

March 6th 2000

To Members of the Barents Sea Co-operation

Regarding Co-operation between Union of the Baltic Cities and the Barents Sea Co-operation.

UBC has been asked by the present chairmanship of the CBSS, Norway, to elaborate possible fields of co-operation between UBC and the Barents Sea Co-operation. The background is of course to utilise possible co-operation possibilities between the regions of Northern Europe.

The Baltic Sea Region and the Barents Region has several common interests. UBC has for example members that are located in regions with members of the Barents Sea Co-operation. The UBC Board Meeting March 31 - April 1 will, for example take place in our member city Kemi. The Secretary General of the Barents Sea Co-operation has been invited to participate in the meeting.

We also welcome more member cities from regions that participate in the Barents Region co-operation, for example Russian cities.

In general, there are no advantages of competition between the Barents Sea Region and the Baltic Sea Region in issues of European interest. On the contrary, by mutual information exchange and co-operation in concrete issues whenever feasible, the sub-national level both in the Baltic Sea Region as well as in the Barents region can benefit. Co-operation in Brussels in issues of common interest is thus of interest.

The Nordic Dimension is a part of the EU Policies today. It is feasible to emphasis the strong sub-national level in the North of Europe and include it in the Nordic Dimension. There can also be advantages regarding co-operation on directing better EU funding for projects that are better adjusted to the demands of the conditions in the Baltic Sea Region and the Barents Region.

I am convinced that concrete co-operation possibilities can best emerge in an atmosphere of open minds and positive intentions. Union of the Baltic Cities is open for co-operation with the sub-national level of the Barents Region.

With Baltic Sea Greetings,

Union of the Baltic Cities

Anders Engström, President