



LEADING RESEARCH IN AN INTER-CONNECTED WORLD

In 2006 the Funding Councils – HEFCE, SFC, ESRC, AHRC – launched an ambitious strategic initiative to build knowledge and expertise in **areas of the world vital to the UK national interest**. In its current 5 years of funding (2006-11) five major inter-university collaborative centres have been established, covering Central and Eastern Europe and Russia, the Arab World, and China and Japan.

At the **Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies**, a collaboration of 10 top universities led by UCL, Oxford and Birmingham, we believe that this initiative shows how the UK can gain a competitive edge in developing the most effective ways to address research and policy challenges posed by increasing global inter-connectedness.

A **new generation of researchers** is being trained in powerful research networks that engage in partnerships with policy makers, business and other users to inform the research agenda. Their work has had significant **impact**, for example, through reports on health policy for the WHO, symposia on energy security, new research on diaspora communities in the UK, and joint user-academic workshops.

Research and training is especially clustered around such **urgent and emerging themes** as

- global economic developments and their regional impacts
- politics and economics of climate change, including energy security
- geopolitics, security and stability
- the quality of democracy and the new dynamics of the EU
- human well-being and health
- communities, migration and cultural exchange

Research – approached, as in the 21st century it must be, in an interdisciplinary way – is taking strides forward in 2006-11, but the need to build capacity in areas such as the politics and economics of climate change, security challenges, new technologies, politics and culture, and the effects of the global economic crisis, has an urgency beyond the current period. The need to understand such developments in **Europe, Russia and Eurasia** – in global context – has lost none of its strategic importance.

The **Centre's vision** for the coming period is to achieve a step-change by

- further strengthening the UK's competitive edge gained through the current initiative
- tackling emerging themes of key importance for users and academics alike
- enhancing coverage of Central Asia, the Caucasus and the Black Sea alongside Central and Eastern Europe and Russia
- and increasing the initiative's impact through collaborative trans-regional research, e.g. Russia and China, Europe and the Arab world, in order to enhance its **global scope**.

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