the web. Furthermore, one must declare that they have been an important contributor to the general knowledge bank, which exist today on various phenomena in the arctic region.

The Northern Forum Interest Realm

One of the earliest initiated interest realms with an awareness of northern issues is the organisation named The Northern Forum. The Forum is a non-profit, international organization composed of more than twenty sub-national or regional governments from ten different countries.
The member regions are; in United States of America – State of Alaska; in Canada – Province of Alberta, Yukon Territory, Northwest Territories; in People’s Republic of China – Heilongjiang Province; in Japan – Hokkaido Prefecture; in Republic of Korea – Republic of Korea; in Mongolia – Dornod Aimag (Province); in Russia – Arkhangelsk Oblast, Evenk Autonomous Okrug, Kamchatka Oblast, Khaty Mansiysk Autonomous Okrug, Komi Republic, Magadan Oblast, Nenets Autonomous Okrug, St. Petersburg, Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Sakhalin Oblast, Yamalo Nenets Autonomous District; in Finland – Province of Lapland; in Norway – Regional Authority of Northern Norway (Landsdelsutvalget), i.e., Nord-Trøndelag, Nordland, Troms and Finnmark; and in Sweden – Norrbotten County and Västerbotten County.

Northern regions share some characteristics that set them apart from other areas of the world. These include:

- an economy based upon the extraction of natural resources;
- a lack of internal capital resources;
- limited infrastructural development;

Figure 2
The Northern Forum Interest Realm (Source: The Northern Forum).
Macro Realms in The Barents Region

a harsh climates and a vulnerable ecosystems;
- diverse and relatively strong indigenous cultures; and
- sparsely populated

Such complex factors create unique challenges for regional Governors and other executives. From throughout the North, the Northern Forum brings these leaders together to address common political, environmental and economic issues.

The idea of creating an organization of northern regional governments was raised in 1974 by the government of Hokkaido, Japan, during the first of a series of international conferences on northern issues. The Northern Forum developed from a Northern Regions Conference held in 1990 in Anchorage, Alaska, attended by more than 600 delegates from 10 countries. The Forum was formally established in November 1991.

Interest spheres and operations

Since its establishment during the break-up of the Soviet Union, the Northern Forum has evolved from an experiment in international relations into an active international organization. Through the Forum, members work cooperatively to help to improve living conditions for all Northerners. Members cooperate on four Northern Forum.

The Northern Forum have singled out four areas which they think are of importance to have on their agenda. They have identified the following programme:
- Environment;
- Sustainable Economic Development;
- Society and Culture; and
- Governance and Policy.

A fundamental part of the Northern Forum’s operations reflects the communicative purpose of any forum: the group sponsors international meetings throughout the year. In addition to the Northern Forum Board of Directors meetings and General Assemblies, the Forum hosts smaller internal working meetings. Through the initiatives of its members, Secretariat and Associate Secretariats, the Northern Forum also helps to coordinate international gatherings for other organizations, governmental agencies and groups.

Implementing intra- and inter-regional projects is another primary aspect of the Northern Forum’s operations. Further activities include responding to members’ requests for emergency assistance, supporting bi-lateral and multilateral international agreements, and raising awareness of Northern issues among international organizations and national leaders of northern countries.

The Northern Forum is not a trade or commercial group. However, the organization helps its members to develop trade and business contacts. Working primarily “behind the scenes,” the Forum has a proven record of improving relationships among the three sectors (public, pri-
vate, and non-profit), particularly regarding operations within the Russian Federation.

Many of today's commercial success stories in the North are the results of the Forum's pioneering efforts to bring business and governmental leaders together during past years. Thus, through the work of the Northern Forum, different commercial entities with interests in the Northern Regions have established meaningful government contacts at high levels throughout Northern Russia, Northern Europe and North America. These contacts continue to lead to increased international business opportunities.

The Northern Dimension Realm

The Northern Dimension has in a few years become a concept on everybody's lips. This originally Finnish initiative from 1997 has focused the minds of numerous Northern players. It has given impetus to new strategic thinking not only among governments but also at the sub-national level, within non-governmental organizations, private business and last but not least, northern scientific networks.

In formal terms there are two complementary Northern Dimension concepts. The European Union has included a Northern Dimension in its external and cross-border policies. The Government of Canada has adopted a Northern Dimension for its foreign policies. The Northern European Initiative of the U.S. Government is closely related to these two policy concepts. With these policy concepts in place the scene is set for deeper transatlantic co-operation on northern issues.

One of the aims of the EU's Northern Dimension concept is to counteract tendencies towards a new European divide along the border between the expanded European Union after the next EU enlargement and the Russian Federation. Both partners, the EU and Russia, recognized this risk at an early stage in the transition process following the end of the cold war. The acceding countries in the region, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Poland and the EEA countries Iceland and Norway can in this context be included in the EU family and have their voices and influence on the Northern Dimension agenda.

The most recent phase of enlargement gave the EU a reason to reconsider its northern policies. With the Swedish and the Finnish memberships the EU expanded beyond the polar circle. The EU had lost an earlier arctic outreach with the withdrawal of Greenland from EU membership. The EU also became next-door neighbour to the Russian Federation with a 1300 km common border. The significance of the common border will be further emphasized when the EU within a few years, as assumed, admits four new members in the Baltic Sea region. One aim of the Finnish Northern Dimension initiative was to strengthen the impact of these fundamental geopolitical and economic changes in EU policies.

The EU has prepared its Northern Dimension positions in close co-operation with its partner countries in the European north. The com-
mon political platform for the EU’s co-operation with the partners was established at the Foreign Ministers’ Conference in Helsinki, in December 1999.

The Northern Dimension Action Plan

On the basis of the results of Helsinki conference an Action Plan on the Northern Dimension was prepared and finally endorsed at the meeting of the European Council in Santa Maria da Feira, Portugal.

The Action Plan consists of two parts; a horizontal part, which recalls the major challenges and priorities for action as well as the legal, institutional and financial framework for activities within the Northern Dimension; and an operational part, which sets out objectives and perspectives for actions during 2000–2003. This time period was considered appropriate for achieving tangible results.

