

17.8.2026

International Barents Secretariat
Ms Jenny Spring, Head of Secretariat
Wiulls gate 2
9900 Kirkenes, Norway

Notification of Withdrawal from the Barents Regional Council

Dear Ms Spring,

Following a decision by the Board of the Council of Oulu Region, we hereby formally notify the International Barents Secretariat of our withdrawal from participation in the Barents Regional Council (BRC).

This decision reflects the current circumstances surrounding Barents cooperation and follows the process initiated by the Barents Regional Council in 2025 to assess the future of regional-level cooperation. It is also consistent with the recommendation for a coordinated withdrawal presented in July 2026 by the Task Force of the Barents Regional Committee.

While withdrawing from the Barents Regional Council, Oulu Region remains committed to maintaining and strengthening cooperation among northern regions in Finland, Norway and Sweden through relevant and effective formats for regional dialogue, knowledge exchange and project cooperation. We believe that cross-border cooperation continues to be essential for addressing common challenges and opportunities in the North and supporting regional development, resilience and people-to-people cooperation.

We wish to underline especially the importance of continuing cultural and youth cooperation across the northern regions. Creating opportunities for cultural exchange, dialogue, mobility and mutual understanding is crucial to the long-term vitality and cohesion of our northern communities. We also urge the continuation of cross-border transport and logistics cooperation. At a time of growing uncertainty and geopolitical challenges, we consider these areas of cooperation more important than ever.

We would like to express our sincere appreciation to the International Barents Secretariat, our regional partners and the many working groups, networks and individuals who have contributed to Barents cooperation over the years. Their dedication has played an important role in building trust, advancing cooperation and fostering shared understanding and sustainable development across the region. The achievements and networks established through this cooperation provide a valuable foundation for future collaboration.

We kindly ask the International Barents Secretariat to acknowledge receipt of this notification and to undertake the necessary administrative measures related to our withdrawal.

Yours sincerely,

Lauri Nikula

Jussi Rämets

Chair of the Board
Council of Oulu Region

Region Mayor
Council of Oulu Region