

THE INTERNATIONAL CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION ON THE INSTITUTES OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE NORTH AND IN THE BARENTS REGION SINCE 1970'S

***5 waves in the history in the networking of international
cooperation between northern higher education institutes***

Esko Rieppula

First wave:

- The establishment and development of the cooperation relationships between the universities in the ***North Calotte*** (Sweden, Norway and Finland and those more north)

The second wave:

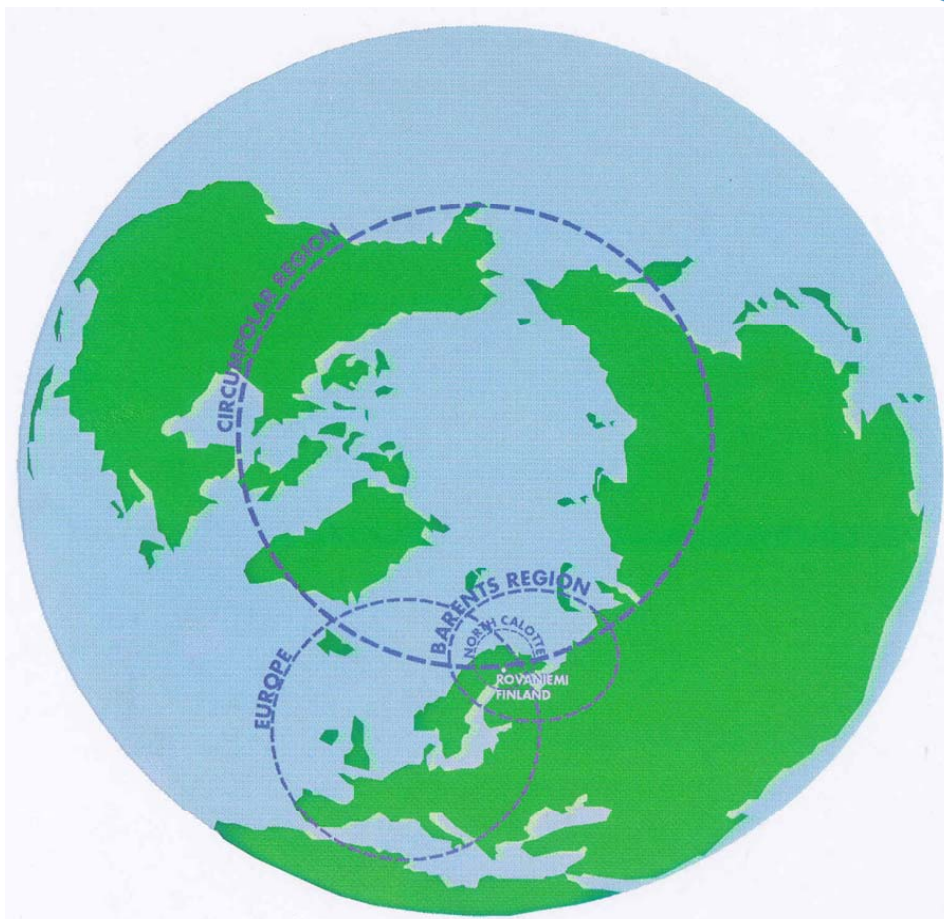
- The development and cooperation with the universities in the ***Barents region***. Then the attention was paid to the cooperation between the universities in the North Calotte and the northern universities in Russia.

The third and fourth wave:

- The development and cooperation between the cooperation relationships between the Barents region and other universities in **Europe**, and globally extensive **circumpolar** cooperation between universities at same time when the cooperation in the Barents region was going on.

Fifth wave:

- The university cooperation under the umbrella of the Northern Dimension Action Plan 2000-2003 by **European Union**.



The Cooperation between Higher Education Institutes in North Calotte

- The cooperation between northernmost region of Sweden, Norway and Finland developed strongly in the 1960's by the North Calotte Council. It was semiofficial cooperation body formed by national institutions. The intellectual founding father was the governor of Norrbotten, Rangnar **Lassinantti** in Sweden. After the Lassinanttis initiative held **North Calotte Conferences** developing the relationships and cooperation in different sectors of the society. These conferences continues further even not so important than in 1960's, 1970's and 1980's.
- In the conference of 1968 in Luleå was held the proposal to establish an research council for the North Calotte, The first universities, Oulu, Umeå and Tromsö, in the region have started not earlier than then years.

