

**Perceptions of European Higher Education in
third countries**

A study carried out by the Academic Cooperation Association

Country Report Russia

INDEX

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
II. COUNTRY INFORMATION	5
1. General information on the country	5
1.1 Population	5
1.2 Political system	6
1.3 Economy overview	6
1.4 Main socio-economic indicators of living standard of the population	7
1.5 Regional Priorities of Russia's Foreign Policy	7
2.Short overview of the (higher) education system	8
2.1 Primary Vocational Education	9
2.2 Secondary Vocational Education	9
2.3 Higher Education	11
2.4 Aspirantura (doctorate studies)	14
2.5 Doktorantura (post-doctorate studies)	14
2.6 Further and additional training of specialists	15
2.7 State policy on education	16
2.8 The impact of Communist ideology on Russian higher education	18
3. Internationalisation of (higher) education and student mobility	20
4. Marketing activities	22
III. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SURVEY	25
1. Choice of target institutions and institutional facilitators	25
2. Promotion of the survey	30
3. Problems encountered and their impact on the study	30
IV. INTERVIEW RESULTS	31
1. Higher Education Experts	31
1.1 General View of Internationalisation, Student Mobility, and its Role in Education Policy	31
1.2 Financial Support Schemes	32
1.3 The Role of the EU as a Study Destination	33
1.4 Future Development of Student Mobility	34
2. Rectors / Vice-Rectors / Directors of International Relations	34
2.1 Internationalisation Strategy	35
2.2 Student Mobility: Support Structures and Patterns	35

2.3 Views on Student Mobility	36
2.4 The Role of the EU as a Study Destination	37
2.5 Information about higher education in the European Union	39
3. Parents	39
3.1 Background Information	39
3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Study Abroad	40
3.3 Host Country and Host University	41
3.4 Information about higher education in the European Union	42
3.5 Comparison of EU Higher Education with Other Destination Countries	43
3.6 The Role of Parents in the Decision Process	43
V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	45
VI. ANNEX	47
1. List of interviewees and their positions	47
1.1 Higher Education Experts	47
1.2 Rectors / Vice-Rectors / Directors of International Relations	47
2. Interview protocols	47
3. List of Higher education institutions	48
4. Flyers and other promotion material	50

I. Executive summary

The study on the perceptions of European higher education in third countries was carried out in Russia between December 2004 and July 2005. In general, students' reactions to the project were positive and they showed a high degree of enthusiasm about studying in the European Union.

10 institutions of higher education and 5 secondary schools took part in the opinion poll. About 2000 paper copies of the Russian version of the student questionnaire and 300 paper copies of the Russian version of the staff questionnaire were distributed. 1710 filled copies of the student questionnaires and 176 copies of the staff questionnaires were returned.

The interviews were held with four experts in higher education, who were selected from different regions and different agencies/organizations; 5 rectors of institutions of higher education, five pro-rectors for external affairs or heads of external affairs departments as well as with 20 parents, whose children would like to pursue their education abroad.

Both face-to-face and telephone interviews were carried out.

The main tendency that we can see in the interviews is the high quality associated with European higher education. Parents, experts and university officials agreed on the prestige associated with European qualifications. Studying abroad and obtaining a diploma in the host country is seen as a means of improving students' future career prospects. The main weaknesses of studying in the EU tend to be perceived as being the high cost of tuition fees and living expenses and the lack of programs taught in English.

Most participants who agreed to be interviewed asked for their names not to be mentioned in the official reports, especially the representatives of regional institutions of higher education. Their participation could be unwelcome by their superiors and they could risk their position. This is due to the fact that some foreign humanitarian organizations, funds and associations which work in the ex-URSS countries and which are financed by foreign governments are criticized for intervening in the political life of these countries.

It has to be noted that stereotypes of education abroad are still deeply rooted. For instance, if a student decides to start or continue his/her education abroad, some people regard it as a decision to leave Russia for good. Sometimes the proposals of Western universities to take part in cooperation projects are considered as an attempt to attract the best students. Therefore, almost all institutional facilitators faced prudence on the part of the senior representatives of Russian institutions of higher education.

In this regard, the French Embassy in Russia was most helpful via its Deputy Counselor for culture and Attaché for university cooperation Mrs Armelle Groppo who sent official letters to the universities, which took part in the opinion poll.

II. Country information

1. General information on the country

With an area of 17 075 400 sq km¹, Russia is the world's largest country. It extends from the Baltic Sea in the west to the Pacific Ocean in the east. The country is bordered by Norway and Finland in the northwest; by Estonia, Latvia, Belarus, and Ukraine in the west; by Georgia and Azerbaijan in the southwest; and by Kazakhstan, Mongolia, and China in the south.

The Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic (RSFSR) was founded in 1918, following the Bolshevik Revolution and was incorporated into the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) in 1922.

The leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev (1985-1991) and the policies of *glasnost* (openness) and *perestroika* (reconstruction) encouraged the revival of a distinctively Russian, as opposed to Soviet, political culture and the transfer of many governmental functions from the Communist party to state structures. Thousands of private associations were formed, leading to the creation of independent political parties.

The country declared its independence in July 1990 in a declaration which asserted the supremacy of the Federation's laws over those of the Soviet central government. When the USSR was dissolved in December 1991, the Russian Federation became fully independent and emerged as the most important Soviet-successor state.

According to its political meaning, the term *Russia* applies to the Russian Empire until 1917, to the Russian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic from 1917 to 1991, and to the Russian Federation since 1991. The name also is often used informally to mean the whole of the former USSR.

1.1 Population

According to the all-Russia population census 2002², the total population of the Russian Federation was 145,2 million in 2002, including an urban population of 106,4 million inhabitants and a rural population of 38,8 million. With 143,5 million inhabitants in 2005³, the country's population declined by 1.7 million between 2002 and 2005. This decline in population is due in part to social changes and to the difficult economic conditions the nation has endured since the collapse of the Soviet Union. This has led to a very low birth rate and to a reduced male life expectancy. The population drop has been slowed somewhat by immigration consisting mainly of ethnic Russians from other areas of the former Soviet Union.

Moscow is the capital of the Federation, other major urban areas in Russia include Saint Petersburg (formerly Leningrad), Nizhny Novgorod (formerly Gorky), Rostov-na-Donu, Volgograd, Kazan, Samara (formerly Kuybyshev), Ufa, Perm,

¹ Encyclopedia Kirill and Mephody, 2005, www.megakm.ru

² source: www.perepis2002.ru/content.html?id=11&docid=10715289081460

³ Federal State Statistic Service, 2005, www.gsk.ru

Ekaterinbourg (formerly Sverdlovsk), Omsk, Chelyabinsk, Novosibirsk and Vladivostok.

1.2 Political system

The President of the Russian Federation is Vladimir PUTIN. The Head of government is Mikhail FRADKOV. The Cabinet or the Government is composed of the premier, his deputy, ministers, and other selected individuals, all appointed by the President. The bicameral Federal Assembly (Federalnoye Sobraniye) consists of the Federation Council (Sovet Federatsii) with 178 seats, whose members are appointed by the top executive and legislative officials in each of the 89 federal administrative units and the State Duma (Gosudarstvennaya Duma) with 450 seats⁴.

1.3 Economy overview

The Russian Federation inherited a Marxist-Leninist command economy from the USSR. Chief among the characteristics of the economy was an almost total absence of private productive capital. All enterprises were owned by the state, with each person receiving a salary for his or her efforts. Farmland was also almost entirely state-owned. All economic planning was done by government officials based in Moscow. Market forces played no part in their decision-making.

During the Gorbachev era many of the basic elements of the Soviet command economy were weakened. Limited private ownership of businesses and land was granted and prices were allowed to rise in accordance with market forces.

After 1991 companies were given permission to become private entities, except for those enterprises employing over 10,000 workers or providing gas, oil, or pharmaceuticals. The rapid change from a severely controlled system to the beginnings of a market economy created chaotic conditions; some Russians profited greatly, but most suffered economic hardship as privatization and other economic reforms progressed. By late 1997, inflation appeared to have been brought under control and industrial production had begun to slowly increase. However, the country was once again plunged into economic upheaval when the ruble plummeted in 1998, following a crisis in Asian financial markets. By 2001 the Russian economy had recovered and the country has enjoyed continued economic growth since 1998. The annual growth rate between the financial crisis of 1998 and the end of 2004 averaged 6.5%.⁵

In 2004 the GDP per capita was \$9,800, which placed Russia in the 82nd position of countries by rank order⁶.

High oil prices and a fairly cheap ruble have benefited the economic situation and over the past five years the role of investments and consumer-driven demand has

⁴ source: *The World Factbook Russia*, The Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov

⁵ source: *The World Factbook Russia*, The Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov

⁶ *The World Factbook Russia*, The Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov

also increased. On average, real personal incomes have increased over this period by over 12%⁷.

However, despite these positive results, problems do exist. Economic growth slowed down in the second half of 2004 and the growth rate for 2005 is expected to be lower than the 6.5% average of previous years. Manufacturing infrastructures need to be modernised and the price of Russian exports such as oil, natural gas and timber are subject to variations. Corruption and a weak banking system are additional problems.

As the following table shows, a large percentage of the population still has an income below the minimum subsistence level.

1.4 Main socio-economic indicators of living standard of the population⁸

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Average monthly income of the population, per capita, RUR	2281	3061	3947	5171	6337
Average fixed pension size ¹⁾ , RUR	694.3	1024	1379	1637	1915
Minimum monthly subsistence level ²⁾ (average per capita): RUR	1210	1500	1808	2112	2376
Population with an income below the minimum subsistence level:					
number of persons (in millions)	41.9	39.4	34.6	29.3	25.5
percentage of the total population	28.9	27.3	24.2	20.3	17.8

¹⁾ 2000-2001 - with compensation.

²⁾ Estimate published on the basis of data stated by the Government of the Russian Federation.

The average teacher's salary varies between approximately \$170 to \$500 per month (www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2004) according to the region, the level of teaching and the academic degree held by the teacher. Teachers generally earn the equivalent of the average Russian salary.⁹

1.5 Regional Priorities of Russia's Foreign Policy

According to *The Conception of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, published by the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs,¹⁰ the country's foreign policy priorities focus on cooperation with the member states of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the European Union, the United States of America, the Baltic States and Asia.

⁷ source: *The World Factbook Russia*, The Central Intelligence Agency, www.cia.gov

⁸ source: www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2005, *Living Standards of the Population*, http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b05_12/lswPrx.dII/Stg/d000/07-01.htm

⁹ source: www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2005, *The Average Monthly Accrued Wages*, http://www.gks.ru/gis/D_02.htm

¹⁰ source: Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2005, www.mid.ru, *The Conception of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation*, p.IV. Regional Priorities of Russia's Foreign Policy

The Russian Federation considers its relationship with the European Union to be highly important and sees the EU as one of its major political and economic partners. Russia therefore aims to develop a stable and long-term cooperation with Europe.

Despite fundamental differences that exist between Russia and the USA, the Federation considers Russian-American interaction as being an important condition for improving the international situation and global strategic stability.

