

Welcome to the launch of the OECD report on the NSPA

Monday 13th March 2017 at 15:00 to 18:00

European Committee of the Regions, Rue Belliard 99-101, Brussels, Belgium

The event will be followed by a reception

On Monday, 13th March at 15:00, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD, will officially launch the study they have conducted on the regions in the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas, NSPA, in the northernmost part of Europe.

Hosted by the European Committee of the Regions in Brussels, with high-level EU representatives, governmental level in the countries concerned, and from the NSPA regions and others, the OECD, together with the NSPA network, will disseminate and discuss the report and its main findings.

The report delivers recommendations and proposals on actions to be taken in the regions, but also at national level in Sweden, Finland and Norway, as well as by the EU towards the regions. This is to strengthen the development in the northernmost parts of Europe.

You are welcome to take part in this launch event and to learn about the report.

Please register before 24th February to: martha.bahta@northsweden.eu

Background

The NSPA network consists of 14 regions in northern Sweden, east and north Finland and North Norway. The regions have for two years been engaged in a *Territorial Review* conducted by the OECD. In many ways this is a unique study as it gathers 14 regions in three countries, with two members of the European Union and one EEA, all of them sparsely-populated regions in the northernmost part of Europe. These regions are advanced in many ways, but with specific challenges; while having greatly different characteristics, the NSPA regions also share many common issues.

The aim of the study is to show the challenges and opportunities, and how the NSPA together can create a common critical mass to truly strengthen the development opportunities in the European front-line, both geographically as a part of the European Arctic, and in creating development.

Together with the OECD's recently published *Regional Outlook*, introduced at the seminar held by the NSPA network together with the Highlands and Islands in Scotland during the European Week of Regions and Cities 2016 in Brussels, the NSPA study sends a strong message from the OECD: that innovation and growth is not only possible in the large urban areas at the centre of Europe. Rural areas, including those which are remote, make an important contribution to national growth and productivity. The NSPA is an example of the potentials that exist, and it is not only possible, it is a necessity to invest in those regions to the benefit of the countries and, not least, the EU as a whole.