

FRIENDLY RELATIONS

Cooperation and dialogue between
Russians and Swedes

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GRANNLAGA. Kontakter med ryssar och Ryssland.

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SWEDEN

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Lars Ingelstam

with Viktor Sundman

To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace.

United Nations Charter, Article 1.2

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Preface

This publication is a brief summary of a book-length (265 pp.) study on contacts between Russia and Sweden, concentrating on people-to-people and society-to-society relations. The intention is to identify existing and potential contacts that can serve to foster cooperation and enhance trust and friendship.

It must be understood that this text can only present the very basic points of the larger report. Many statistics, organizational details and other fine print have to be left out. Even value judgements may at times turn out blunter here than in the original. Since this version is intended primarily for non-Swedish readers two things need to be made clear.

- The study is intended as a basis for reflexion and active policy by Swedish actors: government (national and local), agencies, professional organizations, civil society, business and individuals.
- In spite of my own strong opinions, I have refrained from value judgements and comments on what the Russian government or other Russian actors ought to do (with one exception, see page 49)

The study is based on documents and interviews, the latter primarily with Swedish actors. The Russian side has not been directly approached or heard in the study. Hence, for the most part I had to take the Swedish actors' judgements on matters such as feasibility and cooperativeness at face value.

The initiative to this study is entirely my own. The work has had no form of economic support, nor has it sought or received directives of any kind. Viktor Sundman has worked as research assistant on a volunteer basis. On the other hand, many people have encouraged the initiative, and a large number of colleagues and experts have

contributed to the work with data, experiences and perspectives (the list of these persons cover 4 pages in the report).

The work on GRANNLAGA has been done in close cooperation with the project Fredens Väg (The Road to Peace, see below). The Swedish OSCE network has organized two public seminars on the subject, and held a working seminar (May 10, 2017) jointly with Fredens Väg.

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Stockholm, October 2017

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Fredens väg (The Road to Peace) is a cooperation between Christian Council of Sweden, Uniting Church in Sweden, Church of Sweden (Stockholm Diocese), The Swedish Ecumenical Women's Council (SEK) and Bilda (a study association). Fredens väg has published a study *Vänskapliga förbindelser* (Friendly Relations, 48 pp.) on church-based contacts between Russia and Sweden. Author and project leader: Helena Höij. Secretary: Margareta Ingelstam.

The title. GRANNLAGA is something of a pun in Swedish. It can be read as mending [relations with a] neighbor but it also means delicate or precarious [task].

1 Aims of the study

Russia and Sweden have a long history of contacts and exchanges, dating back to Viking days. Recently, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991 the relations between Sweden and Russia have gone through essentially three phases. The first, beginning in 1991 and ending in 2006, was characterized by expectations on the side of Swedish politicians and people that Russia would soon find its place among European democracies; with a humane capitalist economy to go with it. This was bolstered from the Swedish side by a relatively large program of foreign aid (development assistance), which lasted for 15 years, but was cut off in 2006. (See Chapter 2). The second phase, from 2006 until the beginning of 2013 was one of contradictory signals and mixed reactions. Russian politics did not conform to Western expectations, a resolute re-armament took place and the Russia-Georgia war was seen as an indication of Russia's military aggressiveness. However, Swedish policy versus Russia was not notably changed.

In the third period, from 2013 and in particular after Russia's annexation of Crimea and its involvement in Eastern Ukraine in 2014, the situation was interpreted as drastically changed. A "deteriorated security climate" quickly became the accepted way to describe the situation. Proposals that Sweden should join Nato – a standpoint virtually unheard of, even during most of the cold war period – came from several major political parties as well as from military circles. However, the principle of military non-alignment still stands. A reinforcement of the Swedish Armed Forces was decided in 2015: additional 26 billion SEK were allocated for a 5-year period, raising the annual budget from 40 to 50 billion SEK, with Russia now designated as our (only) military enemy. During the last 3 years, more aggressive rhetoric has been heard, and military exercises have been held more frequently and received more publicity.

This development described above is fairly recent. The military dimension is predominant and receives a major part of public attention, which I find unbalanced and misleading. A broad and inclusive security concept (to be spelt out in Chapter 2) is a foundation for this study. The Russian people are not our enemies, whatever difficulties we have with the Russian Federation or its present leaders. Many commentators, critical against closer links with Nato, and/or the increased military emphasis of our foreign policy, have instead pointed to the need for efforts to lessen tensions, and foster cooperation that can increase trust. Increased links people-to-people and cooperation within civil society are suggested as under-utilized means for preserving the peace and prevent military escalation.

However, such statements often fall short of concrete, practical suggestions, or proposals, on how this could be achieved. The aim of GRANNLAGA is to spell out existing and potential fields for collaboration. In this respect, it intends to fill a gap in the groundwork for a broad and realistic security policy. The contrast is striking to the detailed and highly professional plans that are worked out on a regular basis in support of the military components in security policy. However, the GRANNLAGA study does not attempt to describe or criticise the military measures and preparations. We can, on the other hand, not fail to notice that the balance – in terms of financing, planning and political attention – still weighs heavily in favour of military aspects as opposed to the civilian measures discussed in this report.

Finally, it should be noted that “security” – however broadly this is conceived – is not the only motive for increasing cooperation and contacts between our peoples. There are many benefits to be reaped from increased cooperation: cultural, scientific, environmental, historical, economical. New friendships can be created and perspectives widened.

2 Political and cultural determinants

What is security policy?

Since quite a long time the official and accepted definition of security policy (Sw: säkerhetspolitik) is a broad one, consistent with a clear consensus among researchers in the field. In line with that, the goals for Sweden's security are, in a brief summary:

To safeguard the life and health of the population, the functioning of the society and our ability to sustain basic values such as democracy, the rule of law and human rights and freedoms.

Requisites such as territorial integrity and political independence follow from this. The instruments for realizing these goals are

- diplomacy
- trade
- development assistance
- defence (military and civilian)

(Source: Government bill 2014/15:109). On the other hand, a more limited (military) interpretation is sometimes used in parallel with the one mentioned. A closer analysis shows that the emphasis in the interpretation of security policy has varied over the years. After the cold war military defence was less emphasized, whereas in recent years the military dimension (and expenditure) has received more attention. In this study, we choose to stand by the broader interpretation. As a consequence, we claim that most of the measures dealt with in the following chapters have relevance for Sweden's security policy, at least indirectly.

Diplomacy and international organizations

Sweden has a strong diplomatic presence in the Russian Federation.

The Embassy in Moscow has more than 20 professionals and is headed by an ambassador; the latter is regarded as one of the most prestigious postings in the foreign service. There is also a Consulate General in St Petersburg (4 diplomats), with the task of promoting people-to-people contacts, including cultural and economic exchange. It is also a node for the “strategy” mentioned at the end of next sub-section. During the years 2006-2009 Sweden also had a Consulate General in Kaliningrad. In Swedish debate the decision to close down the Consulate has been criticised, in view of the great importance in the area of this Russian exclave.

During the period 2014-2017 diplomatic relations between Russia and Sweden were described as frosty, from both sides. After a meeting between the Foreign Ministers (Febr 2017) – also influenced by Sweden’s temporary membership in the UN Security Council – relations have improved. They are now described as “normal”. The Foreign Ministers affirmed that contacts people-to-people between the countries should be welcomed.

The report lists several international and inter-state organizations in which Russian-Swedish cooperation can and does take place. Some of them have particular focus on the environment and the Baltic Sea (see Chapter 3). A little known but potentially important venue is the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) in which Russia is an active member. In the Arctic and Barents Regions several intergovernmental organizations have been formed (Chapter 4).

