



Winter was full of opportunities for transnational discussions: the Baltic Science Network transnational seminars in Copenhagen and Vilnius and the Baltic Science Day in St. Petersburg.

The Baltic Science Day was the opportunity for the CBSS not only to mark the establishment of Academy of Science in St. Petersburg in 1724, being one of the first academies of science in the Baltic Sea Region but to discuss higher education, science, research and innovation cooperation across the Baltic Sea Region.

One of the BSD panels «Baltic Sea Regionwide Cooperation in Higher Education» was chaired by the BSRUN Vice-president Dmitry Vasilenko. Among speakers there were Juha Ketolainen, Counsellor of Education, National Agency for Education (Finland); Kalervo Väänänen, Rector of the University of Turku; Kari Hyppönen, President of the BSRUN; Māris Kļaviņš, Chairman of the Senate of the University of Latvia; Vladimir Kutuzov, Chancellor of St. Petersburg State Electrotechnical University «LETI» and Igor Maksimtsev, Rector of the UNECON.

Panelists express their regrets that academic cooperation in the BSR that once was wide and two-

way road is now shrinking due to difficult political climate. Even if the “red light” is not on, actors are waiting for the “green light” while the role of universities is to maintain and intensify their partnerships to show politicians the proper way of doing things.

There is strong need to foster mobility with special focus to researchers, to investigate opportunities for short but intensive programs, to involve businesses in recognition of studies abroad, etc. To make regional mobility attractive for students and researchers universities need to persuade their governments to invest more national money in mobility process.

The scientific collaboration is vital for the BSR as cross-border cooperation is the only way to form joint competences, to decrease expenditures and to attract best research staff. Panelists agreed that the BSN is a good project to set focus on regional R&D policies to find the common fields of research (i.e. ecology, water, new technologies, etc.), to use jointly the research infrastructure and foster research mobility.

CBSS Conference Under the Icelandic Presidency «Baltic Sea Science Day: Implementing the CBSS Science, Research and Innovation Agenda»



On 8 February 2017, the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) held its first conference Baltic Sea Science Day, linked to the historic date of establishment of one of the first academies of science in the Baltic Sea Region in 1724 in St Petersburg. The conference was co-organised together with the Council of the Rectors of St. Petersburg and the Russian Academy of Science.

The conference dedicated to the CBSS Science, Research and Innovation Agenda gathered approximately 130 participants representing the leading universities and research centres based in the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), such as the University of Turku, DESY, European XFEL, Saint-Petersburg State University of Economics (UNECON), University of Latvia, University of Warsaw, as well as managing authorities responsible for science, research and innovation policies and cooperation programmes on the European, transnational and national levels, such as the European Commission's Directorate-General for Research

and Innovation, Russian Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, BONUS, Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education, Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science, Lithuanian Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA) and Swedish Institute.

During the Baltic Sea Science Day two cornerstone projects – Baltic Science Network (BSN) and Baltic TRAM were introduced to the wider Russian and international audiences. Moreover, the conference provided an appropriate space for the dialogue between different cooperation platforms of the BSR, experts and partner organisations, paving the way for future long-term cooperation in the field of science and innovation in the BSR, contributing to the visibility of the BSR as the leading science-research-innovation area both on a European and global scale.

[Source link](#)

Discussions in Vilnius: Getting One Step Closer to the Drafting of Transnational Researcher Mobility Tools



In December 2016, the Lithuanian Research and Higher Education Monitoring and Analysis Centre (MOSTA) launched a survey in order to map Baltic Sea Region - wide academic and researchers' mobility trends. The Baltic Science Network's transnational workshop in Vilnius "[Researchers' Mobility in the Baltic Sea Region: Where Do We Stand and How to Move Forward?](#)" served to introduce wider audiences to the results of this survey, as well as to learn about the mobility schemes existing in the Baltic Sea Region. The workshop also offered a more nuanced look at BSN national discussions and country-specific challenges, thus facilitating the mapping of potential solutions and how they could be addressed in a joint, transnationally coordinated manner.

The BSN workshop in Vilnius served as the concluding transnational meeting, prior to further elaboration of macro-regional researcher mobility tools. The workshop was combined with a visit to the rather recently expanded campus of Vilnius University, encompassing the [National Open Access Scholarly Communication and Information Centre](#) and the [Centre of Life Sciences](#). Also visited was the

recently inaugurated [National Centre of Physical and Technological Sciences](#). The new facilities serve as vivid examples of Lithuanian investments in advancing smart specialisation priorities. Lithuania is now taking targeted actions to create knowledge and technology transfer systems in R&D institutions with the view to making use of the R&D infrastructure in place in a more effective way. The latter actions are also supposed to foster R&D commercialisation, science and business cooperation, and to accelerate the development of the knowledge-intensive business sector.