The importance of Asia in Russia's foreign policy continues to increase. One of the essential aspects of Russia's foreign policy in this region is the development of relations with leading states such as China and India.

2.Short overview of the (higher) education system

Basic general secondary school education lasts a minimum of nine years and a maximum of 11 years and ends when students are 16-17 or in some cases 18. Secondary education leads to the award of the Attestat o Srednem (Polnom) Obshchem Obrasovanii (Certificate of Completed Secondary General Education). The level of general secondary education is relatively high all over the country. Differences in the quality of education are due to the types of schools. State specialized schools where certain subjects are taught in a more profound way (foreign languages, maths, physics, chemistry, economics) traditionally boast of higher teaching standards. The same can be applied to private schools where classes are organized in smaller groups of people (10-15 pupils).

In general, in secondary schools students get the necessary preparation to enter institutions of higher education and to continue their studies. Studying in a specialized school is often a "pass-ticket" to an institution of higher education which majors in the same field. There are also schools where studies in senior classes may count for a year of institute studies, provided a school has a contract with this institute. In this case, school leavers are accepted in the second year at an institution of higher education.

To enter a higher education institution, it is generally necessary to pass a competitive examination. The institutions in Russia set their own entrance exam procedure. A new reform is in the process of introducing a new entrance procedure based on an integrated state examination at the end of secondary education that permits students to enter universities without sitting an entrance exam. However, to enter a prestigious institution of higher education candidates will still have to pass entrance examinations and attend special preparation courses or take private lessons with a teacher from the same institute beforehand.

Foreign languages are taught both in secondary and higher schools. This is, first and foremost, English as well as French and German. Students who are majoring in linguistics, economics and other humanities have a very good command of foreign languages. Learners of technical, engineering and natural sciences pay less attention to studying foreign languages favouring rather "the language of formulas and diagrams". Therefore, professional standards in teaching foreign languages are higher among the teachers from the humanities departments. One foreign language is obligatory for all higher education students: English, French, German or another

language. Higher education institutions today encourage communication skills in language classes as opposed to traditional teaching methods.

Students who leave secondary education have the choice of following further vocational training or general higher education studies. Vocational education in Russia has three levels which, in the order of higher qualifications, are primary, secondary and higher.

2.1 Primary Vocational Education

Qualified workers and employees graduate from schools which provide primary vocational education.

The enrolment procedure to the state and municipal schools of primary vocational education includes submitting applications and is done on a competitive basis provided for by the school statute. The duration of studies at this level is contingent on the overall educational background of a person. Those who enter schools of primary vocational education after the 9th grade of a secondary school undergo a two- or three-year training. This term is reduced to one or two years (sometimes 3 or 4) for those who enter these schools after the 11-th grade. There are full-time and evening courses.

The traditional type of schools at this level are so-called specialized/trade schools. Recent years have seen the creation of a whole network of the new-type educational institutions – professional lycees which prepare future high-skilled employees.

Although in the last 10 years there has been a trend towards a lower number of students, schools of primary vocational education are still an important part of the education system ensuring a professional qualification before finishing a secondary school. As a rule, young people from incomplete or disadvantaged families get this kind of education, that is when there is a need for an additional source of income. Teenagers of this social category, who are unlikely to get their certificate of secondary education, have, in this case, a chance to continue studies.

For a short period of time the system of primary vocational education has seen considerable changes in its specialization. A new integrated list of professions has been made in accordance with the market demands (at present more than 280 professions are on the list). The professions at the services, transport, food and trade sectors are of growing importance. Totally new professions, which are in demand, have appeared : social workers, small businesses organizers, ecologists, designers. As a result, graduates from these educational institutions have become more competitive on the labour market. At the same time, there has been a proportionate decrease in professions in the spheres of industry and construction.

2.2 Secondary Vocational Education

Secondary vocational education is aimed at skilled workers. It is implemented according to the two principal educational programs of basic and advanced levels. After completing the program of a basic level a graduate is given the degree of a “technician”. Advanced level programs provide for a more profound or extended training in relation to those of a basic level (the program is one-year longer). A

graduate with a profound training is given the degree of a “senior technician”, a graduate with an extended training gets the degree of a “technician with additional training in the sphere of...”(management, economics, IT, etc.)

Secondary vocational education can take different forms: full-time or evening courses, extra-mural classes and external studies on the basis of general secondary education (9 grades of a secondary school) or complete secondary education (11 grades of a secondary school). The admittance to the secondary vocational schools is done on a competitive basis in accordance with the results of the entrance exams. About 11% of general secondary schools leavers and about 23% of complete secondary school leavers become the students of specialized secondary educational establishments¹¹.

The study program of a full-time secondary vocational education of the basic level after complete secondary education lasts 2-3 years depending on the skills training area.

The study program at the evening and extra-mural courses is a year longer in relation to full-time courses. Secondary vocational education on the basis of general secondary education is a year longer in comparison with that on the basis of complete secondary education.

There are two main types of specialized secondary educational establishments: training/technical schools and colleges.

Training schools have general vocational educational programs of basic secondary vocational education, whereas colleges have basic and advanced general vocational educational programs. Institutions of higher education may also have programs of secondary vocational education.

More than 300 different qualifications are awarded in specialized secondary educational establishments. Recent years have seen the appearance of dozens of new qualifications, primarily in the social area, in the sphere of services and IT.

Those who have secondary vocational education may go in for higher education on the basis of shorter-term programs. As a rule, the term of studies can be reduced by one year if a person received basic secondary vocational education and by 1-2 years if a person has advanced secondary vocational education.

Secondary vocational education system comprises 2600 state and municipal specialized secondary educational establishments and institute departments which have secondary vocational education programs¹². Today 2.3 million people receive this kind of education¹³.

¹¹ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

¹² Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

¹³ Ibid.

2.3 Higher Education

In accordance with the legislation of the Russian Federation on education and depending on the range of academic programs there are different types of institutions of higher education: universities, academies and institutes.

Any institution of higher education and its branches may have programs of basic general, general, complete general, primary and secondary vocational education, as well as of extended education provided they have the appropriate authorization.

All three types of institutions of higher education usually have postgraduate education programs and advanced training programs for highly-skilled employees and research fellows and conduct basic and applied scientific research.

The Ministry of Education determines the contents of programs, the intensity of studies and the requirements of the general level of graduates. There are full-time, evening, extra-mural and external courses. The same educational standard is applied to all forms of education.

Students enter higher education at the age of 17, one year earlier than in many Western European countries. Russian higher education institutions are progressively introducing a new degree system. Previously students had to complete five years of higher education in order to obtain the diploma of completed higher education. If they did not complete the entire five years, they simply obtained a certificate of non-completed higher education. Today, Russian institutions are introducing Bachelor and Masters degrees in line with the common diploma framework of the Bologna Process. However, the specialist 5-year diploma will continue to be maintained.

Therefore, today graduates are awarded the following degrees: Bakalavr (Bachelor of Arts, equivalent to a Bachelor's Degree (BA) in the US or Western Europe), Specialist, Magistr (equivalent to a Master's Degree (M.Sc, M.A.) in the US or Western Europe) in the corresponding fields of study.

The Bakalavr corresponds to four years' higher education study, the Specialist to 5 years and the Magistr to 6 years. Most students continue postgraduate studies after the Bakalavr.

It has to be noted that education programs may be followed without any breach of continuity or stage by stage.

A graduate, who passes final state exams in accordance with the accredited education program, receives a state certificate of his/her level of education and/or qualifications.

Some institutions of higher education have international education programs for their students within the framework of cooperation with foreign institutes. In this case, students have a chance to enrol for a complete or non-complete course in a foreign institute or higher school and receive a foreign certificate,

It is the elective representative body called an academic council that is in charge of the general management of an institution of higher education. It has a 5-year term mandate. It comprises the rector (head of the council), pro-rectors and, if the council decides so, faculty deans. Other members are elected at a general meeting

(conference). The rector is responsible for direct management of an institute's activities. He or she is elected to this post every 5 years.

The number and the modalities of students' enrolments in the first year depend on the determined admission numbers which are set annually by a respective federal executive body that is in charge of an institute. In addition to this number, an institute may enrol more students by signing a contract in accordance with which a tuition-fee is paid by an individual or legal entity. Students with the best scores at the entrance examinations are proposed free tuition in State universities and a State scholarship of approximately 20 €/month. After the first year, scholarships are dependent on academic results. Additional sources of funding exist such as corporate sponsorship and Presidential, governmental and regional scholarships. Students with lower scores at the entrance exams may be accepted on a fee-paying basis. Tuition fees go from 50 € to 3000 € per semester, according to the region and the reputation of the institution.

Higher education has experienced drastic changes (quantative and qualitative) in the last few years.

The number of institutions of higher education has risen dramatically in recent years, especially due to the establishment of campus branches and non-state institutions. On January 1, 2001 there was a total of 1249 civil institutions of higher education in Russia (including campus branches)¹⁴, including state, municipal and non-state institutions. This number rose to 1823 (including campus branches) in 2004¹⁵.

There were 662 State institutions and 409 private institutions in 2004, not counting campus branches¹⁶. (Note: In Russia there are non-state educational institutions which charge tuition fees and free state educational establishments. Both deliver state certificates/diplomas provided they have the appropriate state accreditation. State institutions of higher education may also charge fees for their educational programs. Free programs are considered to be more prestigious than fee-paying programs and are the most difficult to enter due to the high requirements. As a rule, candidates try to enroll on free programs. If they don't succeed they then try to enter the departments which charge tuition fees. Non-state institutions of higher education with tuition fees are less prestigious due to their relatively short presence on the education market (10-15 years) and due to what many candidates and their parents consider to be these institutions' financial interest in attracting as many students as possible.

In 2004, there were 6 884 000 students in Russia, including 1.6 million enrolled in the first year of studies. These figures include all modes of study: full-time, part-time, distance learning etc.¹⁷

¹⁴ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

¹⁵ Source: www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2005, http://www.gks.ru/scripts/db_inet/dbinet.cgi?pl=2312001

¹⁶ Source: www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2005. P.8.9. *Higher Education Institutions*, http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b05_12/lswPrx.dll/Stg/d000/08-09.htm

¹⁷ Source: www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2005. P.8.9. *Higher Education Institutions*, http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/b05_12/lswPrx.dll/Stg/d000/08-09.htm

The number of people who want to enter institutions of higher education also keeps on growing. In 2000 there were 3 candidates for one student place. In 2004 this number rose to 3.79, for instance, in St-Petersburg¹⁸. The same trend is typical of the other regions of the country.

According to the Russian Ministry for Education, in 2002-2003 student enrollments in the different subject areas were as follows¹⁹:

- engineering and technical – 39%,
- agriculture – 7.7%,
- economics and law – 14.6%,
- medicine 3.9%,
- humanities – 34.8%

Official statistics according to different education levels (Bakalavr, Specialist, Magistr) are not available.

At the turn of the century specialists in the above branches of studies were in lower demand. One of the new branches of studies is “State and Municipal Management” (in 2000 the first graduates numbered only a few dozen). Social demand for new-type managers is high. In 2003 economic and law colleges were the most difficult to enter. The trend of the last few years towards greater interest for technical professions remained unchanged in 2004. Culture and arts as the fields of study were in greater demand²¹.

