



POLITIET
TROMS POLITIDISTRIKT

TROMS POLICE DISTRICT



MARPART-conference 18. oktober 2016

Chief of police Ole Bredrup Sæverud

For those attending the MARPART-conference the scarce populations and large distances in the arctic regions is a well-known fact. Relevant police- and rescue-resources are also scarce, and covering a large geographical area. Even though Northern Norway is the densest populated area in the high north, this is also a precise description here.

Tourism has been a source of income in Northern Norway for many years. Austrian and German royalty sailed the coast more than a hundred years ago. Adventurous expeditions with hopes of scientific output were numerous in the early twentieth century. These were important both economically and culturally, but were far apart and well equipped.

The last ten to fifteen years has seen a significant rise in tourists in this part of the world. These are in large parts of an advanced age, equipped for cruise ships and shopping malls and are here to experience a wilderness they have little understanding for. For them the wilderness is best consumed wild, and there are no better time to get the authentic feeling, than in the darkest days of winter. Christmas eve almost two years ago one could see Japanese tourists with snowshoes walking along the sidewalks in down town Tromsø.

This is in large parts good. And they come in large numbers, and are financially well off. Politicians on both local and regional level understandably work hard to support this development. It provides job-opportunities in local communities which may have limited alternatives.

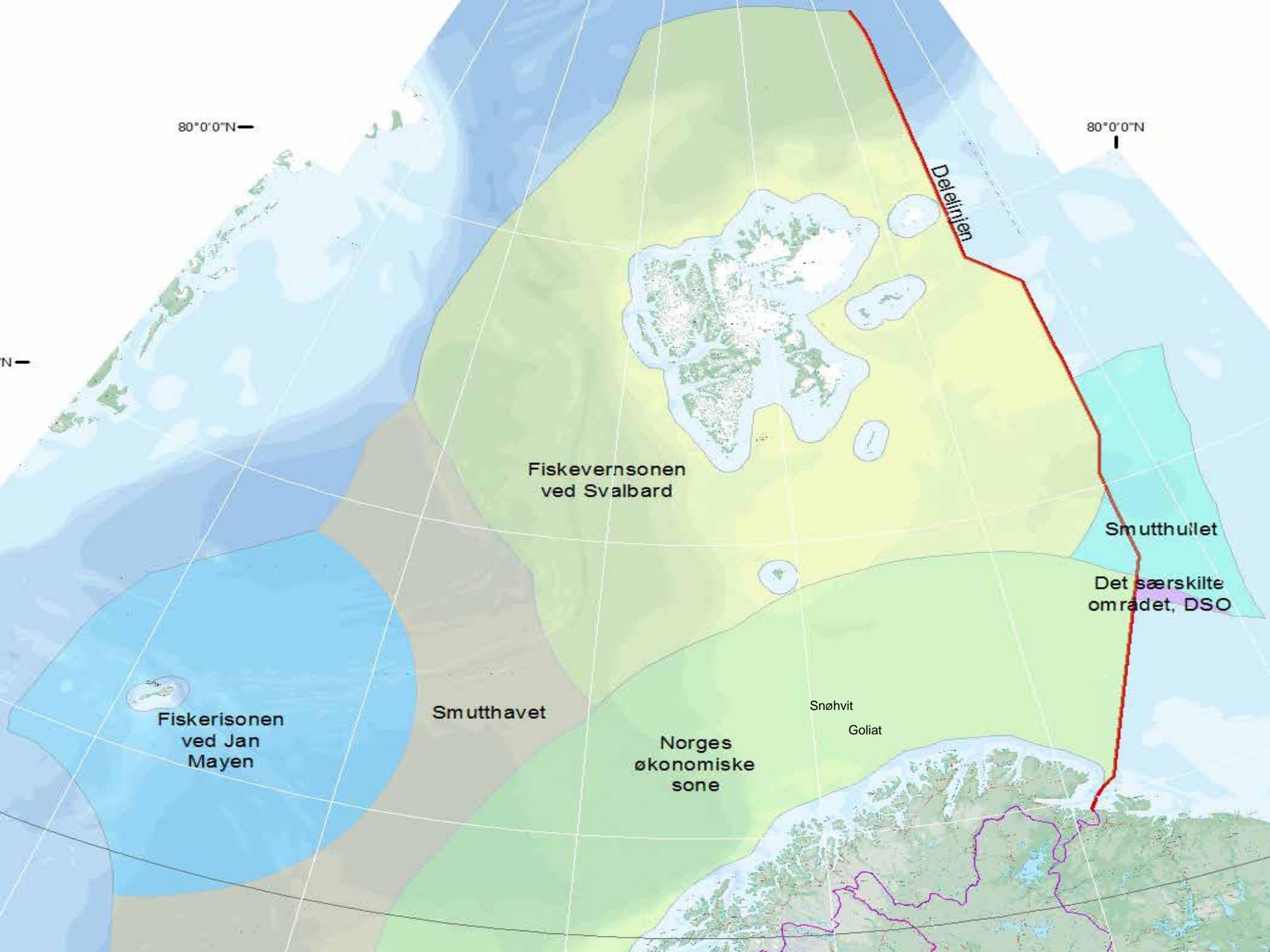
For those of us with a responsibility to be prepared for events no one want, this is a challenge. How to manage Costa Concordia outside Skjervøy, a dark and windy night in February? It is dark, the sea is refreshingly close to freezing over, the winds are getting close to a seven on the Beaufort scale and on board are 2000 American and central European passengers whose preparations for managing the arctic winter is limited to watching Joanna Lumleys hunt for the northern lights on BBC.