Main objectives in the Action Plan are covering the following 13 key sectors:

- energy,
- transport,
- telecommunication/information society,
- environment and natural resources,
- nuclear safety,
- public health,
- trade,
- business co-operation as well as
- investment promotion,
- human resources development and research,
- justice and home affairs,
- regional and cross-border co-operation and
- Kaliningrad.

It is important to realise that the Action Plan is not a list of priority projects, a ‘shopping list’. Rather it is a political recommendation and a reference document to be taken into account in preparing projects and activities funded by the EU, the member states and other players. To be able to be successful in the implementation phase, joint financing by Community programs, international financing institutions, national programs and the private sector is regarded as essential.

37. North Meets North, Northern Research Forum Akureyri, 4-6 November 2000
THEME SESSION “IMPLEMENTATION OF A NORTHERN DIMENSION”. Speech by Ambassador Peter Stenlund, Finland, Chairman of the Senior Arctic Officials, the Arctic Council.
INTERREG IIIA Kolarctic – programme is one of EU’s outer frontier programmes. Its point of departure is compared to other outer border programmes rather exceptional as the programme area can be said to have two outer frontiers, i.e., the western outer frontier between EU member states and an EES country and the eastern frontier which is EU’s outer border to Russia. The functional border is that between EU and Russia. The current writings in the programme documents as “the border and cross-border activities” are referring to the border between North Calotte and Russia and the cross-border activities.

Tangible cross-border cooperation between the North Calotte, Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblast started already in 1993 with the signing of the Kirkenes declaration. The Euro-Arctic cooperation was at that time the same as the INTERREG IIIA Kolarctic – programme area. Since then, the Barents Euro-Arctic area of cooperation has been extended, however, the INTERREG programme continues as originally set out.

Two reasons lies behind the isolation of the border areas. First of all, the border has cut off the border societies economic, social and cultural connections and also prevented a common administration of the regions. Secondly, these areas are usually neglected from the central government or having a lower priority from the centre which has meant they are receiving less attention and hence a lower status at the national level. One of the main objectives with the community initiative taken by INTERREG is that national borders should not form an obstacle for a balanced and development and integration in Europe. The objective for EU is to strengthen the economic and social unity, promote cross-border cooperation between states and regions and encourage a balanced development within EU.

The activity between the EU member states and with other countries and in the border regions is of prime importance for the initiative taken. Attention is therefore given to cooperation, which concerns the outer frontiers of the EU and on cooperation between the most peripheral areas in the EU.

The INTERREG III – programme is divided into three different sectors during the programme period 2000–2006:

- Cross-border cooperation (INTERREG IIIA), is directly addressed to actual cross-border cooperation.
- Cooperation between nations (INTERREG IIIB), is mainly dealing with questions addressing land use and the development of an operational region development strategy between the member states.
- Trans national cooperation (INTERREG IIIC), where the regions are not border areas but rather can be found anywhere in Europe.

The objective is to compare experience and good praxis.

Within the INTERREG IIIA programme part, the North Calotte programme embraces two funding programmes, the Interreg North Calotte programme and the Interreg Kolarctic programme. Within the INTERREG B-part, by Interreg IIIB Baltic Sea programme and Inter-
reg IIIB Northern Periphery programme. Furthermore, the North Calotte programme is bordering two other programme areas, the Interreg Kvarken – Mittskandia and Interreg Karelen. In addition to the above said, the INTERREG III – Calotte programme is focusing on four different development areas:

- Development of the economy in the North Calotte region.
- Promoting cross-border competence development at local and regional level.
- Promoting the Sami community development.
- Development of technological support structures.

The new INTERREG III North Calotte programme period stretches over the years 2000–2006 and has a planned budget frame of some 62 MEUR. The Interreg – Kolartic programme, coordinates the North Calotte programme administratively however, there are two different groups taking the decision for project finance. The financing of the INTERREG community initiative comes from only one structural fund: the EU’s Regional Development Fund (ERDF). Accordingly this means that the regional development activities that affect rural areas can have funds allocated from the EAGGF, activities that concerns human development issues can get support from the ESF, those which concerns structural adjustment in fisheries from FIFG. Hence, with this new instrument of finance one can improve the coordination and linkage effects of those measures and work, which have the support from EU38.

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Figure 3: Programme area for the INTERREG IIIA - Kolartic in dark grey. Lighter grey shadings are seen as the enterprise cooperation target areas.
(Source: Delprogram KOLARTIC 2000-2006. PROGRAMFÖRSLAG. FINLAND, SVERIGE, NORGE OCH RYSSLAND. Norrbotten County Administration. Page 7.)

Macro Realms in The Barents Region
Delimitation of the Programme Area

The programme area comprises exactly the same geographical area as Barents Interreg IIA – programme had in the earlier period, i.e., of the concerned EU-countries are Lapland County in Finland and Norrbotten County in Sweden included. For areas falling outside the EU are Finnmark, Troms and Nordland counties in Norway affected and from Russia are Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblast and Nenetsians Autonom District members. The limitations made above to a few certain regions are justified above all for the sake of programme continuity. The area has strong historical connections and furthermore, the area is the northern most part of the Barents Euro-Arctic area.

Regarding projects dealing with enterprise cooperation the demarcation of the eastern border concerns the entire Russian border to EU, which apart from Murmansk and Arkhangelsk Oblast and Nenetsians Autonom District also comprises the Republic of Karelia, Leningard Oblast and St. Petersburg town. The initiative to the extension has come from the entrepreneurs on the North Calotte.

The programme area is quite large. The border between EU and Russia is roughly 500 km, and covers some 1.0 million square kilometres. Approximately 3.4 million people are living in the area.

The Northern Periphery Programme

The features of the area are very identical from country to country, i.e., extremely sparsely populated, showing long distances between the settlements and has a harsh climate characterise the northernmost areas of Finland, Scotland, Sweden and Norway. The key question for this programme is: how can new entrepreneurship grow while traditional industries are rationalizing their operations, and while labour is increasing in the fields of tourism and information technology? In order to address these issues Finland, Scotland, Sweden and Norway have set up a Programme, which is co-financed by European Commission ERDF Article 10.

