

ARCHIMEDES FOUNDATION
EU INNOVATION CENTRE

special issue

innovaatika

PHOENIX

*Fostering the rebirth of
social sciences and humanities
in the Central Asia*



Dear reader of **innovaatika** !

This is the first Newsletter of the PHOENIX project and it is published mainly to inform Central Asian social sciences and humanities (SSH) community about SSH events and news in the European Union (EU), and also vice versa, to inform EU SSH community about events and projects led by their colleagues in Central Asia (CA).

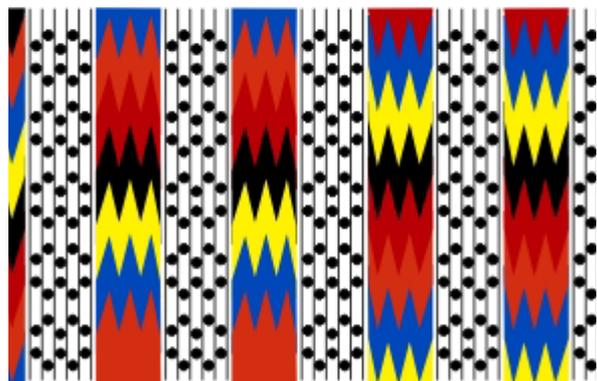
In this first issue there will be given a short survey about Central Asian countries and the main reasons for the creation of the PHOENIX project. One reason, for example, the need to stabilise research potential in Central Asian countries and tackle the problems of mutual interest. It is therefore important to create stronger research partnerships and networking between Central Asia and Europe to stimulate research cooperation; to support common understanding inside different SSH communities; and to attract young researchers from Central Asia into the implementation of the PHOENIX project.

The PHOENIX Newsletter will be published every two months throughout the 2 years of the project and in the next issues we intend to provide discussions, interesting ideas, pictures, reviews and suggestions from the participants of the first workshop held in Bishkek (there will be representatives of funding bodies, universities and research institutes from all five Central Asian countries, including PhD students).

We provide here a publicly accessible e-mail address phoenix@irc.ee and will in future issues include messages from contributors with their ideas and suggestions. The editorial staff will also maintain close collaboration with Central Asia contacts to ensure that interviews and news flashes will be available throughout the duration of the project.

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general information

CENTRAL ASIA

HISTORY

This vast and fascinating part of the world comprises the five ex-Soviet Central Asian countries, composing of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. It runs from the Caspian Sea in the west to Mongolia and China in the east, from the southern Urals and Siberia in the north to borders of Iran and Afghanistan in the south. This 4 million square kilometres territory is a kingdom of steppes, deserts, valleys and mountains.

The Central Asian (CA) countries are strategically located at the crossroads of the ancient Silk Road between China, the Middle East and Europe. Over the past several millennia the Silk Road has brought many traders to Central Asia and the area's location on the vast interior Eurasian steppe has been a continual invitation to empire-seeking armies. As a result, the native culture has been influenced by the infusion of a number of foreign elements, introduced by groups such as the Turks, the Arabs and the Mongols.

Central Asia was for centuries one of the cradles of civilisation. This area is populated primarily by people of Turkic ethnicity (such as the Kazakhs, the Kirghiz, the Turkmen and the Uzbeks). The other major group in the area, the Tajiks, are of Iranian descent.

The most recent foreigners to arrive on the Central Asian scene are, of course, the Russians, having an influence on the culture of the area.

Unfortunately the uniqueness of the culture (e.g. languages, traditions, history) as well as the science achievements are quite unknown for the most of the European countries. The conservatism of the local political and administrative institutions is as responsible as the lack of interest so far shown towards Central Asian countries.

CENTRAL ASIA

TODAY

Some statistics about Central Asian Countries:

Kazakhstan –

Capital: Astana
Population: over 15 million people
Area: 2,724,900 sq. Km
Languages: Kazakh (official), Russian (language of inter-ethnic communication)

Independence: 16 December 1991 (from the Soviet Union)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 23.7%
 (male 1,834,535/female 1,758,988)
15-64 years: 68.4%
 (male 5,075,243/female 5,312,536)
65 years and over: 7.9%
 (male 424,341/female 780,201) (2005 est.)