Support to the reform process 1991-2007 – and beyond

The Swedish Government as well as the general public attached great hopes to the transition taking place in Russia beginning in 1991. One active measure was to establish a program of support, technically and administratively part of Swedish “development assistance” but focused on “support to the reform process in Russia”. This program

was state funded – a total of 3.8 billion SEK during the period. It covered many sectors, such as health services, rehabilitation, young people in distress, environment and public administration. It worked to a rather large extent through civil society organizations in both countries. Many professional and personal links were established during these years, and some of them still exist. The traces are particularly notable in north-west Russia (including St Petersburg and the surrounding area) where Swedish programs were concentrated.

In 2006, the Swedish Government discontinued this program, to be phased out at the latest in 2008. The explicit reason was that development assistance should go only to poor countries (as stated in the OECD DAC rules) and Russia was no longer poor, according to that definition. Other factors, on both sides, no doubt also contributed to this decision. Many participants, in both countries, express their regret that this happened. Some of them strive, mainly through private initiatives and on shoe-string budgets, to maintain some continuation.

The broad program that was phased out 2006-2008 was replaced by a “result strategy” with a more limited scope, which still exists. With a yearly funding of around 90 million SEK (no longer budgeted as “development assistance”) this program seeks to promote democracy, human rights and improvement of the environment. Some of the activities mentioned later in the report are funded through this government program.

And more...

This chapter (Ch 2) in GRANNLAGA also contains some background on the historical relations between Russia and Sweden. As a result of different historical perspectives, but also of cultural (e. g. Astrid Lindgren) and commercial (e. g. IKEA) factors, the Russian people’s attitudes towards Sweden and Swedes are consistently favourable

(Levada Institute). On the other hand, Swedes and Swedish media have a rather negative picture of Russia (in fact the most negative in Europe, according to Transatlantic Trends, 2014). Many Swedes are active in civil society organizations, and have noted that Russian authorities subject such organizations to suspicion and negative legislation. Dominant Swedish media present a recurring narrative in which Russia is a (military) enemy and cannot be trusted.

3 The Baltic Sea Region and the environment

The Baltic Sea has problems

The environmental challenges of the Baltic can be summarized in three points (HELCOM 2010):

- Most sub-basins are negatively affected by eutrophication, hazardous substances and the conservation of species is unfavorable.
- The human communities linked to the sea have been negatively affected by the deteriorated state of the Baltic Sea.
- Given the current impaired status of ecosystem health, the pressures from agriculture, fisheries, industries, the maritime sector as well as from communities need to be effectively managed.

Cooperation in environmental policy

The most important organization established in order to handle these problems jointly and internationally is HELCOM.

HELCOM (Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission) is the governing body of the Convention on the Protection of the Marine Environment of the Baltic Sea Area, known as the Helsinki Convention. The Contracting Parties are Denmark, Estonia, the European Union, Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and Sweden.

HELCOM was established about four decades ago to protect the marine environment of the Baltic Sea from all sources of pollution through intergovernmental cooperation.

The vision for the future is a healthy Baltic Sea environment with diverse biological components functioning in balance, resulting in a good ecological status and supporting a wide range of sustainable economic and social activities.

Several Swedish specialized agencies are involved in HELCOM and have distinct roles in the (five) standing and (three) temporary working groups (see helcom.fi for details). However, the same agencies have also pursued bilateral cooperation with specialists and agencies in Russia.

The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency, SEPA, (Naturvårdsverket, NV) reports more than 90 joint projects with Russia since 1994 in fields such as water and marine environment, conservation and environmental education. In 2016, a new bilateral working program for 2016-2018 was signed with the Russian Ministry for natural resources and environment. From the Swedish side SEPA coordinates the program, in cooperation with the two agencies mentioned hereafter.

The Swedish Agency for Marine and Water Management, SwAM (HaV), is a government agency that works for flourishing seas, lakes and streams for the benefit and enjoyment of all. Among other duties SwAM is HELCOM: Swedish focal point for eutrophication. In that field, as well as in several others, SwAM has developed cooperative links with Russian counterparts.

The Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute, SMHI, has a broad competence regarding climate and weather as well as water resources. SMHI is a key participant in HELCOM. In addition it has a key role in the Group of Earth Observation, a multi-nation effort – where Russia is a member – aiming at a program for global monitoring of weather, climate and water. SMHI is also active in bilateral cooperative projects with Russia in areas such as climate, clean air and sustainable cities.

In addition to those agencies we note also others, who have key roles in fields such as water quality and various aspects of safety in the Baltic:

The Swedish Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen)

The Swedish Chemicals Agency (Kemikalieinspektionen, KEMI)

Like the other specialized agencies mentioned they have special responsibilities in multi-lateral cooperation, but have also developed direct contacts and in some cases cooperation with Russian counterparts.

Two more arenas of cooperation, involving Russia, are mentioned in the study.

- The Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS, with its administrative office in Stockholm) in which Russia is an active member, has put the Baltic Sea environment high on its agenda. It has also initiated environmentally oriented joint research (see below and Chapter 6).
- The Nordic Environment Finance Corporation (NEFCO) is an International Financial Institution established by the Nordic Governments in 1990. NEFCO was created in order to support efforts by the Nordic countries to increase environmental awareness in Eastern and Central Europe by providing financing to projects that reduced emissions harmful to the environment. NEFCO's green financing is targeted at small and medium-sized projects (SMPs) with demonstration value.

Cooperation in environmental research

The severe problems concerning water and environment in the Baltic Sea area require great efforts in scientific research. Such research has been going on for many years and has generated not only scientific results, but also patterns of cooperation and “joint ownership” of the severe problems that still exist.

The largest program at present is BONUS, a broad scientific effort for “a better future of the Baltic Sea Region”. As a general characterization, BONUS is systems-oriented, which can be seen through the headings of groups of projects (calls): Sustainable ecosystems, Viable ecosystem research, Innovation, Blue Baltic.

In one sense BONUS is a part of EU:s research strategy (Horizon 2020) and gets some its financing from EU. In addition, several other parties (including some Swedish agencies and research foundations) contribute to the running of BONUS. Russia, as a non-member of EU, participates under a “bilateral agreement” and provides separate funding. This does not create major difficulties, but is not an ideal form of cooperation.

The Baltic University Programme (BUP) is a university network in the Baltic Sea region focusing on education for sustainable development. BUP has presently 230 participators (universities and similar institutions). A core of 64 (of which 2 are Russian) are members and pay a certain amount for the running of BUP. About 9000 students take part in BUP courses each year. A currently running BUP project, commissioned by CBSS (see above) is set to monitor how 10 Baltic States, including Russia, implement the UN Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals).

The specialized agencies (SEPA, SwAM, SMHI etc) mentioned above have in-house scientific expertise, and also fund projects for Baltic Sea research, mainly by Swedish researchers. An additional important source of funding is MISTRA: the Swedish foundation for strategic environmental research. The two most prominent research units for Baltic Sea research are Stockholm University Baltic Sea Centre and the Institute of Coastal Research,

Department of Aquatic Resources at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

All the research actors mentioned here have cooperated with Russian researchers. They report that interaction has worked very well on a professional level. On the other hand, it is easier to obtain project funding for Swedish researchers than for international cooperation.

4 The Barents Region and the Arctic area

The Barents Region has a special role and history, which makes it natural to present cooperation there in a separate chapter. The Barents region has over five million inhabitants, including several indigenous peoples. The region is spread across the northernmost parts of four countries and includes the following counties (or their equivalents):

- in Finland: Kainuu, Lapland, Oulu Region and North Karelia.
- in Norway: Finnmark, Nordland and Troms
- in Russia: Arkhangelsk, Karelia, Komi, Murmansk and Nenets.
- in Sweden: Norrbotten and Västerbotten

Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Region:

- Sami (in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia)
- Nenets (in Russia)
- Veps (in Russia)

The cooperation in the region has been actively pursued from the early 1990:s and takes on two different forms: with some simplification they could be termed “from above” (states, national governments, EU) and “from below” (local government, civil society organizations, businesses). The Norwegian government was particularly driving in the first phases of the cooperation.

