

The International School has been organized annually in the framework of the Barents EU Center since 2012.

It lasts five days and is devoted to various European topics. Among the issues discussed in the framework of the schools are: resource factor, energy security in relation to the north of Europe, sovereignty, regional cooperation and policy with the participation of the EU in the Arctic region.

Every year the school is attended by more than 40 people, including students and lecturers from Russia and other countries (Finland, France, Italy, Hungary, etc.).

School program includes two main forms: lectures and discussions in working groups. Within the groups students and lecturers discuss the issues that are connected with the day theme and the issues of particular interest of the participants. This type of work allows to consider important issues from different approaches and to exchange views of all participants in the free form. The working language is English.

In the evaluation forms the school participants positively assess its organization, content and format. They noted that the school has the practical significance for them, and this week is beneficial for their future studies and careers.

In 2017, Barents EU Center is organizing an international school from 13 to 17 March. The school topic is "Prospects of European integration: comparison with the regional integration processes in the Northern Europe".

The topic is very relevant. The European Union has faced a number of problems that led to disagreements among its member states. Active migration processes led to terrorist attacks on the European territory, the question further maintenance of tolerance and multiculturalism has been raised. Apart from that, migration crisis strengthens eurosceptics' and nationalists' positions. This raises a question of how migration process is going to develop and what consequences it will have for the European integration. The EU, like many countries, faced the consequences of the global economic crisis. In spring 2010 Greece was on the verge of default, then the crisis affected other weak Eurozone countries. Economic situation in several countries has yet to be stabilized by the EU, thus the member states' interest in developing economic integration should be motivated. Great Britain's decision to leave the EU raises questions on the strengthening of European integration as well. Different member states view topical questions of international relations differently: Ukrainian crisis, sanctions imposed on Russia, etc.

However, at this stage the European Union is one of the main powerful actors in the international arena. Its further development prospects cannot but be of interest for studying.

At the same time the strengthening of regional integration within the EU, especially in Northern Europe, can be noted. Regional international organizations play an important role in international cooperation in the North of Europe. In the northern European region Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Nordic Council of Ministers, Nordic Council actively work. Actors of the European North effectively participate in Barents and Baltic cooperation programs. The region value significantly increased after the European Commission adopted a new initiative "Northern Dimension", aimed at consolidating the efforts of the countries' and international organizations, especially Russian Federation, in developing international cooperation,. The current stage of this integration process is the European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region.

As researchers point out, the regional policy in the European North is characterized by its activity, constant formation of new associations and unions aimed at expanding and strengthening comprehensive ties in the areas of ecology, economics, health care and transportation. This policy provides the basis for further cooperation among the countries in the Northern Europe. One of the main consequences of such policy is strengthening and expansion of the Northern Europe region's role in the European Union.

It is interesting to consider the integration processes in the EU on the whole and the Northern Europe at the current stage, to make parallels and possible comparison. Besides that, the participants can discuss whether strengthening of the regional integration leads to new forms of European integration intensification or such processes weaken the EU unity and community.