

Kazakhstan welcomes MGIMO Forum

Trianon Dialog

Russia and France
to build smart cities

Three monarchies in one

The MGIMO community
in Benelux

Oxford's Sun

The MGIMO delegation
brought sunny weather
to the Foggy Albion

Banu Osekbayeva

The new chairman of the MGIMO Foreign Students Club





Within Kazakhstan Alumni Association of MGIMO there are more than 100 people, and it is rapidly expanding. Kazakhstan graduates, mostly young people, are united by their desire for positive change in their country. The International Forum of MGIMO Alumni, which was held last October in Astana, Kazakhstan, became the first major event for this new association



Aleksandar Vučić, the President of Serbia, gave a lecture at MGIMO as a new University Honorary Doctor



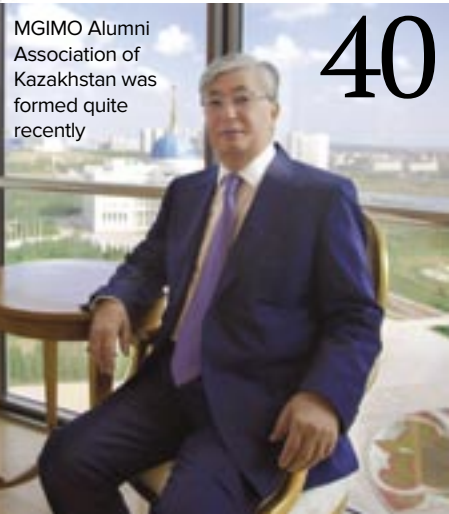
162 King of Saudi Arabia visited MGIMO and was awarded the title of Honorary Doctor of MGIMO



40 MGIMO Alumni Association of Kazakhstan was formed quite recently



6 The MGIMO delegation brought sunny weather to the Foggy Albion and visited Oxford University, the ancient British Citadel of Learning



40

48



150



78

Russia and Austria are very close partners, in this respect the conditions for work here are favorable for Russian diplomats



105

By building churches abroad, we open our souls. This is how MGIMO graduates – Hegumen Philip ('99) and Olga Schetinina-Belo ('95) believe



83

START	6
Oxford's Sun	
The MGIMO delegation brought sunny weather to the Foggy Albion and visited the ancient British Citadel of Learning	
GUEST SPEAKER	16
Mearsheimer's Theories	
American political scientist John Mearsheimer has been invited repeatedly to Russia since the Soviet "perestroika". Last year students were lucky to attend a	

weekly course of the professor's lectures at MGIMO	
TREND	18
Vice-Rectors and Deans of MGIMO on current trends in which the University is moving	
FORUM	30
The MGIMO Forum in Astana	
Last October, the MGIMO alumni from all over the world spent three unforgettable days in the hospitable capital of Kazakhstan	

MGIMO FAMILY	40
KAZAKHSTAN	
Within the MGIMO Alumni Association of Kazakhstan, which was formed quite recently, there are already more than 100 people, and it is rapidly expanding. Kazakhstani graduates, among whom there are a lot of young people, are united by their desire for positive change in their country and the world around them. The International Forum of MGIMO Alumni, which was held last October in Astana, Kazakhstan,	

became the first major event for this new association	
SPECIAL REPORT	68
The Story of Two Churches	
Russian and French belong to the same Christian culture, which means that we have similar systems of values. But Europeans do not know Russia well. Ignorance always begets fear. By building churches abroad, we open our souls. This is how MGIMO graduates - Hegumen Philip ('99) and Olga Schetinina-Belo ('95) believe	

MGIMO FAMILY	78
AUSTRIA	
Russia and Austria are very close partners, in this respect the conditions for work here are favorable for Russian diplomats and other specialists, among whom there are lots of MGIMO graduates	
CAREER	102
The Ministry of Hospitality	
Alexei Izotov ('83) holds the post of Chief of the Administration for Service of Diplomatic Corps (GlavUpDK) within the	

Russian Foreign Ministry. It is engaged in providing a vital service to foreign embassies and business offices, including renting and repairing their buildings, recruiting personnel, day-to-day matters and so on	
MGIMO FAMILY	114
BENELUX	
Benelux comprises three monarchies: Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. In this territory, integration processes began after the First World War, and the initial concept of "Benelux" was	



186

Carles Puyol, the legendary “FC Barcelona” player, visited the MGIMO Volunteer Center. “I am sure the 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia will be a great success,” he said



150

Constantin van Vlotten, Honorary Consul of the Russia in the Netherlands, contributed to founding local MGIMO Alumni Club



152



This year, the new Faculty of Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence commenced its operations at MGIMO. It was founded by Dmitry Korobkov, president of the ADV company and a MGIMO graduate



18

first used only to designate the Customs Union area. It is not only one of the most densely populated regions within the EU, but also the main political hub of a united Europe. It is no accident that a big number of MGIMO graduates are working there

NEWS 162

King of Saudi Arabia visits MGIMO
Aleksandar Vučić – Honorary Doctor of the MGIMO
Trianon Dialogue in Moscow

MGIMO at the Economic Forum in St. Petersburg
MGIMO at World Policy Conference in Marrakesh
MGIMO in Uzbekistan
Summer School in Monaco
RISA: Russia and ASEAN
ASEAN Forum in Vladivostok
ASEAN Week at MGIMO
MGIMO in international ratings
"Fletcher Seasons" at MGIMO

MGIMO at the Jessup Competition in D.C., Riga and Amsterdam
Megagrant of the Russian government for MGIMO
A century of the Russian Revolution
International Summer Schools in Odintsovo
Henley students in MGIMO summer program
WHAT ELSE? 186
Carles Puyol at MGIMO

Please, welcome the first English issue of a Russian corporate magazine - MGIMO Journal!

For 15 years of its existence in Russia, MJ became a chronicler and a researcher of history of MGIMO - one of the flagships of Russia's higher education, the main school of diplomacy, a training center for international specialists of the broadest range: economists, lawyers, managers, political scientists, journalists and many others.

The magazine tells about the attractive aspects of studying at MGIMO through success stories of its graduates. Among them, there are many titans of large business - owners and executive managers of Russia's leading companies, many of them hold the tops of the country's Forbes list. Thanks to their efforts, MGIMO Endowment Fund was established 10 years ago and it became the leader of Russian endowments.

The success story of MGIMO itself is inextricably linked with the name of its rector Anatoly Torkunov, who over 25 years of his rectorial career has turned the institution of a rather narrow profile into a multi-disciplinary university, bringing it to the global educational market. Today MGIMO is the most in-

Igor Drobyshev
Editor-in-Chief



ternational university in Russia - 18 percent of its students are foreign citizens. Leading professors from the world-famous universities of America, Europe, Asia come here to give lectures.

That is why the idea to publish MGIMO Journal for a foreign audience seems quite logical. We will tell you about the life of the University, its new programs, primarily in partnership with world-famous universities, about its think-tanks and scientific clubs where students have a professional start and, of course, about the success of our graduates - those who create the image of modern Russia as well as experts that are united abroad in MGIMO alumni associations.

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START

By Igor Drobyshev

OXFORD'S SUN

The MGIMO delegation brought sunny weather to the Foggy Albion and visited the ancient British Citadel of Learning



One day, the British Department of Education sends inspectors to Oxford. Obviously, once they arrive, they decide to walk and see around the University a bit rather than go to the Vice-Chancellor immediately. Some time passes, and they decide that it's time to go to the Vice-Chancellor. Strangely enough, they cannot find him — he is neither in his study nor on campus. He is nowhere to be found! Someone gives them advice to go to his country house, as he is likely to be there. They arrive and, indeed, the Vice-Chancellor sits in a cozy armchair reading *The Times* and smoking a cigar. “You are here?” the inspectors say, dumbfounded. “Then who is in charge of the University?” “Traditions,” he replies.

This funny story told by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov made Louise Richardson laugh. Maybe that is because his Russian version was funnier than others were, be they Japanese or Philippian. Or maybe, and most likely, that is because Louise Richardson is the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Oxford. Apart from Rector Torkunov, the delegation arriving from London (two hours by car) included MGIMO's Energy Diplomacy School (MIEP) Director Valery Salygin and Russian Ambassador to the UK and MGIMO graduate Alexander Yakovenko joined by yours truly, the MGIMO Journal Editor.

Oxford is a legendary alma mater of the British (and foreign) elite, a university that is at the top of the world's education leagues. All the better, it was the meeting of friends. The MGIMO leadership looked well ahead when it launched joint projects with the University of St Andrews a few years ago. Who could have known that its Chancellor, a

The MGIMO leadership looked well ahead when it launched joint projects with the University of St Andrews a few years ago. Who could have known that its Chancellor L. Richardson would steer this ship of the world's education in a little over a year?

British lady of impeccable manners, who visited MGIMO to partake in the Global University Summit and signed an agreement on a joint sustainable development education program, would steer the ship of the world's education in a little over a year?

Oxford's Vice-Chancellor has a simple-looking study, but this British plainness hides big money and education that is expensive



in every possible sense.

As a matter of interest, what is the value of Oxford's Endowment Fund? “It's no secret,” says Louise Richardson, “five million dollars, i.e. one sixth of Harvard's endowment. Why such difference? US universities are better at fundraising. Much depends on public investments in the UK”.

“Our endowment

reaches 1.5 billion,” A. Torkunov informed his colleague, “of rubles. Nevertheless, MGIMO ranks fifth in the ranking of Russia's colleges. That is why we are satisfied. Instead, we get the state funding to organize major forums: for example, Vladivostok hosted the BRICS University Forum at the Russia-ASEAN Summit in September. The Lao and Cambodian Education ministers, MGIMO alumni, attended the Forum”.

Evidently, L. Richardson showed some interest in the development of MGIMO-St

In Russia, Oxford is Known as a legendary alma mater of the British (and foreign) elite, a university that is at the top of the world's education leagues

Andrews cooperation that started with her helping hand. “It is going very well,” replied V. Salygin, “seven our students went there this year as part of our joint master's degree program, while we received 5 British students. We are grateful for your support of “Sustainable Development and Strategic Management in Energy” program. It is unique, because it uses, on the one hand, the body of sustainability knowledge accumulated by the University of St Andrews and on the other hand, the body of knowl-



V. Salygin, L. Richardson, A. Torkunov, A. Yakovenko

Oxford’s Vice-Chancellor has a simple-looking study, but this British plainness hides big money and education that is expensive in every possible sense. As a matter of interest, what is the value of Oxford’s Endowment Fund? “It’s no secret,” says Louise Richardson

edge about the global power sector and international and Russian-UK energy cooperation that MGIMO possesses. Secondly, graduates receive two diplomas from both the University of St Andrews and MGIMO. Essentially, we train unique specialists and provide human resources needed for large-scale Russian-British projects”.

The cooperation is indeed expanding: apart from the sustainable development program, it covers research. The University of St Andrews and MIEP MGIMO have established the joint Arctic Research Center. Many big companies, primarily BP and Rosneft (MGIMO hosts its special department), take interest in the research pursued by the MIEP Center. These companies are ready to put additional investments in joint programs. “I’ve recently met with Robert Dudley, the CEO of British-based corporation BP,” said Ambassador Yakovenko, “I told him about the MGIMO programs and he reaffirmed his support of the research, after all, BP holds 20% of Rosneft shares. Dudley added that although BP invests in Russia more than it gets, the company expands its outreach in Russia, so it is interested in our alumni”.

“What about the sanctions?” asked Louise Richardson.

“Bob told me that,” explained Yakovenko, “the company is licensed to do business in Russia and the Arctic is the only place where they cannot work due to the American sanc-



tions. The continent is not a problem. I’ve heard the same from the Shell CEO.”

It turned out later that L. Richardson had brought her interest in Russia to Oxford too. “Recently, we have changed our program funding shifting the focus toward Russian and Russian-UK relations studies,” she informed. “The thing is this area of our educational spectrum leaves a lot to be desired due to the Cold War”.

That was a good moment for a trial balloon and A. Torkunov did not waste a good chance. “So far, we have no joint graduate programs with Oxford,” he said, “but we would like to discuss our possible participation in various education formats at your University. For example, you have summer school courses on political science history, international politics, which chimes in with programs at our University. On the other hand, MGIMO has its own English-taught summer schools focusing on Russia’s foreign policy and other subjects and providing a crash course in Russian. MGIMO’s



We have many students who would love to study abroad, including at MGIMO,” said Richardson, “but they have to find funding for that”

new branch in Odintsovo, Moscow Region, offers a four star hotel and a state-of-the-art sport center so that British students could live and study in an environment as good as European campuses.”

“We have many students who would love to study abroad, including at MGIMO,” said Richardson, “but they have to find funding for that”.

Anyway, MGIMO has laid the foundation for serious future contacts with this ancient British citadel of learning.



ELENA LILEEVA ('03)

Head of Russia, CIS & Eastern Europe Pictet Bank, London

After I graduated, I enrolled for the International Relations Master's Degree Program at Cambridge. This is one of the world's best universities and it has a solid graduate program, but it has one flow that is inherent in the Western education system. In order to master a narrowly specialized program one needs to have deep fundamental knowledge. But I studied alongside people who had no idea when the UN was founded or who... Shakespeare was. They had to consult books for reference each time. MGIMO

My MGIMO years help when I hear that my new client is also a MGIMO graduate: we immediately start sharing our memories, they are so similar after all

graduates are far better prepared: we have broad knowledge ready in our memory. We have the University to thank for this; it has transformed us into people of knowledge, people who are eager to learn...

I've recently been at the concert of Russian violinist Vadim Repin and I sat next to his promoter, a foreigner, at the after concert reception. We stroked up a conversation because I had been interested in Wagner's works for a while, so it was easy for me to discuss music. At the end, he asked me, "You have probably studied at a music school, haven't you?" I said, "No, I studied at an Olympic Reserve sports school, I wanted to become a bas-

ketball player". He was astonished, "That means you are just such a knowledgeable person."

Britain is a very expensive country. At first, I was shocked to see how much British people had to spend to maintain their quality of life that is actually pretty low. People of very few lines of work can afford it, including bankers, lawyers and financial advisors. Looking back at my college days and my interest in economics, I embarked on the path of a financial career. I got lucky: HSBC Bank was hiring a client relations specialist for Russia, CIS and Central Europe. I started working there in 2007 as an analyst. I ended up working at HSBC for ten years climbing the ladder all the way up to becoming a Division Head in 2013. However, the banking situation in London changed following the escalation around Crimea. Even before, they had never been very fond of Russia, but after the sanctions policy was imposed, banks withdrew from our market partially or completely for fear of a heavy fine. It was increasingly hard to work there. Even before the sanctions, I tried to explain to executives that not all Russian were corrupt or mafia members and that I knew my clients very well and some of them were my family friends...Bit the media coverage was more and more negative. I decided to leave HSBC. I regarded Pictet bank quite highly. This is Europe's biggest private bank. I was worried whether my clients would follow me to this bank, which is known in London less than in Switzerland. In the end, everything turned out great: I have already worked at Pictet for half a year; I have the same business, the same clients. I am the Senior Banker and Head of Russia, CIS & Eastern Europe in London.

What is it like to be a banker in Britain? It is not an overstatement to say that we are hated. As a person, I can understand that. After all, newspapers publish every other day stories about a financial tycoon who has made billions in profits by playing the stock market or making shady deals. Although this is mostly the case for City investment bankers. Mayfair private bankers like us are busy bees. Our inter-

ests lie far from speculative stock trade; we spend 14-18 hours per day helping our clients. This kind of job appeals to me.

Looking back at my MGIMO years, I have to give credit to not only the professors, but also the opportunities offered

to us through extracurricular activities — the students scientific society, clubs and workshops, amateur talent activities...

It helps when you hear that your new client is also a MGIMO graduate: we immediately start sharing our memories, they are so similar after all.



ANNA-KAROLINA SUBCZYNSKA ('01)

Head, Legal Affairs Department Petropavlovsk PLC, London

I was born in an international family, my mother is Russian and my father is Polish. After I finished school, I got a scholarship from Poland's Ministry of Education and decided to go study in Russia, although I could choose any Western college. Why? My mother raised me in a way that I have always had the Russian mindset and somehow felt nostalgic for my second native country,

although I had never lived there.

Why did I enroll at MGIMO and at the Law School at that? I have always wanted to become a lawyer and have a good command of foreign languages. Even back when I lived in Poland, I already knew I could find these professional skills combination in Russia at MGIMO.

I met an Englishman in 2003 who was hiring a Russian lawyer for an interna-

tional LSE listed gold-mining company with Russian assets. I have worked there for 14 years now and I have reached the position of Legal Affairs Head of whole Petropavlovsk PLC. We exploit gold and iron ore resources based on the license we had obtained to explore reserves in Amur Region and the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. We have secured Western investments in the development or resources.

Having arrived in London, I started with enrolling for a Master's program and obtaining my LLM Master's degree. It would not be correct to compare this education

MGIMO offered to me a broad knowledge background, which is why I always feel comfortable in any circumstances, be it at work or in a company of various people abroad, where I am never afraid to take on new topics



to the one I got at the International Law School at MGIMO, because the London program doesn't offer any fundamental knowledge on either Roman Law, or Civics, or other theoretical disciplines that are a must for any lawyer. Its goal

is different, as it aims to provide narrowly specialized knowledge to solve a specific problem or case. In this way, English education is at all levels, including higher education, lagging far behind Russian and Soviet education. At the

same time, it is unbelievable expensive! I also attended part-time courses for four years, then practiced to obtain the title of solicitor and my degree and now I'm listed in the UK Register of Solicitors. I have worked for this company for 14 years and I have witnessed various periods in its history. Our industry can be quite turbulent depending on the gold and other precious metal prices. I'd count the arrangement of our SEHK listing among my biggest personal achievements. I man-

aged the entirety of the project for many months and when the company was successfully listed, I felt a swell of professional pride.

I believe that I largely owe my success to the MGIMO education. The Institute offered to me a broad knowledge background, which is why I always feel comfortable in any circumstances, be it at work or in a company of various people abroad, where I am never afraid to take on new topics. Language training is

one of MGIMO's big advantages. Only MGIMO offers an education format of a foreign language (two even!) taught comprehensively among numerous other serious disciplines. Or at least, I have never seen that in the West. British students either major in a foreign language and study little else, or pick some other specialization. I have never felt ashamed for my education, I am always proud to say that I graduated from MGIMO. **W**

SUMMER SEMINAR IN OXFORD

In accordance with the professional development plan, 15 teachers of various language departments of MGIMO completed an internship in English Language Teachers Summer Seminar at Oxford University, within the School of Business and International Competences.

Lecturers at Oxford prepared a rich educational and cultural program, during which they actively shared their experience and applied skills. The training took place in the format of lectures, seminars, workshops, case studies and interpersonal communication.

At the end of the program, the MGIMO teachers were especially taken with the following courses: Using Mobile Devices, Boosting your Students' Speaking Skills and Imaginative Teaching in a Creative Classroom.

Lectures were delivered by leading Oxford tutors, including Adrian Underhill, Hania Kryszewska and Charles Boyle.

For example, the lecturer Hanna Kryszewska, within the context of her course, shared ways of working with texts using various sensory systems. She also outlined techniques that contribute to the development of creativity among students, and demonstrated how to make classes useful not only in terms of developing language skills, but also in terms of developing imagi-



nation, by using painting and art for example.

At the farewell gala dinner, all the participants were awarded with Oxford University certificates. When asked for a response, tutor Mr Kovalev shared

his impressions of the internship: "I liked the atmosphere of creativity and the opportunity to change social roles, to attend in the place of a student and to understand how important a motivated teacher really is."

MEARSHEIMER'S THEORIES

Interview and photo
by Igor Drobyshv

American political scientist John Mearsheimer has been invited repeatedly to Russia since the Soviet “perestroika” of the late 1980s. It was only in October last year, i.e. 30 years later, that he finally made it to Moscow. So much time has passed. In fact he has already been writing his last book for eight years. Would we consider him a bit lethargic? Of course not, he is just an old-fashioned fundamental type who works long hours on his book’s drafts and has a least three of them. “As sociologist Charles Wright Mills pointed out in the 1950s, Mearsheimer says, “writing a research paper is a process based on two sets of logic – to discover and also to present. When you write you are guided by the logic of discovery: and often you come to conclusions you did not expect at all at the beginning. India is another country Mearsheimer has been persistently invited to. “I can’t make it”, he laments, “but I am really willing to go. But I am a busy man, and besides I have obligations towards my family”. So students who attended a weekly course of the professor’s lectures at MGIMO are the lucky ones.

MJ: How did you like the MGIMO students?

I do not think they differ a lot from American students. Or Japanese, or Turkish... Indeed we all belong to the same intellectual community. I do not like a politically correct term “global village” but we are all its inhabitants as communication media enables scientists from one country to easily get access to articles and books published in other countries. Of course, if we go to the heart of the problem many Russian students and professors have a different view on the matter, and this is natural – as well as Russian citizens they have their own set of interests. But we all speak the same language, use the same concepts and theories, that is why it is easy for us to communicate.

MJ: You are a prominent theoretician in the field of international relations. Could you, please, tell us about your main theory?

There are three main theoretical fields in international relations, we call them the three big paradigms: realism, liberalism and social constructivism. I belong to realism, I am a realist. I would even say a structural realist. What does it mean? I suppose that the international relations structure, its architecture plays a crucial role in shaping the self-esteem of any state and elaborating its steps in the international arena. I have worked out an offensive realism theory that stipulates that the mere structure pushes the states to behave aggressively and to concentrate the power in their hands as much as possible. As all the states belong to the same structure they are guided by the one logic. As a result our world is built on a permanent competitive

struggle. I would dare say this theory made me famous, many people are eager to listen to me speaking in public. However many people disagree with this theory. And that is great, I love arguing. There is no intellectual progress without arguing. Arguments give scientists the possibility to test their ideas and to make up a more advanced un-

One should just have an inquiring mind questioning “how does this world work?”

derstanding of the world. I had really vivid discussions with Russian students and professors. I was happy to find out that quite a few of them agree with the main ideas of my theory.

MJ: How would you explain it?

Russia – as well as China, by the way – is one of the countries with a realistic mindset. That is why intellectually I feel at ease both in Russia and in China. There are quite a few people with a realistic mindset back in the US, and when I come to Washington and start discussing the issue with my friends from academia I do not always feel in my element.

MJ: And how do you feel discussing the point with those who practice international politics?

The same way. Many of them think that scientists inventing theories are complete and utter day-dreamers and that they, the practitioners making real politics, do not need any

theories. Let me tell you a story. In 2001 I was awarded a Joseph Lepgold prize for my book “The Tragedy of Great Power Politics”. We had a dinner after the ceremony. I sat next to the former US State Secretary Madeleine Albright. She congratulated me on the occasion but confessed: “You know, I think all these theories are nonsense”. I answered “I am surprised hearing you saying so as, to my mind, you are the one applying theories the most in the world of politics”. I swear I nearly saw her brain melting as she was shocked to such a great extent... To deny the role of the theories is a fundamental mistake that prevents us from understanding how a human brain really works. One may not understand the world and elaborate real politics without theory as a basis.

MJ: How do you get your good ideas?

The sources are different. Often I get them while having my morning shower. You know, sometimes they ask me to read manuscripts. I normally look through them in the evening and in the morning I take a shower reflecting back on what I read the day before. It is funny, but these are the moments when the most interesting and clear phrases come to my mind. And the main thing here, is to write the idea down right after, that is why I often have to run away from the bathroom in a rush to write it down... However I have to admit that about 70% of all the “cool” ideas turn out to be nothing in the end. One thing I know for sure is that a good idea will never come to your mind, if you have set a target to invent it. One should just have an inquiring mind, questioning “how does this world work?” Even when I was a boy I behaved the same way, I remember I kept elaborating theories, trying to find out, why this or that baseball team won or lost. ☐

DIGITALIZATION AND AI COME TO MGIMO

This year, the new Faculty of Digital Technologies and Artificial Intelligence, created on the basis of the largest Russian advertising group, ADV, commenced its operations at MGIMO. The founder and president of the company is 1994 MGIMO graduate, Dmitry Korobkov. One of the pioneers of the Russian advertising market tells MJ about this educational sensation at MGIMO.

MJ: What is the reason for the appearance of the new faculty, and what is the reason for its focus on technology?

Today, the reality of the 4th industrial revolution is that we are faced with phenomena that go far beyond the marketing industry and necessitate a review of the current professional training approaches. The first phenomenon is digitalization: in fact, this is an acceleration of human interaction with the outside world, because the digital format allows us to receive and transmit much more data than ever before. This speed of obtaining and processing information becomes a business's main competitive advantage in any industry. It's hard to disagree with the widespread notion that any company today should become a technological one, otherwise it will not survive on the market.

The second phenomenon, inextricably linked to the first, is connectivity: more than 4 billion people are interconnected by information flows; and by 2025, the volume of global data will be about 163 zettabytes, which is 10 times more than it was in 2016. The colossal volume of the information field and the number of links inside it make it difficult to deliver advertising. Artificial intelligence (AI) is designed to solve this problem, to find the optimal communication strategy for a given brand – but, in order to effectively apply AI, it is necessary to understand how it actually functions.

Thus, we can no longer limit future specialists' competence exclusively to marketing, in the traditional sense of the term. Any experts working in an advertising agency, where they be brand managers or

marketing directors, should first of all understand digital technologies and be able to apply the opportunities they present to solve the problems of the company.

MJ: What will the new faculty do?

Training all-round specialists who perfectly understand the specifics of the new conditions for the functioning of the information environment – the faculty will become an experimental platform, where state-of-the-art digital technologies will be rolled out onto the Russian market and the

Artificial intelligence is a challenge for everyone – especially for a generation that is just entering adulthood, for students

best foreign know-how will be tested.

MJ: Digital technologies are taught on the curricula of specialized universities. What is different about the training provided at MGIMO?

Our faculty is created on the basis of the knowledge and practices that real communications business in Russia actually possesses. More than 20 years of experience and technological developments at ADV in recent years will form the basis of the curriculum, which has no analogues anywhere in Russia. Being a partner of international advertising holdings, ADV has its finger on the pulse of

global information flows, which means it is capable of forming an actual education environment.

The key task of the faculty is to develop its students' technological skills, which will allow everyone to increase the efficiency of any business by introducing advanced marketing solutions.

MJ: At MGIMO they train international experts – diplomats, lawyers, economists – so why are the technological skills you are talking about important to them?

The transition of all kinds of information into digital form, changing our ways of interacting with that information, and the constantly growing number of channels for delivering content – all this is generating unprecedented competition for the consumer's attention and irrevocably changing the existing business models in various fields, including those in which ex-pats of different profiles work.

In general, the digital revolution is increasingly blurring the differences between various spheres of business and life.

MJ: Artificial intelligence is the most unusual aspect of your curriculum.

Artificial intelligence is a challenge for everyone – especially for a generation that is just entering adulthood, for students. Technologies for processing big data are gradually becoming an integral part of many industries

including finance, marketing, tourism and retail, and all our daily interactions fit on a smartphone screen. In one year there are about 100,000 new mobile applications. More and more human needs are being transferred to the digital realm. Innovative data collection and data processing algorithms, developments in the field of artificial intelligence and the shift in the economy towards digital platforms allow companies to automate a significant part of their work processes.

A natural consequence of this is the redistribution of human resources on the labor market. A person becomes part of the currency of a new era, and digitalization is a new way of thinking.

MJ: How are these processes reflected in your industry – public relations and advertising?

The most urgent task for each company in our industry is to determine how exactly to apply technologies to optimize content creation, and to address that content to the consumer. This is a huge range of possibilities. The task of ADV is to become a technology platform that will enable us to provide services to our clients and other agencies in big data, neuromarketing, virtual reality (VR), augmented reality (AR) and other colossal changes that are already taking place today. This is the key to success.

ADV is transforming into a technology company and developing new products in the fields of big data and artificial intelligence. We are closely monitoring developments in neuromarketing, VR and AR. 

English Bachelor program at MGIMO

Mikhail Troitsky is an Americanologist by education. Prior to joining MGIMO as Director of the School of Government and International Affairs, SGIA, he held the post of Russian Branch Deputy Head at the American MacArthur Foundation, where he worked for seven years. Consequently Mikhail brought an excellent understanding of how American corporations work to the English-language Bachelor's program, which he leads at MGIMO University. His expertise also brings an understanding of how helpful extensive connections can be and this all helps him to keep abreast of educational trends within International Relations. This is crucial when working with foreign students who select to study at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. The course has existed since 2013, and last year saw its first graduates.

MJ: What diplomas do the students now hold?

The standard diplomas of MGIMO, similar to diplomas one would receive from the corresponding Faculty of International Relations of the University. However, this program is named somewhat differently – Government and International Affairs, and is actually a combination of the traditional IR program with Political Science, as well as elements of the Management, Law and Economics courses. This combination has now proved its strength, as it attracts elite applicants from their various respective countries who want to build a career in public administration.

MJ: Aside from this goal, what else would attract foreigners to enroll at the English-language Bachelor degree at MGIMO?

Firstly MGIMO, unlike many Russian universities, is listed in international rankings, so it is a globally recognized university. In our domain, it is often a combination of proximity and circumstance that also adds to the reasons a student selects our course and this also accounts for our high ranking. For example, we might have a student who is a son of a military attaché from one of the foreign embassies. His parents would prefer to be close to him, so the young man would enroll in our Bachelor's degree. And if his family is posted elsewhere, then the student can transfer to the new university and will be given credits for the studies completed at our University. The same scenario exists for people within business in Russia who do not want to be separated from their family in another country. We also have many students who are the children of Russians who

grew up abroad and have now returned to their homeland. There is also a component of Russians who graduated from a “International Baccalaureate” – or IB secondary education school in Moscow, and this gives them the option to enroll in any

English-language higher education institution abroad, but perhaps for some reason they do not wish to leave and have decided to continue their education in Russia, in order to better prepare for admission to a foreign Master's program.



The third reason we see enrolment is because of an interest in Russia by a foreign student, along with the desire to learn the Russian language in order to continue to live and work in our country. This is because after graduating from MGIMO students have gained a significant advantage over other applicants from abroad in the eyes of potential employers. In returning to their home country, our graduate will easily be able to find employment related to Russia. It is also important to note that the cost of studying at MGIMO is quite standard: €8200 per year and budget-friendly dorm options, from only around €100 per month.

MJ: Is this the only English-speaking Bachelor program for studying International Relations in Russia?
It was the first one in Russia. As of last year, there is a similar program at the Higher School of Economics, but it is run

in conjunction with the London School of Economics. This course is a strong competitor, because their program is a joint one, so you graduate with two diplomas. However we have an indisputable advantage: in-



tensive studies of foreign languages. The course can include two Eastern language, Arabic and Chinese, but I have to say this is only available for Russian-speaking students. The English-language Bachelor course at MGIMO is now in the process of developing a double-degree program, and intensive work is being carried out on this, in several directions simultaneously. One part of the project is already complete: since last year the program has been collaborating with the University of West London; studies take place at the University Center in Marbella, Spain. The campus is globally focused and equipped with the latest technology. There is also a project underway developing a double diploma in conjunction with the University of Reading in the United Kingdom. Lastly there is a Bachelor's program in Geneva, however this is for International Law.

Stu Bao,
graduate of the English Bachelor program

I am most assuredly impressed by the rigorous scholarship and the well-deserved academic prestige of this institute; the comprehensive student performance criterion comprising of a variety of criteria which is managed to not only mirror an objective assessment of one's academic manifestation, but more importantly, an agenda to foster students integrated development. This therefore grants them a considerable competitive edge in further scholastic pursuit of advanced degrees and career advancement. In my view, the modern facilities at the institute more than adequately reinforce an informative and productive academic environment. Moreover, Moscow being a city seated at the intersection of civilizations offers a satisfactory complex of infrastructure to students from all four corners of the world, which allowed us to take in and immerse ourselves in this distinctive Eurasian charm. Like many others, I found the professors at MGIMO enlightened me profoundly with their rigorous scholarly attitude and erudite multidisciplinary knowledge in the course of my education. In addition, one could always find the ideal company when engaging in learning new foreign languages; an abundance of native speakers, owing to the truly international environment at this institute.

Camilla Pagani,
Political theory lecturer, has recently got a PhD at Sciences Po in Paris:

As an Italian lecturer of political theory at universities in France and Italy, I found at MGIMO a very stimulating work environment, where Russian cultural perspective is combined with a truly international dimension. My three years of teaching 'Introduction to Political Science' to first year students at the School of Government and International Affairs has been a truly exciting opportunity. First of all I met a very international group comprised of students coming from various different countries around the world. This was an incredible opportunity for the implementation of the course. I am convinced that to deeply understand current international and political affairs it is crucial to share and compare different interpretations and viewpoints on the world. With their various education and cultural backgrounds students brought to the class a very rich and stimulating basis for dialogues and debates. Interaction between myself the lecturer and among the students themselves was a key element of our seminars. We analyzed theoretical concepts like the state, the power, democracy and autocracy, and many different political theories with different examples from Ancient Greece up until the present day. We reviewed both classic texts like Aristotle and Max Weber as well as contemporary case studies such as the separation of powers in regards to the United Kingdom and the Brexit process, or how new movements have become political parties in Spain and Italy. I have learnt a great deal in discussions with students and sharing different opinions on theoretical and political concepts. Finally, the students are very much involved in the course and participate in lectures and seminars with relevant questions and comments. Their excellent motivation and high level of education made teaching very rewarding. I must say that this was a brilliant lecturing experience where I had the chance to have real international dialogue on political topics with students.



Andrei Baikov: "Establishing the School of Governance and Politics is a timely and progressive step"

Vice-Rector of MGIMO for Master's and international programs reflects on resetting managerial training

The merging of two MGIMO schools – Political Science and Public Administration – seems to me to be a very timely decision. In many foreign universities, the subjects of Public Administration or Government, Regional and International Regulation or Governance, Political Science or Public Affairs and Public Policy have for a long time resolutely coexisted within the framework of a single educational and scientific cluster, and even somehow amalgamated to such a degree it is difficult to recognize the component parts. Therefore, the cultivation of State and Municipal Government studies, which existed at the former school in a broad capacity, has from the very beginning raised a lot of

The unification of the schools will create a new managerial "angle", where the subject of State Administration will enrich the Political Science course

questions. And if we talk about the roots of a discipline and its etymology, Political Science historically was a science about the management of the *polis*. That is; essentially focused on state and municipal government, if we bear in mind the nature of the ancient Greek *polis*.

From the new joint school, fruitful synergies will emerge through the inherently and inextricably linked issues of public administration, political process and international affairs. This will give a new



quality to the teaching of 'conflictology', and will allow to theoretically "reset" training in the already popular specialism of Economic Political Science. In this respect, educational and organizational innovation is extremely important, according to which about 30% of courses – especially selective courses – will become the norm for students studying units such as State and Municipal Management, International Relations and Political Science degrees.

Finally, the new managerial angle will

give a Political Science aspect to State Administration studies. It will also make it possible to begin real training in an area long-overdue for specialized studies, that of International Relations Profile in regards to the external relations of Russian regions: after all, the managerial aspects of these relations are incomparably greater than the political ones, and the international aspect of these issues justifies the retention of the "International Relations" school component.

For those who view MGIMO as a purely diplomatic institution, it may be a discovery that lawyers, economists and journalists from MGIMO are far from being just international relations experts. Managers with a MGIMO diploma successfully lead not only foreign economic structures, but also telecommunications, media, agricultural and oil companies, and own retail networks, cinemas and museums. A look at the first hundred of the Forbes Russia list, a visit to the offices of the Big Four, reviewing the members of the boards of directors of ma-

tional arena, and on the other hand – to maximize and expand the presence of MGIMO within the most significant and promising sectors of the Russian economy, in regional and Federal leaders, in the media community and lastly within the legal business. You can only do this with careful analysis of the labor market, and a solid understanding of the strengths of the university.

MGIMO is among a small group of Russian universities that enjoys privilege by Russian Presidential decree and operates within our own educational stand-

to the interests of companies and even individual business projects.

MGIMO's expertise is in high demand in a number of locations and segments of the international educational market, despite the tight competition that is so evident. That is why we opened our program in International Law and Comparative Law in Geneva and in Marbella a European Law and Management program.

