

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND
Experiences of Nordic-Baltic-Russian Cooperation in Higher Education

**Report of the *Nordplus Neighbour* Network “The European North and
EU-Russian International Relations”**

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Table of Contents

PART I: Introduction

Editors' Note: Why This Report? 7

The ABC of Joint Degrees – Some Statements and
Personal Reflections 13
Tarja Hyppönen

PART II: Taking Stock of the Experience – Program-level

Practicing the Bologna Process: the CBU Joint Teaching Program
for Master's Degree in International Relations at Petrozavodsk
State University 21
Sergei Prozorov and Marina Makarycheva

The Lund Coordinator's Experience of the Joint Teaching Program
on "The European North and EU–Russian International Relations" 29
Bo Petersson

CBU Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in International
Relations. Petrozavodsk Students' Experience 33
Anita Rogozina

Comparing the Finnish and the Russian Educational Systems
– a Student's Perspective 37
Maria Papina

Cross-Border University at a Crossroads – an Aspect of the
Bologna Process in Practice 41
Jussi Laine

Taking Advantage of Diversity in Advanced International Study
Programs – Mutual Learning Perspective 49
Inese Nalivaiko

Quality Assurance – What and How? Some Preliminary Conclusions 55
Corinna Wolff

PART III: Taking Stock of the Experience – Institution-level

Russia in the Bologna Process: A View from St. Petersburg 67
Konstantin Khudoley

Experience of the MGIMO-University in Double Degree MA Programs in International Relations <i>Marina M. Lebedeva</i>	71
A Glance at the Implementation of Bologna at the University of Tartu <i>Jaanka Haljasmäe and Ülle Tensing</i>	75
PART IV: Impact Assessment: From Global to Local Levels	
Political Consequences of the Bologna Process <i>Marina M. Lebedeva</i>	81
The Bologna Process and National System of Education <i>Vladimir Mironov</i>	87
Bologna Adaptation: Local Experiences in Lund <i>Tomas Bergström</i>	95
PART V: The Next Steps	
PhD (Post Graduate)-training and the Bologna Process: Taking Stock of Different Best Practices in the Baltic Sea Area <i>Andreas Önnersfors</i>	101
Three Steps towards a Joint Degree – JTP, DDt, and JIMP. Reflections Based on a Disciplinary Development Project <i>Helena Rytövuori-Apunen</i>	107
Appendices	117

P A R T I
Introduction

Editors' Note: Why This Report?

This report includes papers presented at the conference “Bologna beyond Words: Taking Stock of Experience”, which took place at Lund University on the 4th and 5th of December, 2006. The conference was organized by the *Nordplus Neighbour* network “The European North and EU-Russian International Relations” together with the Department of Political Science (local organizer) and the Centre for European Studies (CFE, co-host) at Lund University. The program and the list of participants are attached to this report. The conference was supported by the Nordplus Neighbour Program. Nordplus Neighbour has been one of the Nordic Council of Ministers’ five mobility and network programs until the restructuring of the family of Nordplus programs in 2007. Nordplus Neighbour is aimed at developing networks between educational institutions, research institutions and non-governmental organizations in the field of education and lifelong learning. The program’s networks consist of at least two Nordic institutions from two different countries and two institutions from two different adjacent area countries, i.e. the Baltic States and northwestern Russia.¹

Our network “The European North and EU-Russian International Relations” was supported by the Nordplus Neighbour Program during three subsequent project cycles (2004/05, 2005/06, and 2006/07). The work has concentrated on quality assurance and the design and implementation of joint teaching and degree programs in the academic field of International Relations. Participating institutions are: the University of Tampere, St Petersburg State University, Petrozavodsk State University, the University of Tartu and Lund University. The network is coordinated at the University of Tampere, Tampere Peace Research Institute (TAPRI). 2006-07 is our third and concluding cycle. Therefore it is time to take stock of what has been achieved and to communicate our experiences and lessons to other similar teaching and development projects, as well as, of course, to the Nordplus Programs interested in the development of joint international degree programs.

The conference in Lund in December 2006 was devoted to the experiences generated in connection with the joint teaching program for Master’s degree in International Relations titled “The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations”. This program was supported by the network and functioned as the “laboratory” for the work on quality assurance and realization of the Bologna goals in the sub-regional Nordic-Baltic-Russian context. We have learned much about the establishment and operative work of a joint teaching program and consider our experiences to be indicative of some of the difficulties in transforming the often lofty words about Bologna standards and international cooperation into hands-on practice. The problems we have encountered have not left us pessimistic about the future prospects of the Bologna process. They have helped us to locate the obstacles and to see how the first impressions about this kind of enterprise can lead one with, if not false, still all too dim lights. One lesson is that a dialogue about the contents of studies needs to accompany all planning, which all too often begins by concentrating on the obvious and acute administrative questions. The content of the

¹ [Http://siu.no/en/programoversikt/nordplus](http://siu.no/en/programoversikt/nordplus)

program needs to be planned with mutual reflections not only on the specific focus of the program but also on what the academic field in question comprises and requires in the different partner institutions. On a more ambitious level, our idea has been to contribute to the development of International Relations as a subject of study in the spirit of European traditions of pluralism and dialogue. The present transformation of the field in the Russian academic institutions in particular makes such an enterprise both intellectually challenging and timely.

The Joint Teaching Program for Master's degree in International Relations titled "The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations" was first planned and sketched out within our Nordplus Neighbour network. The idea of a joint program came up in the discussions between Tampere and St Petersburg in early autumn 2003, and in the same year Lund expressed their interest to join the exploratory enterprise. Planning the program was completed within the Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) Project, which became the core of the Finnish-Russian cooperation. The CBU is a consortium of Finnish and Russian universities, which offers joint Master's degree programs in six study fields: Business and Administration, Forestry and Bioenergy Technology, History, Information Technology, Public Health, and International Relations. These joint Master's degree programs are designed for students, who already have their Bachelor's or comparable degree, recognized by the university.² The extension of these two-year long studies is 120 ECTS.

"The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations" was launched on the 1st of September 2005 as the CBU Pilot Program in International Relations. Nordplus Neighbour provided the wider Nordic-Baltic network which made it possible for advanced students and staff from Lund and Tartu to participate in the design and implementation of the joint courses, including Autumn and Summer schools, as well as the work on quality assurance. The CBU formed the core of the Finnish-Russian cooperation, and the Nordplus Neighbour program made it possible to extend parts of our experimental development work to include another Nordic university, Lund, and a Baltic university, Tartu. These two hubs made it possible to network the activities further to the Nordic and the Baltic countries, and also to deepen the cooperation beyond the CBU. Our conference in Lund is one result of this wider Nordic-Baltic networking. In the course programs it was mentioned: "The CBU Subject Consortium in International Relations organizes a Joint Teaching Program for Master's degree in International Relations. Nordplus Neighbour Program makes possible the participation of teachers and students from the University of Lund (Sweden) and the University of Tartu (Estonia) in this network." Through the synergy generated by the Nordplus Neighbour network the Finnish-Russian project was immediately much more international than otherwise would have been the case. The fact that Helena Rytövuori-Apunen, then working as professor in International Relations, coordinated both projects at the University of Tampere, facilitated the practical coordination. The CBU and Nordplus projects had separate budgets. Only the Finnish-Russian cooperation commissioned by the CBU could be covered from the CBU sources, and the Nordplus budget had its own program rules.

² See: Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) on the website of the University of Joensuu, Finland <http://www.joensuu.fi/joyindex.html>.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

The tasks of the Nordplus Neighbour network were more specific than those of the CBU cooperation. Quality assurance (QA) of higher education is one of the cornerstones of the network's activities. For this purpose QA teams were established and started their operational work in connection with the first joint teaching session in Tartu in September 2005. QA measures have been incorporated into the teaching activities that take place within the network. The administrative solutions to how the joint teaching program has been incorporated into the local study programs in the member universities have differed from case to case. We have dealt with a pilot phase, and the practices have not been uniform. The *joint* program did not, as such, exist as a *local* Master's program but was, instead, locally applied or used as compensating studies. Therefore we called it a joint program *for* Master's degree (studies). The joint program components – courses realized together by the partner universities and bringing together the local groups of students – covered 24 ECTS out of the 120 total. The 24 ECTS consisted of mandatory courses in the program. The local programs were identical in their thesis seminar and Master's thesis volumes (20 + 40 ECTS). In addition, five other courses were jointly organized within the program and visiting studies were arranged. Thus, optional courses at the local university covered only 20-25 percent of the overall total of 120 ECTS. This means that during the pilot phase the program attained a very high level of integration which was based on the identical structure and contents of mandatory courses in the major subject, International Relations.

After the pilot implementation phase (2005-07) the CBU joint Master's degree programs, including a CBU program in International Relations, will be started in its entire extension. The launching date is September 1, 2007. The present report is not an evaluation of the CBU International Relations program as such. This takes place within the CBU and is advised by the CBU Development Unit at the University of Joensuu (Finland). The task of the present report is at the same time more limited and more ambitious. We wish to reflect on our Nordplus Neighbour network's experiences in relation to other similar experiences and also to present a model of the joint degree development that grows from our practices and experiences. Our aim is to contribute to the knowledge and experience of cooperation between institutions of higher learning from EU member states and Russia and to add to the specific competitive capabilities of the region within the larger framework of European higher education. A model which envisages steps towards joint degree is presented by Helena Rytövuori-Apunen in this report. We have also mapped out and presented solutions to the constraints in the joint teaching project and the incompatibilities between different education and curriculum systems. The ways in which solutions were found to the implementation of the "global" (the joint, integrated program) on the "local" level (the partner institutions) and what problems were encountered are described in the individual contributions.

The Nordplus Neighbour network coordinator at the University of Lund was Professor Bo Petersson. It is to the Lund team that we owe thanks for inventing the name of the joint teaching program. At the St Petersburg State University the network's representative from the start has been Konstantin Khudoley, Professor and Dean of the Faculty of International Relations. Professor Khudoley's chapter evaluates the university- and faculty-level experiences in joint international degree programs. In Petrozavodsk, the network was represented by Professors Valentina Maksimova and Sergei Prozorov. Professor Prozorov was the teacher in charge of the joint program. Prozorov (together with

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Associate Professor Marina Makarycheva), Petersson, and Rytövuori-Apunen all give their accounts of the program in this report. In Tartu the Nordplus network was represented by Professor Eiki Berg, who took actively part in the organization and teaching of the Autumn School. In the Lund conference in December 2006 Tartu was represented by Jaanika Hallasmäe, Erasmus Institutional Coordinator at Tartu. Jaanika reports, together with Ülle Tensing, Head of the International Student Office at the University of Tartu, about the experiences of implementing the Bologna goals in Tartu. The experiences of joint program teaching and double degree at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO-University) are presented in the chapter by Marina Lebedeva. Professor Lebedeva's professional duties at MGIMO include the development of international Master's programs. Included in this report is also a contribution from the Lomonosov Moscow State University (MGU). The MGU and the Saint-Petersburg University are the two oldest and leading universities in Russia. Professor Vladimir Mironov offers a critical assessment of the possible impacts of the Bologna process on the Russian national system of education. As an exception to the other contributions to this report, this chapter is a reprint from the *World Public Forum "Dialogue of Civilizations" Bulletin* no. 1, 2006, pp. 202-210. The World Public Forum in Moscow as the publisher and the author has kindly given their consent to reprinting the article in our report.

Four chapters are written by students who have participated in the joint CBU/Nordplus Neighbour teaching program. It cannot be enough emphasized that the students' perspectives, because they are the experts in the different learning cultures, must be incorporated in the planning and implementation of a joint program throughout the process. The students reporting their experiences in this report differ in their degree of participation to our joint teaching program. While Anita Rogozina is a student of the CBU program in Petrozavodsk, Maria Papina has experience of studying in both Russia and Finland. Inese Nalivaiko, a Latvian national then studying at Lund University, participated in the joint Autumn and Summer Schools in the context of the Nordplus Neighbour network. One of the advanced students, MSSc Jussi Laine of the University of Joensuu, was invited to be one of the editors. Jussi participated in several CBU joint courses and is presently a student at the Finnish national doctoral school "Russia in Europe, Cross-Border Doctoral School". Corinna Wolff, a doctoral student at Tampere who in 2005-06 worked as the Quality Officer of the CBU International Relations project, has written an overview of QA in the project.

This report begins with Tarja Hyppönen's summary of the "ABC" of joint programs – with some questions and issues that we should keep in mind in the planning, design, and implementation of such programs in order not to lose sight of the enterprise as a whole when faced with one-hundred-and plus details. Tarja Hyppönen is Coordinator of the Baltic Sea Region Studies Program at the University of Turku (Åbo). Her chapter discusses also the crucial question of the definition and meaning of "joint degree". The following chapters are devoted to the evaluation of our Nordplus Neighbour network's joint teaching program. The program-level reflections in Part I are followed by institution-level reports, which include experiences from St Petersburg State University, MGIMO-University, and the University of Tartu (Part II). Part III discusses the impacts of the Bologna process from the more global to the local levels. It includes contributions from Moscow (MGIMO and

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

MGU) and Lund. Part IV discusses the next steps, doctoral training and the phases in the development of joint degree.

Our heartfelt thanks are to the Nordplus Neighbour program which has supported our network's activities during the three years starting in autumn 2004. For organizing the two-day conference in Lund in December we owe warmest thanks to Dr. Andreas Önnersfors, Center for European Studies at Lund University, and Associate Professor Tomas Bergström, Head of the Department of Political Science at Lund University. Both are also contributors to this report. Many thanks to also Niklas Bernsand, Coordinator of the CFE at Lund, for kindly designing the cover. Coordination of the network has been at the University of Tampere. MA Anni Kangas and the CBU project assistants MA Corinna Wolf and MA Saara Ollikainen, each in their turn, have been of invaluable assistance in the work which in many ways was pioneering and also encountered the administrative and technical problems which harmonization of the structures of an individual university with a consortium of other universities brings about. This has been a somewhat rocky road to travel. But for the students as well as the teachers, the journey of *structural internationalization* in the pan-European sub-regional context has been an intellectually and professionally rewarding and in many ways a useful experience. Without the teachers' team work and the participation of highly motivated students it would not have been possible.

Tampere and Lund, February 2007

Jussi Laine

Bo Petersson

Sergei Prozorov

Helena Rytövuori-Apunen

The ABC of Joint Degrees – Some Statements and Personal Reflections

Tarja Hyppönen

Co-ordinator

Baltic Sea Region Studies, University of Turku

“Joint degrees are the highest or the closest form of cooperation in higher education”

The joint degrees or joint degree programs are high on the agenda of higher education policy in Europe. They are relevant to the objectives, and at their best, they really fulfil the goals of the Bologna process. They enhance internationalisation, student and teacher mobility, collaboration in many forms and at many levels. They make the European higher education more attractive both within Europe and to the wider world. They can greatly advance the EHEA (European Higher Education Area) both in quality and depth.

The first goals were set already in the in 1999, in the Bologna declaration. The aims have since been redefined in the Prague Communiqué 2001: “...to step up the development of modules, courses and curricula offered in partnership by institutions from different countries and leading to a recognised joint degree”. Furthermore, the two cycle degree system, launched in the Bologna process, made the joint degrees more feasible and attractive to higher education institutions. Most of the joint degrees today are running at Master’s level. In many countries the ministry of education or equal higher education authorities recommend that joint degrees should be set up mainly or only at the Master’s level. This has become for the most part official policy.

In this brief presentation I will outline some basic elements and features of a joint degree, which I have collected from several sources during the past five to six years, and which in my own experience have been the most useful and the most substantive. I will concentrate mainly on the international, interdisciplinary programs. That is the field with which I have been involved during these years of planning and setting up a joint Master’s degree program in Baltic Sea Region Studies with several international partners. In the end I have listed some main sources, which I have used.

Definitions

The term itself, “*joint degree*” or “*joint degree program*” often refers to all kinds of joint or collaborative activities in the field of education, covering the “real” joint degrees, double degrees, strategic alliances, joint courses or integrated programs. Still, a “*real*” *joint degree* has certain features, aspects and required elements, which differentiate it from other forms of collaborative activities. It is also important to draw a distinction between the so called mainstream study program including an exchange period (based on students’ free choice and own planning) and a joint degree program.

There are several definitions of a *joint degree*, as well, and this situation has been discussed in many international conferences, seminars and surveys. Furthermore, the

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

definition and distinction between a “joint” and a “double” degree has been often discussed. The difference between these two is, at least in my opinion, the degree awarded after completion of the program. A “joint degree” leads to one degree given together by two or more higher education institutions. A “double degree” again means two or more degrees awarded by two or more higher education institutions for the same study program in one way or another separately developed by and implemented in every participating higher education institution. In addition to all the possible models between, and the combinations of, these two, there are, in practice, several other alternatives present on the map of higher education in Europe today. Several of them carry the label of joint degree.

In my vocabulary, the basic elements of a “real” joint degree are: jointly agreed, planned, and implemented structure, curriculum, courses, admission and grading procedure, graduation regulations, full recognition of studies in the partner university; all this leading to one degree given by one partner university with an explanation of the joint activities and diploma supplement. Jointly planned and implemented does not, however, mean that all the programs in the partner universities should be similar in detail. On the contrary, certain divergence is even welcomed, as far as it can be accepted by all partners. It makes the program more interesting to the students, and gives them the opportunity to learn different teaching and learning cultures in a safe and structured way.

How to Do it

“Joint degrees require a clear and decisive institutional support at all levels”

The crucial starting point in setting up a new “joint” degree program is broad, deep brainstorming that is open to all ideas. Such questions as: What do we want? Why do we want to do this? Who are “we”? Which groups of students do we have in mind? What is unique in our idea? should be discussed. It is a time-consuming process to go through – and so is finding answers to all the questions – but it is worth it. All the ideas, needs, and interests of the participating persons and institutions involved should be mapped and discussed with an open mind, and then finally those points acceptable to all partners can be agreed on.

The second crucial point is the agreement. A joint degree must be based on a formal and official agreement between the partners, signed by those authorities (the University Rector) who usually sign these kinds of international agreements at the university. The earlier the agreement is formulated and signed, the better.

The agreement should include at least the following points:

- the name of the joint degree program, aims and objectives of it, disciplines involved,
- level of the degree (Bachelor/Master/PhD), duration in years and in ECTS,
- entrance requirements, partner institutions, program administration and coordination,
- the regulatory framework, principles of costs and funding (sharing and/or collecting them),

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- evaluation and quality assurance practices,
- mandatory student mobility and how it will be organised.

If one or some of the partner universities collect tuition fees, student mobility should be organised in a way that students do not have to pay twice.

When already running a joint program, commitment of the partners is of particular importance. Commitment is needed at all levels, from the university's leadership to the institution level, including subject and personal level, from the rector to the teachers and researchers involved in the program, from the academic staff to the administrators. One enthusiastic person is not enough, although highly important.

International, interdisciplinary programs also often need development and to constitute new administrative thinking and decision making practices. Faculties, deans and faculty councils play a key role in setting up and running a program, as the faculty usually has the highest academic responsibility for the degrees. It is important to guarantee, that the joint degrees have the same academic status and labour market value as "mainstream" degrees. This includes the qualification for doctoral studies, which in case of an international and interdisciplinary joint program is a particular challenge.

Also, the complexity of national higher education legislation sets challenges to the joint degrees. This should be carefully studied and discussed in the brainstorming stage. Certain flexibility and differences may be needed in the implementation of the joint degree program, but these issues can be solved in a consensual way and in mutual understanding. In any case they are very seldom a definitive obstacle for setting up a joint degree program.

The student's position and their point of view have to be kept in mind and focused on all the way through. The risk of turning students into "guinea pigs" for ambitious academic goals or internationalisation purposes is there, hiding just around the corner. Joint degrees with mandatory mobility are a big challenge to them as well. An international student taking her/his degree in a joint program may have to move several times from one country to another, just as (s)he is getting settled into another one. Some of them may not surmount this, for family or other reasons. Therefore, a plan B to complete the degree may be needed.

Some Examples on How to Structure a Joint Master's Program

The models A and B are just imaginary examples. They can also be combined and applied in different ways, according to what the partners agree on.

MODEL A	MODEL B
One group of students (students move as a group)	Several groups of students (students move individually or in small groups)
<i>Intake of students</i> the students apply and are admitted to one university only (A)	There is a group of students at each university (home university)

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Core substance	
partner A	home university
Optional studies	
partner B	partner university
Specialisation studies	
partner C	home or partner university
Thesis	
A, B or C	home (or partner) university
Degree awarded by (this is, or can be linked with, the thesis)	
A, B or C	home university

In model A, the students apply and are admitted as one group to the joint degree consortium (to university A) and they move as a group from one university to another. When the students are studying in one partner university (A), there is no group or teaching in the others. The program curriculum and teaching is planned and structured in such a way that after the tour to the partner universities (one semester at each), the degree will be completed.

In model B again, the students apply and are admitted according to their own interests and orientation to one of the partner universities, which will be their home university. Each partner university has a group of students. The students move individually or in small groups from the home university to one or more partner universities, depending on the individual study plan and agreement between the partner universities. They take one part of the studies (common or core parts) at the home university, optional and/or specialisation studies at a partner university (or at two of them), and return to the home university for the final semester and thesis writing. The home university awards the degree, with an agreed form and information on the joint degree.

“The effect of a joint program is always greater than the sum of its parts.”

The joint program has positive, desired and foreseeable side effects, sometimes also unpredictable and negative ones. But, if you place your goals high and you are ready to revise them when needed, it is worth trying. Well planned and implemented joint degree programs offer a real international learning and teaching environment to students and teachers.

To conclude, I have collected two short lists, which may be useful.

A short list of ‘musts’

There are good chances of success, if the joint degree program:

- is linked with the mission and strategic vision of the universities involved
- is based on institutional strength and relevant academic interests of the university and the partner institutions

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

- is based on long term collaboration and long term vision
- gives qualification for further studies (Master > doctoral studies)
- has the commitment of teachers and other staff at all stages
- there is a high level of internationalisation at faculty/institution level and significant know-how at international relations level
- a lot of good will and commitment is involved.

As additional pluses, the joint degree programs bring in:

- a shared educational experience and (re)defining professional profiles
- shared academic competence and experience
- elaborating core elements (tuning) of the syllabus
- development of teaching methods
- full recognition of degrees and credits
- convergence of different systems, educational and administrative
- transparency (ECTS, DS, comparative approach)
- a European dimension: studies and employability
- development of joint quality assurance
- structured and integrated student and staff mobility
- trans national / trans university / intercultural communication

All the above enhance the European Higher Education Area.

Useful Texts and Addresses

- Chr. Tauch and A. Rauhvargers: Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe, EUA 2002
- Trends III, 2003: Progress towards the European Higher Education Area, EUA 2003
- Developing Joint Masters Programs for Europe, Results of the EUA Joint Masters Project, EUA 2004
- Trend IV, European Universities Implementing Bologna, EUA 2005
- Guidelines for Quality Enhancement in European Joint Master Programs, EUA 2006.
- Fr. Maiworm, B. Wächter: English-Language - Taught Degree Programs in European Higher Education, ACA 2002
- Glossary of Relevant Definitions about Joint Degrees, 2003 Coimbra Group
- ACA, <http://www.aca-secretariat.be/>
- EUA, <http://www.eua.be>
- NARIC Network of National Academic Recognition Information Centres, ENIC European Network of Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility, <http://www.enic-naric.net/>
- COIMBRA, <http://www.coimbra-group.be/>
- Finnish Ministry of Education, Instructions for Joint Degrees, 2004
- Finnish National Board of Education, 2005

P A R T II

Taking Stock of the Experience – Program-level

Practicing the Bologna Process: the CBU Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in International Relations at Petrozavodsk State University

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Brief Description of the Implementation of the Program at PSU

The Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in International Relations "The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations", organized in the framework of the Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) Development Project with the support of the Nordic-Baltic teaching and quality assurance network, was officially launched at the Department of International Relations at Petrozavodsk State University on September 1, 2005. During 2004-2005 the content of the joint teaching program and the application of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) were agreed upon by all participating departments.

In May 2005 the process of student selection for the program was completed with the acceptance of seven applications. By the decision of the Department of International Relations the following senior students were given a special status of "participants of the CBU Joint Teaching Program": three 5th year students (Arina Stepennaya, Anita Rogozina, Olga Polyakova), four 4th year students (Ilya Novikov, Anastasia Kuznetsova, Natalia Aladko, Alexander Pirogov). All seven students participated in the jointly organized sessions of the teaching program, i.e. the Summer School "Research Orientations in International Relations", held at Tartu University during September 12-17, 2005 and the Summer School, held at St. Petersburg State University during June 12-23, 2006.

During the academic years 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 the following *compulsory courses* of the Joint Teaching Program, taught by Professor Sergei Prozorov, have been completed at Petrozavodsk State University:

2005-2006:

- Research Orientations in International Relations: (10 credits, including lectures, workshops, research paper, book examination)
- The European North: Historical Geopolitics and International Institutional Dynamics (4 credits, including lectures, workshops, research paper)
- Research Seminar 1 (10 credits, including the preparation of the research plan for MA thesis)

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

2006-2007:

- Research Seminar 2 (8 credits, including a graded research paper)
- Research Methodology in International Relations (10 credits, including credits gained at Summer School 2006, local workshops and a graded practicum paper)

The program will be completed during the Spring Semester of 2007 with Research Seminar 3 (2 credits), devoted to the discussion of drafts of select chapters of the students' MA theses.

