



МУРМАНСКОЕ ОБЛАСТНОЕ ОТДЕЛЕНИЕ

INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL CONFERENCE

## Security of arctic frontiers: ecology, history, images of the future

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МЕЖДУНАРОДНАЯ НАУЧНО-ПРАКТИЧЕСКАЯ КОНФЕРЕНЦИЯ

## Безопасность арктических рубежей: экология, история, образы будущего

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г. Мурманск

### **Resolution on the results of the international scientific and practical conference "Security of Arctic frontiers: ecology, history, images of the future" October 22-23, 2020**

The international scientific and practical conference "Security of Arctic frontiers: ecology, history, images of the future" was held on October 22-23, 2020 during the X Russian-Norwegian Days of Cross-Border Cooperation on the basis of the Murmansk Arctic State University and the ZOOM online platform. The main organizer of the event was the Murmansk regional branch of the Russian Geographical Society.

Due to the "new coronavirus infection COVID-19" and the national anti-epidemic restrictions associated with it, participation in the conference was organized in a remote video conferencing format with simultaneous broadcasting and posting of the recording on the public video hosting YouTube. The expert community and the general public were informed through the media, as well as social networks: Facebook and Telegram. English and Russian were conference working languages.

More than 70 experts from Russia, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Denmark, France and the USA took part in the conference. In total, 38 reports and speeches were heard over the two days of the conference. In total more than 210 thousand views were made.

The structure of the conference consisted of 2 sections: "The Arctic - a region of sustainable development, dialogue and cooperation" and "Environmental security of the Arctic", as well as a round table: "Historical questions".

Among the partners and participants were representatives of state, commercial and non-governmental non-profit structures of Russia, Norway and other Arctic countries, including the Murmansk Marine Biological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Federal Research Center of the Kola Science Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the Murmansk Arctic State University, the Arctic University of Norway, the Environmental Protection Union of Finland, Bellona, a number of other environmental organizations, representative bodies of the indigenous peoples of the North, the Norwegian research company Akvaplan-niva AS, The Nuclear Safety Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IBRAE), the Norwegian Radiation Safety Agency (DSA), the international journalist association of Barents / Euro-Arctic region Barents Press, representatives of Christian and Muslim religious organizations, Project Center "Northern Character", JSC "Kola MMC", GC "Uralgrit", Arctic Development AS and others.

The scale and relevance of the problems of sustainable development, dialogue and cooperation in the Arctic were showed in the reports and speeches of the Director General of the Murmansk Region Development Corporation Svetlana Panfilova, head of Arctic Development AS Arild Vollan, diplomat and public figure Arne Treholt, advisor to the head of the information and analytical Center of The Russian State Commission for Arctic Development Grigory Dobromelov.

Great interest was aroused by the speech of Nadezhda Vyaznikova, the head of Uralgrit Group of Companies, on concrete steps to start processing mining waste and land remediation in the area associated with the operation of the smelting plant of the Kola Mining and Metallurgical Company, a subsidiary of MMC Norilsk Nickel, which is planned to close in 2021.

The report of the leadership of the Research Center for Biomedical Problems of Human Adaptation in the Arctic of the Federal Research Center "Kola Science Center" of the Russian Academy of Sciences "COVID-19 in the Arctic and other medical security challenges in the region" was of high importance. The analysis of the situation in the Arctic countries was made using data from the European Center for Disease Prevention and Control.

The head of the Barents Press Sweden journalists' association Tim Anderson Rask, the information policy advisor to the rector of the Murmansk Arctic State University, Svetlana Soldatova, and the chairman of Barents Press Russia Anna Kireeva discussed the problematic issues of covering the Arctic in the information space.

The discussion of the topic of multiculturalism, religious dialogue and cooperation in the Arctic from the standpoint of the Council for Cooperation of Christian Churches of the Barents Region, the Russian Orthodox Church, which has a traditional presence in Finland, Scandinavia and other countries of the Arctic, as well as representatives of the Muslim community of the Arctic, was significant. On the situation in Northern Europe, a valuable comment was made by the expert from Denmark Iben Tranholm.

The environmental section of the conference was opened by Olga Gripas, head of the Center for Environmental Pollution Monitoring of the Northern Directorate for Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring (Northern UGMS), on environmental monitoring in the Arctic seas of the Russian Federation and the aggravation of the problem of the accumulation of international plastic waste in the Arctic waters.

The problems of radiation safety of the coastal ecosystems of the Kola Peninsula were disclosed in the report of the Deputy Director of the Murmansk Marine Biological Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Chairman of the Murmansk Regional Branch of the Russian Geographical Society, Denis Moiseev, which was supplemented by a speech by the representative of the Norwegian research company Akvaplan-niva AS, Alexei Bambulyak (Alexei Bambulyak) , which, in particular, drew attention to the Norwegian practice of radiological monitoring in the oil and gas industry.