Kazakhstan was the first Central Asian country to launch, in 1993, a presidential scholarship program "Bolashak" for study abroad. "Bolashak" means "The Future" in Kazakh. The program is designed to train future leaders in business, international relations, law, science, engineering, and other key fields. Upon completion of their programs, scholarship recipients return to Kazakhstan to perform government service for a period of five years.

Kyrgyz Republic –

Capital: Bishkek
Population: over 5,000,000 people
Area: 198,500 sq. Km
Languages: Kyrgyz and Russian - official languages

Independence: 31 August 1991 (from Soviet Union)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 31.6%
 (male 827,751/female 796,029)
15-64 years: 62.3%
 (male 1,571,476/female 1,632,506)
65 years and over: 6.2%
 (male 123,992/female 194,527) (2005 est.)

In 2003, almost half of Kyrgyzstan's 200,000 university students, 49 per cent, chose subjects in the humanities. Nearly one in four, 23 percent, chose economics and management, and another 12 percent chose law, according to a 2003 Education Ministry report. Just over 17 percent chose technical courses. But fewer than 2,300 students, or 1.1 percent, chose to study agriculture.

general information

Tajikistan –

Capital: Dushanbe
Population: about 7,000,000 people
Area: 143,100 sq. Km
Languages: Tajik (official), Russian (language of inter-ethnic communication), Uzbek

Independence: 9 September 1991 (from Soviet Union)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 38.5%

(male 1,390,220/female 1,368,268)

15-64 years: 56.7%

(male 2,022,764/female 2,040,524)

65 years and over: 4.8%

(male 150,372/female 191,358) (2005 est.)

The Tajiks, an Indo-European speaking people, have inhabited Central Asia since the dawn of civilization and are most closely related to the people of Iran. They have given a name to all of what today is known as Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Afghanistan etc. The -stan suffix, in these countries names, means land in Tajik (Persian).

Turkmenistan –

Capital: Ashgabat
Population: about 5 million people
Area: 488,100 sq. Km
Languages: Turkmen (official)
Independence: 27 October 1991 (from the Soviet Union)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 35.7%

(male 909,113/female 860,128)

15-64 years: 60.2%

(male 1,462,198/female 1,516,836)

65 years and over: 4.1%

(male 78,119/female 125,687) (2005 est.)

More than 70 different nationalities reside in Turkmenistan. The energy-rich Central Asian country has revived its most ancient rituals and customs, and discovered old taboos that were thinly papered over during Communist rule. For a Turkmen, carpet making has the same importance as the pyramids do for Egypt. It is one of the oldest arts in Turkmenistan and the region. The Turkmens are also famous for their horses, breeding and training.

"Water is a Turkmen's life, a horse is his wings, and a carpet is his soul".

Uzbekistan –

Capital: Tashkent
Population: more than 26 million people
Area: 447,800 sq. Km
Languages: Uzbek (official)
Independence: 27 October 1991 (from the Soviet Union)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 35.7%

(male 909,113/female 860,128)

15-64 years: 60.2%

(male 1,462,198/female 1,516,836)

65 years and over: 4.1%

(male 78,119/female 125,687) (2005 est.)

Uzbekistan is the land of an ancient heritage. It has about half a dozen UNESCO protected monuments, which is an incredible number for a country of this size. It shares boundaries with all other 'stans' and has ancient cities like Samarkand and Bukhara. Today Uzbekistan is a large scientific center in Central Asia. Almost 300 scientific institutions function in the country. There is a well-developed research basis and a wide scientific fund with over 25,000 skilled scientists and researchers. There are 59 institutions of higher learning function in the republic, including 16 universities, 39 teacher training institutes, medical, technical, economic, agricultural, and other institutes

Today finds the countries of CA in a period of rebirth. At the same time they still have to withstand several problems concerning ethnic diversity, border disputes and the processes of nation building, different religious beliefs, security, the rapid juvenescence ageing of the population and linguistic diversity. All these problems occur not only in Central Asia but also in Europe, and are directly connected to social sciences and humanities (SSH).

In the situation where new communication technologies are bringing nationalities closer together than ever before and people from anywhere can communicate together as if they were neighbours, studies in SSH, without considering this, are nearly unthinkable.

SSH is an important part of the foundation for a knowledge-based society and economy. The research and academic education generates learning skills, human resources, the ability to communicate, cultural understanding and creative development.