Besides the compulsory joint courses the students gain additional credits from the set of courses offered by Petrozavodsk State University for, respectively, 4th and 5th year of *mainline studies* for the specialist degree in International Relations. The Department of International Relations has made a decision concerning the possibility of *credit transfer* between equivalent courses in the CBU Teaching Program and the compulsory courses in the PSU curriculum for International Relations for the 4th and 5th year and endowed Prof. Prozorov with the responsibility of student assessment in these compulsory courses. As a result, the graduates of the program will be eligible for both the Specialist degree in International Relations from Petrozavodsk State University and the certificate of the CBU Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in International Relations.

2 Lessons from the Petrozavodsk Experience in the Pilot Program

2.1 Structural and Institutional Problems and Solutions

2.1.1 *Licensing of MA programs in Russia*

By selecting program participants from the mainline students of the 4th and 5th year, the Department of International Relations resolves the problem related to the absence of an institutionalized *two-tier* (BA + MA) degree structure at the Faculty of Social Sciences at Petrozavodsk State University. The participants of the CBU Joint Teaching Program are eligible for the Specialist Degree, issued by PSU on the basis of a 5-year course of studies and have the possibility to gain the certificate of the Joint MA program on the completion of the 5-year course of studies (in the case of the students joining the program in their 4th year of studies) or after an additional year of studies (in the case of 5th year students).

In this manner, the two-tier system has been de facto introduced at PSU for the purposes of implementing the joint teaching program. The formal introduction of this system at the Department depends on the acquisition of the *license* to offer MA programs, granted by the Federal Agency for Education of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation. At present, only a small number of universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg have been granted this license, while *applications from regional universities are regularly rejected*. One of the reasons for this situation is that in the absence of a federal-level decision on the universal introduction of the two-tier system at Russian university, running an MA program becomes an indicator of status and exclusivity, which naturally results in a policy of restricting the number of eligible universities. As long as operating MA programs continues to be a matter of *prestige rather than policy*, regional universities, including PSU, have only a slight chance of obtaining the license in question. At this stage, the Department has formally introduced the Bachelor level of studies (4 years), while at the

same time maintaining the five-year Specialist degree. Running a separate BA program is one of the prerequisites for obtaining the license for operating MA studies; hence this decision will hopefully contribute to the success of the eventual application.

2.1.2 The Problem of Curricula Divergence

At the same time, the introduction of the two-tier system at the Department of International Relations at PSU would *not* automatically resolve the problem of curricula compatibility and convergence for the purpose of the establishment of the Joint Teaching Program. The structure of MA-level studies in International Relations is prescribed by the State Standard, which remains *divergent* from the present structure of the CBU Joint Teaching Program. The divergence is both substantive and, more importantly in the present case, structural. Substantively, there is relative correspondence between the “federal component” of the standard (ca.20 credits) and the compulsory courses of the present program, while divergences in other components (e.g. research seminars, language courses, etc.) might be gradually overcome in negotiations on the university level. The structural divergence poses a more serious problem: the state standard stipulates a far greater number of *auditory* (lecture and seminar) *hours* of teaching than the CBU program, which has been developed with an emphasis on independent research work by the students. As a result, an MA program, prepared in accordance with the State Standard, would be necessarily skewed towards auditory hours and offer far fewer credits for independent work (e.g. the preparation of the MA thesis).

Thus, in the event of the formal introduction of the two-tier system and the opening of the MA Program in International Relations at PSU the Department will nonetheless necessarily make recourse to the presently operative arrangement, i.e. selecting a group of students for the *special teaching program* and establishing a *procedure for credit transfer* that enables the students to receive the Russian MA degree.

Insofar as federal and regional standards in MA-level curricula in International Relations are not modified in the direction of greater convergence with the present structure of the CBU Joint Teaching Program, the latter is likely to remain *structurally separate* from the “mainline” studies as much on the MA level as it is presently is on the Specialist level at PSU. At the same time, in our view this arrangement does not pose any problem for the implementation of the CBU Joint Teaching Program as long as the respective Department establishes a procedure for credit transfer that permits students to participate in the international program *without in any way increasing their workload* in terms of ECTS credits. This requires due recognition of the students’ independent research as subject to crediting on a par with auditory lecture and seminar courses. At present, the ECTS system is only used at PSU in the framework of the CBU project, which makes it difficult e.g. to establish a measure of correspondence between CBU courses and courses in the mainline program for the Specialist degree.

2.1.3 Running an English-language program

Another institutional problem concerns operating the program in a foreign language. Aside from a few internationally marketed English-language programs at Moscow and St.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Petersburg universities, all university teaching remains in Russian, as do all official evaluation procedures. As a result, it is impossible to submit a MA thesis, prepared in the framework of the CBU program, as a Specialist thesis at the home university without first translating it into Russian, which unjustifiably *enhances the students' workload*, while no recognition is afforded to the extra difficulty of conducting research and writing the thesis in a foreign language.

Secondly, due to the absence of a practice of offering regular courses in English at the Faculty of Politics and Social Science at PSU, it has been impossible to assemble a set of elective courses in English to complement the above-listed compulsory courses. Local capacity of teaching in English is unfortunately minimal at the Faculty, and the few capable lecturers are frequently reluctant to assume this task. Since designing a course in English is not part of regular duties and is not compensated by salary increments, there is very *little incentive* for lecturers to assume such new and more difficult tasks than they are entrusted with the mainline program. Thus, in order to enable the students of the Joint Teaching Program to take not only compulsory but also elective courses in English, the period of *visiting studies* at a partner university should be increased from the present 1 month to a semester or at least to a quarter. Additionally, the *exchange of lecturers* between partner universities must be intensified.

2.1.4 *The problem of the double degree*

The present arrangement offers the students of the CBU Joint Teaching Program the possibility of gaining a Specialist Degree from PSU and a program certificate of the CBU Joint Teaching Program. The *ambiguous status* of the latter certificate with respect to e.g. its holder's eligibility for *doctoral studies at European universities*, poses serious problems for the marketing of the 2007-2009 cycle of the CBU Joint Teaching program. On the basis of discussions with the present participants of the program at PSU both prior to their entry into the program and subsequently it is possible to conclude that the *primary motivation* for the participation in the CBU Joint Teaching Program is the possibilities that it offers for the pursuit of doctoral studies at European universities. Given that the program poses *additional challenges* for students both in terms of content that goes beyond the mainline curriculum and in terms of studies and research in a foreign language, it is reasonable to expect the program to have an "*added value*" in terms of the opportunities it offers to its graduates. The interest in the degree rather than a certificate has repeatedly been articulated in the informal inquiries of potential applicants for the second cycle of the program. The expedient resolution of the problem of the *joint* or *double degree* is therefore central to the successful marketing of the 2007-2009 cycle of the program.

Unfortunately, the concept of "joint degree" has retained its original semantic vacuity throughout the pilot program. Indeed, given that there is no stipulation of a joint degree either in Russian or Finnish legislation, it appears reasonable to *abandon* this ambiguous concept and focus on the more realistic arrangement of a *double degree*, currently practiced e.g. in the joint MA program of MGIMO and Sciences Po, University of Paris. According to this concept, on the completion of the program, students of the partner universities are eligible for gaining two MA degrees, one from their home university, the other from a foreign partner. Evidently, given the existing curricula divergence, such an

arrangement cannot be made automatically, but must presuppose a certain amount of *degree transformation studies* at a partner university. Unfortunately, no organized procedure for these studies has been designed during the pilot phase. Further work on arranging “transformation studies” will arguably be made easier, if, as proposed above, the period of visiting studies at a partner university could be significantly increased.

The official introduction of the double degree system will also assist the local management of the program in their attempts to resolve the above-discussed institutional problems. At present, the status of the Joint Teaching Program is too ambiguous to provide CBU with any *leverage* in negotiating with university administrations on e.g. modifying structural or substantive aspects of the “university component” of the state standard. If CBU programs could offer second degrees, some of the CBU principles (e.g. crediting independent research work of the students) could be posited as “degree requirements” rather than external opinions that they are presently dismissed as. In this manner, the principles of the Bologna process would be *internalized* far more successfully among both the faculties and the students, redeeming the promises of the benefits of international integration of academic structures.

2.2 Conclusions from the Teaching Experience

2.2.1 Locally organized compulsory program courses

The above-listed compulsory courses of the Joint Teaching Program featured a number of innovations in Russian academic practice that contrasted with the students’ prior experience. While such conventional formats as lectures and workshops did not present much difficulty, even considering English as the primary language of instruction, research seminars and literature exams were rather unfamiliar to students and required a certain reorientation in learning practices. The prevalent format of evaluation at Russian universities remains a final oral examination based on the content of the lectures, which evidently enhances the students’ *reproductive* skills rather than *independent research capabilities*. Nonetheless, the credit structure of the compulsory courses allows the students sufficient time for individual research work, which has resulted in considerable progress made during Research Seminars I and II (Spring 2006-Fall 2007). Research papers, presented up to the present period, demonstrate significant progress in *academic writing* in English, better understanding of the principles of *research design* and enhanced *methodological rigour*. With regard to the design of the second cycle of the program, it is advisable to increase the number of written exercises and short papers in the first semester of the program.

2.2.2 Summer schools

The two summer schools, organized in the framework of the program, have been quite successful in piloting jointly organized teaching by the representatives of all participating universities for an international student audience with a highly *diverse academic background*. Moreover, the courses on Research Orientations and Research Methodology, offered during these summer schools, functioned as the basis for subsequent workshop

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

sessions and paper writing at home universities. While this mode of teaching should by all means be encouraged in the second cycle of the program, it is advisable that it be structured somewhat differently.

On the basis of extensive discussions with PSU students, we would suggest that jointly organized sessions in theory and methodology should *follow* rather than precede local instruction at the home university. The present format, in which theoretical and methodological orientations are presented in individual lectures by various lecturers, appears *excessively difficult* for the students, for many of whom this might be a first serious encounter with many of the discussed approaches. In the case of PSU, faced with numerous questions from the students, we had to arrange follow-up lectures on many of the topics, discussed in the summer schools. It would be more productive to organize lecture courses in theory and methodology *locally* during the first year of the program and, then, subsequently arrange a summer school, dealing with the present state-of-the-art in the discipline and featuring individual lectures by experts in different fields. In this manner, the students would already be endowed with a basic grasp of the relevant disciplinary context and would benefit much more from specialized lectures.

2.2.3 *Visiting Studies*

Visiting studies at a partner university is evidently a crucial component of any international teaching program. Unfortunately, for a number of reasons the period of visiting studies in the present program has been restricted to one month, which seems completely insufficient. Firstly, such a short term excludes the possibility of attending semester-long courses and restricts the choice of electives to currently offered intensive courses, which might well be not of particular relevance to the students. Moreover, this period appears insufficient for carrying out one of the research seminars at a partner university, which would be a prerequisite for any future introduction of joint supervision of research for the MA thesis (see below). Recognizing the financial constraints, it is nonetheless advisable to work towards organizing semester-long visiting studies at a partner university. The third semester of the program appears most fruitful for this purpose, as by this time all program participants should already have defended their research plan and be ready to begin in-depth studies in their thematic area.

2.2.4 *MA Thesis: From Joint Evaluation to Joint Supervision*

The preparation of the MA thesis is the key component of the joint teaching program both quantitatively (in terms of awarded credits) and qualitatively. To be worthy of its name, it is essential that the joint MA program establish procedures for *joint evaluation* of theses and work towards a more ambitious goal of establishing a structure of *joint supervision* of research for the MA thesis. At present, an agreement has been reached on joint evaluation, which is of major importance for local faculty and students. Opening the local academic process up to international evaluation, joint evaluation of theses is a key contribution to quality assurance procedures, established in the program. In particular, the students would particularly benefit from such a procedure, which provides them with an indicator of their

international competitiveness, which is particularly important for those planning to pursue doctoral studies abroad.

At the same time, it appears desirable to move beyond joint evaluation towards joint supervision of MA theses by responsible lecturers from partner universities. Such an arrangement would *efficiently pool the teaching and research expertise* of scholars from partner universities, enabling both more qualitative instruction and greater diversity in teaching and research methods. In practice, this procedure could be established by *dividing the responsibility for research seminars* between home and partner universities. In this manner, the first research seminar (resulting in the preparation of the research outline) would be organized locally, while the second seminar (dealing with in-depth studies in the thematic area) would be organized at a partner university. Evidently, such an arrangement depends on the above-discussed expansion of the term of visiting studies to a whole semester. It also appears that the establishment of an efficient structure of joint supervision would grant the CBU *additional leverage* in advancing a policy of double degrees for the participants of the program.

3 Summary

The pilot Joint Teaching Program for the MA degree in IR has achieved considerable success in integrating academic structures and practices at partner faculties, responsible for the discipline of IR. The experience of PSU demonstrates the possibility of establishing flexible arrangements, permitting the implementation of the program even in the absence of a formal introduction of a two-tier system all across Russian universities. In the final phase of their studies, the participants of the program demonstrate enhanced theoretical and methodological sophistication and considerable progress in designing and undertaking independent research work.

At the same time, these local achievements are difficult to disseminate in the present academic structure, in which an international joint teaching program remains an exception, whose results might be followed with keen interest but not generalized to and replicated at the entire department or faculty. Thus, the CBU program risks becoming an isolated unit within the largely unreformed Russian academic structure, whose attraction for the students is likely to decrease, the less of a novelty it becomes. It is therefore imperative to *upgrade the profile* of the CBU through more intensive efforts at introducing the principle of the double degree. To maintain its attraction and competitiveness after the pilot stage, the CBU must offer not merely an exciting learning experience but also a formal recognition of the students' achievements in the academic systems of *both* participating countries.

The Lund Coordinator's Experience of the Joint Teaching Program on "The European North and EU–Russian International Relations"

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The position of the Lund University in the "European North and EU–Russian International Relations" has from the very beginning been a rather special one in view of the fact that there has not yet been a transition to two-year advanced level courses in the system of Swedish university education. In connection with the adaptation to the Bologna process, Sweden is right now on the point of making this shift. However, the fact that this has not been the case earlier left its mark on Lund's general participation in the joint teaching program discussed in this volume.

Instead, up to now the standard at my Department has been one of offering one-semester master's courses. The closest we came, both by way of course duration and by way of course content, related to that of the joint teaching program, was the Master of European Affairs (MEA) program which until now has had one-year duration. When given the opportunity to nominate four students from Lund to participate in the joint teaching program's autumn school in Tartu in 2005 and in the summer school in Peterhof in 2006 it was therefore natural for us to offer students from the MEA program to take place in those activities. In the first instance, five students, one of whom was a graduate student taking part in the regular PhD program of the Lund Department of Political Science, were nominated to take part. The other four were participants in the MEA program. In other words, the Lund students' participation in the joint teaching program was on a fairly advanced level. One of the participants was thus a PhD student and the others had already obtained their MA degrees at the time of the summer school at Peterhof.

The grad student was a Swedish citizen, but as the MEA program is international in its composition, so was our students' representation in the joint teaching program. Thus, among the nominees there were, apart from the Swedish grad student, two students from Germany, one from Latvia and one from Turkey. I believe that this contributed to the students' feeling that theirs was a rather special position. While all of course represented Lund University, most of them did not represent Sweden, which made their situation a bit different from the majority of the students from the other partner universities.

In the end four of the students took part, since the fifth member of the team, the MEA student from Turkey, unfortunately did not receive an entry visa for his visit to Tartu. The students were compensated for their participation. They received credits for their activities in the Tartu autumn school and could thus count their ECTS credits earned for their program studies at Lund. The Peterhof summer school was a somewhat different story since the MEA program was formally completed by then, and thus no corresponding compensation could be given. However, the students that had taken part in the Tartu autumn school were offered to take part in the Peterhof exercise as well – but this time only as an added bonus to their completed program, since it could not be credited anywhere.

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Even so, three of the students – two from Germany, one from Latvia – accepted the offer which we of course were very happy to accommodate.

As far as I understood from my conversations with the students, they were enthusiastic about being given the opportunity to take part in the program, even if they did so somewhat on its peripheries. The fact that it amounted to a first-time effort and, thus, partly an experiment for Lund, did not seem to concern them too much. In other words, they did not really mind being guinea pigs. I had the feeling, though, that they did not quite know what was expected of them. In the end there was also some disappointment among them that their participation in the program could not be expanded so as to lead up to a formal exam certificate. Initially, they had rather high hopes about this, but as these could not be sustained due to bureaucratic obstacles, the students' zeal diminished considerably in this regard.

During the autumn and summer schools our students took part in the quality assurance on a regular basis, by attending meetings, writing learning diaries and submitting course evaluations. Such communication is of course crucial at all times, but it was maybe even more important now since their participation was on an experimental basis. They needed an outlet to convey their constructive criticism, and as coordinators of the project we needed to hear their views to make improvements for the future.

On the part of the Department and its teaching staff, we were early on thrilled by the prospect that we saw of having extensive student mobility within the program where students could move on a regular basis between the partner universities. I remember that we felt it to be a pity when it turned out that no such opportunities, of the magnitude that we had first envisaged, could be realised within existing budgetary frames. Of course the autumn school in Tartu and the Peterhof summer school were there as the major attractions of the program, but initially we hoped to achieve rotation among and to all partner universities as a more regular feature of the program. I am convinced that if this notion would be possible to realise in future joint teaching programs this would amount to a welcome opportunity for Swedish university students. Mobility of and for teachers is to be highly valued, but for the most part the students comprise the category that can most easily move freely around as they tend to be less bound by family considerations.

With regard to the composition of the teaching staff of the Lund team, there has been some discontinuity. This was most of all due to my own parental leave during the autumn of 2005 which made it impossible for me to participate in the Tartu autumn school. Ian Manners, then Associate Professor at Malmö University College and with temporary assignments at Lund University at the time, was instead our most esteemed Lund representative at the teaching level in Tartu. For my own part I had the pleasure of taking part in, and contributing with some lectures at, the Peterhof summer school on research methods in international relations in June 2006. I also participated in a couple of planning meetings in Tampere and acted as the Lund coordinator of the program.

Due to the structural peculiarities stated in the introduction, I believe that there sometimes was a lingering feeling on our part of being an invited dinner guest who thoroughly enjoyed the company and the meals but who still did not really get the hang of how the main menu was composed. This sense of mild disorientation was certainly reinforced by the discontinuity on our staff side. Furthermore, I must confess that even if I

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

took part in the inner circle of planning the joint program, I tended to be somewhat confused by the fact that there were overlapping structures at work. There was, on the one hand, the broader Nordplus Neighbour group as well as the narrower Cross-Border University conglomeration, and sometimes it was difficult to know what was what and which financial frames applied where. On some occasion I sensed that our students felt this kind of confusion too.

Having said that, my teaching experience at Peterhof was a very positive one. There is one deeply personal side to this; as someone who has devoted the best of his early academic career to Russia, there was indeed a sentimental aspect to coming back after several years of voluntary separation. Regarding the more strictly professional aspects of the teaching, there were above all two impressions that stayed on in my memory afterwards. First of all, I was impressed by the maturity and the general intellectual level that were displayed by the students in the discussions that we had. The mix of students from the different partner universities thus turned out to be very successful, and although the summer heat was pressing on those days, the students' participation and devotion was all the time flawless. Secondly, I could not help noticing that it must be very humbling and thought-provoking for e.g. Swedish students to visit their peers at Russian universities, since the external surroundings and the infrastructure provided are still so different from the standards that our students most of the time are privileged enough to enjoy. It certainly gives the preconditions for better understanding between students from the different countries concerned to experience this difference. And to return to my first point, there was indeed a striking contrast between the excellent intellectual level that all students represented and the frugal external surroundings that were experienced at the University at Peterhof. There is no correspondence between the two, and that too is a useful lesson for many.

In sum, the participation in the joint research program has thus been a very positive experience for my department and for me personally. We have all learnt a lot that will be very useful in future projects. I believe that we should ponder whether there are any possibilities to try to develop a new phase of the program in years to come. It would be a pity if there is not.

CBU Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in IR. Petrozavodsk Students' Experience

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CBU International Relations student

The training of specialists in International Relations takes on a special significance for Petrozavodsk State University owing to the geographical location of the Republic of Karelia. During the last decade the external connections both of the Republic and of Petrozavodsk have increased significantly. Ongoing processes in the sphere of international affairs require the elaboration and introduction of qualified training programs for future specialists in this sphere. This served as the main precondition for opening the Department of International Relations in 2001. At Petrozavodsk State University, the Cross-Border University Project (CBU) was initiated in September 2005. The Department of International Relations is presently participating in the pilot Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in International Relations. The first group was composed of seven students from the fourth and fifth year of studies, who excelled academically and were active in seminars, conferences, and other activities.

The CBU, as an international program, aims at developing intercollegiate cooperation and academic mobility. The project was launched in 2004 and is now in a pilot mode. Undoubtedly, the project is a significant innovation for the Finnish-Russian cooperation in the field of study and research and contains a great potential for developing mutually beneficial connections in the academic sphere, which corresponds to the purposes of the Bologna Process. The aim of this article, however, is to analyze the project "from below", from a students' perspective, so this piece of writing presents the ideas, impressions and thoughts developed after the analysis of a questionnaire distributed among the students recruited for the program. Two years have passed and now it seems possible to produce some conclusions and judgments concerning the work and results of the CBU activity. The benefit of the CBU project for the participating students and for the Department will be characterized from three aspects: from the point of view of research opportunities for Russian students and for the Department; from the point of view of organization of the educational process at the home university within the CBU program; and finally, summer schools and exchange visits will also be analyzed as they constitute an important and innovative part of the project activity.

In terms of new research opportunities the benefit of the MA program consists in introducing the students to the contemporary International Relations (IR) theory and research methodology and their application through lectures and seminars, including ones offered by visiting lecturers. The Western thought in the field of IR theory remains to be in front at this point in time, due to the developed tradition of research. Russian IR specialists are still guided by western schools of thought and enhance their competence through relying on the established approaches. For IR students the MA program is a splendid opportunity to be introduced not only to the few translated works, but to be taught according to the western IR traditions. The students are given the possibility to develop scientific research in the field of IR with a view to the application of recognized European

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

practices. Moreover, through its participation in the CBU project, the department is participating in a pilot project with an aim to increase participation of the Russian Federation in the Bologna Process. Thereby, the department is also spearheading the adoption of European practices by Petrozavodsk State University. The program is enhancing local competence in the “state-of-the-art” in contemporary European IR theory and methodology. The project offers a unique cross-cultural study program for qualified students: to develop and provide joint Finnish-Russian study modules and finally a whole international degree program corresponding to the requirements of the international educational market. This will work for the promotion of international student mobility, enhancement of co-operation, better utilization of expertise and educational resources, high quality, and implementation of the Bologna process at both sides of the border.

In terms of the organization of the educational process the project brought a range of innovations. In particular, the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) was employed and the range of elective courses, including the courses by visiting European lecturers, which enhance our understanding of the IR discipline, was offered. During the realization of the program the emphasis was put on written assignments (e.g. exams, papers, etc.), and the development of individual research skills of the students were prioritized, which was stimulating and contributed positively to the learning experiences. The students acknowledged their own responsibility better and were stimulated to work independently, employing their own creativity. At the same time we also had collective seminars and sessions, in which the most significant issues were discussed. The discussions were organized in a liberal manner and helped to better understand the ideas and concepts being taught. In this connection the personal contribution by the supervisor should also be mentioned. It is my conviction that the success of the program depends, and will continue to depend, on the person in charge, who should possess the experience of teaching in the partner universities in order to coordinate the process. During these two years we were lucky enough to be guided by Professor Sergei Prozorov who encouraged us to take responsibility for our own learning, to exercise our creativity, but at the same time he provided detailed comments and guidelines on assignments and papers.

A significant part of the program, first of all in terms of its content, was constituted by the summer schools and the exchange visits. We have had two summer schools: one week in Tartu (Estonia), two weeks in Saint Petersburg (Russia) and a one month exchange visit to Tampere (Finland). Exchange visits and joint seminars may change students' ideas and to help to decide about their research work. They are also helpful in getting involved with different cultures; in developing the students' abilities to adapt to changing environments and to build up a network of contacts. In the course of this activity we had the opportunity to attend lectures of foreign professors and to be assisted through email contacts, in case of difficulties in understanding the lecture material. After the summer schools, the students were instructed to write learning diaries containing their own reflections on the problems being touched upon. This procedure is quite justified; however there were some difficulties in assimilating the vast amount of information within the short periods available. Therefore it would be desirable to have a series of seminars right after the completion of the summer schools so as to give the students enough time to master the material and to clear out some aspects before composing the diary. Another variant is to have more extended summer schools that would include not only lectures but also seminars and class discussions. The exchange visit and summer schools are a rather new activity for

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Russian students, who usually are expected to receive all information from lecturers in class. Extended contacts help to secure valuable advice and constructive criticism from foreign lecturers. During this experience the students were introduced to more flexible, transparent and accountable methods of teaching, evaluation and quality assessment, having an opportunity to compare the studying process with the one at the home university, and to work out the ability to adapt to and to assimilate to European practices. The exchange visit also contributed much in terms of access to scientific literature and databases, which undoubtedly enhances the competence in contemporary IR theory and methodology. Aside from that, the contacts with students from partner universities in the framework of common lectures and seminars made it possible to exchange point of views, discuss research achievements and to receive peer judgments. Joint international sessions unite students quickly, create the feeling of community and at the same time promote competition and may potentially improve research results.

