Bilateral agreements and cooperation between Norway and Russia - experiences from cooperation

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3-year bachelor and engineering
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- Technology and safety in the High North
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PHD program
- PhD in Science (NT) - Engineering
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- PhD – Nautical Operations (MARKOM)
• Oil Spill Response (OSR) regime of 1994
• Search and Rescue (SAR) regime of 1995
• The agreements
• Institutional arrangements
• Experiences from cooperation
Bilateral Norwegian-Russian OSR regime
OPRC 1990


Objectives:
• A platform to facilitate international cooperation and mutual assistance in preparing for and responding to major oil pollution incidents.

• National obligations:
  • Establish a national system for responding to oil pollution incidents (Article 6-1)
  • Oil pollution emergency plans ..(Article 3)
  • Response capacity (Article 6-2):

• International obligations:
  • Informing neighbouring States of oil spills
  • Providing assistance if requested
  • Endeavour to conclude bilateral or multilateral agreements for oil pollution preparedness and response.
Bilateral Norwegian-Russian OSR regime

- Nested in the OPRC 1990.
- The **basis** for this Norwegian–Russian cooperation is the **shared understanding of threat** of oil pollution in the Barents Sea, which is defined as the geographical area of cooperation.
- The **aim** is to **prevent incidents**.
- The **main norm** of the OSR Agreement 1994 involves the commitment to **provide mutual assistance** in combating oil pollution.
- **Scope**: Barents Sea, but flexible if needed.
Bilateral Norwegian-Russian OSR Regime

- Assistance to be provided in accordance with the provisions of the three main documents that constitute the core of the regime in terms of its substantive and operative components:
  
  ✓ Agreement on cooperation on the combatment of oil pollution in the Barents Sea (OSR Agreement 1994) – defines the general principles of cooperation.
  
  
  ✓ Memorandum of 2006 on strengthening the Norwegian-Russian cooperation on maritime safety in the Barents Sea.
Agreement on cooperation on the combatment of oil pollution in the Barents Sea (OSR Agreement 1994)

• outlines the tasks of the competent national authorities, the Norwegian Ministry of Transport and the Russian Ministry of Transport;

• provides for the parties to develop national systems of oil pollution monitoring and a notification scheme in case of cross-border spills;

• stipulates regular exchange of information and joint consultations and sets the conditions for the Joint Contingency Plan and for joint operations;

• clarifies how requests for help are to be forwarded and responsibilities of the parties;

• sets out a compensation scheme for costs incurred in providing assistance.
Joint Contingency Plan

• An integral part of the OSR Agreement 1994 and an instrument for the joint policy implementation. Provides the procedures of how the general principles of cooperation are to be implemented in practice.

• Three main aspects of joint policy (planning, coordination of joint response and communication) define the set up of the plan.

• **Command structure** during clean up operations, procedures to be taken during different phases of a response operation, notification and communication procedures, joint planning procedures.

• Main function: to provide for **coordinated and combined** response to oil pollution incidents in the Barents Sea.

• Bilateral cooperation is to be based on **regular exercises, meetings and personal contacts.**

• Joint Contingency Plan is **revised and updated annually.**
Institutional arrangement

MINISTERIAL LEVEL: policy cooperation

Joint Norwegian-Russian Steering Group:
- Norwegian Ministry of Transport
- Russian Ministry of Transport

AGENCY LEVEL: operational cooperation

Working Group I
"Maritime safety"

"Oil spill emergency preparedness"
- Norwegian Coastal Administration
- Gosmorspasslužba and the Northern branch of Gosmorspasslužba
Joint exercises and training

- Joint bilateral training Exercise Barents (OSR combined with SAR since 2006) since 1991.
- International (Norway, Russia, Finland, Sweden) training exercises Barents Rescue (every 2\textsuperscript{nd} year since 2001)
- “There is more value from training exercises than an official meeting” (INF).
- NO ACTUAL INCIDENTS HAVE ACTIVATED THE AGREEMENT.
Experiences

- **common understanding** of the problem to be solved, agreement that mutual effort is needed
  - broader number of issues on the agenda than at the beginning of cooperation
  - expansion of the initial agreement (in terms of territory and activities)
  - higher complexity of training exercises
- **professionals** on both sides, high regard for each other
- high **stability of participation** and communication (same representatives)
- informal relationships, “**special culture**”
- Norway has contributed to building up the capacity on the Russian side
  - equipment and laboratory, 2007
  - organising and conducting courses
- **technical compatibility** of the systems
Experiences

- **border crossing** procedures (long bureaucratic procedures on the Russian side)
- **language** barrier
- occasional **communication failures** due to equipment malfunctions

- issues related to **organizational compatibility of the systems**
  - **different approaches** to organization and regulation of the OSR activity
  - **departmentalization** of the Russian OSR system, big number of actors
  - lack of clarity on how the Russian OSR system is structured
Bilateral Norwegian-Russian SAR Regime
SAR Convention 1979 (maritime)

- Aim: develop an international SAR plan
- No matter where an accident occurs, the rescue of persons in distress at sea will be co-ordinated by a SAR organization
- When necessary, by co-operation between neighbouring SAR organizations – pooling facilities etc
- National responsibility to establish capacity – eg co-ordination centres

- IMO search and rescue areas
  Following 1979 SAR Convention, IMO's Maritime Safety Committee divided the world's oceans into 13 SAR areas. In each of which the countries concerned have delimited search and rescue regions for which they are responsible.

- Revised annex 1998 Chapter 3 - Co-operation between States
  Requires Parties to co-ordinate search and rescue organizations, and, where necessary, search and rescue operations with those of neighbouring States. The Chapter states that unless otherwise agreed between the States concerned, a Party should authorize, subject to applicable national laws, rules and regulations, immediate entry into or over its territorial sea or territory for rescue units of other Parties solely for the purpose of search and rescue.