Youth conscience has changed. Today most school leavers realize that their careers and their lives in general depend largely on their choice of college. Competition in the labour market has risen sharply. Senior students prefer starting their professional activities before graduating from college to ensure that they have employment afterwards. The employer takes account both of the branch of study and performance rating of the graduate.

One of the considerable changes concerns the appearance of the new fields of study and new modalities of education. The number of new disciplines, for instance, is over 200 – from IT to taxation, clinical psychology to international corporate finance.

In the near future, starting from 2005 the number of those who want to enter higher education is predicted to go down. This will be due to the demographic situation in the country, as interest in higher education remains strong. The highest birthrate was in 1986-1987. Therefore, by 2010, according to the “Social Opinion” fund, there will be 759 000 entrants at the most against the current 1.6 million²². This could also entail a reduction in the number of institutions of higher education.

¹⁸ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

¹⁹ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

²¹ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

²² Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

2.4 Aspirantura (doctorate studies)

Aspirantura is established by the decree of the Russian Ministry of Education. Following expert analysis it gives a college or a scientific institution a licence to provide education in the sphere of post-graduate studies.

Those who have a higher education certificate are admitted to aspirantura on a competitive basis. There are full-time and extra-mural aspiranturas (doctorate studies). Studying at a full-time aspirantura cannot exceed 3 years, at an extra-mural aspirantura – no more than 4 years. An aspirant should carry out an individual plan, pass the doctorate exams, write and present a thesis.

The preparation of a set number of aspirants, which is determined by the respective ministries and bodies, is funded from the federal budget. Full-time aspirants get a monthly grant. State educational scholarships can also be awarded.

An aspirant should present a thesis to the college department or to the academic council (department, lab, sector) of an educational establishment to receive an evaluation. Afterwards a thesis is presented to the thesis council where at an appointed time it is publicly defended. After secret voting members of a thesis council decide whether to give the doctorate degree to an aspirant or not. Supreme Certifying Commission of Russian Ministry of Education takes the decision to award a doctorate certificate.

About 25 000 people graduate from aspirantura annually. However, only 30% of them defend their thesis²³.

2.5 Doktorantura (post-doctorate studies)

Doktorantura is established by the decree of the Russian Ministry of Education at the institutions of higher education and scientific institutions which, as a rule, have special thesis councils where doctorate and post-doctorate theses can be maintained provided these institutions have passed an appropriate expert analysis. Only people who hold a doctorate degree may be admitted to doktorantura. Doktorantura studies are full-time and may not exceed 3 years. Having finished his thesis, a doktorant should present it to the department of an institution of higher education or to the academic council (department, lab, sector) of a scientific establishment or organisation to get an evaluation. A thesis is defended at the corresponding thesis council. It is the Supreme Certifying Commission that decides to award a post-doctorate degree upon the application of the thesis council after the public maintenance of a thesis. The Supreme Certifying Commission also awards the degree of a professor or an associate professor taking into account the results of scientific and pedagogical activities.

It is the respective ministries and other bodies that set the number of places in doktorantura. These places are funded from the federal budget. The admitted

²³ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

doktorants are given state grants. Doktorants preserve all the rights at their workplace which they had before entering doktorantura (for example, the right to an academic title) as well as the right to return to their former workplace.

To write a post-doctorate thesis those who hold a doctorate degree can be employed as research fellows for a two-year term apart from studying at doktorantura.

There are aspiranturas and doktoranturas at 563 institutions of higher education in Russia and 804 scientific establishments, ministry bodies and subordinate agencies, scientific establishments of the Russian Academy of Sciences and sectorial state academies of sciences²⁴.

Apart from studying in aspirantura and doktorantura one can get a doctorate or postdoctorate degree as a graduant (candidate for a degree) which implies passing candidate exams, thesis preparation and its defense by people who are affiliated to colleges or scientific establishments and organizations without being enrolled in doktorantura, aspirantura or adjunktura. To write a doctorate thesis a person is affiliated for a 3-year term, for a postdoctorate thesis – not more than for 4 years.

1,300 people graduate from doktorantura each year. 40% of them defend a thesis²⁵.

2.6 Further and additional training of specialists

Further and additional training is part of the system of extended education.

Further training implies upgrading theoretical and practical knowledge which is the result of higher requirements for the qualifications and the necessity to get to know new ways of addressing professional tasks.

There are different types of educational establishments which provide extended education:

- sectorial and intersectorial academies of upgrading qualifications;
- institutes of upgrading qualifications – sectorial, intersectorial, regional, in different fields of science, technical education and technology;
- intersectorial regional centers;
- courses (schools, centers) of upgrading qualifications, training centers of the employment service;
- business, enterprise and higher commercial schools.

More than 2 million people underwent further and additional training in more than 1300 educational institutions in Russia in 2000-2001²⁶.

²⁴ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

²⁵ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

²⁶ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

Educational institutions of extended training are usually self-accounting and self-financed. Only educational institutions of extended training in the areas of health, education, agriculture, culture and law-enforcement are partially or fully funded from the budget. Some state programs are also funded from the budget: further and additional training of civil servants, dismissed members of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation, unemployed citizens, managers for state economic agencies, etc.

2.7 State policy on education

The Russian Federation proclaims the sphere of education to be of special importance. The basis of state policy in this sphere is laid down in the two documents which regulate functioning of the Russian educational system. These are:

- Law of the Russian Federation "On Education" adopted by the State Duma in 1992 and amended in 1996;
- Federal Program of Education Development adopted by the State Duma on March 15, 2000;
- Federal Target Program "Development of the Common Educational Informational Environment for the years 2001-2005".

One of the main principles of the Russian state policy in the sphere of education is the principle of an integrated federal education field.

In the Russian Federation education is provided in conformity with the national legislation and international law norms. It is the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation that is in charge of the implementation of state policy and managing Russian education at the federal level.

The citizens' right to education is provided for in the Constitution of the Russian Federation. In the sphere of education the legislation is called upon to ensure and guarantee this right, its aims and goals, separation of powers in education among state bodies and agencies of different levels which are in charge of education. Laws and federal programs guarantee to all citizens of Russia that primary, general and complete secondary education and primary vocational education are accessible to the public and free-for-all; as to the other levels of education (including higher education) it can be free on a competitive basis.

State education standards set the requirements for the content and quality at all levels of education. The State Standard in Education constitutes a social norm of education which is elaborated and implemented in accordance with the Constitution of the Russian federation. It has federal as well as national and regional components.

The main particular feature of the Russian education system is its multi-level nature. From birth to old age each Russian citizen can continuously gain knowledge at the following levels:

- preschool education,
- secondary education,
- vocational training,
- higher education,

- doctoral studies (aspirantura, doktorantura, further and additional training),
- extended education – lifelong learning (for children and adults).

In doing so, the state implements the principle of continuous “life-long” education.

Depending on his/her aspirations and opportunities each Russian citizen may officially get more than one certified qualification, including at the highest level of education.

With the development of IT, distance learning becomes increasingly popular. It implies getting valid higher education whilst being far away from the college tutors.

The Law “On Education” also mentions a non-state (private) education sector. Forms of ownership of various educational establishments can be different: state, municipal, private, other forms (mixed, belonging to public structures).

All institutions of higher education in Russia have national accreditation. Certain joint international programs exist. The Bridge Project sponsored by the Department for Education in Skills in Great Britain aims to develop joint programs between Russian and British universities. Other examples include joint Franco-Russian programs at Masters degree level in Moscow, St Petersburg and Nijni Novgorod and cooperation programs with American universities.

The *Vision 2020* Study published by British Council in 2004²⁷ predicts an increase of 6.1 % in the demand for transnational education in Russia by the year 2020.

By the mid 90-s the younger generation started to realize the importance of education for its future. A high demand for humanities, economics, business and law programs in the last few years is due not only to the market demand, but also to the insufficient funding of engineering, technical, natural sciences, defence and other basic branches which are relatively costly. However, in the last two years we have witnessed a higher interest for technical and scientific qualifications.

A turbulent period of reforms, which were carried out to address the dramatic changes in Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union and entering the third millennium, affected all spheres, primarily the national economy, including education. Today the Russian system of education is going through a stage of modernisation, which includes introducing the Integrated State Exam (Ediny Gosudarstvenny Ekzamen (EGE) that is the equivalent of the French Baccalauréat), an experimental 12-year general secondary education program, higher education certificates of different qualifications, computerisation of all stages of education, mostly higher education, and many other things. The main task of this modernisation is to revive and develop the best traditions of national education, to strengthen Russia’s position among the most educated countries and to integrate the nation into the world education community.

²⁷ British Council, *Vision 2020 – Forecasting international student mobility, a UK perspective*, 2004, London

The funding of Russian higher education institutions comes from the Federal budget and from other sources such as tuition fees and regional authorities. The federal budget constitutes a maximum of 22% of an institution's funding.²⁸

Figures: For 2005 the state has allocated 54.4 billion rubles (\$2 billion) for those institutions of higher education that are under the authority of the Federal Education Agency of the Education Ministry. This is 6.4 billion rubles (\$230 million) more than in 2004, which represents a 13-percent increase. On the whole, the federal budget for the year 2005 provides \$5.5 billion for education, which constitutes about 6% of the expenditure budget of the Russian Federation²⁹.

2.8 The impact of Communist ideology on Russian higher education

One of the legacies of the Soviet regime is that at its end, 99%³⁰ of the population was able to read and write. Before the Russian revolution of 1917, higher education was only accessible to a minority of the population: the nobility and members of the upper and middle classes. During the period of the Soviet Union higher education was open to all and was free of charge, although quotas were fixed for certain ethnic groups.

Education was influenced by Communist ideology as Russian and international history that was studied in schools and universities was adapted in order to underline the role of Communism. Certain study areas were also forbidden, such as genetics which was considered to be a science for the bourgeoisie.

During the Communist era, Russian students were not allowed to study in other countries, except for the Eastern Block. A university was set up in Moscow in order to host foreign students. Other higher education institutions were only able to accept international students with the prior agreement of the Communist Party. The only students accepted were those from the Eastern Block countries and developing countries faithful to the Party line.

Studies abroad were seen as a form of brain drain and Soviet ideology considered foreign societies as hostile. However, studying in another country was a dream for many Russians who wished to see a different way of life.

Today, the policy of equal access to higher education remains, without the quotas for ethnic groups. The effects of the Communist era can be seen in the fact that studying abroad is still seen by some to be a form of brain drain, with foreign countries benefiting from Russian skills.

The fact that studying abroad was forbidden probably explains why many parents today encourage their children to study in another country, as they themselves didn't have the possibility. Sending their children to study abroad is a way of living their dream through their children. However, some Russian youngsters prefer to stay and study and work in Russia, rather than go abroad, as the stereotypical image of life being better elsewhere is not the only image portrayed of other countries today.