However, some problems became evident during the participation in the program. It is quite understandable that being on the pilot stage the program could not be spared from all problems. The experience gained, even if negative, may lay a good ground for the further development. Particularly, additional information must be provided about the course prospects and the possible future implications of the acquired skills – the students appear to be uncertain about the possibility to apply their skills either in local agencies or foreign companies. The opportunity to apply for other educational programs (Doctoral Studies) is rather unclear at the present stage of the project; however, it could be a good motivation for the students. Such continuation of studies would also contribute positively to the promotion of mobility and developing cross-border research. The motivation would also be higher, if the students were given an opportunity to receive a diploma after the completion of the program, as the diploma could raise the status of the project and look more attractive for potential employers. The Program for Master's Degree in International Relations could be a good background for employment in analytical, scientific research organizations, think tanks and so on.

Another problem is related to the local partner, namely Petrozavodsk State University. At the home university, Russian students are having some difficulty in accessing specialized software that is needed during the program; the only chance to acquire essential materials was actually an exchange visit. The quality of the seminar papers and conducted research could have been higher, provided that students possessed the needed information. A similar situation occurred concerning the textbooks required for the book exams – students were compelled to use only one copy for the entire group. The problem might partly result from the inconsistency between the requirements and the programs being taught, which is also compounded by the difficulties to combine the CBU program and the home university studies. We came across the problem of difference in requirements and approaches and therefore experienced a constant lack of time when trying to combine various programs. So, a detailed curriculum should be worked out and the partner universities should agree on the required text books and other training aids, either in printed or in digital form, to be supplied for the students. More mobility for the students would also be desirable; in this case we would have more freedom to choose optional courses and more advanced access to scientific literature. In the case of extended or frequent exchange visits the demand to obtain not a certificate, but a diploma after the

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

completion of the course seems to be sensible and the mechanism to solve this question should be worked out.

Another aspect that deserves attention is the question of a community. In spite of being united in a common program with a range of foreign universities, the CBU students do not have regular joint meetings. We do not feel that we are part of the same experience, and we are not aware of membership in our international group. During the joint seminars and exchange visits the composition of the group was always different – only a few people were present in all sessions. If we gathered together more frequently, it would be easier to share our ideas and views not only with group mates from home universities. We should also have opportunity for on-line interaction with foreign students, discussing and commenting their assignments for the course and evaluating each other's progress.

Talking about the program in general, it is almost impossible to be too critical about it, taking into consideration how much work has been done to launch the project and how much effort and energy were invested to realize it. That is why the Petrozavodsk students are grateful for the opportunity to participate in the pilot Joint Teaching Program for Master's Degree in International Relations, thanks to which we gained invaluable and challenging experiences. At the outset we had rather mixed feelings about the program – it was difficult to switch to unfamiliar practices and change the style of study, though in due of the course we witnessed a positive trend in obtaining more flexibility and personal development. We are grateful for the opportunity to be involved in such an experiment and hope that we will manage to justify the hopes and implement the obtained knowledge. We are expressing special gratitude to our supervisor – Professor Sergei Prozorov, for his support and patience; as well as to Professor Helena Rytövuori-Apunen, Professor Valentina Maksimova, Anni Kangas, Corinna Wolff and Anna Tuusa for their assistance and precious contribution. We would also like to express the wish that the program would be perfected and its activities would benefit the development of Bologna Process and Finnish–Russian cross-border cooperation.

Comparing the Finnish and the Russian Educational Systems – a Student’s Perspective

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The Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) put forward some quite ambitious goals for it to fulfil. However, due to the significant differences between the Finnish and the Russian educational systems, the completion of the process may become a great challenge for both sides – and a noteworthy obstacle to be overcome within the context of the entire Bologna Process.

These observations presented in this article are based on my personal experience. I do believe that they represent the key issues of the current debate in general.

The Curriculum Problem

Currently, there exists three different degrees in Russian universities: a Bachelor's Degree, which takes 4 years; a Specialist's Degree, which takes 5 to 6 years and a Master's Degree, which takes 6 years to accomplish. Both Bachelor's and Master's degrees did not exist during the Soviet times; they were introduced only relatively recently and, even now, they are not offered in every university, as institutions are not very enthusiastic to adapt changes.

As for Finland, the introduction of the Bologna Process has standardized most of the degrees towards the European model. And issues like Bachelor's or Master's degrees, credit transfer system and credit recognition are seen as a standard.

The English Language Problem

Most courses in Russian universities are offered in Russian, and there are only few of them available in English. It was like that, it is like that and it will take a long time before this tendency changes. It is a common belief that the roots of this quandary are to be found in Soviet times, as English language was not needed at that time. Even though it tends to change now, the ongoing process is very slow. Conversely, in Finland even whole Bachelor's or Master's programs are offered in English.

Problems of Educational System Management in Russia

There are three basic functions of educational management: *General functions*, such as goal setting, planning, organizing and monitoring; *Technological functions*, such as decision making and communication and *Socio-Psychological functions*, such as delegation of responsibilities and motivation. Therefore, a system of educational management, as any other managerial system, has a mission to realize these functions according to settled aims and goals. It is, however, been said that the theory of educational management does not respond to the current practical issues of reality.

The current situation may be described by the following concerns:

- Lack of a legal basis for the public state system of educational management.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

- Underdevelopment of the scientific basis for the organisation of the public state educational management.
- Low level of qualification of managers of educational institutions.
- Predominantly authoritarian educational institutional managers and their unwillingness to delegate authority and responsibility.
- Lack of legal culture and knowledge concerning the legal issues for participants of educational process.
- Lack of socio-economical stimulus for pedagogical staff.

The educational environment in Russia seems to be unwavering, while in Finland educational environment is more dynamic and the transformation of higher educational system is a result of the informational society and its constant development. Besides, it is worth mentioning that aims and principles are different, which will be developed below.

Student's Perspective

It is difficult to compare incomparable things, but by setting the following criteria it may become possible.

Motivation

In my opinion, Finnish students have a high motivation compared to their Russian counterparts, as their own interest in studying is rather high. They have the possibility to use a variety of learning styles; hence, information and learning experiences are presented in different ways (case studies, presentations, etc), which meets every student's needs. Furthermore, I see that students are highly involved in the studying process as their approach seems to be mainly non-beneficial, or stimulation to study is not only materialistic. Self-studying is highly emphasised, and it would not be inaccurate to argue that the majority of the Finnish students are studying for life and to gain knowledge, unlike Russian students who are mainly studying for a Diploma or grades.

As mentioned before it is a common trend for Russian students to study only because a diploma is required. Without an education a person does not have any "status". In addition, it may cause complications for employment. However, it is possible to get a job without an education – by the use of "personal contacts network". The lack of involvement and motivation may be explained by the fact that the students' freedom of choice is limited, which leads to a low level of own interest and, additionally, contributes to the fact that the diversity of a learning experience is presented sparingly.

Flexibility of studies

In Finland, there are no serious limitations in study duration, examination possibilities, subjects of studies, etc., which in some rare cases that may lead to lack of motivation to study and graduate on time. There is not much bureaucracy either, which makes studying process easier. Moreover a variety of opportunities provided by a university are easily obtainable for Finnish students, unlike for Russian students in Russian universities.

In the Russian educational process, there are strict regulations about almost every issue students are dealing with. The Europeanization of the educational system in Russia was

proclaimed some time ago. In some cases, however, rules and regulations are called “European”, but in fact the practicalities are still “Russian”.

Exams

As a rule, with some exceptions, exams in Finland are carried out in a written form. The above mentioned flexibility applies here as well: if student fails an exam, he/she is allowed to take it once again. On some odd occasions this may, however, lead to a situations where the exams are not taken seriously by students. The strategy may work in such a way that a student will try to pass his/her exam until he/she knows and understands the subject. Creativity and own thoughts are appreciated, if they stay within the exam’s framework. Moreover, dates for exams are arranged in such a way that the student can choose a suitable date for him/her from the list of available ones.

As a contrast, Russian students are having their exams in both oral and written forms. The regulations about pass/fail cases are more severe, as at some situations failure might cause expulsion from the university, or changing the study rights away from “free education”. It seems to me that the purpose of exams in Russia is to check *remembering*, not *understanding* the topic. This, I believe, explains fairly well the phenomenon that Russian students do have theoretical knowledge but are not able to apply it.

The grading system

The Finnish grading system is said to be reliable, as it is based on a diversified evaluation; grades from 1 to 5 are used. Usually in the Finnish universities the final grade is formed from a percentage of certain course assignments, exercises, etc., which a student has to accomplish during the given course. Most of the students tend to care about the grade and overall performance, as at the university level the average grade is perceived as important.

The Russian grading system uses also a grading system from 1 to 5³. Usually the final grade is an exam grade, and the overall performance of student does not play a significant role – however it may vary. As for the average grade, it is important only in case where a student is applying for a position in an international firm with high recruitment standards. It is also important to mention that in contrast to Europe, the ECTS credit system is not introduced yet in Russia; even if the Bologna Process has been introduced already.

Attendance

Attendance is compulsory in the primary and vocational schools and polytechnics, but voluntary in universities of Finland, except for some cases, where students are informed about that in advance. In Russia attendance is obligatory in most of the cases by default.

Current Problems in Finnish Higher Education

“Profitability” of university studies is a widely discussed topic today. High education can mean low salary or unemployment, depending on the area of studies, so called “structural

³ Where: 5 = excellent, 4 = good, 3 = acceptable, 2 = unacceptable (Fail). One (1) is technically the worst grade, but currently it is given rarely – basically equivalent to not just a failing grade, but failing “with distinction”.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

academic unemployment”. The percentage of people with a university education is rising. As a result there are not enough working places for everybody. At the same time, the needs of the job markets and the output of Finnish educational system do not meet – the basic example may be the following: at some circumstances a plumber gets a better salary than a university graduate. In other words there is a demand for professional workers (like plumbers for example) and a surplus of university educated people.

Summary

The given overview of current trends and the existing educational environment in both countries reveals some obstacles to be overcome in the development of the cooperation in the framework of CBU. To sum up, the following points should be considered: increasing social responsibility, a development of common quality assurance system, which would reflect real facts and details of the process of cooperation; and encouragement of cross-disciplinary education. Common strategies and principles of higher education beyond borders should be developed.

Cross-Border University at a Crossroads – an Aspect of the Bologna Process in Practice

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*“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”
“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the Cat.
“I don’t much care where—” said Alice.
“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat.
“—so long as I get SOMEWHERE,” Alice added as an explanation.
“Oh, you’re sure to do that,” said the Cat, “if you only walk long enough.”*

~Lewis Carroll, Alice's Adventures in Wonderland, Chapter VI~

Setting the Scene

No matter from which perspective one views the reforms brought in by the Bologna Process, it cannot be refuted that they are the most extensive and comprehensive reforms to ever take place in the entire history of European higher education. The principles and guidelines of the Bologna Process as well as the rationale behind it seem to be goal-oriented and fairly straightforward. There are, however, signs that it is the national level institutional interpretations of these Bologna action lines that may well turn out to be the hot-spots for the divergence and the sources of practical problems.

This is not to say that a reform is not needed. On the contrary, it has become clear that the best practices of the Finnish system of higher education have become outdated. Nonetheless, perhaps deluded by the common fallacy that the Finnish education system ranks supreme, many seem not to be bothered by its apparent stagnation. Indeed, from a student’s perspective, it would be logical to argue that free education has positive aspects. That being said, it would be short-sighted not to realise that free education also has a price tag. Thanks to the internationalisation of higher education, a growing number of students have observed first hand that the competitiveness of the Finnish higher education system does not always measure up to its international counterparts.

I would argue that the knee-jerk response against privatisation and brain drain – at times with fairly patriotic nuances – is what prompts the assumption that free equals good. As the Bologna Declaration (1999) states, competitiveness may, however, be reached also by other measures; e.g. by investing in quality and increasing transparency. According to Finland’s Minister of Education and Science, Antti Kalliomäki (2006), one good way to improve the international competitiveness of higher education institutions in Finland would be to strengthen their structures, increase their financial autonomy and develop more dynamic procedures. As Minister Kalliomäki has remarked, a high quality of education and research is a precondition for the impact, efficiency and productivity of education, as well as an important competitiveness factor (*ibid.*). All this, he stresses, requires continuous development of evaluation and quality assurance in accordance with the European scheme (see also Wolff’s contribution in this publication).

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Actions speak louder than words, and hence, the aim of this paper is to shed light on a dynamic project, from the student's perspective. The Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) project⁴ rose to the challenge to measure up to the Bologna Process' criteria and to fulfil the associated goal to promote joint degrees and joint study programs, as proclaimed at the Prague Ministerial meeting in 2001 (See: Prague communiqué 2001). The program is in line with a pan-European process, where jointly planned and carried out study programs are increasing and facilitating deepened educational co-operation and improvements in the quality of higher education (CBU 2006). Such a project is an example of a novel kind of co-operation and also a catalyst for new forms of legislation, regulation, procedures and plans for action.

The CBU offers joint Master's degree programs in six study fields: Business and Administration, Forestry and Environmental Engineering, History, Information Technology, International Relations and Public Health. During 2005-2006, I participated in the pilot program in International Relations: "The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations". As a pilot project, the CBU has had to face a major *problématique* in its practical operations and management, difficulties which would go beyond the scope of this paper. Thereby, in the following, I will focus on the CBU IR program⁵, as an example of how the guidelines of the Bologna Process are being introduced in practice.

While this paper does not aim to provide a comprehensive evaluation of the CBU, the experience gained during the pilot phase of its International Relations (IR) program provides a good framework for taking stock of the extent to which the implementation of the action lines has been institutionally incorporated. The comments and opinions presented in this paper are based on my personal experience in the program.

I am of the opinion that with stagnation comes the inability to embrace change. In the case of the CBU, inflexibility may be due to the absence of the necessary administrative structures to accommodate new concepts or alternatively, because those in positions of authority remain hesitant to support new systems and programs until convinced that they themselves will benefit from them. Either way, it became immediately apparent that the road ahead for the CBU will be bumpy and that there are a great many hurdles yet to be overcome, or at least circumvented, before an authentic joint program can be realised. Consequently, the initialisation and pilot phase of the program was burdened by extra hassles. From the student's perspective these domestic, even departmental, misapprehensions and rivalries seemed unnecessary, unproductive and difficult to understand, but their impact was certainly felt. Moreover, these difficulties risk breeding bad practices in higher education in general. This is worrisome because such bad practices may easily have long-lasting effects and thereby endanger the process itself by causing undesired resistance towards the program – or other future initiatives.

⁴ The Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) Consortium is a university network which organises joint training programs on the master's and doctoral levels for primarily Finnish and Russian students. During the development period 2005-2007 the CBU is based on the Finland, Russia and International Cooperation Action Plan for 2003-2007 of the Finnish Ministry of Education. See: <http://www.joensuu.fi/cbu/>.

⁵ Joint International Teaching Program for Master's degree studies "The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations", organised by the CBU Subject Consortium in International Relations. See: <http://www.joensuu.fi/cbu/ir.htm>.

At the time of writing, in December 2006, the development phase of the CBU project is over and the “real” Master’s degree programs are about to commence. A great amount of valuable knowledge has been gained, yet several issues have yet to be resolved. It seems that the entire project has arrived at a crossroads; the CBU now needs to decide which way it wishes to go from here.

Russia as a Partner in Higher Education

The stubborn and, at times, very palpable barrier effect of the Finnish-Russian border seems to cast doubt on the notion that people tend to interact most with those they are closest to. Given its *physical* proximity, Russia has been and still is *mentally* a surprisingly distant partner for the Eastern Finland in the field of higher education, but also in a number of other sectors of society (cf. Fryer 2004: 11; see also 2005). It would probably be difficult to find an educational institution or a program in Eastern Finland today that would not have some sort of “links” to Russia, but in practice, however, the educational substance of many of these links has unfortunately been superseded by what can only be referred to as “tourism”. As Rytövuori-Apunen (see her contribution in this publication) argues, internationalisation of higher education no longer means just increased interaction and mobility; “[i]t includes *structural development* of teaching programs and curricular contents, administrative structures and recognition of degrees”. Hence, true educational co-operation is urgently needed.

Already before the CBU was launched, there had certainly been an increase in various kinds of initiatives for co-operation in the field of education between Finland and Russia. A number of them were not, however, able to offer anything but new wine in old bottles. Universities in Eastern Finland had been running successful international study programs of various descriptions, but, even if increasing, the number of Russian students enrolled in them has been comparatively undersized. Likewise, students from the universities of eastern Finland, to say nothing of the country as a whole, preferred to travel to southern or western Europe to study much rather than to Russia (See e.g. Garam 2006). Hence, unlike the project manager of the CBU feasibility study, Dr. Fryer (2004: 11), I personally fail to see the CBU as “*the* logical next step beyond existing programs” [emphasis added], but rather as *an* entirely new formula bringing well-needed vigour and bridging the gap between different educational structures.

After it was launched in 2004, in general terms the CBU was eventually conceptualised as a virtual university; a fairly abstract umbrella structure that was envisioned to co-exist with and complement existing programs in its member institutions. The process was put forward by identifying areas of common interest and expertise upon which to build high-quality joint Master’s degree and doctoral training programs. After the specific fields of mutual interest had been found, it became necessary to develop the CBU concept in accordance with the Bologna Process guidelines. Among other things, this meant working towards a common and transparent framework of readable and comparable degrees, introducing ECTS-compatible credit systems and an international dimension in quality assurance, as well as the elimination of remaining obstacles to mobility. The main goals of the CBU were proclaimed to be the increasing and deepening of educational co-operation between Finland and Russia, consequently the improvement of the concrete

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

expertise across the Finnish-Russian border, focusing also on the needs of work and business life (CBU 2006).

Both Finland and Russia have strong educational traditions with firmly rooted practices. In this respect, it is essential to understand that that even though the aim of the Bologna Process is to create convergence, it does not necessarily imply “standardisation” or “uniformisation” of higher education, but the fundamental principles of autonomy and diversity are respected. The Bologna Declaration states that an awareness of common problems is necessary in order for these issues to be tackled for the common good. In the Finnish-Russian case, it seems that in spite of their valuable differences, higher education systems on both sides of the border are facing common internal and external challenges related to various issues in higher education. Thus, coordinated reforms, compatible systems and common action could be fruitful.

Ideologically, the CBU can be seen as a sign that such co-operation is possible. It was understood that the CBU was a pilot project working to accomplish something that had not been done before and therefore received a lot of attention and interest, but also hesitation and critique. The program offers an opportunity to move beyond the old models of co-operation with Russia that have commonly done nothing but emphasised and maintained inequalities between Western and Russian institutions (cf. Fryer 2004). Hurdles do exist, and the situation may still be far from ideal, but the logic behind the CBU implies that at least the reluctant mindset seems to be finally fading away, creating new prospects for the Bologna Process’ ambitions to be fulfilled to their full potential.

A Personal Story

My personal experience concerning the CBU began in the fall of 2005, when I was unexpectedly urged to get involved in the pilot phase of the CBU IR study program. I had not heard much about the whole concept and found it rather strange to join the program, due to the fact that my home university in Joensuu has neither an actual chair in International Relations or Politics nor does it even offer any courses in the field. As a Human Geography major with no noteworthy experience in IR, I felt hesitant about jumping from one core subject to another, but on the other hand, also intrigued for it never hurts to gain more valuable international and multidisciplinary experience.

My involvement in the program, which was initially envisioned to consist of only a trip to Estonia to attend one course, was protracted time and again when I noticed that my shortcomings in IR theory did not present an insurmountable barrier for understanding the topics or joining the discussion during the first courses and seminars. My motivation, then, was fuelled even further when I realised how to utilise this new knowledge in my primary studies in Human Geography. Having had the good fortune to participate in each of the courses, seminars and workshops offered by the CBU, I now feel that I have important knowledge to share about the student’s perspective.

I do not consider myself to be an expert in administration of higher education, but I have certainly gained a fair amount of practical experience in international educational issues. As a student member in the CBU IR program who went through the initial development phase and, hence, witnessed both its positive and negative aspects, I feel that I have a contribution to make. Even though one of the main objectives of the Bologna

Process is to put the student in the centre, it is still unacceptably often that the student's perspective is forgotten or ignored. However, the surprising and delightful fact that I, among other students, was asked to give my comments here is an important sign that the student point of view is valued and, I hope, also kept in mind when decisions concerning the future development of the program are made.

According to its website (See: CBU 2006) the CBU IR program "The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations" is recommended for students of International Relations at the Master's level with career plans in the areas of foreign and regional policy, international governmental and non-governmental organisations, as well as business, education and journalism. Fortunately for me, as it was only the pilot phase of the program, the proclaimed accession recommendations were not rigorously followed.

The opportunity to move from a core subject to another is also an aspect of horizontal mobility underpinned by the Bologna Process. It enables students to gain multidisciplinary knowledge that, in today's academic world, seems to be more and more a necessity. Therefore, and to be in line with the Bologna guidelines, also the CBU IR program should – unlike it is planning to do⁶ – continue to allow students from different neighbouring academic fields to begin their studies in the program. However, to avoid unmanageable dispersion, all students selected for the program should have to fulfil suitable prerequisites before being accepted to enrol in the master's program. Call me prejudiced, but I am of the opinion that the pilot phase showed clearly that a major challenge for the substance of the program is not created by accepting students from different core subjects *per se*, but rather involving students who were at completely different levels in their studies. In a situation where some students are in the early phase of their studies and others are already finalising their master's degree or even beyond this, it is seldom the case that everyone will make the most out of the course. In such occasions, a lot of time is usually spent on topics that may be regarded as basic, even elementary – and the CBU IR program was no exception. In this respect, the caravan is indeed as fast as its slowest camel; and those who happen to be already at a more advanced level in their studies – as I believe students in a master's program ought to be – are likely to get nothing but bored. In the field of higher education, where progress and competence should be values to be sought, this is hardly a recipe for success.

Another setback to the CBU within the context of Bologna Process has to do with the awarding and recognising the credits and degrees. Allow me provide a practical example. Due to fact that the University of Tampere was and is the coordinating university of the CBU IR program, it also had the right to award academic credits for completed studies. University of Joensuu, where I was enrolled, was at the time a partner university – and now apparently completely outside of the whole IR program. Issues of fame and fortune aside, from the student's point of view this was a problem mainly in practice; the credits awarded by University of Tampere could not be added to a student's study records directly in Joensuu because he or she was enrolled in the "wrong" university. The only option was to take the diploma and try to find a professor who happened to be willing to accept the completed CBU studies as compensatory studies for a listed course in Joensuu or

⁶ The CBU IR master's program (2007-2009) welcomes only students who have International Relations or Politics as their major.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

add them to the records just as “studies at other universities”, assigning them a random code. I personally cannot help but wonder how it is possible to coordinate a joint program between Finland and Russia, if we are not even able transfer credits recognised by one Finnish university to another.

The CBU IR has done a great job in moving students, teachers and other personnel around to obey the Bologna guidelines, but forgot to invest in the actual substance of the courses it provides. Like students, also the lecturers came from a variety of backgrounds. Thanks to the funding available, numerous prestigious lecturers with impressive track records were asked to drop by in various locations, but their presence was not utilised to its full potential. Here, I believe, the commitment to the cause is where the problem stems from. Due to its nature as a virtual university with an undefined situation in university administrations and a lack of traditional institutional form, the CBU program causes in practice a lot of extra work for already overburdened faculties. This cannot but impinge on the commitment of university administrations, individual faculties, departments and academic lecturers to such a revolutionary idea (see also: Fryer 2004). This, then, has had an impact on the substance of the courses, the consequences of which were felt most strikingly by the students. Perhaps the most important thing, in this respect, is to remember that in life in general quantity seldom breeds quality – and higher education is no exception. Even if the amplitude of lecturers is enrichment when coordinated properly, the CBU experience has shown that the delegation of educational duties and responsibilities to a great many individuals can lead to severe overlapping when lecturers are not aware of what their colleagues are presenting. It is needless to explain what this does to the commitment of students to participate in corresponding events in the future.

CBU at a Crossroads

It is essential to be borne in mind that as a project with long-term objectives, the CBU is still at its beginning and, thus, difficult to be judged. The goals that it has put forward for itself will be difficult to fulfil, but without question worth the effort. Practical problems aside – all of which I believe are fixable, if there just exists a desire to do so – the Finnish-Russian scientific and educational collaboration has potential and opportunity. Looking at the even bigger picture, there would certainly be a void in the EU-Russian relations to be filled by higher education programs like the CBU that have not yet been burdened by unnecessary restrictions.

