The Bologna Process and Its Impact on Higher Education at Russia's Margins: The Case of Kaliningrad

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Abstract: The Bologna process is no longer confined to western European countries; since 2003 it also embraces the Russian Federation. As early as 1999, Vladimir Putin declared the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad, wedged between Lithuania and Poland, as a potential pilot region for intensified cooperation between Russia and the EU. In this paper, we study whether the Bologna process has served to underpin these ambitions. With a view to the EU, we will ask to what extent the European Union has proffered a model or directly influenced the path for transformation of Kaliningrad's higher education system. We argue that a number of Kaliningrad-based actors in higher education have recognized the salience of European models and the need to work closely with partners from the EU, while Moscow only allows for marginal discretion in terms of Kaliningrad's higher educational policy.

Keywords: EU-Russia relations; higher education; Europeanization; Bologna process; Kaliningrad

Introduction

It has been alleged that Jean Monnet had pondered the role of education in integrating Europe when he purportedly remarked that 'if I was to begin again with Europe, I would have started with culture.'[1] However, EC/EU treaties have never equipped European institutions with a major role in educational policy.[2] Even in the run-up towards a Single Market in the 1980s, the European Commission avoided the contentiousness of legally-binding policy instruments, instead seeking 'A People's Europe' in which cultural integration would develop concurrently with economic integration (Corbett 2005; Maas 2007). Since then, the Commission has continued to foster a 'European dimension' to higher education without assuming a major role in educational policy as such, by interpreting educational policy as a means to master the impact of Europeanization and globalization.[3] Thus, higher education[4] and student mobility was increasingly recognized as an 'EU theme' at a time when the EU was forced to remodel its relations with Central and East European states following the reform movement and gradual dismantlement of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s and early 1990s.[5] Consequently, cooperation in the field of higher education was also extended to the newly independent states, with a strong emphasis on Russia as the legal successor of the Soviet Union. In this context, the Kaliningrad oblast[6] is a particular case, being at the cross-roads of Europe and Russia.

During the Cold War, the Kaliningrad region – the Soviet Union's most western territory – served as a military outpost of high strategic importance in the Baltic Sea. Following Lithuania's restoration of independence and the subsequent dismantlement of the Soviet Union in 1991, it has been geographically detached from the Russian mainland. It is technically an exclave 'wedged' between two EU member states, Poland and Lithuania. Given its geographic location, the compatibility of its system of higher education with the remote motherland versus its immediate EU neighbours is at stake. As the Bologna process is no longer confined to western European countries, the relationship between the different educational systems offers a test case of the exclave's potential to serve as the main opening of Russia towards Europe. With a view to the EU, we will ask to what extent the European Union has proffered a model or directly influenced the path for transformation of Kaliningrad's higher education system.

This paper examines higher education in the Russian exclave of Kaliningrad by focussing on the interplay of domestic, federal and external incentives, models and pressures. As we will show, higher education plays an important (and cross-cutting[7]) role in EU-Russia relations. First, the Bologna process will briefly be sketched out. Second, cooperation in higher education as a theme of EU-Russia relations will be explored. Third, the main lines of Russian reforms in this particular sector will be elucidated. Fourth, we will describe the impact of these reforms on the framework of higher education in Kaliningrad itself. Although Moscow only allows for marginal discretion in terms of Kaliningrad's higher educational policy, it seems that a number of actors in higher education have recognized the salience of European models and the need to work closely with partners from the EU.

The Bologna process

As the most significant and wide-ranging reform of higher education in Europe, the Bologna process was established after the ministers of education from France, Germany, Italy and the U.K. met at the Sorbonne in 1998 to discuss the future of

higher education in Europe. The following year, twenty-nine ministers of education from western European countries met in Bologna and signed a declaration to establish a European Higher Education Area by 2010. Informally, the process of harmonization of higher education standards had already started in 1988 when the 'Magna Charta Universitatum' was issued at a meeting of university rectors celebrating the 900th anniversary of the University of Bologna – a 'text of high moral value but no legal force' (Nyborg 2003). The Charta addressed issues such as cultural values, the notion of institutional autonomy, freedom of intellectual inquiry and the moral and intellectual independence of research as cornerstones of higher education (CRE 1988).

