

Prof. Nina Belyaeva,  
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Dear Nina,

On behalf of the European Wergeland Centre, I would like to congratulate the Baltic Practice for its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. This successful initiative has brought together a myriad of students, professors, and experts from Russian universities, the Council of Europe (CoE), and the local host countries, giving comprehensive insights on central issues concerning democracy development, social responsibility, academic mobility, entrepreneurship culture and human rights.

This August the 10<sup>th</sup> Summer Academy of Baltic Practice, which is supported by the Council of Europe, was organized in Oslo, Norway, in cooperation with the European Wergeland Centre (EWC). This was also the first summer seminar project at the University-Higher School of Economics which enabled participants to receive ECTS credits to be used in their study plans. It brought together more than 25 undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate students from different parts of Russia.

As mentioned, the EWC was a partner of this year's Academy. As part of our human rights education activities, the organization and conceptualization of several sessions and workshops was facilitated. The programme included sessions on the current reforms within the CoE and its impact on education, reflection on core concepts of citizenship and democracy, as well as an introduction of some of the main CoE manuals for Education on Democratic Citizenship/ Human Rights Education in Russian.

For the EWC it was a pleasure to welcome you, we had a very inspiring day all of us, and especially enjoyed the presentations of students about human rights issues.

We have continued our good cooperation with an online lecture at the opening of the new course 'Human Rights in Globalizing World' for the 1-year master students in September 2010, where our experts Caroline Gebara and Gunnar Mandt had an excellent opportunity to exchange different views on human rights education with the students at the Higher School of Economics.

In our view, what makes Baltic Practice a unique experience is the students' engagement and motivation not just to get knowledge but also their readiness to act, to change a world they see 'imperfect'. As many of the students themselves are human rights educators with substantial experience in the field, sharing views and understanding on what Human Rights means on the ground makes the debate enriching and exciting.

Last week we had the chance of meeting once more at the Universality of Human Rights Forum that we hosted in Oslo, in cooperation with the Council of Europe INGOs. We have discussed possible ways to continue our cooperation in the years ahead, and we all are looking forward to working together.

A month ago, the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs Jonas Gahr Støre visited Arkhangelsk, giving a lecture about "Norway and Russia: Taking Northern Knowledge to the Next Level". He said: "...Today there is a Russian student boom in Norway. Russian students now make up the largest group of international students in our country... Unfortunately the number of Norwegian students in Russia was only 75 last year. We sincerely hope this number will increase... Both countries need more specialists on the other country. The best barter trade we can do today is the exchange of knowledge ..."

Let's work together to make it happen!

Once more, congratulations on your anniversary.

Yours sincerely,



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