²⁸ Source: Official report of FBK Audit and Consulting Company, *How Much Russia Costs*, 2004, p.11-12: <http://www.skolko.ru/upload/contents/536/13-obrazovanie.pdf>

²⁹ source: www.budgetrf.ru, supplement № 7 to the Federal Law, *On the Federal Budget for the year 2005*,

³⁰ Federal State Statistic Service, 2005. <http://www.gks.ru/bgd/regl/brus05/lswPrx.dll/Stg/08-01.htm>

Most Russian universities now look to set up cooperation agreements with foreign institutions. Evidence of international cooperation increases the reputation of an institution and helps to attract Russian students. However, certain universities, once they have signed the agreement with the partner university, don't take part in concrete actions.

3. Internationalisation of (higher) education and student mobility

Education is a rapidly growing market with over 20,000 Russian students studying abroad each year³¹. This number is increasing annually by approximately 10 per cent. British Council's *Vision 2020* Study predicts an increase of 50% in the number of Russian students going to study in the UK by 2020³². America alongside many European countries actively promotes its education programs in Russia. The most popular discipline among Russian students studying abroad is social sciences. Courses which are currently in high demand among Russian students studying abroad are also: business (fundamentals of economics and business, management, marketing, finance, business accounting and international business), English language, information technology, contemporary design and art. Technical disciplines are less popular; typically Russia is traditionally very strong in the fields of natural and technical sciences.

Students from Moscow and Saint Petersburg are most likely to be interested in undertaking undergraduate and postgraduate studies abroad. Students from the regions, particularly from oil-rich areas of Siberia are also interested in both undergraduate and postgraduate education abroad.

Russian students study abroad mainly in the U.S.A. and Western Europe. In 2003-2004, the number of Russian students in Germany, USA, UK and France was as follows:

Germany	10 814 ³³
USA	5 532 ³⁴
UK	2 639 ³⁵
France	2 561 ³⁶

These figures had increased from the previous year in all countries except USA which went down by 11.3%³⁷. Several reasons may explain this decrease including stricter visa procedures, the perception of the USA as an expensive destination country and increased marketing campaigns by European players. Nevertheless, the number of Russian students studying in the USA remains relatively high. Students in the fields of management, marketing and information technology, for example, are attracted by the USA, notably at postgraduate level and for professional development programs. American diplomas also have an excellent reputation in Russia.

Each year over 6,000 Russians (undergraduates, post-graduates, faculty and researchers) leave Russia for the first time to undergo study programs in more than 30 countries, either on the basis of Russia's international agreements or as a result of

³¹ Source: www.edu.ru, Federal Portal on Russian Education, 2005, *About Russian Education*, http://www.edu.ru/index.php?page_id=116

³² British Council, *Vision 2020 – Forecasting international student mobility, a UK perspective*, 2004, London

³³ *Wissenschaft weltoffen – facts and figures on the International nature of Studies and Research in Germany, 2005*: www.wissenschaft-weltoffen.de/2005/1/1/2/1

³⁴ Institute for International Education, 2005, *Open Doors*

³⁵ British Council, *Russian students in the UK*: www.britishcouncil.org/ecs/events/2004/1004/details/market.htm

³⁶ French Ministry for Education, Direction de la prospective et de l'évaluation, June 2004, *Les étudiants étrangers en France* (p.31)

³⁷ Institute for International Education, 2005, *Open Doors*

direct contacts of Russian and foreign educational institutions. The forms of study include:

- full course of studies,
- short-term visits for professional or language practice,
- research,
- professional upgrading.

Russian students can directly contact foreign colleges for application matters. As a rule, they get information on education abroad from Internet or via local offices of foreign informational centers and organisations, such as the British Council, DAAD, EduFrance and others.

Russian students also get information in the external affairs departments at their respective institutions. These departments inform students on the exchange programs with foreign partners-institutes and promote student mobility. Most Russian institutions of higher education may boast of signed mobility agreements, but only a small part of them actually implement them in practice. As a rule, the number of Russian students who want to go on a study placement abroad exceeds that of foreign students who would like to come to Russia.

If a Russian institute does not accept the disciplines that have been taught abroad, a student has to repeat an academic year in Russia which is not convenient. The institutions of higher education which are involved in the Bologna Process are the most active in terms of international cooperation and the most flexible in accepting the disciplines taught abroad to Russian students.

In some institutions of higher education participation in exchange programs is only possible for a “chosen few” – such as relatives, friends, etc. of the senior management of an institution. Due to matters of corruption, international exchange programs are therefore not really accessible for most students.

Factors limiting the participation of Russian higher education institutions in the European mobility process include:

- inability of the majority of Russian high education institutions to finance studies at Western European schools;
- lack of infrastructure to support the participation of Russian higher education institutions in European programs implying academic mobility development;
- visa problems, including the Schengen visa.

In 2002-03 Russia had 60,900 foreign students; with 33,400 of them from Asia. See table below³⁸.

	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Total number	54 500	59 700	60 900
Baltic States	1 000	3 900	4 200
Europe	8 800	5 400	5 500
Asia	27 900	33 000	33 400
USA	1 800	2 100	2 200
Latin America	900	1 500	1 600
Canada	200	300	300
Africa (excl. N. Africa)	4 100	5 500	5 600
Middle East and North Africa	9 700	7 700	7 800
Australia and New Zealand	100	300	300

Visa and residency permits do not pose any particular problems for foreign students in Russia. Furthermore, studies are relatively inexpensive compared to Western Europe and USA and offer high-quality training.

4. Marketing activities

It is organisations such as The British Council, the German Service for academic exchanges DAAD, the state agency EduFrance, NUFFIC and some others (for instance, the Delegation of the European Commission to Moscow and cultural centers of the EU member states) that promote European education in Russia. Their premises are usually at the embassies, libraries and culture centers, that is, in the places which are most often visited by young people and students interested in foreign cultures. There are different spheres of their activities in Russia:

- participation in international education exhibitions in Moscow and other regions
- informing candidates and their parents
- organising inter-college meetings, providing assistance to Russian colleges in establishing contacts with European partners
- providing grants for Russian students or assistance in finding financial aid
- assistance in administrative matters (preparation of dossiers, documents, obtaining visas, etc.)
- informing Russian commercial education agencies abroad on the programs which are offered to Russian students.

³⁸ Source : www.gks.ru, Federal State Statistic Service, 2005, *Number of foreign students in the State institutions of higher education*: <http://www.gks.ru/scripts/regl/1c.exe?XXXX33F.7.5.21.1/020380R>

The US Embassy via the American Culture Center and national state or non-governmental organisations (such as the FORD Foundation, for instance, or Soros Foundation) offers grants to Russian senior students or for conducting scientific research.

Canadian and Australian institutions of higher education backed by their embassies take part in special exhibitions and usually work with commercial agencies.

The following major fairs are held annually:

- *Education and Career – XXI Century* (November 2004, March 2005 – Moscow, – 15 000 visitors). There are Russian and foreign exhibitors at this fair, such as Russian education agencies which send students abroad, national organizations and agencies, like the British Council, DAAD and EduFrance and Russian and foreign institutions of higher education. Undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programs both in Russia and abroad are promoted.
- *International Education Fair* (February 2005 – Moscow, St Petersburg – est. 25 000 visitors). A specialized fair devoted to education abroad. Participants: Russian education agencies, which send students abroad, national organizations and agencies and foreign institutions of higher education. The exhibition enjoys great popularity and attracts a high percentage of young visitors (especially aged 15-20). All levels of study and all subject areas are represented.
- *Education UK* (September 2004 – Moscow – 5 600 visitors). The exhibition organized by the British Council represents British schools and colleges as well as institutions of higher education. In 2004, the focus was on undergraduate and postgraduate business programs, art and design programs, English language courses and boarding schools.
- *Business Education in Russia* (May 2005 – Moscow)
- *MBA World Tour* (Autumn 2004 – Moscow – St Petersburg). A specifically targeted fair devoted to business programs abroad. There is a relatively small number of participants. They generally represent middle-level and senior managers.

The impact of these events appears to be considerable, in the long-term as well as in the short-term, as they generate substantial increased interest in studying abroad. For example, the local EduFrance office in Moscow registers an increased number of enquiries about study opportunities in France following its participation and the participation of French higher education institutions in education fairs in Russia. Certain enquiries come from visitors immediately following the events and others up to one or even two years after the fairs. In addition to Internet sites, information offices of national agencies and some Russian university international relations departments, fairs are a major source of information on studying abroad. The fact that students call the local EduFrance office, for example, asking about forthcoming fairs shows the interest such events generate amongst this target audience.

The exhibitors that participate in fairs with well-elaborated promotional strategies get the best results. Higher education institutions tend to participate in general and specialized fairs as part of national pavilions in order to benefit from the strengthened brand image of the destination country. Personal contacts play an important part in the national Russian context. The opportunity to meet face-to-face with representatives of foreign institutions reassures Russian students intending to study abroad. Usually visitors diffuse the information they gather at fairs among friends, colleagues and acquaintances. Hearing about study opportunities in such a manner also reassures potential candidates. Word of mouth therefore yields positive results in the long-term .

III. Implementation of the survey

1. Choice of target institutions and institutional facilitators

10 universities and 5 secondary schools, which represent the below-mentioned regions and cities of Russia, were chosen. The choice of institutional facilitators was made first of all from amongst the large network of local EduFrance representatives who work in or with Russian universities (about 50% of all institutional facilitators). They have access to wide contacts in Russian universities.

To avoid working only with people who are oriented towards France and the French, all institutional facilitators were asked to target students interested in different study destinations.

1 and 2. The capital of the Russian Federation Moscow (Central Federal District, population - 9 m.) is represented by the two leading Russian institutions of higher education: Moscow State M. Lomonosov University and Moscow State Technical N. Bauman University

- **Moscow State M. Lomonosov University**

Moscow State University was established in 1755. It is the biggest public university in Russia and number one in research. The university has different campus in the City and in different regions of the country. More than 40 000 undergraduates and about 7 000 postgraduates study at the university, and over 5 000 specialists do the refresher course here. More than 4 000 professors and lecturers, and about 5 000 researchers work for the faculties and research institutes. The University employs over 15 000 ancillary staff. Every year Moscow University enrolls about 2 000 international students and postgraduates from all over the world. Moscow University has at its disposal more than 600 buildings and facilities, occupying over 1 million square metres. The University campus in Moscow covers 205.7 hectares.

Source : <http://www.msu.ru/en/>

Secondary School: secondary school №944, 1600 pupils. Foreign languages: English and French.

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Daria Kazarinova, Consultant of the RTV-Media Group Agency. Has taken part in several public opinion polls on different subjects, has many contacts among students.

- **Moscow State Technical N. Bauman University**

MSTU was founded in 1830. Moscow State Technical N.E. Bauman University has always been known as an Engineering University of educational excellence, having a potential for real greatness. A long-term history of the University provides many examples of creating a number of the world-known scientific schools which contributed to developments in different fields such as space engineering, heating engineering, biophysics, aerodynamics, radio physics, radio electronics, optics, laser technology, dynamics and strength of machines.