The overall objective for the programme is to contribute to the improvement of services and value creation in northern areas of Finland, Scotland, Sweden and Norway.

The programme is focused on the development of new knowledge about innovative and effective solutions for sustainable business activity, service provision and land use/spatial development planning.

Enterprises, public organisations, educational institutes and other relevant bodies can apply for funding for pilot projects related to these topics. The total budget applied for the programme for year 1999 was some 13.33 MECU, from which half is public counter-parties assistance and half Commission – corresponding Norwegian assistance.

The programme covers geographically the following areas: In Scotland it covers the Highlands & Islands Objective 1 area; North and West Grampian; Rural Stirling and Upland Tayside. In Finland it covers mainly the Objective 6 area and adjacent areas in regions of Pohjois-Pohjanmaa, Keski – Pohjanmaa and Pohjois-Savo. In Sweden it is the Objective 6 area and adjacent coastal areas and finally in Norway it is the four northernmost counties of Nord-Trøndelag, Nordland, Troms and Finnmark.

Northern Periphery Programme Sub-actions

The main programme is divided into three separate sub-action groups. Under sub-action one falls mainly pilot projects involving provision of services. Sub-action one includes also projects that seek to address barriers, which prevent the provision of efficient service production for households and local companies in very sparsely population areas. As can be seen in Table 1, half (5) of the ten projects are falling under a Finnish leadership, four under Scottish leadership and one under Norwegian leadership. A Swedish counterpart can be identified in seven of the ten projects. It is said in the programme declaration that focus may be put on both privately and publicly produced services on the supply side, and both on business and consumer services on the demand side.

Pilot projects concerning business development and sustainable resource management are placed under sub-action 2. The main objective here is to highlight new ways of increasing value creation in existing companies and through entrepreneurial activity in new businesses in very sparsely populated areas, and to explore new ways of sustainable management of resources.

As can be seen in Table 2, ten of the sixteen projects are lead by Finland, three by Scotland, two by Norway and one by Sweden. A Swedish counterpart has been recognised in seven of the fifteen foreign lead projects.
In achieving better economic stability in the areas concerned, the Programme will lead to sustained support for, and maintenance of, current settlement structures, which will play a key role in keeping support based industries in the areas.

Finally, the task of Collation and Dissemination of documentation relating to new knowledge and the exchange of good-practice has been placed under sub-action 3. As can be seen from Table 3, two of the eighteen projects have been cancelled, i.e., they never went further than to the original concept. Of the sixteen projects, nine were lead by Scotland, six by Finland and one by Sweden.

The main objective is to enable the active participants in the programme to learn from other projects within the programme, and from other external sources, which in substance are closely connected to the overall objective of the programme. The sub-action also aims to create new research-based knowledge about peripherality and northern conditions.

As can be seen from Table 1–3, the majority of the projects within the Northern Periphery are managed and coordinated by Scotland or by Finland. Three of the projects are coordinated by Norway and only two are coordinated by Sweden. The marginal influence of both Swedish and Norwegian initiatives in this programme is quite apparent and one can only hope that in the future these countries will show a greater interest in the activities and proposals put forward under this umbrella programme.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Lead country</th>
<th>Swedish counterpart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Participatory Planning as a Tool for Rural Development</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scottish Nordic Business Forum</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrated Coastal Management and Local Business Development, The Case of Salmon</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Round Pole in Building</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festivals on the Top of Europe</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women in the Periphery, Northnet</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation of the Northnet-project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ProAqua</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deer Management</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of the ICT/Multimedia Industry and the Adventure, Green and Heritage Tourist Industry in Remote Areas by Making Use of New Technology</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adding Value to Low-Grade Timber</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultivation and Breeding of Northern Rubus Species</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development of Recycling and Utilization of Construction Waste</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological Utilisation of Peat</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Highlights</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural Area Development with Advanced Technology, RAD-WAT</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural and Cultural Values in Sustainable Rural Tourism</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Projects relating to the Business Development and Sustainable Resource Management.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project name</th>
<th>Lead country</th>
<th>Swedish counterpart</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New Research Based Knowledge about Peripherality and Planning Practises in Depopulated Build-Up Areas in the Northern Periphery, NRBK</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Development and Transfer of New Knowledge and Good Practise in Relation to Sustainable Rural Development in the Northern Periphery, Rural Development Transfer Network</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Role of Regional Milleux in Regional Economic Development</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT-Scand</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 1 – Virtual Call Centre</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 2 – Northern Activities Net</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 3 – Shared Virtual Office</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Cancelled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 4 – Virtual Worker Model Agency Support Mechanisms</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 5 – National Heritage</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project 6 – An evaluation of the effectiveness of telemedicine and medical education in peripheral areas</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ENTREE – Entrepreneurship Education in the Northern Periphery</td>
<td>SE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Common Potential in the Northernmost part of Europe – Northern Potential</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selection Criteria and Model Evaluation for Waste Disposal in Sparsely Populated Cool Temperate Regions</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Management</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liquid (Grey wastewater)</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solid (Solid waste)</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social (Social matters)</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Learning Networks in Northern Periphery Areas</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Re-Use of Peat Production Areas</td>
<td>FI</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Women – New Images</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. Projects relating to Documentation and Exchange of Good Practice
**Baltic Sea Region (BSR) Realm**

The European Commission adopted the Interreg II C programme for the Baltic Sea Region in December 1997. The Baltic Sea Region is one of seven European co-operation areas covered by this Community Initiative. Initially the programme was designed to provide co-financing to transnational projects on spatial planning and regional development.

Already by year 1994, it was based upon established ministerial co-operation in spatial planning in the overall Baltic Sea area through the “VASAB” process (“Visions and Strategies around the Baltic Sea 2010”). At EU level, the “European Spatial Development Perspective” (ESDP) was adopted in 1999 laying the foundations for future joint co-operation on spatial development throughout the overall European territory.

The EU countries involved in the BSR-programme are Denmark, Germany, Finland and Sweden. Further participating countries are Norway, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russia and Belarus. The programme supports exclusively transnational projects involving partners from at least three or more participating states.