Intergovernmental cooperation

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) is the forum for intergovernmental cooperation on issues concerning the Barents region. The chair rotates every second year between Norway, Finland, Russia and Sweden. Russia took over the BEAC Chairmanship from Finland on 14th October 2015. The next chair of the BEAC will be Sweden (2017-2019).

Kolarctic is an EU cooperation, intended to strengthen neighbor relations in The Barents region. Members are the same as in BEAC. Kolarctic finances projects in thematic areas, such as sustainable economy, natural environment and mobility.

The Northern Dimension is a cooperation between EU, Russia, Iceland and Norway, focusing the arctic parts of Europe and the Baltic. Projects (partnerships) deal with issues such as health and wellness, transport and culture.

The Arctic Council is an intergovernmental forum promoting cooperation, coordination and interaction among the Arctic States, Arctic indigenous communities and other Arctic inhabitants on common Arctic issues, in particular on issues of sustainable development and environmental protection in the Arctic. The Ottawa Declaration (1996) lists the following countries as Members of the Arctic Council: Canada, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, the Russian Federation, Sweden and the United States.

Obviously, the above does not give a fair or complete picture of the situation. In broad terms, the Arctic Council has the heaviest political role, while BEAC is considered the most important in terms of practical cooperation. But, as already noted, practical cooperation is predominantly generated on a local level. There we find a wide spectrum of cooperative efforts, which are rather independent of intergovernmental and governmental priority-setting.

Thematic cooperation

Here we give some short notes on on-going cooperation in the Barents area: in some cases, all four countries and most of the counties (oblast etc) listed above are involved. But some bilateral Russian-Swedish project exist as well.

Barents press is a joint organization for journalists from all four countries. Activities include education for young journalists, study tours, seminars and joint investigative reporting. The organization has an office in Murmansk, from which some of the activities are organized.

From an environmental point of view, the region is a very productive one, and at the same time extremely vulnerable to climate change, pollution and resource extraction. BEAC and other organizations support environmental projects. Some of the actors mentioned in Chapter 3 are active in the Barents region and Barents Sea as well. Public awareness of environmental issues is high but civil society (environmental organizations) are still rather weak. A joint Swedish-Russian project (with WWF in a leading role) has recently been approved.

Polar research is now well established as an international task, and involves researchers from Russia, Sweden and several other countries (see Chapter 6).

Sports and athletic competition provide another area for people-to-people contacts. Barents Games is an organization (Russia is a member since 1994) that mobilizes around 10 000 young athletes yearly. Barents Matches are held in 20 different sports and the broadly-based Barents Games (winter or summer) cover 30 different sports.

Women's rights and gender equality have a recognized place on the Barents cooperation agenda. Conferences and consultations on protection of women under threat – and similar issues – intend to counteract violence against women and children, which is still a problem in the region.

Barents Road runs from Bodö in Norway to Murmansk in Russia

(close to the Arctic circle most of the way). Its use and maintenance are supported by an association of stakeholders (municipalities, enterprises) along the road: The Barents Road International Association. It works to enhance the use and usefulness of the Road for trade, tourism and adventure.

Churches in the area have established various forms of cooperation. A joint council (SKKB) of nine dioceses (orthodox and Lutheran) from four countries has been established and works in several areas of common interest, such as indigenous peoples and research. In terms of Russian-Swedish cooperation this is where we find the most active church-to-church contacts, forming a bridge between Orthodox and Lutheran churches.

Conclusions

High-level intergovernmental contacts concerning this sensitive region should of course still have high priority. Efforts to protect and enhance the environment must be actively pursued. From the perspective of GRANNLAGA still another lesson can be learned. The Barents cooperation can in many ways provide examples and inspiration for people-to-people and society-to-society contacts in general. Additional financing, which is desirable and is likely to be highly productive, should aim at strengthening local and regional initiatives, not replace them.

5 Higher education and student exchanges

Higher education (university, college) is a strong formative force on young people: “The friends and memories last a lifetime.” They should for that reason be in focus in efforts to create understanding and trust between peoples. A period spent studying in another country gives deepened knowledge not only about the subject matter, but also about culture, values and everyday life. The same holds for studies of another language, though probably less pronounced. In this chapter, we give data and perspectives on student exchanges between Russia and Sweden, as well as education in the respective languages and “country studies” – all at the university level.

Students from Russia in Sweden

The number of university level students choosing to study in Sweden started at around 200 in the early 1990s and grew to a maximum of almost 800 in 2011. After that, it declined to around 300 as of today. The reason for this is neither wavering interest nor politics, but almost certainly that Swedish universities began charging tuition to students from non-EU countries. (See comment at the end of this Chapter.) PhD students from Russia count around 25 over time, but the number has declined during the last 4 years (for reasons unknown to us). Initiatives are taken to attract advanced level Russian students, by the Swedish Institute and the private Sverker Åström Foundation.

Students from Sweden in Russia

On this point statistics are incomplete. The number of students in exchange programs varies at around 20-30. We can add an unknown number of “free-mover” students, but the conclusion is clear: Russia is not an attractive choice for Swedish university students.

Russian language courses and country studies in Sweden

There are good reasons to treat these two, though different, together. In several instances, in both countries, language education is given in combinations with country studies (politics, history, culture ...).

On the Swedish side, seven universities and university colleges offer courses on the Russian language. The number of students taking such courses has been fairly stable, around 700-800 a year. There was a distinct increase of around 50 % between 2001 and 2005, but it slipped back again. Our interpretation is that Swedish students at the time felt that cooperation in business and other areas was on the rise, but that this feeling later faded out.

University level courses on Russia (history, politics, culture...) are offered at around 6-8 Swedish universities. The general picture is that they are mostly elementary, aimed at non-specialists. The number of students is not exactly known, but a fair guess is around the same as for language students mentioned above, 700-800.

Sweden and Swedish in Russian higher education

Courses in the Swedish language are presently offered in 23 Russian universities, most of them located in the north-west and in Moscow. While the number of universities remains on the same level, the number of students taking Swedish has gradually declined, from around 850 students 10 years ago to around 550 today. Just as in Sweden, language studies are often combined with broader orientation on politics, history and culture. The Swedish Institute supports some of these centres with lecturers and cash grants. The students explain their motives to learn Swedish with an interest in Swedish businesses, or in Swedish culture, or both. The Russian State University for the Humanities (RGGU) was founded in 1991 and stands out in this context. RGGU has a large number of international

cooperation agreements, and in particular it hosts a Russian-Swedish centre for education and research, which cooperates with Uppsala University and Södertörn University.

SSE Russia

Stockholm School of Economics Russia is a niche-oriented Swedish-anchored international business school located in Moscow and St Petersburg, providing higher education for the global executive market in Russia. At present SSE Russia offers two programs:

- The EMBA programs in English and Russian languages
- The Corporate Programs which are adapted to the specific needs of corporate customers

What can be done?

Students are increasingly using the opportunities to study abroad. The Erasmus (EU) program has gained wide acceptance, and is now a natural alternative for Swedish students (They can take their “backpack” of money – grants and subsidized loans – and use them practically anywhere in the world, not only in the EU). Presently the exchanges between Russia and Sweden are on a quite low level – in numbers as well as in intensity. However, it is neither possible nor desirable to steer students to particular countries, languages or study programs. The measures have to be soft and indirect ones: in the form of opportunities and incentives.

One simple measure is to reverse the decision to charge tuition fees for Russian students, and treat them the same as EU citizens. Programs for active support of exchange both ways (such as the “Visby program” run by SI) are in place and could be funded and operated on a much more generous level than today. Several institutes and universities could be given grants and directives in order to facilitate exchanges, e g a stable bilateral relation between one Russian and one Swedish university.