Presently there are approximately 18000 students, concentrating their studies in science and engineering, and 1000 post graduates, working on their Ph.D. theses at MSTU. It numbers 350 Doctors of Science and 1800 Ph.D.s. Opportunities offered by

MSTU attracted more than 300 international students from 20 countries all over the world.

All training programs meet state educational standards and carry national accreditation. Graduates of all degrees earn appropriate certificates.

Source : <http://www.bmstu.ru/mstu/English/>

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Nadejda TRUNOVA, teaching at Moscow State Technical Institute.

3. The Central Federal District is also represented by Lipetsk State Pedagogical University (population of Lipetsk is 500 000 people).

- **Lipetsk State Pedagogical University**

The Lipetsk State University was founded in 1954.

More than 1 000 professors and lecturers work in 15 faculties, there are more than 8000 students. The students are largely from the Lipetsk region and other central regions of Russia. There are foreign students who are on a placement or who study on a permanent-basis.

Source : <http://lspu.lipetsk.ru/index.php?rub=about> (only in Russian)

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Olga Sushkova, Director of the Association of International Cooperation (Association is supported by the Administration of the Lipetsk region).

4. St. Petersburg State University represents the second capital and the second largest city in Russia - St.Petersburg (**North-Western Federal District**, population 5 m.).

- **St. Petersburg State University**

St. Petersburg State University is the oldest university in Russia, founded in 1724.

In the course of almost three centuries of its existence the University has acquired a wealth of experience in international co-operation in the spheres of science, education and culture. It now has about 100 direct agreements of co-operation with universities in 50 countries of the world.

St. Petersburg State University can justly be regarded as an international seat of learning, with as many as 1500 undergraduate and postgraduate students from Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia taking a course of study here every year.

One of the University's important characteristics is the functioning of 11 research institutes as its structural units alongside the 19 faculties, which enables the staff and students to combine the teaching-learning process with fundamental research both in the sciences and humanities.

Source : <http://www.spbu.ru/e/>

Secondary School: secondary school №1035, 1300 pupils. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Anna Rakhmadulova, teacher at the Saint Petersburg State University

5 and 6. Privolzhski Federal District is represented by Nizhni Novgorod State University (population of Nizhni Novgorod is about 2 m. people) and Samara State University (population of Samara is 1 m.).

- **Nizhny Novgorod State University**

The University of Nizhny Novgorod was inaugurated in 1916.

The University of Nizhny Novgorod comprises 27 faculties, 122 departments, 6 research institutes: Physico-Technical Research Institute, Research Institute for Chemistry, Research Institute for Mechanics, Research Institute for Applied Mathematics and Cybernetics, Research Institute for Molecular Biology and Regional Ecology, Institute for Strategic Research, Institute of postgraduate and doctoral studies, International Centre for Studies in Public Economics, Centre of Slavic culture, outpatient clinic and health centre.

In official national ratings, UNN is among the top ten Russian universities.

Total enrolment is over 26 000 undergraduate and graduate students. There are 57 PhD (Candidate of Sciences) programs and 24 post-doctoral (Doctor of Sciences) programs with more than 1000 students. Diploma Specialist programs (5 years) are offered in 47 specialities. Bachelor's programs (4 years) are taught in 22 areas. There are 56 Master's programs (6 years), 10 programs of secondary professional education and shorter-term training programs for those already having higher or secondary professional education in respective areas.

Source : http://www.unn.ru/main_eng.htm

Secondary school №1035 and Gymnasium №53. About 1400 pupils altogether. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Institutional facilitator: Mr Andrey Nikolaev, the Head of the local EduFrance office in Nizhny Novgorod. Mr Nikolaev has many contacts with the representatives of institutions of higher education of Nizhny Novgorod and delivers lectures at different faculties.

- **Samara State University**

The University was founded in 1918. Now 22 educational programs are realized at 10 faculties of the university. Much work on structural and matter renewal of lecture courses and practical training and on bringing of study process methodical supply into accordance with requirements of Governmental educational standard's second generation. There are 6702 day students, 1209 evening students and 4709 students by correspondence at the university. The total number of students had run up to 12619. 94% of alumni get job placements. Post-graduate courses are developing rapidly (48 specialties), about 300 post-graduates study there. Doctors' training courses have been opened (9 majors). 72 Doctors of science, professors and 282 Candidates of science, senior lecturers work at the university.

Source : <http://volgadeti.samara.ru/en/about/>

Institutional facilitator: Mr Pavel Frelikh, the Head of the local EduFrance office in Samara. Mr Frelikh has many contacts with the representatives of institutions of

higher education of Samara and delivers lectures at different faculties. He is also deputy-director of the Alliance Française of Samara.

7. South of the Russian Federation is represented by Rostov State University (Rostov-on-Don, population about 1 m. **South Federal District**).

- **Rostov State University**

The Rostov Region is among the largest South Russian centres of industry and agriculture, science and culture. Rostov State University, founded in 1915 is an internationally-recognized and fully accredited academic institution. The University has 14 faculties, 9 research institutes, a Botanic garden, a large academic library, research centers at the Black seashore and in the Caucasus. It's a vast complex comprising 10 scientific-research institutes (Physics, Physical and Organic Chemistry, Neurocybernetics, Biology, Mechanics and Applied Mathematics, Geochemistry of the Biosphere, Carbo-hydrated Raw Materials, Geoecology and Forecasting of Extreme Situations, Academic-Scientific Research Institute of Valeology, North-Caucasian Scientific Research Institute of Economic and Social Problems, Technological Design Bureau "Piezopribor", the Institute for Retraining Teachers of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Southern Russia Regional Informational Center for Establishments of Higher Education).

Source : <http://www.mis.rsu.ru/foreign/index.html>

Secondary School: secondary school №11, 500 pupils. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Tamara Khouajeva, Assistant to the director of the Alliance Française in Rostov-on-Don. Mrs Khouajeva works with students and teaches at Rostov State University.

8. Ekaterinburg (population 1.3 m. **Ural Federal District**) is represented by the Ural State University.

- **Ural State University**

The Ural State University was founded in 1920. Today it has 6113 students, 13 faculties with 20 majors and 16 areas of study. 120 professors (Doctors of Sciences), 11 members of Russian Academy of Sciences

Source : <http://www.usu.ru/> (only in Russian).

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Lilia Selesneva, teacher in the Ural State University. Her husband is the head of the external affairs department at the Ural State University.

9. The Siberian Federal District is represented by Novossibirsk State University which is situated in the largest Russian scientific and research center with a population of 1.4 m.

- **Novossibirsk State University (Siberia)**

The official opening of the University took place on September 26, 1959. There are 14 departments and specialties: Mechanics and Mathematics, Physics, Natural Sciences, Geology and Geophysics, Economics, Information Technologies, Humanities, Foreign Languages, Journalism, Psychology, Philosophy, Law, Medical Science.

Source : <http://www.nsu.ru/english/> , <http://www.nsu.ru/french/>

Secondary school: secondary school №241, 1100 pupils. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Svetlana Shkarina, the Head of the local EduFrance office in Nijni Novgorod. Mrs Shkarina has many contacts with the representatives of institutions of higher education of Nizhni Novgorod and delivers lectures at different faculties.

10. Kazan is the capital of the **Republic of Tatarstan** of the Russian Federation, located in the centre of the European part of Russia on the banks of the Volga and Kama Rivers. Kazan is situated 800 kilometers east of Moscow on the left bank of the Volga River. The population of Kazan is 1.1 million. Nearly half are Russian and the other half Tatar.

- **Kazan State University**

Kazan State University is located in the city of Kazan and was founded in 1804. Kazan State University is one of the largest and oldest institutions of higher education in Russia.

At present Kazan State University is a large educational and research complex. Students are trained in 32 specialties and directions at 17 faculties and 1 interuniversity department.

There are 579 postgraduate and post-doctoral students, 9572 undergraduate students including 140 foreign students from 27 different countries. There are 1075 professors including 562 candidates and 192 doctors of science and 172 researchers on staff (154 candidates, 18 doctors of science) that work at 86 departments.

Source : http://www.kcn.ru/tat_en/university/index.php3

Institutional facilitator: Mrs Svetlana Klyucheva, teacher at Kazan State University.

2. Promotion of the survey

The following measures were taken during the research:

- distribution of flyers during the Day of Europe on the 14.05.05 (about 1000), in the National Library of Foreign Literature in Moscow, in universities, in the American Cultural Centre, in the British Council and in the French Cultural Centre,
- installation of the link to the survey on the Edufrance Russia website,
- installation of the link to the survey on the Russian University of Humanities website
- installation of the link to the survey on British Council Russia website
- installation of the link to survey on DAAD Russia website

3. Problems encountered and their impact on the study

The research faced certain difficulties:

1. The research could be carried out at the universities only upon the permission of a dean or the head of the external affairs department. Sometimes institutional facilitators got negative responses to their requests. The rationale was as follows: the aim of the Russian education policy is to provide high-quality education in Russia, but not abroad. Therefore, they are not greatly interested in such research. In this regard, the French Embassy in Russia was most helpful via its deputy-counsellor for culture Mrs Armelle Groppo and Attaché for university cooperation who sent official letters to the chosen universities.

It has to be noted that to carry out such research in Russia in state agencies it is necessary to have official state support, for example, official letters, etc.

2. Providing information on the websites of the universities and on other sites, which are popular among students required in most cases high expenditure (placing information for one week would have cost about 1000-2000\$).

3. According to some institutional facilitators, senior university staff agreed to give interviews only on the condition of anonymity.

IV. Interview results

1. Higher Education Experts

E1, DAAD department in Novosibirsk.

E2, Institute of Education Development of Nizhny Novgorod, expert in higher education in Russia and abroad.

E3, Administration of the Lipetsk region, manager of the international cooperation programs.

E4, Expert in education in European countries at the Students International Education Agency. Representative of one of the leading Russian commercial agencies, which has its offices in almost every large town in the country.

1.1 General View of Internationalisation, Student Mobility, and its Role in Education Policy

All the four higher education experts who were interviewed agreed that internationalisation/student mobility is an important aspect of the national/governmental education policy agenda in Russia.

The major goals and objectives of this policy are to promote inter-university cooperation, student and teacher mobility, to raise the ratings of institutions of higher education and acquire international experience.

The following means are used to support the programmes (listed in the decreasing priority order):

- financial support for domestic students to study abroad,
- agreements for mutual recognition of degrees,
- establishment of contact points to support international cooperation in education,
- marketing campaigns
- accreditation of foreign education providers on the national territory.

Expert E1 underlined the importance of support on the part of the Ministry of Education in organising international education exhibitions; expert E4 especially mentioned the role of the governmental and presidential grant program for students, which covers all tuition and living expenses.

The most important countries/regions in terms of university cooperation and enhancement of student mobility are the following: The European region (Great Britain, Germany, France, Italy, for instance) holds the first place, expert E2 mentioned the USA, Japan, China and South Korea, expert E4 pointed out Canada. Note: The choice of a priority country for academic cooperation depends, as a rule, on the areas of academic majors of the higher education institutions. For example, if the university teaches European languages, which is the case of most Russian universities, the experts mentioned European destination countries in first place. Russia welcomes Chinese students, for whom the cost of studies is reasonable compared to other major destination countries. Russia is keen to develop economic cooperation with China. The USA, Japan and South Korea are attractive for

programs in computer science and information technology. Canada was mentioned as a country with an active promotional policy in the sphere of study abroad.

