



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING HIGH NORTH COOPERATION

(HNC)

Between

Regional State Administrative Agency for Lapland
Regional State Administrative Agency for Northern Finland
County Administrative Board of Norrbotten
County Administrative Board of Västerbotten
The County Governor of Nordland
The County Governor of Troms/Finmark

REGARDING

COOPERATION WITHIN
REGIONAL CIVIL PREPAREDNESS

Introduction

Due to comparable climate conditions as well as geographical and demographic aspects northern areas of Finland, Norway and Sweden face several mutual challenges within the field of civil preparedness. All countries can relate to threats and risks that have their origin outside their own territory. Trans-boundary challenges pose a threat for the highly sensitive arctic area. Cooperation between the regional authorities in Finland, Sweden and Norway strengthens the ability of crisis management, crisis prevention and crisis communication at the regional level.

The scenarios we prepare for are likely to become common challenges where joint efforts can contribute to handle challenges within the area of civil preparedness. Despite some differences in the administrative bodies, the regional authorities have corresponding tasks within the area of civil preparedness.

The goal of this cooperation between the regional governmental authorities in Northern Finland, Lapland, Norrbotten, Västerbotten, Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, as the regional coordinators before, during and after serious crises is to enhance the civil preparedness at the county/regional levels.

This activity is based on need for interregional cooperation in the High North. Nordic Council, other established Nordic cooperation including Haga cooperation and NATO-membership offer the international level principles for this interregional cooperation.

The participants have reached the following understanding

1. Preliminary conditions and definitions

The signing parties will from now on be referred to as the Authorities.

This MoU will outline the framework of cooperation and responsibilities between the Authorities and set forth the basic principles and guidelines under which the parties will work together to accomplish the main goal.

The name High North Cooperation (HNC) is used for the cooperation of this MoU. This wide cooperation is based on comprehensive security.

This cooperation is to be viewed as a regional cross-boundary cooperation within the framework of the Governors North cooperation.

The activities and information exchange within this cooperation must be according to the legal framework of each nation. This implies clarifying the mandates and defining the boundaries within the framework of civil preparedness.

This MoU is not a legally binding document and is not intended to modify existing agreements, legal obligations nor impose new ones on the Authorities.

2. Purpose and objectives

The overall purpose of this cooperation is to further strengthen and expand regional cooperation in the area of civil preparedness between the Authorities.

This MoU establishes a process and framework for cooperation within the area of civil preparedness including crisis communication.

The cooperation focuses on areas of common interest and responsibilities, but mutual learning and exchange of knowledge on general organizational principles and experiences in the field, will be realized as a positive consequence of this cooperation.

Objectives:

- Increase information and experience sharing between the Authorities
- Increase contacts across national and county borders (all authorities)
- Initiate visits, joint training events and exercises
- Identify and clarify the common threats and risks of the regions involved
- Strengthen crisis communication skills, communicate effectively to the public and media in crisis
- Adapt and harmonize methods, procedures, and preventive measures where it is suitable for the purpose of this cooperation.

The following subjects of sharing information and experience between the Authorities are identified:

- Events, accidents, and emergency situations
- Exercises, both at regional and local level
- Preparedness planning
- Preventive measures and early warnings
- Meetings, seminars and lectures
- Projects
- Contacts and connections.

3. Responsibilities

The Authorities meet annually to review the implementation of the HNC. An action plan is agreed to set targets and priorities for the 12 months. The action plan can include main events, projects, communication network action and regular meetings. Long-term targets are established to support the action plan.

Costs associated with participation in this cooperation must be covered by the respective Authorities. The chair of the meeting will rotate annually between the Authorities.

4. Implementation of the Memorandum of Understanding

This updated MoU will come into effect on the date of the last signature. In order to enable an effective collaboration, it is agreed that the cooperative activity will be reviewed regularly.

This Memorandum is signed by the following acting Authorities:

..... Kristiina Poikajärvi Director-General Lapland Kaisa Ainasoja Director-General Northern Finland Lotta Finstorp Governor Norrbotten
..... Helene Hellmark Knutsson Governor Västerbotten Tom Cato Karlsen Governor Nordland Elisabeth Vik Aspaker Governor Troms/Finmark