For more information:

<http://www.baltic-science.org/index.php/news-and-press-releases/bsn-press-releases/32-discussions-in-vilnius-getting-one-step-closer-to-the-drafting-of-transnational-researcher-mobility-tools>

<http://www.mosta.lt/en/events/307-transnational-workshop-researchers-mobility-in-baltic-sea-region-where-do-we-stand-and-how-to-move-forward>

Baltic Leaders



*Leonids Ribickis, Academician Dr. habil. sc. ing.,
Rector of Riga Technical University*

- Please tell us how this all began?

As a rector of Riga Technical University I am now for the second term, and all my life I have been connected with this institution. Probably the beginnings of my path could be the student days of my own, when I entered the world of engineering sciences and discovered how close and exciting they are for me.

- Please describe five things in your university you are proud of

1. RTU is a modern internationally recognized university. It is the only multi-disciplinary technical university in Latvia and the largest university in the country.

2. RTU is the first university in Latvia, which has a campus in Ķīpsala, we have developed a comfortable and creative study environment housing with modern faculty buildings, the most modern laboratory building in the Baltics, Design Factory and one of the greenest campuses in Europe.

3. We have developed RTU Strategy which includes the most important policies for RTU development in the period till 2020. Strategy is based on three main goals – high quality study process, excellence in research, and sustainable innovation and commercialization.

4. RTU for the fifth year in a row has been ranked 1st in the rating of the universities and study programs highly recommended by the employers.

5. Finally, but not the least – I am proud of our talented students!

- What do you think are your greatest managerial achievements at university?

Our constant striving for excellence is the factor that best characterizes the quality of our work. In the course of our transformation from a classic academic university into a third generation university, we are promoting synergy between science, academic studies and valorization, educating and training engineers for the future. I am proud that we have a great management team, a well-developed strategy and we have achieved an excellent support from industry.

- Do you feel that your university stays Baltic when everyone wants to be European or Global?

RTU trademark is high quality internationally competitive engineering education based on more than a century-and-

a-half old academic traditions appropriate to meet new technological challenges. We are well informed about our roots and we keep the history and traditions in deep respect. That also means that we recognize the importance and value of our location in the world map and Baltics will always have an invariable meaning to our existence.

- Do you think that cross-border cooperation can be valuable? Any examples? What kind of international experience you feel important to absorb?

Due to a wide range of study programs implemented in English, in the last three years the number of international students at RTU has tripled, amounting to 11% from the total number of students. We believe that we can offer international knowledge and are happy of every foreigner in our university.

We also have a strong initiative – to maintain closer cooperation with different partners, and this is manifested by concrete cooperation agreements we have signed.

When you travel to partner universities what makes the most impression on you?

University should not just react at changes in society; it should be the driving force for changes! I personally am inspired from innovative changes universities adopt and implement.

What are your ambitions for the next year?

My ambitions for year 2017 would be as follows: to begin the second stage of the RTU Campus infrastructure and to successfully celebrate our 155 anniversary, in which framework this summer we will organize a unique graduation celebration ceremony for all our graduates of 2017.

What are three the most curious things in your office?

When you enter my office, you can get introduced with the development plan of RTU Campus, which symbolizes future plans and intentions. Another aspect in my office is that as universities one driving elements is internationalism, I am proud to represent and display different international symbols and presents from many countries. That gives a possibility to my guest get acquainted with new places and things. As well as I have displayed a large world map and a 3D version of the map of Latvia.

Announcement

AGROFORUM MARE BALTICUM 2017 «Agriculture for Rural Development» April 18-20, Tartu



Agriculture and forestry lead development in the rural regions and play a key role in the management of natural resources, particularly land and water, as well as their impacts on a range of different sectors: economic (income), social (employment, quality of life, health) and environmental (landscape, biodiversity, and carbon sequestration). These are in addition to their importance as providers of primary raw materials for the food and other industries (food, feed, fibre, bio-fuels, and timber).

However, the number of people living in rural regions has steadily declined in the past fifty years. The main cause is the dwindling of the number of jobs involved in agricultural trade as technologies and management practices have become more effective and machinery-led on the one hand, and more intensive and large-scale on the other, all of which has been spurred by globalisation. This has caused steady urbanisation, as available employment in the rural regions can be insufficient, leading to a reduction in available services and an increase in various social problems in the countryside that need to be tackled by local governments, entrepreneurs and researchers.