From their point of view, a full degree or a study period abroad are advantageous in terms of acquiring special knowledge in the subject area, improving language competences and career prospects at home. Expert E3 maintains the chances of building one's career abroad are not very high. Note: General opinion has it that Russian institutions of higher education provide a good general background, a good general higher education. But in terms of programs of narrower specialisations, such as, for instance, tourism or hotel management, logistics, design or specialised marketing, Russia's education can be considered as lagging behind its Western counterpart. Therefore, specialists with Western diplomas are in high demand on the labour market in Russia.

The disadvantages or risks of studying abroad, which were mentioned by the experts, are high education fees and difficulty in finding a satisfactory way of living.

Expert E3 said that it is difficult to find employment in the host country of studies.

Two of the experts view as disadvantages for Russia the brain drain (E2 and E4); expert E3 regards getting education abroad by the young people to be very useful.

Financial problems constitute, in their opinion, the major obstacles or barriers in studying abroad. Other obstacles include: insufficient knowledge of foreign languages and motivation, lack of information, visa procedures and inconformities in the education systems.

The study periods abroad or foreign academic degrees are highly valued by employers in Russia and the students with international experience have an advantage in terms of higher salaries, better positions etc. Expert E4 esteems that finding a good position depends largely on the study area and the type of enterprise: joint companies in the sphere of external economic relations value highly graduates of foreign institutes.

1.2 Financial Support Schemes

The state or local government employs the following financial mechanisms and measures in order to foster student mobility:

- a) with regard to domestic students - scholarships, exchange programs. As it was stated above, expert E4 especially mentioned the role of the governmental and presidential grant program for students, which covers all tuition and living expenses abroad.
- b) b) with regard to foreign students – exchange programs (intergovernmental agreements and target programmes of foreign specialists training), foreign students have the same rights to get a grant as Russian students (E3).

The students at postgraduate and PhD level of study are primarily addressed by these support schemes, especially in finance, law, pure sciences, engineering, social sciences, IT and new technologies.

Three experts think that financial support schemes play the main and crucial role in relation to the overall mobility of domestic students. However, expert E4 considers it to be important, but not critical, for there are students who are ready to pay for their studies abroad.

1.3 The Role of the EU as a Study Destination

When experts compare the European Union (EU) to other countries where one can get an international education, they contend that among the major EU strengths are:

- the quality of education (“everybody knows that the level of higher education in Great Britain, France, Germany is very high”),
- “the common higher education area” (“It’s very easy to study at one university and after to continue at another one”),
- the possibility to get education in English (as is the case, for instance, in Finland, Greece, Spain) (E3),
- “a greater number of joint European-Russian companies“ (E4),
- availability of financial support / scholarships,
- acceptance / prestige of the academic degrees obtained in the host country at the local labour market,
- lifestyle, cultural openness and tolerance,
- language.

Note: When asked about the advantages of studying in the European Union, all the experts mentioned the quality of higher education in first place. The other answers were generally given after certain suggestions on the part of the interviewer.

The major weaknesses of the European Union are:

- financing issues,
- few programmes which are taught in English (“It would be better to study in English in a country whose national language is not so popular”) (E4).

Note: All experts had difficulty answering this question. They agreed that there are weak points, but they are insignificant and the advantages of studying abroad outweigh them. This may be due to the general perception of Europe (“they do it better than us”) which is traditionally positive in Russia.

In the experts’ opinion, the differences among individual EU member states in terms of quality of higher education, validation of academic degrees in the home country, costs of living and studies are quite significant.

The future cooperation among Russian universities and the EU partnership universities in general, and in the sphere of student exchanges, in particular, will increase (all experts agree with that), for this is a natural on-going process, there are also common interests, students are willing to take part in exchange programmes; finally, social evolution, political and economic trends require international academic or professional experience (E3).

This cooperation is currently focused on specific regions or countries of the EU, such as Great Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Italy (all experts agree on that). However, all the EU countries gradually get involved in this process, all at a different pace (E3).

All experts are more or less familiar with the European Union programmes, which are especially tailored to foster the cooperation of higher education institutions/student mobility among the EU and non-EU countries, such as Erasmus Mundus. Expert E2 mentioned the TEMPUS programme.

There is no specific information on EU higher education they are interested in, but have not managed to get so far.

1.4 Future Development of Student Mobility

All experts agree that the future development of student mobility in Russia and the number of students going abroad will increase, because it is beneficial both for the universities and students. There is an increasing number of parents who can pay for their children's education and who realize the rationality of investing money in it. (E3, E4). Germany, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Italy will be the most preferred destination countries among students (all experts agree on that). China, South Korea, Japan (E2) and Switzerland (E3) were also mentioned in this regard. Note: Despite the forecasted decrease in the birth rate, the number of students going abroad is likely to increase because of higher living standards (increased income and improved welfare), a vigorous information and marketing policy by foreign countries and an increasing number of interuniversity cooperation programs. China is also seen as a potential exporter of students to Russia. Switzerland is viewed as a prestigious study place for the children of well-off parents.

All experts also think that Russia will be home to an increasing number of foreign students. Although today many students from the developing countries get their education in Russia (E3), attracting more foreign students will be a priority (E2).

2. Rectors / Vice-Rectors / Directors of International Relations

R1. Representative of the rectorate of Ural State University

R2. Representative of the rectorate of Lipetsk State Technical University

R3. Representative of the rectorate of Samara State University

R4. Representative of the rectorate of Rostov State University

R5. Representative of the rectorate of Novosibirsk State University

R6. Representative of the international relations department of Kazan State Energy University

R7. Representative of the international relations department of the Academy for Public Service (Nizhny Novgorod).

R8. Representative (Moscow), of the International Student Mobility Center of Moscow State Technical University named after Bauman (MG TU Baumana)

R9. Representative (Moscow), of the International Law Institute at Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO).

R10. Representative of the rectorate (Moscow), of the Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys (MISIS University).

2.1 Internationalisation Strategy

Most interviewees mentioned that their institutions of higher education have elaborated an explicit policy regarding international cooperation and the internationalisation of the university (except R7). The main objectives of this policy are:

- to enhance the mobility of academic staff and students,
- to confront students with an international environment,
- general innovation and modernisation of the institutions,
- to gain a competitive advantage over other institutions in their country,
- reputation building in a global context,
- attracting foreign students (R6).

and measures:

- partnerships with universities in other countries,
- student exchange programmes,
- research cooperation,
- joint degree programmes with universities in other countries,
- curriculum internationalisation,
- to attract foreign staff and students,
- foreign language teaching.

Only one university with a clear-cut international orientation offers (internationally oriented) degree programmes with an obligatory study period abroad (R9): study placements focusing on foreign languages and other disciplines.

All the universities offer foreign language training courses for their own students. English is usually compulsory. The second foreign language is usually German or French (but not at all faculties). One can also opt for Italian or Spanish. The university (R5) also offers Persian, Japanese and Chinese language courses. The University (R9) teaches all European, Oriental and rare languages.

As a rule, the highest university administration (rector's office and/or subordinate units) is involved in activities concerning its internationalisation and is in charge of its external affairs. The rector's assistant for external affairs provides information on international scholarships, grants, contests, conferences and seminars (R1), the rector might take an active part in developing external relations (by holding regular meetings with the partners) (R3).

Only one university has budget means for its own internationalisation (R9), but these have not been specified.

2.2 Student Mobility: Support Structures and Patterns

Each University has one unit, which is primarily in charge of supporting the international mobility of students. As a rule, it is the External Relations Department with the pro-rector (or rector's assistant in external affairs) at its head.

The main tasks of these units are:

- consulting on international programmes and providing assistance with documentation,
- promoting international cooperation, academic mobility among teachers and students, establishing and maintaining partnership relations with foreign institutions of higher education, exchange programmes (R3),
- organizing study placements for teachers, internships for students in foreign companies, linguistic courses abroad.

Individual professors, teachers and other staff members support and organise student mobility depending on the university's international policy.

The same can be applied to the number of students who go abroad: from 170-180 including all levels of education (R9) to 3-4 students who are doing their Master Degrees (R1, R3). In some universities there are no students going abroad (R2).

The majority of mobile students go abroad within the framework of an exchange programme with a university from another country. R2 said that "our students go abroad as free movers", i.e. on their own. R10 mentioned that students go abroad thanks to the "Russian government and presidential scholarships".

The international exchange programmes play an important role in all the universities but sometimes there is no balance between outgoing and incoming students. Only the university R9 respects a certain balance: there are about 800 students from 64 countries.

The cooperation agreements or student exchange programmes are established with France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, United States, China, Japan. The university R9 has established such relations with almost all European countries, China, United States and others.

There are some departments which run a high number of exchange programmes due to their majors, such as, for instance, world economy (R3), linguistics/foreign languages (R5) and some technical subjects.

2.3 Views on Student Mobility

From the point of view of rectors and international staff, the advantages of a full degree or a study period abroad for Russian students are:

- acquiring special knowledge in the subject area,
- improving language competences,
- career prospects in an international context or at home,
- international academic ties,
- acquiring professional as well as new advanced experience abroad

The disadvantages or risks which they would expect if their students study abroad:

a) disadvantages for mobile students:

- difficulties in validating degrees in certain study areas (accountancy, law),
- the acquired knowledge is impossible to apply in the country of studying when looking for employment,
- the necessity to take academic leave (upon return a student cannot validate his/her studies at the home institute and he/she has to continue studies in the same year prior to his/her study placement abroad (R3), which means longer studies to get a degree,
- due to the inconformity in the education programs Russian students abroad have to study at a level lower.

b) disadvantages for the university or the country:

- the opinions of the interviewees were divided half by half. Some of them presume that there is no brain drain as such, the others think that this problem exists.

At the same time a certain pattern can be seen: the wider the experience of dealing with foreign partners, the greater the conviction that there is no such problem.

The obstacles and barriers which make it difficult for the Russian students to organise a study abroad period:

- poor knowledge of foreign languages,
- financial constraints,
- no general education programmes and inconformity of education programmes,
- lack of information,
- sometimes visa procedures.

The postgraduate and PhD level of study is the most appropriate for students to spend a period of study abroad. All rectors agree with this. The words of R1 can be cited. They express a common point of view: "At this level joint guidance of a final paper or thesis is possible which is beneficial for both countries".

2.4 The Role of the EU as a Study Destination

The EU member states as destination countries are very important for Russian students who are intent on studying abroad. This is the opinion of all interviewees, except for R7, who thinks that the USA is more preferable.

When they compare the European Union with other destination countries for studying abroad, e.g. the US, they list among the major strengths of the European Union:

- quality of higher education (Note: this answer was given by all interviewees without exception. When answering the question the interviewees implied studies in Great Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Austria and Switzerland).