The Cooperation between Higher Education Institutes in North Calotte

- This research council was never establish, instead a couple of years later the rectors of these three universities established a cooperation body named **Samarbetskommissionen för Universiteten in Nordkalottområdet**. – The first meeting was held in the fall 1972.
- The commission had 8 focus areas:
the possibilities for the development of the region provided by human resources, scientific-technical cooperation in order to develop industry and commerce, the planning of the sustainable utilization of the region's natural resources, research on the Sami people and their culture, the collaborative graduate school of the region in order to pay attention to needs of the region, the region itself, and to the fellowship of the researchers in the region, and certain questions such as funding.

The Cooperation between Higher Education Institutes in North Calotte

- In the 1970's the commission expanded cover all the higher education institutes in North Calotte. Later also the University of Iceland and University of Akureyri joined the commission.
- From 1972 till 1996 the commission organized regularly meetings and other activities. After that these activities weakened and the last meeting organized here in Rovaniemi in 2005. After that I have heard nothing about it.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region

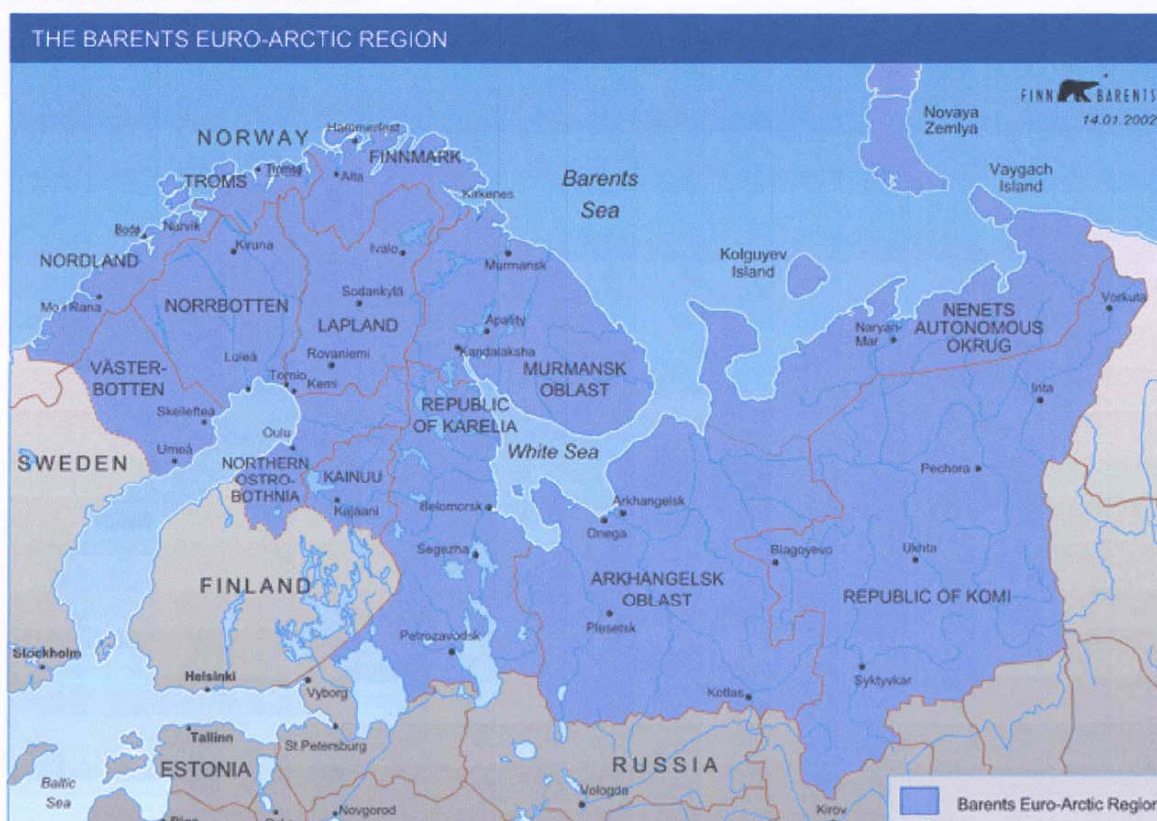
- The collapse of the Soviet Union at the beginning of 1990's created a new situation in northern Europe. This provided an opportunity for the Norwegian foreign minister Torvald **Stoltenberg** to forward cooperation between the North-European nations and states to enhance peace and stability in the area.
- In January 1993 foreign ministers of Norway, Russia, Sweden, Finland and Iceland signed the **Barents Euro-Arctic Regions declaration** of cooperation. Based on that organized the Barents Council of the foreign ministers and the Regional Council from the cooperating provinces.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region

