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LAPIN YLIOPISTO



BARENTS
Cross Border University

UNIVERSITY of OULU
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Barents Cross-Border University (BCBU) seminar, Rectors' Forum and working group meetings

March 10 – 12, 2010

The rectors, vice-rectors and other representatives of the Finnish and Russian BCBU partner universities convened for the annual BCBU meetings in Rovaniemi, Finland hosted by the University of Lapland and University of Oulu. This time the meetings were preceded by a thematic seminar organized on March 10, 2010 discussing the role of the Higher Education Institutes (HEI) to help business meet challenges of the Barents region. At the moment, the Barents development programme is primarily of economical and business in nature, without any specified role for HEIs of the region. However, HEIs of the region are determined to participate in the development process and contribute by research, educational and societal interaction activities.

Keynote speakers including Rector Mauri Ylä-Kotola (Univ of Lapland), Rector Lauri Lajunen (Univ of Oulu), Region Mayor Esko Lotvonen (Regional Council of Lapland; Barents Regional Committee), Emeritus Professor Esko Rieppula (Univ of Lapland) and President Lars Kullerud (Univ of Arctic) commented on the given topic “The Role Institutions of Higher Education Have in Helping Business Meet the Challenges in the Barents Region” from the point of view of different actors of the region. The key issue in the presentations and following discussions was strengthening of the co-operation at all levels: among HEIs, between HEIs and local authorities, between HEIs and organizations of the Barents region, especially the University of Arctic, and between HEIs and business.

The seminar was followed by the BCBU Rectors' Forum, which concentrated on the challenges related to university reforms in both countries and its possible effects on co-operation. In addition, the Rectors discussed the achieved results and further steps of BCBU activities, including the possibility to extend the collaboration to cover also doctoral studies. This would also support and strengthen joint research activities. As a conclusion of the meeting, the Rectors signed the agreement on implementation of the BCBU Master's Degree Programme in Comparative Social Work.

On March 12, 2010, the working groups of BCBU Master's Degree Programmes gathered to discuss issues related to the implementation of individual Master's Degree Programmes and deciding on further actions. In addition, a meeting of the Finnish-Russian Joint Steering Committee of the Master's Degree Programmes in Comparative Social Work and Barents Environmental Engineering was organized for discussing the results of joint activities.

The next joint BCBU meeting will be the meeting of the vice-rectors, to be held in Murmansk during autumn 2010. The next Rectors' Forum will be organized in Oulu, during spring 2011.