So what about diplomacy? The fact is that all of this is conducted in conjunction with it, and therefore, so to speak, beyond diplomacy...

Artem Malgin: "MGIMO provides a Beyond Diplomacy education"

Vice-Rector of MGIMO Artem Malgin's thoughts on the current trend in which the university is moving.



Knowledge of international processes, understanding the shifting priorities of the global agenda, comprehending the influence of world politics on business, is our undeniable competitive advantage

Diplomacy, or rather I should specify; knowledge of international processes, understanding the shifting priorities of the global agenda, comprehending the influence of world politics on business, is our undeniable competitive advantage. It is embodied in every graduate who, when making a practical decision, will be able to take into account international political factors. It is no coincidence that today at the junction of international studies, economic and legal knowledge, another unique MGIMO specialization is born: international lobbying and international political and business consulting.

for Russian and East European companies – MGIMO alumni are represented across all of these quite strongly.

MGIMO faces a twofold undertaking: on the one hand, to maintain the position that the university holds due to the success of these graduates in the interna-

ards. This means we provide education in accordance with Federal and State educational standards, but with the addition of our vision in response to market and employer needs. Independently developed standards give us the opportunity to open effective corporate programs, sharpened

MJ: Recently, your school and the International Lomonosov Center (ILC) have launched a new joint Bachelor program. What are the advantages?
The International Law and Comparative Legal Studies course at the ILC in Geneva is a new educational option the International Law School is offering to applicants, who would like to receive an edu-

program can subsequently commence a Master's program at any university across Europe and the US, and simply start studying without any adjustment period, or culture shock when getting used to life abroad and its peculiarities, as the student will already be familiar with them. Thirdly, the program is extremely advantageous for families who may not wish to have their

there are no ordinary lectures or seminars, the only form of educational delivery is the completely interactive mode. The program is implemented according to a modular format, taking into account European educational traditions, and in addition to classroom activities it also includes practical visits and consultations with law practitioners in international organizations and companies. There are unique units on the program that are not available when enrolled in a standard course at the International Law School. For example, we have English literature classes, as well as an English-language Film Studies unit.

MJ: Where did the need arise from, for such a course?
Due to the need for a thorough knowledge of cultural codes within the European environment, and for a better understanding of the mentality of students and law faculties in Western European universities, and finally how it is formed – all of this will have a great impact on the level of our graduate's future professional life. A sound knowledge of all this will allow the students to suc-



Gennady Tolstopyatenko: "We are strengthening the Law School with innovative programs"

The MGIMO International Law School Dean specifies on the innovation within his department.

cation in both Russia and Europe, enrolled in the one course. The four-year program follows a pattern of rotation: a semester here in Moscow, then a subsequent semester taught in Geneva. This pattern has several advantages. Firstly, the students are gradually exposed to a Western European mentality, in such a way that it "rubs off" on them. This is because our classes are taught by local lecturers, and by living in Europe there is the opportunity through everyday life to communicate and mix with the local population. As a result, students participating in the program gain the professional experience that will give them the ability to work both in the multicultural environment of Geneva and within the Russian legal system. A second clear advantage is that graduates of this

family-member studying abroad for many years at a time. In these scenarios families are much more content with an "alternating" four-year program that on the one hand, assists the students in adapting to an international environment, but on the other hand, allows families to see one another in Russia for longer periods of time than just on vacations.

MJ: How innovative is this program?
First and foremost, it is not a program for the masses – no more than 20 to 30 students are accepted annually. Therefore, it is highly individualized, the methodology is constructed in such a way that the "strong student / weak student" dynamic simply doesn't exist, and everyone is supported to excel in the class. This is why

cessfully integrate into the business environment of a future host country abroad. Therefore, this course contains specially selected lectures, a film library and other "cherries on top", so to speak.

MJ: How are the languages studied?
Over the whole semester it is delivered in line with the methods developed by MGIMO's Language Departments. In addition to our lecturers, who teach in Geneva on a rotational basis, we of course engage native speakers to teach our students. Advanced-level students will be taught by foreign lecturers, and the professional component of our course will be conducted by legal department staff from international organizations and companies. Geneva is the center of international life in Europe.

Genry Sardaryan: "We prepare experts for the future leadership of the country"

Dean Sardaryan elaborates on his new School of Governance and Politics at MGIMO, which is created on the basis of two schools: Public Administration and Political Science.

MJ: What does the future hold for the School of Governance and Politics?
In Russia, MGIMO is traditionally known as the 'smithy' of diplomatic workers that ensure the implementation of Russian foreign policy. However we are faced with the task of preparing a new generation of world leaders who are able to work in an extremely competitive environment, who speak two or three foreign languages and can apply strategy, innovation, and crisis management skills, while possessing a very insightful picture of the political processes that are taking place in Russia and across the globe. Our graduate is; a representative of government bodies, a politician, an employee of institutions and departments providing expert and analytical support to the activities of our authority structures, a GR-unit agent of the country's largest corporations, and who, among other things, has solid legal and economic preparation. We implement three areas of education – State and Municipal Administration, Political Science and International Relations.

MJ: What's so special about the study process?
One of the key roles belongs to the program moderators who work with students both during study hours and beyond, forming the so-called soft skills. We closely follow the students' development, and assess the skills they have naturally, and those that we believe they need extra support with to further develop. We help the students understand their strengths and weaknesses, and work with them to achieve greater results. The school has created an atmosphere that develops students' character and leadership skills, and students must study in a very competitive environment. Those students who in later life wish to



work within state and political activity have an opportunity to conduct an annual internship within the Presidential Administration of the Russian Federation, the government apparatus of the Russian Federation, key federal ministries, services and agencies, political parties or public organizations. Excellent opportunities are also provided for those who are interested in the private sector, and it should be noted that the demand for our experts is traditionally very high in this area.

MJ: Tell us about the Macerata University program in Italy.
The collaboration with Macerata University began eight years ago. UNIMC is one of the leading, and at the same time

the oldest, universities in Europe. We started with a Bachelor's exchange program and today we have reached a unique point: our students have the opportunity to study in Italy to a Bachelor's degree level and to obtain Russian and Italian diplomas in a Master's degree, and since last year – to study in an Italian post-graduate course to obtain a PhD degree, there is no comparable course in the Russian Federation. We intend to use our successful experience to open similar programs for Political Science and International Relations. Today our double Master's program with Macerata is one of the most popular international programs of the University. It has about 50 students, half of whom are Italian citizens.



The Young Gun of MEO

Oleg Pichkov is one of the “young guns” - young deans who gradually rise up to the management level of MGIMO schools within the staff upgrade program, carried out by the Rector Anatoly Torkunov. Last year Oleg Pichkov was appointed dean of the School of International Economic Relations, which this year marks its 60th anniversary. This is the Russia’s oldest school of such profile.

MJ: What tasks did the Rector set for you?
First of all, it is a comprehensive reform of MGIMO economic school. One of the assignments given to me straight away was to present a concept for the further development of the school, I have already fulfilled it by now. But the task was not simple: it was necessary to strike a balance - to preserve all the best that our school comprises while introducing new elements to meet today’s requirements, the demands of employers as well as the interests of students. The concept was approved and supported by the Rector.

MJ: What are the main elements of your concept?
First of all, it includes a number of new competencies, which we begin to teach our students. I can’t say that that they totally differ from those that were in our educational plans. But we will bring them to the forefront, we will put more emphasize on them. By the way, among the competencies we have those that, according to a recent study of the World Economic Forum, will be in demand on the labor market in 2020-25, that is, when the students who are now in their first year will be entering the labor market. It is noteworthy that the skills of critical thinking, creativity and HR management are of particular relevance, while earlier these competencies were considered less of a priority for economists. For the first time, there are such competencies as emotional intelligence (the ability to recognize emotions, intentions, motivations and desires of other people, manage your own and others' emotions to achieve a goal), personal responsibility (readiness to carry out assignments, provide professional services, carefulness, goodwill, expressing interest and loyalty)



and cognitive flexibility (the ability to switch from one idea to another, to think about several tasks at a time, to adapt thinking or attention to goal changing). It is extremely important to introduce appropriate changes in the educational standard and to develop disciplines and teaching methods, taking into account these changes, in the future. All courses should be formed on the basis of this approach - both existing and new.

MJ: Can you give us an example of such an approach?
We will enhance training in mathematical disciplines, put an emphasis on econometrics and mathematical analysis. We will as well introduce courses on big data analysis and digital economy. We will review programs on many basic subjects. For example, the School has never had a profound training in legal studies. I do not clearly see that an economist be efficient

without understanding how this all works in the legal field, within the framework of international law. I am convinced that a student can not become a good professional if he does not get used to putting his heart into his work, to making a creative impulse, starting right from the university years. And our guys have a lot of opportunities to show it. For example, there is a variety of competitions held in student clubs. And the freedom of creativity is unlimited. Recently, the students approached me with the idea: we need a faculty logo, which we would wear on T-shirts or stick to a computer. “Well”, I say to them, “get busy, then”. They held a contest, selected the most interesting design, and now the faculty has its own logo.

MJ: MGIMO is the most international university in Russia. How are you going to use this opportunity for the advantage of your courses?
We have always had foreign students, and their number is growing each year. We try to meet their needs, constantly introducing new English-language courses. Now we are negotiating with the British University of Reading, which is greatly interested in the creation of a tripartite English-language bachelor program in international economic relations. The third party, most likely, will be a Chinese university - we are already getting some proposals. I am glad as most of the master courses I have been reading for a long time are in English. And according to the feedback of the Americans and British - our lectures are useful, they give a broad view of the processes and problems and offer different approaches to their solution. It is also important that the time spent here destroys myths and stereotypes, that some students can, unfortunately, cherish. Taking the course on Russian economy, which I teach, they are surprised that the real country is very different from the image that some foreign media may portray. It is no surprise that students, for example, from African and Asian countries sometimes say: “It turns out

that we are now experiencing the same problems with economic reforms as you had in the 1990s”. Coming back home, they are going to apply our experience in local and national practices.

MJ: Asians and Africans are understandable. And how do, say, Americans perceive our experience?

saw 20 years ago. I really love this book, I have read it many times and once even in English.

MJ: Why? Much of the style of such classic literature is lost in translation.
The matter is that a couple of years ago I was a supervisor of the master degree thesis of one American student. He really



Taking the course on Russian economy, which I teach, foreign students are surprised that the real country is very different from the image that some Western media may portray

You know, immersion in Russian culture helps us in this case. For example, the poem “Dead Souls” by Nikolai Gogol can help a foreigner to some extent understand our 90s of the last century, since the description of the shadow economy of the XIX century given in this work in some way echoes the pictures of a wild accumulation of capital that Russia

wanted to get to a deeper understanding of our culture and for this purpose was looking for a book that he could read. I told him to read “Dead Souls”. And I, too, in order to discuss this work on an equal footing, read it in English. Of course, when translating novels into English, much can be lost, so I was not surprised that the student did not understand this wonderful book. The protagonist – Chichikov, was perceived by the student as a crook, you know, there is such a common type of snake oil merchant, a guy from the Wild West, who moves from city to city and deceives everyone by selling fake snake oil. By the way, such perception is completely at odds with my idea of Chichikov, I dare say I even like him. Yes, from the point of view of the law, he did doubtful things and he himself understood it, but he simply used his original notion to raise capital, and at the same time no one was robbed or offended.

MGIMO ENDOWMENT CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Marina Petrova, Director of MGIMO Endowment Fund

The first endowments appeared in Russia after the adoption of the Federal Law on endowments for non-profit organizations in December 2006, and in the following year the first funds were already created.

Of course, we are in the very beginning, and the entire market of Russian endowments is estimated at about 20 billion rubles (about \$ 300 million). Just compare: the largest university endowment is located in America, Harvard has 36 billion dollars. It is no surprise then that the USA is the indisputable leader here - the American market of endowments is 567 billion dollars.

The foundation of MGIMO Endowment was laid by our graduates who now occupy high positions in the Forbes list: Alisher Usmanov, Vladimir Potanin and Patokh Chodiev. They have contributed significant sums and regularly support the University projects. Their example was followed by other MGIMO alumni. For some, it is a sign of gratitude to alma mater for the knowledge gained or it's a manifestation of social responsibility, for others - the opportunity to present yourself and your company as a part of MGIMO community.

The strategy of MGIMO Endowment is determined by the University's management. The members of the Supervisory Board and the Board of Trustees give recommendations and support the most important projects for the University.

We have drawn up an investment strategy together with the management companies. It takes into account the optimal risk-return ratio. For MGIMO Endowment, these are mainly corporate and federal

bonds and, in part, currency instruments (Eurobonds, dollar deposits). The foreign exchange portfolio is justified by the fact that a significant part of the expenditures is carried out in dollars and euros (foreign trips of professors and student internships, invitation of foreign lectures). Thus, with fluctuations in the exchange rate, our costs remain unchanged. The bonds provide a yield of about 12-13% (based on the results of 2017). There are short and long-term bonds in the portfolio. The manager monitors and takes part in new placements. We look at the stock market, which may show more growth (or

Conservative strategy allows not only to save funds, but also provides a real increase, by 5-7% ahead of inflation

decline). However, the return of MGIMO Endowment is already an integral part of the university's budget, and the loss of funds is simply unacceptable. Conservative strategy allows not only to save funds, but also provides a real increase, by 5-7% ahead of inflation.

Our endowment develops a fundraising strategy, signs donation agreements, conducts grant competitions for students, administers project implementation and prepares reports. One of the latest interesting non-financial projects was "Mentor", where graduates act as mentors



to students, helping them to make the first steps in their careers.

MGIMO works actively with foreign partners and graduates. Significant assistance to MGIMO is provided by a large businessman Frederick Paulsen. A few years ago, IKEA made a big contribution to the Endowment, and recently we have had a collective contribution of the MGIMO Alumni Association in Vietnam.

Grantees of Endowment are employees of the University, professors and students - everyone can implement a project that philanthropists are ready to support: they conduct research, write books, organize scientific events. Such student conferences as "Days of Science" and "Business Spring" have already become traditional and iconic for our University. In addition, at Russian and international events, teachers and students represent the University and act as "ambassadors" of MGIMO.

Endowments unite in professional communities: the Donor Forum, UnivEn - the

University Endowment Association, these organizations work to popularize the notion and solve the tasks related to increasing efficiency.

10 years is not such a long term for endowments, but their role has grown significantly. 10 years ago, the contribution of Endowment to MGIMO budget was only 2%. Today, its part reaches 6% of the University budget, despite the fact that the budget itself has increased 2.5 times! And together with the sponsorship funds coming directly to the University, the share of the target means exceeds 10%. In total, 650 million rubles have been transferred to MGIMO within these years, and the endowment holds about 1.5 billion rubles.



Alisher Usmanov
Founder, USM Holdings

"I consider my contribution to the MGIMO Endowment Fund as an investment in enhancing the global competitive edge of Russian education. Today the University is one of the most widely recognized leaders of national higher education, training highly qualified experts; the political and business elite of Russia. MGIMO is the brightest educational institution in Russia, and therefore it's well-known far beyond our borders and the CIS.

The Endowment Fund for the University is an opportunity for greater financial sustainability and a pathway to independently determining long-term strategy for its own development."

The specific projects that the Endowment can be proud of are: MGIMO internationalization program, the strengthening of the University's positions in international rankings, "5 QS Stars" rating, the interna-



Vladimir Potanin
Founder and President, Interros Company

"The Endowment of MGIMO, my alma mater, has become the first Endowment in Russia. I am really happy to have been able to contribute to it. It will sustain more than one generation and totally fits in with my vision on philanthropy as a systematic, well thought over and life changing action. The profit from the Endowment gives the University an opportunity for development. For us, its graduates, it's a chance to pay back a kind of a symbolic debt for our education which provided a ground for our success. I am continuing to support MGIMO beyond the framework of this endowment - for over 15 years with the support of my Foundation best MGIMO students have been going for internships to different countries worldwide before defending their theses. This year the program has expanded: its budget has increased up to 24 million roubles and students are able to become interns not only at the Foreign Affairs Ministry missions but also in foreign agencies under the Ministry for Economic Development as well as in international organizations. I have no doubt it will help them to make a deliberate choice in favor of a diplomatic career."

tional accreditation of higher education and MBA programs, the magazines included in the Scopus database, the social support of honorary professors and veterans, student grants, etc.

Patokh Chodiev
*Board Member, Eurasian Bank
Co-owner, Eurasian Resources Group
and IMR (International Mineral Resources)*

"Anatoly Torkunov asked us to set an example. Each of us donated 125 000 000 rubles. I also donated 50 000 000 rubles to support the veterans of the Foreign Ministry. Subsequently, every year, the three of us were increasing the capital of the Endowment Fund, donating \$US 1 000 000 on an annual basis. This enabled a real leap in quality, in terms of our support for the institute, because by doing this we were able to lay down a financial base for the Fund, the benefits of which allow MGIMO to independently plan its own growth... True, sometimes there are in-



deed more immediate and urgent needs. For example, in 2010 at a meeting of the Board of Trustees, Anatoly lamented that the machinery in the Institute's printing school were hopelessly obsolete, I immediately offered to finance the purchase of modern equipment, and that upgrade cost 20 000 000 rubles... The next qualitative stage started a few years back, when we set the goal of raising the amount of the Endowment Fund to one billion rubles. As far as I know, currently it has already exceeded one-and-a-half billion rubles."



MGIMO FORUM IN ASTANA

By Igor Drobyshhev
Photos by Igor Lileev,
Igor Drobyshhev,
Alexey Vlasov,
Alexander Orlov

In early October, MGIMO alumni from all over the world spent three unforgettable days in the hospitable capital of Kazakhstan. They enjoyed fruitful communication and exchange of ideas.



Bui Kuyet, Vietnamese participant of the MGIMO Alumni Forum in Astana, fidgets with his passport in his hands and examines at the Kazakhstan visa. "I wonder," he asks, "if I can stay after the forum and travel around Kazakhstan?" Judging by the dates on the visa – he cannot. However Bui has a keen desire to do so. What shall he do? Bui Kuyet, 1983 alumnus, works in the oil industry in Vietnam, an industry which is developing quite productively, based on oil located around the shelves of the South China Sea. It is an industry assisted by Rosneft. Bui is an interesting man, he is a veteran of the Vietnam War, and most importantly – one of the heroes of the MJ issue, where we published a feature on Vietnamese MGIMO graduates. So now he needs assistance. At a reception hosted for the Forum attendees by Kazakhstan's Foreign Minister Kairat Abdrakhmanov, I introduce Bui to the Minister himself. After hearing the facts of the problem, he calls for an assistant, he then photographs Bui's visa with his phone: and, just like that, the undertaking at hand – a visa extension – is accepted for implementation. Although Minister Abdrakhmanov didn't study at MGIMO, his son Temirzhan is a graduate – so there it is to behold, the strength of the MGIMO establishment, which can solve a problem through one handshake!

A delegation of MGIMO delegation, headed by Rector Anatoly Torkunov arrived in Astana and then, first of all, paid a visit to Nazarbayev University (NU), a completely new university, built in 2010 by the initiative of the Kazakhstani President Nursultan Nazarbayev. And although a number of its buildings are still being completed, the university is already considered to be the flagship institution within of the tertiary-higher school education throughout of the republic.

At Nazarbayev University the entire educational spectrum is represented: a preparatory program, Bachelor's degrees, Master's degrees, and Post-doctoral studies. There are eight Faculties here: Engineering, Science and Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Medicine, Mining and Geology and more. There is also a technology park, which means the full circle has been created; this is where scientific developments can go on to develop opportunities and receive commercial offers.



The university students, more than 4200 of them, come from all over Kazakhstan. To be accepted into the university, applicants must pass the TOEFL exam and subsequent subject examinations in English. However, the course teaching language is Russian. Peers of President Nursultan Nazarbayev were impressed listening to Rector Torkunov discuss MGIMO; hearing about

Built in 2010, the Nazarbayev-University is already considered to be the flagship of the higher education of the republic

double diplomas programs working in conjunction with 22 various universities around the world, including the University of Macerata in Italy. In fact, Dean of the Department of Management and Policy, Genri Sardaryan gave a full presentation on this.. Potential MGIMO partners got interested in the unique Russian program of the English-language undergraduate program, which was presented by its head A. Troitsky.

Come evening time, the graduates enjoyed a reception given in their honor, and hosted by the Kazakh Foreign Minister. *** The opening ceremony of the IV Alumni Forum was held the next day, at the Palace of Independence. The Forum was officially opened by the Chairman of the Senate of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kasym-

Zhomart Tokayev, who graduated MGIMO in 1975. He delivered a greeting from the President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan, also an Honorary Doctor of MGIMO: "MGIMO deservedly enjoys its reputation of a prestigious university not only within the CIS territory, but also in countries further abroad. Currently, the role and responsibility of international experts has increased more than ever. Therefore, the activities of MGIMO are critical."

Next the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, graduate of 1972, Sergey Lavrov, took the floor, reading an address from Russian President Vladimir Putin, which stated: "MGIMO is famous for its scientific schools and solid traditions of fundamental education, the multinational community of its graduates is united not



Rector A. Torkunov at Nazarbayev-University

only by heartfelt feelings for their alma mater, but also a commitment to the principles of mutual respect and sincere interest in the development of international cooperation."

The Foreign Affairs Minister added a personal remark: "I see many familiar faces and friends in this hall. You have come from dozens of countries around the world, and this is a convincing testimony to the strength of MGIMO solidarity. All of us, wherever we work, are united by the years of study at the alma mater, which for many has become, without exaggeration, a second home."

Kazakhstan Minister of Foreign Affairs Kairat Abdrakhmanov, who graduated from another university, has been working shoulder-to-shoulder with MGIMO graduates for decades. He thanked the leadership of the Russian Foreign Ministry and MGIMO for training international experts from Kazakhstan: "Our Ministry has the opportunity to send its most promising employees on an annual quota basis to Moscow to study at MGIMO, therefore raising the level of education of future diplomats."

Rector and Academician Anatoly Torkunov, then made a speech, about the university's

President Nazarbayev, an Honorary Doctor of MGIMO: "MGIMO enjoys the reputation of a prestigious university not only within the CIS, but also abroad"

current state of affairs, noting that it has "a magnificent past, worthy present and a beautiful future."

According to various ratings, MGIMO firmly belongs to the top-five universities in Russia. "In accordance with a separate presidential decree bestowed on our university, we have the right to independently determine the standards of our education. We made it on a small list of Universities that are exporting Russian education, and we are as ready for that as any other educational institution, and this is because MGIMO is the most international university in the country. Over 17% of our students come from 53 different countries. We are implementing joint masters programs with 22 leading universities across Europe, the USA and China, and such collaborations are expanding even further. Several Master's





Chairman of the Senate of Kazakhstan Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev opens the forum

programs at the university are taught entirely in English, and our first batch of graduates from the English-language Bachelor's program have just completed their studies. The university also conducts active research work. Naturally, the implementation of projects would be impossible without the support that we receive from the leadership of the Foreign Ministry, as well as from our trustees. The Endowment Fund created at MGIMO is the largest in Russia, and it makes a significant contribution to the development of the university. It allows us to implement new projects, for example, the establishment of our new Information Technology and Artificial Intelligence Department, our new Ecology courses and more. Currently we are building large dormitories for 1800 students on campus, which will finally provide student housing for students from Russia and from abroad.

In recent years, the MGIMO Forum has become a platform for expert discussion of the most important problems of our time. This year, the Forum's discussion sessions were also organized for its participants. One of the most interesting speeches came



from the panel dedicated to International Integration Processes, and was given by MGIMO graduate Thongphane Savanphet, now Deputy Foreign Minister of Laos. Expressing his gratitude to the Republic of Kazakhstan and the MGIMO leadership for the invitation to the Forum, and recounting how in the 42 years of the Lao PDR's existence, more than seven thousand students had been educated in the universities of the former USSR, including MGIMO. Within the Laos Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the

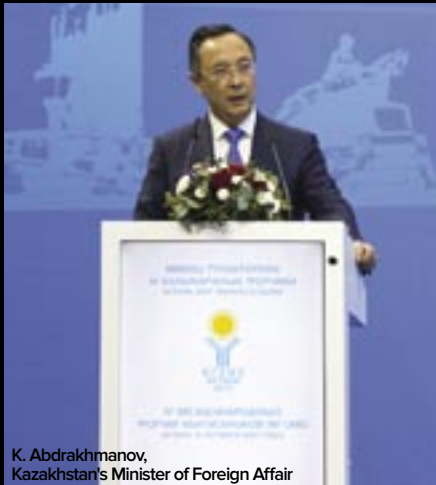
Minister and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs are both MGIMO graduates. "Laos has vast experience in the field of integration," the Deputy Minister said, "because we have been in the process of integrating with ASEAN for a long time. Integration is an extremely complex process in many respects, primarily because of the serious differences between the 10 ASEAN member-states. Nevertheless, the organization has managed to achieve a fairly close and deep economic and socio-cultural integration, while political integration is still a challenge." Also at the Forum; Georgy Leonidovich, Chairman of the Board of Directors from "Karakan Invest LLC", and Professor Georgy Krasniansky, Head of the World Resource Markets Faculty at the MGIMO International Energy Policy & Diplomacy Institute. They reflected on the present stage of development within the coal industry. If in 1993 to 1994 it was unprof-

itable, today, thanks to the restructuring conducted in accordance with the standards of the World Bank and the IMF, it was possible to create a completely private, financially and socially sustainable, competitive industry on the world market. Currently the Russian coal industry is one of the most successful industries in Russia and demonstrates an annual increase in production by four to five percent. Russia ranks third in the world for coal exports after Australia and Indonesia.

Today, coal is indispensable for providing electricity to Siberia and the Far East, where it provides half of the energy generation in those areas. At the same time, there is a trend where the center of world coal consumption is shifting to the Asia-Pacific Region. Under these conditions, the industry needs to train managers to a new



S. Lavrov, Russia's Foreign Minister



K. Abdrakhmanov, Kazakhstan's Minister of Foreign Affairs



A. Torkunov, MGIMO University Rector

"I'm the only European MP on the forum," says Bela Kovacs, MGIMO alumnus and Member of the European Parliament, "and I'm proud of it." He touched on the topic of anti-Russian sanctions, stating they "do not work." In regards to Europe, they did not bring any advantages, on the contrary, it has "suffered from them" and he believes

from 2010 to 2014, agreed with Bela Kovacs in regards to the irrationality of the sanctions. He also discussed subjects such as the importance of values throughout the process of strengthening any integration – within the Eurasian framework, or within the EU – and the need to "agree on them." Having agreed, he added, it is then possible



level and those who are in the position of making strategic decisions, must take into account the interconnectedness and mutual influences of global markets. Bearing this in mind, MGIMO and the Moscow Institute of Steel and Alloys, have recently established the Inter-university Education Center and the MBA program "Strategic Management in Mining Enterprises" was launched in September 2017.

it's about time to cease such sanctions. The Hungarians also lead a good example by recently renewing an agreement with Russia on the nuclear power plant of the fifth and sixth units of the Paks nuclear power plant. "So, it is possible to cooperate," exclaimed Kovach, "but there must be a desire to do so!" Stefan Füle, European Commissioner for Enlargement and Neighborhood Policy

For 10 years the Endowment Fund of MGIMO proved its effectiveness: its capital for this period has increased fivefold and now accounts for 1.5 billion rubles

"within the framework of integration to build a solid foundation for a new 'architecture of safety' in Europe." According to Yaroslav Lissovolik, Chief Economist at the Eurasian Development Bank, "the international experience of economic integration shows that the most successful regional integration blocs achieve the highest rates of economic growth and build the most diversified system of economic alliances with other countries and regional blocs". In this respect, the success of ASEAN should be specially noted. In many respects, similar approaches to integration are seen in the EEU as well. They

are guided by a high degree of flexibility in the integration processes, in contrast to the rigid European format of uniform rules and standards for all countries in the region. At the roundtable discussion titled "Post-Soviet Society, 25 years later – Cooperation

endowments can be compared to successfully climbing a mountain, and reaching the top, which is somewhere in the clouds". For the past decade MGIMO's Endowment Fund has more than proved its success: its capital for this period has increased fivefold

for student initiatives. Everything that supports "not just maintaining a MGIMO's high quality, but also developing and moving forward, as competition with global universities is very strong". One of the most important events of the




A show at the Astana Opera Concert Hall

in the Fields of Education and Culture" Marina Petrova, the Director of Russia's largest endowment fund at MGIMO, outlined its activities. "They say of Harvard that it is a university under an endowment fund," she said. "Comparing with Russia, to use an analogy, the development of

and now accounts for 1.5 billion rubles. As it grows, so do the annual goals set for the Fund. Expenditure is mainly on the internationalization of education, and this includes; inviting and hosting foreign professors, internships for students and teachers from abroad, scientific events, and support

For 10 years the Endowment Fund of MGIMO proved its effectiveness: its capital for this period has increased fivefold and now accounts for 1.5 billion rubles

Forum was the meeting between Rector Torkunov, Minister Lavrov and President Nazarbayev of Kazakhstan. In the course of their conversation, the Kazakh leader noted the special status and standing of MGIMO among diplomats and foreign affairs staff. He stressed the need to engage diplomatic personnel with the work of the Eurasian Economic Union. At the end of the program, the alumni moved from the Independence Palace to the Astana Opera Concert Hall, where they enjoyed a pleasant reception, an award ceremony and a wonderful concert by Kazakh artists. 





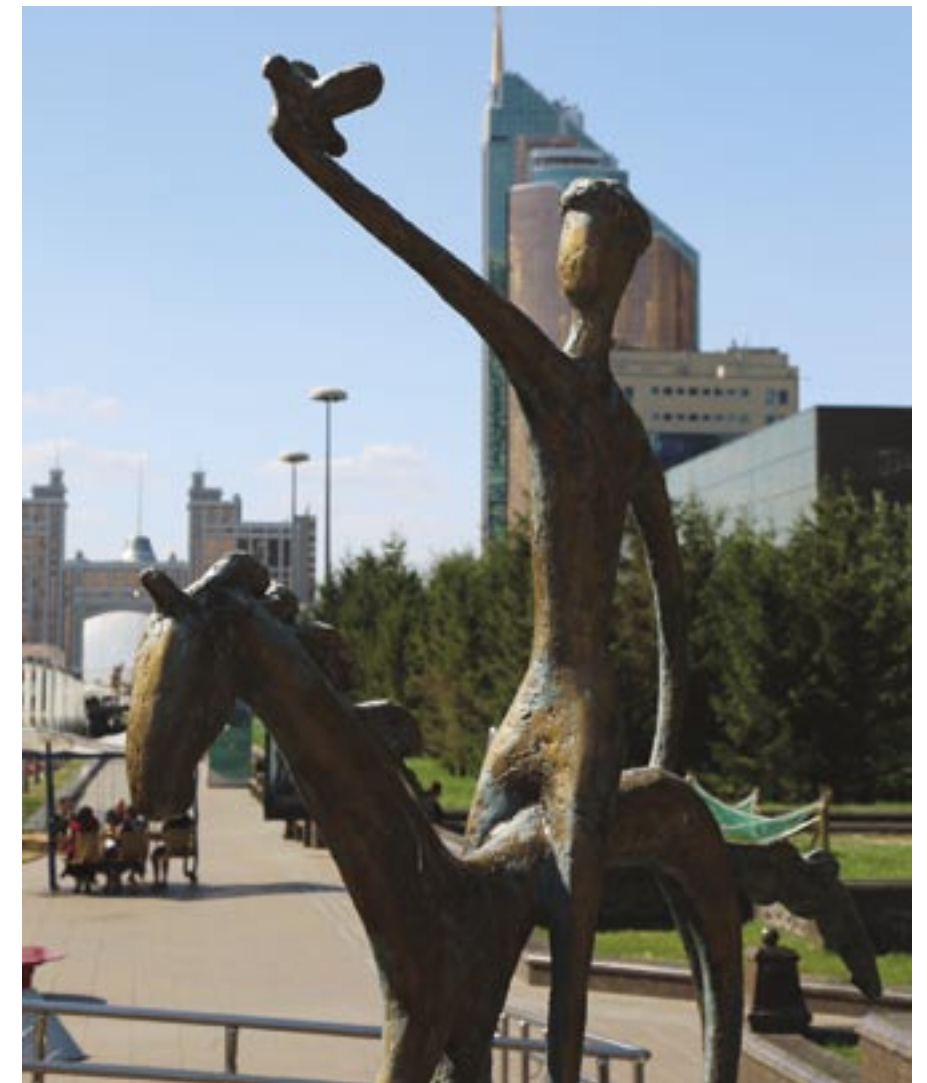
KASYM-ZHOMART TOKAYEV: "Alma Mater and Russia will always be in our hearts"

Kasym-Zhomart Tokayev ('75) is the Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of the Republic of Kazakhstan. According to the Constitution, Mr. Tokayev is the second highest-ranked official in the state, and therefore "chief MGIMO graduate" from Kazakhstan. Consequently, he is the host of the MGIMO Alumni Forum, which was held in October in Astana.

Under the dome of the original Senate building there is a comfortable hall, which is decorated in gentle tones of ivory and gold. From the 14th floor of the dazzling white marble tower, there is a panoramic view of the government district of Astana. Its focal point is the Presidential Palace, known in Kazakhstan and beyond as Akorda, the "White Stake".

Hosting the fourth forum of MGIMO graduates is a great honor for us. Three years ago I attended a forum in Moscow, to celebrate the 70th anniversary of our institute at the Kremlin. The President of Russia, Vladimir Putin gave a speech, which is testimony to how highly regarded the role of MGIMO is, especially in regards to the training of high-ranking international experts within the Russian leadership.

Meetings of MGIMO alumni are in demand, because we otherwise do notice the absence of each other. Even if the graduates don't know one another, after exchanging the first two or three words they become closer and a lively discussion begins: who finished the institute and when, what languages they studied, which lecturers they had, common ground is found almost immediately... As you know, I happened to work at the UN, and I must say that our institute is very well known there. For me, it was sort of a revelation. When I arrived in Geneva in 2011, I did not even have to tell people I had graduated from MGIMO. The point is, the directors of the European branch of the United Nations were our fellow graduates: Vladimir Petrovsky and Sergey Ordzhonikidze, so the UN community was quite accustomed to having MGIMO graduates in these posts.





MJ: Geneva is a very important asset, as in terms of the number of international meetings held, it is far ahead of New York, is that correct?

This is true. In Geneva there are more than 30 international organizations, constantly holding meetings. The Director General of the European Branch is responsible for coordinating their activities and organizing major international meetings. The most important meeting that took place during my time would be the meeting on the issue of Syria. It was held on June 30, 2012 and became the only meeting that brought about a tangible result, in the form of a final document. It still serves as the international legal basis for the Syrian settlement.

Playing a major role in the preparation of this document was fellow alumnus, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. I enjoyed observing him work, such high professional standards. It can be said that he "one-upped" all his own colleagues "to the max", as well as foreign ministers of other countries. Hillary Clinton was shocked by this result, in the sense that she, without knowing it, agreed to the text of the final document, which did not mention the mandatory departure of Bashar Assad. I believe that this document is a diplomatic success story for Russia.

MJ: What is Kazakhstan currently occupied with?

