

Center for Russian Studies established

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The Board of Uppsala University, Sweden, decided today to establish a Center for Russian Studies. It is the only one of its kind in Sweden and will pursue multidisciplinary research focusing on Russia and its immediate surroundings.

"This will truly be a center where the guiding principle is openness and collaboration. We will be rather unique in terms of the breadth of our academic competence. We will gain great strength from gathering research about the same geographic area, but from diverse academic disciplines, under the same roof," says Claes Levinsson, who will direct the institute.

During the autumn Uppsala University was allocated SEK 36 million over a five-year period for research on Russia, as part of the government's strategic initiative in the research field "politically important geographic regions." The Center for Russian Studies, which was formally established by the Board today, will be a multidisciplinary research center and will be located on the Old Forum. It will not teach any courses of its own, but will provide teachers for other departments. Organizationally the center will be placed under the Faculty of Social Sciences.

The new center will feature three thematic research areas that bring together social scientists, language researchers, theologians, legal scholars, and humanities researchers to address common issues:

- state and market
- identity formation
- Russia's immediate surroundings

A great deal of the research is already pursued at Uppsala University, but it is spread across several departments. There will be a permanent core of researchers at the center, but many more will be associated with the center for varying periods of time – from both other departments and other institutions of higher learning, in Sweden and abroad.

"There's a great deal of curiosity and interest regarding what we are setting up here. It will be an open and creative environment that many people will want to be part of," says Claes Levinsson.

Another important aspect is collaboration with the surrounding society. The center is to be a resource center for everyone interested in Russia. In conjunction with the establishment of the center, the Department of Eurasian Studies will cease to exist, and its research will be moved to the new center and to the Department of Political Science.

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