The Bologna process declares a number of broad objectives in the realm of higher education, including increased student and academic mobility, as well as improving the compatibility, comparability and competitiveness of higher education institutions across Europe. The Bologna Declaration has now been signed by forty-six countries, almost all the member states[8] of the Council of Europe. Despite the number of new signatory nations that are from outside the EU, the European Commission still has considerable influence over 'Bologna', including having a vote on all Bologna amendments – the only non-state actor accorded such a privilege. Furthermore, the steering bodies of the process (the Bologna Follow-up Group and the Bologna Board) are chaired by the rotating EU Presidency. So although it is an intergovernmental initiative guided by the Council of Europe and outside the formal decision-making framework of the European Union, it is 'close in its make up and inspiration … and both build[ing] on and contribut[ing] to EU policy objectives' (Reding 2003). With Russia signing the Declaration at the Berlin Conference in 2003, the Bologna process began to frame bilateral cooperation between Russia and the EU in the realm of higher education.

In order to establish the European Higher Education Area, the Bologna process promotes the idea that higher education should serve as an effective means for empowering major top-down social reforms for global educational values and for harmonizing European university programs. Ultimately, both steps are regarded as necessary for competing effectively with universities at a global level, in particular those of the United States. In principle, the declaration also affirms the importance of the social dimension, recognizing higher education as a public good and responsibility.

The Secretariat[9] of the Bologna process has acknowledged the progress made thus far, but is also concerned that the almost fifty countries and organizations involved in Bologna continue with their national reforms, as well as increase the level of coordination between them. Looking at the work programme for the period 2007-2009, the Secretariat has asserted that

> "…a lot remains to be done and with the 2010 deadline approaching, a certain sense of urgency prevails. While most of the action needs to be taken at national or institutional level, it can be supported in various ways by action at European level, for instance through awareness-raising or sharing of good practice but also through work on other action lines, such as developing joint programmes or cooperating in the field of quality assurance." (Secretariat 2008: 2)

In order to achieve tangible results in quality assurance, the European Commission called for 'a more systemic approach to education reform in Europe' (Reding 2003) and stressed that 'Bologna cannot be implemented *à la carte*. It has to be done across

the board and wholeheartedly. If not, the process will leave European higher education even less strong and united than before' (*ibid.* 2003). This met with resistance in parts of the academic community, including in Eastern Europe. In Russia it became evident that

> "… there are clearly distinct camps in Russian higher education – those for and against the Bologna process, or those for and against 'westernising' higher education. Not only does this division encompass ideological differences, but it is also linked to geographical regions. It is mostly in the western parts of Russia that there is a strong interest among higher education institutions in adapting to the approach taken by the rest of Europe." (EUA 2007: 72)

Many of the fundamental ideas of the Bologna process challenge the self-understanding of European university faculty and seem to serve as proxies for an EU-driven process forging a common European cultural identity beyond EU borders. This provided the context for an emerging discourse on 'Bolognization' and 'pizza Bolognese *à la russe*' (Tomusk 2006).

EU-Russia relations and higher education

In May 2003, the Common Space of Research and Education, Including Cultural Aspects (as an integral part of the 'Roadmaps' on the Common Spaces in EU-Russia cooperation) was agreed upon at the EU-Russia summit in St. Petersburg. This agreement, subsequently signed in Moscow in May of 2005, was clearly geared towards the Bologna Declaration. By signing Bologna, Russia has agreed to fulfil its goals by 2010 and eventually become an effective part of the European Higher Education and Research Areas. Yet ever since the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement (PCA) between the EU and the Russian Federation was negotiated between 1994 and 1996, higher education has been an important element of bilateral relations. The PCA recommended that cooperation should focus on 'updating higher education and training systems in Russia' and identified several core target goals: student and faculty mobility; executive and journalist training; inter-university cooperation (involving EU member states); and curriculum development, such as European Studies (Partnership and Cooperation Agreement 1997: Art. 63). The Common Strategy on Russia, a new foreign policy instrument initiated by the Treaty of Amsterdam and launched for the first time under the German EU Presidency, reiterated the need for fostering exchange and mobility programs as well as inter-university cooperation.

Financial assistance to promote cooperation in higher education between the EU and Central and Eastern Europe was allocated through Tempus-TACIS, 'a Community aid scheme for the restructuring of higher education systems in these countries in order to adapt them to the requirements of a market economy' (Commission 2007a). Tempus is managed by the Directorate-General of Education and Culture within the European Commission and is assisted by the Turin-based European Training Foundation. Projects are organized as consortia involving higher education institutions in the EU member states and partner countries, supported by National Contact Points (in EU member states) and National Tempus Offices (in partner countries) that facilitate partner searches (Commission 2007b). Each year, higher education institutions propose projects to Tempus for joint partnerships and

mobility schemes. The 'Joint European Projects' stream of Tempus has focused on curriculum development, university management and institution building, of which Russia was the highest recipient of projects from 2000 to 2006. From 2002 until 2006, applicants from the Russian Federation received the most individual mobility grants amongst all 'third country' nationalities.[10] The Russian Federation also tends to be amongst the highest recipients of projects pertaining to 'structural and complementary measures', projects that support implementation of Bologna objectives.[11] Clearly, the EU has prioritized the Russian Federation in its higher education assistance schemes, yet Kaliningrad has not been a primary target for these schemes.