Given its current stage, it seems to me that the CBU has done its best to respect the goals and guidelines of the Bologna Process. I believe that, more than anything else, it has been a multilateral learning process for both the students and the organisers. It has as well offered previously unseen aspects and solutions for the implementation of the action lines of the Bologna Process. Now, more than a year since the launch of its development stage, the CBU is at a crossroads; it is time to learn from the experience gained and decide which way to proceed. This, logically, depends a great deal on the CBU’s desired destination. If it aims to become an internationally attractive and competitive cross-border university, recruiting students from all around the world and offering degrees relevant and valid throughout the European Higher Education Area and beyond, it has to be able to get rid of

the unnecessary *problématique* it faces and work hard to offer high quality education and concrete expertise.

To be able to do so, it is essential for such a cross-border educational program to use the unique potential it has and make the best of it. The CBU has the ability not only to help students to acquire new expertise that will gain them merit later on in academia or business life, but also to offer an opportunity for new international experiences, cultural exchange, or even a chance to master a new language. For some, like myself, the CBU provided a means to study a discipline that just would not otherwise be possible.

What the often-used catchword “quality assurance” means, is that the experiences gained so far have to be processed in order to utilise them in the development work of the ever-better joint program. Learning by doing and through mistakes is an understandable strategy, but it is too easy to refer to it as an excuse every time when problems arise. A careful and holistic planning of the next step is needed. I am convinced that the greatest potential of the Bologna Process lies in its realisation of the importance of student involvement in the governance and the development of higher education activities, because that is the only way to get real practical feedback regarding contents, teaching methods and the program structure. So far, a strong focus on the economic goals of the Bologna process has meant that the student participation alongside with the action line of social dimension have been the most neglected elements within the process. It is regularly the case that students are not even consulted concerning decisions that will clearly affect them either directly or indirectly. The CBU has been exceptional in the sense that it has truly involved students at least in its quality assurance measures. If, however, the students are allowed to *talk* but are not *listened to*, the problem will never be solved. Hence, it would be necessary, as it has been clearly laid out in the Berlin Communiqué (2003) of the Bologna Process, to publish and disseminate the results of the quality assurance to ensure the utilisation of its full potential. Moreover, by involving students in all steps and at all levels of higher education governance and development could help to avoid such mismatches and learning things the hard way. As Baumann et al. (2005: 5, 48) underlines, the concept of students as partners needs further emphasis, not only on paper, but also in practice.

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Taking Advantage of Diversity in Advanced International Study Programs – Mutual Learning Perspective

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The Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University (CBU) program “The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations” gave its participants an outstanding possibility to experience diversity – in curricula, academic approaches and methods, as well as knowledge and backgrounds of the academic personnel and the participating students. The CBU program supported by the Nordplus Neighbour network brought together six universities from four countries and an even wider range of academic and ethnic backgrounds of its participants, thus the question of managing diversity is inevitable for evaluation of the experience of the program and developing possible future approaches.

When talking about diversity in the context of learning, several aspects can be included – curricula, interdisciplinary studies, academic and professional background of staff and students among others. Diversity is often regarded as a problem, which creates several challenges for program development and its effective implementation. Most of the perspectives usually discussed in this context can be related to academic staff – student interaction, which, if learning process could be illustrated as a multi-level structure, I would call "vertical" learning process. Here the main problem lies in the different backgrounds of the students participating in an international academic program and, hence, the necessity to provide program content that would correspond to the variety of backgrounds thus ensuring inclusion and effective learning. A different perspective, in my opinion, is often either forgotten or hidden behind the discussions on how to manage the problems of diversity. In this short outline I would like to demonstrate that apart from the above mentioned and other possible problems, diversity offers some advantages that have to be exploited to the utmost in order to provide maximum learning benefits to the participants and facilitators of an advanced international program. I will focus on one of them, namely, mutual learning possibilities or "horizontal" learning in student groups comprised of students of various nationalities, and thus, different academic backgrounds.

This perspective is determined by my own study experience in different environments, including University of Latvia (Bachelor of Political Science Program, 2000-2004; Professional degree in Translation Program, 2004-2006), Lund University in Sweden (Master of European Affairs Program, 2005-2006), and the CBU joint teaching program supported by the Nordplus Neighbour network (Lund University made my participation possible). My participation in the CBU program was somewhat limited thus I will mostly be including examples and arguments, which are based on my studies elsewhere.

First of all, as a student finds him/herself in a completely new study environment, which is likely to be very different from the one he/she was used to, it might either contribute to the learning process or decrease its efficiency. I think that while participating in the CBU joint teaching program, the students experienced both. The wide range of topics

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

covered from different perspectives illustrating various methods was, beyond doubt, beneficial for the learning process and the broadening of experience. However, the students came from highly different backgrounds of study (e.g. some of us had studied international relations for several years, for others it was almost completely new field), which created some dissatisfaction. Some students believed that they did not really learn anything new, just refreshed some theories, whereas others contended that the majority of the material presented in the lectures was new for them. In some cases this might have precluded effective learning because of a lack of certain knowledge or experience. Approaching the question realistically, one has to admit that international endeavours like the CBU program will never avoid such situations, especially if students and teachers come from such different academic environments as (mostly) Finland, Sweden and Russia. High diversity can create difficulties and serve as an objective drawback in the study process; however its disadvantages can be transformed into advantages, as students are not only recipients but also providers of the learning. In the "vertical" learning process they are mostly recipients, attending lectures, completing assignments and interacting with professors. However, not only is the official and approved curriculum of an international course of high importance, the mutual learning between students can largely contribute to the process of study, providing the "horizontal" dimension of the learning process. It cannot be included in a curriculum as a separate theme; however it can permeate the entire curriculum, ensuring better learning outcomes.

The first question I would like to address discussing the question of "horizontal" learning is: what can students of an advanced international program bring to the table? There are two groups of possible diversity inputs. First, there are the subjective, interpersonal differences in perception and learning that influence the process and the outcome of studies. This group, however, is not attributable only to international programs and although it has to be taken into consideration, I will not focus closely on it. Second, and more relevant to this discussion, are the objective differences created by the academic backgrounds and experiences of each student. Above all this, it includes the different sub-disciplines followed by students in their previous studies. Even if the program requirements provide admission of, for instance, only students of political science, it still can involve significant differences – some might have studied theoretical political science, some international relations, and others public administration or European politics. The Master of European Affairs program in which I was involved last year was a good illustration of such a situation – while the admission requirements provided for an undergraduate degree in political science, the range of sub-disciplines, previously studied by the admitted students was impressive. Moreover, it is common that students involved in advanced studies have more than one degree. I am an example of this myself since after completing the Bachelor's degree in political science and before continuing with Master studies I spent one year studying legislation translation and obtaining a relevant professional degree. Furthermore, significant differences are created by different approaches within the same sub-discipline. For example, while undergraduate students of political science in Latvia are likely to spend a great share of their university studies studying history, learning by heart historical events, dates and other factual information, Danish students focus mainly on different theories of

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

political science, learning historical facts just when it is inevitable in the process of applying theory in the process of research. Finally, the variety of methodological approaches to learning that the students are used to is also very wide. Group work vs. individual work, written exams vs. oral exams, thesis vs. comprehensive exams – to name just a few examples. The same refers to research methodology. The largest difference I have encountered regarding methodology is the focus of Latvian (and I would think, also Russian) educational establishments on the descriptive, empirical research instead of analytical theory application, as, for example, in Nordic countries or highly critical research methods as, for example, in the USA. This listing of possible objective differences, which are acquired in the process of studies, is far from exhaustive. On the one hand, a group involving students with diverse experiences and knowledge is a great field for mutual learning. On the other hand, the peculiarities described above are more than enough to create vast differences in perception of the same material, tasks and assignments when students with different backgrounds come together in the same classroom.

Differences in perception, which are formed by experience, can create significant confusion and lack of confidence in the learning process. I think the majority of students participating in the CBU program experienced it when they were given an assignment to write a learning diary. Although it is a usual and an understandable assignment for Finnish students, Russian students as well as myself and my colleagues from Lund University were quite unsure how this assignment should be done. Thus I would say that the completed learning diaries probably also were very different. If such assignments should have been graded, it would have created problems of objective evaluation. Besides, such experiences often initially create uncertainty and sometimes even anxiety. I remember myself at the very beginning of my Master's course in Lund – coming from a qualitatively different academic background, I sometimes felt completely lost and unsure whether my study endeavours would correspond to the requirements of the program. I am sure that many of my course mates felt the same. By virtue of great professors who were experienced in working with international groups and the student group as such this uncertainty soon disappeared. It was replaced by genuine interest and enthusiasm in addressing all possible challenges of the new and considerably different studies. It has to be noted that additional stress sometimes can be created if certain students realize that other members of the group have considerable knowledge of domains unfamiliar to them and relevant to the actual study process. Before these students are given the possibility to understand the potential of learning from others, they might experience stress and in worst cases even a lack of motivation for their continued studies. I believe that such potential difficulties should not be ignored when developing and evaluating an advanced international study program. Largely they can be transformed into advantages, facilitating students mutual learning, simultaneously making sure that everyone feels that his/her own experience is valuable as well. Thus the next question is: how can the diversity be used to transform its disadvantages into advantages of the learning process?

The key to success of the "horizontal" learning, i.e., students' mutual contribution to each others' study progress lies, firstly, in helping them to realize the value of each others'

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

experience and, secondly, in encouraging students to share their experiences, precluding any possible assumptions that one type of academic background and/or experience is more favourable than others. This is also a possibility to include effectively those who initially are not confident about their knowledge and thus do not fully participate in the learning process.

The main methods for achieving this objective include many possible types of collective studies – group papers and research projects, group presentations and seminars. In this case each student can, firstly, contribute to the collective work the way that he/she is mostly confident about and, secondly, observe the work and methods of fellow students, most likely adopting some of them in his/her own studies. Often, while working in multinational groups during my Master's studies, I got familiar with the pragmatic and precise approaches of German students, the critical approaches of American students, and the theoretical approaches of Scandinavian students etc. I believe that during my one year in Lund I learned more various approaches to studies than in all five years in my home university in Latvia. Written and oral presentation skills and structures of presentations between all academic cultures differ. Thus working in a group it is possible to find an optimal (or at least close to optimal) solution for research and presentation of a certain matter. Certainly, the optimum result depends on the motivation of each individual student and the group as such. However, I also believe that on an advanced level of studies the motivation generally is higher. Thus, the potential for learning is higher as well.

Apart from group assignments, I think that mutual evaluation assignments are very beneficial, as they involve a dialogue between different academic traditions. One of my most rewarding experiences during my Master studies was a night spent talking on an instant messaging program with my opponent of the very first research paper I wrote for one of the courses. In further studies, when completing other assignments, I often remembered his comments and I am absolutely sure that they, and comments from other reviewers of my essays and papers, helped me to improve my both written and oral presentation skills significantly. Professors cannot always be there to provide comments on every single sentence in an essay, whereas fellow students can, especially if it is a part of their assignment. The same refers to a student being a reviewer him/herself. The outcome of such mutual learning is particularly beneficial if a student represents a qualitatively different academic tradition, as in this case he/she can offer a view from 'outside', which can be unexpected and provide completely fresh, distinctive angle on a certain matter.

Due to limited study time and other characteristics of the CBU course, I understand that it was not really feasible to include any of these methods in the courses (at least the ones I was participating in), but that is why I would like to stress the necessity of considering the use of such methods in further development of the program. Discussing different study questions with fellow students in the CBU program I realized that I could have learned a lot from them, but, of course, it is less likely to happen if there are no formal tasks involving group assignments or reviewing tasks. The CBU joint teaching program brought together more than two academic traditions, several sub-disciplines and many approaches to studies of the International Relations. There was a very high potential for mutual learning between students as well as students and involved academic staff. Some of

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

this potential was used, but even more remained unexploited. It is important to remember that students are not only recipients but also providers of learning in the study process. In advanced international study programs it is particularly true and thus should be accurately considered in order to ensure maximum learning results.

Quality Assurance – What and How? Some Preliminary Conclusions

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Introduction

In the Bologna Declaration (19 June 1999) the European Ministers of Education committed themselves to consolidate the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) within the first decade of the third millennium. “[T]aking full respect of the diversity of cultures, languages, national education systems and of University autonomy”, the signatories “expect the Universities again to respond promptly and positively and to contribute actively to the success of [their] endeavour.” As the ball is passed to the national institutions and individual universities, these are provided with a number of lighthouses to mark the way. Objectives are, among others, to promote “European co-operation in quality assurance with a view to developing comparable criteria and methodologies” as well as “the necessary European dimensions in higher education, particularly with regards to curricular development, inter-institutional co-operation, mobility schemes and integrated programmes of study, training and research”.⁷ With these instructions at hand, those entrusted with giving the EHEA principles content and putting them into practice find themselves less at the beginning of a marked way than on an inland sea – the Baltic Sea in this case – bordering on their countries’ shores. Lighthouses give some abstract orientation, but the routes around the shallows on the way towards them are not drawn on the map.

Making Bologna work, then, is creating by doing, and learning by doing. Initiating “The European North and EU–Russian International Relations” in order to realise Bologna’s “European dimensions in higher education” thus meant at the same time to start a continuous process of self-reflection and self-evaluation. Once the specific objectives of the programme, based on the Bologna goals, were determined, it had to be reviewed whether they were attained, and in what ways this was best possible. This process is essentially what quality assurance (QA) is about. In other words, the *quality* of a teaching programme refers to the level of its objectives and to whether these are attained. *Quality assurance* means the measures applied to assure an appropriate level of goals, to evaluate their achievement, to document these procedures and their outcomes, and to act according to the conclusions drawn from these outcomes.

Quality, obviously, is not something that is created once for all and then carries on existing, but something that has to be maintained. As much as it is about *what* is done, it is about *how* things are done. Among the conditions for a working QA process is a strategic way of thinking and acting. If we understand quality as attaining a certain level of goals, these goals have first to be defined in a way that moves beyond the declarational level and into much more concrete, down-to-earth thinking. Thus, in the beginning, there has to be a clear, out spelt, and shared concept of what the idea of a teaching programme is, and how

⁷ *The Bologna Declaration of 19 June 1999. Joint Declaration of the European Ministers of Education* (emphases omitted).

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

this is to be realised. These shared objectives are then reached best in a community with clear responsibilities, strategic leadership, and a self-critical approach towards the joint activities, forming what might be called a “learning community”. Most importantly, the starting point for QA is the point of view of the students, who should also be a part of this community.⁸ At the same time, quality is *relational*. We can tell whether something is high-quality only by using a relevant benchmark. In short, we know whether the objectives of a programme are of high quality by comparing them to the aims set by the Bologna Declaration and to other programmes. Next, we know whether the programme is carried out with high quality by comparing the outcomes to these objectives.

QA begins with examining and documenting how the programme works on the very practical level. It encompasses all processes, measures, and ways of acting that aim at ensuring the attainment of the programme’s objectives. In order to serve its purpose, i.e. lead to a high quality of teaching, QA itself has to fulfil certain requirements. All processes should be structured and transparent, and they should be well integrated into the ordinary activities within the programme. Moreover, QA requires a long-term commitment by all those involved.

In the following, I explain what quality has meant for the programme “The European North and EU–Russian International Relations” in particular, and how quality assurance has been implemented. In the main part of the article I present the results of these QA procedures with particular emphasis on the two joint schools of the programme. In the final part I consider some preliminary conclusions.

Lighthouses

The objectives of “The European North and EU–Russian International Relations” are spelt out in the programme brochure: The programme offers basic academic education in International Relations and area expertise in the Nordic and Baltic Regions with emphasis on EU–Russia relations. It provides qualifications for a wide range of employment areas including academic careers. The teaching profile concentrates on seeking to enhance intercultural understanding and awareness of the history and identities in the region by applying a pedagogical approach that emphasises interaction between academic study and policy practices.⁹ The attainment of these objectives has been ensured, on the one hand, inherently through the programme structures, and, on the other hand, through the QA procedures applied to these structures.

The *planning and development of programme structures* is central to quality, because this is where abstract objectives are given form and where the environment for their realisation is set. The curriculum of our programme has consisted of a core of *compulsory courses* surrounded by a flexible fringe of *electives*. Both areas have encompassed *joint courses* carried out in joint autumn and summer schools, *student exchange* as well as *teacher mobility*, and *courses of the individual university departments*’

⁸ Markku Ihonen: *Mitä hyvät laitokset kertovat opetuksen ja oppimisen laadusta*. Presentation at the University of Tampere’s Quality Seminar, 16.1.2005.

⁹ Programme Brochure, 2005: pp. 2–4. See also <http://www.joensuu.fi/cbu/> and <http://www.joensuu.fi/cbu/ir.htm>.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

teaching programmes. Electives also included *language studies*. Instructions have been given in a variety of forms and pedagogical approaches including lectures, workshop sessions, thematic and practicum papers, book examinations, and learning diaries. Cooperation with working life has been realised by inviting professionals as guest lecturers, particularly in the frame of a jointly organised course on international project management. The programme has thus gone quite a way beyond internationalising traditional local degrees and has created ways to realise genuinely international education.

Within these structures, concrete QA measures have been applied to ensure the realisation of the programme's objectives on the overall level as well as concerning individual courses and other details of the programme's implementation. These procedures have involved the responsible teachers at each of the participating universities, the programme's administrator, and not least the students. Concerning the programme on the whole, one important feature has been communication, most of all information for the students. Additionally to the participating universities' own channels, this has been done through the programme's internet pages. They contained current news for the students, the teaching programme, and information about the network's structure and administration, including quality assurance. As well as that, the pages had an e-learning platform with the students' study records and preparatory readings for the joint summer school. We also had a picture gallery with photos of the summer school.

The programme's main challenge with respect to its educational aims has been to *accommodate the different backgrounds* of the participating students. The organisation of joint courses for students from eight universities in four countries has to take into account differences in the home universities' curricula and learning cultures as well as the fact that for some of the students International Relations has been a minor subject. The central element of the more concrete QA work has therefore been gathering information from the students on how they responded to the individual courses. In the following, I concentrate on the students' feedback concerning the joint schools at the beginning and at the end of the programme's first academic year.

In order to assess how the programme works on the course level, three major instruments have been applied: *evaluation forms* for each course, *learning diaries* for the mandatory joint courses, and *QA meetings* with teachers and students at the joint schools.

The *evaluation forms* distributed in the courses collected qualitative as well as quantitative information about the students' points of view concerning the courses' contents and the way they were presented. Closed questions aimed at finding out how the course related to the students' prior knowledge, and in how far it provided them with useful new knowledge. In the open questions, students were asked to express their opinions and suggestions about the courses' content, structure, and pedagogical approach.

The requirements for the programme's mandatory joint courses included a *learning diary*. A learning diary's purpose is not in the first place to report on a course's contents, but to reflect and contemplate on them through one's own perspectives. In particular, the students were asked to express what they had learned, what remained unclear to them, what had been especially important to them and why, and what thoughts the course had evoked. From the pedagogical perspective, the aim of the diary is to reflect on one's learning

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

process and develop one's own thoughts. For QA, it proved to be a valuable instrument to get a picture of the different levels of background knowledge and diverse learning cultures.

At both of the programme's joint schools *QA meetings* with teachers and students were organised as forums for open discussion on various course-related issues. During these meetings, students were also informed about the idea of quality assurance in general and the purpose of the procedures applied in the programme. This way, the students were given the opportunity to share their viewpoints on issues important to them, independently of prompts provided by the organisers. Moreover, they were signalled that they had an important position in the QA work of the programme, and that this work was essentially for them.

In addition to these main instruments, the students were asked to provide information in very open questionnaires on the academic culture of their home university (curriculum contents as well as teaching and examination methods) and on their views concerning the pedagogical approaches used in the joint courses. Furthermore, students from different participating universities were invited to participate in the conference taking stock of the experiences with the programme. As a positive side effect, all these procedures also raised the students' awareness of differences in learning cultures by making them reflect on their own relations toward the programme's courses.

Plumbing the Shallows

The programme's joint autumn school in Tartu (Tartu Ülikool, 11–18 September 2005) consisted of the lecture series of the course "Major Research Orientations in International Relations". The main part of the summer school in Saint-Petersburg (Saint-Petersburg State University, 11–24 June 2006) was the lectures of "Introduction to Research Methods in International Relations". Both courses were to be completed by literature examinations and written essays to be presented in seminar sessions at the students' home universities. Additionally to these mandatory lectures in the main subject, the summer school had three smaller elective courses related to policies in the European North.

The autumn school had 32 participants, 22 of whom submitted a learning diary (For practical reasons, the diary could be compensated by an essay). 18 students filled in the evaluations form for the course. In the summer school, there were 29 participants. 25 of them submitted a learning diary, and 17–18 filled the evaluation forms for the four different courses.¹⁰

To start with the participants' *background knowledge*, both of the compulsory lecture series proved to provide the students with a lot of new information as well as to structure and deepen their previous knowledge. By far most of the participants stated that the courses were "significantly" or "partly" necessary for them to get an understanding of the subject matters. A correspondingly large number affirmed that the courses taught them new things, helped them to better analyse what they had learned earlier, and to structure their understanding of the larger area under discussion. Nobody would have preferred to

¹⁰ Altogether, 39 students participated in the programme, 17 of which in all of the joint courses (as of August 2006).

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

take a literature exam instead of attending the lectures. For both courses, virtually all students stated that in relation to their background knowledge they were able to take in the contents “easily enough” or “with some difficulties”, with about 50 % ticking either option. The large amount of new information is reflected in the fact that while the majority of the students maintained they had gained good insights and points that they could continue to work with, many of them also ticked “I don’t know” at this question. For practical reasons, the evaluation questionnaires had to be filled directly in connection to the courses, but this question obviously would call for more time to take in and reflect on the content of the tightly organised courses. Notably, no one said he or she had not gained from the lectures.

A more reflective approach and the positioning of oneself in relation to the information provided by these two courses was the purpose of the learning diaries that were to be submitted several weeks after the schools. Because here the students were asked to go into the course topics in more detail, the diaries make it possible to have a closer look at which topics were new or familiar for the participants, and in which issues the lectures deepened or systematised their previous knowledge. The learning diaries were therefore the most important instrument to find out how the courses related to the students’ background knowledge.

At the “Major Research Orientations in International Relations” -lectures, practically all information was either new to the students or deepened their previous understanding of them. Both were the intentions of the course. On the Masters’ level, the course naturally assumed basic understanding of the most important theoretical approaches in the main subject. Besides enlarging this knowledge, the idea was to deepen and systematise the students’ comprehension of the field. This seems to have worked well, as many participants mentioned that the lectures had provided them with a systematic overview that gave them a clearer picture of the different orientations. However, the issues that were new to the students were only partly overlapping among the different universities. Most of them were mentioned by students from only one or two of the five participating universities.

The same findings are repeated concerning the diaries for “Introduction to Research Methods in International Relations”. Also here, the issues completely new to the participants overlap between the different universities only to a rather limited extent. Moreover, in this course the number of participants with IR as a minor subject was much higher. This, then, is reflected in the differences in the background knowledge. However, also among the universities with IR as a main subject, the students’ background knowledge varied a lot concerning different topics.

On the one hand, this reflects the differences in disciplinary orientations from one country to another; on the other hand it reflects curricular divergences. The first mentioned can be seen as an advantage for the programme, and it also has been described as such by the students who were pleased to learn about perspectives differing from those they were used to. The revealed disparities in curricular structures, by contrast, are clearly one of the most important issues on the agenda regarding longer term activity. An additional challenge in this respect was the fact that for some of the programme’s participants, International Relations has been a minor subject.

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Differences between curricula were of course not unexpected. Yet, in order to deal with this issue systematically, it was first necessary to get an impression of the concrete situation. During the first academic year of the programme the matter was taken into account by tackling arising situations. For example, one student from Petrozavodsk told that his home department provided intensive special training to the programme's participants. Because theory and methodology of IR was present in the department's curriculum to a smaller extent than for instance in Lund and Tampere, this special preparation made it possible for the Petrozavodsk students to follow the lectures without difficulties. At the same time, there seemed to be no significant differences between the curricula of Petrozavodsk's Specialist Degree and St. Petersburg's MA. For the summer school, preparatory reading lists were provided on the programme's e-learning platform. A more extensive use of this platform was also part of the programme's proposal for the next cycle.

An issue connected to the students' different background knowledge is the question how to impart the teaching contents in a balanced manner. While most students welcomed the fact that the joint schools contained a lot of new knowledge, the demanding schedule of the summer school with three lectures per day for two weeks meant that taking in all this new information was challenging. In the feedback forms as well as in the QA meetings with the students, some of them said they had got an information overload. As joint courses for students from four different countries inevitably have to be organised in an intense way, they thus need to be complemented by measures that make it easier to follow the lectures. One of these could be handout materials to be distributed before and during the course. This is also in tune with a wish voiced by many students. Generally the students were pleased to receive handouts and to have lecture contents visualised in transparencies or power point presentations, which facilitated absorbing information. However, they would have wished to get handouts, power point prints or online materials *prior to or at the beginning* of the lecture series in order to be able to concentrate on listening. Some of them also would have liked to have been given papers with the lectures' key concepts as an orientation.