The 45 selected projects financed under the programme are promoting a Baltic urban system and a balanced settlement structure. They are aiming at improving communications and identifying innovative energy solutions as part of sustainable regional development. Integrated management of coastal zones and islands belong to the fields of interest as well as developing spatial planning strategies, in particular with respect to natural and cultural heritage and tourism.
The EU Interreg II C contribution amounts to some 25 MEUR from the European Development Fund (ERDF) to co-finance EU project partners. For Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs), project partners received financing from the EU PHARE and TACIS Programmes but have contributed also from own national funds. Norway contributes with 2 MEUR to support Norwegian project partners.

The BSR influence sphere covers all of Sweden and almost all of Finland, which means the Barents region area for these two countries are concerned and can be seen as a sub-region of the Baltic Sea Region. For the three Norwegian county areas belonging to the Barents region almost none are falling within the BSR, except for some marginal mountainous areas draining eastwards into Sweden.

Furthermore, all the drainage area with an outlet into the Baltic Sea and starting within the Karelian Republic in Russia, i.e., mainly the southern part of the republic surrounding Lake Ladoga, are also seen as a part of the BSR project area, which means that this also could be seen as covering a part of the Barents region influence area in Russia.
Micro Realms in The Barents Region

The realms falling within what is called the Micro realms sphere consist mainly of an interest area created by a group of people with a common goal manifested through the initiatives taken by some private or public body. The micro realms are either areas or corridors along a certain road or along a coastal line. The main object for creating the interest sphere varies and at one time it can be the interest in boosting economic activities along and within the identified sphere, i.e., tourism, fishing, culture exchange and conservation, hi-tech development and promotion or as in others just the exploration and development of new or improved communication links.

The following lists some of the interest spheres, which are seen as of higher importance for the people living within the BEAR area. Some of them are merely local or bilateral in that sense that they only concerns one or at the most two of the countries in the BR. Others look more like corridors in their extension although they can comprise all the four countries within the BEAR area.

**The Barents Sea Interest Realm**

In the creation of the Barents Region cooperation one excluded the marine part of the area, i.e., the Barents Sea is not seen as a part of the cooperation activities taking part under the declaration that was signed in the Kirkenes agreement. However, fishing in the Barents Sea is of
great importance for both Russia and Norway. The fishing industry located in the northeast of Norway – mainly those industries around Tromsø, Vadsø and Kirkenes – are to a large extent dependent on the catches made by the Russians. Hence, what is taking place in the Barents Sea have repercussions on the economic activities located on land.

For the same reason is the heavy industry in this region, which is mainly basing its day-to-day work on the repair of fishing boats also counting on incoming work from the Russian fleet. The amount of people living in this part of Norway is characterised by its small population settlements, very scattered with large distances between the municipalities and with bad communication facilities.

Much of the larger settlements are located along the coast, which is a reflection of the main economic activities that for the last 500 years has formed this area’s dominant way of living – fishing. The realm comprises of the coastal areas of Norway and Murmansk Oblast. However, much of the activities of importance for the Barents region cooperation are taking place in the Finnmark fylke, in Norway.

**The Botnian Arc**

The Botnian Arc is an umbrella project for promoting cross-border co-operation between Sweden and Finland in the region surrounding the Gulf of Bothnia. The Botnian Arc occupies an advantageous position between the Baltic region and the Barents region. The project spans from June 1998 until June 2001.

This region has Western Europe’s northernmost concentration of industry and advanced know-how. The Botnian Arc project will con-
tribute to the creation of a common vision of the region's future and a development strategy that will strengthen both business and society.

Important goals of Bothnian Arc are to identify possibilities for future development in the region, to create networks for vital, long-term regional co-operation, and to make the Bothnian Arc a well-known name in the European Union.

The Bothnian Arc within the Barents region belongs to one of the most successful areas of cooperation between two national states – Finland and Sweden – in northern Europe. The area gives the business firms a competitive operation environment and is at the same time able to offer pleasant and safe living conditions for the inhabitants.

Many of the business firms and the higher education nodes like Luleå universities form together with the various research and incubator facilities and the regional administrative centres well functioning networks cooperating within the various industrial clusters. Much of the success in the area stems from the inhabitants basis of valuation, their readiness to be engaged, sense of responsibility, trustworthiness, professional skill and their willingness to improve their knowledge base.

Objectives for future development

The visionary section of the Bothnian Arc working group have identified three parts that are important to fulfill if one hopes to obtain a successful development of the area. First of all it is important to recognise that one has to strengthen the knowledge base in higher learning. Secondly it is important to support the start of new enterprises and thirdly one should also recognise the importance of developing the cooperation network, which will come out from this type of 'regional constellation. The following paragraphs emphasises the above-mentioned points.

Strengthening of the knowledge base in higher learning

One of the most important production factors is technical expertise on a high level. Through a more intense cooperation and an increased interchange between the higher educational centres and the industry – which both clusters in the area have shown that they have plentiful of – a more effective and useful knowledge and know-how exchange could be acquired.

The supply of skilled labour is a central factor in determining the success and prosperity for the industry. At present, many of the most promising companies in the expanding sectors are facing a shortage of skilled labour. In the future even the basic industries will be facing the same problem when many of the workers are becoming pensioners.

To be able to secure the labour at all levels and in all sectors for this area is one of the most important objectives today for the educational system to solve in order to be better prepared for the future. To be successful in the area, knowledge of the development within different branches and sectors is an important factor to consider. Therefore, it is
vitally important that an understanding of the symbiosis of teaching fa-
cilities and industry is created in the region.

One of the most important factors in strengthening the industries
competitiveness lies in their capabilities of creating innovations, their
abilities to develop new products and/or new production methods as
well as their capacity for working in networks. The rapid changes in
their operational environment imply an even better management envi-
ronment. Special attention must be given to marketing and develop-
ment of knowledge in conjunction with a global market orientation.

