

RESOLUTION
of the International Conference of the Member States of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the European Union (EU) on cooperation in the field of higher professional education.

On the 17th-20th of November 2008, the **International Conference of the Member States of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the European Union (EU) on cooperation in the field of higher professional education** took place at Petrozavodsk State University, the Republic of Karelia, the Russian Federation.

The facilitators of the Conference were: the Federal Agency on Education, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Petrozavodsk State University (PetrSU). Participants from both educational and research institutions of the Russian cities Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Syktyvkar, Petrozavodsk, Kostomuksha, Sortavala and Apatity as well as participants from Finland, Sweden, and Norway took part in the conference. More than 40 educational and research institutions of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the RF, the Federal Agency on Education of the RF, the Council of the Federation and the State Duma of the RF, the European Commission Delegation to Russia, and the representatives of the regional public authorities of the Republic of Karelia and Murmansk Region took part in the conference.

The conference afforded the following opportunities to the participants:

- the exchange of international cooperation experience among the higher educational and research institutions;
- the receipt of up-to-date information on working donor programmes and funds;
- the discussion of new initiatives for sustainable development of the BEAR, through the broadening of bilateral and multilateral cooperation among the educational and research institutions of the Russian and European North, within the framework of the Bologna Declaration.

The Conference Programme consisted of the Plenary Session (first day), 2 Thematic Sections (second day), and 3 Round Tables (third day). The third day of the conference was devoted to the exchange of international cooperation experience and to the discussion of specific project ideas, proposals, and initiatives for strengthening cooperation in the future.

Generally, more than 400 people participated in the conference – 114 registered participants, about 50 employees of educational and research organisations of Petrozavodsk and more than 240 students from different faculties of Petrozavodsk State University.

In general 32 reports were heard at the conference. Most of them will be posted on the web-page: bearptz.petrso.ru as well as other conference documents and materials after the conference.

The participants of the conference examined the following questions during the reports and round table discussions:

1. The utilisation of BEAC capabilities at the universities of Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Finland in development of pilot projects supporting academic mobility and joint educational and research projects within the frameworks of various bilateral and multilateral programmes: *Tempus, Erasmus Mundus, Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window, the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI), the Nordic Council of Ministers, Norway – Russia Cooperation Programme, the Finnish programmes FIRST and CIMO, and the Russian Presidential Scholarship Programme for studying abroad.*
2. The realisation of the concepts of distance learning for the BEAR universities network, namely: a) the system of distance university learning – the basis of the process of educational provision; b) the analysis of the effectiveness of distance learning in the BEAR institutions; c) the methodology of content formation in distance learning in the BEAR Universities Network

The conference participants, having integrated the experience of cooperation and familiarized themselves with the main achievements and prospects of international work development, recommend the following joint actions:

- to resume the activity of the BEAC Joint Working Group on Education and Research;
- to stimulate the creation of consortiums and networks of educational and research institutions on the basis of multilateral agreements, which allow to submit the applications and henceforth to realize important network projects with the assistance of Tempus IV (Joint Projects and Structural Measures), Erasmus Mundus (action 4) and other funding sources in the beginning of 2009;
- to apply for projects under Tempus IV Joint Projects (JP), taking into account the fact that the programme's priorities as far as curriculum development is concerned should also reflect local specific priorities, such as: ecology, tourism & services, sustainable spatial planning, and the protection of indigenous people;
- in order to deal with comparability of curricula at the BA level, universities should apply under Tempus IV Structural Measures (SC) projects. These types of projects enable the partner universities to concentrate on curricula to hammer out the differences between the

European and Russian education systems. To this end it requires the participation of regional and federal Russian ministries of education;

- to use more actively financial instruments such as: the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument - Cross-Border Cooperation (ENPI CBC), particularly the program of cross-border cooperation – ENPI Baltic Sea Region, the 7th Framework Program of the EU (FP7), various programs of Norwegian-Russian cooperation (through the Norwegian Barents Secretariat), the programs of the Nordic Council of Ministers, and other instruments which support the development of higher education and research;
- to make use of opportunities available in the sphere of academic mobility provided by such financial agencies and programmes as Erasmus Mundus (EU), CIMO, FIRST (Finland);
- to share the positive experience of Erasmus Mundus External Cooperation Window as well as of Erasmus Mundus action 2 and 4 gained by individual universities among the participating Russian universities (Petrozavodsk State University; Pomor State University and Arkhangelsk State Technical University; Murmansk State Classical, Pedagogical and Technical University), as well as with partner universities in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Denmark;
- to resume in particular the work of the consortium of universities of the Barents regions concerning EM action 4 “Development of International Marketing Network to Promote Barents Region Higher Education” (www.barentsedu.net), bearing in mind that there is a very informative website www.studybarents.net which could be used for this purpose;
- to recognise as successful participation in long-term cross-border projects such as the Finnish-Russian Cross Border University (FRCBU) and the Barents Cross Border University (BCBU). To promote this experience widely from the point of view of partner location;
- to recommend that the Federal Agency on Education include in the themes of the Federal Targeted Programme on Education Development the development of education and research in the BEAR on terms of co-financing from the BEAC member countries;
- to use distance learning (e-Learning) as an effective instrument in the interaction among the BEAR universities, and to develop cooperation in subject spheres in the field of distance learning;
- to work out the strategy of distance learning application, taking into consideration the experience of leading universities, and to improve and expand the distribution of information to university teachers on the strategy and tactics of distance learning information development;
- to create a unified collection of educational resources, and to use these resources in the development of distance courses;

- to carry out certification of the courses of study tests;
- to use both commercial and shareware platforms for network educational process for various target audiences;
- to create an association of educational institutions, which use the network platform WebCT to conduct educational affairs;
- to work out the regulatory documentation which depicts criteria for the assessment of distance educational resources quality, stipulates the evaluation procedure of distance learning, and determines the procedure of the author's and allied rights usage;
- to broaden the list of educational programs with the purpose of raising skill levels in the field of distance learning theory and practice;

The conference participants consider that the universities network existing now in BEAR is a basic structure for implementation of projects in the fields of: professional training, joint research, cultural exchange matters and introduction of modern technologies, which promotes sustainable development of the Region in globalization conditions.

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The conference participants establish the fact that the introduction and utilization of the conference outputs contribute to the development of human capital assets, to the increase of labour force competitive ability in the world market, and also contribute to the sustainable social and economic development of the BEAR and adjacent areas. The proposed actions will allow notable steps forward in the quality of specialists' training, university management in all directions, and the availability of modern knowledge to the populace of Northern Europe and Northern Russia.