Of the 259 Tempus-TACIS education projects that have been directed towards the Russian Federation since 1994, five have involved universities in Kaliningrad. While seemingly a small number, the nature of these projects has addressed some of the specific cross-border concerns of both Kaliningrad and the EU. The first Kaliningrad-specific Tempus-TACIS project was implemented in 1994 and its objectives were to update English language teaching and teacher training at Kaliningrad State University Immanuel Kant (KSU). Three subsequent projects have focused on raising Kaliningrad's standards of environmental management and education to European levels. Considering Kaliningrad's location, KSU would have seemed an appropriate location for a project in the field of European Studies. Despite this, other Russian universities – as far away as Novosibirsk in southern Siberia – were receiving Tempus-TACIS assistance to implement European Studies programmes as early as 1994. It was not until 2002 that Tempus-TACIS funded a project introducing a European dimension to the curriculum of three faculties at Kaliningrad State University. While relatively late in its inception, this innovative curriculum development initiative has set up a new and substantial cross-faculty Centre for European Studies at KSU (Commission 2007c).

The dearth of EU-funded higher education projects has not been from a lack of receptiveness from within Kaliningrad's universities, which are keen to integrate their higher education institutions with those of their immediate neighbours. Universities in Lithuania have established bilateral exchange agreements or joint projects with universities in Kaliningrad (Fairlie 1999). Other EU member states – particularly the Nordic countries – have also pursued a bilateral agenda in their relationship with the oblast (see Communication on Kaliningrad 2001). Furthermore, some member states like Denmark and Sweden have gone further than merely supporting Kaliningrad with a number of projects (including those in higher education); they have also drawn the attention of other EU member states to the specific needs of this Russian exclave on the Baltic coast. Yet the EU has not singled out Kaliningrad as a specific area for cooperation in the field of higher education, instead regarding the Bologna process as a bridge to all Russian universities.

Domestic reforms in the area of higher education in the Russian Federation

In the beginning of the 1990s, the Russian government started to reform its education system fundamentally. The goal was to democratize, humanize and decentralize education, as well as increase the autonomy of educational institutions. This reform programme was established with the Law on Education in 1992, which was supposed to set the direction of the transformation process. However, in implementing the reforms, the government concentrated on the structural reorganization of educational institutions, with quality assurance, curricular reform, and improving teaching

methods supposedly coming later. The first reform agenda differentiated types of high schools, authorizing private institutions and individualized study programmes. Yet a Framework Law on Higher Education (Law on Higher and Postgraduate Education 1996) was not achieved until 1996, at which time universities had already been in the midst of a deep financial crisis for several years. As a result of the political and economic transformation (and near bankruptcy) of the Russian Federation, education expenditures dropped from 9.6 per cent of GDP in 1986, to 3.5 per cent in 1990, and then 2.9 per cent of GDP in 2000 (World Bank 2004).[12] Universities had lost the status of an institution of state priority and were forced to take measures to ensure their own survival. To generate more income, universities introduced tuition fees and new courses, as well as rented out rooms, labs and building complexes. Instructors began working for multiple institutions as well as earning money through private seminars. Irina Presnyakova of the Russian Academy of Sciences reported that at the start of the 1990s, 'scientific funding dropped ten-fold and scientists were not seen as necessary for society' (Moscow News 2008). There are estimates stating that until 2006 at least 70,000 academics have been lost through emigration (Tomusk 2006: 232). The result was a commercialization of education, such that a lack of scholastic ability could be compensated with money. This development did not lead to greater competition or increased efficiency but instead to a decrease in the quality of education, a 'brain drain', the deterioration of university equipment, and a decrease of real earnings for instructors (Füllsack 2001: 5). Higher education in Russia was becoming a 'quasi-market', without legal or financial regulation (Godfrey 2004: IV).