We had the international EXPO-2017 exhibition. This was the pride of Kazakhstan, as it was the first time this kind of event was held in this part of the world. The exhibition had about three million visitors, and the attention the EXPO has attracted to Kazakhstan, from all over the world. The Expo was covered by the world's mass media, especially on June 10. This was when the heads of state from the largest countries in the world attended the opening, including; President of Russia Vladimir Putin, President of China Xi Jinping, the leaders of India, Pakistan, and our friends in the CIS – the leaders of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Belarus, and Armenia. Also attending were the presidents of Mongolia, Afghanistan,

the King of Spain, and the heads of a number of states in Europe, Asia and the Middle East. It was an enormous event, which was visited by the UN Secretary General and the heads of other international organizations. The EXPO site will be regenerated into the new International Financial Center, a

does not take center stage in regards to our domestic energy balance: it only makes up five percent, gas is 10.5% and the main share is still coal, at 72%, and hydro-electricity at around twelve percent. As for clean technologies, so-called renewable energy sources, they make up about one-and-a-half percent. I believe



Over the past four years, President N.Nazarbayev has given completely new tasks for Kazakhstan's full modernization, the Strategy for "100 concrete steps" was developed

sort of City, in the image and likeness of a center successfully operating in Dubai. The Green Technology Center, under the auspices of the United Nations, will be also built on the territory of the EXPO. Now, as you know, Kazakhstan is a state that mainly produces oil. Although that

that Kazakhstan must focus on alternative energy sources. Over the past four years, the whole country has been faced with completely new challenges, as part of its full modernization. The President drafted the "100 concrete steps" strategy, providing five institutional reforms: modernization of the economy, the powerful development of medium and small businesses, scientific and technological progress, the introduction of new technologies and, of course, political reform. It involves strengthening the independence of the courts, transparency of state activity, first of all the government, to the people. In connection with this, constitutional reforms recently took place, according to which the President voluntarily shared his powers with the Parliament and the executive authorities, the functions that he once needed to give impetus to radical eco-

conomic reforms. As democracy is strengthening in Kazakhstan, stability is evident, therefore Parliament should gain greater authority, and the Government should be more accountable to it. As for the President, he certainly remains a strong figure in the system of state power, and Kazakhstan is a presidential republic. There is no doubt about it, since it is the presidential system that fully corresponds to both the historical tradition, the experience of our development, and the mentality of the Kazakh people. During these four years, the Senate, where I am in charge, was very active in the legislative support of "100 concrete steps". For this initiative we adopted about 60 laws, and it is difficult to even count how many amendments were made to existing laws. This work was very effective prima-

rily due to the fact that the Senate is far from populist and we did not want to end up with the Parliament in shambles, as happens in some countries, including the CIS countries, where inter-party squabbles are often erupting. Our Senate is "de-partisan". We are a professional parliament and our task is to adopt high quality laws.

Our Senate is "de-partisan", and this greatly facilitates the work. We are a professional parliament, our task is to adopt high quality laws



MJ: You were Head of the Kazakh Foreign Ministry for more than a decade and were instrumental with the creation of the various concepts around Kazakhstan's foreign policy, when the country didn't yet have agreements with any state. How justified were the approaches adopted a quarter of a century ago? How has the republic's foreign policy changed during these 25 years?

The concept of foreign policy, which was developed at the first stage of development of our state, justified itself, because

it took into account the geopolitical realities of that time, as well as the potential of Kazakhstan as a regional state in its essence. We then declared the priority of cooperation primarily with neighboring states – with Russia, the PRC and other Central Asian countries. Of course, we could not fail to mention the importance of relations with the United States, the world's main power, as well as with the major states of Asia and Europe. It was extremely important for us to participate in the activities of international organizations, especially the UN. In general, it was a

MGIMO is a world-class university. The merit in this belongs to its rector Anatoly Torkunov, who heads the university for a quarter of a century already. He lifted it to an unprecedented height

balanced, multi-vector policy. Kazakhstan could not build its foreign policy in another way: interest in our country was enormous, because we are in the very center of Eurasia, we have the ninth largest territory in the world. After a quarter of a century, this approach fully justified itself. At present, new integration processes are unfolding across the territory of Eurasia. By the way, our President Nursultan Nazarbayev always played the lead role on this issue, and the Eurasian Economic Union, which was created not so long ago, is in fact, a prod-

uct of his strategic insight. After all, he proposed to create the Eurasian Union in 1994. Unfortunately this idea was then not supported in Moscow, it was considered premature, and how wrong that assumption was. Time was lost, because now in Eurasia we have completely new geos-trategic realities. Therefore, at this stage we are talking about the importance of establishing economic integration in the first place, any other kind of unification is a matter for the future. This is the princi-pled position of Kazakhstan and its leader: a modern integration association should be primarily economic in nature. Secondly, time does not stand still, it is good to see that all-round cooperation with Russia has developed into allied relations, as seen by the signing of the relevant Treaty in Yekaterinburg by our countries in 2013. This means that within the multilateral balanced foreign policy of Kazakhstan, absolute priorities have emerged. Above all, it is about compre-hensive cooperation and allied relations with Russia. Another definite prior-ity is regional integration, in which the Eurasian Economic Union, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, the Conference on Interaction and Confidence-building Measures in Asia (CICMA) play an im-portant part. By the way, the initiative to convene the CICMA was expressed by President Nazarbayev at the UN in 1992, it was implemented and became Kazakhstan’s calling card in the interna-tional arena. We of course, pay close attention to the further strengthening of the potential of the CIS, the development of multilateral cooperation within its framework and we believe that despite criticism from the Commonwealth, it played a positive role and continues to be a notable internation-al association recognized by the UN. Thus, we have decided on the main priorities and believe that they are the right ones.. Finally, the third point is the creation of favorable external conditions for the implementation and development of economic reforms and a favorable invest-ment climate. Here the role of Kazakhstan diplomacy cannot be overestimated.

Kazakhstan ranks first among the CIS countries in terms of foreign direct in-vestment per capita and, in my opinion, the second or third place among all post-socialist states.

MJ: In recent years, a lot of dramatic events have occurred: the "Arab spring", which led to the catastrophe in the Middle East and gave rise to ISIS, a coup in Ukraine and the ensuing war in the Donbass, an explosive situation around the DPRK. Are we on the verge of a new world war? Or is it already here?

On this account we have various hypoth-eses, including conspiracy theories. I do

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not believe that the third world war has al-ready begun. In regards to this I would like to refer to a very interesting document – Manifesto "The World. XXI Century ", pre-pared by the President of Kazakhstan last year and circulated at the United Nations as an official document. In that document, the Head of State warns about the danger of a global nuclear clash. He has the right to talk about this, because 26 years ago, on August 29, 1991, he signed a decree on closing the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site. Kazakhstan voluntarily renounced its nuclear potential and signed the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Thus, it is no coincidence that our country is recognized as the leader of the global anti-nuclear movement. In his Manifesto, the President pointed out that the arms race is continuing, militaristic rhetoric is intensifying, the leaders of cer-tain states are introducing the psychology

of confrontation into the minds of people. He warned that if this trend continues, any plans – whether there are economic reforms, technological innovations or hu-manitarian initiatives – will remain pipe dreams, because nothing will remain on the globe, the Earth will simply be covered with radioactive dust. As for North Korea, it seems to me, using diplomatic methods, you can persuade them to reach peace. And a bad peace, as you know, is better than a good war. We in Kazakhstan are monitoring the ac-tions of Russia in the international arena with great empathy. I personally believe that by sending troops to Syria, Russia has intercepted the strategic initiative, and now, without Moscow, no issue in the world can be decided. At the same time, it is necessary to make full use of the peacekeeping poten-tial of the Russian state in order to reach an agreement on the key issues that hamper the favorable development of the world. Of course, this includes Syria as mentioned, but above all, the issue of Ukraine too.

MJ: You are a Sinologist who has worked in this country for many years. China is Kazakhstan’s most important neighbor. How are Kazakh-Sino relations developing at the moment? What distinguishes them from relations with Russia, another important neighbor to Kazakhstan?

According to the documents, Russia is our ally and strategic partner. China is our strategic partner and a great neighbor. On the other hand, playing with words is quite a dangerous pastime, you can seriously make mistakes when you are a captive to semantics. We must look at the essence of cooperation, at what we have in reality. Under the strategic partnership, I mean, above all, it’s about collaboration of the states with major projects, which will bring great benefits in the foreseeable future. This, for example, includes coop-eration in the field of oil production and transportation or in the military-technical sphere. Secondly, it’s about cooperation and interaction between international organizations, mutual consultation and support with the most pressing issues, as

well as maintaining trusted relations be-tween state leaders. Foreign diplomats and analysts come to us and ask: "How do you live between the two great powers? You must be afraid in such a neighborhood? ". To this question we usually reply: "On the contrary, it is positive to have such neighbors!" China’s entire strategy – from ancient times, and especially now – revolves around the Silk Road, now known as the “One Belt, One Road” concept. They want to cover the whole world with logistics structures that will benefit China, as it has become a worldwide factory for the production of goods. China caught a new trend at the right time, it realized that states are starting to struggle with logis-tics, and this area will become the main revenue source. If China implements this concept, this country will undoubtedly become a world leader.

MJ: Does Kazakhstan want to connect to this Chinese strategy?

Of course, but China also understands that without us the "Silk Road", at least, in the main direction towards Eurasia, will not be possible. It is no mere accident that Xi Jinping called Kazakhstan "the champion in the field of transit traffic."

MJ: In Kazakhstan everyone speaks beautiful Russian. Is this something the state has advocated for?

The Russian language retains great importance in Kazakhstan, and will be present both in the media and in state bodies, because we understand: it is the language of international communica-tion recognized by a UN Charter. In the Kazakh Constitution, the official language is Russian. The Kazakh language is used at state-level. In my opinion, this is the optimal formula. If you know Russian, you can achieve a lot. Our youth willingly travel to Russia to study, currently about 75 000 Kazakhstanis are studying at Russian universities, this is the same population of that of a small city. Russian education is in demand, includ-ing MGIMO. As far as I know, all graduates



are employed, there aren’t any unem-ployed graduates. I hope that the current students, like us, the older generation of MGIMO alumni, will always have an alma mater and Russia in their hearts. Taking this opportunity, I want to empha-size that this is thanks to Rector Anatoly Torkunov, who has led MGIMO for a quar-ter of a century already. He has elevated our institute to an unprecedented height. We are very fortunate that alma mater has

alumni such as Alisher Usmanov (listed at №5 on the Russian equivalent to the Forbes rich list), Fattah Chodiev (№3 on the Kazakhstan equivalent to Forbes), Vladimir Potanin (№8 on the Russian Forbes), who laid the foundations for the MGIMO Endowment Fund, as well as many other alumni – not only success-ful business leaders, but also well-known state heads, politicians, diplomats and journalists. ☐

Photos by Yuri Lukin

BANU OSEKBAYEVA

At the end of 2017, the student of the International Economic Relations master's degree Shahribanum Osekbayeva, became the first woman chairman of the MGIMO Foreign Students Club (38 organizations). Before that, she was the chairman of the Kazakhstani students club (which is, by the way, the largest in MGIMO), and also for the first time replaced a young man in this post. What is it? Is the women invasion coming? "I do not know," Banu shrugs, "like any Oriental woman, I had no intention of destroying patriarchy. It's okay when a man is in charge. And the student structures at the university are traditionally headed by boys. Yes, and I was not going to go to the chair, all the time sitting in the position of a deputy head. But when I was offered this post, I thought: why not?"

MJ: To think about it is one thing, to say “I agree” is whole other thing.
I am used to say yes when I face a challenge. I was always a feisty character, maybe it's a masculine trait, I don't know.

MJ: How does one become a star in a public life of a University?
I started from the very bottom, I remember how on the Day of National Cuisine I cleaned the rest of the food from the

tables. We in the students clubs do not have prestigious and not prestigious work, any activity is welcomed. I got used to the difficulties and many times I proved to myself and others that I could be the best! I was a president at school, I had a deputy, ministries, we regularly organized days of self-government.

MJ: What distinguishes Kazakhs from other nationalities in MGIMO?

Unity. This is even recognized by other clubs. Kazakhs are more likely to communicate within their company or community, help each other, protect: one for all. But I like to communicate and outside of the community. From the very beginning, I went to all events - was leading on the UN models, through my friends I found out what interesting activities were in other fellow student clubs, I came to them - it was like a link between the Kazakh and

other clubs. I was lucky, I found a company on my first year. There are 13 girls, and all different nationalities: Chechens, Armenians, Jewish, Abkhaz, Ossetian, Karachay, Georgian ... and all from different faculties.

MJ: Why did you choose MGIMO?
Five years ago, all high school students in Kazakhstan dreamed of going to study in England - it was a real trend! I wanted to do it too, but my dad said, "No. The best education is in Moscow, you will go there." Why MGIMO? When I was a tenth-grader, I came to Moscow for the wedding of

my elder nephew. It turned out that he and his bride had just graduated from MGIMO. And I immersed myself in the atmosphere of such friendship, unity and community of interests that I just fell in love with it, I realized that I want to enroll only to MGIMO, and I had to go to IER. In addition, I have a propensity for exact sciences - I studied in the physics and mathematics class from the 7th grade, participated in the Olympiads ... And then I went to the MGIMO site and saw pictures of the students playing tennis, and actually I waved racket for seven years!



MJ: Was it difficult to apply?
The competition was tough, we wrote essays, had interviews in three languages: Russian, Kazakh and English.

MJ: How do you like Moscow? Did it scare you at all?
I remember someone saying to me: "In the first year, you may not like Moscow, in the second year you will start to like it, in the third you'll fall in love, and in the fourth you will not want to leave." I fell in love from the first year!

MJ: Were you not disappointed to become its student? You had such expectations...
No! IER really turned out to be the most friendly faculty. I say this precisely, because I communicate with children from other faculties, they even envy us: "Well, why are you so friendly?" Our first "rallying" occurred during the preparation for the test on the history of foreign economic doctrines. We studied this subject in a special way, figuring out which people have materials on it. If someone did not have enough answers, we helped to find them - and became friends. This subject is still closest to me.

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MJ: What other subjects did you like to study?
Well, of course, languages, I have English and Italian. Econometrics, mathematical analysis. Most of all I like subjects related to statistics.

MJ: With such frenzied studies, is there a place for passion in your life?
I like psychology, for example.



MJ: To figure out what lies deep inside the soul of young men?

Not only that. This is necessary to understand how to build relationships with people, especially at work As for the "psychology of boys", I think I understand it completely. Apparently, this is the result of working in the community, I often have to communicate with the guys, especially since I am the chairman of the club. In my opinion, we have very good relations with them, they are always ready to help me, support in any undertaking.

MJ: Did it lead to any sort of romantic affairs?

It did. But, honestly speaking, I prefer personal stuff to remain personal. On the other hand, how would ever hide such relationship - especially if it's a serious one - when you're one with your student club!

MJ: Does serious relationship help or distract you from work?

I think it helps: a common goal helps you to figure out a person better, it unites us both.

MJ: But you can have a serious argument and then your common goal goes out of the window.

You should never mix up your personal life and work. They shouldn't suffer from one another and must lead to a final result.

MJ: What was the coolest idea that you managed to accomplish?

I proposed and organized the Week of Kazakhstan at MGIMO in December last year. It was dedicated to the 10th anniversary of our club and the 25th anniversary of Kazakhstan's independence. On the first day, a conference was held, we invited friends from other clubs, Kazakh students from other universities, so we engaged, so to speak, the "external outline" of our community, as well as their professors and teachers. The second day was devoted to the intellectual game "What? Where? When?" on the subject of the "Achievements of independent Kazakhstan in 25 years". We made an exhibition where items from Kazakhstan were brought -



I remember someone saying to me: "In the first year, you may not like Moscow, in the second year you will start to like it, in the third you'll fall in love, and in the fourth you will not want to leave." I fell in love from the first year!

paintings, books, national attributes and right up to the yurt! ... And on the last day we organized a national buffet - all dishes of our cuisine. This event at the university was remembered for a long time!

MJ: What are you going to do after MGIMO?

I have not decided yet. My life is racing at such a pace that sometimes there is no time to think about it. In addition, I am surrounded by wonderful people who are extremely interesting to me. 🇷🇺



MIKHAIL BOCHARNIKOV ('71)

Russian Ambassador to the Republic of Kazakhstan

When I enrolled in MGIMO in 1966, by the luck of the draft I ended up with the Amharic language. Immediately after that I found out that it is spoken in Ethiopia. I was always keen on learning foreign languages, which is why Amharic was of great interest to me. Piece by piece I studied Ethiopia itself – its history, culture – and soon I was hooked. Ethiopia is one of a kind; it was never a colony. It established strong diplomatic relations with Russia as early as in the middle of the 19th century, and what is interesting about it is that it was done with the help of Russian Orthodox monks. The most popular religion in Ethiopia was and still is Christianity; their church is called the Ethiopian *Orthodox* Church, although it does have some differences from ours, because it is based on Coptic Christian traditions.

I first visited Ethiopia in 1971 and then worked there for two terms of six years each. During my first term, there was a revolution and, as a result, the Emperor Haile Selassie was dethroned, the military took power and they gradually started to pave the way toward a people’s democracy and lean towards the USSR. By my second posting in Ethiopia, the construction of socialist state was well underway.

I remember the time I spent in Ethiopia with fond nostalgia. Actually, we Ethiopian diplomats have always gotten along together like a well-knit team. In the African department of the MFA there were two main clans or, as we used to say, two ‘mafia families’ – Ethiopian and Nigerian. Due to the importance of these two countries, the MFA always sent experts in huge numbers, but even more to Ethiopia, because it was an important Soviet outpost in Africa.

A year before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, I was sent as a minister’s counsel to the Soviet embassy in Zimbabwe (former Southern Rhodesia),

where I worked for two years, then I was assigned as an ambassador to Zambia, the former Northern Rhodesia, which allowed me, during the four years of my posting, to travel around other countries in the region: South Africa, Namibia, Botswana and Angola. An important professional moment for during that time, I would say, was the settlement of the armed conflict in Angola: one side supported The People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola headed by José Eduardo dos Santos, and another side championed the National Union for the Total Independence of Angola and their leader Jonas Savimbi. Although the ‘Lusaka process’ ended successfully, the results of

I’ve worked in Kazakhstan for more than ten years. The range of interactions between our two countries is so vast!

the negotiations came to naught: Savimbi refused to recognize them, and the war continued...

In 1997, a military coup d’état took place in the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) as a result of which a revolutionary, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, rose to power. They started capturing Russian airplane pilots so I, as a director of the African department of the MFA, was tasked to rescue them immediately. It was very hard, and I even had to resort to unorthodox measures. For example, I boarded a small boat and crossed the river Congo from Kinshasa to Brazzaville, where I met with Mr. Sassou-Nguesso. I told him that I had been sent by President Yeltsin, I presented all the arguments I had to him, and soon enough he set those pilots free. In the era of the new Russia, this story, I

believe, was the first successful liberation of Russian citizens from foreign captivity by diplomatic measures.

From 1999 through 2003 I worked as the Russian ambassador to Greece. At that time the country was at the very center of various global problems and external interests. There was also a war raging in Yugoslavia, and I must say that, even though Greece is a NATO member-state, its population sided 100% with the Yugoslavians. During that time I was lucky enough to participate in the process of the restoration of Russia’s Black Sea Navy Fleet in the post-Soviet period. The long-distance military transportation enabled by the fleet is very important for our marines: through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles to the Mediterranean Sea, which was limited by the Black Sea for a long time after the dissolution of the USSR.

as an Ambassador-at-large in 2003-2006, I was tasked with resolving the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. We tried numerous times to reach a peaceful settlement and prevent the resumption of fire between the Georgians and Abkhazians, but we were unable to do so due to the persistence of the Georgian side. Georgia is a wonderful country, and Georgians are very friendly people – I still say this despite the difficulties in our relations that rose after Saakashvili came to power.

Since the year 2006, I have been working as a Russian ambassador to Kazakhstan. I never thought that I could work in one country for so long. The range of interactions between our two countries is so vast! The Russian side has very serious interests here, and the interests of many different countries converge in this very country – pressing issues, related to Europe, Asia, Eurasian cooperation and international security are all intertwined in this place. In front of my very eyes, Kazakhstan has significantly reinforced its foreign policy, and its diplomacy has

gained punch and become a key factor in enhancing the country’s authority on the international stage. First and foremost, this has been possible due to the contributions of the President of Kazakhstan, N. Nazarbayev. Thanks to his skillful management of the country, Kazakhstan has managed, despite all the difficulties that appeared after the collapse of the USSR, to maintain stability, which laid the foundation for its developing economy.

Russian-Kazakh relations are distinguished first and foremost by close contact and friendly personal relations between the two presidents, which encourages the positive development of relations in all areas.

Recalling my years of study at MGIMO, I can say that it gave me a lot. The degree program enriched my arsenal of knowledge and necessary expertise, expanded my outlook and provided me, if not with

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everything, then at least with the majority of things that are required in the future diplomat. After graduating from MGIMO I got accepted into the MFA structure, where I am still working after 46 years of experience. Of these, only 13 years have I lived in my motherland; the rest I have spent and am still spending on foreign



postings. Therefore, I consider myself, in a good sense, the product of this system – as someone who has worked in the field.

Work abroad fosters many important qualities in the diplomat, of which I appreciate independence the most – when you are well versed in Russian foreign policy and you are in a position to rely on your

own talents and capabilities, you know the instructions, but don’t hide behind them for every occasion; and in difficult circumstances, when an immediate solution is required, you take the steps you deem necessary to achieve that solution. If you manage to do so, then you’re a true professional. ☑

At the entrance to the city of Kostanay, an equestrian statue of Shakshak Zhanibek, a prominent statesman of the 18th century, will soon be installed. Dulat Shayahmetov oversees the construction, he is a prominent Kostanay businessman and a descendant of Shakshak Zhanibek: "My ancestor is known for the fact that his militia played a decisive role in the liberation of the northern lands of the Kazakhs from the Jungar. He became the first Tarkhan of the steppe, he also received a letter of commendation from Catherine II." A few centuries later, the descendants of Shakshak Zhanibek – Aliya and Saken Shayahmetov – received their Russian "letters", but in this case educational, in the form of MGIMO diplomas. Alia was elected Chair of the newly created MGIMO Alumni Association of Kazakhstan graduates.

ALIYA SHAYAHMETOVA ('08)

Senior manager, Department of Risk Management & Compliance Control Samruk-Kazyna JSC

The choice of MGIMO for my family was predestined by my grandfather, who himself dreamed of enrolling in this institute back in the 1950s. In 2003 I was accepted into the International Business and Business Administration (MBDA) course at MGIMO. At that time, I was very attracted to subjects such as marketing and brand management. These fields were just at the stage of initial inception in Kazakhstan and this gave me hope that I would find an application for my creative potential in my country. However, when in 2007 the moment of choosing a master's degree came, my attention was drawn by another more promising direction – project management, because the production of any brand or product starts with the launch of a project that needs to be managed competently. My decision landed me at the University of Lancaster in the UK, completing a master's degree with the School of Management. It is an excellent school, it is ranked at 25th place on the worldwide ranking list by the Financial Times. The faculty choice was justified by the fact at that time project management was included in the list of priority educational directions for those receiving a scholarship under the "Bolashak" ("Future")



state program, which was spearheaded by President Nursultan Nazarbayev. In accordance with this program, courtesy of the state, one can study at any university in the world, and the state covers absolutely all expenses – from entrance examinations to graduating with your university diploma. All that is required from the graduate is they then apply their

gained knowledge for the benefit of the Motherland. I've always had a desire to work for the government, I don't know whether it was something MGIMO taught me, or something from my grandfather who instilled a feeling duty to his, and our, country within me. I think it was both. When I received an offer from the Development Bank of

Kazakhstan, I gladly accepted it. The bank is engaged in investments in the non-primary sector of the economy. I worked as a credit risk expert, which means that I had to assess the credit risks of projects, because this is important – to understand whether a project is a successful one, and most importantly, whether we'll see a return in the investment, for the future of Kazakhstan. In 2015 I was employed by the National Welfare Fund of Kazakhstan ("Samruk-Kazyna" JSC), and I realized that I had finally found a place that will fulfill my keenest desire – to benefit my country. Our fund, whose sole shareholder is the government, manages 60% of Kazakhstan's economy, we have in our portfolio such assets as "Air Astana", "Kazakhtelecom", "Kazpost", "Kazatomprom" and others. Shortly before that time, our President Nazarbayev initiated the Transformation Program, according to which all state companies should reform their processes and start working in a new way. I was lucky enough to get into the fund transformation team, where these changes affected us directly. If our fund had previously just been a holding company, now its role had changed, it became an active investor: the ethos was, if it's a profitable project – invest in it, if it's inefficient – we sell it. From my position, I can perceive the positive changes that are taking place in the country: infrastructure projects are being implemented, new roads are being built, investments are being made in projects aimed at new technologies and higher efficiency, which is very encouraging. This cannot but inspire enthusiasm in the younger generation. Also, people like me, who believe that it is possible to make life in the country better. There are many of us who believe this among the young people of Kazakhstan. I see that values are now really coming to the fore. This is happening in our workplace too: it started with the introduction of a new corporate culture. I feel that I want to be valuable to my country, that's why I started to actively promote the idea of the MGIMO Alumni Association. How was it conceived? In February 2017, when the Board of Trustees of the MGIMO University convened, it

was decided to hold the Alumni Forum in Astana, and we put the word out: everyone who wants to become a member of the association must unite! We rented the banquet hall in a restaurant seating 20 people, and almost 50 came! People almost had to sit on top of each other. We made the official decision – the association will be created. I was elected as its Chair. We decided that we'll create not just a club for various interests, but a fully-fledged public organization that will be managed by membership fees and pay tax. The spouse of one of the graduates created the logo design of the association, and just like the logo of the main association, there is an open book that acts as a nest for an eagle above it; the eagle is one of the symbols of Kazakhstan. The idea was as follows: the eagle is a graduate who took the knowledge from the open book of MGIMO, flew off to Kazakhstan and brought the knowledge back to our nest. This is what we want to do. Within the framework of the association we will organize events that benefit society: in education, sports and charity areas. ☑

SAKEN SHAYAKHMETOV ('05)

After graduating with a Bachelor of International Economic Relations from MGIMO in 2005, I did not continue with my masters degree, but started working at PriceWaterhouseCoopers. I soon decided that I was interested in the other side of the process and got a job with the client we were auditing – Siemens. I became a tax consultant for the German company. In 2011 I came back to PWC, but moved to their Kazakhstan office. I was immediately struck by the difference in professionalism – in Russia the level is much higher, which affects both productivity and office culture. At first I was engaged in taxes, I was a de facto tax lawyer, but soon it dawned on me that I would not like to be working with taxes

all my life, and pretty soon I lost all interest. So I went into consulting. Professionally speaking, this industry turned out to be so much more interesting. Sometimes I was responsible for issues that posed a certain challenge for me, and I didn't even know how to start tackling them, and I liked this. A good example of this was the "Smart Astana" program, which involved the development of an action plan to get Astana into the top 30 smartest cities in the world. I was assigned the transport portfolio, and I had never dealt with it before, that's why in order to talk to the client on an equal footing, I had to study this field as much as possible, in just a short time. I really enjoyed working with transportation, it's a whole other world, very nuanced. I was in a constant state of professional euphoria, I was positively obsessed with doing something good for the city and people. As a result, on Kabanbai Avenue we launched an intelligent transportation system pilot that tracked traffic flow and, based on the load of the highway, controlled the traffic lights phases, giving priority to public transport. Buses were equipped with sensors that measure the number of passengers and give an idea of the "demand" for public transport by Astana residents... This is why I like consulting: a large-scale problem that at first seems terrible, then it turns out to be terribly interesting. In 2015 there was a recession in Kazakhstan, which led to a decrease in salary levels. I decided to devote this part of my life to studying – I enrolled at Duke University in the US, and now I'm in the process of studying for my MBA degree. I have the opportunity to compare the education I received at MGIMO with the programs of the best American universities. I can say that MGIMO excels on the strength of its own unique courses, there just aren't any courses equivalent to them. For example, the theory and practice of international business course or the regulation of foreign economic relations... A course in commercial translation also turned out to be very useful. In my opinion, the main advantage MGIMO gives, along with languages and unique subjects, is the people. The intellectual level of my fellow students was very high. The network of contacts I acquired during my studies is one of the most important assets I have. ☑



GANI KASYMOV ('74)
*Adviser to the Chairman of the Board,
The National Chamber of Entrepreneurs of the Republic
of Kazakhstan, Atameken*

In 1969 I became a student of the Oriental Department of the Faculty of International Relations majoring in Arabic and French, specializing in the Maghreb countries. At the institute I

learned that guys from Kazakhstan had studied at MGIMO from the very first years of its foundation and then had found their place in the MFA system of the USSR and Union republics, in the

embassies and in all directions of the diplomatic service.
It was a very interesting time to be a student. This was the ongoing period of Khrushchev's thaw: the air was full of freedom of speech, relations between the USSR and the West were on the rise, and it seemed to us that life was getting better every year. In my opinion, this was a very good period in the history of the Soviet Union.
My fellow students were very international and friendly. In later years, many of my fellow students became major leaders in the foreign ministries of Eastern Europe, the CIS countries and Russia. We were taught by wonderful teachers and professors. And at MGIMO,

I believe that the main secret behind the MGIMO curriculum's success is its universality, thanks to which MGIMO graduates always find the optimal solutions to any problem

the teaching and research in such subjects as international relations and international law – no offence to other academic institutions – were the best. MGIMO was ahead of other universities, for instance Leningrad University and Moscow State University in those areas and in the field of Oriental studies. I was lucky to be taught by Kharlampy Baranov, the doyen of Soviet Arab studies. He is known as the author of the Arabic-Russian and Russian-Arabic dictionary, a standard in Arabic studies worldwide, and he began to work on it as far back as 1915 when he was a student. In the Arab countries, they still treat his research with great piety and respect, and even the theologians correct their spellings based on his dictionary!
I will never forget my student years:

traveling around the country, nocturnal gatherings in our dorm, cultural trips to theaters. I learned what a real opera was; I saw Vladimir Vysotsky playing Hamlet at the Taganka Theater. At that time there was a real theater boom in the country: people were prepared to stand and wait in kilometer-long queues just to get to the next premiere; filmmakers shot outstanding films, which tens of millions of people went to see over and over again, and poets performed readings of their works in sold-out stadiums – it was just incredible! I have never seen anything like this widespread love of art in my life.
After graduating from MGIMO, I worked in the Foreign Ministry, was an adviser to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, headed the international department of the Office of the President, worked as a trade and economic representative in France and Europe, and headed the State Customs Committee of the Republic. I also was a *Majlis* deputy and a Senator of the Parliament. And on whatever post he worked for, I always relied on the foundation that I got at MGIMO, my alma mater, to which my heart belongs.
I believe that the main secret behind the MGIMO curriculum's success is its universality, thanks to which MGIMO graduates always find the optimal solutions to any problem. I am grateful to my university for developing me as a person, expanding my horizons, giving me opportunities that helped me to unlock my potential and to achieve what I wanted to achieve in life – not only as a professional, but also as a citizen. This truth becomes more evident to me with each passing year.
MGIMO gave me good friends and useful connections. Whenever I was a foreign envoy, I would often meet other MGIMO graduates at international events. The MGIMO Alumni Forum in Astana has become a meeting place for good old friends who not only have something to remember, but also something to discuss – since we are international experts, which means that we can professionally discuss current world politics issues. 🌐



SABR ESIMBEKOV ('90)
Co-chairman of the Japan-Kazakhstan Business Council

Why did I choose MGIMO? First of all, my parents always wanted me to become a diplomat. My father was a famous football player, then he worked as a coach, headed the republican federation of football, and traveled a lot with sports delegations around the world – he’s attended the Olympic Games, championships, and so on. Perhaps his stories about distant countries inspired me to follow an international course. Secondly, in high school I became interested in Japan. I enrolled in MGIMO in 1981, and I had to fight for the place on the Japanese course. I was offered Vietnamese – I refused. I was then offered Turkish – on the grounds that it is closer to Kazakh and it would be easier



for me, but I stood my ground. Svyatoslav Neverov taught Japanese, he was an amazing person. His ancestors were Russians who studied at Japanese schools in Harbin, China after the 1917 revolution. His knowledge of Japanese was phenomenal. I once worked as an interpreter with a group of professors at the University of Tokyo, and they complimented me on my Japanese, asking who it was that I owed my knowledge to. I invited them to visit our Japanese department. They exchanged only a couple of phrases with Neverov, and you just had to see the respect they bestowed on him after the meeting, literally bowing away to the exit. I remembered how one of them said: "We do not have such knowledge

of the Japanese language anymore". After graduating from MGIMO in 1990, I started my PhD in the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (now Russian Academy of Sciences), where I became involved with a very good team of students led by Yevgeny Primakov, the future Minister of Foreign Affairs and Prime Minister of Russia. In 1992 I was invited to go to Japan and continue my PhD at the Yokohama National University. In 1994, when President Nursultan Nazarbayev paid his first visit to Japan, it turned out that I was the only Kazakh who spoke Japanese and knew Japan well. At that time, Kazakhstan did not possess such expertise. I worked as an

I worked as an interpreter for the president and, apparently, I did it so well that as he was leaving he asked me about my future plans. I said, I'm going to stay in Japan for a while, because I have a year left before my defense of thesis. "But this will not stop you from opening an embassy here?", he remarked, out of the blue

interpreter for the president and, apparently, I did it so well that as he was leaving he asked me about my future plans. I said, I'm going to stay in Japan for a while, because I have a year left before my defense of thesis. "But this will not stop you from opening an embassy here?", he remarked, out of the blue. The President's offer was a huge honor for me, and I agreed, especially as I could finally apply the diplomatic education I received at MGIMO, and so became Kazakhstan's Charge d'Affaires in this country. So, with the President's blessing, I became a pioneer in Kazakh-Japanese relations, and I'm still proud of it. Another reason I gained this position is because I still retained the continuity of the old MGIMO school of Japanese studies, which I passed on to young Kazakh Japanese experts who came to work for us. By the year 2000, when all the functions of the embassy were up and running, I decided to change direction and continue my career in the oil industry – I was in charge of the Department of International Relations, overseeing new projects in the National Oil Company of Kazakhstan. I became involved in the reconstruction projects of our refineries, alongside Japanese experts. Then, as Vice-President of the state oil transportation company Kaztransoil, I became responsible for the construction of the pipeline in Western Kazakhstan. As a result, we were able to connect to the transportation system of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium and supply additional volumes of Kazakh oil to the Black Sea coast and European markets. The second pipeline – from Central Kazakhstan to China – gave the country new export opportunities. We were now able to export oil independently to China and the Mediterranean via the Baku-Ceyhan oil pipeline. Since 2010, I have been working as Co-Chairman of the Japan-Kazakhstan Business Council. It was created because of the need for informal communication between representatives of not only large, but also small and medium-sized businesses. 

TEMIRZHAN ABDRAKHMANOV ('08)

Deputy CEO
Samruk-Kazyna Contracting, Astana

When I had to choose my own way of life, I did not philosophize too much. I planned to follow in the footsteps of my father, a diplomat, who climbed all the rungs of the diplomatic career ladder. I chose the Faculty of International Law, as international lawyers are in high demand, by international organizations and private transnational companies, and they earn an excellent wage.

When I was accepted to IL faculty, I was allocated English and French as my languages. I can not say that I was a high achiever, but all-in-all I studied fairly satisfactorily. I lived in a dorm where a pretty large group of Kazakhs lived: 40 people and we often stuffed ourselves into someone's room and had a lot of fun, many of us still keep in touch.

After graduating from MGIMO in 2008, following the advice of my older alumni,



I went to the most promising area in Kazakhstan at that time: the uranium industry. Kazakhstan is the number two country in the world, after Australia, with uranium reserves and number one in terms of production. At that time, the price of uranium raw materials was high, the industry was on the rise, and its employees were in a quite good position salary-wise. When I started to work as the smallest manager in the National Atomic Company Kazatomprom, I ended up in a very interesting business: despite my youth and lack of experience, I was immediately assigned a very important task: to develop –from scratch! – the draft Treaty on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy with India, in order to begin the supply of uranium to this country. That's what the MGIMO brand was all about. The major advantage in the eyes of my superiors was my professional level of English. I was also among those who were preparing the justification document for the International Nuclear Fuel Bank (the bank is in charge of low enriched uranium), which opened its doors in Kazakhstan at the end of August.

For nine years I worked in the nuclear industry. During this time I learnt all the nomenclature of goods purchased for the company to a masterful level. Also, as it turns out, as an international lawyer, I was re-qualified as a legal procurement expert: I follow the legality of the corresponding procedures. More recently I decided to change my sphere of work: I got a job as deputy CEO at "Samruk-Kazyna Contracting", now I implement the world's best technologies and practices into the procurement system, which will allow us to make savings with people's and the nation's funds.

