



## **"BARENTS 2058"** - Scenarios for the Pomor zone –

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### **Introducing the context**

A new understanding of the northernmost areas of Europe is emerging. Oil and gas found in the Barents Sea can become Europe's most important petroleum source. The Barents region has large natural resources such as fish, "untouched" nature and minerals. Scientists predict that global warming will affect the arctic ecosystem heavily. The big melt will open up for new transport-corridors and make larger areas accessible for industrial development. The old East-West conflict has already started to be replaced by East-West cooperation. Russia is stepping up as an economic super power and the bilateral relationship to Norway is developing into a delicate balance between cooperation and industrial competition.

### **History of migration**

The 50 years of closed borders during the cold war led to a colossal social, cultural and economical abruptness on each side of the east-west border. If we go further back, small settlements and ethnical groups who moved from one territory to another through the different seasons dominated the enormous continent. With the drawing of the national borders between Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, these groups were forced to pick a side, and many families and rich cultures were divided or even demolished. The so-called «Pomor-trade» between the Russian city Arkhangels and the Norwegian cities Kirkenes and Vardø was an important seaway connection for many centuries. Mostly they traded with timber, wheat and fish, but also Chinese tea and luxury goods found its way to the small Norwegian settlements. The sum of all the historical migrations and connections makes Finnmark a multicultural society. (There are among others; Norwegians, Sea-sami, Skolte sami, Kvener (Finnish) and now Russians.)

Despite the homogeneous appearance, Russian cities like Murmansk and Nikel, are in fact multi-cultural and multi-ethnic. This is a result of the politics of decentralization and the following migration within the enormous continent of the former Soviet Union.

### **The Barents region**

The Barents Region is defined as the northernmost areas of Sweden, Finland, Northwest Russia and Norway. 6 million people live in the region, which consists of 1.75-million km<sup>2</sup> ground – the same as the total of France, Portugal, Spain and Germany. 75% of the territory and population is Russian. Beside the natural resources the region has some nodes of industry with advanced technology, higher education and research. But low density, big distances and hard climate make it challenging to run the settlements and infrastructure efficiently. One other challenge is that most of the infrastructure, communication lines, administration and economy is organized and structured nationally in north-south direction, while trans-national links in east-west direction are missing.

Formalized in 1993, the Barents Cooperation was set up to strengthen people-to-people contacts resulting in a regional network that was intended to create a multilateral interdependence and hence contribute to the economic cultural and social development. The idea was to create stable and peaceful relationships. International disputes between Norway and Russia were intended to be solved in climate of mutual dependence and good relations.

The region has in the last years become increasingly relevant due to its greatly promising petroleum resources. The wealth and diversity of natural resources such as oil and gas, fish, minerals and forests are enormous and represent a future potential of colossal character.

### **The Pomor-zone:**

To meet the potentials of this new development, the Norwegian government by the Ministry of foreign affairs has launched a proposal for a new bilateral developing zone, the so-called "Pomor-zone". Geographically the area is proposed to be located in the northwestern part of the Kola Peninsula, with the zones in and between Kirkenes (N) and Nikel (RUS). These two cities just signed an agreement of twin-city friendship. As the first step of development into physical reality it is proposed to establish an enclave on each side of the border. On the Russian side this is intended to be a new maritime and industrial zone at the bay of Pechenga. On Norwegian side the same kind of zone is planned to be in the Jarfjord, only 25km from Kirkenes. In the second phase of development the two enclaves are intended to merge into one bigger transnational area. The contents of the zone are thought to be bilateral development of industry and logistic systems, special rules for trade with different taxes, as well as an arena for new and old common trans-national culture and communication and simpler border crossing travel and transport. Such a kind of vision only can be realized stepwise and is last but not least depended on full support from both governments. These days the political signs for this are not so bad.

### **Hammerfest – Kirkenes – Nikel - Murmansk**

In a long-term perspective (2058) an extended demarcation of the Pomor-zone and spin-off to a larger region and different cities could be one scenario (this is not mentioned in the official document). Kirkenes is the biggest city and center of the municipality of Sør Varanger. It has today no big active industry, but the former mining company AS Sydvaranger has ambitious plans for the future. The city has around 4000 inhabitants and is increasingly based on tourism. The strategic location at the end of E6 and last stop of