During this transformation process of the 1990s, the weakening of the central state and the decentralization of public services allowed university administration to become more autonomous. The formerly centrally-regulated institutions started to interact with their environment independently; with students, with regional administrations and businesses, but also with international institutions (Bain 2003: 47). Under the new conditions, the focus of higher education shifted to regional needs. Institutions started to focus on the regional labour market and especially on the requirements of fee-paying students. For the universities, increased autonomy and a regional orientation created new opportunities for manoeuvrability and self-definition. Regional political administrations started to provide financial resources in an area of federal competence to ensure the survival of their regional universities.[13] At the same time, universities played a stronger role within regional politics and economies, by attracting foreign investment through well-educated specialists and research capacity. This development influenced the interaction between universities, politics and society, as well as affecting the distribution of human resources (Kuebart 2002: 85).

Following the opening of the country and the subsequent increased autonomy of educational institutions, international cooperation shifted from state to university control. With the Law on Education (2005: Ch. 57.2), Russian education institutions acquired, for the first time, the right to direct interaction with foreign education institutions, companies and organizations. The Framework Law on Higher and Postgraduate Education created new possibilities in the sphere of higher education: for independent international cooperation (Law on Higher and Postgraduate Education 1996: Ch. 33.1); for international economic activities (*ibid*.: Ch. 33.4); and to ensure that newly-acquired financial resources did not revert to state control (*ibid*.: Ch. 33.5). Due to these regulations, foreign relations became an important part of university autonomy, especially as foreign partner universities and international organizations

and institutions had financially supported Russian universities during the crisis years. They had paid for new equipment and supplemented the income of instructors. Cooperation programmes had helped to modernize curricula and introduce new specializations and international exams. For many of the universities, international cooperation and exchanges became an important non-governmental financial source[14] and programmes like Tempus-TACIS played an important role in securing the survival of Russian universities.[15] However, critics have noted that during the 1990s, TACIS money was spent primarily on the mobility of administrative and executive staff and less on students and academics. Some changes in methodology and curricula were endorsed by teacher interest, others from student pressure or competition between universities (Eimermacher 2002: 22). Yet overall, international influence has been essential to Russian universities trying to adapt to new social, economic and political standards.

There was a reorientation in Russian higher education policy following the election of Vladimir Putin in 2000. Education was meant to play a key role for the new government as part of an extensive reform of the Russian state, and its economy in particular. The authors of the 'Concept of modernization of Russian education up to 2010' have emphasized that there is a need to reform the education system as a reaction to comprehensive global changes that entail new challenges for the state, society and individuals (Concept of modernization 2001: Ch. 1.1). For the new government, human resources play a vital role in the economic development of the country and will secure Russia's place in the world. They regarded the 'retreat' of the state during the 1990s as a mistake that had weakened Russia's transformation process (*ibid*.: Ch. 1). On one hand, the new government demanded a more active role for the state. On the other hand, they maintained that increased individual responsibility, a broader financial participation within society and financially-guaranteed university autonomy were important principles (*ibid*.: Ch. 2.6). Now based on a market economy, the system of financing should play the key role in the future reform of education.

The government's decision to sign the Bologna Declaration in 2003 was an important step in the reform process. The goal of the government was to integrate Russia into the European Higher Education Area and to modernize the Russian university system by means of cooperation with European universities. Along with participation in the Bologna process, the federal government enacted the 'Federal target programme for the development of education between 2006 and 2010' in December of 2005. In this target programme, the central principles of the reform process were described using the Bologna Declaration as a guideline. As the basis of education policy until 2010, the federal target programme serves as an orientation for all levels of government, including regional and local administrations. A long term objective of the programme is to increase Russia's global competitiveness in education services by cooperating with European universities (Federal target programme 2006: Ch. 2).

The federal target programme is critical of the low quality of Russian education, decreased mobility of students and teachers, and the lack of university orientation towards the labour market (*ibid*.: Ch. 1). The programme proposed four reforms to overcome these deficiencies. One was to extend cooperation with European states to improve the quality of education and adapt to international quality standards. Another was to introduce comparable degrees as well as standardized and transferable degree descriptions, qualifications (the diploma supplement) and credit equivalency

(ECTS). A third was to increase the mobility of students, scientists and university teachers through increased scholarship and loans. The final reform was to expand the export of education services (*ibid.*: Ch. 6). Through the adaptation of European quality standards, evaluation criteria and documentation, the export of Russian university services should improve.