In my spare time I like triathlons, in fact I organize amateur competitions. The skills and experience associated with this sport were unexpectedly useful to me when the idea of establishing the MGIMO Alumni Association of Kazakhstan first arose. Not only did I help to establish it, but also became Chair of the Audit Commission – you know, I do like to control and check expenses, it's already in my blood. 🏊‍♂️

RUSLAN MADINOV ('08)

CEO
Priority Projects company, Astana

Perhaps the most interesting for me was the macroeconomics course, and from the very beginning I tried to apply the theory in practice by getting a job at KPMG in the corporate transactions support department. And I was lucky: at that time it oversaw the de-monopolization of such power giants as the RAO, the Russian Unified Energy System. It was a colossal experience: to analyze the company that was responsible for almost the entirety of Russian electricity. Although such a flow of information was almost impossible to digest, I really wanted to, and I also tried to share the information with my mates, and to find out the opinion of the teachers who were ready to share something new on the topic. In our course and in groups there was a tangible competitive atmosphere, so such studies built our characters and

I am grateful to MGIMO for the expertise and for the friends that I gained all around the world



developed our leadership skills.

When I was still a student, MGIMO got one of the most striking pages of history – the creation of the Endowment Fund. Three alumni – Alisher Usmanov, Vladimir Potanin and Fattah Chodiev – each pitched in 125 million rubles and agreed to raise the amount of donations to one billion in the future! I was amazed by the foresight of these patrons, as they were not just giving money, but were invested it in the development of their alma mater. Among these three graduates, it was especially pleasant to see the business elite of Kazakhstan represented: by Mr. Fattoh Shodiev.

After I had graduated with a diploma in international economics from MGIMO in 2008, I enrolled in the Master's business studies program at Imperial College (London), where I had an opportunity to look at the global economy through the prism of Western education. After returning home, I joined the Kazakhstani Ministry of Finance, in the taxation committee as an expert in the in-house auditing department.

Since 2012, I have been working in the private sector, at first in a family business – in the field of agriculture – and now in research and development: medicine and services. Our company operates in Kazakhstan and

on international markets. We are involved in attracting large amounts of financial resources and effectively investing them in the development of our partners' businesses. Valuing our experience and knowledge, investors have been investing their funds in projects recommended by our company for more than five years.

I am grateful to MGIMO for the expertise and for the friends that I gained all around the world. I'm definitely going to encourage my children to enroll in our university; I want them to become part of a community that helps young people set their life's priorities and realize their dreams. 🏡



**SHYNAR
ZAKIYEVA ('01)**

Co-founder of the “Rafe Coffee & Food” chain, Astana

My mother dreamed that I would go to MGIMO when I was only one-year-old. My father also supported this idea. At that time he served in the Soviet border troops, and then for almost 15 years he was the Director of the Border Guard Service of independent Kazakhstan, which means he defended our state borders, our closest borders. He then apparently wanted his daughter, who would become a diplomat, to defend national interests – far away borders.

In 1996, my dream came true: I became a student of this university. The combination of languages I was allocated turned out to be rather unusual: the first was Serbian and the second was German. But in 1996, the Serbian course was quite relevant: Serbia



was at the center of military events in the Balkans.

After graduating from MGIMO I gained a place at the Diplomatic Academy. I returned to Kazakhstan in 2004, and started a role within the United Nations Development Program resolving border management issues in Central Asia. The project was aimed at enhancing the capacity for border management, infrastructure development, the implementation of new technologies and training of new experts. In 2005 I was

I am fortunate, because the education I received at MGIMO determined my entire life. I am very proud to be part of the extensive and glorious MGIMO family

invited to work in the Foreign Ministry and then, almost immediately, was sent to our embassy in Austria.

I was engaged with OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) matters, and I managed to see the work of this Organization from within. At that time we pushed our application for Kazakhstan chairmanship at the OSCE and in 2010 we achieved this goal. I was subsequently posted to the Kazakhstan mission at UNESCO, we faced the important aim of promoting Kazakhstan's initiative, announcing the 10th anniversary of the reconciliation of cultures, and we did it! We were co-authors of the resolution supported by many countries, and it was approved. Generally speaking, the topic of rapprochement of cultures, tolerance and interfaith harmony is known as one of Kazakhstan's “shticks”, our country has vast experience we can share.

In 2013, it was decided to open our embassy in the Kingdom of Sweden, and I was posted to Stockholm for two-and-a-half years. There, as First Secretary, and later as Minister Counsellor, I finally acquired the experience of bilateral diplomatic relations.

In August 2016, I was transferred back to the central office as part of rotation. Recently I took a sabbatical from being a foreign ministry staffer – although I remain in its core staff reserve – to try my luck in business: I became a co-founder of the “Rafe Coffee & Food” chain. My brother and sister founded this company. I may not have the same business acumen as they do, but I help them with negotiations, establishing new contacts and using all my professional skills.

I often reminiscence about the years I spent at MGIMO. I am fortunate, because the education I received in the alma mater determined my entire life. I am very proud to be part of the extensive and glorious MGIMO family. ☑

**NURKEN
RZALIEV ('11)**

*Managing partner
Chocotravel, Almaty*

I had always dreamed of studying at MGIMO, and in the most prestigious faculty to boot: international relations (IR). And, you know, dreams do come true: in 2006, I enrolled in the IR program! I was lucky enough to win the state Bolashak (“Future”) scholarship. And then fate made a zigzag – I got a call from Astana and they said: “We are prepared to pay for you, but on one condition – if you



change faculties." This, of course, came as a huge blow, and my dream collapsed ... But the Bolashak foundation has a list of priority competencies that the state needed, and the specialty that was taught at the IR department was not one of them. The only faculty that fit the foundation's concept of the foundation was an educational program in the field of state and municipal government.

Well, it couldn't be helped – I was transferred to the other program, and did not regret it! I was enrolled in a group that was very strong. Here's one piece of trivia: very few graduates from MGIMO receive gold medals. You will not believe it, but three graduates from my group became gold medalists at the same time!

Traditionally, the most difficult subject at MGIMO is a foreign language. After school, I thought I knew English well. At university, I realized that this was not the case. My first encounter was a hectic language class schedule – ten hours a week. 70 percent of my time went to English alone, and this went on for five years. But I am very grateful to our English department. It was only after I got to America, where I got an internship at an advertising agency, that I realized what an invaluable wealth of knowledge I had gained at MGIMO: I could easily communicate, and read literature of any level of difficulty!

Once I graduated from MGIMO, I wanted to find a job where there would be opportunities for growth and development, as that is



Karina Artykbay (*17)
Altynai Azhgalieva (*16)
Nurali Kamzabek (*17)



how MGIMO had brought us up! (Apart from studying) we were constantly doing things that really spoke to us. We would organize various events – for example, we were some of the founders of the International Students Association, then we and the ISA team organized the first student Olympic Games at MGIMO. We would offered ideas and make them viable. But the main thing is that we liked to communicate with people, to rally them, focusing everyone's energy on some task, and quickly achieving high-quality goals. On the other hand, I wanted to change things in Kazakhstan for the better, establish some new areas of activity – to become, so to speak, Columbus, the pioneer.

It is not necessary to work in a huge company to achieve this, even if you are offered

a large salary. Once I met the founder of a small company that was in the coupon business, I realized that there would not be much of a salary in it, but that this business had clear potential. After starting working as a sales manager, two months later I was already at the head of the team, and in three months I had become responsible for sales in the whole city! We began to grow at a cosmic speed. When I started working at the company, it had a staff of 15 and then, three months later, 120! After a short time, I turned from an employee to a partner with my own share in the company. We earned a lot of money, but we were only 23 years old! We had five main projects – Chocoflife (coupons), Chocofood (food delivery service from restaurants), Chocomart (online store,

At university we were constantly doing things that really spoke to us, organized projects, rallied people together to implement them. That is how MGIMO brought us up!

analog of Amazon), Chocotravel (service selling airplane and railway tickets) and Lensmark (contact lense delivery service). Starting small, we have become absolute leaders in Kazakhstan today, holding 90 percent of the market and acting as near-

monopolies in our sectors.

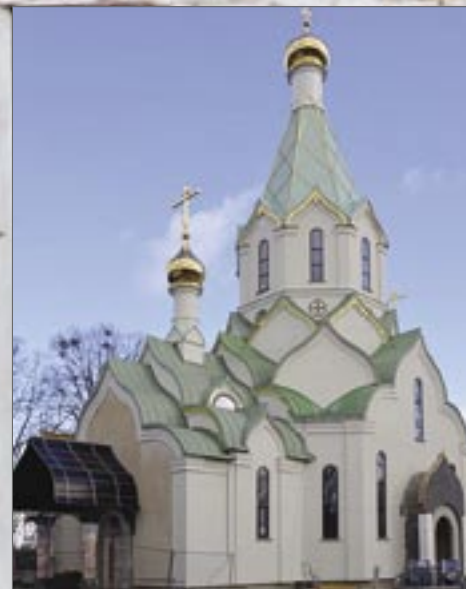
What did MGIMO teach me? To think, to work with data, to structure large amounts of information and to analyze. I acquired an important skill of 'learning things quickly' because, in business, everything changes at an extreme tempo. I learned to be independent, and gained the ability to build relationships with others. By building good, trusting relations with your partners and your team, you provide your business with long-term, sustainable growth.

Finally, the people I met at MGIMO have become my close friends and partners in life; with one of them – Gennady Kim – I'm currently founding a business. He is the director of Chocoflife, and I promote Chocotravel. That's how we live. ☑

Interview and photo: Igor Drobyshev

THE STORY STORY OF TWO CHURCHES

Russian and French belong to the same Christian culture, which means that we have similar systems of values. But, despite the development of modern Media, Europeans do not know Russia well. Ignorance always begets fear. By building churches abroad, we open our souls. This is how MGIMO graduates - Hegumen Philip and Olga Schetinina-Belo believe.



All Saints Orthodox Church, Strasbourg

Since 2004 in Strasbourg (France) there is a representation of the Russian Orthodox Church attached to the Council of Europe. Since 2011, it is headed by Hegumen Philip ('99). But no less important, Father Philip believes the construction of the Church of All Saints, which he leads for several years in the "parliamentary capital of Europe."



MJ: How big is the need for a new church here?
It is great. The venue that we rent in Strasbourg does not meet the needs of parish life for a long time already. Firstly, it's a former garage, and the area is only 150 square meters, people are crowded, it's impossible to hold a normal service on holidays. And we get more and more parishioners now.

MJ: You've found quite the place!
Yes, the place is beautiful. And prestigious. The 15th district of Strasbourg, here the mayor himself lives. And next to it is the Council of Europe. The church is built on the banks of the Rhine, on the arrow, near

the sluice, we've got lots of cruises with tourists passing by...

MJ: How did you manage to get such a site?
It was not easy at all. When the idea of building an Orthodox church to the mayor came to my predecessor, the city did not really want to give us land. But when they elected a new mayor, everything changed. He did a lot to establish ties with Russia, under his office Strasbourg become a sister city to Russian Vologda. In 2013, our parish signed an agreement with the city on which we leased this land for 99 years with the option of subsequent repurchase, and also straightened out the building permit.

By the way, the city gave us several plots to choose from, and the authorities themselves were interested in making the place beautiful and could attract tourists, as well as French and Germans (near Germany) who are interested in Orthodoxy.

MJ: Tell us about your parish.
We have a fairly serious parish life. In French Alsace and the German Black Forest there are many Russian-speaking compatriots from different countries of the former USSR, many employees of the Council of Europe, students of Strasbourg University. By the way, the flow of emigrants from Russia almost ceased from Russia, it grew from Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia. Most people come to the holidays, on weekends, in the week we got less: everyone works without rest. People after all, as a rule, come here for economic reasons. But they face a lot of difficulties. From this, they often remain in despondency, in the decline of moral forces. They begin to look for support, they come to the church. We, of course, try to support somehow and motivate people.

MJ: Is European comfort a lie?
We must understand that a comfortable life here is mostly for EU citizens only. Well, for the rich, but wealthy Russians, as a rule, are not believers, we do not have such in the parish, they live somewhere in their villas, they do not go to the church... The problem is that many people fall for this bait: they say that you can get a good job in Europe. They come, but they face great difficulties. After all, to integrate,

you need to make serious efforts, not everyone, for example, at 40 years olds are ready to learn the language, get or confirm their work qualification, become a teacher, an engineer, and not work as a cleaner or look after a child or an old woman.

MJ: Building of a church is a costly affair.
The Russian company Transneft helps us with financing. We are very grateful to them, because they came to the rescue, when our situation was desperate, we even owed a large sum - 700 thousand euros. They have covered the debt, and the financing program has been agreed upon. We report on spending, they report to the tax authorities. Everything should be transparent.

We're building churches abroad here because we want to establish a dialogue with the Europeans. Which is why we're building a place where we could do it

MJ: By building Orthodox churches abroad, we are attracting Europeans, we gain, so to speak, soft power ...
Soft power is a political term. I would try to use church definitions instead. Many in the West talk about the mysterious Russian soul. And faith is the soul of the people. Building churches abroad, we open our soul to our neighbors in Europe. We thus say to the West: "If we build churches on your soil, we are not enemies to you, on the contrary - we sincerely seek friendship, and therefore we share with you the most valuable thing that we have."

MJ: Hence, there is an "export" version of the Russian soul - matryoshkas, a song and dance ensemble of Alexandrov, and there is a real soul: churches?
Not exactly! Culture is also an important part of our soul. However, many of our

cultural achievements are brought here only for a while. And around the church life is built on the spot, and any resident of Europe can join it, without making a trip to Russia. Anyone can see how an Orthodox person lives, what fills his mind and heart. When the French ask why we are building a church and opened a rep-

resentation at the Council of Europe, I answer them: it's not because we are striving for expansion, but because we want to communicate with you. For this, we create a space where we can do this. Especially since we belong to one Christian culture, which means that we have similar system of values.





MJ: Speaking in secular language, you are an ambassador. You, after all, studied at the MGIMO diplomat?
I myself come from Lipetsk (Lipetsk region, Russia) and at school I was fascinated by history, read books about Russian diplomacy, discovered an in-

teresting world of people who served their country, and had a high culture and encyclopedic knowledge in their veins. I was very attracted by the image of a diplomat. For me it was the best option for the future. Upon enrolling in MGIMO in 1994, I began to study

French and France. I want to say thanks to the teachers of the French department. Although they were very strict, they awakened our interest in language, they motivated us to find a key that would open the door to French culture.

MJ: And what exactly is this key?
I think, in the teacher himself, who gave us his love of language and culture.

MJ: How did you find faith?
The path was rather gradual. I went to

church in Lipetsk, but at first I could not stay there for more than 15 minutes. It was unusual, although I really liked it there. I received new impulse in Moscow. Here, religious processes developed rapidly: new churches were built, prominent preachers appeared, and lots of new literature was published. At the end of the 4th year, I was sent for a year to the Sorbonne via exchange program, where for a year I became really conversational in French, and I learned how to work with French-language literature. In Paris, I went to the church, but not as a parishioner, I began to learn how to read in Church Slavonic, began to help the priest in the altar. He im-


Any European can see how an Orthodox person lives, what fills his mind and heart. We belong to one Christian culture, which means that we have similar system of values

mersed himself in the divine service as a participant in the process, mastered the meaning and significance of the service. There was such a deep immersion in the church life that on my return to Moscow I had a desire to devote myself to the church. Therefore, I went to work in the Department of External Church Relations of the Russian Orthodox Church. After all, the DECR is roughly like the Foreign Ministry, it deals with relations with foreign churches, maintains relations with government structures of different countries, with international organizations.

MJ: How did you become a representative of the Russian Orthodox Church in Strasbourg?
I worked at the DECR for ten years, went through all the steps: from an ordinary

employee to the deputy chairman of the department. In absentia I graduated from the theological seminary, then the Moscow Theological Academy, where I defended my thesis on theology. In 2011, I was sent a representative of the Moscow Patriarchate in Strasbourg with the right to represent the church position under the Council of Europe.

MJ: What topics do you follow in this capacity?
The Church is primarily interested in the topic of values, which the Council of Europe mainly considers: that is, everything related to human life. This is the problem of euthanasia, and the use of biotechnology, and gender issues, and same-sex unions, and the relationship of parents and children, even such a seemingly question as "Who can be called a parent" also becomes important.

MJ: There was a note of discontent in your words.
Indeed, we have a misunderstanding, for example, that the Council of Europe develops moral guidelines for modern society in a bureaucratic regime. And where is democracy? Where are consultations with the community, including with religious communities? After all, in a democratic society, you, logically, have the right to participate in the discussion of the rules that are written for you. Perhaps, 20-30 years ago, when the main topics here were the rule of law, democracy, elections, corruption, churches and did not need such an active presence in the Council of Europe, these problems were resolved at the interstate level. But today the agenda concerning values has expanded so much that in the early 2000s the church realized that it was necessary to monitor these processes on site and to react to their development. Our representation tries to take part in discussions on fundamental issues of values, raise its voice, and struggle with utopian thinking. After all, it happens that for the sake of their ideological schemes, the European officials ignore the obvious, so we have to remind them of simple human logic and morality. 

Holy Trinity Cathedral, Paris

The opening of the Holy Trinity Cathedral and Russian Spiritual and Cultural Center held in Paris on October 19 last year marks a unique event in the history of Russo-French relations.

Olga Schetinina–Belot ('95), a partner and member of the supervisory board of French ESL, was involved in the project from its very beginning. Her “road leading to a church” started when Patriarch of Moscow, and all Russia, Alexius II made an official visit to France back in 2007. He met with the then-French president Nicolas Sarkozy and asked permission to build a new orthodox cathedral in Paris.

“The fact is that the Three Hierarchs Cathedral, on rue Petel, where Russian expatriates have attended services since the Russian revolution, has become too crowded and does not fit the parish any longer, as it has increased due to the new arrival of more expatriates”, explains Olga. “The building did not even look like a cathedral. Diocese of Korsun of the Russian Orthodox Church rented the premises, a former bicycle factory, for the church’s needs.”



MJ: How did you get involved with the idea of building a new cathedral?
In 2008 by pure chance I found out that Archbishop Innocent, then bishop of Korsun, was a MGIMO graduate. The news astonished me and I invited him to join a meeting of the MGIMO Alumni Association in France, that I am head of. This meeting was an earthshattering moment for me. I saw an ordinary, modest man but the atmosphere around him changed something deep inside me, and I asked for a moment of his time after the meeting. Speaking in person he told me about an idea to build a cathedral in Paris, but he did not know how to approach its implementation, as the challenge seemed insurmountable to him. I said I could help and he replied, “We have a work team, join us”.
I took a professional approach to the task and involved my company, that operates in the field of strategic communications and PR. Soon our friends among the French political elite told us that a suitable block of land located on quai Branly in the center of Paris would shortly become vacant. The block had previously been occupied by the French meteorological service. However, they warned us that to get the block we would be facing tough competition – with Canada, for example, as they had desperately wanted it for their embassy for quite a long time, and had almost come to an agreement with the government. Yet there was a small chance for us too.
When I learnt that the Patriarch had ap-

proved the idea we submitted a bid and started dealing with the Elysée palace and the Parliament – I knew all the people we would be collaborating with.

MJ: What was the reaction in France?
We had to persuade people both in Paris, and in Moscow. Within the Russian Ministry of Finance they were at first quite deaf to our request, saying “You are crazy. We do not have the finances to pay our old-age pension obligations and you are suggesting we spend a fortune in Paris?” The Archbishop answered rather proudly that “pensions are a good cause but we also suggest something worthy”.

MJ: Did the Russian Embassy give you any assistance?
It was a transition period for our ambassadors. Aleksandr Avdeev, the previous one, was leaving and a newly-appointed Aleksandr Orlov was just getting into the

swing of things, but he soon joined the project. The state support was crucial as the church on its own cannot buy land in central Paris, even if it had enormous fund-raising success. If the church had been the

Our company operates in the field of strategic communications. We consult our clients and thanks to our network of contacts we then promote client interests within the government, regulating agencies, local authorities and other groups



sole buyer, it would have taken us years to get all the permits and the authorizations. Besides which it may have been a failure anyway, as events in the 1990s highlighted for the French that if vast Russian funds were on the table, it must have been our oligarchs laundering their fraudulent money. That is why Russia purchased the land from France in 2008. It was granted diplomatic status. Actually that was not part of the initial plan, but – partly thanks to the

Yukos case, where Russian property was sequestered on multiple occasions – they decided to assign the land to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs so that those risks were eliminated.

MJ: How much was it?
About €70 million. The construction works were in the same region. But I have not finished my story... So at the time, even the Russian government winning the bid to purchase the block was not a technicality that obstructed the process. France had serious criteria to be met and naturally – one was that the would-be owner of this prestigious location should have a clear vision of the project. The main criteria was budget and quality. We were happy with our proposal even though our budget was not our strongest forte. As besides the Canadians there were also very wealthy candidates such as large American and Arab companies...

MJ: I see your point... It is all about top-class real estate.
Right you are. We believed that France would opt for a cultural project, a new gem in the city – they are obsessed with the idea of making Paris the world’s cultural capital. It turned out we were right.
We organized an international tender and received around hundred proposals. It was not easy for the jury, that included a major’s office representative, to decide but finally they selected a proposal prepared by a well-known French architect Jean-Michel Wilmotte. Construction works were completed in 2014, the cathedral opened in October last year and in December it was consecrated by Patriarch Kirill.
It would be false modesty not to mention that at the dinner with Patriarch, I was honored by the Order of St. Euphrosyne. Svetlana Medvedeva and the then-new Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo were also present at the ceremony. In his speech the Patriarch was highly appreciative of France saying, in his view, Paris is the only place in the world for a cathedral of that kind. It was a success, and in terms of business the Russian Orthodox Church became my first Russian client in France.

MJ: Your road to this triumph started at MGIMO. Why did you decide to study at our university?
I wanted to work on a global level but as an international economist, rather than as a diplomat. I was good at languages and

I had the great honor of being awarded the Order of St. Efrosinya "for the contribution to the construction of the temple" and receive it from the hands of His Holiness

math, that is why I entered the faculty of International Economic Relations. It was back in 1991, the very next year the Soviet Union collapsed and everything changed. New subjects appeared in our curriculum, we did not even have textbooks – we were the ones who translated them. My thesis was on one of these new subjects – financial analysis of investment projects. Once I graduated, I started working for an American telecommunications company Lucent Technologies, a spin-off of AT&T. I then moved to Motorola where I was a



contract manager – negotiator for Europe, Middle East and Africa. I think it was my fate to become a negotiator – that is what they taught us at MGIMO: international commerce consists of incessant negotiations. Our graduates working for export holdings dealt with negotiations selling our equipment, raw materials and so on. I did exactly the same, for the benefit of a Western company.

MJ: How did you find yourself based in France?
It was due to a drastic change in my life – I met a man who became my husband. Frederic is one of the leading French lawyers working with Russia. I entered HEC Paris to get an MBA from a Western university. It was very difficult because at MGIMO I had only studied English and Spanish. So I then had to study French at the same time and I was pleased that some classes were held in English. When it came to looking for a job I discovered I could not even write a cover letter without making mistakes. But what is good about our institute? Being a MGIMO graduate one will not find major difficulties studying any European language. And today, 15 years later, I am writing briefing notes in French for high-ranking officials.

MJ: Your company operates in the field of strategic communications. Could you give us more detail?
We are one of the leading companies in the field. Strategic communications is a generalized term. To simplify, it is really lobbying but I prefer the term “influencing”. We consult our clients and thanks to our network of contacts we then promote client interests within the government, regulating agencies, local authorities and other groups. Lobbying is a fully regulated activity in Europe.

MJ: How does the education you received at MGIMO help you in your job?
It still helps as the majority of my clients are companies seeking new markets and new partners, and some of them are interested in doing business with Russia as well. ☐

Interviews and photos
by Igor Drobyshev

VIENNA

Russia and Austria are very close partners, in this respect the conditions for diplomatic work here are favorable. Austria's voice in Europe is quite vocal and for us it is of great significance



DMITRY LYUBINSKY: "Our task is to work for a positive outcome"

During Dmitry Lubinsky’s career there have been many serious challenges, but he values most of all that one case, which he calls fateful. "It was 1984, and during the process of foreign language allocation they gave me, a MGIMO freshman, German. Firstly, it is more complicated than many other European languages, and secondly, it predetermined my entire future career." Today, as the Russian ambassador to Austria, Dmitry ('89) remembers the German language school at MGIMO with fond gratitude. "It is brilliant, and has its roots in the post-war years, when a whole galaxy of Germanists with legendary names came out of the University."

MJ: Did your expectations of the quality of the education coincide with the reality?

Yes, it even surpassed my expectations. Economic subjects were taught by wonderful lecturers who were deeply immersed in them and devoted their lives to the development of foreign economic relations, and this could not help but attract me to it all. I was very interested in the subject of Germany’s energy policy and Soviet interests in this field, and subsequently I wrote a dissertation for my diploma on this topic.

MJ: It seems that back in those days, oil was not as relevant as it is now?

In the late ‘80s the oil business developed in quite an interesting way, and it was the gas industry that was more in the background.

MJ: Gas is something that is very close to your specific German topic, right?

Yes, German, I lucked out. I passed my pre-diploma internship at our trade mission in Germany where my colleagues not

only supplied me with data from industry publications but they took me to actual business meetings, went to enterprises where they tackled real issues. I got a real opportunity to, so to say, completely im-

merse myself in the subject... However I did not continue on work in the gas industry specifically, as I was unexpectedly offered a role at the Foreign Ministry. I was very lucky, thanks to the changes



The German language school at MGIMO is brilliant, and has its roots in the post-war years, when a whole galaxy of Germanists with legendary names came out of the University

that took place in the country, the collapse of the USSR, at the age of only 24 years, I took up an important post close to the Head of the MFA Secretariat, Deputy Foreign Minister Boris Kolokolov, where he worked with great concentration for six years until his retirement.

I was practically thrown straight into the deep-end. If it were not for the experienced colleagues I was managing; people who knew the bureaucratic staff culture like the back of their hand, and who managed the document circulation, which was colossal, by the way, I probably wouldn’t have coped at all. I have learned, on the one hand, to appreciate my professional colleagues, I have mastered the art of communication and building relationships with them, and on the other, I have acquired the ability to align our collective interests to solve common problems. The skill of using the experience of niche experts to solve common problems helped me a lot, later in life.

I gained many friends at the Foreign Ministry and beyond. This not only facilitated the adoption of important papers, but also the resolution of emergencies that always occur unexpectedly. In this sense, it is very important to have good personal contacts, for example, with colleagues in the Executive Office of the government, in the Presidential Administration. It is important because sometimes you are too short on time to either write a paper, or to wait for a response. The ability to simply pick up the phone and call someone who’s authorized to make decisions, has allowed us to get out of the most intricate of situations easily.

After Kolokolov retired, I had a great desire to return to my roots, and in 1996 I was posted to our embassy in Bonn as Minister-Counselor. Those four years working in Germany were extremely interesting and rich with diversity. Suffice to say that during this period our embassy moved, along with the German government to its new capital – Berlin. I remember when the ambassador called a meeting to determine the date of the move. It was

conditionally fixed for September 1, 1999, because by this time the Chancellor and the entire government would have moved to the new capital. After all, it would be only then possible to fully collaborate with our German partners. Not everything turned out as expected. The process of a fully-fledged transfer of state structures took almost a year and a half, and it turned out that our embassy was already in Berlin, and the Foreign Ministry, by and large, was still in Bonn. At the office there were certain difficulties, after all it’s necessary to discuss questions with German colleagues in a face-to-face meeting. It was really beneficial that my German colleagues flew back and forth very often, so we agreed: they let me know when they were in Berlin, and we’ll then discuss our

I was very lucky, thanks to the changes that took place in the country, at the age of only 24 years I took up an important post of the Head of the Secretariat of a Deputy Foreign Minister

questions over a cup of coffee. So, when someone is wondering how I got so good at German, I say: thanks to my German and Austrian friends, with whom we communicated so often "over a cup of coffee." When I returned to Moscow, I stayed within the realm of German, which I was very pleased about. In early 2005 I departed to assume the post of Minister-Counselor in Vienna, where I worked for three years until 2008, right until I returned to Moscow and led the Department. I worked as its director for six years.

MJ: You came to Vienna as Russian ambassador the year after the events of 2014, when the apparent confrontation with the West started... You know, anyone and everyone could blow their trumpets on this topic in the

West, and despite the fact that links with the highest echelons in Russia are at certain stages minimized, our dialogue was never completely disrupted. Because European partners – and we have always understood this perfectly – have the same starting positions as Russia: interdependence and, above all, economics. You will not find lobbyists more active on the issue of abolishing sanctions than among our European business partners. If we look at the large German and Austrian firms, nobody actually left the Russian market. Yes, the volumes of trade were falling, but at the same time, investments were growing in those sectors where our business interests coincided, especially in the energy area. This activity continues to gain its natural momentum.

MJ: You’ve been working here for two years already, you know the country, but your position is different now.

It is always interesting to return to a country where you have already known it in one capacity and you are suddenly engaged in another. Of course, with the ambassadorial position new duties arise before you, but new opportunities open up as well: to realize the existing ideas or to promote various projects. After all, Vienna is one of the key, and in some areas the most important international platform, after New York, of course.

MJ: Can you expand on what those areas might be?

Here the specificity is that, in addition to the UN, the OSCE is also present here. That’s the reason for having three Russian ambassadors stationed here: two permanent representatives are engaged with the international organizations and with the OSCE, and then the third ambassador is responsible for bilateral relations. We work collectively, in a very tight group, and any problems that might arise, we solve together. If any major events are scheduled: political visits, multilateral events, all three teams are engaged in them in full force. How we adjust these activities simultaneously and harmoni-




ously – that is a separate and rather interesting aspect of our work.

MJ: What responsibilities did the Ministry give to you?

It's no secret that special instructions are prepared for each outgoing ambassador and after your instructions are approved by the minister, they become your guidelines. On the basis of those instructions, you already establish the work of the embassy and put the tasks before the team. Simply speaking, our main undertaking, was and still remains, to work for positive outcomes. It seems to me that thanks to the reasonable, balanced approach of the Austrian leadership, as well as our Austrian

Russia and Austria are very close partners, in this respect the conditions for diplomatic work here are favorable. Austria's voice in Europe is quite vocal and for us it is of great significance

colleagues and partners, we are able to achieve it in many ways. Our bilateral relations are in excellent condition. We have

very active ties with Vienna, and with its regions, and in addition to economic ties we have excellent cultural connections. For example, development in the field of youth and education, is going quite well. When one is amongst Austrian company, if you quote the figure of people who study German in Russia, namely about two million people, bearing in mind the population of Austria is eight million, this will make a great impression on them... Russia and Austria are very close partners, in this respect the conditions for diplomatic work here are favorable. Maybe it's not the largest leading country in the EU, but Austria's voice in Europe is quite vocal and for us it is of great consequence. 

YURI FEDOTOV ('71)

Director General of the United Nations Office in Vienna, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

To answer the question "Why did you choose MGIMO?" was easy for Yuri Viktorovich Fedotov. Since childhood he has sought to learn as much as possible about the life of other countries and peoples. "We had a map of the world at home,

and at an early age I knew all the capitals of all the countries. I read a lot about international relations. Therefore, the decision to attend MGIMO occurred naturally. I began to prepare – read more, and study English seriously. And my dream came true."

MJ: Can you recall some of the highlights of your years at MGIMO?
That memory is still fresh. It was very interesting to study, we had amazing lec-

The programs of the Office help combat drug trafficking, imprison Somali pirates and help women and children who fall victim to trafficking and develop international cooperation in this direction



turers, luminaries, academicians, whose lectures were always packed with students. A very bright episode of my study is related with the French language. In first year I did not pass the French exam and I was threatened with expulsion. I panicked, began to cram all day and sometimes even into the night. As a result, I passed the ill-fated test and was placed in the top five students during summer session exams. Since then I was always among the top students, and later, when I was already working at the Foreign Ministry I was trusted to translate top-level talks from French into Russian.

MJ: How did your career develop after that?

For me it's not just a career, it's my life. I started at the embassy in Algiers, back then it was a diplomatic mission, but it had great importance. Thousands of our experts worked in this country: engineers, construction workers, doctors, teachers, and military advisers. Political contacts, trade and economic ties were actively developing, so the work of the embassy was visible even in Moscow. I was then posted to the Soviet embassy in India. Throughout almost all of the '80s I worked in Delhi, I was the adviser on foreign policy, and the lead of the corresponding group. I still recall those years with pleasure: India is a unique country, and for a diplomat – an excellent training ground for your professional skills. In 1988, I was invited to take up a post with the Department of International Organizations (DIO), and so began working with UN issues. For me these were years of intensive development of the then relatively new field of activity within the Foreign Ministry. These were years of massive, tectonic transformations in our country: the perestroika period, the collapse of the USSR... And then my next posting to New York, where I worked for the Permanent Mission to the UN under the leadership of Sergey Lavrov. Working within the UN environment, especially in New York, is no bowl of cherries: irregular working hours, long hours of exhausting consultations over the co-

ordination of vital documents, emergency meetings at night and on weekends... However, all this was more than compensated by the realization that events in this world depend on you personally, and it gave me the strength to go on. In 1999, I became Director of the Department of International Organizations, and three years later I became Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia. In this post I oversaw the main priority areas of multilateral diplomacy. In 2005, I finally got an ambassadorial appointment, so I went on a posting to the UK. I worked in London for five years, until 2010, when I then had the opportunity to try my hand directly at the UN itself, as the CEO of the Vienna office and at the same time as the Executive Director of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. This appointment was preceded by a serious recruitment process.

There is no one universal recipe for success it is very individual. Career for me was never an end in itself, I tried to work with full dedication and so I drew satisfaction from it. Here's my advice: be yourself, work conscientiously and honestly, be proactive and you will be noticed, success will come

I successfully passed the selection and still work in this capacity. Over the years my career – and I remain in the diplomatic system after almost half a century already – I've seen everything: successes that we can be proud of, or crisis moments where the winner was not always successful. There were also disappointments. I can give you some examples. In the early 2000s, as Deputy Foreign Minister, along with my colleagues, I was actively engaged in the search for a politi-

cal solution to the Iraqi crisis. This time was intense: weekly flights to New York, to meetings of the Security Council, to the capitals of the world's leading countries, to Iraq and other countries in the region. The UN mechanisms confirmed the absence of WMD in Iraq. Nevertheless, despite all efforts, it was not possible to prevent the military intervention and the world is still reaping the consequences. I have another successful example. When I worked in London, a scandal erupted around the "Litvinenko case". Anglo-Russian relations were seriously complicated, political dialogue was interrupted, and sanctions were introduced. The case then, however, did not reach the current level of the anti-Russian campaign, but nonetheless the atmosphere was very difficult. In these circumstances the embassy focused on working with the British business community: we organized thematic conferences, meetings with Russian economists, as well as other events. As a result, in spite of unfavorable political conditions, the UK was one of the first nations to make direct investments in the Russian economy. It was mainly investments in the real estate sector, which supports our economic growth. In my current post, I cannot help but feel pride in myself because of the fact that the programs of the Office on Drugs and Crime in various countries and regions really help combat drug trafficking, prevent drug addiction, imprison Somali pirates, and help women and children who fall victim to trafficking. In general they improve the situation in a number of regions and develop international cooperation in this direction.

MJ: What advice can you give to MGIMO students who wish to achieve success? How can they reach it?

There is no one universal recipe for success it is very individual. A lot of it depends on the confluence of circumstances, as well as good luck, so here's my advice: do not go against your will, be yourself, work conscientiously and honestly, be proactive and you will be noticed, success will come. 🇷🇺

ALEXANDER LUKASHEVICH

Alexander Lukashevich, a 1981 graduate of MGIMO and a Russian Permanent Representative to the OSCE in Vienna, has a special attitude to this city. It was here in the last years of World War II that his father Kazimir Lukashevich personally fought for the victory of allied forces. "That's how fate was decided!" says Lukashevich. "Father fought for Vienna, and was awarded a medal" for the liberation of Vienna, "and now I defend the position of our country in matters of European security at the same place."

MJ: You're not a newcomer to the OSCE, you worked here in the '90s, and in the early 2000s. What feelings did you have when you were head of our mission?