- acceptance / prestige of the academic degrees obtained in the host country on the local and international labour market (“we are proud to have our students who have studied abroad”),
- availability of financial support / scholarships,
- accessibility of higher education with degrees from Russia,
- ties with Russia and territorial proximity with Russia (Note: it is easier and cheaper for those studying in Europe to come back home during the holidays than for students in the USA. Parents can also visit them),
- economic growth, common European currency,
- safety ,
- lifestyle, cultural openness and tolerance, (Note: Historical cultural ties are above all between Russia and Europe. The Russian mentality is somewhat closer to that of Europeans than Americans),
- language (Note: knowledge of a European language may be useful during the student's future job search, all the more so, given that economic cooperation with Europe is one of the priority areas of Russia’s foreign policy).

As to the major weaknesses of the European Union, they are:

- teaching in a national language (apart from English, German and French), few programmes in English,
- “Studying English is a top-priority, therefore, many students go to the US. American diplomas/certificates are considered to be more prestigious” (R6),
- a different level of education. (Note: The interviewees presume that one can not compare, for example, the quality of education in Latvia to that of Great Britain or education in Portugal to education in France. Therefore, when choosing European partners Russian institutes prefer “old” European countries with a better educational reputation. This shows that Russians do not perceive the European Union as a united structure in the sphere of education quality).

The differences among individual member states of the European Union are quite considerable in terms of quality of higher education, validation of academic degrees in the home country, costs of living and studying. “In terms of the quality of education the old European universities are still considered to be the most prestigious. On the other hand, tuition and living fees are higher here. From this perspective, the institutes, which offer a not so expensive, but not necessarily of lower quality education, may have an advantage,” – that was an opinion of R3.

All the interviewees agreed that future cooperation among Russian universities and partnership universities from the EU in general, and on student exchange, in particular will increase:

- through joint projects, exchanges among students and teachers, academic guidance of final papers and theses, academic ties (R1),
- via students' and teachers' participation in scholarships and grant programs (R3),
- within the framework of coordinated study plans and programs (R4),
- within the framework of the Bologna Process.

But this cooperation will focus mainly on specific regions and countries of the EU: Great Britain, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy ("old" EU members). However, the interviewees noted that their institutions are open to cooperation with all the countries.

2.5 Information about higher education in the European Union

The interviewees mentioned that they are more or less knowledgeable about the education systems in France, Great Britain, Germany, Czech Republic, Finland, Hungary and Spain.

The main sources of information sources of information about EU higher education are the following:

- Internet,
- professional ties (university cooperation, contacts among colleagues, personal trips),
- educational counseling services (British Council, EduFrance, American Center etc).

Due to their professional occupation, most interviewees are familiar with programmes of the European Union especially tailored to foster cooperation in the sphere of higher education institutions/student mobility among the EU and non-EU countries such as Erasmus Mundus. TACIS, BRIDGE, DAAD, TEMPUS and TIME programmes were also mentioned.

There is not any specific information on EU higher education they are interested in, but have not managed to get so far. Nobody was hampered in their search for general information on EU higher education programmes.

3. Parents

20 parents took part in the opinion poll.

3.1 Background Information

Most of the parents have 1 or 2 children, although some of them have several (for example, 5).

It is largely parents that look for information on education for their children who are either secondary school leavers (17-18 years old) or junior students (19-21 years old). Senior students look for the required information all by themselves. Therefore, the parents of senior students constitute a minority of those who have been interviewed. The number of girls who want to study abroad is twice as large as the number of boys. One of the possible explanations for the greater number of females wanting to study abroad might be the fact that Russia remains a patriarchal country, where women (in the social conscience) are assigned secondary roles – notably, those of housekeeping and childcare. Women have to make more efforts in order to achieve well in their professional life. For example, a man may get a managerial

position with a certain level of education whereas a woman would need to have a higher level of qualification in the same case.

Half of the interviewees have relatives (husband, brother, nephew, son/daughter) who are studying or have studied abroad. Countries such as Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, Canada, the US, Australia and Cambodia were mentioned. The other half does not have such relatives, but has friends whose children studied abroad. Some parents (about 5) said they have neither relatives, nor friends who studied abroad.

Some families (about 8) have relatives who currently reside abroad: in Spain, Great Britain, France, Denmark, Belgium, Estonia, Latvia, Canada and USA.

It was a parent's idea to study abroad in 50% of the cases, about 15% of the interviewees said that it was their child's idea. The rest of them said that the idea to study abroad was nurtured both by the parents and their children.

The main subject area of studying abroad is economics, linguistics/foreign languages, architecture/arts. Three parents think that the best way is "to study at first at the Russian institute and then in a foreign one (as a major)". Five parents said that "they and their children have not decided yet".

The overwhelming majority of the parents think that their children should get an academic degree not lower than MA/MSc.

Most parents are ready to pay for their children's studies abroad. Some of them (15%) are ready to provide their financial assistance in addition to a grant.

3.2 Advantages and Disadvantages of Study Abroad

From the parents' point of view, the advantages of studying abroad for their children are:

- international diploma/certificate which facilitates job search in Russia,
- career prospects,
- wider outlooks,
- prestige,
- foreign language practice,
- independence.

And for the family in general:

- career growth in Russia,
- prestige.

There are also some disadvantages or risks which the parents expect from a study period abroad of their children:

- separation from the family and no communication with the child,
- financial risk and culture shock,

- lodging and medical treatment difficulties.

About 20% of the parents could not answer, some of them think that “it is up to their child to confront the arising problems, if he/she can not do it, he/she should come back to Russia”.

Some obstacles and barriers make it difficult for the parents and for their children to organise the study abroad period:

- tuition and living expenses,
- getting a grant,
- insufficient information and the problem of choice of the education program.

One person mentioned lack of motivation. Three people said there are no obstacles to studying abroad.

3.3 Host Country and Host University

The parents have taken into account France (“Sorbonne”), Great Britain (Oxford), USA, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Belgium, the Netherlands (listed in the decreasing order of preference) as possible host countries for their children.

The main criteria for the choice of a host country where they want their child to study is getting an international diploma/certificate, learning a foreign language, interesting education programs and the possibility to get a grant:

- quality of higher education (the most important criterion, 90% of persons interviewed),
- acceptance / prestige of the academic degrees obtained in the host country on the local and international labour market, Note: This criteria is closely related to the first and is important. Parents regard studying abroad as a possibility to get a more well-paid job nationally or abroad (“my child can easily find a good job in Russia with a European academic degree”, “my friends think it’s very prestigious to send children to study abroad”),
- the costs of living and study / availability of financial support / scholarships (“I know that sometimes studies are free in Europe. So I prefer to pay only for accommodation (transport and so on) of my son and it would be cheaper than to study in Moscow State University”), Note: Corruption is rampant in Russian higher education institutions. One often has to give bribes to get a candidate enrolled in a tuition-free programme. The range of bribes depends on the region and the prestige of the university. But it can amount in Moscow to 50 000\$. Therefore, some families face a choice: to pay a bribe or to send a child abroad, which can be less expensive given that some European countries have tuition-free educational programs.
- safety and living standards,
- lifestyle and culture; multicultural / tolerant society,
- language spoken in the host country,
- distance from home (only 2 parents mentioned it).

Parents who have stated more than one country as possible destinations were guided largely by the knowledge of foreign languages of their children: if it is English, the UK was mentioned first (the USA in the second place), if French – France, if German – Germany. One person mentioned Belgium, for there is a possibility to “be educated in several foreign languages (French, German, English, Dutch)”. Professional ties and relations with relatives were also among the criteria for the choice of a country.

Almost all parents mentioned a member state of the European Union as a potential destination country.

If they think about the university in which their children will study, they have some specific criteria or characteristics in mind that this university has to meet:

- the university’s reputation and availability of financial support / scholarships (all interviewees mentioned it),
- the availability of suitable accommodation,
- the availability of support and advice for foreign students,
- the level of tuition fees.

3.4 Information about higher education in the European Union

Most parents mentioned a relatively low awareness of the education systems in the EU. They are more or less knowledgeable about education in Great Britain, France and Germany. Some of them mentioned Denmark, Hungary and the Netherlands. Two parents considered the level of education in Germany, Belgium, Great Britain and Spain to be high.

Parents get the information on the institutes and education programs in the European countries, first and foremost, from Internet and mass media. Among other sources many interviewees mentioned friends and acquaintances, professional contacts, personal trips, education abroad information agencies (EduFrance, British Council etc).

About one third of the interviewees do not have any difficulty in getting information. Others mentioned inadequate knowledge of foreign languages and an insufficient number of information sources. Two persons think that “information on studying abroad is lop-sided in Russia – most often it is expensive programs that are proposed, few people know that there is free education in European countries”.

Two of the parents answered that there is some specific information about the EU higher education they are interested in, but have not managed to get so far: crystallography in French institutes and scholarship information in the EU countries.

3.5 Comparison of EU Higher Education with Other Destination Countries

When parents compare the European Union to other countries where one can get an international education, they contend that among the major EU strengths are:

- the quality of education,
- distance from home (“It’s close to Russia so we can easily visit our daughter”),
- culture,
- historical, cultural and scientific traditions,
- ties with Russia,
- validation of diplomas in Russia,
- Bologna Process as a common education standard for the EU countries.

Note: Like all the other interviewees, parents mentioned the quality of education in the EU in the first place, notably implying education in countries such as Great Britain, France, Germany, Belgium, Spain, Italy or Switzerland.

The major weaknesses of the European Union: tuition and living fees, “self-financing on the part of the European institutions”, “in some countries tuition fees are higher for foreigners than for nationals”. About 50% of the parents could not answer. Note: Experts, rectorate representatives and parents agreed that there are weak points, but they are insignificant and are outweighed by the advantages of a European education.

To enhance the attractiveness of EU higher education parents propose introducing wider information on free education in the EU, wider advertising (at the universities) and organizing promotional campaigns, getting to know European institutes via study placements and scholarship information.

3.6 The Role of Parents in the Decision Process

About 50% of the interviewees take account of a child’s opinion and agree with him/her when taking a decision on studying abroad. About 10% think that a “child’s opinion is important” and that “it’s up to him/her, since he/she is to build a career on his/her own”. About 5% of the parents take into consideration a child’s opinion after all the others. Others “influence their children” or take a decision together.

Almost all parents think that the role of agents, teaching staff and other persons outside their families in advising and supporting them is important. Their information and administrative assistance is mentioned in the first place. One person expressed the gratitude to the school where his child is studying for the exchange programmes.

The final decision on studying abroad is taken by 60% of the interviewed parents. A child takes this decision in 10% of the cases. The rest of the interviewees said they take a decision together. The high percentage of parents taking decisions instead of their children is due to the fact that it is usually the parents of children under 18 who look for information and take the final decision (see section 3.1). It is to be noted that parents also generally have an important part to play in taking the decision on studying abroad if there is no scholarship available. Most students do not have

sufficient personal financial means to study and live abroad. Therefore parents are responsible for financing and taking decisions in this regard.

V. Conclusions and Recommendations

Today the EU comprises 25 member states. However, for Russians the united Europe is represented, first and foremost, by the “old” European states, such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands. Therefore, when Russians speak about European education, they tend to imply the education systems of these countries.