Integrating the Bologna process into a domestic educational reform agenda has influenced both foreign and domestic policy in Russia. Within Russia, this integration has directly affected not only higher education reform, but also the labour market and the public sector (creating independent universities and associations). It helps to bring the Russian higher education system into accord with the requirements of a knowledge-based society and raise the competitiveness of the Russian economy. Furthermore, Bologna has had an indirect impact on government budgets and administrative reform (Pursiainen and Medvedev 2005: 22).[16] The influence on Russia's foreign policy has primarily been related to the dialogue with the EU. In EU-Russia relations, the four Common Spaces are closely linked, so that progress in the most advanced fourth Common Space of Science, Education and Humanitarian Exchange can have a positive effect on the other three (Pursiainen and Medvedev 2005: 23). Russia's interests in international cooperation concern questions of mobility – such as the weakening of the visa regimes, especially Schengen – and the recognition of Russian diplomas.[17] These problems play an important role in the Russian dialogue with the EU. At the EU-Russia Summit in London in October of 2005, the EU loosened visa restrictions for people working in certain fields, such as education and science. Cooperation between the EU and Russia in the technological fields should help to transfer technical competence from European States to Russia (Adomeit and Lindner 2005: 16-7). In addition to that, central elements of the Bologna process and the exchange in higher education in different fields should be supported (Commission 2005b). As a consequence, elements of the Bologna process are integrated into common agreements between Russia and the EU, and Russia uses Bologna for its internal reform process.

Reorganizing the Russian university system in the context of the Bologna process will improve opportunities for Russian citizens in the international labour market and improve the international competitiveness of Russian universities. Yet, for a section of Russian society, particularly elites, it is important that education is modernized as a part of national identity and culture, while also important that traditions are protected. According to Viktor Sadovnichij, rector of the Moscow State University and leader of the Russian Rectors' Union, universities are responsible for the protection of cultural identity and national dignity (Sadovnichij 1999: 35). In the debate about the Bologna process within Russia, there is conflict between the forces of globalization and the forces of national identity (Pursiainen and Medvedev 2005: 24-5).

The development of higher education in Kaliningrad

Universities in the Kaliningrad region

In the Kaliningrad region, there are eighteen institutions of higher education, both state and private, which also includes seven branch universities from institutions in St. Petersburg and Moscow.[18] Two of the eighteen have full status as a university: Kaliningrad State University Immanuel Kant (KSU) and Kaliningrad State Technical University (KSTU) (Russian Education 2006). Both of these universities are state-run;

KSTU is subordinated to the State committee for fishing, and KSU is operated by the Ministry of Education. Private universities and branch institutions predominantly offer courses in social sciences, humanities, economics and law and are commercially oriented towards fee-paying students (Klemeshev 2004: 8).

Kaliningrad State University Immanuel Kant is the largest university in the region, with more than 12,000 students and nearly 600 instructors.[19] Founded in 1967 on the basis of the Kaliningrad Pedagogic Institute (which existed from 1948 to 1967), KSU currently consists of thirteen faculties with forty-five specializations. In 2005, the university was renamed in honour of Immanuel Kant, a famous 'son' of Königsberg, the German city that became Kaliningrad. The university also makes historical reference to the Königsberg Albertina University, a former university in the Prussian tradition that was originally founded in 1544. According to the strategy of the university, the internationalization of KSU and harmonization of Russian and European education are important components of their education policy. This policy is manifest in KSU participation in EU projects, the Union of European Universities and the Conference of Rectors in the Baltic Sea area. The university also has a European Information Centre, a Centre for Human rights of the Council of Europe, and a language centre for Swedish and English.

Transformation and regionalization of the regional university system

The dissolution of the Soviet Union and independence of the Baltic States influenced the development of the regional university system. For Kaliningrad – like all other Russian regions – the beginning of the 1990s saw a marked decrease in the public budget for education. Yet it was especially Kaliningrad's isolation from the Russian mainland that hindered traditional communication and cooperation between universities and companies in the Russian Federation and post-Soviet countries. For instance, the former Institute for Fishing (since 1994, KSTU) trained specialists not only for the region, but for all of the Soviet Union, and when the fishing and ship-building industry went into a deep economic crisis in the early 1990s, the demand for specialists decreased. As a result, cooperation with companies in this field decreased not only in post-Soviet countries, but also in Russia. Moreover, between 1990 and 1995, university enrolment was declining in Kaliningrad and across Russia.[20] According to Andrej Klemeshev, the rector of KSU, the reason for this development was that the focus of education at regional universities did not correspond with the demands of the regional labour market, which increasingly corresponded to a free-market economy (Klemeshev 2004: 8-9). Other reasons for the drop in student enrolment were decreasing mobility of students from other regions and Russia's difficult economic situation at the time. Due to Kaliningrad's exclave situation, the living standard declined more than in other regions.[21] Similarly to the rest of Russia, student enrolment has increased rapidly since the mid-1990s as the economy improved and universities refocused on the changing needs of regional labour markets.