* Supporting start of new enterprises

The tradition of entrepreneurship is weak in the region, hence, a low
rate of new entrepreneurs in the Swedish part of the Barents region.
This is especially true for large-scale industries, dominated by the for-
est- mining- and heavy metal industry sectors. However, a diversified
enterprise sector is a very important attraction factor and one should in
every way support the establishment of new enterprises.

To remedy this, education in starting new enterprises – manage-
ment, marketing, etc. – should be encouraged in any way, as well as in-
creasing and facilitate the possibilities for new risk capital, either avail-
able for starting up new enterprises or in expanding already existing
companies. These measurements should however be closely monitored
in order to have investment done in unnecessary bad speculation
projects.

* Developing the cooperation network

Cooperation within the BothnianArc – both in Finland and
Sweden – but in particular between these two countries, have often
been said to be to weak. A well functioning regional, national and in-
ternational network between different actors in the society is said to
promote the establishment of an attractive innovation environment.
With the exception of the twin cities Torneå – Haparanda, cooperation
between Finnish and Swedish companies is very low. The preconditions
for cooperation can definitely be improved.

Another important forum for cooperation are the universities, other
higher research- and educational centres. The universities have an im-
pressive mass of knowledge and are posing an important knowledge
bank, in particular when it comes to specialist knowledge of the Barents
region realm. The exchange of teachers and students between the two
countries could be more intensive and directed if the exchange format
was less formal and strict. This is a resource knowledge and skill that
could be tapped more systematic.

Cooperation between the industry, the educational sector and local
as well as regional authorities should be cultivated more. Notwithstand-
ing a number of co-operations and projects exist in the region; many of
the planning activities done at the municipal level or the regional level
are unknown to the business communities. Preferably the goal should
be that a more natural exchange of information in both ways through
official as well as unofficial channels should be worth striving for. There
is sign that the will is there, however, so far no successful solutions have
yet been found. A sometimes-mentioned solution to facilitate this could be arranged through informal meetings where an exchange of information could take place.

**THE BARENTS ROAD INTEREST REALM**

Barents Road\(^\text{40}\) refers to the almost 1500 km long road between Bodø and Murmansk via Arjeplog, Luleå, Haparanda/Torneå, Rovaniemi, Salla and Kandalaksja. The organisation’s first congress was held in Murmansk on the 18\(^{\text{th}}\) of March in 1997. The purpose of the organisation is to be a centre for an expanding co-operation within the Barents Road Region. It shall also work for an increased understanding between people and a peaceful co-existence in the region.

The overall goal is to create employment in the region through development of tourism and improve the conditions for business development.

The activities will mainly run in project form. The funding is through membership fees and grants from the participants of the project. Applications for financial support will be sent to external financiers (EU among others). The different projects can be local, national or international.

Fully adequate members are municipals and cities that benefit by the road connection. Support membership is offered to everyone who is interested, companies, organisations, institutions and associations among

\(^{40}\) Barentsin Tie in Finnish, Barents Vei in Norwegian and Barents Väg in Swedish.
others that may have use of and want to support the road organisation and its idea. The organisations highest deciding power is the yearly congress. A committee leads the activity with two members from each country. The chair shall wander between the countries. To the committee a workgroup is assigned with two members from each country.

**The Blue Highway Interest Realm**

The Atlantic – Karelian corridor or as it is called in Sweden, the Blue Road, or Sinninen Tie in Finland belongs to one of the four designated development areas by EU in the Baltic Sea region. It is designated as belonging to the Interreg areas and there are presently many ongoing and planned coordination activities along the corridor.

The phenomenon the Blue Road started in 1962 with the ambition to improve the communication in an east-west direction between E4 in Sweden and E6 in Norway. The initiative taken on the Swedish side also arose some interest on the Finnish side as it in some way also indicated that this could increase the boat traffic on Kvarken. A road community with common interest was started by in the late 1960s and the members were mainly called for from the adjoining municipalities along the road. Under the years, the area has been extended eastwards and by year 1992 the road community was extended with a Russian/Karelian section.

The Blue Road has its extension from its start at Mo in Rana in Norway in the west via Sweden and Kvarken, the narrowest part of the Gulf of Bothnia, and via Finland to Petrozavodsk and Onega in The Republic of Karelia in the east, a road link of some 1600 kilometres connecting four countries. The activities have varied over the years and have with time become more east-oriented with the fall of the iron curtain in

![Figure 9](image-url)
1989. Today a rather close Swedish-Russian cooperation project exists within the field of culture tourism. In addition the Swedish-Russian cooperation is strengthened through the twin-region agreement that was signed between the County of Västerbotten and Republic of Karelia already by year 1994.

Apart from the four different national road-associations also an international Blue Road Association has been created with an expressed prime objective to strengthen the cooperation between the members and areas along the road. However, there is no expressed wish to link the Blue-Road Cooperation in any way to the BEAR, neither is there any signs that this will be an item on the agenda. On the other hand the interest is more directed towards St. Petersburg, and there are obviously signs that they are giving the so-called E-12 alliance – the southern Finnish-Russian link of the Blue Road – a greater attention.

Kvarken Councils Interest Realm

An interest sphere that can be said to be partly micro and partly macro, is the so-called Kvarken Councils interest realm. On the Swedish side, it includes all the municipalities in Västerbotten County, comprising some 250000 people, which is also a part of the Barents region, in addition it include the municipality of Örnsköldswik in Västernorrland County with a population of some 60 000.

However, the regions on the Finnish side – are not members of the Barents region. They include some 57 municipalities in Western Finland County; comprising a population of more than 450000 people. Of this population some 100000 people have Swedish as their mother tongue and of the resting 350000 people, many understand the Swedish language.

Figure 10

The Kvarken Interest Sphere.
Since the Kvarken, as the narrowest part of the Gulf of Bothnia is called, unites Ostrobothnia and Västerbotten, the populations on either side learned long ago to cooperate. In the 1300s, the whole of Swedish Norrland was administered from the Castle of Korsholm in Finnish Ostrobothnia. For many years, the inhabitants of the archipelago in Björkoby and on Holmön carried both mail and passengers across the Kvarken – an early precursor to today’s cross-Kvarken transport services and cross-Kvarken cooperation. A map from 1573 illustrates how the Kvarken already by then was an important communication passage and how people crossed over the Kvarken at different times of the year.