According to the Russian students, parents, teachers, higher education experts and university representatives that took part in this project, higher education in Europe boasts a high quality and academic degrees are valuable and prestigious on the local and international labour markets.

According to the participants that were interviewed, the advantages of studying in Europe include obtaining an international diploma or certificate, which facilitates the job search in Russia and abroad, improved career prospects, acquiring a wider outlook on life, prestige, foreign language practice and uniform education standards within the framework of the Bologna process.

Among the disadvantages of studying in the EU are the following: a small number of programs in English, difficulties in finding satisfactory accommodation and complicated visa procedures.

Whilst the experts and university representatives appear to be well informed on the higher education systems of European countries and on education programs, this awareness principally concerns countries such as Great Britain, France and Germany. The representatives of higher education institutions stated that their main sources of information on European higher education are Internet, national education information agencies and professional ties, such as colleagues. Parents were less aware of the education systems in the EU than the other two groups and mentioned as sources of information: Internet, national agencies, friends, acquaintances, professional contacts and personal trips. Some parents felt that there is an inadequate number of information sources on European higher education in Russia.

In addition to the formal interviews carried out for the study, discussions also took place with students interested in studying abroad. Generally speaking this group gets its main information on studying abroad from the Internet, information agencies, friends or the home institution. Friends are an important source of information as Russian students feel reassured when study programs or institutions are recommended by others. In the context of widespread corruption in Russia, face-to-face contact with representatives of foreign higher education institutions is also therefore important.

Both the higher education experts and representatives said that there is no specific information on EU higher education that they are interested in but have not managed to get so far. However, lack of information on study opportunities in Europe is quoted as being one of the obstacles to studying abroad. Increased information on the less well-known destination countries is therefore probably necessary in Russia.

Financial problems are mentioned by the parents, experts and university representatives as constituting an obstacle to the participation of a considerable number of students in international exchange programs and to the direct application of Russian students to European institutions of higher education. Nevertheless, there is a certain category of potential candidates whose parents are ready to pay all the tuition and living fees for their children in the European countries.

An insufficient level of foreign language proficiency is perceived as another possible obstacle to studying in Europe, especially in countries which deliver programs in less widespread languages.

Considering the results of the interviews, the following measures may be recommended in order to provide information on EU higher education and on grants to Russian students:

- participation by European higher education institutions in international education fairs in Moscow and other regions,
- creation of websites and information portals, notably a portal in Russian on study opportunities in all 25 EU member states,
- organizing meetings between representatives of Russian and European universities, providing assistance to the Russian universities interested in establishing contacts with the European partners,
- editing special reference books, including on grants.

In the current context of change, it would appear to be useful to inform Russian higher education institutions further about subjects such as the Bologna Process, the structure of studies in the EU and ECTS. By organising seminars and conferences on these issues for both staff and students, the EU would stand to increase its influence in Russia.

According to the interviews carried out, a European brand for higher education should benefit in Russia by focusing on the identified strong points of European higher education, such as the high quality of studies and the prestige of degrees. At the same time, other aspects of European higher education which are not always perceived in a positive fashion could also be highlighted, such as the range of programs taught in English, which appears to require further promotion in Russia. An additional advantage of studying in Europe which it could be useful to stress is the development of foreign language skills. Highlighting alternative EU study destinations to the United Kingdom, France, Germany and the Netherlands also appears to be necessary in order to increase awareness about these countries.

One should be able to increase the diffusion of information on European higher education and raise student mobility from Russia to the EU by taking the above measures into account.

VI. Annex

1. List of interviewees and their positions

1.1 Higher Education Experts

E1. Mr Robert ZABOTTA (Novosibirsk), head of the DAAD department in Novosibirsk.

E2. Mrs Irina GOLUBEVA (Nizhny Novgorod), head of the foreign languages department at the Institute of Education Development of Nijni Novgorod.

E3. Mrs Ludmila KURAKOVA (Lipetsk), deputy-head of the administration of the Lipetsk region, in charge of the international cooperation programs.

E4. Mrs Natalia DANILOVA (Moscow), Expert in education in European countries at the Students International Education Agency.

1.2 Rectors / Vice-Rectors / Directors of International Relations

R1. Representative of the rectorate of Ural State University (Ekaterinburg)

R2. Representative of the rectorate of Lipetsk State Technical University (Lipetsk)

R3. Representative of the rectorate of Samara State University (Samara)

R4. Representative of the rectorate of Rostov State University (Rostov-on-Don)

R5. Representative of the rectorate of Novosibirsk State University (Novosibirsk)

R6. Representative of the international relations department of Kazan State Energy University (Kazan)

R7. Representative of the international relations department of the Academy for Public Service (Nizhny Novgorod).

R8. Representative of the International Student Mobility Center of Moscow State Technical University named after Bauman (MGTU Baumana) (Moscow)

R9. Representative of the International Law Institute at Moscow State Institute for International Relations (MGIMO) (Moscow)

R10. Representative of the rectorate of The Moscow institute of Steel and Alloys (MISIS University) (Moscow).

2. Interview protocols

Available upon request.

3. List of Higher education institutions

Moscow State M. Lomonosov University

It is the biggest public university in Russia and number one in research. More than 40 000 undergraduates and about 7 000 postgraduates study at the university, and over 5 000 specialists do the refresher course here. More than 4 000 professors and lecturers, and about 5 000 researchers work for the faculties and research institutes. The University employs over 15 000 of ancillary staff. Every year Moscow University enrolls about 2 000 international students and postgraduates from all over the world. Moscow University has at its disposal more than 600 buildings and facilities, occupying over 1 million square metres. The University campus in Moscow covers 205.7 hectares. Source : <http://www.msu.ru/en/>

Moscow State Technical N. Bauman University

Moscow State Technical N.E. Bauman University is known as an Engineering University of educational excellence, having a potential for real greatness. Presently there are approximately 18000 students, concentrating their studies in science and engineering, and 1000 post graduates, working on their Ph.D. theses at MSTU. It numbers 350 Doctors of Science and 1800 Ph.D.s. Opportunities offered by MSTU attracted more than 300 international students from 20 countries all over the world. Source : <http://www.bmstu.ru/mstu/English/>

Lipetsk State Pedagogical University

The Lipetsk State University was founded in 1954. More than 1 000 professors and lecturers work at 15 faculties, there are more then 8000 students. The students are largely from the Lipetsk region and other regions of Russia. There are foreign students who are on a placement or study on a permanent-basis. Source : <http://lspu.lipetsk.ru/index.php?rub=about> (only in Russian)

St.Petersburg State University

St.Petersburg State University is the oldest university in Russia, founded in 1724. One of the University`s important characteristics is the functioning of 11 research institutes as its structural units alongside the 19 faculties, which enables the staff and students to combine the teaching-learning process with fundamental research both in the sciences and humanities. It has about 100 direct agreements of co-operation with universities in 50 countries of the world. St.Petersburg State University can justly be regarded as an international seat of learning, with as many as 1500 undergraduate and postgraduate students from Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia taking a course of study here every year. Source : <http://www.spbu.ru/e/>

Nizhny Novgorod State University

University of Nizhny Novgorod comprises 27 faculties, 122 departments, 6 research institutes: Physico-Technical Research Institute, Research Institute for Chemistry, Research Institute for Mechanics, Research Institute for Applied Mathematics and

Cybernetics, Research Institute for Molecular Biology and Regional Ecology, Institute for Strategic Research, Institute of postgraduate and doctoral studies, International Centre for Studies in Public Economics, Centre of Slavic culture, outpatient clinic and health centre. In official national ratings, UNN is among the top ten Russian universities.

Total enrolment is over 26 000 undergraduate and graduate students. There are 57 Ph.D.(Candidate of Sciences) programs and 24 post-doctoral (Doctor of Sciences) programs with more than 1000 students. Diploma Specialist programs (5 years) are offered in 47 specialities. Bachelor's programs (4 years) are taught in 22 areas. There are 56 Master's programs (6 years), 10 programs of secondary professional education and shorter-term training programs for those already having higher or secondary professional education in respective areas. Source : http://www.unn.ru/main_eng.htm

Samara State University

University was founded in 1918. Now 22 educational programs are realized at 10 faculties of the university. Much work on structural and matter renewal of lecture courses and practical training and on bringing of study process methodical supply into accordance with requirements of Governmental educational standard's second generation. There are 6702 day students, 1209 evening students and 4709 students by correspondence at the university. Total number of students had ran up to 12619. 94% of alumni get job placement. Post-graduate courses develop rapidly (48 specialities), about 300 post-graduates study there. Doctors' training courses are opened (9 majors). 72 Doctors of science, professors and 282 Candidates of science, senior lecturers work at the university. Source : <http://volgadeti.samara.ru/en/about/>

Rostov State University

The University has 14 faculties, 9 research institutes, a Botanic garden, a large academic library, research centres at the Black seashore and in the Caucasus. It's a vast complex comprising 10 scientific-research institutes (Physics, Physical and Organic Chemistry, Neurocybernetics, Biology, Mechanics and Applied Mathematics, Geochemistry of the Biosphere, Carbo-hedrated Raw Materials, Geoecology and Forecasting of Extreme Situations, Academic-Scientific Research Institute of Valeology, North-Caucasian Scientific Research Institute of Economic and Social Problems, the Institute for Retraining Teachers of Humanities and Social Sciences, The Southern Russia Regional Informational Centre for Establishments of Higher Education). Source : <http://www.mis.rsu.ru/foreign/index.html>

Ural State University

The Ural State University was founded in 1920. Today it has 6113 students, 13 faculties with 20 majors and 16 areas of study. 120 professors (Doctors of Sciences), 11 members of Russian Academy of Sciences. Source : <http://www.usu.ru/> (only in Russian).

Novossibirsk State University (Siberia)

There are 14 departments and specialties: Mechanics and Mathematics, Physics, Natural Sciences, Geology and Geophysics, Economics, Information Technologies, Humanities, Foreign Languages, Journalism, Psychology, Philosophy, Law, Medical Science. Source : <http://www.nsu.ru/english/> , <http://www.nsu.ru/french/>

Kazan State University

At present Kazan State University is a large educational and research complex. Students are trained in 32 specialties and directions at 17 faculties and 1 interuniversity department. There are 579 postgraduate and post-doctoral students, 9572 undergraduate students including 140 foreign students from 27 different countries. There are 1075 professors including 562 candidates and 192 doctors of science and 172 researchers on staff (154 candidates, 18 doctors of science) that work at 86 departments. Source : http://www.kcn.ru/tat_en/university/index.php3

Secondary School 1: secondary school №944 (Moscow), 1600 pupils. Foreign languages: English and French.

Secondary School 2: secondary school №1035 (St. Petersburg), 1300 pupils. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Secondary School 3: Secondary school №1035 and Gymnasium №53 (Nizhny Novgorod). About 1400 pupils altogether. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Secondary School 4: secondary school №11 (Rostov-na-Donu), 500 pupils. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

Secondary School 5: secondary school №241 (Novossibirsk), 1100 pupils. Foreign languages: English, German and French.

4. Flyers and other promotion material

Attached