As higher education in Russia began to transform in the late 1990s, regional universities started to make adjustments to changing regional needs. Because of growing demand by students and companies, KSU extended specializations in fields like information technology, tourism, ecology, and financial services. The university established a priority in the teaching of foreign languages, increasing the number of lessons as well as using foreign expertise to modernize equipment and pedagogy. The main goal of this policy has been to improve student opportunities in foreign and

domestic labour markets, as well as facilitate university integration into the European Higher Education Area by means of increasing mobility for students and instructors (Klemeshev 2004: 11). For KSU, this new orientation aided by international expertise has been an important step in increasing competitiveness *vis-à-vis* other universities in the region in attracting fee-paying students.

During the Soviet era in Kaliningrad, specialists in agriculture, construction and medicine would be provided by universities from other regions, especially the Baltic Union republics. But due to the rupture in traditional cooperation between Soviet higher education institutions, Kaliningrad must react independently to new situations. For example, an initiative of the regional administration prompted KSU to open a centre for medical education which will evolve into a medical faculty (Pavlova 2006). Thus universities participate in restructuring the region, and the regional administration influences the orientation of the universities.

Internationalization through Europeanization

Due to their physical location, the universities of Kaliningrad have greater possibilities for international cooperation than other Russian regions. There is a high interest amongst neighbouring states to cooperate with the Kaliningrad region because of the differences in social development and soft security risks.[22] Currently, KSU has official agreements with fifty-one universities worldwide, fourteen in Germany and twelve in Poland (Kaliningrad State University 2007b).[23] For a small regional university like KSU, a large number of international cooperation projects can have a huge potential for exchange and reform. But lacking an effective strategy for international relations, the university's limited resources are overtaxed.

The Kaliningrad State University Immanuel Kant is one of twenty-five Russian universities chosen by the federal government to introduce the ECTS system and other elements of the Bologna process (see Moscow State Institute 2007). But the pro-rector of education, Irina Kuksa, wonders why KSU participates in the Bologna process in the framework of federal legislation and agreements with the Ministry of Education, in the same way as all other Russian universities. In her opinion, KSU should play a special role in this context because of Kaliningrad's geographic and geopolitical location. For universities in Kaliningrad, the pressure to adopt Bologna principles is higher than for all other Russian universities. Due to Kaliningrad's proximity to the EU and high mobility of students and instructors, the universities must prepare both students and staff for study and work abroad. The greater ease of faculty exchanges with European universities could ensure that Kaliningrad university instructors are familiar with new teaching methods and that visiting lecturers from Europe bring new ideas (Kuksa interview 2006).

The main obstacle for full integration of Russian universities into the Bologna process is implementation by the state. For Moscow, the preservation of national traditions is just as important as mobility and common standards. Russian universities are not allowed to introduce elements of the Bologna process independently; they can only support the federally-mandated reform process. So even though Bachelors/Masters degrees existed at KSU since 1992 (they were introduced by the Yeltsin Government as an alternative to the Soviet diploma), Irina Kuksa remains sceptical of a full introduction of a two-cycle degree system because of the strong regulation of the education process by the Russian government. This poses particular problems for students in Kaliningrad: independent Masters Programmes are very rare

because of the lack of academic standards and specialists at KSU and there is little demand for Bachelors degrees on the regional labour market (*ibid.*). Furthermore, there are no possibilities for vocational job-training, an important step for Bachelor degree graduates in Europe (Smolin 2005: 51). The differences between the Russian and European education system are too great for a quick and simple adaptation of Bologna standards. Russian universities need more flexibility and the students more independence for the successful implementation of Bologna reforms.

One of the most important projects for harmonizing KSU with European quality standards has been the Euro-Faculty. In March 1993, this project was initiated by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS). Their goal was to reform higher education in the eastern part of the Baltic Sea region, in the fields of law, economics, public and business administration. While Euro-Faculty centres were opened at universities in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the 1990s, KSU had only established a branch in the faculties of law and economy by September 2000. This project has been financed by the European Commission, the Scandinavian states, Germany, Poland, the Netherlands, Great Britain and the aforementioned host states of Euro-Faculty. Its main element is guest lecturers from European partner universities: they instruct at different levels, initiate research projects, and help to modernize curricula at the host universities (Kaliningrad State University 2007a). The central objective of the Kaliningrad Euro-Faculty is to modernize teaching in economics and law to the point that those faculties are able to respond to international challenges, cross-border trade and the increased integration of the Baltic Sea area. Sustainable change at KSU should be achieved through modernization of curricula and teaching methods (Progress Report 2002: 68). The main obstacle to these reforms is the lack of flexibility of the curricula and education standards set by the Russian Ministry of Education. For example, introducing new methods and curricula is only possible if the number of lessons is reduced, yet this factor determines instructors' salaries, resulting in resistance to reform amongst faculty. A further difficulty is the low level of foreign-language ability amongst students and instructors in Kaliningrad, a critical aspect for international cooperation. Even though language training has been intensively supported from the beginning of the Euro-Faculty, its improvement remains a long term goal (*ibid.*: 69-71).