Confusion. The Ukrainian case looked painfully confrontational. I remember well how difficult it was for us in the OSCE, some 15 and 20 years ago. However, Russia's position was then noted and understood. But now... I try to calm the arguments, to remind the other ambassadors that even in the most difficult periods we still managed to make important collective decisions on strengthening European security; in Lisbon, 1996, and in Istanbul in 1999. The potential we developed within the OSCE has been forgotten and nobody has the will to restore it. The foundation of the edifice, which was not easily built after the Helsinki Final Act, is now collapsing. Previously, before the 2000s, if the OSCE had an initiative, there would be meetings held, attendees would include the General Secretaries of such large organizations as the UN, OSCE, CSTO, NATO, the Council of Europe, now the impulse of collective activity has faded into oblivion. Imagine that – secretaries of these organizations, as well as the heads of a number of regional and sub-regional organizations,

had been sitting together and were devising a model for combating terrorism. It was a real policy, a real solution to collective decisions and a very strong, powerful signal to all interested forces to unite their efforts in the fight against terror. Today our organization has turned into a discussion club where one group of states accuses other group of something, makes political dividends on it and does not seek to offer solutions to contentious issues at all.

This is the picture I saw after arriving in Vienna after a long break. Three years have already passed, and I still cannot see the what the role of the OSCE is, because it is almost non-existent, there is discussion on small issues, but not major European and Euro-Atlantic issues.

MJ: Do you think that the West deliberately undermined the role of the organization?



Unfortunately, the OSCE has turned into a discussion club where one group of states accuses other group of something, makes political dividends on it and does not seek to offer solutions to contentious issues at all

For me it's absolutely obvious. This trend arose and began to increase after the decision to expand the European Union and NATO. As a result, in the early 2000s, Americans, along with their European allies, instead of working to strengthen collective principles in European affairs, did everything to marginalize the OSCE. Nevertheless, this is a unique platform where Russia can fully defend the interests of its allies and itself.

MJ: How so? Through the basic principle of consensus in decision-making, which takes into account

the interests of all 57 OSCE member-states. If the decision is not accepted, the search for a compromised solution begins. The OSCE philosophy is a joint ‘concert’ of European and Euro-Atlantic organizations, in which the OSCE plays the role of a ‘conductor’. This is a collective beginning in Europe, therefore alliances and associations should play a secondary role, and add something to the general orchestra. NATO and the EU always act against it. The EU is a company of states united by a single treaty, activities of which, unfortunately, largely contradict the principles that are underlined under the OSCE.

MJ: It would seem that European problems are becoming as pressing as ever: refugees, terrorism, war in the southeast of Ukraine. It is all the more important to strengthen the collective body, which has the potential to address all these problems?

Certainly. But some groups of states think otherwise, they take responsibility for solving the fate of entire regions, not conforming either to the interests and needs of the countries that are part of them, nor to the norms and principles of international law. We all know the examples. This is primarily the bombing of Yugoslavia by the aviation of individual NATO countries in 1999. We were the only ones who spoke out against it. After all, it was essentially a matter of the fact that a group of OSCE member-states committed aggression against another of its participants. This trauma still affects the OSCE's activities in the Balkan region, and generally in Europe as a whole. On every anniversary of the bombings we make a special statement in the OSCE Permanent Council, we find other platforms to remind people about this horrible and offensive action that was carried out. It bypassed all norms and principles of international law, the Helsinki Act and its basic principles: non-interference in internal affairs, respect for sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, as well as the non-use of force and the threat of force. All these principles were violated.

MJ: You came to Vienna from the post of Director of the Department of Press

and Information. Did your previous experience help you in any way? Certainly, the experience gained at the director's post, especially the work with Foreign Minister Lavrov, witnessing his public speaking skills, dealing with controversies, is all, of course, an invaluable lesson, and it certainly helps me in my current post: firstly, to feel confident in front of the public, and secondly, to speak up, clearly expressing your thoughts on the subject. This is facilitated by circumstances, and this distinguishes us from other states, in that Russia has a very principled and consistent position. It is easier for us to defend our methods, because they do not change under the influence of

The OSCE is a one-of-a-kind platform, and a place for those who have already experienced the full gamut of ordeals because there is simply no time to train newcomers. People are expected to know the subject matter and immediately, as they say, sit down to the microphone

the combination of the events themselves. If we have to resort to a compromised solution, then it doesn't happen at the expense of national interests. Maybe it's holding the floor on my part, but I have the impression that representatives of most of the states that are accredited with the OSCE do not feel their responsibility for maintaining and strengthening its role.

MJ: So, it would seem that they are the appointees that just... Yes, they just serve their terms. They enjoy Viennese life without thinking that their contribution would be very important for raising the authority of the OSCE.



MJ: This is a low-quality diplomacy. Quite right: low-quality diplomacy. Unfortunately, it is different from the teachings that we received back in our time.

MJ: What is the reason? Europe is united and diplomacy ceased to be just French or Austrian – but has it become just characterless European instead? I will tell you more, the EU usurped the right to speak on behalf of a whole group of participating states, therefore, not all 57 countries take part in the OSCE's work, at least not all of them come forward with their individual positions. This, of course, is a disaster, because the EU is not a member state of the Organization. Its authoritarian methods within the collective body are completely unacceptable. But again they are confronted only by Russia, the rest either cautiously look towards the EU, or sympathize with it. You will not believe it, but in response to our outrage at this state of affairs on their part, we often hear a stupid question: "Are you really interested in listening to the opinion of all states?"

MJ: But it was for this very reason the OSCE was established. That's the point of multilateral diplomacy. Of course! After all, there are national nuances in the position of each state, there's always something interesting and useful for the purposes the common cause.

MJ: It seems that Russia is bogged down in the OSCE, like a swamp, neither here nor there. Or is there any progress? No, Russia is not bogged down, we can still operate successfully here. In spite of the fact that everything from Russia is met with hostility, even under the conditions of the information war we still manage to take steps. Recently an interesting concept appeared – "integration of integrations". It is an attempt to find common denominators, economic compatibility and interconnectedness of integration processes, within the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union – in order for cooperation to take place

within the framework of these integrated associations.

MJ: The entire leadership of the Russian mission to the OSCE – you and your two deputies – are MGIMO graduates. Does that help? We have a feisty team, and we have known each other for several decades and have already worked within the framework of the OSCE. This is a collective of like-minded people, which is now a very rare thing. We do not need a lot of time to explain each other's tasks, we gather at meetings in order to discuss details, tools, methods, because the goal is always understood uniformly. The OSCE is a one-of-a-kind platform, and a place for those who have already experienced the full gamut of ordeals because there is simply no time to train newcomers. People are expected to know the subject matter and immediately, as they say, sit down to the microphone. I am proud of my team and those small achievements we have accomplished here. ☑

TIMUR GOGOLASHVILI ('97)

Protocol Officer, Liaison Office of the Director-General / Executive Director UN Office at Vienna & the UN Office on Drugs and Crime

My choice of University was preordained. The fact is that I grew up in a diplomatic family. However in 1993, when I was preparing to apply for MGIMO, the country began to provide ample opportunities for business and it was decided at a family meeting that I would study at the Faculty of International Business and Business Administration, as it seemed to be the most promising at that time. After graduating from MGIMO in 1997, I was fortunate to gain a position at the State Duma, the Russian Parliament's lower chamber, where I worked for a year on reception at the Speaker's office, this is where I first gained experience with protocol. In 1998, I moved to the Foreign Ministry, where I began to work with UN issues. Soon I was appointed to our permanent mission to the United Nations in New York, where I was actively engaged in protocol issues and was responsible for arranging visits and receptions for high-ranking officials. Onto March 2004, where I received an invitation to lead the Protocol Department of the Secretariat of Minister Sergey Lavrov. The subsequent eight-year period, from 2004 to 2012, became a landmark in my life. This work became for me not only a great honor, but also an enormous educational process. I was responsible not only for the protocol issues themselves, and the coordination of related visits by foreign delegations to Moscow, but also for organizing all official visits of the Minister abroad. I drafted their agendas, coordinated and carried out full protocol support, including arranging the motorcade,

seating, exchanging gifts, laying wreaths and so on. The schedule was outrageous, but it was so interesting that all the difficulties became insignificant.

Nevertheless, unfortunately, I had to leave this job for family reasons: my son was born and this pace was no longer acceptable. I chose my family.

At the end of 2012 I beat the competition for the post of Chief of Protocol, at the Vienna office of the UN and for six years I have now been working at the Secretariat. My office is responsible for all the protocol issues of the Vienna branch, we work with more than 150 missions of the UN member states, international organizations and NGOs, provide protocol support to the UN Office in Vienna and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime. If we compare the UN scene with my MFA period, then this is completely different work. It's a very international environment, so it's certainly harder to work in. Everyone requires a different approach, everyone has their own "English language". By the way, just on language: my English language – and it was noticed by people who know me well – became "UN-ish", more bureaucratic, so to say. It is the language of international documents, simplified and intelligible. This is understandable: you need to be understood by people for who English is not their native language, but still a working one nonetheless.

When commencing my post, I tried to inject into it a more active pace, but I began to struggle with all the bureaucratic and slow processes in this line of work. I managed to create some change, I deployed and accelerated many processes: for example, all the documentation was transferred to a digital form, we are now practically not using any paper documents. I also developed and introduced, along with my colleagues, a new accreditation system that significantly improves processes and speeds up application registration. Previously, this process took three-to-five days, but now on average it's only a day.

For the quality of my work I received several certificates of gratitude from the

Secretary General, his office now invites me to enhance and improve various events beyond Vienna, for example, as a consultant to the UN General Assembly in New York.

In my five years here my office has hosted a lot of major events, where I actually had to be responsible for organizational and protocol issues, and let me use this

From the traveling bilateral diplomat I probably grew into a so-called "stationary" multilateral expert



metaphor: to assemble a large "orchestra" to play its music and for every "musician" to know their notes is far from easy.

Recently, I became interested in protocol work and event management from a scientific point of view, as a discipline. It first appeared in the '70s, I have read quite a bit about it. After more than 17 years of experience in this subject, I have accumulated so much knowledge, experience and also so many materials, that maybe in the future I will write a doctoral dissertation. I even want to create a kind of guidebook.

In professional terms, from the traveling bilateral diplomat, I probably grew into a so-called "stationary" multilateral expert, as I do not go on diplomatic missions and my "trips" look like an active communication within the multinational UN system. ☐

VLADIMIR ZHEGLOV ('93)
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, Vienna

At MGIMO, I was allocated Chinese. Studying an Eastern language requires a colossal effort. It can take you five hours to translate one newspaper article. Then to find the right character in the dictionary, you must first find its main element, then count the number of strokes...

When I graduated from MGIMO, then working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs I was offered a posting to China, to which I agreed to immediately. I had already visited China in 1991, when completing an internship at Nanking University, and this is where I met my future wife Tatyana, a Sinologist student who graduated from Irkutsk University. I started at the Consulate General of Russia in Shenyang, where my partner arrived after her own graduation from university. We registered our marriage at the consulate and a year later we had a son – the first of my seven children. By the way, throughout the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I am the parent with the most children. More on that later...

Sino-Russian relations were actively developing. I can recall vividly the visit of Russian President Boris Yeltsin to China in 1996. I was among the Consulate General staff who were devoted to hosting his assistants. At some point – either through an oversight of our reporters, or through the fault of the organizers – a spontaneous press conference was called. However there was no interpreter. They turned to me: "Do you speak Chinese? Get over here, interpret!" So I interpreted for our President for five minutes, I cannot really say that his answers were that informative – you know, just general conversation, but I still have the photo where I'm standing right beside him!



So, my entire family and I are roving from mission to mission, my children were born in China, Ukraine, Moscow, New York and Geneva. In total we have seven children, they all live with us in Vienna.

In 1997, I accepted an unusual proposal to be posted at the Russian Embassy in Kiev, Ukraine. I saw it as an interesting challenge. My assignment was to protect the rights of our compatriots. This particular issue was quite relevant. Ukraine had already become a "separate" state, and at times rather unfriendly. I remember people from Crimea coming to us literally in tears and begging: "Help us stop the chaos! They are plundering the institutes, and the scientific schools are falling apart...". What could we do? Russia lost Crimea in 1991.

This assignment actually changed my specialization: I then immersed myself deeply in the human rights arena, of which I am still a specialist.

In 2003, I accepted a posting to our UN Mission in New York. I was fortunate enough to work under the guidance of our outstanding diplomats there: I started with Sergei Lavrov, and I left when Vitaly Churkin was our permanent representative. It was a very valuable experience, which gave me multilateral diplomacy skills.

Just when I had returned from New York, I was shortly on the move again and posted to Geneva, where I spent the next five years working on human rights issues. Thus, if we also include Vienna, I've managed to work in the three most important sites of multilateral diplomacy. Yes, these are completely different cities: New York is called a buzzing metropolis, Geneva is more a quiet village, and Vienna is a calm city, but believe me, political life is buzzing everywhere, so much so that sparks are even flying there!

Of all the important events that we organized and held in Geneva, I will focus on one large conference on the protection of

Christians, held in 2015 at the ministerial level, and it was a definite breakthrough. The situation of Christians in the Middle East has become quite terrible: in fact we are seeing religious cleansing, exterminations by terrorists, and so on. At the same time, Christians in Western Europe are being oppressed, they are forbidden to display their religious leanings, churches are being closed...

I was then appointed to my post here at the Permanent Mission to the OSCE. Of the three "baskets" of the OSCE – security, economic and environmental issues and the humanitarian dimension – I am engaged with the last two. The main goal of our work within the second “basket” is



to move towards the formation of united economic space, as we say, "from Lisbon to Vladivostok." The third "basket" is a humanitarian one.

So, my entire family and I are roving from mission to mission, my children were born in China, Ukraine, Moscow, New York and Geneva. In total we have seven: Artem, Anastasia, Anna, Arina, Alesya, Athanasius and Arkhip. Obviously, all their names start with an "A", somehow we've established this tradition. Our children all live with us in Vienna. Of course, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken this into consideration, and we were given a four-room apartment and a spacious car. Our needs are quite modest, my salary covers everything. ☑

DMITRIY BALAKIN ('98)
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the OSCE, Vienna

MGIMO opened a whole new world for me, it is an excellent school and introduced me to lots of remarkable people, many to whom I will be grateful for the rest of my life.

I remember the lecturers at the Department of the History of International Relations who taught us what is now called "content analysis", thereby enhancing our ability to independently compare and analyze information and draw the right conclusions.

I was allocated Arabic at MGIMO. Our lecturers were not only the bearers of fundamental knowledge, the authors of Russian-Arabic dictionaries, but also people capable of captivating students with their love of the language, and immersing them not only in the language, but also in the rich world of ancient customs and traditions of the Middle Eastern countries, their culture and poetry and more. Their methodology turned the study of a difficult language into an exciting activity.

After graduating from MGIMO in 1998, I started at the Russian Foreign Ministry, where I began working in the Department of the Middle East and North Africa. During this period the second Iraq crisis occurred, that was connected with the bombing of Iraq by US and British aircrafts, Operation Desert Fox. The situation was very tense, it was not easy to function at all, especially when I had to deal with the evacuation of Russian citizens from Iraq.

Later I started working in Jordan, where I was dealing with bilateral relations between Russia and Jordan, as well as issues of culture and protocol. I was fortunate enough to have an audience with King Abdullah of Jordan, twice. At the presentation of credentials, I was accompanied by ambassadors. It was fascinating to compare the



Jordanian, and in fact British, protocol with the system of protocol traditions that we had studied at University.

In 2006 I received my first assignment to Russia's Permanent Mission to the OSCE in Vienna. I was working with Balkan countries, issues of economic and environmental nature and conflict settlement. I had to learn new dossiers and plunge right into unknown nuances. However in this regard I didn't experience any major hurdles. My wide range of skills and interests, that MGIMO is so renowned for equip-

ping students with, helped me to handle everything.

The Vienna posting ended in 2011, with my appointment as Head of the NATO Department within the Department of European Cooperation of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Back then we had only just concluded the world famous Russia-NATO Council summit in Lisbon, which had raised our cooperation with the alliance to a rather serious level, and opened up interesting prospects. Unfortunately, in 2014, the NATO countries

ceased these interactions and activities unilaterally.

Since 2015 I have been working as Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the OSCE. I am engaged in a wide range of issues: from the settlement of the internal conflict and the problems of overcoming new challenges and threats, to the OSCE budget and Russian personnel representation in this very Organization.

The increased confrontation within international relations, the anti-Russian sentiment of certain Western countries and Ukraine do not allow us to fully use the unifying potential of a pan-European organization. We are faced with constant attempts to censure our country for everything, to rewrite our history, to give a distorted picture of the emergence of the current security crisis in the Euro-Atlantic zone and to manipulate facts in a very obvious way. Therefore, we are actively using the OSCE as an asset, a platform to point out these deceptions, and to tell the truth about the situation in the Donbass. We remind them about blatant violations of the principles of

MGIMO opened a whole new world for me, it is an excellent school and introduced me to lots of remarkable people, many to whom I will be grateful for the rest of my life



**KRISTINA
VOITINSKAYA**
(‘14)
Manager
Sibur International, Vienna


Although I originally chose the *Accounting and Audit* specialization at MGIMO, the German language became the pivoting point around which all my studies revolved. The workload was very serious, but the effort, as time showed, proved justified many times, because

now the language is my main tool in the work and a means of communication in life.
In 2014, right after graduating from MGIMO with a Bachelor’s degree, I headed to Vienna, where I entered the Vienna University of Economics – which offers a highly reputable Master’s

degree – and studied at two faculties simultaneously: Quantitative Methods in Economics, and Corporate Finance. I also worked at the Vienna branch of VTB Russian bank while studying!
At the credit department of VTB I was engaged in the analysis of potential transactions, but pretty soon I realized

that banking industry did not attract me at all. Thanks to the MGIMO Alumni Association in Austria, I learned about

At Sibur, there is no routine – many things in this business are still a novelty to me. Every day, I get new assignments, learn, and become more experienced

an opening for a planning and control expert at the company *Sibur*.
Sibur has helped me to realize that I like the manufacturing business much more than the financial world. Work at Sibur is very interesting – every day, I get new assignments, I learn and I become more experienced. By the way, the quantitative methods I studied help me here as well: in the development of optimization processes, price analysis, and the preparation of daily reports for the commercial unit, which include analyzing our competitors’ business activities and their current transactions, arrears and other indicators. 



SIBUR International:
Christina Voitinskaya (‘14)
Lasha Bortsvadze (‘09)
Yulia Firsova (‘12)

**JULIA
FIRSOVA ('12)**
*Junior Trader, SIBUR International
GmbH, Vienna*

I entered the legal faculty at MGIMO in 2008. Looking back, a fateful event occurred while I was taking the 2nd course, that would change my life: I got an internship in the legal department of SIBUR International. This internship fascinated me so much that I decided to try to combine my studies with part-time work. At first, of course, I was afraid that I would not be able to cope with the study load, but having a large volume of tasks made it necessary for me to optimize my schedule, so in the end I began to have even more time to learn and study better. In addition, my studies began to be more meaningful: the knowledge obtained at the university started helping me in my work. If there were any difficulties, I would come to the University with a list of questions, so basically I was cracking real life business cases.

Work at Sibur requires constant development; each new project and site brings new opportunities, new nuances, interesting acquaintances and opens up whole new horizons

As a result, in 2012, after graduating from MGIMO I began to build a full-time career within the SIBUR company. Soon I was sent to the Vienna office of SIBUR International, to the export sales department specializing in raw hydrocarbons.

I like that my work requires constant development. Starting with more gen-

eral administrative tasks, I plunged into logistics, ex-works shipments, customs clearance issues and planning processes; I began to study the market situation and also to understand how these and other financial instruments work. This year I began to conduct transactions on long-distance supply bases, and since this field is associated with sea shipping, it requires some mastery of maritime law.

For me, business trips to production sites are a great motivation. When you see the well-functioning work of a ter-

minal, you understand the volume of products that are being loaded every day into huge containers, and then loaded onto ships – and most importantly: how many people are involved in carrying out the transactions that we handle. You start to look at the whole process with pride and you really realize your role in the scale of the company; and after returning to cozy Vienna, you go back to work with a full understanding of the grand scale of events and the importance of your tasks.



The choice of MGIMO was in some way predetermined for me, because many people in my family already worked in the international sphere. My mother is alumni, my grandmother was a famous educator and Indologist, she taught Hindi and Urdu at the Department of Indian languages at MGIMO for a long time.

In 1993, I applied to MGIMO, for the Faculty of International Trade Law, and chose the European stream and was allocated German and English.

Towards the end of my degree I decided to attain my master's. This was a new and unusual element in the structure of higher education, and the only legal master's degree at MGIMO was available at the newly established Institute of European Law, so I chose

"Do not be afraid to make mistakes – this is not important," says professor Marat Baglai to us, "What's important is to think, reflect and justify"

it. The master's program was supported by the TACIS program, which the EU developed back then for the CIS. European professors visited frequently, they taught special courses thanks to which we were introduced to different ideas about possible approaches to legal education in Europe. The master's degree has instilled in me respect for the European Union as a unique integrated education, with a special legal system.

After finishing my master's degree I started working for the German company Noerr. It was enormously helpful that I had my past language training, and the Germans had a hard time believing that I had learned German so well without living and studying in Germany. However soon I wanted to undertake more "international" work and

reach new horizons, so in 2001 I moved to the English, larger law firm called Norton Rose, where I was in charge of the German portfolio.

In 2005, I received the offer of a role at IBM's Central European headquarters in Vienna, initially I hesitated but I eventually agreed, because it was in line with my desire to reach a more global professional platform. I liked the prospect of becoming a lawyer at an international corporation.

This decision was not easy, I had to adjust to everything: not only the country, but also my specialization, because I had previously worked with external legal consulting, i.e., I advised firms, and now I had to become an in-house lawyer, like an internal legal adviser. This was a completely different approach to work



for me: assuming responsibility for making decisions in your own company.

At IBM I was offered conducting legal support for the company's operations in Russia and CIS countries.

Currently the main strategic impera-

tive of IBM's activity is the development of artificial intelligence in regards to cloud technologies. One of the most advanced industries in this respect is healthcare. This technology is already used in many medical centers across the USA and Europe, assisting doctors to promptly solve complex cases.

How does the education I received at MGIMO help me? I could say that I am grateful to the University for the arsenal of knowledge and skills, the quantity of which gradually turned into quality and eventually grew exponentially. However I'm afraid this will sound trite. I can only recall us absolutely green freshmen, sitting in the classroom with the Professor of Constitutional Law Marat Baglai and, while answering his questions, were so timid and afraid to



**DENIS
POPOV ('12)**
*Attaché
Russian Embassy
Austria, Vienna*

In 2006, I won the All-Russian language Olympiad in German which put me in the fortunate position of being able to enroll at MGIMO without having to sit exams.

Much of my time at MGIMO was held under the aegis of the UN model, I worked in its secretariat, participated in meetings and often went to "model" events abroad: to both Geneva and Vienna. At this time we had a fun and friendly group of fellow students in the secretariat, many of whom are still my friends.

Despite my interest in studying the UN subjects and multilateral diplomacy in general, these subjects do not impact on me as much here in Vienna as one might have first guessed: Russia has a permanent mission to international organizations such as the UN and the OSCE. Nevertheless, I still call on my skills of multilateral relations in Vienna at times; Austria is tightly integrated within the EU, and it is necessary to have an understanding of the history and subtleties of integration processes in

the European space for understanding its internal politics.

The experience of working in the UN model secretariat at MGIMO was a great help for me in Vienna: for several years I worked in the Embassy secretariat as Head of tProtocol. Having firsthand experience of the model meant I was already accustomed to the erratic nature of work, of having to work within tight deadlines. This training has helped with my current role in Vienna as well; many international negotiations take place here. I have witnessed four rounds of meetings on the Iranian nuclear program and three others on Syria.

After graduating with a Bachelor's Degree and with aspirations of working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I enrolled in a double masters program. Part of the degree was taught at the Free University of Berlin and I already had ties with this university, as I participated in its "German Studies Russia" program, which had taken place at MGIMO.

The master's degree turned out to be rather unusual: it included studying the "international relations" course simultane-

The experience of working in the UN model secretariat at MGIMO was a great help for me in my work in Vienna

ously across three universities: the Free University of Berlin, the University of Humboldt and the University of Potsdam. It must be said that initially myself and the other MGIMO students on the course were in a state of slight shock.

My year in Berlin was incredibly useful on all fronts. I gained sound theory and practice, and enhanced my ability to structure knowledge. I really got to know the country and the mentality of the German people better, and I also received an understanding of how German foreign policy discourse is built. The second year of the Master's

program, which was back at MGIMO, was much more "hands-on", which was important to me as by then I considered the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as my main option for future employment. As a result, I'm pleased to say in 2013 I became an employee of the Russian Embassy in Vienna.

Over the four years I have had the chance to work across a variety of issues. Firstly, in the internal policy group, and then on the protocol side. I am currently again engaged with working within Austrian internal policy.

As for bilateral Russian-Austrian relations, if compared with those of other EU countries, their level is clearly one of the best, as they are practically not burdened with any serious issues. The Austrians tend to the Soviet military cemeteries, they do not forget that in 1955, largely thanks to the role of the Soviet Union, their country could restore its statehood on the basis of neutrality, which is still being preserved to this day.

**ALEXANDER
ZINEVICH ('12)**
Consultant to the Department for Combating Corruption and Economic Crimes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

enrolled at MGIMO back in 1966, and at the allocation of languages I received Amharic, which is spoken in Ethiopia and Eritrea. I had the opportunity to taste all the "delights" of studying an Eastern language. For the first two courses I was naturally chained by language slavery, so to speak.

At the end of my MGIMO studies I went on to receive my PhD, although I had been planning to go to the Foreign Ministry, to the Legal Department, where I had previously completed my internship. However I was given a good piece of advice: "Defend





authentic healers, it was a fascinating experience... After three years of work in the General Secretariat of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I was posted to Russia's Permanent Mission to International Organizations in Vienna.

The first time I visited this city was back in 1987, when I participated in a seminar on behalf of MGIMO University. I did not just like the city, I experienced real culture shock, and I fell in love with Vienna! I was assigned to a project related to the fight against crime, drugs and terrorism.

From my very first day I was taking part in the development of the UN Convention on Combating Transnational Organized Crime. I was then appointed to the Russian Permanent Mission to the OSCE, where I worked for many years, and as a result I became a multilateral diplomat.

When this assignment was complete,

In 2013, a few of us had an idea to establish the MGIMO Club in Vienna. This idea had been floating around for a long time: many of our graduates live and work here. We do not have any membership cards, the main goal for us is networking and communication

your thesis, while you're still young and don't have a family, and then go on to practical work...". So I followed this advice, I became a graduate student at the International Law Department of MGIMO, where I defended my thesis on international airspace law.

However I still didn't join the Foreign Ministry, because of my work at the Secretariat of the USSR Commission for ICAO Affairs, which dealt with the legal regulation of our participation in this in-

ternational organization, and this seemed more interesting to me as a lawyer.

I then returned to MGIMO where I gained the role of Deputy Vice Rector and was engaged with academia for five years. However feeling a craving for more hands-on practical work, in 1990 I moved to the Foreign Ministry, and was posted to the Philippines. What an amazing country. On one occasion, an acquaintance of mine, from the local Presidential Administration took me out into the jungle to meet

I received an offer to become a consultant to the Department for Combating Corruption and Economic Crimes of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

In 2013, a few of us had an idea to establish the MGIMO Club in Vienna. This idea had been floating around for a long time: many of our graduates live and work here. We do not have any membership cards, the main goal for us is networking and communication. ☑

VASILY MIKHAILOV ('02)

*Trading manager
Metadynea Trading company,
Vienna*

I enrolled in MGIMO in 1997. At first, there were a few disappointments: I was given Polish as a language. I did not imagine any future opportunities with this specialization, but then I managed to get transferred to German.

At the faculty I chose the direction of political science, which was very fresh at the time. We were getting immersed in this interesting subject that is saturated with a variety of philosophical concepts. This expanded our general cultural outlook.

In my last year of studies I tried to get a job, and was lucky: my CV was accidentally noticed by MGIMO graduates who were already working in the oil trading company. Although they only had five people there, it exported half the resources produced by Tatneft. For me it was quite the revelation!

I was immediately offered to go to Cyprus, where the company was opening a new office. I stayed there for two months, and it was, in fact, an internship that any student of economy would envy: I learned how a tanker is chartered, how it is loaded, how the oil is pumped, etc. Senior colleagues made contracts, and I was, so to say, "sitting on the oil pipe" ...

I was already dreaming of a future as an oil magnate, but my parents said: "Do not disgrace us, go into civil service!" I had to comply, especially since there was an offer to go to the Consulate in Bonn, so I headed to Germany in 2002.

From the very beginning, I realized that this was not for me. The Consulate in Bonn is considered a fairly intense one – we issued fifteen hundred visas every day. Imagine seeing a crowd of three hundred people every day. But, to be fair, interacting with the Germans turned out to be good language practice.

As soon as I got back to Moscow, I contacted my old partners in the oil business, but it

turned out that the raw materials trade was beginning to die out as a business industry. Nevertheless, the brotherhood of MGIMO again came to my rescue – I was given work in a new industry: trade in petroleum products. We began to build our operations from scratch, establishing ties, working out financial instruments to finance trade operations, etc. Again, we opened up an office in Cyprus, where I started working as a manager in 2007. It was a dynamic, vibrant business – ambition and drive had returned to my life!

But in that sphere, there is no place for stability. Large players soon entered the business, and the market quickly began to shrink.

I settled into the trading division of the Russian company Gazprom Neft in Vienna, in the crude oil/gasoline/distillate department, becoming responsible for the same things that I had been doing in Cyprus; but when the sanctions hit Russia, Gazprom Neft curtailed its European operations.

Soon I was headhunted by the company Metaforakzia from the city of Perm, the larg-

est Russian producer of methanol and began working in its logistics division. Consumers of methanol are usually producers of acetic acid or MTBE additives, which increase the octane rating of gasoline from 80 to 92. Still there are some clients, the "wooden group" as we call them, who produce phenol-formaldehyde resins that join the chips in laminate boards or chipboard.

I haven't regretted for the longest time the fact that I will never become an ambassador (although my parents, in my opinion, have not yet accepted this). I have a simple Russian name and surname, and anyone in the world understands that I come from Russia. Therefore, I consider myself an international expert in the field of trade and I proudly represent my country abroad.

I am grateful to MGIMO for the broad education I received that continues to help me to reach understanding with people from any country, and to understand their cultural codes. ☑



VLADIMIR
KOZIN ('02)

*Crime Prevention and Criminal
Justice Officer
UN Office on Drugs and Crime
(UNODC)*

I wanted to become an international lawyer back when I was still at school in Chisinau in Moldova. In 1996 I got accepted into the Department of Private and Commercial Law at the Faculty of International Law, MGIMO. Although I found it a bit rough at the beginning: I was offered Danish, but I wanted to study Chinese. I went to see Rector Anatoly Torkunov, and he resolved the matter, in my favor. "In Denmark, a lawyer can get by with English," he said. "But we do need lawyers with Chinese."

I am extremely grateful to our lecturer Nelly Dikaya, who taught us a lot about the

mentality of the Chinese people, and gave us an excellent method for studying any Eastern language. At the time I was studying and in fact today, we have a multitude of learning materials: textbooks, films, and so on. Yet back in Nelly Dikaya's day, in her youth, students really appreciated every small bit of knowledge. For example, I was shocked when she told us her story of how in the 1960s, when they were still young teachers, they were unable to visit the country of the language they were studying. The relations between the USSR and China were frozen at the time. So they resorted to language practice in Kazakhstan and Kirghizia, in villages where the Dungans, Chinese Muslims, lived.

After graduating from MGIMO I began postgraduate studies at the University of Taiwan, where I had an agreement with the institute on cooperation, and I became the first law student from Russia. I then had an opportunity to further

deepen my education; I got accepted into the Master's course at George Washington University in the USA. Thanks to my Chinese I was not only able to get a scholarship, but I also found a job immediately after graduating from the university.

From 2007 to 2011 I worked at the law firm of Baker & McKenzie, dealing mainly with matters related to legal transactions. In the US, there is a law called the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which the state widely uses to combat bribes of foreign officials by international companies. Foreign firms do not seek to quarrel with the American justice system and subsequently hire lawyers to handle such cases in court.

However at some point I realized that I was no longer interested in this line of work. Since I often used the UN Convention on Combating Corruption in my work, I applied to this very organization, and again my Chinese language skills helped me. After the interview, I was offered the position that I still occupy to this day: a role with the Office for Combating Crime and Criminal Justice of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

Staff must work in all of the official languages of the United Nations, and I have as many as two, Russian and Chinese. My English doesn't count, as it's a working language. Thanks to my education as an international expert and the experience of combating corruption, I think I fit in rather well. The financial remuneration here, of course, is somewhat inferior to the salary of an American lawyer, but the work is so fascinating that it more than makes up for any financial "disadvantage".

The UN Convention against Corruption was ratified by 181 states, and our task is to support the implementation of this UN mechanism in practice.

I am pleased that, in recent times UNODC has been cooperating with MGIMO. I was one of the key people who initiated the signing of the memorandum of cooperation, I actually prepared the text. Thanks to this document, MGIMO has become an academic center that can and does implement educational programs in the field of combating corruption, not only in Russia, but also throughout the CIS zone. ☑





THE MINISTRY OF HOSPITALITY

Interview by Igor Drobyshev
Photos by Igor Drobyshev,
GlavUpDK Press Dept.

Alexei Izotov, a 1983 graduate of MGIMO, holds the post of Chief of the Main Administration for Service of Diplomatic Corps (GlavUpDK) within the Russian Foreign Ministry.

GlavUpDK is the single largest operator in the Moscow real estate market, its portfolio covers a total area of 1.2 million square meters and this includes: 150 historical mansions, objects of cultural heritage, classic examples of Russian and Moscovite-designed architecture, as well as massive multifunctional centers and residential buildings. The organization is engaged in providing a vital service to foreign embassies and business offices, including renting and repairing their buildings, recruiting personnel, day-to-day matters and so on.

Alexei believes that he owes his professional start to the Japanese language, although when enrolling in MGIMO back in 1978, he didn't dream of all things Japanese at all. "I did not choose the Japanese language," says Alexei. "Rather, it chose me."

MJ: Was journalism your choice?

After all, you graduated from the Faculty of International Journalism.

Yes, from an early age I wanted to be a journalist. I successfully passed the creative competition, passed all four exams with A+ and got accepted to MGIMO.

MJ: So how did Japanese choose you?

I was summoned by our Dean, Victor Anfilov, and he said: "Since you passed the entrance exams with flying colors, there is an option to allocate you with the difficult Japanese language." For at least the first three courses it was not just hellishly intensive study, but study just to survive. Every night I went to bed no earlier than four in the morning, staying up late learning Japanese characters – all my walls were covered with them. Several times I was on the verge of despair already and was ready to write a letter to request a transfer into another language, but one very wise teacher gave me an important piece of advice: "Listen, do not be a fool, Japanese is your only way to stand out from the crowd."

By the end of the third course a miracle happened: the quantity turned into



There is a saying in Japanese: "You can fall seven times, but you must rise eight times." I recall these words each time, when my life puts me in front of a new challenge

quality, something clicked in my head, and suddenly I began to understand everything. This was all thanks to our fantastic lecturers – first of all to Professor Neverov. He was an intellectual from the old school, born in Harbin in China, studied Japanese, reached professional level, eventually becoming a brilliant scientist and teacher, the author of all Japanese-Russian dictionaries, which are still used by students today. Professor Neverov did not give us marks, but instead would say:

"I am dissatisfied with you," then one wanted to go bright red with shame.

MJ: When did you first visit Japan?
In 1982, I was awarded an internship at the Soviet Embassy in Tokyo. Having



returned home after six months, I then made a career decision in favor of the Foreign Ministry, I decided that if I fail to become a career diplomat, I can always go into the newspaper business.

