

Political transformation and its impact on higher education in the Baltic Sea region

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Structure of the presentation

- Political changes
 - End of the Cold War and new security agendas
 - New countries and reconfiguration of political space
- Social and economic changes
 - Overcoming economic crises - development tracks
 - Challenges of demography and knowledge society
- Change in higher education policy and practice
 - Changing stakeholders in BSR higher education
 - Reaction of HE institutions to social and economic changes

1. Political changes in the BSR - 1

- End of the Cold War and new security agendas
 - End of the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact
 - New countries, political realism and membership of NATO as a goal
 - Farewell to the Nordic balance
 - Dream of a security community – regionalisation of the Baltic Sea area

Dream of a Security Community

- A Security community is a group of people, which has become **integrated**. By integration we mean the attainment, within a territory, of a **sense of community** and of institutions and practices strong enough and widespread enough to assure, for a **long time**, dependable expectations of **peaceful change** among its population. By sense of community we mean a belief on the part of individuals in a group that they have come to agreement on at least this one point: that common social problems must be resolved by processes of **peaceful change**. By peaceful change we mean the resolution of social problems, normally by institutionalised procedures, **without resort to large-scale physical force**. (Karl Deutsch 1957)

1. Political changes in the BSR - 2

- New countries and reconfiguration of political space
 - Regained independence of the Baltic Republics
 - Reunification of Germany
 - European Union as ultimate goal and the only safe option
 - Finnish and Swedish membership of the EU in 1995
 - Northern Dimension – Finland's freedom of action
 - Growing importance of the regional dimension in the EU
 - Realism versus constructivism in interpreting political changes – modern and post-modern options

THE NORTHERN DIMENSION



2. Social and economic changes

- Economic crisis in Finland after the collapse of the Soviet Union – need for a new pattern of economic development
- Baltic Republics and Poland – end of planned economy and liberal market reforms
- Increasing commodification of knowledge – conceptualising knowledge society
- Demographic situation – social losers and winners

3. Current trends in HE in the BSR

- Diminishing role and influence of the state on the governance of HEIs
- Transition from the state control model to the state supervising model
- Growing importance of the third mission
- Overcoming the past and meeting the future of the Baltic Sea region higher education
- Regional universities in the BSR

4. Current trends in HE in the BSR - latest developments and policies

- Steering at a distance at a price of tighter contractual agreements with HEIs
- Growing importance of external stakeholders – redefinition of internal stakeholders.
- Increasing pressure on accountability.
- Knowledge and education treated as commercial products.

5. Conclusion

- Political changes from the 1990s make the process of networking and HE cooperation in the BSR irreversible.
- In Scandinavia neo-liberal priority order replace the Humboldtian tradition with free research and teaching as goals.
- Difficulties with the Russian participation – administrative (Bologna process) and political (what is near abroad?)
- In all other countries - increasing use of market-related indicators to measure output and productivity.

5. Conclusion II

- BUT... on the positive side:
 - Networking and mobility have become a natural component of the HE business.
 - Enormous increase in innovativeness
 - Invention, adaption and innovation – Nordic keys to success have been accepted and emulated in the Baltic republics
 - Nordics are forerunners in the knowledge society
 - Reserach based teaching at universities is a rule established by the evaluation processes



Europe in a nutshell