In the 19th century, the first steamboat service was introduced in the Gulf of Bothnia and the Kvarken. During the war years in the late 1930s and early 1940s, traffic was very lively across the Kvarken, with boats on the open water and with horses and motorised vehicles when and where the ice could bear them.

More organised Kvarken cooperation developed out of the links between the Nordic Charity associations “Pohjola-Norden” in Finland and “Föreningen Norden” in Sweden and from twinning cooperation between municipalities.

1972 saw the founding of the Kvarken Council at the first Kvarken Conference in Vaasa, Vasa. The early years focused on creating an organisation and on solidly basing cooperative activities in the municipalities, local authorities and organisations of the region. In 1979, the Kvarken Council became a part of official Nordic cooperation with economic support from the Nordic Council of Ministers and its Nordic Committee of Senior Officials for Regional Policy (NÄRP).

An interest sphere that can be said to be partly micro and partly macro, is the so-called Kvarken Councils interest realm. On the Swed-
ish side, it comprises of mainly of Västerbotten County which is part of the Barents region plus the municipality of Örnsköldsvik in Västernorrland County. Furthermore it includes Helgeland in in Norway, which is also a part of the Barents region. However, the municipalities on the Finnish side – are not members of the Barents region.

The Kvarken Council and Interreg

Since 1995, Kvarken cooperation has been a major part of the regional cooperation programme Interreg IIA Kvarken-MittSkandia (see Figure 11). The Kvarken Council acts both as chief secretariat and project participant within the regional cooperation programme.

Together with the MittSkandia region and the County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, the Kvarken Council forms the Executive Group Secretariat. This means responsibility for information dissemination and for providing advice to project applicants, the preparation of applications to go before the Executive Group, as well as presenting accounts and reporting back on the implementation of the programme to the programme Monitoring Committee, various national authorities and EU bodies.

As project participant, the Kvarken Council implements concrete cooperation projects with partial funding from Interreg IIA Kvarken-MittSkandia. Here, the Kvarken Council has taken a special responsibility upon itself for projects, which come under the Transport and Communications measure, with the aim of ensuring a ferry service across the Kvarken is maintained. The Kvarken Council is also project participant for other projects within tourism, culture, trade and industry and the environment. Approximately 25% of the nearly 60 projects, which have so far been accepted within Interreg IIA Kvarken-MittSkandia, have the Kvarken Council as project participant.
The idea of town-twinning originated after World War II when people realised that close cooperation with their neighbours was the only way forward. The initial objective was, for towns from different European countries, to exchange experiences in all areas of local life.

The European Commission's town-twinning programme was launched in 1989. It aims to strengthen existing links between towns and at the development of new twinning initiatives by means of carefully targeted grants. It encourages in particular twinning agreements where in the past there have been few.

Another layer of so-called micro realms can be identified if one also takes into account all the exchange taking place in the many twin towns cooperation and exchange activities in the Barents region. The following presentation lists some of the exchange activities taking place between Swedish municipalities in the Barents region and their twin towns. The result is limited to municipalities on the Swedish arena and its twin towns in another country.

Similar twin town exchange takes of course place in Norway and Finland, however, data available for the two countries has been difficult to get hold of, and hence, only the Swedish twin town are accounted for here.

Many of Norrbotten County's twin town exchange and cooperation schemes are originating way back long before a BEAR-membership was a reality. Some of the earliest started just after the WW II and then it was mainly towns in Finland, which were singled out for any type of cooperation. The municipality of Kiruna is a good example of this type of exchange as many of the citizens in Kiruna took part in the rebuilding of Rovaniemi town, which was one of the most devastated towns in Finland.

The reconstruction of Rovaniemi that started in the late forties laid the foundation for a warm understanding of the post war problems faced by the Finns which has led to a continuous good relation between the two towns. On the Norwegian side Kiruna had its counterpart in the sea town Narvik.

The same warm exchange has also been maintain for many of the other municipalities in Norrbotten, i.e., Boden town initiated exchange both with Finland (Uleåborg) and Norway (Alta) during the same time period, Haparanda with Torneå in Finland and Hammerfest in Norway, the municipality of Överkalix started exchange in 1947 with the Finnish municipality Savukoski and for Övertorneå was the neighbouring town of Ylitornio the obvious counterpart in the exchange.

As can be seen from table 4, the exchange with towns in Russia started mainly during the early nineties after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. There are odd exceptions and for example Kiruna started...
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Twin town or municipality</th>
<th>Start year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arjeplog</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Umba</td>
<td>1992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arvidsjaur</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Kempele</td>
<td>1987</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td></td>
<td>Stravroupoli</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td></td>
<td>Florens</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Krakow</td>
<td>1993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Great Britain</td>
<td></td>
<td>Exmouth</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td></td>
<td>Secheim-Jugenheim</td>
<td>1995</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boden</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Uleåborg (Oulu)</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Alta</td>
<td>1949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aparity</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Aushikawa</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gallivare</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Korttä kommun</td>
<td>1990</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td></td>
<td>Vågans kommun</td>
<td>1985</td>
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<tr>
<td>Russia</td>
<td></td>
<td>Kirowsk kommun</td>
<td>1990</td>
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<td>Haparanda</td>
<td>Danmark</td>
<td>Ikast</td>
<td>1947</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td></td>
<td>Tornøe</td>
<td>1947</td>
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<td>Litauen</td>
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<td>Sirvintos</td>
<td>1992</td>
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<tr>
<td>Norge</td>
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<td>Hammerfest</td>
<td>1947</td>
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<td>Rysland</td>
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<td>Kveder</td>
<td>1993</td>
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<td>Jokkmokk</td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Lovozero-Murmansk</td>
<td>1995</td>
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<td>Kalajärvi</td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Pielavesi</td>
<td>1973</td>
</tr>
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<td>1991</td>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Kola</td>
<td>1991</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4

Twin Towns in Norrbotten County.