- The **Regional Council** established several sector-specific working groups, one of which was the **Working Group for Higher Education and Research**. The members of the working group were representatives from the northernmost universities in each country.
- The working group advanced the bilateral and multilateral cooperation projects on the universities, for instant Barentsplus exchange programme with national regional funding and Barhelp (Research and Higher Education Lift Programme).
- At the height of its activity, the Barents cooperation was participated by hundreds of researchers, teachers and students from the different universities of the region.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Network

- Founded 1994 under the Barents Council and Regional Council the Working Group of Higher Education and Research



Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) and University of Arctic (UArctic)

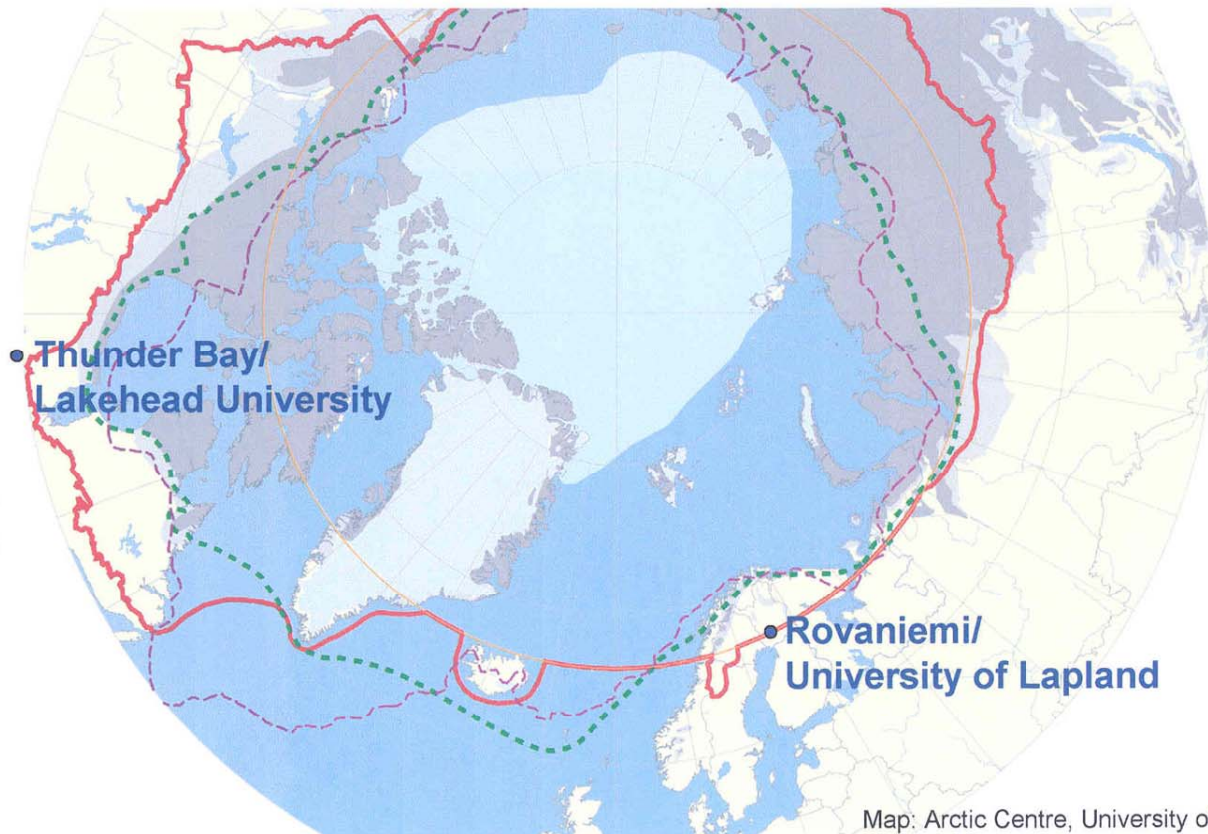
- On the initiative of Vice-President Geoffry **Weller**, Lakehead University, Canada, set out systematically to develop its international relations in the circumpolar north by signing cooperation agreements with the number of universities in northern Russia, Finland, Scandinavia, Alaska, Iceland and Greenland. – The first conference, entitled ***A Role of Circumpolar Universities in Northern Development*** was held at Lakehead in November 1989. At the Rovaniemi conference, in December 1992, approved the rules for the Association and set up the secretariat.
- In the first years **CUA** reached more than 50 members from the entire circumpolar world, including Japan and China. A secretariat housed at the University of Lapland.

Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA) and University of Arctic (UArctic)

- The Luleå conference in the middle of 1990´s brought to light an opportunity for cooperation between CUA and recently established Arctic Council in elaboration the ***University of Arctic***.
- After the preparations made by the CUA, a network of universities, University of Arctic (UArctic) was established under the Arctic Council in 2001. After that over a hundred higher education and research institutes within all the eight member countries of the Arctic Council participate on its activities.
- CUA has blended in as a part of the activity of the University of Arctic. CUA´s role in the process to establish UArctic was very important; without it UArctic would never to be realized.

Circumpolar Universities Association (CUA)

– Founded 1989/1992 Thunder Bay/Lakehead University; Rovaniemi/University of Lapland



Map: Arctic Centre, University of Lapland

The Northern Europe and European Union – The Northern Dimension Policy in Union

- Sweden and Finland joined into European Union in 1995.
- In September 1997 the University of Lapland and the provincial government of Lapland organized the seminar ***Barents Region today – Dreams and Realities Conference***. All the former foreign ministers, who signed the Barents Euro-Arctic Regions declaration (*Stoltenberg, Kozyrev, af Ugglas and Väyrynen*) participated this seminar.

The Northern Europe and European Union – The Northern Dimension Policy in Union

- The opening presentation was given by Finnish Prime Minister Paavo Lipponen, who proposed that the European Union need a policy for Northern Dimension and made the initiative addressed to the EU Commission to develop “a strategy for the Northern Dimension based on an analysis of the risk and opportunities that (the region) offers”.
- After the preparation the Commission initiative **Action Plan for Northern Dimension in the External and Cross-Border Policies of the European Union 2000-2003** was approved at the Feira Summit, Portugal in 2000.
- The geographical area of the Action Plan extended from Iceland to north-western Russia, from Norway, Barents and Kara Sea to the southern shore of the Baltic Sea.



The Northern Europe and European Union – The Northern Dimension Policy in Union

- Finnish government organized *The National Forum* to implement of the Action Plan to different concrete projects. The main results were the environmental projects as the south-western wastewater plant in Saint Petersburg and the social and health care projects financing by EBRD. – University people participated in these and other projects as a specialist.

Conclusion

- As we have seen, the trans-regional cross-border cooperation of higher education in the north goes back to **four decades**. It has **expanded** from 3 calotte countries to 8 arctic countries and to the entire circumpolar world.
- The **aim** for the cooperation has always been interaction for the people living in this region. **Only research and education on the North done in the North and knowledge gained from that research and education can best serve the needs of the people living in that region and ensure sustainable development here.**
- We have also seen how organizations built for these purpose have **changed** their forms during these decades, and how they have been replaced by new forms, better suited for the given time and task.