Belarusian State University belongs to a highly internationalized university community and traditionally puts a great attention to cooperation with foreign partners both at inter-university level and within international projects framework. A special attention is paid toward Nordic countries and in particular Finland due to the fact that in both Belarus and Finland higher education plays a significant role in society and the national innovation systems. In common with other countries with highly developed higher education sector, both countries develop enhancement-oriented quality assurance systems. With all that said one should believe that both BSU and Finnish universities would benefit either from bilateral cooperation or joint educational and research projects.

Much has been already done in this direction. As of the end of 2013 one can see results achieved as well as new fields to discover, new opportunities to unleash and new mechanisms of further cooperation to develop.

For today the major part of links between two countries has been established within EU Programmes and joint projects implemented within their framework.

Ample opportunities for exchange visits to University of Turku and Oulu University for BSU students, academics and staff are opened within three joint projects launched in 2011-2012 within Erasmus Mundus Action 2 Programme. Several successful joint researches were conducted within these projects.

Overall data on student exchanges with Finland demonstrates interest shown by BSU students for visiting Finnish HEIs. A good example of high interest BSU has toward studies in Finland is recent statistics of BMU-MID and MID projects grant completions: University of Turku is the most wanted university in the consortia.

Another major cooperation framework is the EU Tempus Programme. Currently the SUUCSID project “Inter-universities Start-Up Centers for Students’ Innovations Development and Promotion” is implemented opening up an opportunity for cooperation with Tampere University of Technology and, above all, sharing experience with its best practices, enriching experience through joint work and enhancing student, academic and staff mobility between BSU and Finnish HEIs in the direction toward enhancing the quality of education. In this light, sharing best practices, enriching experience through joint work and enhancing student, academic and staff mobility between BSU and Finnish HEIs with no doubt contribute to development of both sides.

Scientific and research activities are also given great attention in cooperation between two countries. One of the major tools for such cooperation is the EU’s Seventh Framework Programme for Research. Several research visits to Finnish research institutions were conducted by Belarusian specialists and researchers, as well as a number of joint scientific projects were launched. Among them are the EU FP7 CACOMEL project and the EU FP7 NET4SOCIETY project connecting the University of Eastern Finland and BSU.

Belarus and Finland are also working together in the sphere of nuclear safety. In 2011 a number of specialists and young chemists had been trained in Finland at the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority bringing new links with Posiva Research Company, Energy Company Teollisuuden Voima Oyj.

BSU students and academic staff also participate in various international conferences, seminars and other activities hosted by Finnish HEIs during 2011-2013. Our young researchers and academics visited Jyväskylä University, Research Park of Turku, Aleksanteri Institute, Finnish Institute of International Relations, Institute of Russia and Eastern Europe, Department of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Åbo Akademi University and many others.

Such a long list of Finnish HEIs having links with BSU can be seen as one more proof of interest shown by both countries toward joint work and cooperation. Staying in the global world the education systems of both Belarus and Finland face similar challenges, develop close and interconnected fields of research and work in the same direction toward enhancing the quality of education. In this light, sharing best practices, enriching experience through joint work and enhancing student, academic and staff mobility between BSU and Finnish HEIs with no doubt contribute to development of both sides.