Concerning the students' (and teachers') *different learning cultures*, obviously the most striking unfamiliar thing the students of the two joint schools were confronted with was the learning diary. Yet, while the diary itself was new to most, some students were more familiar with the ideas behind it than others. On the one hand, this is reflected in the ways the diaries were written, on the other hand in the students' opinions about them. The vast majority of the students liked writing the learning diaries, but explanations for this opinion diverge: when comparing the learning diary to lecture examinations, some of the students evaluated both methods according to how well they allow for an objective check of the students' knowledge. From this perspective, most of these respondents maintained that writing a diary was appropriate because for several reasons it would not have been suitable to write an exam. The learning diary was thus not seen as having a value as such. An evenly large group assessed the diary from the point of their own learning process and welcomed it as a method encouraging a more reflective and deeper way of absorbing new knowledge. Thirdly, a smaller group of students liked writing the diary mainly because of the possibility to freely express their own thoughts. These attitudes are mirrored in the different ways the diaries were written. On the one end of the continuum there were summaries of the lecture contents with remarks as to how familiar these were; on the other end there were

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

diaries that took these contents as mere points of departure for their own associations or views. Even though the students from Finland and Sweden in general had a more breezy approach, writing styles vary also among the same university's students. Concerning disciplinary approaches, the Russian students put much higher emphasis on the *historical* dimensions of the issues under discussion, whereas others were more tuned to *theoretical* considerations. This difference tells about the respective idea of the discipline as such.

While the idea of a personal grip of the lecture contents or even of a critical perspective was clearly new to some students, exactly those lectures encouraging approaches of this kind got the most positive feedback. Thus, also the learning diary obviously has a lot of potential for all of the participating students, as it demands an individual perspective and is at the same time flexible concerning the approach of the writer. It does, however require some time for adaptation. This is also shown when looking particularly at the learning diaries submitted for the second joint school. Those participants who had also taken part in the first joint sessions – and therefore had already written another learning diary nine months earlier – were clearly more familiar with its concept. Thus, in addition to the provided instructions on how to complete a new type of task, students also need some practical guidance and above all time to get acquainted with the required way of thinking. Indeed, the idea of the learning diary is not to level out these kinds of differences, but, contrarily, to give room to them. The learning diary does require much more than a lecture summary, but it is flexible as to what this something “more” is in the concrete case.

Concerning the conduct of the lectures, a comment repeated in the feedback from students across all participating universities is their appreciation of discussion and interaction during the lectures. The more interactive lectures were welcomed, and with respect to the lecture series' on the whole, more discussion was wished. This finding is remarkable in the sense that at the same token, many students were not used to discussions during lectures. Instead, they were used to more discursive seminars complementing them, and these they were now missing during the joint schools. That said, the almost unanimous call for more discussion not only shows the convergence of students' preferences concerning pedagogical approaches, but also reveals problems concerning the course structure. Both of the complementary lecture series – “Major Research Orientations in IR” and “Introduction to Research Methods in IR” – were only a third of the whole course in question, and were to be complemented by literature exams and by essays presented in workshop sessions at the home departments. Thus, the purpose of the joint lectures was primarily to provide a common basis, while the workshops would offer a forum for more discussion. However, for the course on research methods, not all participating institutions included the seminars as an integral element of the course. This means that the deepening of the lecture contents through discussions was missing. Notwithstanding this fact, discussions during the lectures also serve the purpose to lighten the exhausting lecture days during long joint sessions. Therefore, they may be taken into account as an integral part of joint sessions independently of the larger curricular structures.

In the same context, it is also very understandable that a number of students called for more emphasis on the practical applications of the methods presented in the lectures on research methods. This would indeed have been the purpose of the follow-up workshop sessions. Nevertheless, some part of this problem could have been resolved by better

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

information to the students beforehand about what expected them during the lectures. The same holds for the observation that concerning the joint course on major research orientations – the first course of the entire programme – some students had quite different expectations referring to its content and position in the teaching programme and wished for lectures on more concrete issues of Northern European policies. In this respect, it obviously would have been necessary to inform them beforehand more explicitly and intensively about the programme curriculum, which, of course, encompassed courses on exactly these topics.

In general, the feedback has been very positive, and the students have been highly motivated to participate in the programme. Especially appreciated was the concept of combining International Relations with a regional emphasis and concrete encounters of students and teachers from this region. In this context, some of the Russian students would have wished for more Finnish participants. The role of the students' enthusiasm for the programme's quality should not be underestimated. They not only volunteered as guinea pigs in a pilot phase of the project, but with their attitude also considerably motivated the organisers. Their very legitimate wishes for a more balanced distribution of students from the participating institutions and for workshops complementing the joint lectures shows that quality assurance – as a question of commitment to the joint goals – should not only involve all of the immediate programme organisers, but is also an administrative issue.

Instead of a Map

In front of the piles of papers conscientiously written and filled in by the students, one returning question is: What about the differences?

As for *differences in curricula*, their levelling out is a long term issue, as the development of compatible degree structures proceeds from cycle to cycle. However, it is possible to balance existing differences independently of this process. With special regard to courses organised in joint sessions, measures to reach a more even starting ground largely go together with ways to ensure a higher level of *absorbing capacity* during intensive sessions. Our experience suggests the combination of the following:

- *Extensive and systematic preparatory distant learning through an e-learning platform.* In this way, the lecturer herself has the possibility to make sure that the students have the information they need for specifically this lecture. Similarly, the students know what expects them and can pick the pieces they personally need. Of course, this requires a longer preparation of the joint courses and also a mode of conferring credits for the preparatory work. Online platforms provide for a range of imaginative uses reaching from the distribution of materials and information to learning groups and online discussions, for example.
- *The distribution of hand-out materials before and during the courses.*
- *Planning the joint sessions as an integral part of a larger unit* that should include follow-up workshop sessions. In our case, the elements of the entire courses were (1) lectures in joint sessions and a learning diary, (2) literature

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

exams at the home universities, and (3) papers written by the students and presented in workshop sessions at the home universities.

- *Discussion* during the lectures makes long session days less exhausting. Their realisation in lectures on theoretical or methodological issues requires thorough preparation of the teachers, and extensive coordinative work of the course's responsible teacher. The latter can also be said about the organisation of joint courses as such. To plan and agree on the contents and aims of the joint lectures makes it necessary to have a *reasonably resourced full time coordinator*.
- *Breathing spaces* for the students give them time to absorb information and make it easier to adjust to unfamiliar environments.

Regarding *differences in academic cultures*, their mutual approaching may be one long term result of programmes of this kind, which, however, cannot be deliberately engineered. On the contrary, familiarising with different learning cultures and academic traditions should be viewed as part of the special skills international programmes provide. Instead of unification, the aim should therefore be to raise *awareness* for differences by also making them an *explicit* issue for example in QA discussions with the students – and the teachers. Explicitness includes informing the students on what expects them e.g. in visiting lectures and exchange studies. From the teachers, it requires sensitivity for and experience of diverse conventions. Especially in programmes with a regional focus, the experience of different cultures can in this way be turned into an advantage, a special expertise that cannot be provided by traditional degree programmes.

PART III

Taking Stock of the Experience – Institution-level

Russia in the Bologna Process: a View from St. Petersburg

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In 2003 Russia officially declared entering the Bologna process. However, the restructuring of the higher education in Russia to meet the Bologna standards is proceeding in fits and starts. Only 15 percent of all university students follow the two-step model (Bachelor – 4 years, Master – 2 years), the rest remain within the conventional Soviet-time one-step university system of education that lasts 5 years. The shift to the mechanism of academic crediting has been implemented only on paper – in practice it does not work. Students still spend most of their study time in class, while the share of independent studying is substantially less. A large number of bureaucratic regulations remain intact. Of course, these regulations do not impinge upon the lecture content – academic freedoms are guaranteed by the Constitution of Russia and respected by the authorities. However, they create excessive obstacles in the way of the arrangement of the study process. Thus, for example, students are offered a large number of freely elected courses (in the Soviet times such type of courses was virtually non-existent), however, the students do not have the freedom to pick the order of succession of their courses – just like in the past.

There are several reasons inhibiting the process. I shall highlight just those two of them appearing the most crucial.

First, the influential circles of bureaucracy and business – the two most principal elements of the Russian ruling elite – are committed to the development of cooperation and trade with the European Union (as well as with other countries), but not to integration. They fear losing against international competition. This inconsistency of reference points affects, inter alia, the sphere of higher education and the implementation of the Bologna process.

Second, there remains some serious resistance within the very system of higher education in Russia. The Soviet system of higher education was an integral part of the rigid centralized system. The collapse of that system and the transition to a market economy in the 1990s turned out to be extremely painful for practically all universities and educational institutions. Besides, back in the 1990s the Russian government was not doing much to reform the higher education, while at the same time it substantially reduced subsidies to it. This led to a major crisis which in turn caused the exodus of the most dynamic part of the academic community from education to business. Some left for the United States and the EU countries. Today, the average age of the university professors exceeds 60, and they would rather preserve the status quo than accept any transformation. In addition, a sizable portion of students believe that the European labour market will remain out of reach for them even if there is mutual recognition of diplomas of higher education.

Saint-Petersburg State University was one of the few pioneers in Russia to join the Bologna process and it is constantly aspiring to stimulate the evolution of Russia's higher education towards the European standards. Much progress has been achieved by the School of International Relations – one of the youngest Faculties of the country's oldest

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

University. The School of International Relations regards its participation in the Bologna process within a larger international context. We are setting our goals not only to form common criteria with the universities in the EU, but also to raise our competitive ability, modernize our study process, and implement innovations widely. At the same time, we are fully cognizant of the negative downturn that the system of education will face in the coming years due to the unfavourable demographic situation in the country. This prompts us to tap into the global market more actively by attracting international students. Over the past 10 years our Faculty has welcomed students from more than 74 countries. Still, we are seeking new partnerships and striving to expand our network of contacts. Last but not least, the Faculty tries to take into account those new trends that will come into play following Russia's upcoming joining of the WTO.

The School of International Relations was one of the first in Russia to complete the transition to the two-step degree model (Bachelor, Master). It has given us a great advantage making it possible to extend our international contacts. Besides, the Master's programs are much less regulated by the State. In practice, the decisions to launch these programs are taken at the University Academic Council level. Better still; the curricula can be endorsed at the level of the Faculty Academic Council. This allows achieving substantial flexibility and makes it possible to adapt our curricula specifically for collaboration with concrete foreign university partners. The Bologna process does not have any rules as to the language of instruction. Yet, in reality, there comes up a need to introduce teaching in English, at least in part. At our Faculty we have already launched a new Master's program "New Independent States Studies", in which the classes are taught in English. Besides, there are several modules under the Bachelor's programs which are also taught in English.

We at the Faculty believe that our priority should be the development of Master's programs leading to a double degree. Our prior attempts at creating programs leading to a joint degree have shown that at this stage that direction is less promising. The Russian legislature, as well as that of the EU and of a majority of other countries, provides no mentioning of a joint degree whatsoever. Therefore, unfortunately, the solution to this problem cannot be found without making changes to the legislation of many countries, which is bound to take a long time.

Presently, we are in the process of creating two separate Master's programs leading to a double degree with the University of Miami (Florida, USA) and the University of Tampere (Finland). Both projects have received the support of the Russian Ministry for Education and Science that nominated them for a grant within the framework of the National Project "Education". The cooperation with the University of Tampere also receives the support through the Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University Project.

We have already made some significant progress as far as our cooperation with the University of Miami is concerned. Its main purpose is, for the students pursuing similar, however still different majors, to receive the diplomas of both universities (International Relations from Saint-Petersburg State University and International Administration from the University of Miami). This effort conforms well to the policy of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs (APSIA) whose membership is held by both our institutions. During the negotiations practically all issues of mutual recognition of academic grades and credits were resolved as well as some issues related to the

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

organization of the study process. We are also planning to make extensive use of live video equipment. Yet, the biggest challenge is posed by financial issues, since there is a large discrepancy in the cost of tuition, room and board between the universities of Miami and Saint-Petersburg. Yet, we hope that this program will be in effect in 2007.

The pace of progress of cooperation with the University of Tampere is slower – the prospect of introducing a double degree is viewed as a goal to be achieved only in a few years. Besides, there is no final concurrence regarding academic credit evaluation of courses, as well as regarding some other issues.

Despite these challenges, on the whole, we view our endeavours to create two Master's programs with a double degree quite optimistically. The gained experience could be also used for cooperation with other universities.

Experiences of the MGIMO-University in Double Degree Master's Programs in International Relations

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Five years before the Bologna Declaration was signed the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO-University)¹¹ launched a set of Master's courses in International Relations together with Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris (IEP – Sciences Po) in Moscow. This was the first Master's program in International Relations in Russia and also the first joint Master's program at MGIMO. Only later, in the end of the 1990s, a Russian MA program in International Relations was started. Additionally, in the early 2000s a joint Russian-German MA program was launched at MGIMO.

In the Russian-French MA program teaching was in Russian and in French. Thus, the admission criteria were fluency in these two languages and a Bachelor's diploma. Approximately 20 students enroll in the program each year. Similarly, the Russian MA program in International Relations has 20-25 students per year. In the joint Russian-German program, there are 3 students from each side.

The experience of the first MA program has been very important for opening other Master's programs in International Relations at MGIMO. We have learned that it is very important to choose an appropriate partner. In spite of educational, national, and other differences two universities can have much in common. MGIMO and Sci Po (Paris) prepare specialists mainly for practical work in political, legal, and economic relations. The programs of the two institutions are based on the idea of multidisciplinary studies (history, political science, economy, law, foreign languages) and have the same duration, two years.

In its early phases, the MA program consisted of some Russian and some French courses. After a few years it was decided to provide an "integrated" program.¹² This meant that more cooperation between the two universities was needed. MGIMO and Sci Po created a new united MA program based on cooperation of the teaching staff and not only the administrative structures.

In order to realize this new "integrated" Master's program one of the first steps was to encourage French and Russian teachers to work together. For this purpose the annual scientific seminar "MGIMO – Sci Po" was set up (held in Moscow and in Paris) and joint courses by Russian and French teachers were proposed. One part of the joint course was delivered by a Russian professor and another part by his French colleague. After two years the graduates received the MGIMO diploma and the Certificate of Sci Po.

In the early 2000s the Russian-French MA program in International Relations was transferred into the MA program, titled "World Politics". Belonging to the field of

¹¹ About MGIMO see: <http://www.mgimo.ru>.

¹² For details see: Rousselet K., Lebedeva M.M. Une expérience internationale d'enseignement des relations internationales: le dialogue des traditions, Kosmopolis. Almanakh, 1997, pp. 29-31 (published in Russia).

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

International Relations, this program also began to pay more attention to political science, the contemporary development of the world, and non-governmental actors. Previously the focus had been predominantly on state actors.

Starting from the 2005/2006 academic year, this Russian-French MA program was transferred into a double diploma MA program. During the first year, students study at MGIMO (Moscow), and during the second year they study at Sci Po (Paris). During the summer they have a three-month internship. Two diplomas (MGIMO and Sci Po) are given to graduates after two years of education. They also receive the European Diploma Supplement.

In the 2005/2006 academic year another double degree MA program in International Relations was launched. An agreement was signed between MGIMO and three well-known German universities: Free University of Berlin (FUB), Humboldt University (HU) and the University of Potsdam (UP). At MGIMO, this program is based on the MA program "World Politics", which consists of two sections: a Russian-French MA program and a Russian MA program. This is the first Russian-German MA program in International Relations in Russia. The experience of the Russian-French MA program was used extensively in the creation of this program.

The admissions criteria for the Russian-German MA program are: (1) fluency in the languages of instruction (Russian, German, and English), and (2) a Bachelor's degree in a subject relevant to the discipline of International Relations or World Politics. Students of the Russian-German MA program comprise a part of the Russian MA program.

In accordance with the agreement, three students from the Russian and the German side (totally six) enroll in the program each year. They study at the home university two semesters. One semester they study at the host university, and one semester they do their internship. At the end of the education cycle (two years) graduates receive a Master's diploma from MGIMO and a Master's diploma also from the Free University of Berlin (HU and UP are partners of FUB in running the program). The European Diploma Supplement is included.

At the moment the Master's program in International Relations has a multi-part structure and about 50 students for each year of education. In order to manage this situation two Directorates (Directorate MGIMO-Sci Po and Directorate MGIMO-German universities) were founded. The task of each Directorate is to elaborate the strategy of education. French and German coordinators work at MGIMO and do the everyday management.

The problem of the content of education is a much more complicated issue than the management of the programs. Each country and each university has its own traditions and requirements. For example, in Russia there is the state standard (disciplines, which have to be studied in order to get a Master's Diploma in International Relations). Certainly, double degree programs have to meet the requirements of all participating institutions. In order to achieve this MGIMO has built a Master's program consisting of three blocks (see Figure 1).

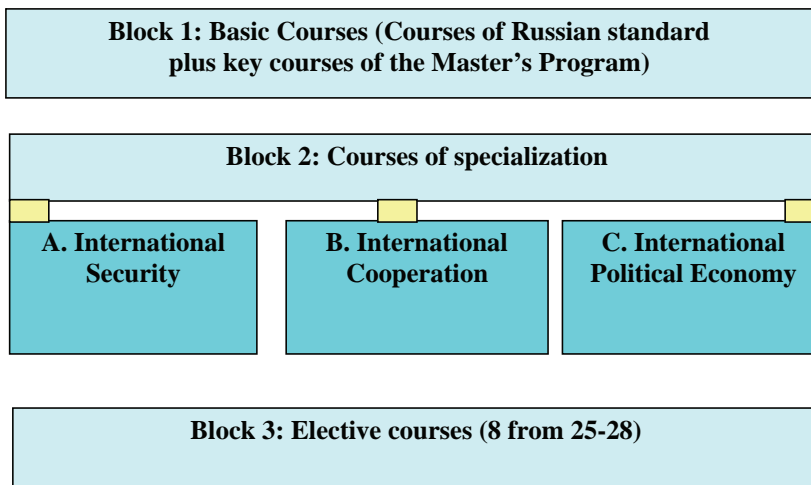


Figure 1. Structure of MA program in International Relations in the MGIMO-University.

The first block consists of two types of courses: 1) Russian standard courses and 2) courses which are considered by MGIMO as the key courses in the program (MGIMO's university standards). The courses of the first block are compulsory for every student participating in the program. The realization of this block covers all national and MGIMO requirements.

Starting from the first days of education in MGIMO students of the MA programs choose a specialization (Block 2). In general they have three options: International Security, International Cooperation, and International Political Economy. The decision made by the students at the beginning of the MA program cannot be changed later. This block provides for variations in the education of 50 students. Students of the double degree Russian-French MA program and also the students of the Russian MA program can choose from all three options, but the students of the Russian-German double degree MA program have presently only one option – International Security. The reason for this is the schedule of the two programs (in Russia and in Germany) and also the short time which students spend at the host university. During the third semester, when the German students are in MGIMO, a number of courses of Block 2, which is sufficient for all requirements, are in Block 2 A (International Security) only.

Block 3 consists of elective courses. For the students of the Russian MA program all of these courses are electives. It is not so for the students of the Russian-French and the Russian-German MA programs. In order to meet all the requirements of the partner university we make some of these courses compulsory for students of the double degree

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

programs. For example, the course on methods in International Relations is compulsory for the Russian-German program students. It is an elective course for the other students. In the case of the Russian-French MA program a multidisciplinary approach has to be provided. So, for example, a course on history of International Relations is obligatory for the students of this program, while it is an elective course for the other students. This means that the range of choice for the students of the double degree MA programs is narrower. We consider that they have made this choice already when they decided to enroll in the double degree MA program, which provides them two diplomas after two years of education.

Summing up the experience of MGIMO in double degree Master's programs, one can say that in order to start and to run such a program we need:

- To choose a proper partner university. "Specialization" of a partner in the educational field as well as the level of teaching have to be the same;
- To meet the requirements and educational traditions of both states and both universities;
- To create a new program. It has to have its own specific aims, etc. It is not enough to make a construction out of the courses of two universities;
- To have a dialogue between the teaching staff of the two universities through joint scientific seminars, scientific meetings, joint scientific studies and publications, etc.

When a double degree program is started the first impression normally is that the main problems are "technical" (official licensing of the program, formal requirements, etc.). It is not necessarily so. The main crux is the content of the program. Not an administrative staff or assistants but experienced and well-known professors can create and run an attractive and interesting double degree program.

A Glance at the Implementation of Bologna at the University of Tartu

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The Old and New Study System

In 1999, an extensive higher education reform regarding study programs and the transition to a new system of stages, the 3+2 system, was launched in universities in Estonia. The current organisation of academic higher education consists of two cycles: a three year Bachelor's level followed by a two year Master's level education. In some profiles the study programs have been integrated into a single 5-year cycle: medicine, engineering, teacher training, etc. The goal of the Bachelor's level studies within the two-cycle structure is to acquire basic knowledge and skills in the speciality required for pursuing education at Master's level. At the Master's level students develop specialisation and specific skills. In terms of curriculum development, there have been radical changes following the Bologna process: from input to outcome based and content to competence based curricula, and from a subject-focused to a student-centred teaching process.

The reforms inevitably bring along substantial changes, the adoption of which is very time consuming. In order to get an initial feedback of the results of the reform, a series of 133 interviews were carried out at Tartu and some other Estonian universities with Bachelor and Master's students, lecturers and Program Managers. The following, in the first section, is a brief and generalised overview of responses received which definitely require further analyses, but this is not in the scope of this summary.

Students often perceive a three-year Bachelor's program as a compressed and marginally restructured a four-year program. It is described as an extremely intense study program that leaves very little time for in-depth learning and has no coherent structure. It is said that within the curriculum courses and modules are fragmented and there is insufficient integration between courses. The workload required for earning a credit can differ substantially across and within specialisations.

In the students' view, course titles and their credits have changed, but course materials and methods used for teaching are sometimes the same as used for pre-reform study programs. This indicates that a change in the volume of learning has been achieved through a shortened syllabus or by rushing through the teaching process. The course requirements, in terms of the students' workload, are sometimes identical to the courses of the former 4 year Bachelor's programs. Thus, there can be cases where insufficient alterations in content and mostly structural changes in curricula have lead to intense study

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

programs that provide little support for in-depth learning and extra curricula activities. The latter is most probably influenced by the fact that a great number of students are working.

In the pre-reform system of higher education, Bachelor's level studies provided the competence of a specialist. In the current system, a specialist qualification requires completion of Master's studies. However, the students tend to believe that a three-year Bachelor's program should equip them with a specialist qualification. This misunderstanding could easily be influenced by the fact that a Bachelor's degree was also awarded to for graduates of the pre-reform education system. In addition, the differences between the two systems may seem blurred if a new course with different goals and learning outcomes is being delivered with an old syllabus and materials.

Faculties have expressed a need and readiness to contribute to the further effort in curriculum development. A new role in a curriculum development as well as in its administration is given to Program Managers. The Program Managers are members of the academic staff who have been appointed to administrate a curriculum and are supported by a Program Council. The Program Council includes representatives of academic staff, students and employers. The latter are expected to report on the extent to which graduates meet the needs of the labour market. Administration includes content analyses of the curriculum and activities related to financial and marketing aspects. Managers are entitled to initiate changes in a curriculum structure, and there are mechanisms for them to ensure feedback from the students – evaluation of teaching and courses. These evaluations are of considerable importance as a basis for introducing changes to individual courses or modules of the curriculum. It is therefore an imperative for a Program Manager to control that the competitiveness as well as the attractiveness is achieved through more intensive efforts at curriculum development.

Mobility Issues

Mobility enables students to enrich their education and professional credentials. Today, more and more issues that have emerged from mobility are addressed at the university level, particularly in relation to recognition of studies taken in another institution. Obstacles for in-country mobility, i.e. spending one semester in another higher education institution of the home country, arise primarily from shortcomings in curricula which focus on input rather than learning outcomes. If studies at another institution are not fully recognised, there is little mobility between institutions, as in-country mobility is not that attractive for students to extend their nominal study period.

The international mobility of students has increased significantly during the last 5 years. Now, the focus has to switch from quantity to quality of mobility. This requires, first of all, in-depth planning from the academic staff in terms of establishing partnerships with higher education institutions. So far the selection of partners has not been very systematic and based on comparability of curricula. Equally, courses that have no learning outcomes pose difficulties. Often the goals of a course or a module, the broader aims of education, are spelled out, but the more specified performance standards and expected learning outcomes are not described. This makes the transfer of courses taken abroad very complicated, but it does not apply to the University of Tartu only. Given this reality, studying abroad substantially increases the students' workload, which does not allow graduating within the

nominal study period. In a three year curriculum, students regard it more difficult to find the possibility of attending year-long courses abroad. Students express a wish to be able to spend more than a semester to successfully complete a course, but this is often excluded if one wants to complete one's Bachelor's studies within the given time. A three year program hinders a longer experience of studying abroad, unless there is a compatible module taught at a partner institution which is fully recognised by the home university or there is a special study abroad semester built into the curriculum that allows for an extension of the three year study period.