To notice achievements in the science field among young people with fresh ideas, it's important to help them to communicate with other countries beyond the borders of CA and support the development and common understanding inside different SSH communities.

project PHOENIX

PHOENIX

We may ask: “Why should we turn our attention in the science field towards Central Asian countries?” To give an answer to this question it could be beneficial to remember that CA traditions and experience may provide a fresh view of many scholarly problems, not because they are better but because some of their understandings and biases are different from those that are common in Europe.

We should also remember that many central ideas in the humanities and social sciences originate from deeper eastern roots and the past but not from the shallow layers of the stream of international publications.

CA countries share a culture and a way of living enriched by many centuries of experience as the mediators of social, artistic, scientific, religious and commercial exchange between East and the West.

Today it offers a wide arena for the SSH community to promote and protect the cultural heritage and through this make cultural tourism more attractive. Every country with a different history and traditions has got something beneficial to share of which foreigners are currently unaware.

PARTICIPANTS

The PHOENIX project constitutes an integrated set of networking and training measures for the SSH community in Central Asia and it is based on the close cooperation of three partners:

1. The Archimedes Foundation (Archimedes) in Estonia
2. The University of Helsinki (HU) in Finland
3. The Kyrgyz Centre of Science and Technology Development (KCSTD) from Kyrgyzstan.

Despite the awareness that the Earth is becoming a true village where people can meet easily, people can not understand each other because of different historical, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. There is a need for interpretation. Estonia has with Finland, a common cultural and linguistic background and has in the same time been part of Soviet Union like Central Asia.

To achieve the goals of the project, it requires extensive coordination between partners. The coordination among partners has been planned through the project management team.

The key persons in the management structure are:

Ülle Must (Archimedes) –

- She is the Director of the Innovation Centre of the Archimedes Foundation.
- A Member of the Board of the Archimedes Foundation.

- She is responsible from the Estonian side for the implementation of the HERA (Humanities in the European research Area) project, and organizing the HERA conference in Estonia in 2007.
- Lecturer in the Tartu University History Department and Tartu University Euro College since 1995.
- A member of different R&D policy bodies – e.g. Evaluation of Estonian Excellence Centres Proposals (2002), R&D policy groups by the Ministry of Research and Education (2003), Member of the Management Committee of Estonian Research Information System (2004).
- Together with Swedish colleagues she is involved in INTAS ININ Continuing advice project for Central Asia (since 2004).
- Member of the COLLNET network.

Arto Mustajoki, Professor (HU) –

- He is a Doctor of Philosophy and Professor of Russian Language and Literature;
- Vice President of International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature.
- A Member of the Board of the Academy of Finland.
- He has been a Chair of several Evaluation and Accreditation Committees.

Olga Borisova (KCSTD) –

- Expert of the National Information Point for the European Community's Sixth Framework Program for research and Technology.
- Has experience in working in TACIS projects.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

As is well known, there have not been many opportunities for most of the young and talented researchers in Central Asia either to broaden their experiences, to expand their achievements or to be acknowledged.

Therefore it is an important task to attract young researchers from Central Asia into implementation of the project in all its phases, and via Phoenix, to form the basis for future partnership activities.

The main objective is to create an active networking and training environment for the community in Central Asia, alongside the expertise of MS partners, the expertise of existing EU funded project (e.g. MORESS, HERA) and collaboration networks (COLLNET).

The goals of the PHOENIX project are to establish stronger research partnership and networking across national boundaries. The key to success and stability in

workplan

the region depends on creating an environment where development of the area's resources proceeds relatively unhindered, and where the profits of that development can be re-invested into the development of the region as a whole. **It is important to improve and identify communication between Central Asia and Europe.**

Through workshops, training courses, video links, virtual conferences and the mapping of the SSH community in Central Asia, PHOENIX will create the basis for future cooperation and will raise the consciousness and common understanding between different SSH communities.

The most important expected outcomes of PHOENIX are that the activities for Central Asia SSH communities will lead to successful cooperation projects in Framework Programs.

