



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 initial 5 years of funding 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 (CEELBAS)** – 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.

CEELBAS research networks are especially clustered around such **urgent and emerging themes** as:

- global economic developments and their regional impacts
- geopolitics, security and stability, including energy security
- the quality of democracy and the new dynamics of the EU
- human well-being and health
- communities, migration and cultural exchange
- the impact of new media in the region

A **new generation of researchers**, trained within these powerful research networks, are also engaging 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 and knowledge exchange partnerships.

In the period 2006-11 CEELBAS has delivered the following:

- no fewer than 50 **network workshops** and 20 **language projects**
- 70 Masters and Doctoral **Studentships**
- 7 Postdoctoral **Fellowships** with a total of 17 years of research, and
- more than 60 **published outputs** arising from postgraduate and postdoctoral research.

The Centre has also created a Database of Expertise, a Digital Language Repository and an Online Guide to Fieldwork.

Research – approached in an interdisciplinary way, as it must be in the 21st century – has taken strides forward. The need to understand **Central and Eastern Europe and Russia** in a global context has lost none of its strategic importance and CEELBAS warmly welcomed the announcement in the AHRC's *Delivery Plan 2011-15* that there is to be a second phase of funding for Language-Based Area Studies will focus on 'realising the benefits' of the work so far and 'enhancing impact'.

Robin Aizlewood

Robin Aizlewood
Director of UCL School of Slavonic and East European Studies
Director of the Centre for East European Language Based Area Studies