The International Dimension

The University of Tartu has set internationalization as one of its major priorities for the period leading up to 2008. A critical part of the internationalization strategy of the University of Tartu includes developing English-language degree programs and increasing the number of international students. The University of Tartu is at the very beginning stage with its international curricula. There are five Master's level curricula primarily targeted to international students. For the time being, there is one English-taught Master's program for international students. The rest have so far been working with domestic students, but will be marketed for international students as well. However, internationalization is not merely a matter of recruiting international students, but it aims equally at preparing domestic students who will be capable of working in different international environments. Joint programs support the integration of international dimensions into teaching, research, service and administration, and help universities to combine the strengths of individual institutions. Moreover, they contribute to the rapid implementation of the Bologna indicators: comparable degree structures, mobility and recognition of degrees.

Our very limited experience has shown a need for considerable extra time and effort to open a sustainable and successfully working joint program. The University of Tartu has one Erasmus Mundus joint Master's program, in cooperation with four well known universities of technology in Nordic countries, to which the first students were admitted in January 2006. This joint program has been designed on the basis of existing curricula in all of the participating institutions. The University of Tartu has not registered its joint curriculum at the national level, and graduates of this program will be awarded a double diploma and degree from the institutions they attended.

Currently our national legislation does not include a joint curriculum as a distinctive kind of study program, but in the coming months a joint curriculum with its characteristics and operating principles will be added to the higher education legislation. The University of Tartu Statutes of Curricula have set special requirements for opening a joint curriculum including quality assurance and a clear distribution of academic, administrative, and financial responsibilities within a network of universities.

One of the difficulties of joint programs is a quality assurance procedure and its implementation across a network. The internal quality measurement activities involve joint supervision of Master's theses, but there is a need also to assure common assessment standards for courses and modules taught across the network. The network has agreed to arrange periodic evaluations under the responsibility of a Consortium Committee. In

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

addition, each single course is evaluated through the completion of a questionnaire. One joint evaluation form will be developed for assessing courses taught in partner institutions. Feedback seminars will be held at the end of each semester with the participation of students, teachers and administration.

For external quality assurance, at the national level, all participating institutions have had their programs accredited by national accreditation or equivalent quality assessment authorities. In case of an officially opened joint program, national accreditation would naturally apply to the module(s) offered by an institution of that country. Thus, parts of a joint program would be accredited by different quality assessment authorities.

Establishing a joint program has brought out the vital role of the Program Manager who must ensure that information concerning activities within a joint program is disseminated within an institution. It is crucial that the academic staff involved with the program feels fully committed to running a coherent study program and is familiar with the program as a whole in order to avoid repetition of contents. At the same time, from the perspective of sustainability of a program, it is important that cooperation is wider than just through a single representative of the participating institutions. We are at a too early phase to know whether our first joint activity to build such a program has succeeded. What has become very clear is that the administrative work in a joint program has proven to be very extensive and cannot be underestimated in terms of staff and funding.

This paper presents a rather simplified overview of the situation. Its aim is not to criticise but to offer a brief look into the current stage of curriculum development at our university. The Bologna process and its mechanisms have influenced the study process immensely and the results of the changes that have been made are gradually becoming apparent.

PART IV

Impact Assessment: From Global to Local Levels

Political Consequences of the Bologna Process

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Education has traditionally been in the periphery of both the global political agenda and international studies. As a rule, international treaties in different areas touch upon education in only the last instance. For example, in May 2005 the Russia-EU summit adopted the four “road maps” concerning the common spaces between the parties. Education, together with culture and science, closes the list. A similar order of priorities prevails in many other cases. However, during the last years education has become more important politically. In 2006 it was, for the first time, a subject of discussion for the G-8 meeting.

The scholarly work in this field is predominantly focused on *techniques of teaching*. Education as a *factor shaping world politics* is not dealt with by International Relations scholars. In the textbooks of International Relations and World Politics there are no chapters on the role of education.¹³ Only in the context of discussing the gap between the “Global North” and the “Global South” education is mentioned.

At the same time it is evident that the orientation towards “intellectual production” calls for certain modifications in the educational domain. These processes were first brought into focus by economists who demonstrated that the increase in the income of individuals with a degree is far more probable than in the case of those without a degree.¹⁴ A Russian economist, V. Inozemtsev, even came up with the assumption that instead of expecting a Huntingtonian-style “civilization divide” we can expect a divide along educational lines; growing dividing lines between those with a high educational and professional profile and those who lack it.¹⁵

The European educational integration, which is referred to as the Bologna process, was, to a great extent, launched because of economic reasons. At the turn of the 1980s and the 1990s people in Europe realized the technological weaknesses which had started to hinder further development in all spheres of life. Europe was lagging behind not only the United States and Japan, but also such countries as South Africa in the implementation of information and communication technologies (ICT) – credit cards, the Internet, cellular networks, etc.

Another critical issue was the fact that American and Australian universities were winning in the competition of providing educational services. Since the early 1990s, the number of European students in the United States had surpassed the number of American

¹³ See, for example, Goldstein J. S. *International Relations*. Sixth Edition. – N.Y. a.o.: Longman, 2005; *Handbook of International Relations* / Ed. by W. Carlsnaes, T. Risse, B.A. Simmons. – L., a.o.: Sage, 2002; Kegley Ch. W., Wittkopf E. R. *World Politics: Trend and Transformation*. Ninth Edition. – Belmont: Thomson/Wadsworth, 2004.

¹⁴ See, for example, Inozemtsev, Vladislav. *Za predelami ekonomicheskogo obshchestva*. Moskva: Nauka, 1998.

¹⁵ Inozemtsev, Vladislav. *Raskolotaya tsivilizatsiya*. Moskva: Nauka, 1999.

students in Europe.¹⁶ Also from the psychological point of view, seeing European higher education “fall behind” was unpleasant. Europe, which had a great cultural legacy in *higher education being an integral part of its societies*, was lagging behind other regions in the world.

The attempt to reform European higher education was designed to enhance its quality and to reinforce its linkages with both societal practices and science. The “reform architects” had in mind raising the attractiveness of the European education for students. In order to make the educational levels of graduates mutually compatible, irrespective of a given institution or the acquired qualifications, special mechanisms were devised to harmonize all parameters with common European standards (a three-level system comprising Bachelor’s, Master’s, and Doctor’s degrees; the introduction of the ECTS; a European diploma supplement, etc.).

There are “Bologna optimists” and “Bologna pessimists” in each state participating in the process. The arguments put forward by both sides are well-known, and so is the history of the Bologna process. Here, we will focus on some specific aspects of European integration in higher education and, in particular, the role of the university in the Bologna process.

The *Magna Charta Universitatum* (1988), which is a part of the bases of the Bologna Declaration, declares:

- University autonomy
- University’s independence of political and ideological tenets
- Interconnectedness between research and education
- Renunciation of intolerance and orientation towards dialogue

The university, rather than the state, is the fundamental unit of the European higher education integration. A non-state actor – the university – becomes the key “creator” of the Bologna process. However, the reform was launched and worked out in ministries of education and was initiated by their chiefs and staffs. Thus, the integration was imposed from the above, by a “ministerial” path. This gave a certain force to the European integration in higher education, especially at the start of the process. Simultaneously it drove the Bologna process along the lines of more “technical” issues (the required period of time to obtain a degree, the number of credits per semester, etc.). The content of education was left out of the considerations. Consequently the teaching staff was almost excluded from the creation of the Bologna process. Thus, the university cannot play the crucial role that is given to it in the Bologna Declaration. A balance of contributions in the Bologna process between the professional community (teaching staff) and the administrative staff needs to be established. We also need studies of the Bologna process and its consequences.

The European integration of higher education has been evolving extremely rapidly. Over the past seven years since the Bologna Declaration was signed, 45 European states have joined the process. The rate at which the educational space is getting integrated is considerably higher than in the case of economic integration in the aftermath of World War

¹⁶ Bolonskiy protsess: narastayushchaya dinamika I mnogoobrasie. Dokumenti mezhdunarodnikh forumov i mneniya zarubezhnikh ekspertov / Pod. red. V.I. Baidenko. – Moskva, 2002.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

II. Given also the fact that integration in higher education is impeded by such factors as language differences and national educational disparities this is, indeed, remarkable.

In terms of the scale of potential socio-political consequences, the Bologna process may be compared with the post-World War II economic integration in Europe. The latter started with the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community. The socio-political trends determined by the integration of the European educational space continue to be disregarded in international studies. There are at least two reasons for this situation. Firstly, the outcome of educational integration will become apparent in a long-term perspective only. Secondly, it is going to be difficult to identify the impact of the Bologna process *per se*, because many other factors also influence the end result.

Nevertheless, one can highlight the major trends of socio-political development brought about by the European higher education integration. It seems that the Bologna process will make European integration deeper, and that it will push non-EU states to closer cooperation. The harmonization of the main higher education parameters (levels of education, timetable, etc.) presents an opportunity to make the level of graduate qualifications more transparent for employers in all fields and in all European states. It will also enhance the creation of common “professional languages” for every specialization within Europe and, in this way, ensure higher mobility of the qualified work force. Moreover, the Bologna process presumes a partnership among European universities including mobility of students and professors. As a result, European university graduates will take up their professional careers with corresponding knowledge and innumerable multinational personal contacts which were established during the time they studied together. This will lead to the creation of a common political, economic, and cultural European elite.

The Bologna process may also lead to some unexpected positive outcomes in interstate relations. For example, Russia and Latvia are states which participate in the Bologna process: Latvia from the very beginning (i.e. from the date of signing the Bologna Declaration) and Russia from the year 2003. Over a long period of time these states had a common system of higher education. This system included mutual recognition of diplomas and a common basis for training scientific and teaching personnel. Russian was the main language of the educational process, and there were also many other traits in common. Having entered the European Union in 2004, Latvia is apparently interested in developing an active role as an EU member state.

At the EU-Russia summit in Saint-Petersburg in 2003, and again at another summit in Moscow in 2005, higher education was declared to be a constituent element of the cooperation between Russia and the EU member states. Being one of the first participants in the Bologna process and also a state that is well acquainted with the system of higher education inherited from the Soviet past (with all its advantages and disadvantages), Latvia could act as a mediator of the cooperation on behalf of the European Union, above all, in the western regions of Russia. The good knowledge of the Russian language by Latvia’s residents is highly advantageous for Latvia in developing such cooperation. Within the framework of the Bologna process, which presumes mobility for students and teachers, the Russian-speaking residents of Latvia gain new opportunities of studying and teaching in Russia. Thus, the issue of the Russian language in Latvia, which is one of the thorniest problems in the Russian-Latvian relations, could be managed.

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

A university community is by its very nature built up by network principles, and democracy implies a network of social links and relations. This is why universities have traditionally played a significant role in entrenching democracy in Western Europe. Today, the university, in accordance with the Sorbonne Declaration, is the basic structural unit of the Bologna process. It has the potential to play the same role in Eastern Europe. In this way, the Bologna process can stimulate the process of democratization.

In addition to the generally acknowledged favorable aspects of educational integration, the Bologna process can bring about a number of other types of phenomena that may not be all that desirable. It may bring about a restructuring of the entire university community, with at least three strata coming to the fore. The first stratum will include the most successful and prestigious universities that are fully integrated into the Bologna process. These universities will form some kind of consortia for teaching pan-European elites. The second stratum will be composed of universities that will be partly integrated into the Bologna process. This category of universities will be accommodated to educate those who will work at the local or sub-regional levels. Finally, the third group of universities will consist of outsiders, working on the brink of survival and mainly at local levels.

The role of regions and cities is also certain to undergo change. We can expect a robust development of cities hosting major universities. These universities are likely to specialize in fields corresponding to the interests and profile of the city or region which provides them surplus opportunities (to invite high level experts, to let students have internship in relevant organizations, etc.) For example, the issues of multilateral diplomacy, international bodies and multipartite talks are central to Geneva universities. Matters related to European integration are relevant to the Brussels universities, and the problems of international finance may attract universities in London. As a result, one can anticipate a greater “regionalization” or even “megapolization” of Europe; a process which is going to change the socio-political and economic faces of the continent.

The evolving educational integration in Europe has given rise to similar processes in other countries and regions, in particular in the United States. This brings up the problem of adjusting the Bologna system with other educational systems.

In the case of Russia, regional diversity has a special dimension. With its huge territory and the Eurasian position, Russia is facing a situation where the universities based in its European part are more integrated in the Bologna process than is the case with Siberian and Far Eastern universities. The latter seek partnership with the universities of the United States and other neighboring regions. A potential danger lies in the possible erosion of the single educational space in Russia with all its consequences. However, there is also a different scenario. Geographical diversity may become Russia’s considerable advantage, because sooner or later a need is bound to arise for a kind of “converter” between European, American, and Asian educational standards. In this context, huge prospects may be opening up for Russia, which could play a “mediating” role between different educational systems.

Thus, education is becoming a sphere which vividly reflects the most burning socio-economic and political issues of the day and of the future. This means that all these aspects have to be studied in particular by International Relations scholars. In the future, the

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Bologna process will have to be compared with education systems in other regions of the world. We also need to alleviate some possible negative consequences of the Bologna process. All this needs multilevel and multilateral negotiations.

The Bologna Process and National System of Education

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Today the world is undergoing the process of globalization that includes powerful integration processes that have great advantages, but, at the same time, pose an unprecedented threat because they suppress national cultures and traditions. We witness the development of the global communication space which significantly affects all aspects of society, individual and components of the whole system of culture. Before we begin talking about the effect of these processes on education, we must define major factors of modern culture's transformation.

By the term "transformation of a culture" I mean the process of destroying the classical culture or, to be more precise, destroying the system of classical cultures and development of a single global superculture that is based on the opportunities that gives the global communication space.

First of all, the changes affect the very type of communication between cultures. In the semiotic plane, communication between cultures was realized within local notional space. It was a contact of two semiotic systems that was quite adequately called by Yu. M. Lotman "the semiosphere" since it includes not only the sum of languages, but also a socio-cultural field of their function¹⁷. Such a semiosphere was the juncture for the least voluminous notional parts of the culture. The rest required a cultural interpretation, a transition. The area of junction (sameness) was rather small whereas the other area was enormous.

The need for understanding resulted in the tendency for enlarging the former area, however, it was the latter area that had a greater notional value. Lotman introduces for this kind of situation the concept of "tension", i.e. a resistance between two cultures as semiotic systems. The area of sameness is acting as a mere background for entering the area of the unsame, unknown for the penetrating culture and thus, curious and interesting.

It is this type of communication that is especially prone to destruction, because cultures are in a way being drawn to the single communication space. This space is an independent force that influences the dialogue of all cultures. It literally forces them to conduct a dialogue according to its laws and rules. Cultures enter another environment that penetrates intercultural dialogs thus creating a background for its closing within the Global Communication Space.

The integrative linguistic tendencies dominate today in the world. The "pseudo-cultural" field of communication expands, so a dialogue is now based on the principles of cognition of the most accessible, coinciding or almost coinciding notional structures. This communication field is designed for general stereotypes, evaluations, parameters of the

¹⁷ Lotman, Yu.M., *Inside thinking worlds*. Moscow, 1996, p. 194.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

required behavior, i.e. its most accessible or simplest components. The integrative super-culture absorbs the diversity of local cultures. We will be able to understand any man in any part of the world, but it will be an understanding on the level of coincidence or even sameness of denotations.

Pop-culture as a form of mass culture is a typical product of global information space. This culture purposely disclaims basic ethnic, religious foundations and traditions. It is based on the integrated informational environment, it is realized by means of mass actions that we call a show.

The very same processes occur in modern education that follows the path of disclaiming the fundamentalism principle which is characteristic for classical universities for pragmatic purposes that often hide behind catchy slogans about a single educational environment. This type of integration means simplification of the education system rather than a synthesis of the best national models.

The Bologna process, just as an attempt to create an integrated European education system, is quite good in theory. It is also a geopolitical goal to create some kind of alternative to further Americanization of the European space. On the other hand, if it is implemented carelessly and hastily it may cause irreversible damage to the peculiarities of national education systems. There have been a great number of protests against it, including students' protests in Germany and France. We must understand that education is not some sort of an industry sector, but a part of national culture, the backbone part. According to official data, in Russia about 40 million people in one way or the other are incorporated in the education system.

All this allowed me to say in an interview that the Bolognization, the way it was proposed some time ago is some kind of a shadow of globalization. When we talk about the Bologna process, I have a feeling that behind it there is some sort of Minister of Higher Global Education with his team of Education Ministers from different countries who coordinate and implement their secret resolutions that are not very clear for the majority of people. I have never believed in the conspiracy theory, but talking about our country, sometimes I feel that the proposed implementation of the "Bologna" resolutions is deliberately aimed at destroying one of the best world education systems - the Russian education.

In the most educationally developed countries that have their traditions of university education (France, Germany, Italy, etc), heads of the largest universities are very careful about the Bologna process and insist on preserving the national priorities of their educational systems. For example, in France there is a number of well-known institutes that do not submit to the Education Ministry and thus they ignore the agreement. In some Scandinavian countries heads of higher education institutions passively resist this process hoping that it would take a long time before the decisions made at the top reach each and every university. It is hard to imagine that Germany would dismiss their traditional university system of education based on independence of universities from the central government. Unfortunately they are forced to do it.

Interestingly enough, the Bologna process was initiated by Education Ministers and not educational structures. In June 1999 Ministers of Education of 29 European states signed the Bologna declaration. In 2003 40 countries, including Russia, became engaged in the Bologna process.

It is hard to argue with the Bologna principles on the level of declarations. There have been declared a better access to European education, the increase of academic

mobility, which should promote the formation of the European identity. Although there emerges a philosophical question: is identity always good or is it better to have diversity?

I will explain with a metaphor. Some time ago I, as a MSU pro-rector, welcomed a large delegation from France. While discussing the principles of the Bologna process I asked them: “Do you like your French wines?” “Yes, of course!” they said. “Imagine that there will be no French wines anymore, there will be common European wines that would comply with a common European standard. For instance, Germany refuses to dismiss its standards of beer for the European ones, preserving its traditions, even though losing economically. What would you prefer, a diverse menu with Greek olives and metaxa, German and Czech beer, French and Italian wine or a common menu that includes just universal hamburgers?” And education process is not less unique and complex, it always has national roots.

Of course, nobody is against creating a common educational area of Europe. But reasonable people understand that this unity should not be equal to sameness, but rather it pre supposes a complex and flexible model that incorporates various sub-systems. This is a unity of the diverse, not the unity of the same or, if we speak in philosophical terms, the «dead» unity. Any system is more efficient and able to develop if its elements complement one another rather than reject each other by subjugation. There is a beautiful French system of education, a very efficient German system. Finally, the Russian education system is in many aspects not inferior to any other system. So why should we disregard our advantages? Should it not be better to try to synthesize them?

The documents of the Bologna process do not make us carry out mechanical integration; in fact, they declare general principles allowing for peculiarities of national educational systems. But, unfortunately, in every country these principles are implemented by officials who find it easier for them to simplify any process of reforms as much as possible.

Unlike us, the Western countries consistently and firmly defend their stand. Some things are accepted, others are not. In Russia, on the other hand, we witness something strange going on: we are joining the conventions on somebody else's terms. They tend to forget that Moscow University and other leading universities of Russia long before and independently from the Bologna innovations participated in integrating education processes. In the meantime, every major university in Russia has its peculiarities, which allows us to talk about different schools that complement one another. Unification that is being imposed on us unavoidably decreases the quality of the education because it is oriented on the average level.

The proposed process of educational integration has a number of contradictions. Integration must be based on the fact that as a result, the recreated system will benefit from the strong points of both systems. That is why the key requirement for integration must be some kind of “equality” of the systems – economic as well as cultural. It is hard to integrate culturally and economically unequal systems. That is why when we talk about the educational process of integration, the cornerstone idea must be the increase of the quality, taking advantage of all the achievements.

Unfortunately, Russia originally experienced the primitive way of integration which practically destroyed the national education system and, first of all, the university education.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Traditions of the Russian university system of education stem from the principles of the university education set by Wilhelm von Humboldt. Today when there are numerous discussions about combining research and education, many people forget that universities from the outset were founded for that purpose. In university researchers talk about results of their academic work during lectures and every instructor must conduct academic research.

The Russian education was always based on fundamental knowledge: students gradually and consequently acquired knowledge about their major as opposed to the mosaic-like system in other countries. This means that students join different schools of their major very early - in their second year. Students almost immediately get involved in the work of their Chair, join the academic community, and work on academic questions together with senior students and post-graduates. This is how academic schooling is often started.

Also we are aware that the Devil is in the Details and the number of these details is growing, which even led to a postponement of the advent of this system. So I would like to proceed to the evaluation of some consequences of thoughtless integration.

The central point is providing control over the quality of education, which must exist not only inside a university, but outside it and the two-stage system of degrees (Bachelor, Master) as well. The main mechanism must be a special system of assessment - credits. According to the developers, it should result in an increase of student mobility, flexibility of changing educational programs and opportunity to get an uninterrupted education.

The “Bachelor-Master” System

Bachelor is the first step of the higher education system which, according to the Bologna agreement, should last at least three years. But if in the West, school education lasts for 12 or even 13 years (for example, in Germany), in Russia it still lasts 11 years, so for us, it is a considerable reduction of the length of education time.

Our education within the framework of “diplomaed specialist” qualification presupposes early specialization (usually beginning from the second year), which makes education more profound and fundamental. A Bachelor, especially the way it is interpreted by Russian developers, studies for 3–4 years, but, practically, he has no specialization. Thus, it is assumed that a student will acquire fundamental knowledge during the Master's degree program (2 years). But, first of all, they do not give enough time in the curriculum for that and, secondly, what they do not say as loudly, Master's degree program will not be free of charge. Thus, we see a depreciation of the fundamental level of education.

(As far as I know, Germany went through these problems: it turned out that Bachelors, despite the fact that it was declared that there was a high demand for them in the market, were not welcomed in the labour market, so they had to go back to school. Let me just give you some of the headings of the *Sud Deutsche Zeitung* articles on this subject: “We are closed - everybody out!” This article focused on the low demand for Bachelors in the market since a Bachelor's degree is just a continuation of school education. The system will result in a reduction of instructors, so there won't be anyone who would teach in the Master's degree program.

The article “With a bulldozer across universities” dealt with an unjustifiable combining of different majors for Bachelor degrees: music and Germanic philology, history and philology etc. A German Bachelor will not be in demand for the USA, just like a Malaysian bachelor or any other. Germany discusses the consequences of changing the system: there will be a sharp decrease of university lecturers because there will be no specialization on the Bachelor level.

German labour unions request the Ministry to take into consideration their opinion since the Ministry does not fully understand the social consequences of implementing the principles of the Bologna agreement).

Of course, a number of majors can easily adopt the principles of the Bologna process: engineer and technical, some economic and management. But what about the fundamental knowledge acquired in mechanics and mathematics, philological or philosophical departments? Is it possible to become a linguist majoring in Germanic philology or classical philology in 3–4 years of unspecialized classes in philology and 2-year specialization in the Master's degree program? Of course not. It means that the economic losses that would result from the lack of theoreticians in the area of fundamental knowledge will be incommensurate with the money that could be saved on education today.

Credits-hours

It looks quite harmless. What is the difference in what system grade and get grades? Generally speaking, this is a system that unifies everything, so that grades that were received in one university will be accepted in any other. But here the Devil is also in the Details. In Russia the credit system together with the absence of specialization of Bachelors may result in the liquidation of chairs. If there is not specialization for Bachelors, then all junior or all senior students study the same things. If we are obligated to accept the credits-hours, then it is not important where a student got them. In Europe, where education is generally at the same level in all parts, it is probably possible. But in our country it may turn university chairs in the numerous universities and institutes that have emerged within the last few years into a store selling credits-hours. So a person gets his credits-hours in some kind of third-rate university, goes to the Sorbonne, and the Sorbonne must accept him. That is why we are the ones who are willing to join the Bologna process, but will the Sorbonne or Harvard be eager to see us?

A change to the credit hour system will drastically change the mechanisms of financing. To whom will the state allot money if the grades were received in different universities? Who will lose in this situation?

Tutor System

There is one tutor for 120 students. We have a different system, more personal, when an academic advisor works with five-six, may be 10–12 students at the most. If we discard this system, then we will not really need chairs since students will not have specialization. Bachelors, the way officials understand it, are not supposed to have a specialization, they study for 3–4 years. Then Bachelors go to the Master's degree program, where students

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

choose their specialization, but it lasts only two years. The number of academic hours for specialization is so small, that it is impossible to talk about any kind of serious specialization. For some specialization this might be enough, but for classical philology it is absolutely impossible. Moreover, those who will want to enroll in the Master's degree program will have to pay for it.

The idea of discarding the *Aspirantura*, Russian doctorate degree, was quickly and easily approved. In one version of the Bologna convention there was supposed to be a PhD, but no doctor. This is also wrong, because our chair system leads to the doctorate degree. There is a place to grow. Our doctorate thesis is a development of the new academic approach and discarding this system will severely damage academic schools, which are the basis of our education. Although this criticism was taken into consideration, the Berlin convention of 2003 states: «Realizing the need to create closer ties between the EHEA and ERA in Europe and the importance of research as a component of the European higher education, Ministers advise to add the doctorate level as the third step of the Bologna process complementing the two basic steps of higher education»(Berlin).