Nuclear safety issues in Northern Europe, including those related to plans to close the Norwegian research reactor Halden, construction of nuclear waste storage facilities in Sweden and Finland, international cooperation and participation of public organizations in the implementation of projects to improve nuclear and radiation safety in Northwest Russia, as well as the disposal of dumped nuclear facilities of the northern seas were touched upon in the reports of Andrei Zolotkov, Director of ANO Bellona in Murmansk, Mikhail Kobrinsky, Deputy Head of the Department of the Institute for the Safe Development of Nuclear Energy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with the correspondence participation of representatives of the North-West Center for Radioactive Waste Management SevRAO and the Norwegian Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority (DSA).

Evgeny Borovichev, Deputy Chairman for Research, FRC KSC RAS, presented a report on "Hot spots" and a map of environmental problems in the Barents Region associated with the work of hundreds of industrial enterprises and other pollution sites throughout the entire Barents / Euro-Arctic region.

An important announcement was made by Mika Flojt, a representative of the Lapland branch of the Finnish Environment Association, about the environmental threats posed by the Norwegian corporation Yara's plans to launch an international mining project in Sokli, Finland.

Lars Anders Bær, President of the Swedish Sami Parliament, member of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Indigenous Peoples, highlighted the problematic issues related to the negative impact of military and industrial development on the traditional way of life and well-being of indigenous peoples in the Arctic. It is important that he drew attention to the fact that the Sami reindeer husbandry began to feel a direct threat from the recently built and actively developing wind power farms.

Head of the Environmental Safety Department of Kola MMC, Evgeny Salakhov, spoke about the practice of interacting with the Pasvik international reserve for environmental monitoring in the border areas of Russia and Norway.

Environmental expert Anton Lukin made a report on the work of the Northern Fleet and other organizations, including volunteers, to clean up the Arctic territories from previously accumulated waste, used equipment and garbage. Important additions concerning the territory of Novaya Zemlya and Franz Josef Land were made by the director of the Russian Arctic National Park, Alexander Kirilov. The commentary from the environmental and journalistic community was made by Anna Kireeva.

The round table "Questions of history" was opened with a video message from a veteran of the World War II who took part in the Petsamo-Kirkenes operation and the liberation of Northern Norway, Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences Vice-Admiral Ashot Sarkisov.

Dmitry Dulich, an expert of the Regional Branch of the Russian Military Historical Society in the Murmansk Region, a member of the Russian Geographical Society, made an overview report on the history of the confrontation in the Far North during the Second World War. Issues related to the Petsamo-Kirkenes operation, the role of the USSR and other countries in the liberation of Norway and Northern Europe as a whole, attempts to silence, revise and distort the history of the war, expeditions to the places of battles in the Arctic in 2018-2020 were raised.

The following reports were also heard: Director of the Northern Fleet Air Force Museum Sergey Checherov on the actions of the Northern Fleet aviation in the land and sea areas in 1941-1945, Sergey Dobrov, head of the Northern Fleet Naval Museum, on the events of World War II on Spitsbergen, Novaya Zemlya and other Arctic territories, as well as the head of the department of the Hydrographic Service of the Northern Fleet, Alexei Kornis, about the evidences of this found during the complex expeditions of the Northern Fleet to Arctic in 2018-2020.

Polina Kharybina, chairman of the Sami Assembly (Sam Sobbar), highlighted the participation of the indigenous peoples of the North in the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945.

The representative of Norway, military historian Steinar Borch Jensen revealed in detail the theme of the joint struggle of the Norwegian partisans of Finnmark and Soviet warriors in the fight against the Nazis on the occupied territory of Norway.

Anna Churlik, a representative of the Museum of History and Local Studies of the Pechenga Region, made a speech on the work to popularize knowledge about the military history of the Russian-Norwegian borderlands.

Svetlana Efremova spoke about the history of the creation and work of the regional branch of the Imperial Orthodox Palestinian Society in the Murmansk region.

In conclusion, the issues of preserving the common historical memory of the Second World War in Russia and Norway were considered. Deputy Chairman of the Murmansk regional branch of the Russian Geographical Society Sergey Goncharov reported on the work of the Russian-Norwegian expert group on history and the annual joint events held with its participation. Norwegian representative Remi Strand told about the support of this cooperation by the Minister of Defense of Norway Frank Bakke-Jensen and the newly elected Governor of Troms and Finnmark Bjørn Inge Moe, as well as interaction with the Federation of the Norwegian Military Veterans - NMKF.

Remy Strand also read a written report from journalist and writer Per Kristian Olsen, author of the Norwegian book "Jevnet med Jorden" about the use of scorched earth tactics by the Nazis in Northern Norway.

In this work, Olsen, based on historical documents, shows how Nazi propaganda blamed the burning of most of Northern Norway and the mass deportation of civilians, as a result of which up to 20% of its territory was destroyed, on the Soviet Red Army and its offensive operation. He expressed regret that this lie got into textbooks and became part of the official history of modern Norway. The author of the study insists that this undeservedly forgotten episode of the war requires international attention and condemnation as the most serious war crime of the Nazis in Norway, which has no statute of limitations, and this and other myths of the war must be convincingly debunked.

The truth about the events of World War II in the Arctic should be the basis for good-neighborly and peaceful cooperation of the Arctic countries today.