Student life is not only about studies. Attention should be given to the social welfare and integration of exchange students. Arrangements similar to the Swedish student home in Paris could be sought, in order to make it more attractive to study in Russia and in Sweden, respectively.

6 Research

Scientific knowledge is international

The search for new knowledge – as well as the caring and propagation of scientific knowledge already acquired – has always been a strong cohesive force in international relations. At the same time specific forms of knowledge (such as methods of mass destruction) have increased fear and tensions in the world. Hence, for both positive and negative reasons, cooperation and integration in various scientific fields must be given high priority in the search for a peaceful world.

Several important initiatives have been taken, based on the specific responsibility of the international community of scholars. The Pugwash movement (Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs) and International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, (IPPNW) have both been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for efforts to create awareness about the disastrous consequences of a nuclear war. In both, there is active Russian participation.

University research on Russia in Sweden

Research goes on in many institutions of higher learning. A number of university professors have gained wide recognition as Russia specialists through their research as well as through popular books and presentations. From an institutional perspective, however, three centers pursue “Russia studies” on a permanent basis and should be mentioned here.

Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies (IRES) was inaugurated in 2010, as part of the government’s strategic initiative in the research field “politically important geographic regions.” There is a permanent staff of researchers at the center, but many more is associated with the center for varying periods of time – from both other departments and other institutions of higher learning, in Sweden and abroad. IRES has the intention to serve not only as a

scientific excellence but also as national resource center.

Stockholm Institute of Transitional Economics (SITE) is an autonomous part of Stockholm School of Economics. Founded in 1989, SITE intends to become a leading research and policy center on transition in the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe. Its ambition is to serve as a bridge between the academic community and policy makers. To promote communication and the sharing of ideas. SITE regularly organizes policy oriented conferences and seminars. The SITE leadership notes that despite tremendous advances in recent years, there is still much to be understood about economic, political and legal institutions and how to change them.

Södertörn University and CBEES (the Centre for Baltic and East European Studies). CBEES, founded in 2005, is a research center at Södertörn University with the mission to develop, coordinate and conduct research focusing on the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe. Research into the Baltic Sea region and Eastern Europe is the highest prioritized area within Södertörn University's strategy on research. It is performed within all four schools of the university, and the research focus is characterized as multidisciplinary. CBEES is staffed by professors, senior researchers, research leaders and visiting researchers with a theoretical or empirical focus on the region. Currently, there are three research profiles: Politics of space, Identity and citizenship, Memory and heritage.

Institutes

The main task of the Swedish Defence Research Agency (FOI) is to support the shaping, build-up and utilisation of Sweden's defence resources, through its research-based knowledge and experience. As a part of the department of Defense Analysis there is a Russia project, on a permanent basis. The best known and most important product from that research is a biannual report on Russian Military Capability. The mandate for the group is, however, security policy

and hence it is not limited to military matters in a narrow sense.

The Swedish Institute of International Affairs (UI) has a Russia and Eurasia Program, which conducts research and analysis on the political, economic and social development of Russia and its neighbors. The program serves as a hub for researchers, experts and students who share an interest in Russia, Eurasia and Eastern Europe. The objective is to meet the need for knowledge of the region by conducting and supporting teaching, research and the dissemination of information in cooperation with academia, state administration and society as a whole.

Institutional cooperation

In Russia, the Akademia Nauk has a key role in coordinating and initiating research (though not as strong as during the Soviet period). The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences (KVA) as well as the Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences (IVA) have numerous cooperation agreements with academies in other countries, but presently not with Russia. This should be re-considered.

Baltic Science Network (BSN) is recently established (as an outgrowth from CBSS, see Chapters 2 and 3) and is a network for research and research policy cooperation in the Baltic region. All states around the Baltic, including Russia (and Germany), are members. This opens opportunities for increased cooperation and should be given high priority.

The Baltic University Programme (BUP) (see Chapter 3) also has a considerable potential for increased research cooperation. A similar but smaller network is the Baltic Sea Region University Network (BSRUN) with 20 member universities (seven Russian but no Swedish).

Scientific cooperation and exchange are clearly not bound to

institutional arrangement such as those mentioned above. In many fields (for instance my own original discipline, mathematics) exchange is lively, and was so even during the Soviet period. In other areas, cooperation is difficult, due to cultural and historical factors. There is also a certain amount of brain-drain from Russia to the West, which of course is not a desired effect of increased contacts.

Polar research

Polar research comprises all research carried out in, or concerning, mainly the Arctic and Antarctica, although researchers are also keenly interested in the sub-polar regions and the Swedish mountain areas. This means that, in principle, polar research comprises every scientific discipline – from natural sciences to social sciences. The Swedish Polar Research Secretariat is a government agency mandated to co-ordinate and promote Swedish polar research. The agency's primary mission is to organize and support research expeditions to the polar regions and manage research infrastructure. The Secretariat also helps to create favorable conditions for polar research that does not involve fieldwork.

Polar research is genuinely international, and Sweden has had the opportunity to play a leading role (signified e g by the use of the icebreaker *Oden* in several expeditions). Cooperation with Russia is central and has high priority. One particular example is the expedition SWERUS-14 in the summer of 2014, involving 83 researchers, and travelling all along the Russian northern coast, from Tromsø, Norway to Barrow, Alaska – and back.

7 Culture

A sector full of contrasts

Most Swedes would recognize that Russian culture is rich but “different”. If asked for particulars many would refer to the great authors of the 19th century, plus classical music, opera and ballet – but also reveal a quite vague idea of contemporary culture in Russia. If a Russian would be asked the corresponding question about Swedish culture, the answer would probably contain (enthusiastic) references to names such as Astrid Lindgren and ABBA but also a fairly rich picture of Swedish history and Russian-Swedish relations.

Cultural exchange is central to a policy of widened understanding between the peoples, but one has to recognize not only the asymmetry in size and importance. Russia is more important to Sweden than Sweden to Russia. There are also huge differences in tradition and in perceptions of what “culture” is all about.

Promoting Swedish culture in Russia

In the early years of the 1990s, Sweden was one of the first western nations to make culture a part of their presence in the new Russia. This tradition has been upheld: promotion and dissemination of Swedish culture remains a strong element in our country’s official presence in Russia.

There are two hubs for this effort. A Councillor for Cultural Affairs (kulturråd) is part of the Swedish Embassy in Moscow, together with a staff of four. At the Consulate General in St Petersburg one consul is responsible for culture; primarily in the north-western parts of the country. Culture as a field of responsibility means, in this context, essentially “artistic creation of high quality”. This does not prevent that from time to time attention is given to adjoining fields, such as academic research (Chapter 6), and journalism (Chapter 11).

The promotional activities include participation in art, film, theater and book fairs and festivals, organizing visits and exchanges from Swedish artists and authors, and in general promote the presence and visibility of Swedish culture in Russia. At times cultural events can be combined with the promotion of Swedish trade and businesses. A prioritized field is that of translation. Successful introduction of Swedish literature, film and drama to Russian audiences depends on the availability of translators of high professional standing and in sufficient numbers.

Financing comes from several sources. Personnel costs are covered by the Ministry of Culture, on a regular basis. Projects are financed ad hoc through grants from The Swedish Institute, The Swedish Arts Council and some others. It is sometimes possible to receive grants from private Russian foundations.

In the study GRANNLAGA I express approval and some admiration for the planning and execution of these promotional tasks. At the same time, the study uses strong language to express concern over the level of financing. On the average, the total sum for projects is below 1 million SEK yearly. In all kinds of comparisons this is a pathetically low amount. A reasonable volume for an active presence in this huge country would be at least 10 million SEK “at once”, and gradually increased over time.

Increased funds can be used to facilitate exchanges between artists and groups in the two countries, on a stable and long-range basis. One might also consider setting up a Swedish Cultural Centre (Culture House) in Moscow, or St Petersburg, or both.