One of the main points of creating a universal educational area is connected with diploma recognition. This is a rather odd point. When Russian experts are needed they have no trouble joining even such bodies as Max Planck Institute in Germany. We should not make this mythical «overall protection in terms of universal educational area» our ultimate goal. We can assimilate so much that it will be impossible to tell Moscow University apart from Berlin University and Athens University from Paris University. MSU Rector V. A. Sadovnichy once said that if the mathematics standards in the Soviet time were identical, there would have never emerged famous, but different Moscow and Leningrad mathematics schools. Unity must not be equal to identity.

I would like to repeat. I am not opposed to integration, but the systems are different. Let's see from the government's point of view, who is benefiting from this integration. Individuals naturally benefit. I, as a young specialist, would like to work abroad. But isn't it a mere political demagoguery since the problem of a visa free space turned out to be more difficult? It is possible to make any kind of decision, but to refuse a visa. Maybe this is a place to start as it was done between Germany and Russia when academics and students can visit both countries without any visas. But what does the Bologna process have to do with it? It is naive to think that anyone would go to politically-unstable Russia. I think that the Bologna process will actually result in a decrease of the number of students visiting Russia.

Russia needs something else, since it is in a rather different situation. We need new scientific and technological breakthroughs to compete, so within the framework of top-priority academic schools we need a rigid policy including the area of training specialists. We need measures that preserve the freedom of choice of the future occupation, but at the same time they should influence this choice based on the demands of the state, otherwise one day we will wake up in a country of lawyers and economists.

The West European society is rather critical about the Bologna convention, but the mechanism has been launched. There is hope that there will be enough common sense. I hold that the ideas of the convention are implemented to a full extent not in the top European universities, but in the second-rate ones.

I would like to say that after some rigid criticism coming from Moscow State University, some improvements have been made. Today all of them are taken for

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

granted whereas 2–3 years ago when a simplified version of joining the process was proposed, all of the improvements could have been overlooked?

Bologna Adaptation: Local Experiences in Lund

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Introduction

I have been asked to deliver some personal views on the experiences in Lund of adapting the Bologna process. My perspective is essentially from the department level in a decentralized university system where departments are rather independent in academic matters. My experience of the Bologna process comes from being active in working groups at the department as well as faculty level but also from a background of being the international coordinator of the department since 1995.

As a teacher, I often teach about administrative reforms. I have now been provided with a new case to use in classes. The Bologna process is a wonderful illustration of the difficulties involved in efforts of changing organizational structures, cultures and processes. There are also interesting lessons to draw from comparative studies concerning the implementation.

Sweden and the Bologna Process

Sweden has been a laggard in introducing the reform. We have accomplished consensus by proposing changes while keeping the old structure alive for a foreseeable future. This, to my mind, reflects the different interests of traditional universities and the new university colleges that have developed rapidly as a result of the policy of increasing the proportion of young people studying at higher education institutions.

There has been an uncertainty for a long time whether Sweden would go for the 3+2+3 formula. The solution is that we do, while still keeping the old “Magister” degree (4 years). The latter is important for smaller university colleges since they could not count on having the right to issue Master degrees without special permission from the National Agency for Higher Education. Also joint degrees are not allowed by law even if some Swedish universities actually take part in cooperation activities involving this kind of degree!

On the other hand some parts of the Bologna reforms are already implemented beforehand. Sweden has a module system with fixed credits. Many departments have previous experience with the ECTS credit system, giving grades according to this system to foreign exchange students. (This includes our department in Lund). At the Bachelor level of Political Science, where courses are given in English, 50 out of 120 students are, now in the spring of 2007, exchange students.

Consequences of the Bologna Process at the Department Level

The Bologna process has led to an intense activity at all departments at Lund University. The reform demands cooperation in all directions:

- within the department
- with other departments in the faculty
- with other faculties at our university
- with other Swedish departments
- with departments/faculties in other countries

From a department perspective Bologna also means centralization. Decisions are moved to higher levels of university administration. Detailed course descriptions are reviewed by the faculty, the vice-chancellor's office decides which programs should be offered. In a university that has been much decentralized this is, to put it mildly, not met with enthusiasm among all teachers. Possibly this tendency has come to stay. Contributing to this prediction is not least ideas of quality assurance and auditing. In this respect we are moving in the direction of becoming a "normal" European (read: French!) university: hierarchically structured and strictly governed by excessive rules.

If Bologna "stream-lining" also means reduced differences in teaching styles and attitudes towards students remains to be seen. In the worst case, according to the experience of some students, this would mean replacing independent, critical studies with repeating "facts" delivered by a God-like professor.

The development has its bright points, though, for instance the focus on employability and mobility during studies and after obtaining degrees. Already now 35 percent of the students at Lund University with Political Science as a major are having courses at foreign universities as part of their degree.

The Question of Language of Instruction

The Bologna process moves the language question¹⁸ to the fore. The dominance of English might be seen as a problem in itself: cultural hegemony is against the European spirit. New Master programs will predominantly be taught in English. The literature will give Anglo-Saxon perspectives to the detriment of other outlooks on the world and current problems in it. The intellectual level of discussions that are being held in a non-native language could also be questioned. Could the quality of discussions in seminars be high enough if many students hesitate to make their voice heard while searching for the exact phrases?

However, there is really no alternative for a small language area as Sweden. When we entered the exchange programs like Erasmus we were forced to introduce courses in English and in that way we have achieved a kind of advantage when we now think of developing advanced level courses. The other side of the coin is that our students lack knowledge of French, German etc. Just to take an example, the number of Swedish students with a proficiency in German is decreasing radically. This means increasing problems in

¹⁸ This section relies on my contribution to a report about Erasmus experiences (Erkki Berndtson (ed): *Improving Faculty and Student Mobility Conditions in Europe*, Budapest: epsNet, June 2005 ISBN 963-86790-0-X)

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

sending students to Germany. If other countries do not follow suit and introduce teaching in English, our range of possible partners will diminish accordingly.

New Activities as a Result of the Bologna Process

What kinds of actions does our department engage in as a result of the Bologna process then? The department takes for instance part in developing three new trans-disciplinary Master programs at the faculty level; on Global Studies, Development Studies and Gender Studies. This has been an interesting exercise in creating new patterns of cooperation among departments and individual teachers. New efforts have also been necessary to ensure that the different departments of Political Science in Sweden coordinate their efforts in order to ensure the possibility of moving between universities without unnecessary administrative obstacles.

The incentives for finding international partners have increased in order to fill extended programs with a qualified content. Consequently the department has adopted a new policy of internationalization, identifying strategic partners to develop cooperation beyond the mere exchange of students. Joint programs, teacher exchange, course development, new research activities that could influence teaching content; the list of possible activities is long. So, while still acknowledging a state of confusion, uncertainty and parallel systems, the Bologna process could also give rise to, in the words of Charles Dickens, great expectations.

PART V
The Next Steps

PhD (Post Graduate)-training and the Bologna Process: Taking Stock of Different Best Practices in the Baltic Sea Area

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Introduction: Definition of Post Graduate Training (PGT)

Between 2000 and 2003, I went through PhD-training of two different countries, Sweden and Germany. I was a member of a German graduate school, *Graduiertenkolleg*, at the University of Greifswald and at the same time I conducted my doctoral studies at the university of Lund/Sweden. In 2003, I defended my thesis at Lund University and was subsequently recruited by the Ministry of Culture, Education and Science of the German federal state Mecklenburg-Vorpommern in order to carry out a survey on possible cooperation in the field of PhD-training with the Nordic countries. I finished this task in June 2004 and was subsequently engaged by NorFA (now NordForsk) in order to conduct a survey on PhD-training in the Nordic-Baltic Area. Due to my position as research secretary (with the responsibility of research and research training) at the University of Kalmar/Sweden in 2005, the survey has been delayed but it was possible to round up the work with a final version presented in March 2006 that recently was published in a first draft version.¹⁹

My personal experience of crossing borders made me think a lot about the preconditions of PhD-training and how deeply rooted in the scientific culture of the respective country our concepts of what it means to obtain a doctoral degree are. From a German point of view, Swedish doctoral training by many was seen as a quick and overregulated way to obtain a doctoral “light”-degree, “only” a PhD, as some expressed. “Real” research was to be carried out during indefinite time and under undefined conditions on the side of the “doctorandus”, his/her relation to the “Doktorvater/-mutter” being the most important element of training and quality assurance. From a Swedish point of view, I saw many elements of the creation of German “real” Dr. phil. as a hoax. For me it was absurd that a person could sit for ten or fifteen years without even having presented a single line of the dissertation to her/his fellow PhD-students, that the final dissertation was not defended at a public disputation, and that it was not even printed in a publicly accessible (draft) version. Whose doctoral training is heavier? Whose research performs better? If we remain within the confined boxes of our respective national scientific cultures, there is a risk to find very few compatible elements. The Bologna process opens up for discussing the real foundations of what we mean with academic training and research.

There exists a large variation between different countries when it comes to defining the status of a person who is on her/his way to write a dissertation and to obtain a (in some countries even only a *first*) postgraduate degree. In some countries she/he is called PhD-

¹⁹ Önnersfors, Andreas: “PhD-/Post Graduate Training in the Nordic-Baltic Area” in *Exploring the North – papers in Scandinavian Culture and Society* 2006:1, Lund 2006.

student, doctoral student, doctorandus, candidate of science etc. Instead, the term *Post Graduate Training* is used in order to describe anything that happens between the advanced undergraduate degree that is required to be admitted to a postgraduate career and the postgraduate degree that internationally is recognised as a PhD-degree. Although many countries have not yet introduced a formal training leading to that postgraduate degree, the vast majority agrees that a student with a M.A.-degree or equivalent needs a certain amount of supervision and instruction in order to conduct original research and to obtain skills that prepare for a further academic career or a career outside academia.

PGT is on the borderline between original research and organised academic training, which might be the reason that it is more difficult to formalise its content compared to undergraduate studies. A solid base in the theory of science is needed in order to define convincingly the meaning of “original research”. There seems however to exist a general compromise that original research has to do with the individual ability to collect and analyse empirical data that in some sense have not been studied previously and with the goal to produce new and innovative knowledge, be it through a series of laboratory tests, sociological field work or the compilation of historical source material. Academic training on doctoral level is often defined as a transfer of skills needed to carry out research itself, to disseminate research, to receive educational skills in order to teach on university level or skills that relate to the demands of the labour market outside academia. Two systems of PGT exist in Europe: the “traditional” system is based on a relationship between the PhD-student and his supervisor and might be called a “master-apprentice-system”. The second system combines elements of personal supervision with formal training elements and is regulated in different ways in the examination structure of the respective country. Regardless of system, there are also demands for the social conditions of the PhD-student, such as wages and level of grants, access to social security such as parental leaves or unemployment compensation. The formal status of PhD-students at HEI:s is also a topic of growing interest.

The challenge for European integration in the field of PGT is to combine the best qualities of these two training-systems and to provide PhD-students with a joint social standard and status at European universities.

PGT and the Bologna Process

One reason for the enhanced interest in PGT all around Europe is that the Bologna process also includes ideas about a “third cycle”. This development is quite recent and doctoral training was first mentioned in the Berlin Communiqué of 2003:

“Second cycle degrees should give access to doctoral studies. [...] Ministers consider it necessary to go beyond the present focus on two main cycles of higher education to include the doctoral level as the third cycle in the Bologna Process. They emphasise the importance of research and research training and the promotion of interdisciplinarity in maintaining and improving the quality of higher education and in enhancing the competitiveness of European higher education more generally. Ministers call for increased mobility at the doctoral and postdoctoral levels and encourage the institutions concerned to increase

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

their cooperation in doctoral studies and the training of young researchers. [...] Ministers state that networks at doctoral level should be given support to stimulate the development of an excellent European Higher Education Area.”²⁰

Two years later, on the occasion of the Bologna-follow-up conference in Norway, the Bergen Communiqué 2005 stated:

“[...] Doctoral level qualifications need to be fully aligned with the EHEA overarching framework for qualifications using the outcomes-based approach. The core component of doctoral training is the advancement of knowledge through original research. Considering the need for structured doctoral programmes and the need for transparent supervision and assessment, we note that the normal workload of the third cycle in most countries would correspond to 3 – 4 years full time. We urge universities to ensure that their doctoral programmes promote interdisciplinary training and the development of transferable skills, thus meeting the needs of the wider employment market. We need to achieve an overall increase in the numbers of doctoral candidates taking up research careers within the EHEA. We consider participants in third cycle programmes both as students and as early stage researchers. We charge the Bologna Follow-up Group with inviting the European University Association, together with other interested partners, to prepare a report under the responsibility of the Follow-up Group on the further development of the basic principles for doctoral programmes, to be presented to Ministers in [May] 2007 [in London, GB]. Overregulation of doctoral programmes must be avoided.” As a future goal, the Communiqué further set up “the awarding and recognition of joint degrees, including at the doctorate level”.²¹

Following the discussion on the European level, PGT will in the near future be included in the proposed examination structure and hence become a topic for coordination between the countries involved in the Bologna process, which includes Sweden, Estonia, Finland and Russia:

3 (B.A.) + 2 (M.A.) + 3(-4) (PhD) + 2 (postdoc)

Three years of undergraduate training will lead to a B.A.-degree, followed by two years of advanced training for a M.A.-degree. Three of four years of further post-graduate-training are completed with a PhD. As a “fourth cycle” two years of postdoctoral research, preferably abroad in order to collect international experience, will follow for those interested in a further academic career.

The growing interest in PGT on European level is reflected by the establishment of a joint-European doctoral organisation, Eurodoc (www.eurodoc.net). It takes the form of a federation of national associations of Ph.D. candidates and young researchers.

²⁰ www.bologna-berlin2003.de

²¹ www.bologna-bergen2005.no

Eurodoc's objectives are:

- To represent doctoral candidates and junior researchers at the European level in matters of education, research, and professional development of their careers.
- To advance the quality of doctoral programmes and the standards of research activity in Europe.
- To promote the circulation of information on issues regarding young researchers; organize events, take part in debates and assist in the elaboration of policies about Higher Education and Research in Europe.
- To establish and promote co-operation between national associations representing doctoral candidates and junior researchers within Europe.

Eurodoc annually arranges conferences on topics related to the situation of PhD-students and young researchers in Europe. One main ingredient of these conferences is the presentation of national surveys on the state of PGT. These national surveys are then compiled to a joint survey that is subsequently published on the Eurodoc-website. The latest Eurodoc-conference took place in December 2006 in Nice/France. According to the information available on the Eurodoc-website, Finland has no doctoral organisation taking part in the cooperation.

Short Overview over PGT in Estonia, Finland, Russia and Sweden

Statistics and other information on research training in Estonia, Finland and Sweden is published continuously updated on www.nifustep.no/norsk/innhold/statistikk/norbal.

PGT in *Estonia* has rapidly developed since the 1990-ies. In 1999, a major curriculum reform was launched that prepared both undergraduate and postgraduate studies well to the ambitions of the Bologna process. This includes the application of credits according to ECTS-standards as well as formal training elements besides the promotion of original research. In terms of the organization of studies, the Ministry of Education and Research (MoER) is preparing a new initiative, the launch of doctoral schools in broad research fields, which function as a consortium to concentrate resources between different higher education and research institutions, linking also foreign institutions and industry. The aim is to increase the efficiency of PhD training and lower the age of PhD graduates.²²

Concerning PGT in *Finland*, the Academy of Finland in 2003 stated that training of young researchers also should provide competence needed for career paths outside academia. Thus, a broad multidisciplinary approach should be integrated within PhD-programmes. This implies that post-graduate *training* is considered the standard case. Finland is known since 1995 for its investment in an extensive graduate school system. In 2003, no less than 114 graduate schools were funded by the Ministry of Education.²³ Finnish academic traditions concerning PGT are influenced by its Swedish origin and the systems are very similar.

²² For fresh information, see eurodoc.net/file/2005EurodocReport_Estonia.pdf. Önnersfors, op.cit. p. 33-40.

²³ Önnersfors, op.cit. 41-49.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Russian PGT is conducted according to a sophisticated model with two post-graduate degrees (“Kandidat Nauk” and “Doktor Nauk”, which might be compared to the Swedish “licentiat” and “doktor” or the German “Doktor” and “Habilitation”) that most certainly ensures a high standard of the research carried out, but that only partially fits into the ideas of a third and final cycle that prepares for a future post-doctoral career.²⁴

PGT in *Sweden* has since the 1970-ies been divided into original research and training. Graduate education consists of 160 credits (1 credit corresponds to approximately 1.5 ECTS credit), which is a length of 4 years. This could be enhanced up to 5 years by complementing with department work such as e.g. teaching and supervision of thesis workers. Among the 160 credits there are doctoral courses that range up to 80 credits.²⁵

This very short survey shows that Sweden, Finland and Estonia have very similar systems of PGT where training elements and original research are well defined in terms of credits and time, and where content and intention of training programs are well delineated. This opens up for a trans-nationalisation of PGT and the integration of different scientific cultures into each other. The Russian preconditions of PGT are only partially comparable with the other countries. Whereas joint scientific standards of original research carried out on PhD-level most surely are easy to agree upon, it will be harder to establish a common training program that fits into the structure of all countries potentially involved in cooperation.

PGT: Remaining Challenges

One of the most important remaining challenges for trans-national cooperation in the field of PGT is to find a good balance between training elements and the conduct of original research without prolonging the time needed to obtain a final post-graduate degree that prepares either for a future intramural or extramural career. If countries interested in cooperation agree that elements of education obtained on M.A.-level can be counted as a substantial part of the formal training needed to obtain a PhD-degree, it would be easier to discuss what training elements really are needed to support the process of original research, dissemination of knowledge, teaching skills, skills needed within a non-academic career, etc.

At first sight it seems to be far too complicated to unite diverging concepts into cooperation. But the overarching challenge of the Bologna process – also on PhD-level – lies within the discussions of the foundations of academic teaching and scientific research. How much can a person develop scientifically within eight-nine years of studies and proofs of independent research? Is he/she then prepared for a future career within and outside academia? Within these discussions, it is often fruitless to compare systems and try to adapt them to each other. We need to come down to a level where we discuss basics and why we believe in them. Most surely, Sweden has one of the best systems of PGT in Europe. However in the normative texts passed, very little is said about what “original research”

²⁴ For fresh information, see eurodoc.net/file/2005EurodocReport_Russia.pdf. See also Önnersfors, op.cit. 120-135.

²⁵ For fresh information, see eurodoc.net/file/2005EurodocReport_Sweden.pdf. See also Önnersfors, op.cit. 136-157.

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

means and why it is important. It is easier to find regulations about the relationship between supervisor and PhD-student than explanations why this very personal transfer of skills can be helpful for a young researcher. Formal training is stressed as an important element of PGT, but its content is rarely explained nor is its usefulness contested. What are the real foundations of scientific innovation and how can PGT contribute to catalyze it?

Three Steps towards a Joint Degree – JTP, DDt, and JIMP Reflections Based on a Disciplinary Development Project

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My recent experience of the design and implementation of an international teaching program aiming to realize the Bologna goals derives from our Nordplus Neighbour network and my work as the coordinator of one of the pilot fields of the Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University Consortium (CBU). The CBU is a project launched by the Finnish Ministry of Education with the purpose of experimenting in the realization of the Bologna process goals in bilateral Finnish-Russian cooperation.²⁶ From June 2004 until August 2006, I coordinated the pilot project in International Relations. Our Nordplus Neighbour network “The European North and EU-Russian International Relations” has been in operation since 2004. Participating in the network are the universities of Tampere (coordinator), Lund, Tartu, and the Petrozavodsk and the Saint-Petersburg State universities. How these two projects, CBU and Nordplus Neighbour, have been mutually supportive for our enterprise is shortly explained in the first chapter. I will now explain the overall design in which what we have done so far is the first step.

Internationalization of higher education no longer means just increased interaction and mobility. It includes *structural development* of teaching programs and curricular contents, administrative structures and recognition of degrees. Structural development is a rocky road. Enthusiastic students, bright young people, have been our greatest source of strength. Students have been prepared to sacrifice time and money in order to gain the experience of international learning environments. There have been a great many bureaucratic problems, but these can always be overcome with inventive people. Our Russian partners, in particular, have been very inventive, and this attitude has been a great help in overcoming structural differences.

Our network has felt it important to take stock of the actual experience that has been gained from Bologna – “Bologna beyond Words” – and to discuss concrete steps through which we can contribute to the development of a European Higher Education Area (EHEA). Organizing mobility – such as the “twinning” concept in which 50 percent of studies are at a partner university – is only one element and a point where intricate questions begin. It is important to identify phases with clear goals in the structural

²⁶ See: <http://www.joensuu.fi/cbu/>

development process and to monitor their implementation. We have found that the greatest difficulties are not on the international and legal planes. When the legal frame for a Joint Degree does not yet exist, flexible solutions can be found within existing programs. Paradoxically, the greatest difficulties seem to be domestic, even parochial, and relate to departmental rivalries. International development projects envisaging a Joint Degree require long-term planning and monitoring of the results, a clear management structure, and clear mandates of who does what. If development projects in the name of Bologna stagnate to be no more than the institutions ordinarily do, the result, from the point of view of external resources, is duplication of national programs; something the Nordplus rules explicitly prohibit.

Sometimes there are already too many models and instructive guidelines. The model I would like to present is mundane; it grows from concrete experience and needs felt at the field level. The approach is pragmatic and not idealistic. It builds on practices and not the primacy of ideas.

The experimental program that the network developed together was named “The European North: Dynamics of EU-Russian International Relations”.²⁷ The experiences gained from this program have been discussed in Part I of this report. The partners in the program have very different degree structures – in Sweden the MA is still one year, in contrast to the two years of the other partner universities. In Petrozavodsk the degree is the Russian Specialist Degree in International Relations (5 years), instead of the two-tier (BA and MA) that the Bologna process endorses. These structural differences did not hinder the operation of our Joint Teaching Program, and the goal has been, precisely, to find solutions to these structural differences during the next phases of the experimental project. My presentation deals with the lessons and instructive ideas gained from the joint teaching project. This project has not yet been completed, and this presentation in no way makes an assessment of the results of the project. Instead, I seek to abstract some instructive guidelines and something like a model from the experience I have shared.

Launching a program begins with an outline of the mission, the target group, the program and teaching profile, and the structure of the program. The key points of our mission can be outlined in the following way:

(i) *Developing the academic field of study*

International Relations is an appropriate academic field for an experiment in the realization of the Bologna process in the sense that the problems of understanding different national systems and academic and cultural traditions are central to the field. The possibilities of communication are an inherent problem in the subject of study.

We have departed from the notion that the subject area of the program, *the evolving EU-Russia relations in the European North and the Baltic Sea region*, is ideal for the process of mutual learning between the Nordic, Baltic and Russian communities of International Relations. The specific goal has been to develop International Relations (IR) studies in the participating institutions through a program of joint and mutually

²⁷ This program was designed for the period 2005-07 (two years, autumn-spring).

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

complementary study modules and courses and with emphasis on regional North European relevance. The program has been outlined to follow the *intellectual mode* of “European International Relations”. This means emphasis on the plurality and dialogue of academic and research traditions. Especially in the Baltic countries and in Russia the field is in a process of dynamic development, and this situation creates a fruitful point of departure for a dialogue of traditions. From the point of view of international policies, the expectation is that the field of study can contribute with analyzes and policy-relevant knowledge and thereby redeem its third sector tasks.

(ii) *Structural development towards Joint Degree*

During the first phase, the program is a Joint International Teaching Program, which is offered by an international network of partner institutions and individual teachers. Student admissions and the organization of studies are according to national rules and regulations. The critical question is how to proceed from this level?

The model I propose consists of three steps towards organizing a Joint Degree – the Joint Teaching Program (JTP), the Double Degree with transformation studies (DDt), and the Joint International Master’s Program (JIMP). These steps are realized through a two-year teaching period each, and an implementation phase always builds on the results of a feasibility study (f) carried out during the previous phase (project cycle).

(f1)

→ JTP

(f2) → DDt

(f3) → JIMP

Thus, these steps are:

(A) 1st and 2nd year of project implementation, Joint International Teaching Program (JTP);

(B) 2nd and 3rd year, Double Degree with transformation studies (DDt). DDt is a *procedure to realize Joint Degree* at the first stage of its development;

(C) 4th and 5th year, Joint International (Master’s) Program. This phase starts the development of a *joint admissions platform*.

On these bases our goal, thirdly, is to add to the (iii) *specific competitive capabilities of the region within the larger framework of the European Higher Education Area*.

I will now explain the three phases. The launch of a Joint International Teaching Program (phase A) is preceded by a feasibility study phase (f1), which produces a plan of implementation. The term for the first phase is Joint International *Teaching* Program, because during this phase student admissions and studies take place according to national

rules and regulations, and the degree certificate is a national certificate only. The student's participation in the Joint Teaching Program can be confirmed in a separate program certificate and, when possible, also mentioned in the actual degree certificate.

During this phase, the main tasks include developing *structural compatibility of curricular structures and contents, defining the joint program components and developing a joint credits transfer system*. A Joint Teaching Program is not possible without a working credits transfer system. In our program, we have sought to use the same assessment-unit, the ECTS-point counted as a number of hours. In the Russian universities, this coincided with the introduction of the credits system. Initially, the practices of all partner institutions differed a lot from each other.