WORKPLAN

-disseminating knowledge and raising public awareness

Dissemination activities will be undertaken both to create an awareness of the project at the EU level and to extensively distribute the knowledge generated within the project. Project dissemination activities will consist mainly in the creation of information on the PHOENIX web page. Also access to the virtual conference, mapping results, workshop proceedings, will be uploaded and occur through the PHOENIX website – PHOENIX.irc.ee

Indeed every project is created in the sincere that it will be successful. In the order to be successful the PHOENIX team understands that it will need support not only of the scientific community and officials but of the general public as well. In consideration of this aim, the public and other stakeholders will be made aware of PHOENIX via electronic leaflets, virtual conferences and the website, as well as through a coordinated Public Relations strategy.

The project will be implemented through different activities:

- Communication and Dissemination
- Mapping measures
- Workshops - April 2006 ; November 2008 (both in Bishkek)
- Video conference - September 2007
- Virtual conference - November 2006 and September 2007
- Training courses - November 2006, September 2007

Short messages about the activities:

Communication and Dissemination

Dissemination activities will be undertaken both to create an awareness of the project at the EU level and to extensively distribute the knowledge generated within project.

Access to the information, virtual conferences, mapping results and workshop proceedings will occur through the PHOENIX website. In addition to the website, ten issues of the electronic newsletter will be published.

Mapping measures

The objective of the mapping exercises is to provide an overview of the research landscapes in the SSH sectors. The aim is not to produce a “map of excellence” but the “mapping of reality” (basic statistics, national/international programmes and initiatives, major research centres). PhD students from all five CA republics will collect the data.

Mapping of local SSH competencies – the general situation in SSH in the respective country (list of national programmes and major research institutions or research groups; names, addresses of the universities, institutes, centres, web pages).

Mapping of CA SSH research infrastructures – collections and datasets created in SSH.

Benchmarking reports will identify similarities and differences, strengths and weaknesses.

Workshops

There will be two workshops in Bishkek (the capital of the Kyrgyz Republic) – one will take place at the beginning of the project and the other at the end. Topics to be discussed are:

- Academic and professional recognition in Europe
- Traditional educational models in Europe
- Comparison between Educational systems (Russian Federation, Western Europe, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Central Asia)
- Higher Education Quality Assessment
- International cooperation in SSH
- European mobility schemes helping “third countries“

Video Conference

A Video conference will be organized during the HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) conference held in Tallinn in September 2007. At the same time a seminar will be held in Bishkek. Ph. D students from CA will actively participate and the topic of the conference

workplan

will be “New technologies in SSH research”.

Objectives:

- how to raise awareness of PHOENIX in the SSH research community
- discussing the issues of relevance to the SSH in a broad sense
- the possibilities offered by EU’s Framework Programme for research
- to test technologies used in SSH.

The video conference will use the Silk Road Internet network that connects all CA countries.

Video conference records will be available on the [website](#).

Virtual Conference

Virtual Conferences will take place in November 2006 and September 2007. The main speakers of the conferences will talk ‘virtually’ with participants at confirmed times.

The main objectives of Virtual conferences are the same as the Video conferences. The entire program and the communication abstracts of the conference will be displayed on the [web page](#).

Training courses

Training courses for Ph.D students from CA, Estonia and Finland will be organized before HERA conferences in Estonia (November 2006 and September 2007). Topics to be discussed are SSH in relation to new technologies and foresight in SSH.

- to support collaboration between Ph.D students in CA and Europe
- to give opportunity to PhD students from CA to use SSH infrastructure
- to discuss the issues of relevance to the SSH in a broad sense

There will be a total of 50 participants during each training course. The contents of the lectures will be on the [website](#).

CALENDAR 2006

13. – 14. April 2006	Workshop in Bishkek
19. – 22. November 2006	Training Course in Estonia
23. November 2006	HERA conference in Helsinki
23. November 2006	Virtual Conference
27. November 2006	Brokerage event in Estonia

workshop

FIRST WORKSHOP

“Boosting quality: International Credential Evaluation and Higher Education Quality Assessment in SSH”

