

Overview of the Governing Board Committee Meeting on 25-26 February 2010

On the 25-26th of February a meeting of the Committee of the European Studies Institute Governing Board on strategic options of the ESI development and their budgetary implications took place at the MGIMO-University and the EU Delegation to Russia. Jaap De Zwaan (professor, Clingendael Institute, the Netherlands), Eiki Berg (professor, University of Tartu, Estonia), Alexander V. Filippov (Head of the division of multilateral cooperation, Ministry of Education of Russia), Oleg N. Barabanov (Head of the Chair of Politics and Functioning of the EU and the Council of Europe) and observers Annouchka Nabokov (representative of the College of Europe in Bruges), Nicola Scaramuzzo (curator of educational programmes, EU Delegation to Russia), Mark L. Entin (Director of the ESI) and the executive secretary Anna N. Tsibulina (tutor of the ESI) were present at the meeting.

The meeting took place in a business-like and trusting atmosphere. Despite deep difference of opinions among the participants which appeared at the very beginning of the Committee's work in October, the meeting ended up with adoption of a package recommendations to the Governing Board. The Committee has selected an optimal (both from financial and substantial point of view) list of measures needed to implementation of all new activities of the ESI.

When selecting the options, the Committee was guided by the idea of ensuring and preserving already achieved positive results of the ESI functioning and at the same time of increasing the quality of provided educational services and their diversification. The main challenge of the Committee was to allow the ESI to contribute even more to strengthening the EU-Russia relations by training a growing corps of professionals who could further build cooperation between parties.

The Committee has considered the current duration of the Master's programme to fully meet the requirements of the Russian state standards and requests of the main beneficiaries i.e. Russian ministries and agencies. The Committee welcomed the proposal of supplementing the Master's programme as from 2010/2011 academic year with three-week intensive language courses. It proposed to grant the ESI students more free days for self-directed work and to practice working with small groups. It also decided that organization of intensive week-end classes outside Moscow as an essential part of a studying process will have a very positive impact on quality of the education at the ESI. This type of classes should take place on a regular basis but on a limited scale.

The members of the Committee came to a common understanding that it is important to offer foreign students from the EU who will study at the ESI a possibility to learn Russian language and attend lectures on Russian history, law, politics and culture in addition to a main curriculum. Besides that the ESI should gradually proceed to granting students a choice of writing and defending Master theses in EU working languages – English, French and German.

From the Committee's point of view the ESI current activity on holding short-term courses should be put on a regular basis. These courses should be open for participants from business community as well but on a fee basis. Organization of short-term courses for business community is very much welcome. However there is no need to reflect it in the ESI budget.

In accordance with an expressed common position of the Committee activities of the ESI within the framework of its Regional strategy should become an integral part of the ESI planned activity and be envisaged in the budget. These activities are to be carried out according to ordinary

financial requirements just as all the other ESI activities. The specific character of these activities is that they should be regarded as joint ventures of the ESI and regional universities and/or authorities targeted to establishing a network of academic and research centres of European studies in the Russian regions. Organization of scientific studies on key issues of cooperation between Moscow and Brussels should become a part of the ESI regular activity by involving young promising researches from Russia and the EU.

The members of the Committee came to a conclusion that the proposed forms and methods of the ESI activity in the framework of implementation of the Strategy of Development of ESI for 2010-2013 will entail further enlargement and promotion of its activities. As a result workload of the ESI staff and administration will considerably increase. In addition to the existing staff the Committee has envisaged in a draft budget for 2010-2013 positions of the new vice-director and 3 tutors and respective wage costs.

Having agreed on all the issues in accordance with a mandate of the Governing Board to the Committee the members of the Committee assigned the ESI to introduce some technical adjustments to the draft budget it has elaborated in cooperation with the EU Delegation and send it out to all the members of the ESI Governing Board.

The Committee took into consideration a decision of Prof. Jaap De Zwaan to present a report on results of the work of the Committee at the next meeting of the ESI Governing Board on the 22nd of April 2010.

The members of the Committee have expressed profound gratitude to Mr. Ivan D. Ivanov for his important contribution to the work of the Committee and in particular for his paper which reflects opinions of the Russian ministries and agencies.

The members of the Committee thanked Mr. Alexander V. Filippov for his active participation in the work of the Committee and asked to pass their thanks to the Ministry of Education.

The members of the Committee have also regretted that Annouchka Nabokov who has provided expert support will temporarily leave work for the College of Europe in Bruges and expressed hope for continuation of fruitful cooperation with her in future.

A final paper of the Committee with recommendations on realization of the Strategy of Development of the ESI and their financial implications as well as a draft budget of the ESI will be sent additionally.

Secretary of the Committee,
Anna Tsibulina