In outlining the *program content*, one of the first questions is *for whom is the Program designed?* Our answer, which was developed in the CBU context, is: The program offers students of International Relations at the master's level a unique opportunity to study in an international environment and to benefit from a development project which in the European North contributes to the European Higher Education Area in the spirit of the Bologna goals and guidelines. The program is recommended for students with career plans in the areas of foreign and regional policy, international governmental and non-governmental organization, as well as business, education and journalism. The Joint Teaching Program provides basic academic training in International Relations and area expertise in the Nordic and Baltic Regions with emphasis on EU-Russia relations.

Secondly, there is a question about the *specific program profile*. In our outline, this is to study the political, economic and cultural dynamics of the Nordic-Baltic region in relation to and against the background of the development of EU-Russia and Russian-European relations. The outline of the Program content departs from the recognition that the eastern enlargements of the EU and NATO have highlighted change in Russian-European relations, which are the primary context for the political and economic dynamics in the Baltic Sea and Nordic areas and affect foreign and security policies in the whole region. In the European North, Russia and Sweden are in a historical perspective mutually competing regional powers, and Finland and Estonia, in mutually divergent ways, constitute a rim area of contest and cooperation between "East" and "West". This offers a unique point of departure for the study of continuity and change in a historical perspective and with emphasis on the implications of present-day integration processes on the dynamics of power, belonging and identity in the region.

Our goal has been to develop International Relations with a strong regional relevance. A strong basis in the discipline is needed. We did not wish the "smörgåsbord" which, according to our Russian colleagues, is the current situation in Europe and threatens to ruin the quality of the Russian educational system.²⁸

Furthermore, *what is the teaching profile?* In our outline, it concentrates on seeking to enhance intercultural understanding and awareness of the history and identities in the region and, most importantly for academic study, to train the analytical eye for seeing interfaces and possibilities of dialogue in conflicting policy issues and practices. The pedagogical approach emphasizes interaction between academic study and policy practices.

²⁸ See Vladimir Mironov's chapter in this report.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Professionals of foreign policy and functional cooperation participate in the teaching as guest lecturers. During 2005-06 courses in joint sessions were organized at the University of Tartu (Estonia) and the Saint-Petersburg State University (Russia).

Who are the participating institutions? The Nordplus Neighbour network, as already mentioned, consists of the universities of Tampere, Lund, Tartu and the Saint-Petersburg and Petrozavodsk State universities; equalling five partners. Of these Lund and Tartu were not parts of the CBU. The Nordplus Neighbour network enabled their participation in the joint sessions and quality assurance activities. Partner institutions in the CBU International Relations pilot project are the University of Tampere (coordinating university), the Saint-Petersburg State University and the Petrozavodsk State University. In these universities, International Relations is studied as a major subject. Those participating universities in which International Relations can be studied as a minor subject through arrangements in the program were collaborative partner universities. In the CBU context, this category included the Saint-Petersburg State Polytechnical University and the University of Joensuu. In addition, we had teaching associates and, of course, invited guest lecturers and experts. Teaching associates in the CBU project included the two Nordplus Neighbour partners, i.e. the University of Tartu and the University of Lund, and also the Aleksanteri Institute at the University of Helsinki and The Baltic Institute of Finland (Tampere). Among the guest lecturers we had teachers from the European University at St. Petersburg (EUSP). Any other status was problematic, because the EUSP is a private university which, in spite of the recognized quality of its education, is not fully acknowledged within the Russian national system of education.

The criss-crossing Nordplus and CBU networks created a pool of teaching resources and extended the possibilities of mutual learning, making the students' learning environment immediately much more international than would have been the case in bilateral Finnish-Russian cooperation.

Program structure: The Joint Teaching Program (120 ECTS credit points, 2 academic years) consists of *compulsory subject studies*, a *Joint Portfolio* of elective courses, and other *elective courses including language studies* up to 10 ECTS. The compulsory subject studies create the necessary compatibility in the disciplinary subject area between the member institutions. In International Relations, the compulsory subject studies are typically theory and methodology courses, courses on disciplinary history, and include also substance-specific, program-tailored courses. The Joint Portfolio allows adjusting local teaching profiles with the joint program and offers optional courses to the students. The other elective courses are local course offerings registered annually for the program studies by the steering group of the subject consortium. These local courses are also available for visiting students in the program. The steering group of the subject consortium (see below), with the consent of the participating departments, provides instructions for the implementation of the Joint Portfolio studies and other electives.

The *integrated curriculum*, which forms the core of the Joint Program, can be for example 50 percent, i.e. 60 ECTS. The appendix to this paper presents an outline of an exemplary

EXPERIENCES OF NORDIC-BALTIC-RUSSIAN COOPERATION IN HIGHER EDUCATION

program. In this example the integrated curriculum consists of the compulsory Joint Program Courses and Schools (IR 1-3, 28 ECTS), Seminar II (IR 4b, 10 ECTS, visiting studies), and 22 ECTS chosen from the Joint Portfolio and locally organized elective courses if the latter are used for visiting studies.

In the design and implementation of the program, we encountered *structural feasibility problems*, i.e. incompatibilities in the length of studies and standard courses, in the number and contents of mandatory courses, and the free space available for optional courses. For example, at Russian universities students traditionally have a great number of class hours. The Russian students' yearly load of work hours is also much larger (Saturdays are work days). So, even if we had the same assessment-unit, the Russian students' workload could not be accommodated within the 120 ECTS of a master's program. They had, by their national law, 25 percent more hours (about 400 in number) than the Finnish students. This incompatibility was solved by dumping the extra amount of hours that the Russian educational system requires in a possible place in the teaching program, such as "MA thesis-related literature studies, group work". There were also *infrastructural problems*, such as lack of textbooks. The Russian teaching tradition, in comparison with ours, emphasizes lectures and oral exams. Finally, there were *administrative compatibility problems*, relating to who has authority in admissions, credit management and granting of degrees, etc.

The students will testify how we muddled through the implementation of the studies. Chosen to participate in the program were 12 students at the Saint-Petersburg State University, 7 students at the Petrozavodsk State University, and 3 students at the University of Tampere. In addition, Tartu sent 2 students to our Autumn School and 4 students from the University of Lund participated in our Autumn and Summer School. Later on, three students inquired whether they had the option of continuing their studies in the CBU program at Tampere. Unfortunately Tampere did not show any interest in the idea that these students apply for the right to study within the categories available. This was also the result with the question of 5 students from Tartu. Visiting studies (1 month) among the CBU partners could be arranged, but in this case the question was about intraprogram mobility.

The pilot program, which soon will come to its conclusion, is a joint teaching program. In this phase, the partners each choose their own students, and the students carry out their master's studies in accordance with local rules and procedures. The *joint international teaching program* is thus a *qualitative feature in the local education*. The students have the possibility to do their local (national) degree on the basis of the teaching and exams, including the master's thesis, offered in the joint teaching project, which throughout the project cycle is subject to transparent quality assessment. During this phase, the disciplinary goals are to increase the compatibility of teaching and curricular structures in the partner universities and to develop quality assurance.

On another level, the goal is to promote the mutual recognition of degrees. Following the two-year period of experimenting with the Joint Teaching Program, the structural goal is precisely this. In a situation where the *common legal frame is lacking*, there are different approaches to the problem:

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

- (1) National decisions about direct correspondence of degrees. This is the case when for example a master's degree from Sweden is recognized to provide eligibility for PhD studies in Finland.
- (2) The partner universities agree that the studies in the consortium are mutually corresponding and provide a separate international diploma as a sign of this recognition. A master's degree from the Saint-Petersburg State University is recognized as a master's degree at the University of Tampere if the first mentioned degree has been completed within the joint program of the consortium. This model has not received administrative-political support lately. However, the concept of Double Degree need not mean only this. The third option may be the most realistic.
- (3) The partner universities accept the studies in the joint program as studies required for their own degrees. On this basis the students, who have gained a degree from one partner university, can be enrolled at another partner university and gain the right to degree studies according to the rules and procedures of this second university. Here, Double Degree means that the student can gain a degree also from the second university, and do this on the basis of *additional studies*, which serve to abridge – *harmonize – differences between educational systems*. These additional studies transform one national degree to another. This gives rise to the term: transformation studies. The degree certificate makes transparent the structure of the second degree. This can be a *Joint Degree* certificate. For example, a student who has completed master's degree studies at Lund can apply to be enrolled at Tampere and gain a master's degree from this second university by doing the additional studies required. The student can use the joint studies of the joint program completed at the first university for the second degree, which is not just another master's degree but a *Joint Degree the composition of which is made transparent in the certificate*. The right to a Joint Degree can be given on an individual basis. At enrolment, the second university can register those studies it accepts to be in accordance with its own study requirements.

The Double Degree with transformation studies (DDt) is a procedure to realize Joint Degree in the situation in which the legal frame has not yet been developed. This arrangement increases mobility between the universities and in the labour market. It is also a means to solve problems resulting from differences in degree systems and structures. It provides the joint program with the added value it needs from the point of view of the student, and is a means to create a common and transparent space in higher education. For the student, it is an option. The content of transformation studies can be decided by the national institutions or in bilateral or multilateral agreements. From the point of view of this arrangement, it is desirable that the teaching program's joint studies cover a relatively large part of the credits required.

Developing the Joint Teaching Program requires that the partner institutions design a teaching platform appropriate for the purpose. Phases (A) and (B) are based on the fact that the students are recruited to the local programs and that the studies in the joint program are *transferred to the local platform* in proper order. The Joint International Master's Program (JIMP, phase C) includes regulations to the effect that the right to study in another partner university is given already when the students receive the right to study in the *university network*. They are immediately students in a consortium of universities. Joint admission procedures should not be very difficult to design. The national doctoral schools provide an example. The project organization, together with the member universities' national bodies, organizes a joint application process open for students already enrolled at the consortium's national universities. Students from outside the consortium countries can enter the program by simultaneously enrolling at a national university in one of the consortium countries. JIMP starts the third phase of development. This brings in a new set of questions which are already too hypothetical to be dealt with here.

All these questions are intricate and require legal and administrative expertise. I would like to present some ideas and invite the experts who are knowledgeable of the details to examine the possibilities they can offer.

Project Organization

This type of project is developed in a consortium of universities. The nature of the project as an enterprise in structural development requires the creation of consortium structures also *within* the partner universities. In the CBU context, we did the following: The Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Tampere appointed a Finnish-Russian project cooperation group consisting of the nominated responsible teachers of the program at the partner and collaborative partner universities. This body, which represents a university consortium on the specific program level (subject consortium), was outlined as the international planning and administrative unit of the project. In this model, the members of the subject consortium have a mandate provided by their respective universities to negotiate matters relating to the planning and implementation of the joint program. Administrative decisions, of course, are made in the proper bodies and according to the rules and procedures of each partner institution. The subject consortium has the status of a project organization under the auspices of faculty-level administration. The project status is not new to the universities. In practice similar models have already been working, for example, in externally funded research projects and doctoral schools.

The consortium coordinator of the program should have a clear mandate and sufficient resources to ensure consistency in long-term planning, program implementation, and the development of joint quality assurance procedures. A viable project structure requires all these pillars.

Each partner and collaborative partner university has a local working group for the local planning and implementation of the program.

Quality assurance task groups with the students' participation are set up at each partner and collaborative partner institution and at the joint international level.

THE BOLOGNA PROCESS ON THE GROUND

Instead of a conclusion, I would like to reemphasize just two points.

First, if Bologna is not only a label, it is important to identify phases of structural development and to monitor the implementation of the process. Development towards a Joint Degree requires a development project which in the universities involves the central administrations for both project design and management. When resources are provided without management the result may well be duplication of national programs.

Second, I have already argued that harmonization of disciplinary practices and increasing the recognition of degrees in order to create an open and transparent education space is not synonymous with the unification of the contents of study. Vice versa, harmonization of structures (the *form* of studies) can increase the diversity of *contents*. This, as such, is not our educational goal. Rather, the goal is to rehearse the students in dialogue in the deeper sense of epistemic attitudes and academic traditions, and to train their analytical eye and research skills. Here, we enter another field – the question of the benefits and problems of international learning environments.

APPENDIX I: Draft program prepared by Helena Rytövuori-Apunen and Corinna Wolff (University of Tampere) in cooperation with the CBU Development Unit, University of Joensuu, March 2006. Names of lecturers and lecture outlines provided by the lecturers have been deleted.

Program title: *European and Russian International Relations*

The program offers students of International Relations a unique opportunity to study in an international environment and to benefit from a joint project which contributes to the European Higher Education Area in the spirit of the Bologna goals and guidelines. The program is recommended for students with career plans in the areas of foreign and regional policy, international governmental and non-governmental organization, as well as business, education and journalism. The program provides basic academic training in International Relations and area expertise in the Nordic and Baltic Regions with emphasis on EU-Russia relations.

The specific focus of the program is to study the political, economic and cultural dynamics of the Nordic-Baltic region in relation to and against the background of the development of EU-Russia and Russian-European relations. The outline of the program content departs from the recognition that the eastern enlargements of the EU and NATO have highlighted change in Russian-European relations, which are the primary context for the political and economic dynamics in the Baltic Sea and Nordic areas and affect foreign and security policies in the whole region. The importance of relationships with Russia is recognized in multilateral European cooperation and the politics of the European powers. In the European North, the interplay of multi- and bilateral policies reproduces historical constructions of the Baltic Sea region as a rim area of contest and cooperation between competing interest blocks or between “East” and “West”. The basic idea of the program is to study continuity and change in a historical perspective and with emphasis on the implications of present-day integration processes on the dynamics of power, belonging and identity in the region. European and Russian International Relations looks at the interfaces of policies and of effective history, including disciplinary and cultural traditions.

Integrated curriculum

The integrated curriculum (minimum 60 ECTS) consists of the compulsory Joint Program Courses and Schools (IR 1-3, 28 ECTS), Seminar II (IR 4b, 10 ECTS, visiting studies), and 22 ECTS chosen from the Joint Portfolio and locally organized elective courses if the latter are used for visiting studies.

Visiting studies across the border

Visiting studies are at least 3 months and a minimum of 24 ECTS. Visiting studies are agreed on in the student’s individual study plan and between the program coordinators of the sending and the receiving universities. Visiting studies regularly include Seminar II (10 ECTS) and a chosen number of locally organized electives. It is advisable that the regional and university standard courses in International Relations at the Russian universities are available for visiting Finnish students as electives. Language studies can be included in visiting studies.

		ECTS
Draft Joint Master's Degree Program, two-year cycle of implementation, total credits		120
COMPULSORY SUBJECT STUDIES IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS (IR)		92
IR 1 Joint Program Courses (teacher mobility, pre-course through e-platform)		- 8
1a	The European North: Historical Geopolitics and International Institutional Dynamics (2 ECTS) Lectures, workshop (incl. paper with literature studies)	
1b	Russian Policies on the European North (2 ECTS) Lectures, workshop (incl. paper with literature studies)	
1c	Russia-EU: Understanding Conflict and the Limits of Integration (2 ECTS) Lectures, workshop (incl. paper with literature studies)	
1d	Finnish-Soviet/Russian Relationships: Transition Discourses from the Cold War to the Present (2 ECTS) Lectures, workshop (incl. paper with literature studies)	
IR 2 Joint Autumn School: IR Research Orientations		- 10
	Lectures in joint sessions 24 h, workshop sessions, thematic paper and book examinations	
	Several lecturers. The lectures consist of the following parts:	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual History of International Relations as the framework of analysis and interpretation • The Great European Issue of Integration • A Science of Multiple Worlds • Neorealism, the “neo-neo” Debate, and Constructivist Approaches to International Anarchy • The Problematics of Exclusion and Dissent in Critical IR: The Emergence and Settlement of Dissident Approaches • The Re-Turn of Culture and Community in International Relations • The Promise of Pragmatism in International Relations 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concluding Discussion: The State of the Discipline and Future Challenges 	
IR 3 Joint Summer School: Introduction to Research Methods in IR		- 10
	<p>Lectures in joint sessions 26 h, workshop sessions, practicum paper, book examinations</p> <p>Several lecturers. Lecture topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research Design and Process • Epistemic Grounds of Research – Main Orientations • Comparative Politics and Model-Building • Behavioralist Research • Discourse Analysis and Theory • Textual Analysis and Hermeneutical Interpretation • Rhetoric and Speech Act Theory in the Study of Policy Discourses • Semiotic Studies in International Relations • Ethnographic Research in Current Russian Social and Political Science • Qualitative Interviewing • Quantitative Methods for the Social Scientist • The Qualitative/Quantitative Divide Revisited 	
IR 4a Thesis Seminar I (home university)		- 10
IR 4b Thesis Seminar II (visiting studies)		- 10
IR 5 Work placement/internship		- 4
IR 6 Master's thesis		- 40
ELECTIVES		28
IR 7 Joint Portfolio of courses available for optional studies		-12-14
7a	<p>Including:</p> <p>Course on International Project Management (Joint Summer School course, 1 ECTS), lectures 12 h and book examination</p> <p>Lecturers: Experts of The Baltic Institute of Finland</p> <p>Topics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept and definition of a project • Advantages of project work; Projects as tools of development • PCM, from conception to implementation: Professional project management 	

	<p>vocabulary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project planning: objective-centred and problem-based; Areas of expertise in project management; Project organization • Planning analyses: SWOT-analysis, problem analysis; Project plan and budget • Implementation; Monitoring and Evaluation; Reporting; Closure • Exploitation and distribution of results • The Baltic Sea Region and its cooperation structures; financing instruments, conditions and special features in management of international projects in the region 	
7b	North-West Russia on the Border of the European Union (Joint Summer School Course, 2 ECTS), lectures 9 h and an essay/a research paper	
7c	Continuity and Change in Foreign Policy Discourses in the European North (1 ECTS, optional paper 1-2 ECTS), lectures 20 h Lecturers: SPBSU, Lund, Tampere	
7d	Identity and Foreign Policy: Russia, Europe and the West (2 ECTS), 22 h (organized in cooperation with the University of Helsinki)	
7e	The Politics of the Putin Presidency (2 ECTS) Lecturer: PetrSU	
7f	How Do Concepts Fare? Intellectual History of Concepts in Russian and Finnish Politics (2 ECTS) Lecturers: Russian Studies Program at the University of Tampere	
7g	Cross-Border Media Studies (2 ECTS) Lecturers: Tampere, with Russian guest lecturers	
Other elective courses registered annually for IR by the subject consortium		-14-16
Language studies (elective) Russian, Nordic languages, and advanced English (academic communication).		-0 -10

Organization of courses, seminars and thesis instruction

Mobility is implemented through organizing courses at different locations and through visiting studies:

- *Joint Autumn School* (7 days) at the University of Tampere, and *Joint Summer School* (14 days) at another partner university (lectures as joint sessions, workshop sessions and literature exams at the home university). Preparatory teaching for the joint lecture sessions is organized by means of e-learning platform.
- *Joint Program (compulsory) Courses* through teacher mobility
- *Master's Thesis Seminar II* : visiting studies (preparatory work at the home university)
- *Master's Thesis*: home university responsibility, second instructor and examiner from a partner university
- *Elective courses* include a Joint Portfolio (available for all students in the program) and local course offerings, including teacher exchange between the partner universities. The *home university compulsory courses* which are not part of the integrated curriculum can be offered as electives and thus made available for visiting studies in the program.

Mobility arrangements

As a principal, the subject consortium pays for all mobility expenses, while the hosting university is responsible for organizing the arrangements concerning travelling, accommodation, orientation etc. Visiting studies are arranged on the basis of bilateral agreements. If the costs for Russian language courses are not covered by the hosting Russian institution, the subject consortium may cover these expenses.

Forms and methods of student assessment

Forms of teaching include lectures, seminars, workshops, distance learning courses and the use of e-learning platforms, and practical training. E-learning is also used for assessing differences in the students' background knowledge (pre-course). In order to harmonize testing procedures, book examinations are organized in connection with the compulsory courses. Testing procedures include traditional teacher-assessment (book examinations, writing assignments, lecture diaries) and self-assessment such as learning diaries as well as peer assessment realized through the quality assurance teams.

The quality of teaching is assessed with procedures based on the creative benchmarking model, which is a process of comparative assessment leading to a creative process while recognizing the partners' different working cultures. Each member institution has a quality assurance team consisting of teachers and students. All the local teams meet during the program's joint sessions. The results of the QA teams work are reported on the program website. In the QA work related to the jointly organized courses, a procedure is used combining a learning diary, an evaluation form, and group discussions. Assessment with evaluation forms is a standard procedure for each course.

Assessment is carried out with a grading scale reaching from 1 (sufficient) to 5 (excellent). Grades are converted to local standards when necessary. Exams and re-take exams are organized according to the accepted procedures of each university and as agreed on in the steering group of the subject

consortium. Alternative ways of taking courses are arranged on the basis of individual agreements and following the guidelines of the steering group of the subject consortium. The main function of any alternative ways is to create a margin of flexibility for completing visiting studies. When necessary for compelling reasons, compensating teaching for the compulsory courses is arranged by the responsible teacher of the course through an e-learning platform and by using a combination of instruction, written assignments, and book examinations. E-learning platforms for the courses are maintained by the coordinating university.

Student guidance

Each student agrees on an individual study plan with the program administration at the home university during the first semester. The individual study plans of the students are confirmed by the steering group of the subject consortium. Each university appoints a tutor teacher who is a member of the local quality assurance team.

APPENDIX II: Program. Conference on “Bologna beyond Words: Taking Stock of the Experience of ‘The European North and EU-Russian International Relations’”, Lund 4th-5th December 2006.

<i>Day/Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>
4 December 2006	
Afternoon	Arrival
6 pm-	Dinner at the Pillar Hall, University Main Building. Opening addresses by Head of Department of Political Science, Prof. Christer Jönsson, Head of Centre for European Studies, Prof. Barbara Törnquist-Plewa, and Project Coordinator at Lund, Prof. Bo Petersson
5 December 2006	
9-9.45 am	Bologna adaptation: local experiences (Lund, Tartu)
9.45-10.10	The Finnish-Russian Cross-Border University CBU; an introduction (Joensuu)
10.10-10.30	Joint programme design on the field-level. The network ‘The European North and EU-Russian International Relations’ (Tampere)
10.30-11.00	<i>Coffee break</i>
11.00-12.00	Local experiences of the programme: St. Petersburg, Petrozavodsk, Lund
12.00-13.30	<i>Lunch</i>
13.30-13.50	Discussing problems and prospects: Design and implementation of quality assurance (Tampere)
13.50-14.30	Students’ perspectives
14.30-15.15	Discussion: credits transfer, curriculum development, mobility (All)
15.15-15.45	<i>Coffee break</i>
15.45-16.45	Prospects for the future. Concluding discussion. (All)

APPENDIX III: List of Participants. Conference on “Bologna beyond Words: Taking Stock of the Experience of ‘The European North and EU-Russian International Relations’”, Lund 4th-5th December 2006.

<i>Name</i>	<i>University/Organisation</i>
Andrae, Cecilia	EU International Program Office, Stockholm
Bergström, Tomas	Associate Professor; Deputy Head of Department, Political Science, Lund University
Bragioni, Hugo	International division, Lund University
Billgren, Boel	International division, Lund University
Elgström, Ole	Professor, Political Science, Lund University
Haljasmäe, Jaanika	SOCRATES/ERASMUS Institutional Coordinator-□incoming and outgoing Erasmus students, University of Tartu
Hyppönen, Tarja	Coordinator, Baltic Sea Region Studies, University of Turku
Jönsson, Christer	Professor, Head of Department, Political Science, Lund University
Khudoley, Konstantin	Professor and Dean, Saint-Petersburg State University
Laine, Jussi	Research Amanuensis Karelian Institute, University of Joensuu
Lebedeva, Marina	Prof., Head of the Chair of World Politics Moscow State Institute of International Relations
Luukkanen, Arto	Professor, Director Finnish-Russian Cross Border University Joensuu
Makarycheva, Marina	Dr.; Petrozavodsk State University/Niznii Novgorod State University
Nalivaiko, Inese	Former visiting student at Lund University, Riga.
Önnerfors, Andreas	PostDoc, Cultural Studies, Lund University
Papina, Maria	Advanced student, University of Laapenranta (St. Petersburg)
Petersson, Bo	Professor, Political Science, Deputy Head of Centre for European Studies, Lund University
Prozorov, Sergei	Professor, Petrozavodsk State University
Rogozina, Anita	Advanced student, Petrozavodsk State University
Rytövuori-Apunen, Helena	Senior Research Fellow, University of Tampere/Tapri. June 2004-July 2006 Professor, Coordinator of the Finnish–Russian Cross-Border University CBU pilot project in International Relations.
Törnquist-Plewa, Barbara	Professor, Head of Centre for European Studies, Lund University

Uddman, Paula

Wolff, Corinna

Director of Studies, Political Science, Lund University

Researcher, University of Tampere; Finnish–Russian Cross-
Border University CBU Project Assistant and Quality Officer
Oct. 2005-Oct. 2006.