This is a scenario we have to prepare for. If we don't, people will die only because we didn't do our job.

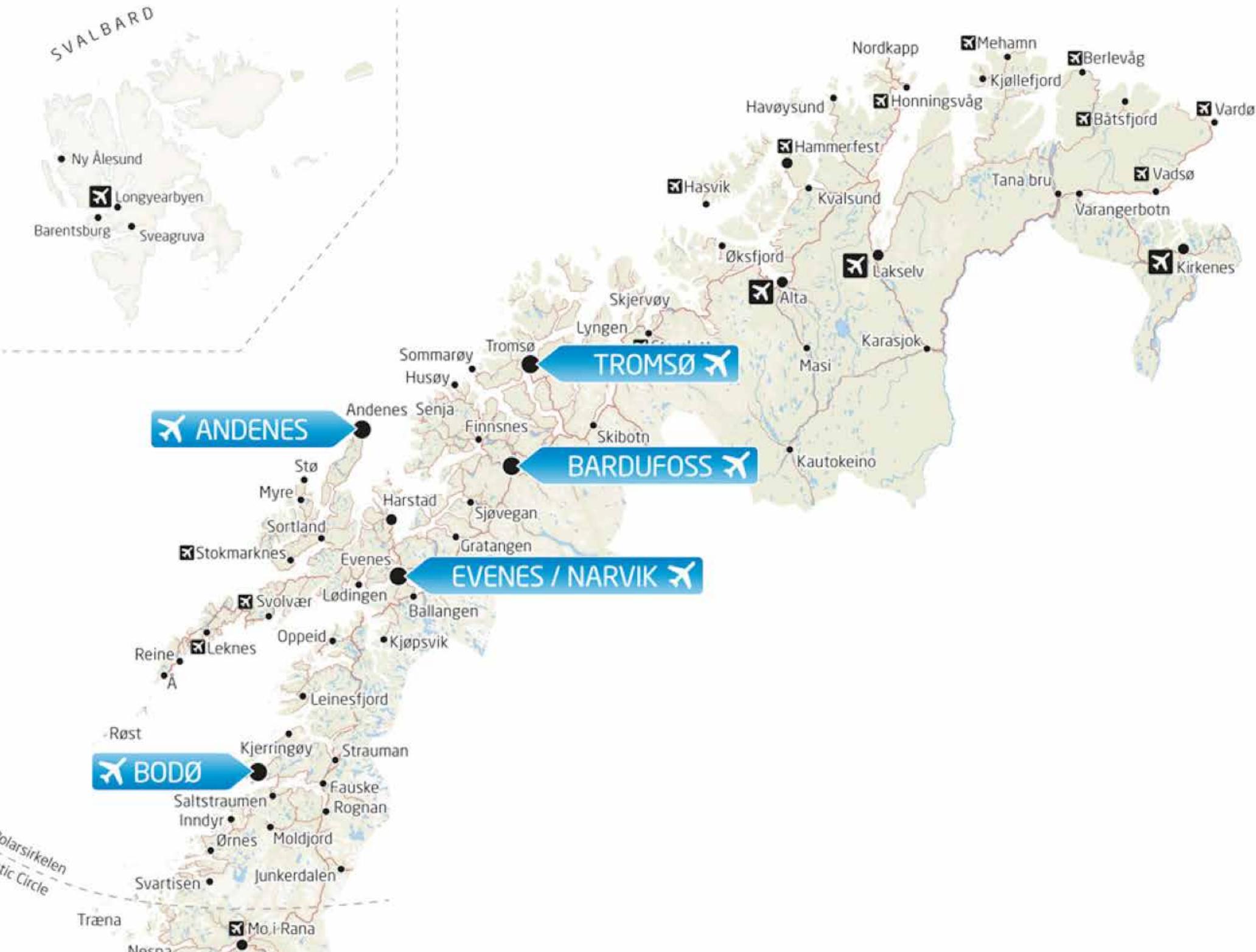
How do we move so many people of the ship? Where can we house them? Where can we find the necessary means of transportation? There will be people who have lost their travel documents or medication. People will be sick and injured. It will get an enormous media coverage. There will be a surge of impatient embassy personnel.

In a smaller scale this was the scenario of "Øvelse Svalbard" I 2015, and a large exercise I Alaska this year. In Troms we have started to make a coordinated plan for this, in cooperation with the county Governor's office. If we are to manage this, all sways of society has to take their responsibility, and our actions has to be coordinated.

But it is not enough to be prepared. We have to discuss how to lower risk. One could state that no cruise ship can travel alone in remote areas. Then we could evacuate form one to the other. Are the regulations regarding ship pilots as rigorous as they should be? Safety has to be an integral part of our society's development.







SVALBARD

Ny Ålesund
Longyearbyen
Barentsburg
Sveagruba

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TROMSØ ✈️

BARDUFLOSS ✈️

EVENES / NARVIK ✈️

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Polarsirkelen
Arctic Circle



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