A high degree of mutuality should be sought: exchanges in which both parties have stakes on roughly the same level. However, for many reasons the initiative and perhaps most of the financing will, for some time still, remain with the Swedish side.

Russian culture in Sweden

There is no unit or program in the Russian embassy or the diplomatic system, comparable to the efforts described above. To the extent active promotion occurs, it has mainly to do with great events and world-renowned orchestras or operas. However, the world-class quality of these parts of Russian culture guarantees their visibility and presence even in Sweden, through normal (market) channels.

One example: ballet from the Bolshoi is transmitted live, several times a year, to more than 40 cinemas around Sweden, using the same system that sends opera from the Metropolitan in New York.

Another example, originally a Swedish (Radio Sweden) initiative, is the yearly Baltic Festival. It is centered around classical music, but focuses attention also on issues such as environment and leadership. Russian artists and companies are regular contributors to this festival. A standing participant is Valery Gergiev, excellent but politically controversial conductor.

Seen from another angle there are many interest groups and small-scale initiatives built on a genuine interest in Russian culture. Film festivals, featuring old and new Russian films, are held yearly at least in two places (Uppsala and Stockholm). In some of the universities offering Russian or Russia studies (Chapter 5) students have formed associations and groups in order to pursue their interest in Russian culture.

Public funding of culture is a sensitive issue. Should the state, or other public bodies, somehow facilitate the dissemination of Russian culture in Sweden, and try to enhance the public's familiarity with it? The study holds that such support would be useful and feasible, as long as it is given in forms compatible with the Swedish tradition of non-partisan and a-political support of cultural activities.

8 Economy, administration, safety and social welfare

Many working relations

In this chapter, we list a fairly large number of, mostly undramatic, cases of cooperation established between Russian and Swedish actors. They range from state budgets, promotion of trade and business, nuclear safety and border control over to health and social work.

Budget processes

Already in 1988 (during the perestroika period) contacts were established between the Ministries of Finance. The objective was to form a modern, transparent state administration in Russia, with an emphasis on public finances and state budgeting. The Swedish side took up the challenge, and in 1992 formed a project organization: the Swedish-Russian Cooperation Project (SRSP). It operated actively for more than 15 years, with approval from the highest political level but without great publicity. It was very much appreciated by the Russian counterparts. When financing was cut off in 2007 (see chapter 2) the project could continue, but ad hoc and on a smaller scale. It received some financing also from the Russian side. In the fall of 2016 a handbook on budgeting (in Russian) was published.

Courts

On similar grounds as the one just mentioned, a cooperation between courts in the two countries was initiated in 2003. Contracting parties were The Swedish National Courts Administration (Domstolsverket) and its Russian counterpart. Issues such as effective administration, the courts' reputation, youth delinquents and human rights were on the agenda. In 2008 financing was cut off (see Chapter 2) but contacts were re-established in 2010, and a project was realized, on a limited scale, from 2012 to 2014.

Promotion of trade and business

As a recognized part of the Foreign service, both the Swedish Embassy in Moscow and the Consulate General in St Petersburg have personnel charged with promotion of Swedish exports, investments and business in general. The organization Business Sweden (half state, half private) is active in Russia, where it is an important actor with a key role.

The Swedish Chamber of Commerce for Russia & CIS (based in Stockholm) offers information about trade and business opportunities through seminars and informal meetings. Furthermore, the Chamber facilitates networking with decision-makers. The Chamber was, in a different form, founded already in 1968. It has presently 65 member companies (large and small, listed as well as unlisted).

Certain statistics and some general observations on Swedish companies in Russia, and about trade between the countries are given in the Swedish GRANNLAGA.

Border control and safety at sea

Under this heading some facts about cooperation between certain state actors in Russia and Sweden are presented namely those who are charged with controlling the borders and preventing dangerous, illegal and criminal activities.

Police. Multilateral and bilateral cooperation on organized crime is an effort with high priority and involves many actors from several countries, coordinated in the task force BSTF. Regular bilateral contacts on current affairs occur repeatedly.

Customs. Between Russia and Sweden there exists an agreement from 1993. Another bilateral agreement concerns illegal transfer of narcotic drugs (2005). Both countries are members of the World Customs Organization, WCO. Both countries are active against

organized crime and cooperate in BSTF (see Police, above)

Boundary control, shipping and rescue at sea. There are three major actors on the Swedish side:

- The Coast Guard (Kustbevakningen) is a civilian state agency working with rescue, assistance and monitoring, for the marine environment and safety at sea
- The Swedish Maritime Administration (Sjöfartsverket) is a governmental agency and enterprise within the transport sector and is responsible for maritime safety and availability. “We take responsibility for the future of shipping”
- Swedish Sea Rescue Society (Sjöräddningssällskapet) is a private organization, responsible for 70 percent of all sea rescues in Sweden. It receives no government funding. Thanks to 2.000 volunteer crew members, rescue services are always available 24 hours anywhere along the Swedish coast and on the major lakes.

In the Baltic Sea coordinated efforts between countries are evidently necessary. The actors just mentioned all take part in cooperation and joint planning. To a large extent coordination is done through HELCOM, described in some detail in Chapter 3 above. Although the organizational picture is a bit complex, several informants to the study confirm that cooperation, including interaction with Russia and Russian officials and professionals, runs well. Increased bilateral Russian-Swedish cooperation on the level of practical tasks and method development should be encouraged, and financed.

Nuclear security, safety and non-proliferation

Since the collapse of the USSR, Sweden has been engaged in international cooperation to ensure that radioactive and nuclear materials and facilities are kept safe and secure. Sweden has – for nearly 25 years – been active in the nuclear and radiological areas of international cooperation. Several hundred projects have been implemented in states that once were republics of the Soviet Union.

Sweden also works on the basis of goals and procedures established in the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR Agreement), a framework for enabling external partners to implement projects in the nuclear and environmental fields in Russia.

The Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (SSM) is responsible for the projects, which are run in accordance with a recognized standard for responsible international behavior. The financing came originally from the Sida grant in support of the reform process in Russia (see Chapter 2). It was continued beyond 2006 as part of the environmental part of the new strategy, and is now described as “neighborhood country cooperation”. It is based on a specific economic allocation (which was 35 million SEK during several years) though the future level seems to be somewhat uncertain at the moment (2017).

In conjunction with this, a well-developed program of advanced education on nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament has been in existence. It has included Russia and Sweden, as well as international actors such as SIPRI, King’s College London, US Department of Energy and the Nonproliferation Center, Monterey, USA. These projects have been run by SSM with economic support from the Swedish MFA.

Social sectors

During the years when support was given to the reform process (1991-2008), social issues had a central role, in terms of economic volume and as a political priority. Almost all of these activities were discontinued in 2007-2008; social sectors are not included in the “result strategy” presently in force (though some elements can be covered under the broad aim “human rights”; see also Chapter 10). Still, such work is discussed in this report under the assumption that if and when country-to-country cooperation is re-established and

expanded, social sectors ought to have high priority. The experiences from the former period will then be very useful.

Health and medical services. A broad program for assistance to Russian medical and health services was launched in 2000. Initially the focus was on clinical cooperation and the use of modern technology, but gradually the emphasis shifted towards capacity building and systemic issues. Fields mentioned in the extensive and useful reporting from the period were: primary care, psychiatry, reproductive health, youth, prevention of infections – all taken in a broad systemic perspective. The organization on the Swedish side is worth mentioning. An ad hoc but highly efficient Eastern Europe Committee (ÖEK) coordinated state, county, academic, professional and voluntary organizations in the fields of health and medicine. It was eventually dissolved in 2010 for lack of funding.