MJ: What were the highlights of your first posting to Japan?
I was sent to the Consulate General of the USSR in Osaka. I started at the lowest position – Duty Assistant. Right from my very first day the senior comrades explained to me that a diplomat is the eyes and ears of the government, and as such must constantly receive information from them. It is necessary to show initiative in this way. An example is this; somehow I, a young employee, picked up the phone and called the head of the port, Osaka is a port city. The operator patches me through, and I say: "As an employee of the USSR Consulate General, I would like

to meet with you." I immediately received an invitation to come. Once there, as soon as I get out of the car, I see a red carpet in front of me, which is rolled out through the whole port. Alongside it is a huge crowd of people, the

Only in Tokyo did I understand the excellent level of an MGIMO education. In a language school there my Japanese tutors said unanimously: MGIMO's educational level is ten times higher than that of institutions in the USA or in Europe

port's employees – eight hundred people – and all bowing. While walking along the carpet, the orchestra plays the anthem of the Soviet Union, followed by the Japanese anthem, and when I reach the end, I see a

man in uniform, the Chief who welcomes me warmly. "Dear Mr. Diplomat," he says, "I am ready to tell you what is going on in our port. For the convenience of communication I ask you to board this yacht. From it, I'll show you how our port works." He spent all day with me, and all because I just decided rather randomly to show initiative and gather some information... This type of attitude towards Soviet diplomats we encountered everywhere – no one below the level of company president hosted meetings with me, ever. This was an important lesson, thanks to which I fully realized the greatness of our country. The lecturers at MGIMO instilled patriotism in us, nurtured pride in our homeland in us, but only in Japan did I see genuine respect for the Soviet flag. After a year and a half I was posted to our embassy in Tokyo, where I spent more than three years, and gained a unique opportunity to continue my Japanese language studies, this time through the postgraduate course of Tokyo's language school. Only once there did I understand the excellent level of an MGIMO education. My Japanese tutors said unanimously: MGIMO's educational level is ten times higher than that of institutions in the USA or in Europe. They were amazed at the number of characters and grammatical constructions that we knew.

MJ: Was your second posting in the post-Soviet period?
Yes, I saw the news of the collapse of the USSR in Japan. It was a difficult time. The state did not have the money to pay salaries to our diplomats across the globe, some of them went to foreign companies. My Japanese friends came to me – the presidents from three companies at once, they said: there is always a vice-president position for you. University acquaintances offered me professor posts in a number of prestigious universities. There was, of course, temptation, but I overcame it in myself, which I do not regret. I subsequently often met with those who had accepted job proposals. I will not offend them by saying this: many of them could not rise above the role of "guest workers",



the Japanese did not take them seriously: they usually engaged them in a Russian project, but they did not let them get close to anything else.

MJ: Professionally speaking, were there any positives in your second term in Japan?
I managed to make a sound professional leap. After the collapse of the USSR, staff turmoil began to appear in foreign institutions, and Japan was no exception. I managed to prove my mettle: I was both an attaché for culture, and a press attaché, and was working closely with Japanese-Russian relations. I wrote a lot of telegrams, and my information was in demand in Moscow. As a result, at the beginning of the trip I held the position of the third secretary, then I left Japan in 1994 as the first.

Main Administration for Service to the Diplomatic Corps under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation or the "Ministry of Hospitality" as GlavUpDK is often called is the biggest operator in the Moscow real estate market. This business provides a good influx of funds into the Russian economy

In Moscow, I received a new challenge – I was offered managing the Secretariat of the Deputy Minister – the famous Japanese expert Alexander Panov. I was thirty-ish, at the time the youngest manager operating at such a level. The two years that I spent as the Head of the Secretariat gave me valuable experience. After all, we supervised 31 countries across Asia. In 1996 Alexander Panov planned to go to Japan as ambassador, and he offered me the post of Consul General. This is a key post: the consul, so to speak, has all the power in one hand: you act as the police, a judge, a notary, a registry office, and the informal head of the Russian community. The consular statute goes as follows: the main responsibility of the consul is to defend the interests of individuals and legal entities of Russia abroad.

During the five years I was Consul General in Tokyo, I heard from the Japanese many times: "We have seen Russia with different eyes, seeing how it cares about its citizens."

MJ: At the end of this assignment did you recognize that a posting to Japan is enough for you?

Yes, I learnt my way around this country well and I didn't have the desire to go somewhere else even as an ambassador, I realized that I was satisfied. Then I recalled how one of my student friends, the founder of a major bank, had once offered me the role of vice-president. I decided to challenge myself by becoming a banker and for five years I was responsible for relations with state bodies and international projects. Then I worked as the president of an investment company that was engaged with projects mainly in the energy field, in the Asia-Pacific region, and in 2009 I received an unexpected and tempting offer to become one of the leaders of the largest Russian car company, AvtoVAZ. I agreed and so for five years I was the Director for Interaction, liaising with government agencies, industry organizations and the alliance "Renault-Nissan" within this auto-industry giant of mine.

A huge international project with Renault-Nissan introduced me to many interesting people – both to ordinary technicians and world leaders in the car industry, such as Carlos Ghosn, Chair of the boards of Renault, Nissan and AvtoVAZ. We had the Russian President visit us several times AvtoVAZ is a colossal city-forming enterprise, and I cannot single out any one significant achievement in this position, because all that the company strives for is actually the fruit of a collective effort by tens-of-thousands of people. Imagine this: at the end of the shift a huge flow of humans rush through the gate – it's a grand spectacle! On one occasion, I decided to inspect the plant – and it's 600 hectares long mind you – by driving along the perimeter by car, but I abandoned that idea halfway through, as I understood that I would need more than a day.

The production cycle, starting from foundry production and finishing with assembly can leave a magnificent impression on you: every 60 seconds a new car leaves the conveyor.

MJ: You have accumulated considerable experience, as an international expert and also as a manager in a domestic setting. Therefore, your arrival at

Learning such a complex language, Japanese, added a number of important traits to my personality. Thanks to our lecturers and the education I received at MGIMO, as well as special training, our graduate here is never tired to move on, he is ready to overcome any difficulties. Our graduates constantly keep within themselves a feeling of dissatisfaction with themselves, a need for further growth

GlavUpDK seems like quite a natural progression.


You know, this idea also occurred to me when I saw the enormous assets of GlavUpDK. Indeed, the symbiosis of competencies that I have acquired for my professional life, the combination of experience in the diplomatic service and business, and quite tough business added to that, this symbiosis means I am extremely suited to this work. The main Administration for Service to the Diplomatic Corps, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation renders services to diplomatic

corps in the field of transport support, medical service of diplomatic corps and employees of foreign companies. It also services the staff needs of embassies and foreign companies. Our organization also has the Golf Club "Moscow Country Club" in the Nakhbino area, and the holiday resort "Zavidovo" near Moscow, which includes fashionable hotel complexes. Today, more than 184 embassies and representative offices of international organizations, over 120 media outlets and 2,093 companies, 1456 Russian and 637 foreign, use the services of the "Ministry of Hospitality" as GlavUpDK is often called. This business provides a good influx of funds into the Russian economy.

MJ: GlavUpDK is a unique structure, right? Are there any similar organizations found across the globe?

There are, but only in those countries that either were part of the USSR, or have always been close to us and built their economy based on the Soviet model. Perhaps the most powerful one is China. However ours is the oldest, we recently celebrated our 95th anniversary.

MJ: What are you grateful to your alma mater for?

The University really developed me as a person. Learning such a complex language, Japanese, added a number of important traits to my personality. Thanks to our lecturers and the education I received at MGIMO, as well as special training, our graduate here is never tired to move on, he is ready to overcome any difficulties. There is a saying in Japanese: "You can fall seven times, but you must rise eight times." Our graduates constantly keep within themselves a feeling of dissatisfaction with themselves, a need for further growth, because a person is like a bicycle: if it stops, it falls, you can only keep your balance in a constant state of movement. This is what MGIMO taught us. Therefore, I can't help myself recalling another Japanese pearl of wisdom: "If even once you say that you are pleased with yourself, you're finished." 





ILNAR MIRSIYAPOV:

“I need results, always push it to the limit”

Ilnar Mirsiyapov, a 2005 graduate and a MGIMO trustee, while only 35 years old is already a member of the Inter RAO board – Russia's largest energy holding company, and also a member of the governing bodies of dozens of companies of this group. He is quite comfortable to live at such a speed, although the keyword, as he admits, that defines his modus vivendi is "discomfort", a feeling of constant tension. "In recent years, I have almost had no vacations. My vacation is playing hockey, and this is also a discomfort – emotional and physical." says Ilnar.

He found out about MGIMO, as being one of the best universities in the country, back at school, in his native city of Nizhnekamsk in Tatarstan, Russian Federation. His preparations for admission were very thorough, and in 1999 Ilnar became a freshman at MGIMO.

For Ilnar the most interesting subject at the Faculty of International Business and Business Administration was anti-crisis management. He did not know yet that this direction would become key throughout his entire professional life. This clarity will only come about after a few years, after having worked for several oil companies, Ilnar started at the Russian Agency for Nuclear Energy. Many more than a hundred of its enterprises were in dire financial straits and they had to be rehabilitated. "I became one of the heads of the division which was developing operations to protect businesses from amalgamation by commercial structures, which were less interested in production, and more interested in expensive land and real estate. We rescued them, helped to get out of their debt crisis, and completed their process of corporatization."

Then Ilnar was invited to Inter RAO, a body that was created for the export and import of energy sources. "Back then it was a small trading company. In seven years

our team turned it into the largest Russian energy holding, the industry leader, which owns assets in more than ten countries around the world. Today, Inter RAO is the largest investor in the Russian electric power industry. Of all the public compa-

When we came to Inter RAO it was a small trading company. In seven years our team turned it into the largest Russian energy holding, the industry leader, which owns assets in more than ten countries around the world

nies across this industry, we have, perhaps, the highest turnover, and by number of shares, we are the largest: over the years we have grown to 20-25 times our original size. We started with revenues of around 30 to 40 billion rubles a year, now it accounts for 850 billion rubles."

This workload does not prevent Ilnar from setting new goals for his personal

growth. He is about to conclude his studies at the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, where he is getting an Executive MBA degree. Why not in Europe or America? "Russian business is taking a big turn towards Asia: Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, India and China are drivers of the world economy, there is a huge concentration of capital, intelligence, and best practices."

What will this new education give him? Will Ilnar be open new horizons? "No, horizons are for those who are missing something, my work suits me just fine. I think in terms of common goals and I hope that I use the acquired educational "values" for the benefit of the company, shareholders and the country. For me work is the main thing; in it a person finds their purpose. Many people are searching for their purpose all their lives, but it seems to me that I have already found it. It is a different story though when one believes that there is no limit to perfection. I read somewhere that in 90% of cases where projects are unfinished, they fall over when there is only 10 to 20% left to attain the final goal. I always need results. Therefore, one of my basic rules for life is to get the result, always to push it to the limit!"



AN OBJECTIVE EVALUATION

On paper, Sergey Kravtsov must instil fear into the hearts of deans across Russian universities. A Deputy Minister of Russia's Ministry of Education, he is also the head of the Federal Service for the Supervision of Education and Science (Rosobrnadzor), with the powers to shut down any university. Not overnight, of course, but after a given number of warnings, of violation of the educational standards set by the government. MGIMO, however, has nothing to be concerned about, as our university is the one Kravtsov graduated from back in 2000. This has nothing to do with the old-boys-club in action, it is just that Kravtsov knows first-hand that at MGIMO one receives high-quality education.

MJ: What is the most useful thing you learned through your MGIMO education?

We had many interesting professors teaching economics, law and state administration. For example, Grigory Atamanchuk, who taught state administration theory, I remember well. I recall a lecture, he said for a successful administration, you need two things: first, you need to have a clear understanding of the body you are administering, which means that you need to be an expert in the field; and second, you should know administration theory. Sometimes, it's quite the contrary: a person is in charge of a certain field after having come from a completely different one. When this is the case, it's hard to work efficiently. After that lecture, I definitely knew that I had made the right choice deciding to work in education. I also remember a very interesting lecture on economics, we analysed two economic models – the liberal and the Keynesian. It turned out according to Keynesian economics, there are some areas where market principles are not used at all, and this applies to education, above all.

MJ: You have been the head of Rosobrnadzor for almost four years now. What is this agency in charge of?

We are in charge of stimulating educational development by carrying out objective evaluations. We need to understand educational levels at different schools and performance levels of different children in order to help them, not to punish them. In this regard, we are quite different from

other supervisory bodies, as we are required to provide the methodology to help schools develop. For example, if a certain school boasts high academic performance, then we need to use it as an example and try to replicate this performance in other schools. The first mechanism for stimulating education is an objective evaluation and the second mechanism is inspection. Our experts inspecting schools or universities have considerable practical experi-

The internet's potential will soon be used not so much for informal chatting but for education

ence, and therefore are able to give solid recommendations. If recommendations are not followed, then we need to take administrative action. There are two levels to our task: on the one hand, we need to impartially evaluate the students' individual academic achievements and devise recommendations in case we discover problems; and on the other hand, we need to perform an objective evaluation of the school's educational system overall, and we also do this with experts who can give the necessary recommendations for improvement.

MJ: Can we expect education to involve innovative technology in the future?

The basics of education will definitely remain traditional: there will be teachers to pass knowledge on to younger generations. But I believe that in the future, children will use social media to unite into different interest groups, so that together they can acquire new knowledge and undertake interesting educational projects for which the teachers will act more as organisers.

MJ: So, the education environment is going to go digital?

Exactly. I think that the internet's potential will soon be used, not so much for informal chatting but for education. This will give an incredible impetus to receive new knowledge. It is really quite hard to rouse interest in education artificially because the teacher needs special training to do this. However, when the interest itself arises from talking to peers, this is a completely different kind of motivation!

MJ: MGIMO has just opened a lyceum at its new campus in Odintsovo, in the Moscow area. What do you think about this idea?

When this idea was at the discussion stage and I spoke to the dean Mr. Torkunov, about it. I had some doubts about whether MGIMO could spread its education quality to the pre-university level, but now I can see that it is possible. It is a rare occurrence in our country, when a university itself starts preparing its own future students. We will definitely analyse this situation and share our findings with the educational community. ☑



BENELUX

Benelux comprises three monarchies: Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. In this territory, integration processes began after the First World War, and the initial concept of "Benelux" was first used only to designate the Customs Union area. It is not only one of the most densely populated (27.6 million people) regions within the EU, but also the main political hub of a united Europe. It is no accident that a big number of MGIMO graduates are working there.

Текст и фото: Игорь Дробышев

ZELANDICARVM
INSVLARVM EXAC-
TISSIMA ET NOVA
DESCRIPTIO, AVC-
TORE D. IACOBO
A DAVENTRIA

BELGIUM

Belgium has many business cards: it's amazing chocolate, and beer, which here is three hundred varieties - from village to the village, and, of course, the "Manneken Pis". But seriously, the problems in Belgian life, like everywhere, enough. The country consists of three economic regions - Flanders, Wallonia and Brussels capital region. Flanders of them are the most developed, she believes that she deserves an independent existence. True, it is as acute as, say, in Catalonia, the question here is not worth it. The Russian embassy is closely watching these trends, and it does not seem that the situation will ever Develop according to the Catalan scenario: the Flemish are "confederal". Although life in the last time somehow painfully often refutes forecasts ...



ALEXANDER TOKOVININ ('78)

Russian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Belgium

Alexander Tokovinin comes from a family of diplomats. His father Aurelius Tokovinin graduated from the Moscow State Institute of International Relations in 1952 and spent his whole life studying German issues.

MJ: Why did you decide to follow in your father’s footsteps?

To be honest, I was not completely sure of my choice. At school I was not bad at math. However at some point I moved towards diplomacy. I believe that having a family “dynasty” in this field is in no way negative. Since childhood you have been saturated with this professional spirit and at the same time you don’t have any illusions, knowing that diplomacy is not the easiest life, although you may be in palaces and attend receptions from morning till night. This is a hard, sometimes even exhausting profession. I witnessed my father working 10 to 12 hour days, every day and coming home tired. To some extent, this diplomatic work is asceticism. However I did not become an expert on Germany, unlike my father, as at the University I was allocated the Arabic language. It was unexpected, but I got became very enthusiastic and discovered the wonderful world of the Middle East. To learn classical Arabic was just intense intellectual pleasure. By the way, Arab countries appreciate when a foreigner speaks a beautiful formal version of Arabic. After all, not even all Arabs have this ability.

MJ: Which Arab country were you sent to when you first started at the Foreign Ministry?

I was not posted to any. I received a posting to Ethiopia, so that is, beyond the Arab world. This unexpected turn of events is not uncommon in the career of a diplomat. The fact is that there was a civil war at that time in Eritrea, it was then part of Ethiopia, and the rebels, in attempting to get help from the core Arab countries, had positioned themselves as also part of the Arab world, and apparently for this reason they were bombarding our embassy with leaflets written in Arabic. Unfortunately there was no one to read

them. So the ambassador requested that staff send him a recent graduate fluent in Arabic. However for almost five years I worked mainly in English: I interpreted and recorded conversations, and as a result, my oral English improved significantly, nearing the level of fluency. In the future, this skill became extremely useful. When I returned to Moscow in 1983, I was asked by our HR dept: "Are you an Arabist? So transfer to the Department of the Middle East." Three years later I was posted to Syria. I was fortunate, I worked in the largest Soviet embassy in the Middle East. The work was very intense, with a high-level of bilateral relations, and Soviet diplomats were in huge demand, we would be preyed upon by diplomatic corps colleagues always inviting

I believe that having a family “dynasty” in this field is in no way negative

us to meetings, as it was believed that we had the largest amount of information.

MJ: Unfortunately, today Syria lies in ruins...

It is with bitterness I look at what happened to Syria, because I knew how it was so different back at that time. I lived there with my family for six years, and we began to feel at home. It was a fantastically beautiful country, and the Syrians are terrific people, very soft, kind, and friendly by nature. They are very welcoming to guests, they often invite them into their homes. In Syria, I started to remember my Arabic. For one’s Arabic language to resurface, the environment in Syria is ideal, as the dialect

is the closest to formal Arabic. Soon I became so fluent that I sometimes interpreted at the highest level, including for Hafez Assad, father of the current president, Bashar Assad. Returning to Moscow, a real challenge was waiting for me. As it is well known, in 1991 diplomatic relations with Israel were restored, after having ceased in 1967 because of the war, and I headed the new department of Israel and Palestine.

MJ: What was the main focus in terms of Russia’s relations with Israel?

It was critical to host the first ever visit of the Israeli Prime Minister - at that time it was Yitzhak Rabin - to Russia. I worked diligently towards this goal, and in 1994 the visit was a success.

MJ: So there were no major issues at all?

There were issues, and serious ones at that. Discussion on a number of points even went into a deadlock. The Israelis have a trait: standing on their own, on a not hugely important, but symbolic issues. For example, they demanded that Jerusalem be documented as their capital, although we do not recognize this. In general, it was an impasse. The Israeli Ambassador, who was a friend of Prime Minister Rabin, General Barlev, was a very experienced man, and he salvaged the situation. He was completely silent. Totally silent, and then said suddenly: "You know what, the Prime Minister will visit, then he will decide himself." Indeed, Prime Minister Rabin, who struck me as a very wise man, instructed me to accept one of the compromises...

MJ: Did you get to meet Yasser Arafat?

Yes, many times. He visited the same year. Yasser Arafat was also a wise leader, who took the path of a political solution to the conflict with Israel. At that time it seemed that the peace process had a fair chance,

but it turned out differently... I happened to attend meetings with many Middle Eastern leaders. They all possessed different personalities, but all of an excellent caliber. For example, former President Hafez Assad, I would call a political chess player, he lived and breathed politics... Interestingly, at that time the Middle East was ruled by former military airplane pilots: Hafez Assad, Hosni Mubarak, and Israel’s President Ezer Weizman: they all graduated from pilot-schools. King of Jordan Hussein bin Talal was an amateur pilot, he at times entered the cockpit... However I did not engage with Israel issue for very long. In 1995, I was posted as Minister-Counselor to Egypt.

MJ: How useful was this posting in professional terms?

By that time, it was no longer Damascus, but Cairo that was nominated for the role of our key embassy in the Middle East. The head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time was Yevgeny Primakov, who treated Egypt in a special way, he read everything that was tabled from Cairo, so we were always told: careful, you are under special attention of the Minister himself... Among the most vivid memories I have was the construction of an Orthodox church in Cairo, which I was fortunate enough to be involved in. At that time the only Russian church in Egypt was the house church in Alexandria. However by the 1990s, most of the parishioners lived in Cairo, so there was a strong need to move the church to Cairo.

An agreement was reached between Patriarch Alexy II and the Alexandrian Orthodox patriarch, on the exchange: they were given a church in Moscow, and they gave us a vacant Greek church. The building needed repairs, but there were no funds. When a certain Gordei Denisenko reached out to us, according to his passport he was an American, but at the same time a truly Russian person, from a family of emigrants. He said: I want to donate funds to the church. As he worked in the American company Bechtel and supervised the construction of the largest hotel in Cairo, he found contractors and supervised the repair work himself. I provided political and organi-



zational support: wrote letters to the city authorities, coordinated police liaison and so on. Overall, we repaired the church and opened its doors to the congregation. After my posting to Egypt, I received a very interesting proposal – to work at the Department of Foreign Policy Planning (FPP), which creates a general picture of the world situation, based on information received at the Foreign Ministry from all Russian embassies. It is one of the few other units reporting directly to the Foreign Minister. I started at the FPP back in 2001, and I worked there for a total of eleven years – albeit with a break of four and a half years, when I left as ambassador to Morocco.

MJ: This was your first embassy position?

Yes it was. In Morocco by the way, I had to again do a language "switch", and better the level of my French, without delay. Also, as the Berber influence is so strong in the Moroccan dialect of Arabic, it is so different from standard Arabic that I did not even attempt to master it. The Moroccan policy towards us was quite balanced: they have a good understanding of the significance of Russia, its place and coordinates in the international system, and they maintain sound relations with us. In my role, I tried to develop and strengthen relations, this is the key task of an ambas-

sador. During my posting, trade turnover increased, amounting to more than \$US 500 million, which is quite a large amount for a country with a small economy. According to the fishing agreement, Russian vessels now have the right to trade in the exclusive economic zone of Morocco. Morocco also unilaterally canceled the requirement of a visa for our tourists. Lastly, in 2006, the first and so far the only visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin took place in Morocco. Upon return to Moscow, as already mentioned, I again found myself at the Foreign Policy Planning Department, first as Deputy Director, then as a Director, and I held this position until June 2016. FPP is the main analytical department within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This is very multifaceted and interesting work, which allows us to feel personally part of the mechanism for developing and polishing foreign policy decisions. For example, I outlined two drafts of the Russian Foreign Policy Concept, which were approved by President Vladimir Putin in 2013 and 2016.

The most significant moment for me was the opportunity to work directly with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. While working with him I prepared his foreign policy speeches – was engaged in speechwriting.

MJ: Does the Minister tend to edit texts to a large degree?

I have never witnessed him simply signing a paper without reading it, he analyzes everything very carefully. Any mistake – and he will see it instantly. The Minister is very creative, he has incredible concentration and is tremendously efficient in the way he works. However, he appreciates it when new ideas are brought to the table. So much so that he has no time for platitudes, he does not like it when the wording might seem to be correct, yet it's still a boring read.

MJ: You have been working as an ambassador in Belgium for almost two years, could you share your impressions of this period?

It is my first long assignment in the European realm, although, I had already


been to Brussels several times while accompanying the Minister, but I actually saw very little of the country, just whatever was outside the car window.

Belgium, unlike some other EU countries, does not aspire to stymie relations with Russia, it moves, one could say, in the "middle-stream" of the EU course of politics. If we analyze the year 2017, considering all the issues primarily associated with anti-Russian sanctions and a difficult phase of cooperation between the EU and Russia, in general, I still see positive dynamics. Despite trade sanctions, trade with the EU as a whole and with Belgium in particular has intensified. Two years ago there was a dramatic drop in trade: by more than 20%.

Despite anti-Russian trade sanctions, our trade with Belgium has intensified, there remains a strong interest in expanding our cooperation

By 2016, the minus figures had already crept up to just three percent, and then in the first half of 2017 we were back in the black, almost by 30%. Throughout business circles in Belgium, there remains a strong interest in expanding our cooperation.

MJ: This year you will celebrate the 40th anniversary of your MGIMO graduation. How beneficial was the education you received at the University?

At MGIMO there exists a strong tradition of excellent humanitarian education, thanks to which I never felt in a weaker position, in comparison to my colleagues from other countries. The knowledge we received at the University gave us a very adequate awareness of the world and the confidence to objectively realize our potential and perform in our professions at a skillful level. For this I am indebted to MGIMO. 





DMITRIY BORODIN ('89)

Minister-Counselor

Embassy of Russia in the Kingdom of Belgium, Brussels

I grew up in a simple Soviet family: my mother worked in the defense industry and my father was an officer, and also the conductor of a military orchestra. However I dreamed of becoming an international lawyer. Why? Partly because my father was not only a conductor, but...a military investigator – in the army, you understand, there are a lot of surprises... In 1984 I felt prepared and I managed to be accepted at MGIMO. I spent five absolutely wonderful years at the University.

Firstly, I was very fortunate: I requested French and was allocated this language. Another streak of luck was that we had the opportunity to experience the teaching of international law legends. I have never actually worked as a practicing lawyer, I have been engaged in political bilateral diplomacy all my life, but the legal knowledge that I received is extremely helpful in tackling many different situations.

In the Foreign Ministry, where I started

after graduating from MGIMO, I was posted to Africa, to Benin, where I was situated for four and a half years. Among the highlights of the trip, I will have to mention the immense accolades that myself and other diplomats at the embassy, received from the leadership of the Foreign Ministry. This was in regards to our collaboration with the Germans, for our work breaking up the drug delivery channel to Germany from Nigeria, through Benin and Moscow. Africa took a lot of blood and sweat from me; I fell ill four times with stage four malaria, which is the most severe level of infection.

When I returned home in 1994, I was initially offered another posting down the African route, but, as is very often the case in our business, a chance meeting in the corridor changes your life abruptly. Thanks to this chance meeting, I unexpectedly began in the role of Secretariat to Deputy Minister Sergei Krylov. I learnt some very important life lessons in this role, which included among other things, the skill of reading documents and analyzing telegrams to understand the true nature of politics.

In 1996, I was sent on assignment to Luxembourg, where, as Second Secretary, I was responsible for finances and general consular duties. As a result of this assignment I gained a much deeper understanding of Western Europe, as this was a part of the world I had not experienced before. In my opinion the core advantage of the Grand Duchy is that from there it is quick and convenient to get to almost any European capital city.

My next assignment took place at the Russian Embassy in Belgium, where I worked as an adviser on foreign policy issues. I was already familiar with Belgium from a previous posting, and but this time I really fell in love with the country. Listen to the song Le Plat Pays, “My Flat Country”, by Jacques Brel and you will understand that the romance of Northern Europe – not Scandinavian, but Dutch-Belgian – is truly unique. To begin to understand the Belgian national character, you need to stand by the North Sea with a force eight storm raging and witness a

fragile boat entering the bay with its daily catch. Such a character was formed in the daily struggle against the local environment for survival. The Belgians, and the Flemish, above all others, are very smart and hard-working, and their hearts are in the right place...

In 2008 I returned to Moscow and received a very interesting proposal: to head Mikhail Shvydkoy’s Secretariat, the Russian President’s Special Envoy for International Cultural Cooperation. Over three years I learned so much about the world’s artistic heritage, none of which was known to me throughout my entire life previously, although I was a patron of the Conservatory from the age of six.

The Secretariat organized many cultural events in different parts of the world, the main focus of all of these events were ‘Exchange Years’ between different countries. The most fascinating was of course held in 2010: the Year of Russia in France and France in Russia, when hundreds of events took place: economic, cultural, youth, sports, gastronomy, the list goes on. One event in particular stood out for me, the extensive exhibition, “Holy Russia” at the Louvre, which had gathered masterpieces together from dozens of national museums.

In 2014, I started as Foreign Policy Department Head in France, at the First European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Subsequently the infamous events unfolded in Kiev, and everything began to change at breakneck speed. The Format Normandie diplomatic group appeared, and it was necessary to conduct nightly telephone conferences between our chiefs, prepare memos for the Minister and President Putin for his talks with then-French President Hollande and other leaders.

This was a demanding challenge, yet there was a more pleasant side to it: in addition to handling relations with France, which could hardly be called friendly, myself and other colleagues were also handling relations with the Principality of Monaco. Monaco is, at first glance perhaps – just a patch of land that has grown around a rock, but in actuality, it is an

influential state. Back in 2015, against a background of frenzied Russo-phobia in Europe, Monaco organized a full-scale Year of Russia and it was a success. This is one of the few truly sovereign countries in Europe, and Prince Albert II was quite the

I really fell in love with Belgium. Listen to the song Le Plat Pays by Jacques Brel and you will understand that the romance of Northern Europe – not Scandinavian, but Dutch-Belgian – is truly unique

host in his Kingdom. Across Europe there is no comparison, no one comes close. He has excellent relations with the Russian President Putin.

My second posting to Belgium began in May 2016, and I took the position of Minister-Counselor. If you compare this with my first posting, then, of course, it had become more difficult to operate. Because of the anti-Russian sanctions, those willing to cooperate with us had decreased, and the only matter that I was happy to see was that the Belgians are clever and pragmatic people. Therefore, we continue to liaise with them and conduct a fairly intensive dialogue. As for Belgian business, not one company ceased trading with Russia, the local industry giants continue to work in our market. 🇧🇪



ALEXANDER MILYUTIN ('97)

First secretary,
Embassy of Russia to the Kingdom of Belgium, Brussels

When I was in school, I was very versed in humanitarian subjects and English, and at some point it seemed to me that I could set myself an ambitious task – to become a student of MGIMO. I accomplished it in 1992.



Unexpectedly, I was assigned Dutch, but to some extent, I think that was the hand of fate. I liked the language, and I got enthusiastically involved in it. After the first course I got into the exchange program and, for the first time, found myself in the Netherlands, where I took language courses.

After graduating from MGIMO I was invited to work in the First European Department and immediately left for our embassy in the Netherlands. I worked in The Hague for four years, gaining colossal communication experience, because our external diplomats – a specific colony of people

One particular highlight I can recall is the year 2001, when I was first called upon to provide a high-level translation for the state visit of the Dutch monarch, Queen Beatrix, to Russia – the first in three hundred years. I was thrown in at the most important site – to interpret at the Kremlin negotiations between Beatrix and President V. Putin. I sat half a meter from the President and the Minister and translated the event, as they say, "on edge."

Following that, as part of a cultural program, we flew on a Queen's plane to the city of Nizhny Novgorod. The Royal Aircraft – a Fokker-70 – turned out to be quite large, fitting the Queen's entire entourage and our representatives. I was lucky to be sitting opposite the Crown Prince, Willem-Alexander, with whom I started a stimulating conversation. At some point, the Prince offered me a cigar, and since I had just quit smoking, I proudly refused his offer. In hindsight, I'm

In 2001, I was thrown in at the most important site – to interpret at the Kremlin negotiations between Queen Beatrix and President V. Putin

sorry I did: it would not have been necessary to actually smoke a cigar, but I could have had a souvenir from a crown prince. Willem-Alexander is now the King of the Netherlands.

My next mission sent me to Belgium in 2004, where I was mandated with economic relations and (by default, because of my command of Dutch) Flanders. At that time, we paid much attention to our economic cooperation with Belgium; we actively sought to support local investments in the Russian economy and managed to reach a peak in trade turnover.

My current mission began at the end of 2015, when I again was sent to the same location in Belgium to focus on the



economy and connections with Flanders. However, our relations with the EU changed most abruptly in 2014, and the situation has continued. Our contacts at a high level have decreased, and the trade turnover has sharply decreased. However, in the case of Belgium, the situation has already 'bounced back from the bottom' and is growing again. It is important to ensure that economic ties are preserved, and despite everything to retain Belgian business on the Russian market. We are also trying to convey to the local business community that now is the most convenient time to invest in our own production in Russia: the costs are relatively low, and the potential market – including the development of the EAEC – is huge.

Last year marked my 20th anniversary of my graduation from MGIMO. The university taught me the ability to communicate with people; to feel their emotions; to get from them what I need in a professional way; to listen, and to persuade other listeners and promote my position. That is what diplomacy is all about. ☑

ANDREY
TELEGIN ('12)
Third Secretary, Assistant
to the Ambassador on Protocol,
Embassy of Russia in the Kingdom
of Belgium

While in their childhood many people dream of becoming astronauts or pilots, for me it was a lot more down to earth. Looking at my father – a diplomat and graduate of the MGIMO Law Faculty – I wanted to become a representative of the same profession, to also travel around the world defending the interests of the Motherland.

Now, it is with real fondness and nostalgia, that I remember my student years and studies. The knowledge that the University equipped me with is difficult to overestimate. With great interest I studied all the numerous legal disciplines taught to us,

from Roman law to international law and the law of the European Union. This allowed me to expand my professional horizons, and gave me the skill of thinking analytically... Upon admission, I was first allocated French, which I have never regretted afterwards. I remember with warmth the fascinating lessons from our tutors, who knew how to present interesting material; by trying to reveal the nuances of language for us, they gave us such a high-quality of learning, and helped us to develop tactics to overcome any difficulties in translating or interpreting. Undoubtedly, this whole body of knowledge helps me in my everyday work at the embassy, where I have been working for more than two years. I have a difficult job – I am an Assistant to the Ambassador on Protocol. This sphere requires responsibility, skill and the ability to rapidly problem-solve while carrying out numerous protocol tasks and arranging official events. One must also maintain good contacts with the Belgian side when working with delegations, as well as organizing high-level visits. ☑

ALEXEY
BOGOLYUBOV
(’14)

Attaché,
Officer of the Consulate, Embassy
of Russia in the Kingdom of
Belgium

The question of selecting a uni-
versity I had already decided at
an early age. I was born into a
diplomatic family, and I had the
opportunity to observe this professional
field as a child. My father told me about

government classes, I was usually given a
position of "Minister of Foreign Affairs".

In addition to basic theory and valuable
diplomatic skills, my studies at MGIMO
have given me the ability to build relation-
ships with people. For example, during
one of the classes devoted to the negotia-
tion processes we engaged in a role-play,
related to the settlement of the conflict
between Israel and Palestine, and thanks
to the reasonable approach that I was able
to show, the parties managed to resolve a
seemingly deadlock situation.

Since February 2015, I have been working
in the Consular Department of the Russian
Embassy in Belgium and I am consistently
reminded of how important and how useful

My responsibilities include the provi-
sion of consular assistance to Belgians and
also Russian citizens residing in Belgium.
I must admit, the work, is by no means
simple and easy. It demands a certain
endurance from the diplomats, as well as
the ability to think outside the box and
make decisions. The skill of communicat-
ing effectively with clients, and taking into
account the different personalities is also
one I use on a daily basis. The main point
to bear in mind is that an informal ap-
proach and a sincere desire to help people
solve their problems is at times very dif-
ficult. If you are able to achieve this, one
feels great satisfaction and professional
pride. For example, recently I was able



Andrey Telegin
Alexey Bogolyubov
Ekaterina Churkina

his education at MGIMO, about how re-
markable and significant these years were
for him. Unsurprisingly, I had a desire to
enroll at the best, in my opinion, univer-
sity in the country. My high school knew
about my plans, so in these so-called self-

on a practical level my knowledge, gained
at MGIMO, is for me. I remember with such
gratitude my French tutors. I have no issue
when dealing with Belgian people, because
I was well aware of the subtleties of Belgian
French, as we studied this in our classes.

to help a fellow citizen to reinstate all of
her Russian documents that were burnt
and lost in a fire. Consequently, I cannot
lie, it's very pleasant to read the words of
gratitude that visitors leave on our em-
bassy website. 🇷🇺

EKATERINA
CHURKINA (’12)

Attaché,
Consulate of the Embassy of
Russia in the Kingdom of Belgium

MGIMO always seemed to be an
unattainable peak, and grow-
ing up I could not imagine
that I would ever study at this
world-famous university. When I learned
that there would be a regional historical
Olympiad hosted by MGIMO in my home-
town, I firmly decided that I should do my
very best and reach this peak. I'm pleased
to say the end of the Olympiad, I attained
second place and enrolled at the university.