Point to Point Realms: Town-twinning
in the early 1980 a twin town exchange with Rustavi in Georgia, which at that time was a part of the former Soviet Union.

Eleven of the fourteen municipalities in Norrbotten County have established a twin town connection with Russia during the last ten years. This was a conscious investment suggested in the discussions both preceding and following the Kirkenes declaration.

The location of the twin towns in Russia show very definitely that one of the underlying objectives in the Barents cooperation, i.e., to boost the cultural exchange between people living in the area should be encouraged, has penetrated the work at the municipality levels.

One can also see that the governing municipalities in Norrbotten also have heeded this positive attitude. When asked on the importance and intensity of this twin town exchange all of the concerned authorities see the rediscovered Russian part as a very important event and at the action level, in many municipalities implemented through an intensive exchange of school pupils, this is one of the highlights of the year, when the school gets visitors from Russia or when they are allowed to go to Russia to see and meet their twin school on their home ground.

Visible in the twin town exchange is the fact that Sweden has become a member of the EU and that the Baltic states have become more accessible to twin town exchange. This has of course also affected the municipalities in northern Sweden, however, the trend during later years is also that far off places like some of the cities in Asia, Japan and America, are having the odd twin town with some of the municipalities in Norrbotten.

The picture that was seen in Norrbotten County can clearly be seen also in Västerbotten County. The municipalities of Bjurholm, Nordmalings, Norsjö, Skellefteå have all established twin town exchange already in the late forties, either in Finland – Kuivaniemi, Suomussalmi, Sodankylä, Vuolijokki, Brahestad, Pudasjärvi – or in Norway – Mo in Rana. Much of this exchange is based on the aid to refugees that was started at that time. However, some of this exchange has diminished over time and they are not as extensive now as they were during the fifties and sixties. A number of new twin town connections have during the fifties and sixties been established in Norway which today are still very active.

Exchange with places in Russia started already in the mid seventies. Thus, Umeå and Lycksele municipalities have developed a Twin Town co-operation protocols with Petrozavodsk and Olonets in Karelia already by 1976 and 1980. Robertsfors has a corresponding cooperation protocol with Kostamus, also in Karelia.

There is a manifested large presence of bilateral Swedish-Russian contacts between companies and non-profit organizations in both the Swedish BEAR-counties. A distinct example is a Russian-Swedish study concerning cultural heritage-tourism along the Karelian parts of the so-called Blue Highway, stretching from the Atlantic coast over Sweden and Finland to Lake Onega.

As can be seen from Table 6, only six of the municipalities in Västerbotten County have established a twin town exchange with a Russian counterpart, which is much lower than what is seen in Norrbotten.
Åsele municipality is the latest to initiate a twin town exchange with Lahdenpoyha in Karelia. Furthermore, the start year for an eastward ex-

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Municipality</th>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Twin town or municipality</th>
<th>Start year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bjärholm</td>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>Bardu</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Kuivaniemi</td>
<td>1946</td>
</tr>
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<td>Dorotea</td>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>Haalula</td>
<td>1994</td>
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<td>Russia</td>
<td>Olonets</td>
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<td>Vefone</td>
<td>1965</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Åhtari</td>
<td>1986</td>
</tr>
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<td>Palermo</td>
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</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td>Wertar</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>Kuhmu</td>
<td>1970</td>
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<td>Ylikiiminki</td>
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<td>Steinfold</td>
<td>1976</td>
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<td>Lögstor</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<td>Tallinn</td>
<td>1982</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>Bråviken</td>
<td>1946</td>
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<td></td>
<td>China</td>
<td>Tongling</td>
<td>1998</td>
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<td>Norway</td>
<td>Mo i Rana</td>
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<td>Mo i Rana</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Silec</td>
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<td>Würzburg</td>
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<td>Vened</td>
<td>1986</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Russia</td>
<td>Lahdenpoyha</td>
<td>Initiated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5

Twin Towns in Västerbotten County.
change with Russia came ten to fifteen years earlier in Västerbotten than in Norrbotten.

A common trait in the town-twinning process has been the strong local anchoring of ideas and contribution from the grass-root levels. People are engaged in aid projects when difficult times are seen in Russia and many school children are seriously involved in the yearly class-exchange, which have developed over the years. In general there is a popular cooperation taking part over the borders, which does not exist in other parts of Europe. The cooperation with Russia is also one of the issues that have priority.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County</th>
<th>Municipal-ity</th>
<th>Russian Twin Town</th>
<th>Start year</th>
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<td>Kola</td>
<td>1991</td>
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</table>

Table 6

Established twin town/municipality exchange between Russia and Norrbotten and Västerbotten counties.
Discussion

Over the years – and especially during the last decade – people in Northern Sweden have developed a unique form of initiating contacts and bridging the cooperation with Russia on issues dealing with the area now comprising the Barents region. The “locals” call it a “bottom-up-model” and it seems to lacks its parallel in other parts of Europe. A multitude of actors coming from regional administrations, town-twins, private as well as public enterprises, culture actors, universities, press, schools, political parties as well as individuals are all in one way or the other engaged in implementing this model. This can be seen in many aspects, however, much of the silent work taking place by all these actors is directed towards promotion and encouraging a modern network for cooperation.

Furthermore, a prime objective for these actors seems to be recognition of the work that is taking place in the north. Recognition is very important and is in a way a prerequisite for attracting funds from the outside world for the development of the area in the way they prefer. As long as their work is not recognised by the outside world, and especially by the EU, the hunt for capital, which can be utilised in the development of the Barents region, will be very difficult.

Much of what has been done during the last couple of years has been wrapped up in nice writings and speeches praising the work that is taking place, however, very little substance with regard to earmarked funds and capital have come to this area. What is needed is an uplift of the issues in the north so that they can be compared to the programmes that are launched for Western Balkan and the Barcelona programme. A necessary budget window must be opened for the north so it will allow the area to get momentum towards a successful development. In short, one needs to move from word to action. It is therefore very encouraging that the Minister for Foreign Affairs in Sweden, Ms Anna Lind\(^4\) together with Chris Patten the Foreign Commissioner stress the point that what is happening in the North must be seen as common matter for the EU.