Social work and social services was another priority. Capacity building and creation of professional standards were central. Addiction to alcohol and drugs was a huge problem in Russia at the time: there was a focus on rehabilitation.

Children with social or physical handicap. The general pattern in Russia until the late 1900s was to place children with special needs in institutions: whether they suffered from physical or mental handicaps, or lived in dysfunctional families. Swedish experts took a great part in efforts to break this pattern and instead supported families (“against separation”), as well as improved the situation and professional standards in institutions. As an example, researchers from Ersta Sköndal högskola assisted in creating the influential Early Intervention Institute (EII) in St Petersburg. Evaluations indicate that the Swedish contributions were decisive, but also that people on the Russian side were very much aware of the need for change. Some of the counterparts in EII were even more “radical” than the Swedes, but less experienced.

In all three areas mentioned above, capacity building was central. This involved determined efforts to “spread the word” beyond the centers of specific cooperation. Courses and seminars for professionals, administrators and politicians from other parts of Russia was an integral part of the effort. As mentioned above, a restart of social programs in Russian-Swedish cooperation can profit from an impressive body of knowledge and experience.

9 People to people: tourism and twinning

The two forms of contact discussed in this chapter have an element in common: they involve “ordinary people”. They are accessible without any specialized knowledge or membership, and have the potential to create contacts between quite large numbers of people.

Russian tourism in Sweden

There exist very good and fairly detailed statistical data on Russian tourists in Sweden (published by the public/private company Visit Sweden). A few notes on the current situation:

- Russians spend 351 000 visits to Sweden, lasting longer than one day, which makes Sweden number 17 among their destinations in Europe (Finland is number 5)
- Russian tourists account for 1 % of foreign guest nights in Sweden. They spend slightly more than the average foreign tourist per day.
- Surveys (initiated by Visit Sweden and the Swedish Institute) indicate that in the category of Russians who claim to be interested in international contacts (10,6 million), as many as 96% express an interest in visiting Sweden.

The last point confirms the impression that Russians in general have a favorable picture of Sweden as a friendly, safe and well organized country.

However, in the last 2-3 years, the number of tourists has declined and Russian spending fallen off. The reason is almost certainly economic: the buying power of the Russian middle class has dropped. There is no reason to believe that this decline has any political connection. Market analysts believe that when the Russian economy recovers, tourism might well “explode”.

In this field “the market rules” and the industry is well aware of the opportunities. However, some active measures (such as more information in the Russian language) and certain innovations can be useful, but will probably affect the numbers only marginally.

Swedish tourism in Russia

On this point statistics are not as complete or illuminating as those mentioned above. The general picture is that the flows of tourists in this direction are small, with some exception for St Petersburg. The trips made often have a specific interest in focus: history, art, music, architecture etc.

The Russian tourist industry does not eagerly cater to European visitors, though a Tourist Office has recently been established in Helsinki and 4 more are under way in Europe. Our conclusion is that Swedish tourism in Russia is not likely to expand to large numbers. The importance of personal first-hand experience should not be under-estimated, but as an area for active policy tourism in Russia seems less important than other forms of contact – including those discussed in the next section.

Twinning and municipal partnerships

In the long (200 years) period of increasingly peaceful relations between the Scandinavian and Nordic Countries, the twinning of cities (vänorter) has been an important element for understanding and cooperation. The idea has spread outside Scandinavia, and twinning is presently supported through EU programs. Increasingly the term municipal partnership is used. Twinning/partnership agreements have been established between Swedish and Russian cities. In 2011, 27 such agreements were listed. But the interest and intensity seems to be fading out: more than half of these are “inactive”. On the other hand, some twinning arrangements – such as the one between Örebro and (Veliky) Novgorod – are run with

great conviction and enthusiasm.

With support from the state (Sida) a new start for twinning partnerships was launched in 2016. It is organized by the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD), a subsidiary to The Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SKL). After inviting applications from municipalities in Sweden and Russia 8 such partnerships have now been established. The interest from Russia was significantly stronger than that from the Swedish side. ICLD therefore decided to twin more than one Russian city to one Swedish. This new program centers attention to a specific, common problem, such as environment/sustainable development or care for the disabled. Evaluation and scientific follow-up will be part of the program.

This initiative is extremely relevant and should be welcomed. Municipal partnerships have a good track record. The focus on a specific problem may be sensible in the first phase. On the other hand, one should enhance the impact through a broad approach, characteristic of the “classical” form of partnership/twinning. They often included schools, theatre groups, choirs, sport clubs, churches and local politicians.

10 Civil society organizations

“Civil society” is a summary term for the segments of society which are independent of the state and free of commercial interests. Civil society organizations (CSO) are those that operate mainly in that part of society. CSO (or NGO, or “popular movements”) are considered an important element in Swedish society and are sometimes referred to as a “third sector”.

CSO played an important role in the support program that was in effect from 1991 to 2007 (see Chapter 2), in accordance with a Swedish tradition (the same pattern is reflected also in development assistance and the work of Sida). Russian counterparts were sought and found, but clearly there was no CSO tradition in post-Soviet Russia comparable to that of Sweden. In several areas discussed below we (sadly) find essentially a recurring pattern: interchanges were growing in a promising way, but almost all came to a halt around 2007, mainly – but not exclusively – due to the withdrawal of funding.

Human Rights

In the present “result strategy” (see Chapter 2) Human Rights and democracy are areas of priority. A number of CSO work in this area. Support for field work and partnering is given based on this strategy (via Sida and SI). Two of them are mentioned in the report.

Civil Rights Defenders (CRD, previously known as the Swedish Helsinki Committee for Human Rights) attempts to defend people’s civil and political rights and to strengthen Russian human rights defenders. CRD works in several regions, partnering with local organisations to achieve long-term sustainable change. One example: In the North Caucasus, human rights defenders receive support and legal assistance through a project named the Stockholm Process.

CRD also support marginalized groups such as HBTQ.

An organization with similar aims is Östgruppen (The East Group for democracy and human rights). It is active in Russia and Belarus. A significant part of its activities is monitoring and disseminating knowledge about the human rights situation in the areas where the group is working.

Churches and ecumenical organizations

This is a complex field, due to several factors. One such factor is that the Orthodox Church in Russia has a privileged role and is reluctant to enter into collaboration with churches from other traditions. On the other hand, religious and church life in Russia is dynamic and diverse, and several forms of cooperation have been identified. Some of them occur in the Barents region (see Chapter 4) and some contain practical elements (such as rehabilitation and vocational training) as an outgrowth of a shared Christian commitment. The situation and the possibilities for increased cooperation are laid out in some detail in the study by Helena Höij: *Vänskapliga förbindelser (Friendly Relations)*, 2017

Men for gender equality

Founded in Sweden as *Män för jämställdhet (MÄN)* this organization runs a multi-task project called SAfE in Russia, funded by Sida. Its focus is to halt and prevent men's violence against women and children. In cooperation with partner organizations MÄN works with fathers in order to prevent violence, supports victims and offers treatment for perpetrators.

Children and young adults

Several CSO concentrate on the plight of children and youth. Some of them can be traced back to the earlier period of cooperation (see also Chapter 8, Social sectors), others (such as the World Childhood Foundation) operate on the basis of donated funds, without state

support. It is evident that the situation for many children in Russia ought to be significantly improved. Adoptions from Russia to Sweden (and other countries) have been common. They were often combined with active child welfare projects. However, adoptions as well as the adherent projects, have decreased due to legal difficulties and cultural factors. As noted also in Chapter 8 cooperation concerning the situation of children and young people – in particular those with special needs – has proven fruitful. Earlier experiences show that people with a child perspective are able to establish a symmetric relationship and fruitful modes of collaboration.

Political organizations and trade unions

The comment here can be short. Almost all such forms of collaboration – quite extensive until 2007 – has ceased to exist. The explanations given refer to changes inside Russia. Former partners have changed their political outlook; a common ground is difficult to find. The negative attitudes of Russian authorities and recent legislation are contributing factors.