Most of the changes in European agriculture have been driven by the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, which aims to encourage viable rural communities, however the efficiency of its international regulations is the cause of ongoing debate. The main potential contribution of farming to rural development could be in terms of supporting employment, businesses, and environmental and cultural services. In peripheral regions, farming may

be necessary to ensure the economic and social infrastructure. Globally, the WTO advises that rural development policies should exploit the contribution of farming, both in terms of improving on-farm activities and supporting ancillary services, to secure sustainable development for rural areas. While intensification of agriculture has caused social issues, using more efficient machinery, management practices and high-yielding crops has in some regions had a positive effect on the environment. Primarily, the decline of conversion of forested areas into farmland, and higher incomes from agriculture, have allowed farmers to invest in more environmentally-friendly practices and more precise fertilising regimes, which in turn have reduced water pollution and soil degradation and improved local biodiversity. Adding diversified rural activities, rural tourism and improved risk management to this, hopefully with the best use of regional heterogeneity, some European rural regions have managed to turn their decline around. The success stories are very often based not on national support schemes but on supported grassroots initiatives involving local people who are using their regional strengths and divergence to develop and implement new innovative activities and supporting policies.

To discuss the issues above the Estonian University of Life Sciences, together with the Estonian Ministry of Rural Affairs, is bringing together the fifth international forum for all stakeholders involved in agricultural development – policy makers, entrepreneurs and scientists – from all of the Baltic Sea countries as well as from Eastern Partnership countries. The aim is to learn from each other and focus on the most pressing issues in agriculture and rural development. This is therefore an excellent platform to develop trade relations as well as transfer knowledge between the East and the West. The conference will take place from the 18th to 20th April 2017 in Tartu, Estonia and will finish with the opening of the biggest annual agricultural fair in the Baltic region, the Maameess 2017, which will be the 25th anniversary of this event.. The conference languages will be English and Russian, with simultaneous translation. While the participation is free, prior registration is compulsory.

Find out more at agroforum.emu.ee

Announcement

THE FIRST FOSTERC SEMINAR 2017 Fostering Competencies Development in Belarusian Higher Education



Date: 30th March 2017

Venue: National Institute for Higher Education, Moskovskaya, 15 Minsk, Belarus. Belarusian State University, Rector's Office, University Council Conference Hall, 5a, Bobruiskaya str.

Language: Translations services for Russian and English.

FOSTERC project is a structural project in the frames of the Erasmus+ Programme Capacity Building in Higher Education running from October 15th 2016 to October 14th 2019. Its main aim is to strengthen the use of innovative principles and approaches to teaching and learning in the Belarusian Higher Education Institutions for the improvement of graduates' learning outcomes. The Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV, Spain) represented by INGENIO is the responsible for coordination and project management and Dr. Adela García Aracil is the project coordinator.

In addition, the associate partners are:

- 3 European Universities: Lietuvos Edukologijos Universitetas (LEU – Lithuania), U. w Białystok (UwB – Poland), Turun Yliopisto (U.Turku – Finland)
- 8 Belarusian Universities: Belarusian State University (BSU); Yanka Kupala State U. of Grodno (YKSUG); Belarussian State Pedagogical University (BSPU); Francisk Skorina Gomel State University (GSU); Grodno State Agrarian University (GSAU); Polotsk State University (PSU); Brest State University (BrSU); Belarus State Economic University (BSEU)

- Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus
- National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE – Belarus)
- University Solutions, SL (USSL – Spain) After the KoM celebrated in Valencia (Spain), FOSTERC team will hold, the following 30th of March 2017, its first public seminar at the National Institute for Higher Education in Minsk (Belarus).

The overall aim of this seminar will be to discuss the current situation of reforms and needs of the Belarusian universities for the implementation of the Bologna process. External experts in defining and implementing learning outcomes and in pedagogical reforms will be invited to discuss and provide feedback in the use of innovative approaches in teaching and learning for the Higher Education System, and in specific for the Belarusian one. The seminar will be an excellent opportunity for different stakeholders to exchange knowledge and to network with experiences practitioners in similar area or in Belarus

The seminar will be organised by Belarusian State University (BSU) with the support of the National Institute for Higher Education (NIHE) and the Ministry of Education of the Republic of Belarus.

The Agenda of the seminar will be available at:

www.fosterc.bsu.by



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Member Profile

[WWW.
saimia.fi](http://WWW.saimia.fi)

Saimaa University of Applied Sciences



Saimaa University of Applied Sciences is an institute of higher education in Southeastern Finland in the cities of Lappeenranta and Imatra. We offer degrees in five fields and in 20 degree programmes.

We have about 3000 students, 200 of them being international degree students. The number of teachers and other personnel is about 260. We have two campuses, one in Lappeenranta and another in Imatra. The students from abroad who join us are welcomed as an integral part of the international atmosphere of our university of applied sciences, and they give us all an opportunity to learn how to work in a multicultural environment.

In our international co-operation, we place emphasis on Western Europe, Nordic countries, Russia and the new EU member states, as well as China and Malaysia in Asia. Many of our students take the opportunity to complement their studies by studying or working at one of our international partners.

We also have a lecturer exchange scheme whereby we offer our expertise to our international partners and in exchange, we benefit from some of the unique knowledge they have to offer. We are strongly committed to addressing the challenges of international research and development projects.