At the allocation stage I received the
Dutch language and I think that I was very
fortunate. We were not only taught the
basics; phonetics, grammar, and conver-
sational Dutch, but we also received an
education for a future diplomat. This edu-
cation included urging us to reflect upon
global processes, learning critical thinking
and to always ask the question: "Why is
this?" My classmates and I were accepted
into a large united family of all those who
were studying Dutch: the Eastern European
Association of Nederlandists, a platform
bringing together Russian lecturers and
students from different Russian universi-
ties, as well as those from Belarus and the
Ukraine... Examples of our activities were
preparing reports on topical issues for a sci-
entific conference and roundtable discus-
sions within the framework of the annual
Day of the Dutch Language and Culture. I
participated in its preparation and helped
with organization, I found it to be a very
helpful experience for me.

MGIMO taught me many valuable les-
sons, and I do not only mean in regards to
pure knowledge. The university became for
me a school of life, where I took my first
independent steps.

Thanks to the excellent preparation I
received at MGIMO, I successfully passed
the exam and gained entrance to employ-
ment at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Not only did
MGIMO taught
me many valuable
lessons, the university
became for me a school
of life, where I took my
first independent steps

of Russia. After almost three years in the
First European Department I was posted to
Belgium.

Work within the Consular Department
is diverse, and it requires endurance and

patience, after all, when drafting various
documents, you have to liaise very closely
with various people. Everyday there are
new situations where I am presented
with a variety of duties, and sometimes
completely hitherto unimaginable cases.
However this contributes greatly to the
strength of my professionalism, and the
acquisition of skills in the application of
administrative regulations. It also edu-
cates employees like myself about the
importance of the task entrusted to them,
it develops important qualities such as
efficiency and diligence, as well as com-
passion towards people, the ability to
perceive their problems and the desire to
help. 🇷🇺



VLADIMIR CHIZHOV ('78)

*Russian Permanent Representative to the EU
Brussels*

After the MGIMO entrance exams and it came to the allocation of languages, Vladimir Chizhov was in no way surprised to hear that he had been given Greek. "I only had the vaguest notion about the Greek language – I knew "alpha" and "omega", but nothing more. After some reflection and remembering that people in Cyprus even speak Greek, I reasoned that I was more or less fortunate."

MJ: How was your Greek?

It was fairly decent. So much so, that after the second course I had the opportunity to interpret for the then-President of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios. Actually, in 1973 during my summer vacation, I went to Cyprus as an interpreter for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Nicosia International Fair. I fell in love with the Greek language, it's fairly structured, which made it easier for me to become fluent. However it has its unique traits: phonetics, first of all. Although it is simple, not as difficult as say Chinese or Vietnamese, Greek still has

In 1975, while walking around Athens I, at one point, fell into conversation with a Greek. He said: "Well, you're not from around here, I can tell. You're a Greek, most likely from Boston, you have that dialect." It turns out that many Greek people live in Boston

individual sounds that can prove difficult for Russian students, but I coped with them. Eventually I got so proficient at the language, that I was often mistaken for a Greek person. This happened in 1975 during my pre-diploma internship in Athens. I was walking around the city and was pleased to note that I could communicate well, I was understood. At one point I fell into conversation with a Greek. He said: "Well, you're not from around here, I can tell. You're a Greek, most likely from Boston, you have that dialect." It turns out that many Greek people live in Boston... I can give you another example. When Yevgeny Primakov was the Foreign Minister, I was working as Director of the Balkan Department and had to go to scheduled consultations in Athens. This

coincided with the World Congress of the Greeks in Thessaloniki, attended by Greeks from Russia, Ukraine and so on. I presented the Minister with an idea: let's prepare your welcoming speech to the congress, and I will translate it into Greek and read it out for you. He agreed. I flew to Thessaloniki, the Consul General greets me and we went onto the congress. It was being held in a huge gymnasium hall, with two thousand attendees. I arrive and immediately felt instinctively: something is wrong, the atmosphere is too tense. It was only then the organizers explain to me that an-hour-and-a half before my arrival there had been a huge argument over the question of who can be considered Greek. In particular, knowledge of the Greek language was a main criterion for it... Then a Russian diplomat comes out to the podium, and in fluent Greek, gives the greeting message of the Russian Minister. The effect of an exploding bomb wouldn't do justice to compare what happened next. There were even older Greek women weeping and kissing my hands... Which means that I hit bull's-eye with my speech, and apparently the dispute, ended right there.

In general, Greek is also good because it also provides you with knowledge from completely different fields, for example, medicine: after all, the vast majority of terms, including diagnoses, originate from Greek. Once I was in the hospital and understood immediately all of my symptoms and ailments.

To finish my monologue on the Greek language, I will tell you about how it was thanks to Greek that I actually became the last interpreter for the Soviet Leader Leonid Brezhnev. On October 28, 1982, only 12 days before his death, he organized an official dinner in honor of the then Cypriot President Spyros Kyprianou, at the Faceted Chamber of the Kremlin. I was summoned from the Foreign Ministry to interpret for their leader. It was a fully-fledged visit in conjunction with an official visit to Riga and Tbilisi. I must say that at this time the Americans had exerted strong pressure on the Cypriots, trying to force them to abandon their trip to

Latvia. After all, although Cyprus was not a member of NATO and the EEU, it was still considered part of the West, and as you know, Western leaders did not visit Baltic states. To their credit the Cypriots stood their ground and travelled to Riga. On November 2nd, Kyprianou returned home, and 13 days later he returned again, but this time for Leonid Brezhnev's funeral.. Again I interpreted for him. In 1985 I travelled to Cyprus, where I worked for six and a half years. Of all the valuable lessons I learnt there from our ambassador, the fine diplomat Yuri

Fokin, I will name perhaps the main lesson; "When you become a manager," he said to me, "you will understand that it's physically impossible to do everything yourself. Your managers will always bear ultimate responsibility, however you must determine the bottom line yourself, and start delegating responsibility to your assistants." Today I follow this advice to the letter. By the way, when I returned to Moscow, Fokin did not forget me and offered me the post of an adviser to the Second European Department, the British



Assessing our relations with the EU, I have to say that there have been ups and downs. Currently we are in a deep 'down', and it's not our fault. However I will say this: if in previous years we hadn't create a 'goodwill reserve', a complex architecture of co-operation that we now possess, who knows where we would be now

Department to be precise, which I then became the head of. However, I was not posted to London. Moreover, as a result I spent 13 years in Moscow. True, I advanced up the career ladder from an adviser to Deputy Minister... I'm getting a little ahead of myself though, and since the mid-'90s, I have been focusing my professional career following the European path and its activities, and that is what I'm still occupied with. On one occasion I was invited to travel to Vienna for a month to work as part of our delegation to the OSCE, but in the end I stayed for four months. Then I found myself in the Balkans, engulfed in the flames of war, and began to work in the region as Deputy to Carl Bildt, who was the High Representative for the Peace Settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I spent the entire

year in 1996, in Sarajevo. The city was a very depressing sight, there was not a single building left intact, and movement was only possible using specially marked routes that were free from landmines. A highlight of that period is my part in the meeting of Minister Primakov with Carl Bildt in Rome. I suddenly faced a challenge: I had to prepare first memos for both participants and the final papers for them as well. They needed to appear as completely different documents, both in style and language of presentation. I will not go into details of how I did it, but needless to say, they both were satisfied with the documents...

When the EU accumulates a critical mass of political will, this understanding will pull itself, like Baron Munchausen, by the hair from the impasse into which they have driven themselves into. At that point they will know where to find us

After returning to Moscow, I became Director of the Third European Department, I worked in the Balkans, and two years later I was offered the position of Director of the Department of European Cooperation (DEC). Although I had other plans, as by that stage, I had been working at central headquarters for quite some time and was thinking about foreign postings and in particular about the ambassador post in Greece, which was being vacated at the time. However I preferred to overcome the professional challenge: I remained as the DEC director. In 2002 the new minister Igor Sergeyev, appointed me as Deputy Minister, so I began to supervise all of Europe. In 2005 I

was sent here to Brussels where I am now the head of our Permanent Mission to the EU, and today I'm probably the "longest-playing" Russian ambassador.

MJ: How do you assess this massive period of change in regards to our relations with the EU?



Of course, it's impossible to evaluate it unequivocally. There are ups and downs, downs and ups. Currently we are in a deep 'down', and it's not our fault. However I will say this: in previous years we hadn't create a 'goodwill reserve', a complex

architecture of cooperation that we now possess, who knows where we would be now... Of course, much of what we built then is currently mothballed, or frozen. Trying to best describe the nearest or even medium-term perspective of these relations, I will use the terminology from the field of nucle-

ar physics: when the EU accumulates a critical mass of political will, this understanding will pull itself, like Baron Munchausen, by the hair from the impasse into which they have driven themselves into. At that point they will know where to find us. ☐

**EVGENIYA
CHECHELYAN
(’05)**

*First secretary,
Press Service, Permanent Mission
of Russia to the EU*

My mother is a teacher who speaks two other languages, and she instilled in me a real interest in studying English, ever since my early childhood. I have been studying English my whole life. I decided to attend MGIMO, as it is where some of the best language teaching in the country can be found. I selected the Faculty of International Journalism. Since graduating from MGIMO, I have joined the Foreign Ministry.

As a creative person, I enjoy the profession of a diplomat because there is room to use your creative ideas in your daily work. Especially in our fast-paced and eventful times, a fresh creative perspective on the traditional methods of diplomacy is very much in demand. As such, in my work at the Press Service of Russia's Permanent Mission to the EU in Brussels, I am engaged in digital diplomacy, which is developing at a pace today. The way I see my duties is: I promote a positive image of the Permanent Mission, the Foreign Ministry and, in a broader sense, Russia among the foreign public. Every positive comment from users on the Permanent Mission websites is an occasion for a sense of pride and a feeling that your efforts are not in vain. Trying to tell the truth about your country in opposition to the falsified stereotypes spread by its opponents. My weapon is language, and a foreign one at that. The very high-quality language training, which was why I initially decided to enroll to MGIMO, I make use of every day would like to kindly thank all of my French, Spanish and English lecturers. ☐

**LEONID
KOROLKOV
(’09)**

*Third Secretary, Permanent
Mission of Russia to the EU*

MGIMO had always attracted me with the opportunity to open up the world of international politics, diplomatic postings, travel, knowledge of other cultures and of course other languages. I chose Arabic as my first language: a beautiful, surprisingly flexible, and I would say, "mathematical" language. In addition to the "mysterious East" and the ancient culture of the region, I was attracted by the economic and creative potential of the relatively young in its present form Middle East region, and the prospects for Russian cooperation with it.

Thanks to the exchange program between MGIMO and the Royal Jordanian University, my classmates and I managed to visit this kingdom twice. This travel really united us. We are still close friends and we are often in contact, despite the fact that we all live in different countries, but we can always bond over being a part of the special MGIMO Arab family.

Another important area that had a strong influence on me was that of political science, and in particular systematic analysis. Having enrolled in the Master's degree of "World Politics", I studied political analysis at the Department of Applied International Analysis. This course opened up new horizons of knowledge and political thinking for me, and allowed me to look more comprehensively and conceptually at global and regional problems, and ultimately strengthened my desire to work in a diplomatic field. My current post at the Russian Permanent Mission to the EU has only increased my



Mikhail Shulgin
Evgeniya Chechelyan
Leonid Korolkov

awareness of the value of an MGIMO education. Russia's permanent representative to the EU, Vladimir Chizhov, is a brilliant MGIMO graduate, and also many of my current colleagues graduated from our university. Their backgrounds vary completely: they are graduates of different faculties with a range of languages from Chinese to Hebrew. Yet their distinct knowledge and skills combined constitute a unique professional resource. One that helps our mission successfully defend our national interests in the vibrant world of European politics. 🇷🇺

EVGENIY
TERESHENKO
(’09)

Second Secretary
Permanent Mission of Russia
to the EU

I came to study at MGIMO from the small southern Urals city of Kurgan. University for me has become not just a place of study, but a real second home. After lectures, classmates and I spend time together playing sports in different clubs. I started playing badminton and now play for the national team of the University. Life in the dormitory and study at the University took place in an atmosphere of friendship and mutual assistance. Every year, according to tradition, on the Maslenitsa holiday we cooked and ate pancakes. Also I remember special courses and master classes, where MGIMO invited employees of leading companies, researchers, and experts from the Foreign Ministry to come and speak to us. It was an excellent opportunity to learn about practically applying the knowledge gained at the seminars. Their advice helped us to rightly prioritize our studies and decide on the location of our pre-diploma internship. It can be quite tense working at the Foreign Ministry. It not only requires knowledge of the most diverse political and economic disciplines, but also of such subjects as psychology, jurisprudence, religion and culture, as well as digital technologies. The dynamics of



today's international relations always keeps us very busy and constantly drives our will to improve. We also think creatively, having to resort to finding solutions outside-the-square. With the development of social media and the internet, we have to assess more and more sources of information. Here I can't help but note the usefulness of abstraction and annotation skills, which we honed during language classes at the University. The uniqueness of diplomatic work is that it is extremely versatile and allows you either to be a narrow expert in a certain country or issue, or a well-rounded diplomat, constantly changing the direction and geography of your work. Before I was posted to Brussels, I worked for almost four years in West Africa – concurrently at the Russian Embassy in

Ghana and Liberia. I am proud that during this time I helped dozens of Ghanaian schoolchildren and bachelor students to receive an education in Russia, thanks to our state scholarship programs. Many of them have already returned to their homeland, and they discuss their achievements and reminisce with a real feeling of gratitude for their study in Russia. Working in the EU domain has become a real challenge for me from a professional point-of-view. Now certainly is not the finest period in Russia-Europe relations, yet even under such conditions it is necessary to find opportunities for dialogue, and new spheres of cooperation and mutual interests. In my opinion this is the foremost undertaking for the diplomat. 🇷🇺

IVAN
VOLKOV (’16)

Attaché
Permanent Mission
of Russia to the EU

Upon entering MGIMO I was convinced this was the right choice, the University gave me not only an excellent tertiary education, but also long-lasting friendships, with people whom I still keep in touch with. At the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, I have chosen European Union law as my specialty, and I am very fortunate that my work is closely connected with this particular subject at present. I take great pleasure in the fact that the knowledge I acquired during my studies I can now apply professionally in practice. The diplomat's profession constantly tests your strength; almost every day one must solve new issues that have presented themselves, and that often requires a creative approach. However, in this lies its charm, because due to the diverse nature of the work, it is never in danger of turning into a routine. In addition to the legal aspects of diplomacy, I always had a keen interest in politics and international relations, and it is into this area that I would like to develop my skillset and be engaged with professionally in the future. 🇷🇺

ies of rare languages, is an absolutely unique phenomenon on a global scale. This is not an exaggeration, something you clearly realize when talking with fellow diplomats from other countries: it's unlikely that any other university worldwide is able to boast with such a broad scope of language instruction. One of the brightest memories from my student years is the annual language evening of the faculties of the Near and Middle East countries. Of course, the largest numbers usually came from Arab Studies groups, but we, the Hebrew Studies people, tried to keep up even though our group was smaller. We played funny skits and sang songs in Hebrew, which have stuck in my head so firmly that I can still sing any of them from beginning to end. 🇷🇺

DMITRIY
SEMENOV (’04)

Counsellor,
Russia's Permanent Mission
to the EU

Although my father advised me to enroll at MGIMO, as he's also a graduate of the university, it was my conscious decision at the same time: I was interested in politics and its relationship with the economy, as well as government.

I am very grateful to the teachers of Korean and English. I benefited in particular from the military English translation course, not only for the language itself, but also for learning how to read articles from The Economist in the fourth year with the following questions in mind: who has this or that text been written by, and in connection with what? From what perspective is the author approaching the question, and what is the author trying to achieve? This approach gave me practical training in working with media materials. In the bachelor's degree we were mainly given a large body of knowledge, whereas in the master's degree we were called upon to apply various paradigms of the theory of international relations; we were being taught to think for ourselves. In fact, we were told: everything you have studied before is absolutely correct, high-quality stuff, but it's still just one school of thought, and you can look at international issues from several points of view. This was very useful to me. As a Counsellor to the Russian Permanent Mission to the EU, I am involved in political aspects of Russia-EU energy relations and the EU's external energy policy. After many years, I have finally understood that the main thing that we were taught at MGIMO, from my perspective, was to work with information and analyze it – and those are the exact skills that help me today. 🇷🇺

MARINA
PILYAEVA (’07)

First Secretary,
Russia's Permanent Mission
to the EU

Undoubtedly, MGIMO has played a big role in my life. My specialization – I'm an Oriental Studies major with a focus on the Middle East – has been the main one for me in the Foreign Ministry for the past ten years. In general, the language school at MGIMO, including the stud-



ALEXANDER GRUSHKO ('78)

Permanent Representative of Russia to NATO, Brussels

In the summer of 1973, the MGIMO leadership asked students to forgo their vacations, and help build a new building of the University instead, which was being constructed in South-West Moscow. One such volunteer was then student Alexander Grushko. "I worked as a concreter, pouring concrete into the building foundations . On one of the walls you will find my initials that I carved out with a wire – a kind of a quality sign, if you will. Judging by the fact that MGIMO is still firmly standing on this foundation, I would say we have poured the concrete quite well."

MJ: Why did you decide to go to MGIMO?

Actually, at school I was fascinated by the economy, I had even decided to apply to the Economics School of Moscow University for this reason. However, at the exam something unforeseen happened: taking an exam paper with questions on it, I saw a formula in which there were neither numbers, nor letters, but some strange icons. I realized that mathematics is just not for me. I had to move in the humanitarian direction. I prepared and got accepted into MGIMO, where I was allocated the Dutch language.

MJ: Weren't you disappointed? I mean, the region in question is quite small.

On the contrary, I was pleased. We studied this language with great enthusiasm. The Dutch language lecturers and students made up a fairly small group, so we had a very friendly "Dutch family". Also the need for the Dutch was vast, we were used as interpreters at all kinds of various events. In fifth year I commenced an internship at our embassy in the Netherlands, where, after defending my thesis, I immediately started my professional career. Returning to Moscow, I was accepted as an attaché in the First European Department, where I worked for five years. During this time, I managed to master the entire array of international politics through the prism of bilateral relations, studying the position of the Netherlands in regards to all major world issues. In 1985 I was sent as the third secretary to our embassy in Belgium. This was already in the perestroika period

and glasnost in the USSR, so my role was of colossal interest to the Belgians, and as Soviet diplomats, we were in high demand. I traveled with official delegations, perhaps across all Flanders. Then there was a twist of fate: I became engaged to the very relevant issue of

I worked as a concreter, pouring concrete into the MGIMO building foundations. Judging by the fact that MGIMO is still firmly standing on this foundation, I would say we have poured the concrete quite well

disarmament. Arms control came to the forefront of world politics, it was viewed as the most effective way of building a new security and peace-building system. For ten years – from 1990 to 2000 – I dealt with issues related to the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE). The intensification of these themes coincided with the transformation in 1994 of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) into the OSCE. A separate Russian permanent mission to the OSCE was created, but at the same time all disarmament streams were allocated to a separate delegation, and I was instructed to lead it.

MJ: Isn't the topic of disarmament a bit tedious?

On the contrary, I am grateful to fate that I found myself in this field, which I consider to be the key for European security. As for romance, then, believe me, disarmament was enough for us, we literally lived for our work, spending countless hours discussing different ways of problem-solving, like a chess player enthusiastically calculating their next move. The main point to bear in mind is that the solutions we were seeking, for very complex problems, would always need to meet the interests of our country. Moreover, this complex multilateral work was aimed at reaching a common understanding between all stakeholders. Furthermore, the interpretation of this understanding by all parties would still need to provide acceptable conditions for all parties.

In this sense, arms control visibly embodies the principle of indivisibility of security – to be at the point where no single group strengthens their security at the expense of others. Unfortunately, our current partners have forgotten about this, currently they are trying to create islands of security, and this in the new world order, is absolutely futile.

MJ: You are considered to be an expert in NATO relations.

Yes, as it so happened I was assigned to work in the Department of European Cooperation (DEC) of the Russian Foreign Ministry as Deputy Director, NATO division. It was a difficult period: a complete freezing of relations after the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in 1999. We left this period behind, having held a well-known summit in Pratica di Mara and signed the Rome Declaration, which was created by the Russia-NATO Council. I was then appointed director of the DEC, and perhaps the main direction for us then, was the relationship with the EU. A considerable effort was invested into the formation of four common areas, which were fixed in the relevant document adopted in 2003 at the St. Petersburg summit.



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MJ: What areas are those?

The areas of; internal security, external security, economics and humanitarian issues. It was of fundamental importance for us to ensure, through these four areas, equal cooperation with the EU. The EU should realize that in the eastern part of our common areas an integration association is developing successfully – EurAsEC, which will not follow them. It was in the EU's own interest to provide not only standard interactions with the association, but also respect the ideals that exist within it.

MJ: At that time, did you consider becoming an ambassador elsewhere?

In 2004, the management appointed me as Deputy Minister: I supervised all European organizations and associations: the EU, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, NATO, and also was responsible for the First European Department.

MJ: In 2012 you came here to work as Permanent Representative of Russia to NATO. Was it positive and cordial up until the Ukrainian crisis of 2014?

I would not say that. We had difficult relations with NATO, for the simple reason that we always knew what it was created

for. Actually, why was the Russia-NATO Council formed? Its core task consisted of two main components: first, to minimize the risks that may arise due to the fact that NATO and Russia remain the two largest military powers in Europe. Therefore, the fewer surprises that we might expect from each other and misunderstandings of military intentions, the more peaceful our lives would be. The second task of this Council is to monitor the broader security situation, serve as an early warning tool, identify risks, and discuss whether the risks are common ones, and if so, seek ways to combine efforts to neutralize them. After 2014, all our joint projects are frozen. Yet even before this crisis, we began to feel that NATO was again beginning to enter an identity crisis period or "raison d'être" crisis. The fact is that, evolutionarily speaking, NATO has gone through several distinct periods. At the first stage – the "cold war" – everything was clear. Then followed a period of expansion and large operations, from the Bosnian operation and ending with the Libyan, plus Afghanistan, where NATO has had no visible results for more than 15 years. NATO intervention outside the framework of international law led to disastrous consequences, leaving behind either disjointed states, or large territories, generally devoid of statehood, which then become the fiefdom of terrorists of all types. It became obvious that the period of large operations for NATO is also ending: both because of their apparent failure, and because of the ineptitude of the alliance to solve similar problems in the current security conditions. Currently NATO has begun to reflect on which side they need to develop now. At this point we felt that it would be a question of returning to its origins, that is: searching for a great adversary. As one of the former NATO Secretary General's said at a major international conference in Brussels: "If there were no Ukrainian crisis, it had to be invented." NATO is now doing what it does best: building up military activity, increasing interoperability, creating new command structures, conducting military exercises.

This precise military planning, which is carried out according similarly to "cold war" practices, is very dangerous, because it generates a hostile policy, inspires public opinion: the increase in costs is necessary to prepare for a case of Russian aggression. The apotheosis of disinformation campaigns to the public was reached during the "West" exercises. They were labeled as "provocative", necessary for Russia to conceal the preparations for the conquest of the Baltic countries and the invasion of Ukraine. Then they presented the idea

The MGIMO education was fantastic! We were given the crucial thing: a systematic view of the outside world. The bar was raised quite high for us. At University, we learned to distinguish the crux of the matter, to connect the various phenomena with each other, it was not a type of moronic ranting, but rather a creative process, which of course, should be the main method of working in any diplomat's career

that under the guise of the exercises, we would move troops into Belarus, and then would not withdraw. "Listen," I said to my Western colleagues, "if we have a bilateral agreement on the deployment of a division of our forces in Belarus, we do not need any exercises for this, we'll just deploy them there." Although, we certainly do not have such plans. A few months later, sound assessments began to appear, many military experts admit that we conducted absolutely standard exercises that fully corresponded to the parameters that we stated.

MJ: Yet there are some sane people among the Western elite, right?
Of course there are. In Western Europe, there is a fairly large stratum of people who understand that no security system without Russia, and even more so against it, simply cannot be created. Even in the meetings of the Russia-NATO Council, we can clearly witness that emphasis is placed in different ways, and we share common views on some issues. For example, by and large, they agree with our assessments for Afghanistan. Someone agrees more, someone perhaps less so. However in general, I do not experience collective rejection. Reality cannot be ignored, otherwise processes lead nowhere. When one recognizes the reality, it is possible to build bridges of interaction that will bring obvious benefits to everyone.

MJ: Do you start pounding your fists on the table when such heated discussions arise?
Well, there are all sorts of situations, and of course, at times when it's appropriate, we are certainly not shy. However within the framework of the Council, as a rule discussions are mutually respectful. Dialogue is quite professional and conducted in a businesslike manner. Theatricality is not inherent to us.

MJ: Last year was the 40th anniversary of your graduation from MGIMO. How do you assess your education generally?
It was fantastic! It seems to me that at MGIMO we were taught the crucial elements: a systematic view of the outside world, and they gave us the key to that knowledge. When I began at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the processes that took place within international affairs were not a total revelation to me. The bar was raised quite high for us. At University, we learned to distinguish the crux of the matter, to connect the various phenomena with each other, it was not a type of moronic ranting, but rather a creative process, which of course, should be the main method of working in any diplomat's career. 🇷🇺



ANATOLY
GORSHKOV ('78)

Trade Representative of the
Russian Federation to Belgium and
Luxembourg, based in Brussels

Enrolling in MGIMO back in 1973, I received Arabic as my first language and French as my second. I had not seriously considered lands further East before, but the teaching of the Arabic course at MGIMO was exceptionally good, so my skills were of a good standard. This was greatly facilitated by the interpreting work that I completed, especially in sports: I interpreted at various competitions, and at meetings of international federations, I also became an interpreter for the travel company Sputnik, where I was entrusted to accompany groups of 20 to 30 young Algerians and Belgians, I was responsible for them during travel around the country, and to think I was only 18 at the time! This experience gave me many life skills, and was valuable in terms of professional growth, because I saw my own country through the eyes of foreigners, which was very useful for a young international expert.

Upon graduation from MGIMO in 1978, I was drafted into the army, and for two years I served as an interpreting officer in Algeria. This was also extremely educational for me. I was promoted to Chief Military Adviser, and regularly participated in negotiations at the Ministry of Defense, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In essence I was engaged in military diplomacy. When I returned to Moscow, I started working at the Foreign Ministry, in the First African Department, I was then posted to the Consulate General of the USSR in Annaba, to the east of Algeria. A colossal metallurgical factory and a thermal power station were being built by the USSR, so naturally there were many Soviet experts: almost four thousand people. The day-to-day duties were exhausting, first we would host a reception for any visitors, and then would be drafting and completing various certificates, and so it went on, until late at night.

Two years later I was posted to Tunisia.

Although the nature of the workload was the same: "from morning to night," I enjoyed the work environment there much more. Unlike Algeria, Tunisia, was an open country, focused on attracting foreign tourism.

At the end of my posting, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs gave me the opportunity to study at the Diplomatic Academy to improve

As Russia had just joined the IMF and the World Bank, I was invited to take up a post at the Government Office, because there were almost no experts in this field in the country



my qualifications. The main result of my studies was the defense of my PhD thesis on "The participation of the Russian Federation in the activities of international financial organizations." The thesis defined my work for many years to come. In fact I defended it in June 1992, and just a month earlier Russia joined the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. I was immediately invited to take up a post at the Government Office, because there were almost no experts in this field in Russia. I began to work as an assistant to the Deputy Chairman of the Government, who was responsible for foreign debt issues and relations with the IMF, the World Bank and the EBRD. For almost six years I was engaged in this incredibly interesting business: financial diplomacy. However then I had the desire to work on specific projects involving the World Bank in Russia.

Initially, I was engaged in promoting

reforms within the social sphere: pension reform, targeted benefits, assistance to the unemployed, and so on. Yet the most interesting project was the completion of the construction of the complex of flood barriers in St. Petersburg. The construction of the "dam", as it was called by the people, began in 1979, but then ceased again in 1984 due to lack of funding. Construction was resumed again in 2003 and eight years later the project was fully completed. This structure is a barrier against the surging waves coming in from the Gulf of Finland, which is millions of cubic meters of water per hour, and previously raised the level of the Neva river in the city by two or more meters.

I also enjoyed a project related to the preservation of the cultural heritage of the North-West region of Russia. In collaboration with the Ministry of Culture we were engaged in the search for relevant items and coordinated restoration work. Through my years of working at the World Bank, I adopted their project-based approach to tasks. Having studied it in practice and passed the exam at the International Institute of Project Management in 2009, I received a Project Management Professional (PMP) qualification. With that under my belt, I began work in the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia, where the project-based approach has been in high demand for many years.

Three years ago, the Ministry sent me as a trade representative to Brussels. By this time, due to the Ukrainian crisis, our trade with Belgium had basically collapsed. Gradually the situation is being rectified, although the nature of our exports is that raw commodities, mineral fuel and oil products are still predominant. A large share in the commodity turnover is still occupied by rough diamonds; about 50% of the Russian company Alrosa's products are exported to Belgium, where the Antwerp World Diamond Center operates. The volumes are significant: US\$ 2,000-2,500 million a year, but again this is just raw material.

However, the gradual increase in the share of non-resource exports brings me joy: we've got processed metals, fertilizers, chemical products, woodworking products, and also grain. Our trade mission is also attracting Belgian investments in Russian regions. ☑



ALEXANDER
VLADYCHENKO
('09)

Lead Senior expert
Russian Trade Mission in Belgium
and Luxembourg

It was not purely by chance that I chose MGIMO. My grandfather worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR, and my parents are also MGIMO graduates. I was aware of both the high level of education, and the prospects for diplomatic work that our University provides, and so I decided to become a diplomat, to


contribute to the protection of Russia's interests in the foreign policy arena, as my forebears once did.

Studying at MGIMO gave me many assets, not only in terms of knowledge and skills. I met wonderful fellow students who became my loyal friends. Knowledge of French and English in the field of international economic relations was extremely useful to me in further studies. After MGIMO I graduated with my Master's in Paris and went on to receive an MBA degree in Dublin, where I not only studied but also worked.

Despite all my internships being in the private sector, I decided to go into the public sector, joining the Trade Negotiations Department of the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia, where I began to deal

with the issues surrounding Russia's participation in the World Trade Organization, the Eurasian Economic Union and other organizations. Three months later I was sent to handle APEC events in Indonesia, where I became acquainted with multilateral diplomacy in practice. I also took part in the meetings of the various WTO working bodies, it appeared to me as a very interesting undertaking; to build a dialogue and search to find, even in the most difficult situations, an optimal solution that would take into account the interests of Russia.

Recently I moved from working within the multilateral trading system to bilateral relations: I'm working at the Trade Mission of Russia in Belgium and Luxembourg, where I am engaged in the development of bilateral trade and economic relations with Luxembourg. I think that I was very fortunate to receive this diplomatic posting.

Working in Belgium once again, I realized what a small world it is. Here I have come across many MGIMO graduates; both permanently employed in Brussels and Luxembourg, and those who often travel here on business. 



**EVGENIY
EGOROV ('85)**

*Consul General of Russia in the
Kingdom of Belgium, Antwerp*

I already possessed the desire to see the world at elementary school when we began to study geography. As the Soviet Union was ring-fenced off from the outside world by the "Iron Curtain", and there was no internet yet I still wanted to see the rest of the world with my own eyes. When it was time to choose a profession that could help fulfill the dream, I considered applying at MGIMO.

I firstly served in the army, and after enrolling at MGIMO, I chose English, and then secondly Bulgarian. In 1985, after graduating, I was posted to the Consulate General in the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv and was subsequently transferred to the capital Sofia.

I was very comfortable there, it was interesting working in that environment as a profes-

sional; at the embassy we had a traditional organizational structure: specific groups for foreign and domestic policy, collaboration with scientific and technical development, as well as culture and information collaboration. We also had an agriculture attaché, a consular department and a military attaché. I completed all the junior steps up to the first diplomatic post of attaché, I worked within the culture and information group, and in addition to usual the duties of the press attaché, I also supervised a dozen other streams, including all creative unions and the activities of the ambassador's spouse.

My second assignment took place in 1993: to Bulgaria again, to act as Vice-Consul at the Consulate General of the Russian Federation in the city of Ruse, on the Danube.

In 2002, I realized that I wanted a change in my career, so I successfully applied for a role within our Permanent Mission to international organizations and this took me to Vienna, where I was able to engage in a completely new sphere: multilateral diplomacy. I was engaged in issues such as the export of conventional weapons, and the activities of the Zangger Committee – which identifies the source of nuclear materials and develops procedures for the export of nuclear materials and technologies. I also became involved in the work of the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. It was a challenge, as I did not have past experience to draw upon at that point.

In 2009, an offer arose to return to work along Balkan lines again and travel as Minister-Counselor to Macedonia. The Minister-Counselor role is also the Deputy Ambassador, a role where you are generally the main "workhorse". There was almost no time left for any personal life, but I deeply and utterly learned how to become a Director of an organization. Macedonia is quite a small country, but exciting and beautiful. It is one of the few European countries, along with Serbia, which has not imposed anti-Russian sanctions and as a consequence it is very welcoming towards Russia.

In 2016, I was appointed Consul General in Antwerp, Belgium. The consular district assigns responsibilities to the Consulate General across two provinces: East Flanders and Antwerp, as well as the seaports of Ghent, Ostend, and Zeebrugge. The Flemish region is

distinct in Belgium, it generates up to 80% of the entire country's GDP.

We continually receive support and mutual understanding from the local burgomasters and governors here. Recently we solemnly celebrated the 300th anniversary of Russian Tsar Peter I visiting Antwerp, and this was held in no less of a location than the historic central city hall of Antwerp.

For any of the more problematic moments I can trace these back to the curtailment of economic cooperation because of the notorious anti-Russian sanctions. Although the opportunities for trade and economic interaction are still fairly sound. Here we have the largest ports in Europe and some of the largest in the entire world along with highly developed industrial clusters, and the unique Antwerp International Diamond Center. By the way, in terms of trade with Belgium, Russian diamonds can easily compete with our hydrocarbons. The economic relations are gradually being restored. For example, this year we plan to exchange business delegations between Antwerp and St. Petersburg, as the two cities are celebrating the 60th anniversary of twin-city status. 

**MIKHAIL
LEBEDEV ('05)**

*Acting Head
EU Affairs Division
Gazprom Representative Office in
Belgium*

I have a true MGIMO family, especially on my father's side: he and his brother attended the university. My mother, Marina Lebedeva is Head of the World Political Processes Faculty at MGIMO.

I was accepted at MGIMO in 1999, in the first class of the new Faculty of Political Science. At that time this area was completely unexplored, not a single University had political scientists as their graduates. We were like "guinea pigs". Our lecturers honed their teaching ideas using innovative approaches: they organized role-plays, simulated situations, and held roundtables on world politics.

The class that left the strongest impression on me was that of Yevgeny Primakov,

former Foreign Minister and Prime Minister of Russia, and then President of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Russia. He did not give lectures, however he conversed with us, sharing his thoughts with us. Once, in one class, he suddenly stopped and said: "Students, why do you say yes to me? Do you agree with me on everything? In fact I can be wrong. I need you to object to me, to put forward your arguments." This great man taught us an important lesson: no matter how wise you think you are, you too can be mistaken, and if you want to be an effective leader, surround yourself with people who are free to express a different opinion.

The enormous advantage of MGIMO's education has always been its versatility. Owing to their broad outlook, the MGIMO student will not merely pass a subject only when expert; on the contrary, they learn it in a short time and become a top-class expert. That's why so many of our graduates go on to

have careers in such a variety of fields. Some have made great strides within the Foreign Ministry, others in the Gazprom company, and some are engaged with benefitting of our defense complex, and others still have found themselves in the media, and so on.