Aleksander Salenko, the head of the Euro-Faculty in the Law Department of KSU, describes two main obstacles for the success of the project. First, the need for a generation change within university faculties, because of the resistance to reforms by older instructors and a staunch hierarchy at Russian universities. The second obstacle is the rigid education standards that are fixed by the federal government. The Law Department at KSU received a special permission by the Ministry of Education to deviate from the education standards for the purposes of Euro-Faculty, but for comprehensive adaptation to European norms and standards, Russian universities will need more autonomy (Salenko interview 2006). In turn, Vera Zabotkina, the pro-rector for international relations at KSU, emphasizes that the Russian Ministry of Education has accepted all changes of curricula by the Euro-Faculty, so that European standards for university education can be integrated. In light of this, basic courses were reduced from forty to twenty-five hours per week, and more advanced courses were reduced to twenty hours per week (Baltinfo Newsletter 2004: 10-1). In this, it is clear that the new structures of the Euro-Faculty are not directly integrated in the normal study plan at KSU, but exist as a parallel structure. This development is typical for Russian

adaptation policies pertaining to European standards: on one hand, new standards and criteria are partly introduced; on the other hand, important elements of the existing system are preserved. Meanwhile, Moscow continues to pressure regional universities into implementing reforms without creating the necessary preconditions for them.

Conclusion

In the area of higher education, the European Union provides only a few templates. However, further market integration as well as the evolution of the Bologna process put the EU into a position to shape the internationalization of higher education. Thus higher education has also developed into an area for cooperation between Russia and the EU. With regards to Kaliningrad, however, both parties have not agreed on the making of a special regime for the oblast; instead they prefer to deal with higher education issues in Kaliningrad rather comprehensively within the context of EU-Russia relations. Today, a multitude of cooperation projects exist in the area of higher education, rendering Kaliningrad into a cooperative test region often by default rather than by design.

The implementation of the Bologna process (albeit still at an early stage in Russia) seems slow in Kaliningrad, similar to other Russian regions. However, this process has shifted higher education into a more pan-European rather than exclusively EU-driven endeavour. Hence, the Bologna process appears to be an application of the EU's open method of coordination (from the Lisbon EU Council in 2000) to incorporate non-EU countries into the pursuit of a number goals in educational policy. It is obvious that the Russian government is very much in favour of such an approach, putting Russia on par with the EU and its member states.

Still, a number of problems persist. Implementation problems are generated by institutional path-dependency (personnel, institutional resistance, etc.) and there are no quality control systems ensuring the proper implementation of Bologna objectives, such as curricular reforms. Policy-makers in Russia and Kaliningrad have recognized the need to integrate Kaliningrad into systems of higher education, both federally and regionally (in terms of the Baltic Sea area). While university administrations in Kaliningrad have learned much from EU experience in managing joint programs, there is still some doubt as to whether these programs are going to be self-sustainable. Individual projects – such as Euro-Faculty – have provided an important impetus, but they constitute islands of reform in the much larger and rougher seas of Russian higher education.

Hence, only partial adaptation is evident. Resistance *vis-à-vis* European standards prevails because adaptation to and emulation of 'European' and 'Western' standards occurs only in younger segments of university faculties in Kaliningrad. The federal policy in higher education is twofold: while it seeks to restrict regional autonomy, it also attempts to reduce resistance to 'Bologna' on the ground.