Following the conference, it is proposed to make the following decisions:

1. Recognize the relevance and practical significance of the topic declared at the conference and the issues considered in the sections.
2. To support the need to hold this conference on the stated topics on an annual regular basis.
3. Recognize that the results of the conference can be applied in the framework of international cooperation in the Arctic, cross-border and interregional dialogue between representatives of the Arctic countries and other stakeholders in the interests of solving common problems.
4. Among the issues that, based on the obtained expert data and public opinion, are of great practical importance for the sustainable development of the Arctic and require the attention of interested structures, the following should be highlighted:

- The US policy in the Arctic, directed against Russia and carried out from the positions of other Arctic countries without taking into account their national interests, is one of the main destabilizing factors in the region. This requires the development of confidence-building measures, the intensification of dialogue between Russia and other sub-Arctic countries, including the Barents cooperation and interregional interaction;
- Based on international statistical and other data, the new coronavirus infection COVID-19 has become a serious challenge to the international epidemiological security of the region, but at the same time it is not the main medical and biological problem of the Arctic countries. Nevertheless, given the global scale and widespread public outcry, COVID-19 can become a factor uniting countries in working together to improve and enhance the well-being of people in the High North. In particular, it is proposed to pay attention to the importance of the development of regional Arctic programs for the production of strategically important goods for medicine, pharmacology, animal husbandry and nutrition of the population (Local food), due to the real difficulties in logistics and their delivery through quarantine territories, to create dispensary groups for observation for people who have had COVID-19 and other dangerous diseases, according to the assessment, prevention and correction of psychological risks of social stigmatization, maladjustment in conditions of chronic stress from a pandemic and Arctic impact of a person's functional state.
- Intercultural and religious dialogue is an important part of the life of people in the Far North. In this regard, one should take into account the long-standing historical ties and the traditional presence of the Russian Orthodox Church on the territory of the Nordic countries and in other Arctic states. On the example of cases of public desecration of the Koran and other anti-Islamic actions recorded in Norway, manifestations of religious and ethnic intolerance in the Arctic region are of utmost concern. The practice of gross interference of state structures in the family life of believers and the confiscation of their children, which has taken root in some countries, is alarming;
- On the part of the Muslim community of the Murmansk region, on the example of the long-term successful work of the Council for Cooperation of Christian Churches in the Barents Region, expressed readiness and desire to establish cooperation and dialogue relations with the Islamic Ummah of Norway and other Arctic countries;
- In the work related to the coverage of the Arctic in the information space, the problem of bias towards negative topics is highlighted, as well as the so-called. "Helicopter journalism", as a result of which the world information field is dominated by materials created by people who are not directly in the Far North, but, at best, make short trips to the Arctic;
- In the field of ecology, on the basis of monitoring data, the problem of the accumulation of marine debris, including plastic, in the Arctic is becoming increasingly important;
- In the field of nuclear safety, interest was noted in the closure of research nuclear reactors in Halden and Kjeller, Norway, nuclear waste leaks in Greenland, plans to build nuclear waste storage facilities in Sweden and Finland. The importance of maintaining and developing international cooperation with the participation of public organizations in the implementation of projects to improve nuclear and radiation safety in the North-West of Russia, in the areas of dumped nuclear facilities in the Arctic seas, as well as

international radioecological monitoring, including for controlling such processes as radionuclides with the waters of the Gulf Stream system contaminated with liquid radioactive waste from the British Sellafield nuclear complex;

- To ensure a complex approach to work on the environmental problems of the Barents / Euro-Arctic region, it seems appropriate to use the results of the Barents Map project on mapping pollution objects in all four of its member countries: Russia, Norway, Sweden and Finland. This experience can also be extended to all Arctic states;

- Consideration should be given to information from Sweden that recently established wind farms have a negative impact on the traditional Sami reindeer husbandry;

- The plans of the Norwegian corporation Yara to implement a large mining project in Sokli, Finland, which may pose a threat to transboundary water bodies and nature reserves in Russia and Finland, require the closest attention of the international expert community;

- The historical truth about the Second World War and the victory over fascism in the Far North should be the foundation for building good-neighborly relations in the modern circumpolar region. The positive experience of Russian-Norwegian cooperation, implemented in the form of museum and university projects, interaction of public structures, a joint expert group on history and its initiative: "Routes of Memory", could be expanded to the entire territory of the Arctic region;

10. Ensure the publication of text and multimedia materials of the conference, on the official page in the public social network Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/SafeArctic>,

11. This resolution should be sent to the Arctic Council Secretariat, the International Barents Secretariat, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, the Barents Regional Council and relevant working groups for information and consideration;

12. To express gratitude to the participants of the conference, as well as to the heads of organizations and their divisions who have delegated their representatives to speak.

Broadcast recordings are available at the links:

1. Sections: "The Arctic - a region of sustainable development, dialogue and cooperation" and "Environmental security in the Arctic", English - <https://youtu.be/5ZL0xmuNSjc>
2. Russian - <https://youtu.be/dM34juqRdBs>
3. Seminar "Questions of History", English, Norwegian - <https://youtu.be/eWW64AeFpz4>
4. Russian – <https://youtu.be/ldhZkcfeooM>