

## Fact sheet – Maritime delimitation in the Barents Sea and Arctic Ocean

- The Norwegian and Russian negotiating delegations have reached agreement on the bilateral maritime delimitation of the continental shelf and the exclusive economic zone in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean. This marks a decisive turning point in efforts to achieve a final solution to the most important outstanding issue between Norway and the Russian Federation. The agreement has been announced today in a joint statement by the Foreign Ministers of Norway and the Russian Federation. (link to Joint Statement at [www.regjeringen.no/](http://www.regjeringen.no/))
- The negotiations have now been completed, but some technical control work remains before the final treaty is ready for signature. After that it will be put before the two countries' national assemblies for approval and ratification.
- Norway and the Russian Federation have been engaged in negotiations on a maritime delimitation line between the two countries for 40 years. The Russian Federation has traditionally based its position on a sector line, running roughly along longitude 32° E northwards from the Russian coastline. Norway, on the other hand, has based its position on an equidistance line between the coasts on either side of the border. It is the continental shelf between these two lines, of approximately 155 000 km<sup>2</sup> (and the overlapping exclusive economic zones within this area) that constitutes the disputed area in the Barents Sea. In addition to this, there are overlapping claims further north in the Arctic Sea, of approximately 20 000 km<sup>2</sup>. Altogether the disputed area measures approximately 175 000 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Clarification of the principles for the equitable delimitation of the continental shelf and exclusive economic zones has been one of the most controversial subjects in international law. During the past two decades in particular, the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague and specially appointed arbitration tribunals have issued decisions that clarify important principles and provide guidance for coastal States. In several of its decisions, the ICJ has specified that the solution is to be based on objective geographical features where any major disparities in the respective coastal lengths may be of significance.
- In addition to the course of the line, the parties have discussed fisheries resources and hydrocarbon activities. The conclusion of the maritime delimitation treaty will not alter or adversely affect the excellent cooperation between Norway and Russia in the field of fisheries. Norway and Russia have long been at the forefront in terms of the management of shared fish stocks and straddling fish stocks, in the sense that our regulatory regimes have been based on the actual distribution areas of the various species and their migration patterns, independently of national borders. This cooperation will be continued, for example in the Norwegian-Russian Joint Fisheries Commission. In the field of hydrocarbon cooperation, the two delegations recommend the adoption of detailed rules and procedures ensuring efficient and responsible management of their hydrocarbon resources in cases where any single oil or gas deposits should extend across the delimitation line.