

# Higher Education System in Russia: reform process and dynamics of internationalization.

The paper “Higher Education System in Russia: reform process and dynamics of internationalization” was prepared by the team of experts from the National Training Foundation (Moscow, Russia) as part of a larger research project “A comparative analysis: Challenges and opportunities for large higher education systems”.

The implementation of this large-scale project has allowed us to evaluate the dynamics of the national higher education system within a broader international context, as well as to compare its recent trends with other countries’ experience. The cross-cultural format of the comparative study, as well as the pressing character of the issues dealt with, have brought the topic of internationalization to the subject of a special debate and turned it into a possible direction for future joint work.

As the history of the Russian education system evolves, increasingly complex public systems and organizational structures lead to significant levels of systemic diversification. It is characterized by the presence of both strong, internationally recognized universities, and a large number of institutions that focus only on the national and even regional levels. Thus, it is logical that the approaches to the development and evaluation of internationalization process should be differentiated as well.

The Ministry of Education and Science of Russia adopted such an approach, initiating a number of comprehensive strategic projects to form and support different elements of the higher education structure. In 2013, the Ministry of Education and Science of Russia initiated the “5-100” project in order to develop world-class universities. The goal of this strategic project is to increase international competitiveness of leading Russian universities and have five of them included in the Top 100 of international ratings by 2020.

Thus, the leading role of the state strategic actions – such as creation of the “5-100” project – remains persistent in the internationalization process. However, despite the fact that the development of the higher education system in Russia was historically dominated by the state, current institutional trends prove an emerging balance between state-private actors. The country’s state education policy is focused on enhancing the autonomy of state universities and on reducing the normative barriers that prevent universities from flexibly responding to the changes in the educational service market.

More autonomous higher education institutions are able to form their own ways in achieving the goal of internationalization within a given structure of incentives. This dual institutional development will continue to influence the future of the internationalization process in the higher education system of Russia.