Hurtigruten, in addition to having an airport makes it to an attractive and easy accessible destination. The harbor of Kirkenes is like the Jarfjord ice-free during the whole year. The Russian town Nikel is the capital of the municipality of Pechenga and only 8 km from the Norwegian border and 40 km from Kirkenes. It has about 16 000 inhabitants. The last decades the major commercial activity has been depended on mineral industry, mainly from nickel and military installations along the border. Pechengas bay is today discussed as an actual candidate for receiving the offshore gas from the Shtokman field in the Barents Sea. In the large scale Kirkenes-Nikel are part of a bigger system and network of cities and nodes in the northern region. There are different dependencies, relations and correlations between the various cities, industrial enterprises, landscapes, people ect. From the industrial point of view, especially when it comes to off shore-gas and –oil technology, the cities of Murmansk and Hammerfest are the more important players in the regional network today. Murmansk has a long tradition to be a heavy industrial and marine-military base in the north. It is the only harbor of North Russia, which is free for ice the whole of the year. Nevertheless it should be mentioned that large parts of the industry and infrastructure today are busy or in bad conditions. The city has like Nikel challenges with old pollution. With its 320 000 inhabitants, Murmansk is the Russian capital of the county of Murmank, which mainly is is the Cola peninsula. Murmansk is the biggest city north of the polar circle. Hammerfest, on the other side, has only 9500 inhabitants, but during the last years the city has developed to be a unique European high-tech base for receiving, freezing and shipping offshore gas. The city is in a strong growing period with a lot of enthusiasm. Hammerfest is second biggest city of the county of Finnmark.

### **The Task**

What will tomorrow bring? How can, will, should or should not the Barents region be transformed during coming five decades? Through scenario techniques, the course seeks to find answers to the different future possibilities. The common basis for the scenarios will be rooted in reality and consist of hard facts, prognosis, predictions and statistics. The differences of the possible answers will be caused by the uncertainties of these elements as well as by own values and attitudes. Scenarios as we use them here, are thought to be stories about the future. The stories should have a message, statement or relevance to current questions. Since we work with different cities on both sides of the border, the comparative element and relations and correlations between the cities, people and the landscape are important elements. The scale of the scenarios should in the long-term perspective be regional, but it is also intended to zoom into the urban and natural landscape, architecture and people.

### **Working tools during the semester**

The essence is a combination of working with scientific methods/empiric facts and free (visual) expression. The goal is to create a story about the future: - Transforming statistical information into visual work - using mapping – interviews - visual perception – photo – collage - film.

## **Working schedule**

During the semester and study trip different/workshops lectures will be given. There will also be tutoring. The following setup shows the structure of the semester with the main tasks and topics for the students.

Before the study trip:

### 1. Establishing a common knowledge base

Collect, categorize and organize material for a common database for the course. The students have to divide themselves into thematic groups:

- Natural resources/Trade/Industry - Infrastructure/Architecture - Migration/Transit/Tourism – Climate/Ecology/Landscape - Politics/moving borders/security - Identity/ethnic/tradition

The time perspective is crucial. What has the history shown? What are trends, tendencies, prognosis, and predictions?

Result: Maps, statistics, visualizations, less text as possible.

During the study trip:

### 2. Completing the database by empiric work (same topic/same group).

Mapping and collecting physical and non-physical parameter. Register development and processes of change, site-specific/ site-logic, and potential in the existing. Making thematic comparative studies Norway/Russia.

Result: free but operational

After the study trip:

### 3: Comparative studies

Divided in new groups the task will be to investigate unlike multilateral border areas. Examples: Conflict zones, changing border situations/merging-separation, blooming multinational areas, multilateral projects.

Result: Maps, statistics, visualizations, less text as possible.

### 4: Developing scenarios

Scenario planning begins by identifying the focal issue or decision. There are an infinite number of stories that we could tell about the future; our purpose is to tell those that matter, that lead to better decisions. So we begin the process by agreeing on the issue that we want to address.

Divide in to new groups -The groups investigate different angles and approaches to result in a scenario dated 2058. Each group must have an architectural approach.

Result: Maps, statistics, visualizations, free scale, free work, free expression, but reasonable story, less text as possible.

### 5: Exhibition

The final products are going to be shown in an exhibition in Russia and Norway. The target group of our work is political and administrative decision makers as well as average normal people. Beside an exhibition in the Norwegian consulate in Murmansk and the Russian in Kirkenes, we will work to get the projects published in the media.

## **The project in one sentence**

While the topic is rooted in real political documents and officially formulated goals, the approach is intended to be a free and critical view into the future. The task is to illustrate the future consequences of ongoing political discussions.