

Report

Unlike many youngsters from northwestern Russian regions, who travel to Scandinavian countries almost on a constant basis, I've ever been neither to Sweden nor to Finland or Denmark. So I believe that a fellowship of the Foundation for the Furtherance of Swedish-Russian Relations turned out to be a really unique chance not only to visit these countries as a tourist but, what was more attractive, to become a resident of an ancient and very beautiful Swedish town Uppsala. This small town is world-wide known due to its famous University, which manages to successfully combine medieval traditions with recent technologies and methods.

Being a political scientist I was affiliated at Uppsala Religion and Society Research Centre. My research field was tightly connected with such issues as religion, nation-building, secularism phenomena. So the choice of this Centre was, to my mind, very logical as it focuses on highly interesting problems – for example, the role and influence of religion on society processes. It was a very pleasant surprise for me to know that there is a special Theology Department at the University, where all imaginable issues connected with religion are in the focus of research. It's really unique that such issues are separated in a special unit, what allows to study them deeper and more thoroughly. Moreover, all priests have to graduate firstly from this Theology Department and could combine divine services with teaching at the University. There were many other interesting facts about church and religion in Sweden I learnt while communicating with researches from the Centre and during special seminars, conducted in the Department.

I'd like to tell some more words about these seminars. Almost every faculty or research group offers every week (or even twice a week) a program of seminars, which are conducted not only by Swedish scientists but by many researchers from all over the world. Seminars are usually followed by discussions and informal communication, when you are able to get acquainted with very interesting and prominent scientists. I was struck by the huge variety of topics, presented at such seminars and the level of guest researches and scientists invited. I really liked this format and tried to attend as many seminars as possible, starting with politics and finishing with philosophy and

literature. The great surprise was also many excellent libraries, affiliated at the University.

So I'd like to confess that my scientific life in Uppsala was really reach and exiting and I got not only new knowledge and ideas but also contacts, I'm going to use in my future career.

But Sweden (and especially Uppsala) has also brought me much joy and pleasure in free time activities. After overcrowded Moscow I was excited bicycling in parks, going to picnics to beautiful lakes, walking through narrow streets of the downtown and visiting organ concerts in magnificent and famous Uppsala Domkyrka. I'm really grateful to the Foundation for the Furtherance of Swedish-Russian Relations and personally to Sverker Åström and Disa Håstad. I'm also happy that I've met Sverker Åström before he died last summer. And Disa was always very kind and patient in my getting acquainted with Swedish realities, generous and hospitable. What more can I say in conclusion except I'd like to get one more scholarship from the Foundation and continue learning Sweden!