

Barents Rescue 2019

Increasing disaster response capabilities in the Barents Region through enhanced cooperation

Exercise Barents Rescue has been created under the Barents agreement in order to develop the capacity for cross-border collaboration when dealing with natural disasters, large scale accidents and other emergencies in the Barents Region.

A peaceful and secure development in the Barents Region

Since 2016, the focus for the exercise has shifted from field training exercises to emphasize the planning process, where structure, methods, experience-gathering and field work collaboration between partners in the region is vital. The implementation shall also take into consideration the action plans for climate adaption and the effect on the Barents Region. During 2019, Sweden, through MSB, are hosting the Barents Rescue and will test a new concept in the shape of an Event Week. Several activities will take place before and during Event Week 2019. The participants will, among other things, develop the following areas:

- To send, receive and act upon emergency alerts and requests, for assistance in accordance with the Barents cooperation framework,
- to share and uphold a common operational picture,
- to receive collective and coordinated support from other nations in line with the host countries routines for host country support,
- to conduct more effective routines for national border crossings,
- to cooperate at the emergency site.

Planning Barents Rescue also includes cooperation and networking between the different actors in the four member states. Planning takes place mainly in the region. The major planning conferences for Barents Rescue 2019 will be held in Umeå and Kiruna.

What is Barents Rescue?

Barents Rescue, a civil international crisis management exercise, was initiated and conducted in Sweden for the first time in 2001. From 2019, it will be conducted every third year. The four countries take turn in arranging the exercise. The last time that Sweden hosted Barents Rescue was in 2011.

Barents Euro-Arctic Council was inaugurated on the initiative of the foreign minister of Norway, Thorvald Stoltenberg, in 1993. The aim is to:

Strengthen peace, stability and progress through the enhancement of the capability of cross-border cooperation within the Barents Euro-Arctic region.

During 2017 – 2019, Sweden will hold the chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, led by the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Barents Agreement was signed in 2008 by the governments of Sweden, Norway, Finland and the Russian Federation. The agreement includes crossborder collaboration in the following areas: Emergency prevention, preparedness and response, and the ability to extend cooperation to facilitate the provision of mutual assistance in the event of natural or man-made disasters or other emergency situations. The agreement describes, among other things, joint exercises and training.

Event Week 23-27 September 2019

Event Week will consist not only of practical training and field exercises for first responders but also seminars, workshops and other forms of educational training. Selected guests will be invited to visit Event Week, during which exercises will be conducted on strategic as well as operational levels. The practical training and exercises aim to develop the following areas:

- First responder's collaboration on scene in the Barents region,
- robust communication between Tetra users in one region within the Barents region,
- raising alerts,
- border-crossing and host nation support.

During Event Week, one of the world's largest exercises within Disaster Victim Identification (DVI) will also be conducted. The exercise includes every component of a DVI-operation such as the disposal of deaths at the scene, known as the Post Mortem examination, meeting next-of-kins in the Information Center for recording of personal descriptions as well as comparing DNA tests, known as the Ante-Mortem collecting of information.

National perspective

Sweden, through MSB, holds the chairmanship in the Planning and Evaluation Working Group (PEWG), a working group under Barents Joint Committee, during 2018 – 2019. PEWG has the task of supporting the planning and evaluation.

Barents Rescue 2019 is expected to provide experience which is applicable in all other emergency situations requiring International support, regardless of the country, nature or cause of the emergency.

Regional perspective

The Swedish regions of Norrbotten and Västerbotten are participating and are the ones most involved in the Barents cooperation. The County Administrative Boards of Västerbotten and Norrbotten, the Swedish Police Northern Region, the Rescue Services and the County Councils are, among others, all active partners when planning and conducting BR 2019.

Read more: www.msb.se/barentsrescue19

www.barentscooperation.org

Timetable

23 May – table-top exercise
28 – 30 August – alerting exercise

Event Week, 23 – 27 September:

Monday – transportation
Tuesday – training day, command post exercise with DISTAFF
Wednesday – field training exercise with field units
Thursday – field training exercise (half day), and recovery
Tuesday–Thursday – workshops and seminars
Friday – transportation

Evaluation

As part of Barents Rescue 2019, a joint evaluation process will be conducted. The aim is to generate know-how in order to achieve continuous development when dealing with cross-border and cross-sector accidents and crises in the Barents region.

These evaluation results will be a base for knowledge-sharing experiences and for the development of the Barents Rescue exercises.

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