

SCIENTIFIC LIFE



THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL SCIENCE IN THE BALTIC SEA REGION: RESEARCH PROJECTS AND NETWORKING

Based on the results of the *Development of political science: research projects and networking* international workshop
(June 2, 2010, Svetlogorsk)

On June 2, 2010, the *Development of political science: research projects and networking* international workshop was held in Svetlogorsk. It brought together researchers from Russia, Poland, and Lithuania. The status of workshop was emphasised by the presence of the presidents of national political science associations of the countries mentioned above.

The *Academic and research mobility as a vehicle of research development of universities* session featured a presentation by Prof. Andrei P. Klemeshev, rector of the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University, the chair of the Kaliningrad branch of the Russian Political Science Association. The presentation addressed the problem of university networking in the field of political science in particular and the humanities and social sciences in general.

Teresa Sasinska-Klas, president of the Polish Political Science Association, a professor of the Jagiellonian University in Krakow, stressed the need to adopt a single language of communication. In the course discussion on working languages, the participants settled on the Russian and English languages.

Olga Yu. Malinova, president of the Russian Political Science Association, called for closer cooperation between international experts emphasising the importance of interdisciplinary research within political sciences as well as the need to integrate the results of research of different scientific schools of thought.

Irmina Matonyte, president of the Lithuanian Political Science Association, drew attention to the regional differences in the tendencies of political science development as well as teaching political science at university.

Mikhail V. Ilyin, head of the Department of Comparative Political Science at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, stressed the importance of cooperation in the course of selecting information and materials for research between Russian and international universities, which would facilitate the development of science and the formation of a research information base.

Yelena Yu. Meleshkina, Associate Professor at the Department of Comparative Political Science at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, addressed the issue of using academic journals as an instrument of development of network research. The decision was reached that the workshop participants will invite their colleagues to publish their articles in the existing Russian and international journals and, on the long run, to consider the development of an own publishing programme focusing on the Baltic region studies. As a result of the discussion, it was decided to jointly develop a concept of a political terminology dictionary.

The *Networking in research* session was opened by Gennady M. Fedorov, the vice rector for research of the Immanuel Kant State University of Russia. He highlighted, as an example of a successful networking project the *Baltic Region* academic journal published by IKSUR in collaboration with Saint Petersburg State University.

In the course of the presentation of the Baltic region Institute, the workshop participants got acquainted with the regional studies centres: Irina Batorshina commented on the work of the Lithuanian studies centre, Igor Zhukovsky presented the Polish studies centre.

Timur R. Gareev, the vice rector for innovative development of IKSUR, acquainted the participants with the interdisciplinary humanities database emphasising the need to increase national academic and research mobility.

An important result of the workshop was the development of thematic and conceptual guidelines for the joint work of the three — Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian — professional associations. A decision was reached to shift the focus to sociopolitical process in the Baltic Sea region. The main topic of the research project was entitled *From conflicts to sociopolitical partnership: the experiences of integration of transforming political communities in the Baltic region*.

The principal target of the project is an attempt to identify the factors and mechanisms of transformation of sociopolitical conflicts into political relations structures in the conditions of sociopolitical transformation and the need to solve the problems related to sustainable development. The central problem is to identify disagreements are peculiar to individual countries and find the ways to reach a consensus and consolidate communities.

The workshop participants identified common research interests: territory, history, transitional processes in countries and the development of the post-communist space in the wide space. Focal point of research will become the conflicts that resulted from the following historical events

- 1) the 1917 revolution and the disintegration of the Russian Empire;
- 2) World War II;
- 3) the collapse of the communist bloc, the change of regimes in Eastern European countries.

The research project is meant to elucidate the transformation and modernisation processes in the countries as well as the mechanism of maintaining the stability of political dynamics. The project is expected to study the

influence exerted on the process of political institutionalisation of conflicts by the following conditions:

- national and regional traditions of interaction between political actors;
- the degree of difference in interests, the perception of conflicts by society;
- the readiness of elites to negotiate and reach a compromise;
- external influences;
- distribution of resources.

Following the proposal of Lithuanian colleagues, a decision was reached to devise a detailed plan of the research project, which would prove the competitiveness, necessity and consistency of the project in order to attract financing and participants.

The project is expected to focus on the efficacy of the following conflict resolution and transformation mechanisms:

- the mechanisms of external actors' influence;
- institutional design;
- the mechanisms of establishing borders and criteria of involvement of participants in the conflicts;
- geographical extent: the Baltic region and the adjacent territories: Russia, Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Estonia, Belarus.

The plans for the near future were formulated as follows:

- to discuss the conceptualisation and operationalisation of the project;
- to hold the *Sociopolitical conflicts and the consolidation of communities in the conditions of sociopolitical transformations* workshop;
- to plan specific empirical studies and choose adequate methods.

The Immanuel Kant State University of Russia and the Kaliningrad branch of RPSA operating on its premises, which have sufficient experience in coordinating international network research, were put forward as the platform and coordinator of trilateral cooperation

I. I. Zhukovsky, D. R. Nurdinova