Environment

During the period 1991-2007 environmental and conservation organizations in both countries were responsible for a large part of the effort: more than 100 projects are reported. Most of them were phased out, though some informal (and poorly financed) links remain. Recently the issue has come to life through a rather large, 3-year program in north-west Russia and the Barents region (financed by Sida). Swedish and Russian WWF and some other organizations cooperate in capacity building for an increased role of civil society in decision-making about environment and natural resources.

Sports

In Sweden sports organizations, counted together, is the largest CSO. The movement is organized in several layers (national, regional, local) and in a large number of specialized sports federations. With

few exceptions, the sports are international in character. Hence there exist numerous contacts, and some of these undoubtedly mean connecting with Russian athletes, clubs and teams. But, except for a few observations (see about Barents Games, Chapter 4), it has not been possible for us neither to map nor recommend specific action in this vast field. However, there are indications that increased cooperation and exchange (bilateral and multilateral) would be feasible, and will be encouraged by organizations in the field, not least The Swedish Sports Confederation (Riksidrottsförbundet).

Chess

Chess is very large in Russia, encompassing brilliant players and grand masters. At the same time chess is a truly popular activity. Swedish chess circles confirm that Russia still has a strong role in the international context. This is an area in which Swedish players could learn much from an exchange: there is good reason to discuss the feasibility of some sort of bilateral arrangement.

Russian associations in Sweden

The Russian national association (Ryska riksförbundet I Sverige, sometimes abbreviated Rurik) reports some 1600 members (including some firms) and aims at improving relations between the two countries, promote cooperation between regions, facilitate the integration of Russians into Swedish society, fight xenophobia and work for unity among expatriate Russians. Rurik has obtained status as a recognized Swedish CSO and receives some minor grants on that basis.

In March 2016, another organization was founded: Svensk-ryska vänskapsföreningen (Swedish Russian friendship association). Its expressed aim is to work for good relations, on all levels, between Sweden and the Russian Federation. Three printed speeches by president Vladimir Putin are offered as a welcome present for new members.

Final remarks

There are convincing reasons that CSO should play a significant role in cooperation and trust-building between peoples and countries. The recent change of attitude from the Russian government and Russian authorities, in particular the law (2012) against “foreign agents”, create uncertainties and difficulties which drain energy from CSO. In some cases, cooperation is made impossible.

Hence, the Russian government should repeal this counterproductive and unfair legislation and instead support and facilitate the work of CSO, including international cooperation.

The Swedish government should continue, as far as feasible, to support CSO cooperation and make good use of the competence and commitment in “the third sector”.

11 Journalism, media and influencing public opinion

The subject of this chapter is sensitive and controversial; more so than any of the other chapters. The full report GRANNLAGA makes a point of quoting different sources in order to give a balanced picture. A brief overview of the Russian media landscape is included in the report, relying on public and frequently quoted sources. Here, however, brevity may hide the nuances of the original. Some – necessarily simplified – initial remarks:

- Russians have a generally favorable picture of Sweden and the Swedes
- Swedes in general have a rather shallow knowledge of Russia
- Influential Swedish media have in recent years pointed to Russia as our enemy
- The present Russian government tightens its grip over media, and tries to direct attention to foreign affairs and away from domestic issues.

Training of Russian journalists

Fojo is an academic institute, originally created for further education of Swedish journalists (since some years Fojo is part of the Linné University). Fojo has implemented journalist training programs in Russia since 1995, in cooperation with local partners. The programs have been designed for journalists in print, web and broadcast media. Seminars have covered a wide range of subjects such as investigative reporting, journalistic ethics, media management, web-editing, training of trainers. Financing for Fojo's Russian programs comes mainly from Sida.

Fojo projects have been of great significance for about 4000 journalists, media managers, editors and journalism students who have participated in educational programs in Russia from 1996

to the beginning of 2017. Fojo's own analysis of the situation is: "Democracy and the free media in Russia emerged strongly in the 1990s, but today the situation is much different. The Russian journalists are working in a deteriorating media and legislative environment. Russia has become one of the most dangerous countries in the world for a working journalist."

Fojo's mode of working has been somewhat modified, away from individual journalists toward media houses. In practical terms, new legislation (see end of Chapter 10) has had some psychological effect, but Fojo has been able to continue its activities, aimed at free and independent journalism.

Fojo is not the only actor for further training of Russian journalists. The organization International Media Support (IMS) is multinational and has its head office in Denmark and its SCOOP program (which is also supported by Sida). A third actor is the Stockholm School of Economics (SSE) Riga Centre for Media Studies. It is located in Latvia but has close contacts with media and journalists in Russia. The Barents Press cooperation is also important; it was mentioned in Chapter 4.

Trans border communication and cyber attacks

We start with a negative: there are no Russian media of any importance specifically addressing Swedish audiences, nor any Swedish media directed to Russians. Radio Sweden used to have a channel in Russian, but it closed down in the beginning of 2016. This caused a certain debate, which also tied in with the issue of propaganda broadcasts. The issue was related to language-based tensions in the Baltic area. The question of transmitting radio and TV in the whole Baltic region is controversial, partly because of strained relations between Russian minorities and the majority populations in Estonia and Latvia.

Not surprisingly, transborder and transnational communication is a touchy issue. Reporting in regular print and electronic media may be problematic at times, but it is open to public scrutiny and critique. Another level of complexity is added through social media, such as Twitter, Facebook, blogs and microblogs. They provide outlets for brief outbursts and incisive wording, often from unidentified sources. In terms of tensions and enmity between countries and peoples, these are problematic. The allegation that Russian or Russian-sponsored “trolls” try to influence public opinion in other countries is frequently heard. At the same time, anyone can see large numbers of comments from Swedish sources, hostile or scornful against Russia. “No smoke without fire?” We ought to know more, but in the research for the GRANNLAGA study, no reliable data were found on which to build a reasoned opinion or to formulate concrete recommendations.

Terms such as psychological warfare and cyber warfare are becoming more frequent in public debate, including messages from the Swedish government regarding security policy. (My view is that the words “war” and “warfare” should be reserved for physical, armed violence. Other forms of aggression and de-stabilization may be as serious, but calling them “war” may lead astray in terms of appropriate responses and organization.)

A particularly touchy issue arose from the proposal in 2015 that Sweden should join the NATO unit for strategic communication, StratCom, located in Riga, Latvia. Defense minister Peter Hultquist, who favored this move, stated his motive (January 2016):

So-called maskirovska, misleading information, is nothing new. ... But in the present hardened security climate these methods again come to the fore, but partly in new forms adapted to the technical means available to-day.

Against this position, critics argued that NATO does not have any impressive track record of objective reporting. Above all, our own agencies (for crisis management, psychological defense etc.) and in particular our free and independent media are held to be better suited to take on the challenge.

Final remarks

The most important conclusion is that problems such as biased reporting, disinformation and repression in the fields of media and communication cannot be handled in that sector alone. Supporting measures, such as training programs for journalists, are useful and should continue. In the Swedish tradition, there could be no state intervention in the content of the media. Hence, sustainable improvement in these aspects cannot be achieved through some specific “policy” or “strategic communication” run by the state and/or NATO.

Decisive importance should instead be ascribed to confidence-building measures in general, discussed in earlier chapters: cooperation in fields such as trade, environment, research, student exchanges, tourism, twinning, rescue at sea, fighting crime etc. This said, media houses as well as individuals should strive for balanced and truthful reporting and avoid increasing tensions. For this the free press and media carry the full responsibility.

