THE BARENTS REGION — WHERE GAS MEETS ORE

A High-level Seminar for Industry and Commerce in an Arctic environment, KIRKENES 22-23 JUNE 2010

The Embassy of Sweden in Oslo, in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, The Embassy of Finland in Oslo, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, the International Barents Secretariat, the High North Center for Business and Governance Bodø, SINTEF and Voksenåsen cordially invites you to a seminar in Kirkenes 22-23 June 2010.

Forceful and dynamic development currently characterises the technological and industrial situation in the High North. This reflects the fact that the countries of the Arctic region currently are engaging in this in developing High North/Arctic strategies, focusing in particular on energy supply and energy security, environment and climate policies and new avenues of cooperation. For Sweden the chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council is an important incentive to explore challenges and opportunities in the High North environment. For Norway the High North policy is given highest priority and Finland is preparing a new Arctic cooperation strategy. Also Russia has obvious and significant interests in the region.

All of this plays into areas of technology, research and business development. Since the region is one of the world’s richest, geologically speaking, with great energy and mineral resources, focus will naturally be on extractive mineral industries’ encounter with the new high tech energy businesses’ mainly offshore-based realities and potentials, especially natural gas.

The aim of this seminar is to catch these recent developments and focus on new possibilities for cooperation between economic actors in these fields, and to set a trans-boundary perspective by focusing on questions of trans boundary obstacles, labour mobility, logistics and development of infrastructure. We also aim to reflect the interplay between culture, business and industry in the High North. The seminar will gather industrial leaders, as well as heads of business and community representatives from the Northern regions, as well as others with interest in the High North, for a future- and development focused dialogue on what is happening, and potentials for development, in support of sustainable industrial growth in the region and its countries.

The seminar has three main themes:

- Industrial value creation from geological resources (ore and mineral deposits) and natural gas: current situation and possibilities.

- Energy and energy efficiency: technological possibilities, climatic and environmental challenges, development of renewable energy resources.

- Industrial framework conditions in the Barents region – what needs to be done - in the fields of logistics, infrastructure and labour mobility, and reducing border hindrances?
The seminar is planned as a lunch-to-lunch seminar 22-23 June. Our hope is that the seminar will, by creating a forum of dialogue between interested actors, convert into a process where the different actors may identify concrete projects of importance for future cooperation and development.

The relevant Ministries of Industry (and Trade) will be represented at Ministerial or state secretary level.

The seminar can be expected to be able to build fruitfully on the proceedings and findings of the three Barents Council events preceding the seminar in Umeå, Haparanda and Brussels repectively.

A follow-up seminar on this theme is planned at Voksenåsen, Oslo, for the autumn.

You, (your company/organisation), are hereby invited to take part in the seminar.

In view of time, and hotel facilities, your participation needs to be filed to kim@barents.no no later than 18 May. Please find registration form and practical information attached. Details on programme, speakers list etc. will be distributed shortly.

Michael Sahlin
Swedish Ambassador to Norway