

*Dr. A. G. Izmailova
Dr. I. I. Dukeov
Prof. A. Liljenberg
Stockholm School of Economics Russia
191186, St. Petersburg,
Shvedsky Lane, 2
tel: +7-812-320-48-00,
fax: +7-812-320-48-09,
e-mail: dukei@sseru.org*

EUROPEAN HIGHER BUSINESS EDUCATION PROGRAMS IN RUSSIA (AT THE EXAMPLE OF SWEDEN)

The Bologna Process, which will allow creation of a unified European higher educational space, as well as increase of competitiveness of European higher educational institutions, is one of the urgent issues for discussion in the field of education on the eve of 2010.

Russia and Sweden are among the countries that participate in the Bologna Process. Interestingly, there are already successful examples of functioning of Swedish educational institutions in Russia. The present work covers the Swedish model of business education and also presents a concept that has been functioning in Russia successfully since 1997. This allows understanding to which extent the Russian consumers of the educational product are prepared for consumption of European educational services, as well as how efficiently is implementation of European methods of education going on in Russia.

It is necessary to say that between 1995 and 2004 the quantity of students willing to receive higher education in Sweden grew by 52%¹, which spoke not only about growth of popularity of higher education in this country but also about the quality of educational services that grew better. In turn, this confirms a high level of quality of the educational product imported from Sweden.

Executive MBA programs for executives are the highest stage of business education, which allows obtaining of knowledge about practical management tools in the most diverse areas. Stockholm School of Economics in Sweden became one of the first educational institutions in the country that started education under Executive MBA program. From the very start the program gained stable popularity among successful managers who wished to improve efficiency of their work and climb the career ladder.

The modular format of Executive MBA program received popularity on the market of educational services of Sweden very quickly, which made the management of Stockholm School of Economics think about a possibility of

¹ According to documents of the official website <http://www.hsv.se/> dedicated to higher education in Sweden.

broadening of the geography of provision of its services outside of the country. Decision on opening of a division of Stockholm School of Economics in Russia was made in 1997.

Relying on 12 years of existence of the school in Russia it is possible to say with assurance that the Swedish educational model is fairly successful among the Russian audience. Very often the qualitative composition of participants of Executive MBA programs becomes better in comparison to Swedish groups and profile of the groups includes top and middle-rank managers of large Russian and Western companies working on the territory of Russia. The modular format of education turned out to be attractive for the Russian audience too. It allows gathering of not only managers from Moscow and St. Petersburg but also from other large cities of Russia and CIS countries to the programs.

Along with this, during education under Executive MBA programs in Stockholm School of Economics Russian participants also encounter certain difficulties. Thus, for instance, the volume of homework between the educational modules is much bigger than that habitual for Russian students. Such homework usually consists of reading of one or two books in the English language, articles dedicated to pressing problems of the topic of the module, as well as a written task requiring independent outlining of this or that problem. All this forces participants of the programs to spend a significant quantity of time on self-education in the breaks between the modules, which definitely brings its fruits and enables them to broaden the scope of knowledge acquired during the period of education under the program.

A written exam after graduation of each of the semester is another difficult moment. Unlike a traditional exam in Russian higher educational institutions where questions are provided for preparation, in Executive MBA programs participants are offered to get prepared for the entire learned material of the courses including obligatory repetition of homework. The maximal learning and repetition of materials of the educational modules is achieved in such way.

Participants of Executive MBA programs have a unique possibility to pass education under a European program without going abroad. Along with this, the quality of the educational product does not grow worse because the school invites to the Russian programs the same lecturers who teach in Sweden. The only important difference is adaptation of some courses to peculiarities of running of Russian business. During preparation of lectures lecturers try to take examples from Russian practice or to illustrate this or that technique by cases of Russian companies. The possibility to get education both in English and in Russian languages is also very important. It is a unique case when participants who do not have a sufficient command of the English language have a possibility to learn under a program of European business education. Such programs are fulfilled by the same Western lecturers but with synchronous translation, which allows preserving of quality of education.

Speaking about efficiency of functioning of the model of Swedish educational program Executive MBA, it is possible to mention achievements of graduates of Stockholm School of Economics Russia who occupy the leading positions in the largest Russian and Western companies like Rosneft, LUKoil, Kalina Corporation, IBM, Sibur, and are also among 100 representatives of the reserve of the managerial staff of the President of Russia.

At present, Stockholm School of Economics Russia is the only Russian school represented in the rating of business schools of *The Financial Times*. *The Financial Times* newspaper annually composes a rating of the leading international business schools, universities and other educational institutions that offer education in the field of business in various forms and carry out short-term education of managers and specialists. These educational institutions and their programs are evaluated according to a number of parameters on the basis of data of comprehensive polling of their graduates, as well as quantitative information provided by the institutions themselves. The rating takes into account information about career growth of graduates, gain in their salary, as well as methods of education qualification of lecturers and international composition of students.

Since 2001, when The Financial Times composed a rating of Executive MBA programs for the first time the relevant program of Stockholm School of Economics has permanently been on the leading places of the rating among educational institutions of Nord Europe and Baltic Sea region countries.²

All this enables us to speak with assurance about successful implementation of the Swedish model of education in Russia, as well as about a possibility of further development of European educational programs on the Russian market.

² <http://www.ft.com/businesseducation/emba2008>