

Memorandum of understanding between
the City of Oulu, the Municipality of Tromsø,
the Council of Oulu Region and
the Troms County Council



OULU



POHJOIS-POHJANMAA
Council of Oulu Region



TROMS fylkeskommune
TROMS County Council

Taking into consideration the existing relations and cooperation between the City of Oulu, the Municipality of Tromsø, the Council of Oulu Region and the Troms County Council (hereafter “the Parties”) and their mutual interests, and expressing the will to enhance mutual understanding as well as to further intensify cooperation, the Parties have decided to enter into a memorandum of understanding to confirm their commitment to further cooperation.

Parties

1. Troms County Council, represented by Mrs. Cecilie Myrseth, Chair of County Government

Troms County has a population of near 165,000 people. The main task of the County Council is to act as a regional developer. It is also responsible for delivering a number of welfare services to its inhabitants, including management of upper secondary schools and continuing education, public and school transportation and secondary roads. The county is a major contributor to business, social and economic development and administers regional project funds. It is also responsible for dental health services, cultural heritage, public health and wellbeing.

2. Council of Oulu Region, represented by Mr. Jussi Rämetsä, Region Mayor

The Council of Oulu Region is a regional, politically governed, municipal coalition for the development and interest supervision in the county. It is responsible for regional planning and general coordination of regional development programs related to national and EU structural funds. The Council oversees the interests of the people, municipalities, organizations and enterprises and speaks on their behalf regarding both national and international issues. The Oulu Region has a population of near 410,000 inhabitants (8 % of the Finnish population) and thus is the fourth largest region in Finland.

3. City of Tromsø, represented by Mrs. Kristin Røymo, Mayor

The Municipality of Tromsø is a local government with 73 480 inhabitants (January 2016) and is the largest city in North Norway. The Municipality is responsible for education, health and well-being services, culture, city development, business and international relations.

4. City of Oulu, represented by Mr. Matti Pennanen, Mayor

The City of Oulu is a local government and a city of 198 804 people (March 2016), in the Oulu Region. It is the most populous city in Northern Finland and the fifth most populous city in the country. It is responsible for well-being services, educational and cultural services, urban and environmental services, employment and business development.

References

The Oulu Region and Troms County are located in the Arctic part of Europe. The European Arctic is the most developed part of the Arctic. There are more cities, universities, cultural institutions and young people here, than in any other part of the Arctic. In view of this, Norway, Sweden and Finland are well positioned to take a leading role in the development of an environmentally sustainable and economically prosperous Arctic.

Introduction

1. The Parties favor strong cooperation in order to enhance the development of the European Arctic. The development in this region must be based on the principle of economic, social and environmentally sustainable growth.
2. The memorandum shall contribute to increased knowledge about the possibilities for cooperation between the regions and the cities.
3. The memorandum shall facilitate joint actions and projects of common interests.
4. The memorandum, in its entirety, takes into account the Sami population and national minorities.

§1 Purpose and timeframe

The main purpose of the joint memorandum:

The Parties seek synergies in the selected prioritized areas, cf. §2. For this purpose the Parties agree on promoting and strengthening close, trustful cross-border cooperation through exchange of information between stakeholders in the regions of Oulu and Troms and the cities of Tromsø and Oulu.

Joint actions within the prioritized areas will take into account the different tasks and competences of the Parties.

Period of validity

The memorandum comes into effect from the date of signature and is valid for 3 years. At the end of the 3-year period, an evaluation will be carried out. If needed, the memorandum will be updated.

The memorandum is prolonged and valid for another 3-year period, unless one of the Parties wishes to terminate the memorandum. Either Party can terminate the memorandum on a three-month notice.

§2 Prioritized areas

1. **Political cooperation**
2. **Transport and communication**
3. **Business development, skills and labor**
4. **Tourism, culture and events**
5. **Education, research and innovation**

1. Political cooperation

The Parties will work closely together in order to raise awareness of common Arctic opportunities and challenges.

1. The political cooperation is embedded in the good relations developed through the North Calotte Council, the Barents Regional Council, the Arctic Council, the Arctic Economic Council and the Brussels-based network for the Northern Sparsely Populated Area (NSPA). The cooperation aims to mutually strengthen the Parties and ensure their position as key stakeholders in national, European and global Arctic policies.

2. Transport and communication

The Parties commit themselves to work actively in order to create better East-West connections by air, telecommunication, road and rail, and work towards a long-term transport plan.

1. The transport plan should be clearly connected to TEN-T core network plans, cover all modes of transport and focus on border-crossing transport corridors between Finland, Sweden, Norway and Russia.
2. Functional flight connections play a significant role in population mobility and economic integration in the region. The continued support of the Arctic Airlink flight connection between Oulu, Luleå, and Tromsø is important, as it is the only international East-West flight connection in the northernmost part of Europe.

3. Business development, skills and labor

The regions and cities of Northern Europe can to be a driver for sustainable growth, both nationally and internationally.

1. Through this memorandum the Parties aim to develop an even deeper cooperation among the potential industries in the regions.
2. The Parties will work actively to build networks of business development organizations and companies.
3. The Parties' cooperation will contribute to the overall objective of creating a common labor market with increased cross-border labor mobility.

4. Tourism, culture and events

1. The cities of Tromsø and Oulu and the regions of Oulu and Troms all have a multitude of cultural institutions and a wide range of cultural events throughout the year. The Parties commit themselves to working to strengthen networks and co-operation in the field of culture and creative industries in order to develop and promote Arctic culture and events.
2. Through this memorandum the Parties seek closer cooperation to attract tourists to their region and increase the revenues of the tourism industry.

5. Education, research and innovation

The objective shall be joint activities in order to improve education, research and innovation of the regions in question. The Parties shall endorse networking and collaboration of universities and research and innovation actors within the region.

§4 Follow-up and coordination

Networking and collaboration in the prioritized areas cf. §2, will be followed up and coordinated by a task force of representatives of the Parties. The task force will gather approximately twice a year for an update.

The memorandum of understanding is made in two copies, Norwegian and Finnish, of equal legal force.

Oulu, September 8, 2016

Kristin Røymo
Mayor
Municipality of Tromsø

Matti Pennanen
Mayor
City of Oulu

Cecilie Myrseth
Chair of County Government
Troms County Council

Jussi Rämetsä
Region Mayor
Council of Oulu Region

§3 Joint activities

1. Study trips, workshops, seminars and peer-to-peer activities will be organized to improve the knowledge of each other's region and to facilitate projects.
2. A main focus will be on actively seeking to establish joint projects and on using the funding tools available on regional and national levels, and EU funding for cross-border/ interregional collaboration, for example Interreg, Nordic Council, Horizon 2020.

