

Dear Rector Valery Bryazin, Esteemed Rectors vice rectors and dear colleagues. I am very pleased to address such a prestigious audience. Unfortunately the invited representatives of Russian and Finnish Ministries of Education could not join us on this occasion in spite of their previous plans.

Cross Border University has ambiguous goals – and not only for participating universities but other actors as well. The national credibility and international profile of two national educational systems are being displayed to an international audience. This by itself is a challenge for executing members within our consortium.

During the last year we have developed a good base for the structure and content of our cross border university co-operation. We have had lot of working variations in the process. Now, it seems obviously, that we can not start the CBU in as wide form as we planned initially, and it is the time to focus our resources and efforts on the first practical step in CBU co-operation. This is creation of the working model for all our future international master programs. At the same time, we have to remember that this is only the first step and CBU will grow to include more master programs in the future.

The structural limits are present when institutions develop their working organization and curricula in accordance to Bologna Process in order to be a part of the European Higher Education area. To succeed our cross border university and its degrees have to follow the same structure of academic qualifications. The programs and related qualifications will have to be comparable and recognizable all of the European High education area. The Erasmus Mundus –master program may serve as a good model for the development of our program curricula.

Fortunately, a “CBU minimum” framework for Master’s programs in Finnish-Russian Barents Cross Border University has already been developed. The commitment to this structure is necessary. This issue will be taken up further by Kimmo Kuortti further in the afternoon.

Finding a common language and understanding in a multicultural project is often difficult and takes some time, but we have a good reason to look forward to our future:

The new framework agreement on Northern Dimension Policy by Russia and EU will be accepted in the end of November. Education is highly important on this co-operation agenda and cross border university will be one of its practical implications.

Thank you for your attention.

Paula Kankaanpää
Vice-Rector
University of Lapland