Having said this, one must also say that it is tricky today to say that you work with a “pure” region. The reason why we say so, is the fact that today’s community actors most often do not relay on simply one single network, rather they communicate in a world consisting of a multitude of networks and hence a mixture of territories, all with their own regional boundaries. The earlier so common division and classification of an area into falling either under the homogenous region con-

\(^{4}\) Financial Times, 2000-12-20.
cept or falling under the functional region context, has in this world of
globalisation behaviour more or less lost its value.

As said earlier one of the reasons for having a problem in identifying
a “pure” region is the multitude of actors with widely differing de-
mands, competence and selected interests – economic, military, politi-
cal, environment and sector preferences which to a large extent governs
the sphere and boundaries of their “interest” area. These limited varia-
bles are usually called the common territorial preferences or the com-
mon region preferences.

Multitudes of all these networks, with its either visual or in-visual
boundaries, are formed by the actors working at and within the munic-
ipality, regional, national or the international arena. The horizons of in-
terest varies from actor to actor, however, they very often refer to the
Barents Region when they so think it is appropriate for fulfilling or sat-
tify their objectives.

An inventory shows that some actors are more active than others.
This can be seen most clearly when it comes to be active in applying for
and in implementing various investment or development projects
within the region. There are also a number of actors having a much
larger activity arena and the influence they have on the BEAR can
sometimes be rather diffuse, and most often very difficult to evaluate.

Clearly they have an influence on the decisions that are taken within
the BR, however, if they are boosting the work within the BR or not are
quite difficult to see. Time will have to work its toll before one can say
more specifically that programme so and so has been an agent for faster
and more substantial development in the region.

When it comes to the more formal planning qualifications – those at
the municipality level, the regional level or at the county council level –
very little of Barents region issues are to be found in Swedish regional
and municipal planning documents or in actual project investments.
This is also the case with risk awareness and preparedness against envi-
ronmental – especially nuclear – threats. A common reference to the
Barents Region cooperation is usually hidden in words like “one should
strive at increasing the international cooperation”, and with that one
usually means both the work with neighbouring countries as well as the
specific work directed at the BEAR.

The main result of the work presented in this report can be summa-
rised under the following points:

X BEAR of today is at its best a so-called regional building entity –
but not a functional regional unit.

X The utilisation of the region concept is very diffuse – almost any-
thing that spatially can be delimited tend unpremeditated to be
called a region

X In practice BEAR is more of a reference phenomena than a regional
entity. The exception is various destination projects – e.g., The Bar-
ents Road or Culture exchange and cooperation at the political
level.
The BEAR membership acts many times as a source of inspiration and reference frame for new and odd projects. And it is also to a large extent a question of projects rather than long-term investments in structures with a fundamental idea change.

Another image of BEAR is that it is seen as attractive especially for areas not becoming a member. For example the Komi Oblast has for years applied for membership – however, the Russian counter members have objected afraid of that they will become less in focus if new regions are included.

BEAR is sometimes seen as a possible investment ‘space’ (geographical, economic, political) in which it can be positive to be a member of. The membership give some formal legitimacy to initiate contacts with a large number of institutions in the near vicinity but also but no less important with institutions and bodies at the supra national levels.

The vision of BEAR as a motor for an East-Western economic development in the North has not lead to any tangible marks so far.

BEAR lies as one layer in a stratum of layers, where the delimitation of a regional unit usually is based on the content of interest shown by its members.

A greater part of the BEAR-related activities are taking place at the bilateral level. Very few multilateral development projects are to be identified.

General development in Russia together with the specific environment problems are affecting our civil preparedness more than the fact that we are a member of the BEAR.

Cross-border activities are mainly taking place between Norway/Russia and Finland/Russia, i.e., in areas bordering either one of the countries or both. So far it seems that activities in a BEAR projects have most intensive and extensive among the Norwegian-Russians. The reason for running the project seems to a large extent be linked to local survival strategies.

A great deal of the activities so far implemented within BEAR have aimed at studies and so-called soft phenomena, while so-called heavy investments in infrastructure and other artefacts to a large extent are missing.

There are enormous variations in the BEAR identification at the individual level. For the common man BEAR is not the same for a person living in Nordmaling as for a person living in Kirkenes, although they both are members of the Barents region.

Where so is felt becoming various actors are positive and works for and together with BEAR: The Barents Corridor between Norway and Russia, or the Salla border passage between Finland and Russia are two good examples of “hot spots” also relevant in other regional context.

There is no preparedness or express a wish in the municipal physical plans against nuclear emissions on the Kola Peninsula, neither at the county level.
In general, the BEAR membership has in no way affected the physical planning at the municipal level. On the other hand, the nearness to Russia – and then primarily the Finnish regions bordering Russia – show their concern in their comprehensive plans.

With regards to the present Swedish discussion on new infrastructure development in Sweden i.e., the Norrbottniabanan and the Bottnian Arc, the BEAR and its importance or implications in this aspect are almost never mentioned.
References


[16] SPD for Objective 1, Northern Sweden.

[17] ÖPL. For Sweden: all municipalities in BD and AC counties.

[18] ÖPL for all municipalities in AC and BD counties.


Regional Council consists of an alliance of municipalities, roughly corresponding to a county. For Kainuu: Planeringschef Heino Hiltunen and planarkitekt/planchef Paula Qvick. For North Ostrobothnia landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Martti Hannula. For Lapplands Landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Ossi Repo and experten Tuomo Molander.

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Regional Council consists of an alliance of municipalities, roughly corresponding to a county. For Kainuu: Planeringschef Heino Hiltunen and planarkitekt/planchef Paula Qvick. For North Ostrobothnia landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Martti Hannula. For Lapplands Landskapsförbund utvecklingschef Ossi Repo and experten Tuomo Molander.

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The Centre for Regional Science, Cerum, initiates and accomplishes research on regional development, carries out multidisciplinary research, and distributes the results to various public organizations. One major area of research is the sustainable development in the arctic and sub-arctic political, socio-economic and cultural systems. Studies are often conducted in collaboration with Northern Studies research institutes in other countries.

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