12 Summary and recommendations

A new Russia policy

Based on three factors – a broad interpretation of security policy (Chapter 2), the many possibilities of cooperation and trust-building presented in the study and the UN Agenda 2030 (Sustainable Development Goals, in particular SDG 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development...”) – there is a strong case for re-thinking Swedish policy versus Russia. A revised policy would require a new balance between military (defensive) and civilian (both pro-active and defensive) measures. A shift in relative emphasis does not necessarily imply a reduction in military spending (an issue which the study does not discuss) but definitively an increase for civilian measures, in particular cooperation and trust-building. A short discussion of financing is found at the end of this chapter.

Motives

Beyond somewhat lofty aims such as “preserving the peace” and “cooperating for democracy and human rights”, during the research for the study we found a mixed bag of motives – held by different actors – in favor of enhanced cooperation and contacts (but very few against). They range from “help oust the president” to “cooperation is valuable for its own sake” and all sorts of nuances in-between.

My own reasoned conclusion, that might form a basis for concrete policies, can be summarized in two points:

- Contacts will increase knowledge. “The other” will look less frightening, the true nature of difficulties will be clarified and problems will be easier to solve.
- The Russian people are not our enemies. State-to-state disagreements (including military posturing) can of course not

be disregarded: there is no quick fix for them. However, in the longer run people-to-people contacts will ease tensions and eliminate aggressiveness even between states.

Recommendations

The Baltic Sea is central in two respects. The environment is under serious challenge, in particular by eutrophication. The area is also one where many sectors and nations meet, for transport, fishing, tourism and (unfortunately) even military activities. Cooperation is hence vital and should be generously financed. Environmental policy and research should be given a large budget of its own.

In the Barents region people-to-people cooperation is already well developed. It should be financed on a higher level, with care taken that the primacy of local initiative does not get lost. Some forms of cooperation might be “exported” as examples to other regions.

Student exchanges should be encouraged. Grants for bilateral linking between Russian and Swedish universities could be made available. Special funding, such as the “Visby program” (SI) could be considerably expanded, Tuition fees for Russian students should be abolished. Social arrangements, such as Student Houses, are worth exploring.

Swedish research on Russia must be expanded and made a priority area in research policy. Bilateral agreement between academies, research councils and universities should be encouraged. Research networks, such as BSN and BUP, could serve as bases for closer cooperation with Russian actors. Sweden can work for closer integration of researchers from Russia (“third country”) into EU research programs. Established areas of cooperation, such as nuclear safety and polar research, should of course be maintained, and could be complemented by e.g. postgraduate training programs.

The promotion of Swedish culture in Russia should be extended through a sizable expansion of grants (to at least 10 million SEK), and a strengthened organization. Exchanges should be encouraged and new forms tried (such as Swedish Cultural Centers).

A number of little-known instances of cooperation (state finances, courts, police, customs, safety at sea etc.) demonstrate how confidence is established between Russian and Swedish officials and professionals. Without breaking existing patterns, such cooperation should be expanded – and financed. The institutional structure in Russia needs improvement: hence cooperation may be useful and welcome.

Russian tourism in Sweden is interesting in many aspects. The relevant actors (state and commercial) are aware of the possibilities. Certain improvements in order to make Sweden more attractive are possible, but the major factor is the buying power of the Russian middle class. Twinning and municipal partnership (vånortsutbyten) should be encouraged. The ICLD program initiated in 2016 should be expanded and generously financed. In doing so it is desirable that many municipal actors from both sides: schools, culture groups, sports, churches etc. are included.

Cooperation between civil society organizations (CSO) should, in spite of difficulties and roadblocks, be regarded as a central area for trust-building and cooperation. Sweden should continue its efforts to convince the Russian government that the adverse attitude towards CSO-based cooperation is counter-productive. Swedish agencies (such as Sida and SI) should expand their programs, and every future “result strategy” ought to include a broader set of priorities, in particular social work, children and young adults and capacity building.

The training of Russian journalists is an area with a fine track record,

and should of course be continued. The situation for journalists and the media in general is sensitive and delicate (grannlaga!). Initiatives such as Barents Press and other (mostly informal) networks of journalists and media actors are at present perhaps the most important instrument in order to increase understanding. Disinformation and hostile messages are spread through both social and mainstream media. A deteriorating security climate should be handled through professional efforts on the part of specialized agencies and the media themselves. Expressions such as “information war” should be avoided, as should other forms of inflammatory language.

Financing and organization

If a broadly conceived security policy is taken seriously, this will be reflected in budget allocations. At present military defense receives 40+ billion SEK, with a 26 billion SEK increase over 5 years decided, ending up on 50 billion SEK yearly. Increased tension caused by Russia is given as the motive for this increase. The Swedish Armed Forces have a dominating role in security policy, in terms of money, personnel, information resources and research.

A few years back I co-authored a study, in which we could show that the total state budget for civilian security and peace-building measures was around 2 billion SEK (some parts of development assistance, with a total budget of 39 billion SEK, were counted). Only a small fraction of this amount is devoted to improving Russia-Sweden relations. Given the many opportunities and requisites laid out in this report, considerable increases regarding economic contributions as well as political initiatives are justified. An amount of 1 billion SEK should be allocated in the short term, aiming at an increase toward 2 billion in a not too distant future. Hopefully, tensions will eventually fade away, and this special grant can gradually be converted or withdrawn. It is not desirable to create a unified administration for this purpose: this report demonstrates the multi-dimensional nature of cooperation. Still, some form of coordination will be needed.

Acronyms and abbreviations

| | |
|--------|---|
| BEAC | Barents Euro-Arctic Council |
| BEEGS | Baltic and East European Graduate School, Södertörns högskola |
| BONUS | International research program on the Baltic Sea environment |
| BSN | Baltic Science Network |
| BSRUN | The Baltic Sea Region University Network |
| BSTF | Baltic Sea Task Force on Organized Crime |
| BUP | Baltic University Programme |
| CBEES | Centre for Baltic and East European Studies, Södertörns högskola |
| CBSS | Council of the Baltic Sea States |
| CRD | Civil Rights Defenders |
| CSO | Civil Society Organizations |
| EII | Early Intervention Institute (St Petersburg) |
| EU | European Union |
| FKSN | Russian Federal Agency for Narcotics Control |
| FOI | Swedish Defence Research Agency |
| Fojo | Institute for further education of journalists, Linné University |
| HBTQ | Collective term for homosexual, bisexual, transsexual and queer persons |
| HELCOM | Baltic Marine Environment Protection Commission - Helsinki Commission |
| ICLD | International Centre for Local Democracy |
| IPPNW | International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War |
| IRES | Institute for Russian and Eurasian Studies, Uppsala University (formerly UCRS) |
| IVA | Royal Swedish Academy of Engineering Sciences |
| KVA | Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences |

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|-----------|--|
| MFA | Ministry of foreign affairs (in Sweden: UD) |
| MÄN | Men for gender equality |
| Nato/NATO | North Atlantic Treaty Organization |
| NEFCO | Nordic Environment Finance Corporation |
| OSSE/OSCE | Organisation for security and cooperation in Europe |
| RGGU | Russian state university for the humanities |
| SEK | Swedish crowns |
| SEPA | Swedish Environment Protection Agency (Naturvårdverket) |
| SI | Swedish Institute |
| Sida | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| SITE | Swedish Institute for Transitional Economics, at SSE |
| SKKB | Cooperation committee for Christian churches in the Barents region |
| SKL | Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions |
| SMHI | Swedish Meteorological and Hydrological Institute |
| SRSP | Swedish-Russian cooperation program (Ministry of Finance) |
| SSE | Stockholm School of Economics |
| SSM | Swedish Radiation Safety Authority |
| SWERUS-C3 | Polar research expedition in 2014 |
| UCRS | Uppsala Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies (now IRES) |
| UI | The Swedish Institute of International Affairs |
| WCO | World Customs Organization |
| WTO | World Trade Organization |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |
| ÖEK | The Eastern Europe Committee for health and medical services |