

Visit to Moscow 1-4 March 2007

Richard T. Griffiths

My visit to Moscow had two ostensible purposes. The first was to give a conference presentation on the role of “gateway cities” in Western Europe as catalysts to further economic development. Gateway cities are seen as centres of international networks and are supposed to act as a country’s principal contact point to the globalised world economy. The conference was designed to assess whether Moscow fulfilled this function, whether it was efficient in doing so (or sufficient to pull the rest of such a geographically large economy behind it) and why the “spreading effects” seemed so limited.



The second reason for my visit was to lecture to the students of the Moscow Higher School of Management, of which I am a member of the Scientific Council (too long a story for this report). The School is a recent creation and it specialises in distance education in public administration, aimed at promoting academic and ethical standards of Russia’s next generation of policy-makers. The students come from all over Russia and many were meeting at a joint seminar in Moscow. My lecture was on Euroscpticism and it provoked a lively discussion afterwards. I found the students articulate and intelligent, well-informed and utterly charming (it helped that they made me feel like a film star!).



As so often occurs at such meetings, we used the occasion to discuss the ways of increasing understanding between Russia and Western Europe and together we designed an ambitious scheme of shared summer schools, short student visits and internet conferencing. If all goes well, these plans will see fruition in 2007-8.



And I even managed to get on TV!!