



DRAFT 08 Sep 2011

**Northern Sparsely Populated Areas (NSPA) Forum
22 September 2011
Kuopio, East Finland**

The NSPA Forum is a place to share ideas and best practises and also to define common objectives and goals for the future. The Kuopio Forum focuses on the next EU funding period and the opportunities that it brings to the Northern Sparsely Populated Areas.

DRAFT PROGRAMME

Venue: Hotel Scandic Kuopio, Satamakatu 1, Kuopio

Thursday, 22 September

moderator: Riikka Railimo, Director of East Finland EU Office

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| 09.30 | Registration |
| 10.00 | Opening words and welcome to Pohjois-Savo in East Finland
Mr Jussi Huttunen, Region Mayor, Pohjois-Savo region |
| 10.15 | Introduction to Northern Sparsely Populated Areas
Mr Kari Aalto, Director of North Finland EU Office |
| 10.30 | Keynote speech + discussion
Future of regional policy in the EU
Mr Alain Roggeri, Head of Unit - REGIO H.2 (Estonia, Finland and Latvia),
European Commission - DG REGIO |
| 11.30 | How to promote the NSPA in a national setting
Mr Heikki Aurasmaa, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Finnish
Ministry of Employment and the Economy (tbc) |
| 12.15 | Lunch |

- 13.30 Defining NSPA: grand opportunities and challenges
- *Natural resources*
Mr Risto Pietilä, Regional Director, Geological Survey of Finland (tbc)
 - *Research and development*
Ms Susan Holmberg, PhD Political Science, Mid Sweden University
 - *Demographic change and social innovation*
Mr Kimmo Niiranen, Regional Officer, Regional Council of North Karelia
 - *Cross-border cooperation*
Mr Rune Bakkevoll, Special Advisor, North Norway European Office
- 14.30 Coffee break
- 14.45 NSPA position paper on the future of structural funds
+ NSPA - the way forward: general discussion
Mr Erik Bergqvist, Chairman of the Board of Region Västerbotten
- 16.00 European Parliament and regional policy
MEP Riikka Manner, Member of the Regional Development Committee,
European Parliament
- 16.30 Comments from DG REGIO
Mr Alain Roggeri, Head of Unit - REGIO H.2 (Estonia, Finland and Latvia),
European Commission - DG REGIO
- 16.50 Welcome to the next NSPA Forum in Mid Sweden
Mrs Åsa Möller, Chair, County Council of Västernorrland
- 17.00 Concluding remarks
Mr Matti Viialainen, Region Mayor, Etelä-Savo region, Chairman of the regions
of East Finland 2011
- 19.00 Evening programme (Kuopio city reception)

The regions of northern and eastern parts of Finland, Norway and Sweden have many common circumstances such as sparse population, harsh climate and long distances. This part of Europe is also specifically affected by globalisation, energy-supply, climate change and demographic change. The region has a population density of only 4.9 inhabitants per km², something that cannot be found in any other part of the European Union.

The NSPA network consists of 14 regions in three countries sharing common circumstances and objectives, working together to raise awareness of the region in the EU institutions, to influence EU policy and to provide a platform for best practise.