- IMO and Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) jointly develop and publish the International Aeronautical and Maritime Search and Rescue (IAMSAR) Manual
Bilateral Norwegian-Russian SAR regime

- Agreement of 1995 (replaced 1988 agreement)
- Based on SAR Convention 1979.
- Geographical scope: Barents Sea

- Provide assistance with all suitable means
- Responsibility for organisation and coordination
  - Murmansk Marine Rescue Coordination Centre (MRCC)
  - Joint Rescue coordination center Northern Norway (JRCC NN)

- SAR operations are to be based on laws and regulations within the national borders it takes place
The Agreement

- **Procedure to request assistance**
  - The party receiving the emergency call is responsible to organize the operation
  - Contact other party to plan, coordinate and execute response
  - Party responding to a call may at any time request assistance
  - Duty to assist to the extent they dispose of suitable resources.

- **Access** to other parties territory
  - Send request to enter (with relevant info)
  - Request handled as quickly as the situation requires.
Cont’d

• Notification of vessels in distress from the other party

• Share relevant information

• Communication procedures
  – Technical specifications
  – Exchange of information through MRCC & JRCC NN
  – Language: English
Institutional arrangement

• National implementation though providing appropriate instructions to national agencies (Art9)

• Meet on a need basis and conduct exercises. (Art 10)

• Planning group meets annually to plan common exercises.
• No formalised decision-making body
• No independent organisational capacity (secretariat, budget, etc)
Exercise Barents

- The Exercise Barents is held on an annual basis in accordance with the 1995 SAR agreement (and 1994 Agreement on Oil Spill Response in the Barents Sea).
- Convened on a rotational basis - Russian and Norwegian SAR and OSR services.
- Scenarios initially small scale. Complexity and amount of resources have increased substantially.

- Approx 1-2 incidents per year under the agreement
Experiences

• Cooperation has developed and improved gradually
• “Language issue”, has improved
• **Regularity of communication** has increased
• Day-to-day communication, and cooperation through the joint Barents SAR regime, have a synergetic effect
• SAR cooperation between Norway and Russia has predominantly been in terms of **Norwegian resources being called upon**.
• **No common contingency plan**

• **Norwegian responders divided in whether it will be effective in case of a large-scale incident**
Experiences

- **Border-crossing** still remains an issue. “*Sometimes border crossing clearance of vessels is not possible, [which] might challenge the search pattern planning procedure*”.
- Problem to get an **overview of resources on the Russian side**. Norway provides this data to Russian partners.
- How **Exercise Barents** are conducted;
  - scenarios are unrealistic in terms of weather conditions, location of incident, and access to SAR resources.
  - Do little do test the actual capacity and availability of SAR resources and thereby identify gaps.
  - **Russian SAR participation** limited to rescuing someone at predefined coordinates and with all necessary resources available.
  - **No formal evaluation procedure** following common exercises. Debrief after exercises function as an arena for discussing experiences
  - Primary value in conducting exercises, was to **maintain communication** between Norwegian and Russian participants.
Common features SAR and OSR

- Developed gradually
- Common interests and understandings of purpose
- Professionalism (emergency responders) and personal relations (trust)
- Low political involvement (+or-)

- Uncertainty regarding Russian system and capacity
- Border-crossing/sovereignty
  - Authorities ‘outside’ established cooperation

- Are responders becoming experts at exercising and/or emergency response?
Selected publications on SAR & OSR

- Ivanova, Maria; Sydnes, Are K. Interorganizational coordination in oil spill emergency response: a case study of the Murmansk region of Northwest Russia. *Polar Geography* 2010 ;Volum 33.(3-4) s. 139-164.
- Sydnes, Are K., Maria Sydnes, and Yngve Antonsen. International Cooperation on Search and Rescue in the Arctic. To be submitted Oct 2016.
- SARiNOR WP 3
- MARPART Report 3.
Escape, Evacuation and Rescue in Ice Covered Waters

Pre-project, July 2015

Phase I
- As-is mapping
- Objective: Document present EER capability for maritime accidents in Arctic waters
- Map today’s EER capability in Northern Norway, Barents Sea and Russian Arctic
- Analyze applicability of existing lifesaving appliances in the Arctic
- Investigate best practice EER systems worldwide, focus on maritime accidents
- What can be learned from these systems?
  - Emergency towing preparedness in English Channel, including selection and training and salvage team
  - Prince William Sound EER, use of escort tugs
  - Russian Northern Sea Route, use of escort tugs
- Compare findings with present EER capability in Canadian and US Arctic waters
- Describe and discuss EER capabilities in relation to selected maritime accidents in Arctic waters
- Discuss cross border challenges for rescue operations
- Prepare proposals for improvements

Phase II
- To-be specification
- Objective: Specify requirements for a future EER system to handle maritime accidents in Arctic waters
- Work meetings with relevant Norwegian and Russian stakeholders
- Specify two/three scenarios related to ongoing/planned oil and gas activities or maritime transport operations in EuroArctic waters and discuss future EER requirements
- Need for new types of lifesaving appliances
- Need for new operational procedures
- Operational characteristics of enclosed lifeboats in ice covered waters
- Application of rescue vessels with stern ramp
- Improving hoisting capability from lifeboats/life rafts to helicopters
- Requirements to personal survival equipment
- Prepare document describing requirements to improved Arctic EER system

Phase III
- Gap closing activities
- Objective: Discuss and propose ways to bridge the gap between to be and as is EER system for maritime accidents in Arctic waters
- Polar Code impact
- Oil and gas company standards - licence to operate requirements
- Competence requirements for key personnel in the EER system
- Final document specifying a road map to improved performance of future Arctic EER systems
Thank you!