BISHKEK 13-14 April, 2006 Issykul Hotel

13th April

- 12.00 – 12.30**
- Welcome
- Presentation of PHOENIX project – Ülle Must
- 12.30 – 13.20**
- Short presentations (10 minute self introductions) from all countries
- 13.20 – 13.50**
- Academic and professional recognition in European Regions – Gunnar Vaht
- 13.50 – 14.10**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 14.10 – 14.40**
- Traditional educational models in Europe. Diversities in higher education systems and recognition problems – Gunnar Vaht
- 14.40 – 15.00**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 15.00 – 15.30**
- Pause
- 15.30 – 16.00**
- Bologna process towards the European Higher Education Area by 2010.
- Bologna process and higher education reforms in Estonia – Gunnar Vaht
- 16.00 – 16.20**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 16.20 – 16.50**
- Credential evaluation – criteria, procedure, and sources. Comparison of educational systems (cases from Russian Federation, Eastern Europe and Central Asia) – Gunnar Vaht
- 16.50 – 17.10**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 17.10 – 18.00**
- European Mobility schemes helping “third countries”
- Marie Curie, Mobility portal etc. – Kristin Kraav
- 18.00 – 18.30**
- Questions and Discussion.

14th April

- 09.00 – 09.45**
- Higher Education Quality Assessment – definition, specific features, purpose of accreditation
- Transnational Recognition of Accreditation Decisions – code of good practice, qualification frameworks and shared quality criteria and descriptors, selection criteria for External Experts – Tiit Laasberg
- 09.45 – 10.00**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 10.00 – 10.45**
- Criteria for assessment of teachers work (feedback from students, scientific merits, teaching material, participation in the development of teaching, work as a member of a collective) – Prof. Arto Mustajoki
- 10.45 – 11.00**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 11.00 – 11.30**
- Pause
- 11.30 – 13.00**
- Quality assessment matrix as a tool of improving teaching.
- Teaching methods as a means to obtain generic skills (ability to find, evaluate and use information, ability to work in teams, writing and oral presentation skills, ability to make conclusions) – Prof. Arto Mustajoki
- 13.00 – 13.15**
- Questions and Discussion.
- 13.15 – 13.45**
- Conclusions.

lectures

About the lecturers

Gunnar Vaht

Director of ENIC/NARIC Centre in Estonia. The Centre belongs to the Council of Europe and UNESCO network ENIC (European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility) and is a member of the European Union network NARIC (National Academic Recognition Information Centres).

He is the elected President of the European Network of National Information Centres on Academic Recognition and Mobility.

Tiit Laasberg

Head of Estonian Higher Education Accreditation Centre. The Estonian Centre of Higher Education Accreditation (EKAK) is engaged with the organization of research evaluation and accreditation of higher education and with the organization of the work of the Higher Education Quality Assessment Council, which operates in the sphere of government of the Ministry of Education and Research and carries out accreditation of universities and their curricula.

He is member of the Steering Group of Central and Eastern European Network of Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education.

Kristin Kraav

She is the Mobility NCP for Estonia under FP6 and member of the Programme Committee for Human Resources and Management in the framework programme and coordinator of the Estonian Mobility Network.

Arto Mustajoki

He is a Doctor of Philosophy, Professor of Russian Language and Literature; Vice President of the International Association of Teachers of Russian Language and Literature; Member of the Board of the Academy of Finland; Chair of the Research Council for Culture and Society (Academy of Finland); Member of Standing Committee for the Humanities ESF; Member of the Core Group of Standing Committee for the Humanities ESF; Member of the ESFRI (European Strategy Forum on Research Infrastructure) committee for Humanities and Social Sciences, Member of the Network Board of HERA (Humanities in the European Research Area) 2005–

His Recent Evaluation and Assessment Experiences:
 Chair of the International Evaluation Committee for Estonian Departments of Russian Philology 1999
 Chair of the Finnish Expert Group in the Evaluation of Uppsala University 2001
 Chair of the Evaluation Steering Group of Finnish-Russian Cultural Forum 2004
 Member of the Pre-selection Committee for the Millennium Technology Prize 2004–2006
 Member of Steering Committee for Research Assessment of the University of Helsinki 2004–2006
 Member of Steering Committee for Evaluation of Administration in Helsinki University 2004–2005
 Member of the Support Group for the Assessor (Jorma Rantanen) of the Structural Facilities of Research in the Finnish University sector 2004–2005
 Chair of the International Evaluation Committee for the Faculty of Arts of Jyväskylä University 2005
 Member of the Support Group for the Assessor (Ilkka Huovio) of the Finnish Institute of Russian and East-European Studies 2006–