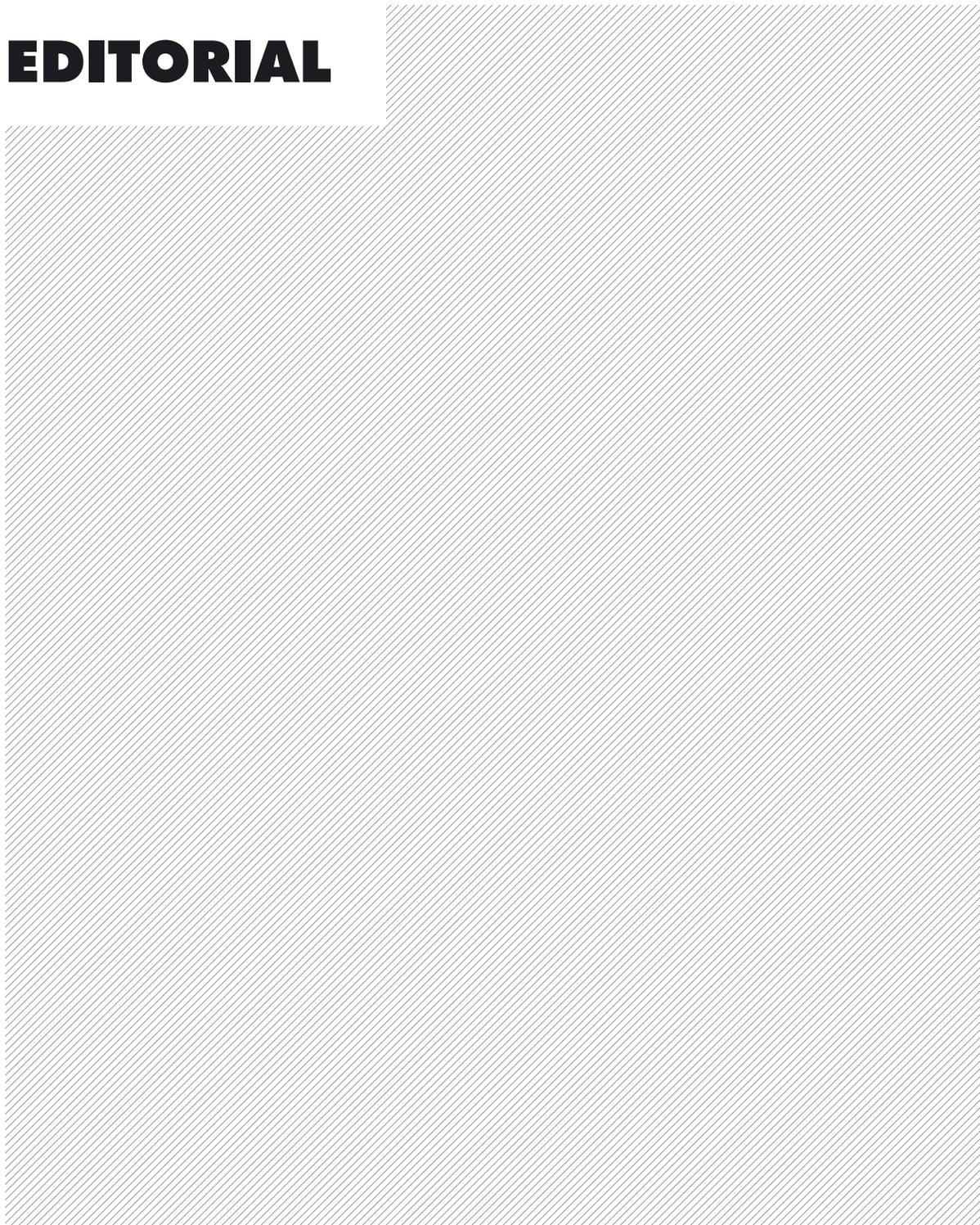


EDITORIAL



On the way

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The second issue of Barents Studies has been published. The new journal is on its way to becoming a viable international collaborative forum for research-based knowledge about the Barents Region. This issue brings together authors from all the member-countries of the Region: Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. Through cooperation with the authors and reviewers, we come closer to reaching the goal of creating value out of the diversity of thought stemming from our various cultural, socio-economic and academic backgrounds.

The general aim of the journal is to discuss the Barents Region from the point of view of sustainable development. In this issue the articles and other materials cover the social dimension of sustainability, either directly or indirectly. The rise of interest in social sustainability, in contrast to the times when more attention was paid to environmental or economic aspects of sustainable development, is a significant trend of the last decade. The need for a paradigm shift that brings more attention to people and their role in development is increasingly being recognized. An emphasis on social sustainability is the only way to realize sustainable development, since it takes into account both social development and social processes that transform behaviour and make changes in the economic and environmental spheres (United Nations Commission for Social Development, 2013).

By now many definitions of social sustainability have been produced. They include such aspects as peace, social justice, reducing poverty, and many others. The definitions differ; however, they all share certain key elements that are decisive for an understanding of the concept. These elements are people and their need for a good life – both for those who are living now and those to be born even in the remote future – and ways to achieve their desires. The cover of this issue is the first-prize photograph in the journal's photo contest "My Barents Region"; it is by Irina Nazarova from Petrozavodsk. A child is sitting in peace on the northern seashore, unafraid of a huge ocean-going vessel cautiously approaching the coast in front of her. We believe that this picture creates associations which bring us to the core of social sustainability.

The contributions to this issue revolve around the theme of social sustainability in the Barents Region. The first article, by Associate Professor Sonni Olsen, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education at the University of Tromsø, deals with the role of language in border relations. The author investigates how border contacts between Norway and Russia in the high North affect the development of the two neighbouring languages and the identities of the people in the region. In the following paper, researchers from several institutions in Finnish Lapland – Rainer Peltola, Ville Hallikainen, Seija Tuulentie, Arto Naskali, Outi Manninen and Jukka Similä – address the phenomenon of social license as a prerequisite for social sustainability. From this perspective they discuss organized berry picking by foreign seasonal workers in the context of local traditional rights in Northern Finland. Irina Atkova and Hanna Alila, doctoral students at the University of Oulu, explore, in their article, the concept of a trade development strategy and its impact on cross-border trading between Murmansk Region and Finland. Vladimir Dyadik, PhD (Econ.), the Acting Head of the Kirovsk City Administration in Murmansk Region, communicates his practice-driven research on strategic planning at the municipal level. He analyses the challenges to its development in Russia through the prism of local self-government practices in the Nordic countries.

This issue contains a book review of “Science, Geopolitics and Culture in the Polar Regions: Norden Beyond Borders”, edited by Professor Sverker Sörlin at the KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm; the review is by Hanna Lempinen, a researcher at the University of Lapland. And we continue with our series of “academic selfies” of young researchers from the Barents Region. There are four brief, inspiring essays about the subjects’ research and more.

In the moment of turbulence that our world is facing today, it is important to remember that the Barents Region is a region that has managed “to transfer a barrier into a bridge” (T. Stoltenberg, 2011). We believe our common work helps make this Barents bridge stronger.

We thank the authors for their efforts, and the peer-reviewers for the high-quality voluntary work they have done in providing thorough feedback to the authors.

Warmest welcome to the second issue of *Barents Studies*!

Visit our website: www.barentsinfo.org/barentsstudies for more information.

If you have suggestions that would improve the journal, please contact us. The email address for the editor of this issue is: larissar@iep.kolasc.net.ru.

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