Endnotes

[1] Jean Monnet had apparently remarked to journalists, ‘si l’Europe était à refaire, je commencerais par la culture’ (Blitz 2003: 198). However, Blitz contests the idea that Monnet had ever regarded education as a potential building block for European integration.
[2] Education was not explicitly alluded to in the Treaty of Rome (1957) thereby implicitly ensuring that it was within the domain of member states. Subsequent treaties have established the EU’s role in ‘encouraging co-operation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of their teaching and the organisation of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity’ (Treaty of Maastricht 1992: Art. 126.1). This policy of a supporting role has been reiterated within Art. 149 of the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997) and Art. III-282 of the Draft Constitutional Treaty (2004).
[3] In the case of many federal EU member states, such as Austria and Germany, competencies in educational and cultural policy are at the sub-national level. Hence, the Europeanization of this policy area, which then provides the national state with the opportunity to interfere (in varying degrees) with *länder* competencies.
[4] In this case, higher education refers to the general and theoretical education provided by tertiary, non-compulsory and degree-granting education institutions (i.e. universities and colleges). Programmes within the EU mandate draw a distinction between higher education (Erasmus Programme), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci Programme) and continuing (adult) education (Grundtvig Programme). While much of the attention within the EU as well as the Bologna Process has focussed on higher education in the sense used here, the Commission does want to improve all forms of education and training as part of the ‘Lifelong Learning’ aspect of the Lisbon Agenda (see Commission 2003).
[5] Aside of the new programs fostering education in Central and East European countries (like Tempus), various internal EU educational and mobility programs – such as Socrates and Erasmus – were made accessible to students from former Communist countries as early as 1998.
[6] In this article, the terms Kaliningrad, Kaliningrad region, and Kaliningrad oblast are used interchangeably as synonyms, unless there is an explicit reference to the city of Kaliningrad.
[7] That is involving issues such as visa facilitation for students and young researchers.
[8] Monaco and San Marino have not signed the Declaration, nor has Belarus as it is no longer a member of the Council of Europe.
[9] Since 1 July 2007, the Bologna process is being supported by a Secretariat, jointly operated by the education ministries of the French and Flemish Communities of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. The office of the multinational Secretariat is located in Brussels supporting the Bologna process in the run-up to the next Ministerial Conference, which will take place on 28-29 April 2009 at the universities of Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve.
[10] Exceptions: 2nd round 2002, Albania had more. In the later rounds, (1st and 3rd rounds of 2004, 3rd round of 2005, 1st and 2nd rounds of 2006) Egypt had more. Please see http://ec.europa.eu/education/programmes/tempus /stat_en.html.

[11] In 2003, the Russian Federation was the target of three out of twelve projects (most); in 2004, Russia was the target of only three out of forty projects; in 2005 (round 1), it was the target of only four out of forty-one projects and for round two of 2005, it was seven of thirty-seven (most).'
[12] Over this same period, OECD-states spent an average of 5.5 per cent of annual GDP on education, with a considerably higher GDP as well (Verbina and Chowdhury 2004: 493).
[13] The pro-rector for academic policy at the Moscow State University, Vladimir Mironov, emphasized that good relations to the Moscow City Council were decisive to finance electricity and heating costs of the university during the 1990s (Mironov interview 2005).
[14] Between 1993 and 1995, more than 200 foreign foundations worked in Russia. In 1996 they financed 9 per cent of the budget of Russian universities (Chvostrostov 2001: 178).
[15] Russia is the biggest recipient of Tempus-TACIS funds. For instance, in 2005, Russia took part in eighteen projects with a value of €7.5 million, which was the highest rate of technical sponsorship by the EU in this context (Commission 2005a).
[16] It supports the streamlining of the budget process and limits the state's regulatory role in higher education.
[17] Russian degrees are not recognized in the developed world. In 2002, India was still refusing to acknowledge Russian diplomas (Smolentseva 2004: 2).
[18] Most of the state universities in Russia are under federal control (in 1999 there were 537). Some depend to regional (36) or local administrations (12). As in Soviet times, only some of them are financed by the ministry of education, the others by industrial branch ministries (Teichmann 2005: 99).
[19] In 2006, KSU had 12,070 students and 615 teachers (Russian Education 2007)
[20] The number of students enrolled at state universities in the Kaliningrad region went down from 15,800 in 1990/91 to 12,400 in 1995/96 and increased to 24,600 in 2003/2004 (Klemeshev 2004: 10).
[21] Kaliningrad's economy is very connected with the Russian economy. Industrial production decreased 29 per cent by 1998 compared to 1990 levels (the Russian average being 46 per cent) (Klemeshev and Fedorov 2004: 27).
[22] In soft security fields like environmental protection, health service, administrative corruption and organized crime, risks in the Kaliningrad region were particularly high during the 1990s (see Hubel and Gänzle 2002).
[23] In comparison with KSU, Nizhni Novgorod State University has more than 31,000 Students (in 2005) and a much higher academic and research potential (one of the leading universities in some academic fields), and yet has only twenty-four official international agreements (Nizhni Novgorod State University 2007).

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