I also spent time employed by 'Russia Today' after I completed my Master's program. This Russia-focused television channel is aimed at a foreign audience. It was newly created when I joined – it can be said, I stood at its source. I was engaged with broadcasts as a correspondent and a producer. During the eight years I spent at RT, I experienced some real highlights as a journalist. I felt I was working on a just cause – which, in principle, I have been doing my whole life, continuing by and large this family tradition: defending the interests of Russia. If now while based in Brussels, I am responsible for the energy component of the Russian economy, RT promoted its image and viewpoint. After all,



Russia is often depicted as a bogeyman simply because our viewpoint is not known and there is not an understanding of why we may disagree with an issue, why we might make certain decisions and take certain positions. It is crucial we explain it to those who do not know, otherwise we will remain foes for the West.

However a few years ago I unexpectedly received a job offer from the Gazprom Group. They were looking for a person who would handle liaisons with the EU. I attended a whole series of interviews, and at the final stage they said to me suddenly: "Well, you are the right candidate for us, we hope to see you in Brussels!" I did not intend to work abroad, because in Moscow my life was going quite well, and I did not want to exchange the impressive Moscow metropolis with its vibrant lifestyle for a European "village". After consulting with my family, I accepted the offer, and in 2014, I started a new life chapter, I was a key staff member in the opening of the new Gazprom representative office in Belgium. It's amazing that there has not been a Gazprom outpost here before. As it is in Brussels that the European Commission meets, which largely develops the policy of the European Union in various fields, including the energy sector. Being based in Brussels and liaising directly with European officials is the most convenient way to spot new trends developing in the European gas market.

For the past three years we have been lobbying to increase our interests in the field of energy, conducting both GR (Government Relations) and PR-activities. The activities are aimed at building regular interaction with the European Commission. This is because any major negotiations, which usually end with the signing of important agreements, begin with a palpation of positions, a search for solutions.

It's not straightforward to undertake our activities here in Brussels, we face strong opposition, because our partners have strongly politicized matters for discussion. We currently have many questions on the table to the European Commission: the potential delivery routes for Russian gas, the implementation and further operation of the Nord Stream-2 gas pipeline, the position of gas in Europe's energy reserve of, and the anti-trust


situation against the Gazprom Group. At the moment, the European Commission conducts anti-trust proceedings against such technology giants such as Google and Apple. At the same time, these American companies refused to cooperate and ceased negotiations with the European Commission. So we are the only ones who patiently continue dialogue.

We are trying to convey to the European officials that it is necessary to listen to the market and that attacks on Gazprom bear significant risks for the entire European gas industry, as we have been a key player in this sector for a long time, and without us the promotion of major gas infrastructure projects in Europe will be cumbersome. Concurrently, according to our estimates, natural gas is critically

I felt I was working on a just cause – which, in principle, I have been doing my whole life, continuing by and large this family tradition: defending the interests of Russia

required for EU countries, especially if they intend to continue moving towards reducing their greenhouse gas emissions. At this stage, renewable sources are not able to cope with demand without the help of natural gas.

Recently several MGIMO graduates, including myself, decided to organize a MGIMO alumni club here in Brussels, because there are a lot of alumni in Benelux region. It's important we keep in touch, to gather to remember all the virtues and values our alma mater instilled in us, and to share information about what is new and interesting in the areas in which we work, because we live in a complex and very interdependent world.

On October 14 which is MGIMO Day, we held our first alumni meeting: 45 MGIMO graduates from all across Benelux region gathered in Maastricht in the Netherlands. Thus the momentum has begun, and I do hope that come spring we will celebrate the creation of the MGIMO alumni club in Benelux. 



NETHERLANDS

Tulips, canals, red lanterns, mills, klompen (wooden shoes)...

If you long for this kind of northern European exotic, you go to Holland. Any schoolboy knows, that Amsterdam is the capital of the Netherlands. It's the place where a king has been taking an oath of allegiance to his people for hundreds of years already. But, it turns out that the actual capital of the Netherlands is the Hague, here we have the residence of the Royal House, the Parliament, government and embassies.





ALEXANDER SHULGIN ('73)

Ambassador of Russia to the Kingdom of the Netherlands
Permanent Representative of Russia to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

Alexander Shulgin remembers very clearly his first contact with "real-life French". In 1972, as a trainee from MGIMO, he was asked to accompany a French ambassador, who had just concluded the negotiations, out to the Foreign Ministry exit. "We step into the elevator, the ambassador asks a question, and I am miles away, I cannot string two words together in French. I take his coat and by mumbling I draw attention to myself, and he simply keeps talking to me... Thus began my career at the Foreign Ministry." It's hard to imagine, but a decade after this off-putting start Alexander Shulgin will go on to become a high-profile diplomat, interpreter and translator, who will be consistently involved in diplomacy at the highest level. He has interpreted negotiations between world leaders including Leonid Brezhnev, Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin.

MJ: How did this metamorphosis occur?

In 1978, after my first substantial assignment to Paris, I gained entry into the First European Department and was surprised: there were numerous staff and not all of them had work to do. I had become accustomed to working very hard, without days off and even working into the night, which happened very frequently in my consular department. So I felt uneasy at the First European Department and in order to keep myself busy, I began to develop my own recording system using a notebook when interpreting, and strengthening my knowledge of French. My activities were noticed and this began to slowly connect me to official language work. I vividly remember that December day in 1981, when I was entrusted to interpret at the highest level: in the morning I interpreted for Leonid Brezhnev at a meeting with the delegation of the Papal Academy of Sciences, and then later a conversation between Andrei Gromyko and French Minister of Foreign Trade at the time, Michel Jobert.

MJ: How did you get accepted into MGIMO?

In 1968, I was actually planning to enter the Moscow Aviation Institute, as my father was a military pilot. However they had their entrance exams in August, and MGIMO's were in July. I decided to try my luck even though I was not particularly involved in relevant MGIMO subjects, but my attempt was successful. The competition was not tough and I scored the points required for entry. I am very pleased that this happened.

I was assigned to the Monetary and Credit Department of the Faculty of Economics, my primary language was French, and I was allocated English as my second language, I had studied this language at school.

MJ: When did you first visit France?

After graduation from MGIMO I was accepted into the Foreign Ministry and then immediately posted to the embassy in France. My first role was that of Deputy Chief of the Visa Office, basically I issued tourist visas. At first it was very difficult

– especially to understand and hold a conversation in French over the phone. Fairly soon though it became much easier for me, and the day-to-day work was intense and interesting; just imagine: in 1974 over one year we issued 37000 visas! I then moved to the Press Department and then onto the Ambassador's Secretariat, working with the legendary diplomat Stepan Chervonenko. He was an exceptionally wise diplomat and a terrific man. He taught me such important lessons, one of which is that you need to be so careful with people, especially subordinates. Always speak politely, do not raise your voice, and try to consider every word before you speak.

MJ: Was it difficult to work as an interpreter with such prominent people?

The main thing is to always be in shape. Like pianists, who need to constantly train their fingers, the interpreter must constantly keep themselves busy – translating articles, reading them aloud, analyzing, retelling... You can never stop to give yourself praise: if one thinks, I have good language skills, if you get comfortable, you will always stay at a certain level. No matter how well you know the language, you are not immune to the pitfalls. You must always be ready for them. I was so carried away by translation and interpreting work that I did not allow myself to relax.

It is also necessary to have a deep understanding of the subjects being discussed. I was well acquainted with the topics that were to be discussed during talks, as I worked in the First European Division, where we prepared the topic briefings ourselves. It was historically organized in this way: translations at the Foreign Ministry were mainly provided by regional units, and the assignment was set; in each department there must be staff who can translate and interpret at the highest level. However this era is now consigned to the past, today the Foreign Ministry's Department of Linguistic Support has a strong team.

MJ: How did you return to working in diplomacy?

In August 1987, I was posted to the embassy in Paris, I started as First Secretary, began working in a political taskforce, and then moved on to an independent area, where I led a workgroup on bilateral relations. It was already the time of perestroika, of the all-European platform... I witnessed the disintegration of the USSR from abroad... In 1998 I was appointed as Consul-General in Marseille, where I also simultaneously represented Russia in Monaco. This was the period when excellent relations with Monaco began. In 2001, I organized Crown Prince Albert's first visit to

The ambassador asks a question, and I am miles away, I cannot string two words together in French. I take his coat and by mumbling I draw attention to myself, and he simply keeps talking to me... Thus began my career at the Foreign Ministry

Russia, at that time the ruling Prince was Rainier. I was also involved in organizing Prince Albert's visit to the North Pole in 2006, which he undertook on dog sleds, starting from the Russian Arctic base of Barneo, located a hundred kilometers – about 60 miles – from this point. In 1999, we launched the "Russian Culture" festival in Cannes, which is still held annually today. Since the beginning of the 2000s many cultural events have become possible due to the Russian-Monegasque Declaration on Cultural Exchanges, which was the first such document in the history of bilateral relations.

MJ: When was your first embassy assignment?

In 2006, I was appointed to the post of Ambassador in Senegal and the Gambia concurrently. While in Dakar, I recall a truly remarkable episode, which I actually consider to be one of my greatest professional achievements. In May 2008, there was a summit planned on the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), in which Russia has observer status. We had no intention of participating in it, and I had no instructions to this effect. Suddenly, 10 days before the opening of the summit, I receive an order: to organize a presentation by Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who was to visit Dakar to present a message from President Vladimir Putin. This was, as it were, his farewell message to the OIC Member States as President Putin subsequently vacated this post. Firstly, it was extremely difficult to decide on which minister to include from the list of speakers. The OIC has a strict running order: first the monarchs, then the presidents, then the heads of government and, last but not least, the foreign ministers. However this only applies to fully-fledged participants, and the "observers" are only invited to the opening and closing ceremonies. At first I very much expected that it would be possible to arrange for our speech to be delivered at the opening ceremony, but unfortunately the seemingly well organized event became rather unorganized: because of the agenda wrangling, the ceremony was actually derailed and we didn't manage to arrange for the Minister to speak. Moreover, at the most inopportune moment there was a mishap: someone jumped ahead in a rush, and the Russian News Agency TASS's media channels reported that the Minister had already made a speech. So then it was all the more important that the speech actually took place, and the sooner the better. We managed to find a solution that not only allowed us to solve the problem of him speaking, but also to do it in a way so we delivered over and above the original request. The Minister stepped up to the microphone at the summit before the speech of the King of Saudi Arabia and the King of Morocco. I won't tell you how we did it, but

I'm still proud that we solved that particular problem. From this posting I was then transferred as Ambassador to Luxembourg. The contrast was, of course, striking: from Senegal, where the sun shines 350 days a year, to Luxembourg, where the sky is more often than not grey and overcast. Relations with Luxembourg were remarkable though, this country is one of the main investors in Russia within Western European.

MJ: Little Luxembourg a main investor? Yes, at that time it was actually in third place in terms of investments in our economy. Although, of course, there is no need to lie, these funds are mainly from Russian expatriates – so the funds were deducted from Russia, but are now returning, so to speak, under the Luxembourgish flag. In September 2015 I was at The Hague

My good friend, a fellow graduate and an Ambassador in another European country, once said: "A MGIMO student should always be ready to be awakened at two in the morning, given a random subject, and then be obliged to speak coherently on it for 10 to 15 minutes"

in the capacity of Ambassador. Until 2014, relations with the Netherlands were remarkable. The year 2013 can be called the apex of these excellent relations, when Russia and the Netherlands had their exchange-year, during which three hundred different events were held. The Netherlands ranked second in terms of investment volume in Russia after Luxembourg, and held first place as our trading partner in Western Europe, and the second largest globally after China.

Trade reached figures of US\$83 billion. Of course, this was mainly due to our petroleum and natural gas supplied to Europe through Rotterdam port. After the reunification of the Crimea with Russia, the Dutch, acting in solidarity with the EU, embarked on a path of anti-Russian sanctions. Then there was the tragic incident with the Malaysian Airlines Boeing airplane. The version of events reported here was that the "militia supported by Russia" were behind it. It is depressing to see the lack of an objective view on the issues. For some reason the

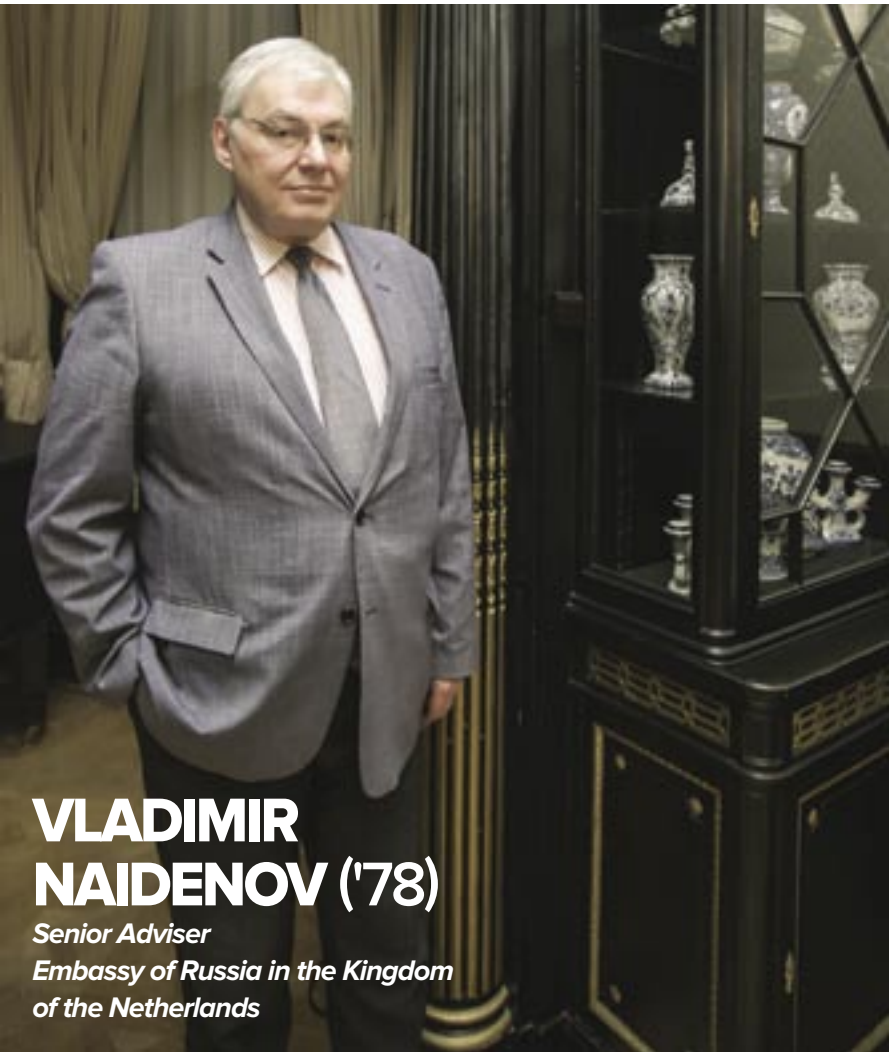
Dutch turn a blind eye to the fact that during the conflict in the South-East, the Ukrainians were supposed to close their airspace, but did not do so. Instead of bringing them to justice, the Netherlands views the event completely incorrectly. Furthermore, the Netherlands involve experts from Ukraine in a joint investigation team... this group has produced an interim report, which does not take into account the data from the investigation conducted by our side. Our official representatives said that the investigation was not transparent, and Dutch Foreign



Minister Bert Kunders, summoned me and began to censure the representatives for it: they allegedly devalued the importance of the work of the investigation team... I answered that they cannot keep silent, they can talk what they think. And incidentally asked the question: "I hope you remember that the families of the victims applied with letters to the Russian leadership, to the Ukrainian President Poroshenko and to the US Secretary of State Kerry with a request to shed light on this tragedy?" I recalled that our side had already answered, Kerry had been silent for a long time, and then gave an answer, and Poroshenko did not give a response at all. To all of this, the Dutch Minister replied: do not politicize this incident. I asked Minister Kunders: "Do you know, Minister, that back in 2001 an airplane on a Tel Aviv – Novosibirsk flight was shot down over the Black Sea? You probably remember what the Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma said at the time: they said that it just happened..."

MJ: What was the Minister's reaction? Rather bitter... In short, public opinion here purposefully suggested that Russia is at fault. Unfortunately, at the level of contact with ordinary people this bitter mood is shared. Business remains interested in Russia, and we know that none of the Dutch companies are leaving our market. We are doing our best to maintain positive achievements and prepare the ground for the resumption of our cooperation.

MJ: You graduated from MGIMO 45 years ago. How did your education help you in your life and your career? My education was magnificent! We were taught the guidelines to a systemic view of matters, and had a taste for communication with people instilled in us and an enjoyment for work within the media arena also. My good friend, a fellow graduate and an Ambassador in another European country, once said: "A MGIMO student should always be ready to be awakened at two in the morning, given a random subject, and then be obliged to speak coherently on it for 10 to 15 minutes." 📖



VLADIMIR NAIDENOV ('78)
*Senior Adviser
Embassy of Russia in the Kingdom
of the Netherlands*

Having enrolled at the Faculty of Economic of MGIMO in 1973, I was allocated the Dutch language as my primary language. We were actually the first group of students to study Dutch in the Faculty's history. The fact is that the Soviet Union at that time began to actively develop economic ties with the Netherlands. In general, trade relations with this country have always been positive – since the time of Peter I. In the late '60s Russia built a gas pipeline to Europe, and the Netherlands has always sought to become a gas rotunda, a distribution hub, in Western Europe. At first, I had major problems with the Dutch language. It may have been the fact that I knew German well, and because Dutch is like German, I perhaps did not easily grasp it as a stand-alone language, it

seemed to me that it was like a German dialect. As one of the Dutch aptly said, when you hear Dutch, it sounds like a drunk English sailor trying to speak German. However when I graduated from MGIMO in 1977, I suddenly found myself in Belgium. I think that I was very fortunate. The fact is that the Belgians, unlike their neighbors who persistently refused to open Soviet Consulate-Generals in port cities, agreed to establish such an office in Antwerp. They needed a Dutch speaker so I was summoned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and asked: "What if you refocus your duties away from foreign trade to a more consular line of work?" I agreed: Belgium was an interesting opportunity for me, including being able to learn the Flemish language, which is very close to Dutch.

In Antwerp, my role was very stimulating but intense, I even had to locate a building for the Consulate-General. I searched the whole city and the surrounding area, inspected dozens of buildings, negotiated with brokers and, having shortlisted the best options, put my proposals on the table to the Consul-General. Antwerp was considered a key site for us. We had many ships entering the ports of all the Benelux countries, but especially many to Antwerp, in fact it had risen by two thousand in just a year. Antwerp was also first in terms of our joint ventures through which the state carried out its foreign trade operations.

Returning to Moscow in 1981, I began working in the First European Department, where I was gradually attracted to high-level translations, and over time this became my main specialization. During those years however, there wasn't much work, we had no contacts in Holland at the highest level, and delegations rarely came to us.

I have interpreted for an impressive list of leaders; the former Minister of Foreign Affairs Andrei Gromyko, former Leader of the Soviet Union Mikhail Gorbachev, and President Vladimir Putin. My last interpreting assignment took place in February 2014, when King Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte came to Sochi for the Winter Olympics. After this there was the Ukrainian crisis, notably the Boeing plane crash near Donetsk. Since that time we haven't had any liaison at this level with the Netherlands...

During this time I gained a wealth of experience, there were so many interesting episodes and humorous events that have somehow been saved to my professional 'memory piggy bank'. I must confess sometimes during negotiations I would get very anxious: at one point I remember, I began to interpret Gorbachev's speech from Russian to Russian. However he helped me, he understood that my brain was melting and encouraged me: "Calm down, it's all right" he said.

My most taxing day occurred back in 1986, during the official visit of the then-Prime Minister of the Netherlands Ruud

Lubbers and then-Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek. To begin with, from 9am to 3.30pm – so for five-and-a-half hours – I interpreted negotiations between the Soviet Foreign Minister at the time Eduard Shevardnadze, and Hans van den Broek. I then was whisked into a car, managed to eat a couple of sandwiches for lunch en route, and then continued to interpret for another two-and-a-half hours in the negotiations between our Prime Minister Nikolai Ryzhkov and the Dutch Prime Minister. I had to interpret both languages, because the Dutch interpreter could not work at that day for some reason. Then Prime Minister Lubbers attended a meeting with Soviet Leader Gorbachev,

I had major problems with the Dutch language, it seemed to me that it was like a German dialect. As one of the Dutch aptly said, when you hear Dutch, it sounds like a drunk English sailor trying to speak German

which was scheduled to run for 40 minutes, because at 8pm they both had to attend a performance at the Bolshoi Theater.

Instead of meeting for 40 minutes, they talked for three-and-a-half hours! Again, I was interpreting for both sides. Meanwhile the audience at the theater is waiting, the director delayed the beginning for half-an-hour, then for 45 minutes more, but still, there are no leaders. The audience began to jeer. Then someone from the Kremlin gave the order: start without the two leaders. The lights go out, the spotlights shine on the guests of honor box seat and an announcement is heard: "In honor of the Prime Minister of the Kingdom of the Netherlands ..." The box is empty, there is only Andrey

Kelin, then a young diplomat who was our backup as a spare interpreter – also with a brilliant grasp of Dutch. He is now the Director of the Department of European Cooperation of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In the theatre, an anthem plays, flags rise, Kelin gets up, people look at him and are surprised: what a young Prime Minister the Dutch have...

At one time I regretted that I, an Economics graduate, did not apply my economic knowledge in my career, that I hadn't worked in the sphere of foreign trade. However I believe economic knowledge for an interpreter is extremely useful. Nothing is wasted. ☑

CONSTANTIN VAN VLOTTEN

Honorary Consul of the Russian Federation in the Kingdom of the Netherlands, Maastricht

I have been working as an Honorary Consul of Russia for four years. The initiative for this post actually came from myself. I've been working with Russia for 25 years. At first, it was easier for me to work there, and secondly, it is no co-incidence that I am in this role as I have a Russian wife, Nadezhda, and also my daughter, who is now 25 years old and is, as the saying goes, the fruit of my love for Russia! Finally, I am a reliable partner of the Russian embassy: if there are any incidents with Russian citizens in Holland – for example if someone has problems with their children or difficulties with the police, they call me, and I come to the rescue. Recently here in the Netherlands we celebrated the 300th Anniversary of the arrival of Peter I to this land: to the territory of modern-day Holland and Belgium, and I took a very active part in organizing the events that the Russian Embassy held in Holland.

Back in 1992 I traveled to St. Petersburg because I wanted to start a restaurant business in Russia. At that time, the city was



lacking financial strength and there were no funds to restore any of the fine museums. I suggested the following scheme: to open a restaurant in the museum and put half of the profits towards its restoration. Having received the consent of the authorities, I opened the first restaurant in Pavlovsk, the second one in Tsarskoye Selo, then in Peterhof, the Russian Museum and the Menshikov Palace. The total investment in this project was one million Dutch guilders, equivalent to approximately €455 000. At home in the Netherlands I was asked: "Why are you not afraid to invest there? It is Russia!" However my business was developing successfully, there were no major issues, and also because I understood one very important thing: Russia is a country of law, and if you work honestly, you have nothing to fear.

In 1994 my business gained a Russian partner and a joint venture was created, and do you know whose signature was on the registration certificate? Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin, who at that time was Chairman of the Committee on External Relations at the Mayoral office. I have this document hanging in a frame in my office. When I met MGIMO graduates Mikhail Lebedev and Yevgeny Sklyarov and they told me about their wish to hold the first alumni meeting, I naturally offered them my restaurant. When I then learned that former Ambassador and former Minister of Culture Alexander Avdeev had also graduated from MGIMO, I added that actually it would be a great honor for me to host the event. Eventually when Alexander Avdeev visited, I took him in the castle Château de la Motte. After having many conversations

with this outstanding man, I understood why MGIMO is called the Russian Harvard. My beautiful castle, Château de la Motte, is located near Maastricht. This area is a remarkable place as the city lies at the junction of the borders of Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg. It is no surprise that it was here in 1992 that an agreement was signed on the creation of the European Union. On October 14 at the Château de la Motte, several dozen Russians, MGIMO alumni, gathered in the Benelux countries. They socialized happily, raised toasts for the alma mater and for strengthening Russia's relations with the Benelux countries. As a host, I asked to be allowed to say one important toast. I raised a glass for the health of Russian President Vladimir Putin – especially as it was a week before his birthday. ☑

LUXEMBOURG

This land seems like a rather fantastic country to many. There is something magical to be heard even in its name – the Grand Duchy...

The country's main practical advantage – and for that it is favored by the wealthy across the world – is its advantageous tax regime. In addition, prominent Russian musicians consider Luxembourg the ideal "jumpstart country": from here one can quickly travel to almost any famous concert hall in Europe.



VICTOR SOROKIN ('78)

Russian Ambassador to the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

The first dossier entrusted to young diplomat Viktor Sorokin in the First European Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was devoted to relations between the USSR and Luxembourg. Perhaps it was because the stars were aligned in such a way, but after many decades, he was appointed as Russia's ambassador to this country. "From the first day of work here," he says, "I keep repeating: Luxembourg, without exaggeration, became my first real love!"

MJ: Did your expectations of this country coincide with reality?
They even surpassed it! Studying the country, I contacted colleagues from Luxembourg, who lived in Moscow. They were amazing people, and I dreamed of seeing Luxembourg with my own eyes.

MJ: Why did you decide to become a diplomat?
I come from a family of diplomats. My father worked in Algeria and Morocco for many years and my mother is a Germanic expert. I enrolled at MGIMO back in 1973, and I chose the Faculty of International Law. Why? In those years there was simply a boom in international law, many different international documents were signed: on disarmament, banning weapon testing, and so on.

I studied at MGIMO with such pleasure, because studying law is also beneficial for the formation of your personality and your character. In addition to profound mastering of a vast amount of knowledge, jurisprudence also requires literalism, getting under the surface of documents: with all conventions, treaties and dossiers. This provides you with the skill of self-organization, it allows you to have the ability to swiftly solve a problem.
I was aiming at employment with the Foreign Ministry, and I was fortunate: I was accepted and assigned to its contractual and legal department. While there I honed my professional skills, learned how to conduct international negotiations, and what thorough preliminary preparations should look like. Also I learnt that above all – it is critical to know the dossier. One's ability to work with the dossier, to really understand it inside out: the history of negotiations, the points of view of the different parties, positions, counterargu-

ments; all of this should become second nature to any lawyer. Only by having the entire raft of evidence can you start negotiations with your opponents.

MJ: Where were sent for your first assignment?
To Congo, in Brazzaville. This was a country that at that time adhered to a socialist leaning, so we were very active in collaborating with the country, including in the field of military-technical cooperation. I liked the local people, they were raised with French culture, and there were a lot of French people based there too: doctors, teachers, and the theater was in French as well. I cannot say a single bad word about them – the French left a decent mark there. I also became familiar with Congolese culture, and began to study the local language of Lingala.
Upon return to Moscow I found myself working in the First European Department, it was there I received the very Luxembourg dossier!

MJ: Yet you weren't posted to Luxembourg?
No, but I do not regret this, because in 1986 I was posted to France. This was an exceptional period in the Soviet-French relations, which against the background of our perestroika process, developed quite successfully.
At first I was engaged in consular work. This allowed me to travel all over France – there were events constantly, and the young consul was sent to settle the situation in one remote place, and then another. We worked mainly with the Russian diaspora, we were engaged in the issue of the historic cemetery of Saint Genevieve-de-Bois, where many famous Russians have found their rest, so we actively

contributed to its preservation. There was also a specific tradition, and I hope it continues to this day; during the celebration of Victory Day, young diplomats were sent to major French cities and visited the graves of Soviet soldiers. This was organized quite solemnly, with wreaths laid and communion with compatriots and local authorities.
In my career, I was soon instructed to engage in culture. In Paris, the activities of the cultural group had a special significance: theater and ballet troupes regularly visited on tour, and various exhibitions and other cultural events were organized as well.
When I returned back to the Foreign Ministry, my diplomatic career began its most difficult and lengthy stage. It lasted for two decades – from 1992 until my departure to Luxembourg. Throughout this time I was engaged in Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova with Transnistria, in the role of Director of the Second Department of the CIS countries. I witnessed how Ukraine was gradually cut off from us... I was engaged in all the delegations, participated in all the negotiations; starting from meetings on the subject of the Black Sea Fleet and on the issue of the withdrawal of nuclear tactical ammunition on the territory of Russia, as well as in negotiations with the Ukrainians and Belarusians on how to allocate German funds for the equipment of Soviet troops – who were quickly withdrawn from Germany, even before the conclusion of a general political bilateral treaty. There were very difficult negotiations on the fate of the foreign assets of the former USSR. All countries, including Georgia and those of the Baltics, have ratified this treaty, Ukraine has become the only country that did not. Moreover, it sent out communi-



cations to all countries trying to prevent re-registration of the USSR's foreign assets for Russia. Yet thanks to the efforts of our diplomatic skills in practically all of these countries the assets in question remain Russian.

MJ: As it turns out, you, a Francophone, were engaged in Slavic issues for more than two decades?
This is true. I did have, nevertheless, a "connection" with France: through Yuri Dubinin, under the leadership of whom I was fortunate enough to work there. In fact, he invited me to begin work in the Ukrainian vein when he was appointed ambassador to Ukraine. There were other fine diplomats who taught me a lot, for example, former Russian Prime Minister

In 2016, we celebrated the 125th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Russian Empire and the Grand Duchy

Viktor Chernomyrdin, who soon became ambassador in Kiev. While working in Moscow as Director of the Department, I sensed all of his intellectual power and his state-like approach even though we were thousands of kilometers apart. He made a major contribution to the develop-

ment of Russian-Ukrainian relations, and across all areas, but above all in those of economy and energy – thanks to his ties at Gazprom, as well as the respect that Kiev's political elite had for him. Everyone knew him, and he solved many issues directly with the Ukrainian leadership. Chernomyrdin taught me to place more emphasis on the economic component of diplomacy. As before that because my degree was international law, I still believed that it was more effective to negotiate by preparing and signing documents.

MJ: You have been working in Luxembourg for almost two years now, in this beautiful castle...
By the way, this castle has a rich and dramatic history. Château de Beggen

was built at the end of the 19th century. During the Second World War, the supply services of the Wehrmacht were located here. When the Americans liberated Luxembourg, they also settled here. We began to rent it in the '50s, and in 1973 acquired the building and the land. The location is practically in the center of Luxembourg, it takes at most 10 minutes to reach the Ducal Palace or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We have a rich history of relations between Russia and Luxembourg. In 2016, we celebrated the 125th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Russian Empire and the Grand Duchy,

Dozens of Luxembourgers voluntarily appealed to the Soviet government, refusing to serve the Wehrmacht and asking to instead become enlisted by the Red Army. The then-Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker opened the memorial complex in the town of Tambov where Luxembourg prisoners of war are buried. Russia does a lot to support the complex

as well as the 150th anniversary of the treaty signed by representatives of the great European powers that gathered in London, establishing that Luxembourg will forever be neutral and independent. A key role in the signing of this document was played personally by Russian Foreign Minister Alexander Gorchakov. This can be witnessed by reading the correspondence between him and the Russian envoys in Paris and London. As a result, we defended our adjustments to the treaty and Luxembourg turned

from a vassal fortress city into an independent state. For this matter Luxembourgers are still grateful to us. We are grateful to the Luxembourg authorities for the fact that they are most attentive to the burial places of Russians who came here with the first wave of emigration at the beginning of the 20th century. At the time, about 200 Russian people settled in Luxembourg. They worked in factories and mines and lived in a friendly community, there was also a church parish. During the war years here many Russian immigrants were abducted by the Nazis and put into slave-labor. Russia, for its part, does a lot to support the memorial complex in the town of Tambov, where Luxembourg prisoners of war are buried. They were forcibly made to fight under the Wehrmacht banner, and thrown to their deaths on the Eastern Front. It is understood that dozens of Luxembourgers voluntarily appealed to the Soviet government, refusing to serve the Wehrmacht and asking to instead become enlisted by the Red Army. The then-Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker opened the memorial complex.

MJ: How do anti-Russian sanctions affect our relations? Luxembourg, of course, participates in the EU solidarity policy, but they do not put the carriage before the horse, and do not place obstacles in the way of promoting our business. We have many joint landmark projects in various fields, for example, in metallurgy. Luxembourgish metallurgical companies are participating in the steel mill modernization program in Russia and are implementing training programs for young Russian metallurgic experts. Relations are also developing in the field of space exploration, i.e. within the framework of cooperation with the Global Satellite Operator SES, which has its headquarters in Luxembourg. Recently, during a visit to Moscow of Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel, a promising future cooperative venture was discussed: the mining of minerals in space.

MJ: What is the most impressive feature of Luxembourg for you?

It is a very tolerant environment here. The country has absorbed numerous cultures, different religious denominations and languages. Multilingualism is very much in demand – thus even in banks here each employee is almost obliged to speak six or seven languages. Currently in Luxembourg there are about three thousand of our compatriots. There are three Orthodox churches – Russian, Greek and Romanian. Everyone is fairly contented living here, I cannot recall any cases of disputes over nationality or faith. ☑

SERGEY TITKOV ('88)
*First Counselor
Deputy Head of Mission
Embassy of the Russian Federation
in Luxembourg*

Back in 1982 I enrolled in MGIMO's International Relations faculty, during the distribution of languages I was allocated Somalian, a language of which I did not know even existed back then. The Somali language was so unfamiliar to us and so far from our linguistic ideas that during the first lessons, studying it even felt like some kind of entertainment. Somalia belongs to the Afro-Asian group, which used to be called the Semito-Hamitic language family. It is closest to Arabic in phonetics, principles and rules for constructing phrases and words, as well as vocabulary. This connection is no mere accident, Somalia has always been in the zone of influence of the Arab East, and even a member of the Arab League. The Somali system of values is strongly influenced by belonging to the Islamic religion. On the other hand, it is the language of a people whose mentality is radically different; not only from ours, but also from the world outlook of the peoples directly surrounding this country. Somalis are a nomadic people, they are fiercely independent, and proud people...

After graduating from MGIMO I started my career at the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was posted to Mogadishu. I rapidly became familiar to the exotic elements specific to East Africa; the climate, and the difficult living conditions. The structure of the embassy was quite limited, however we needed to manage many issues, not only of a professional nature: operational-diplomatic, consular and protocol issues, but also life support for the embassy settlement. Thanks to these challenges, I managed to receive invaluable experience, that of a universal diplomat. It was very useful later, and many of my former classmates who received appointments to major postings, had not developed these skills. However in 1991 a civil war broke out in Somalia, and the war was so appalling,



ing, that our embassy was forced to fully evacuate. Back in Moscow I continued my career along the African direction and was sent to Kampala in Uganda. During this period, there were very well-known tragic events in neighboring Rwanda, related to the ethnic conflict between the Hutus and Tutsis. This had a major impact on Uganda, as it sheltered a large number of refugees.

When people ask me what good "multilateral" work is, I usually answer: versatility! This is not in jest

Once back in Moscow, in 1996, I had the opportunity to change career direction and work within a common European sphere. From 1996 until I was appointed to Luxembourg just this year, I was essentially a "multilateral" expert – firstly in Brussels at the Permanent Mission then within the European Communities, and finally at the Permanent Delegation to UNESCO in Paris. When people ask me what good "multilateral" work is, I usually answer: versatility! This is not in jest. Perhaps those who work in a bilateral environment will not share my point of view, but in my opinion, working in a multilateral format broadens your horizons, you must be able to communicate with representatives of different countries and peoples, make the most of your knowledge, not to mention languages: not one, but at least two, and, finally, come into contact with the most diverse international problems. However "multilateral" work is not a straightforward matter. It requires effort to adapt to the specifics of different states, all promoting a variety of interests, as well as a high degree of nuance within issues. All of this must always be taken into account, when building tactics and reviewing a line of action at multilateral events and in relations with colleagues. Due to my "multilateral" work, I was able to meet a vast array of people, not only fellow diplomats, but also representatives of various Russian ministries and departments. This in particular aroused my interest in the economic sphere. I decided that I lacked economic knowledge, so I began studies at the Department of World Economy, Diplomatic Academy of the Russian Foreign Ministry, which I then graduated from back in 2006. In September 2016, I assumed the responsibilities of a "first mate" at our diplomatic mission in Luxembourg. I'm very pleased that I returned to the two-way track. Meanwhile, the diplomatic service is specific yet at the same time beautiful, it doesn't allow you to become isolated in one direction, one must change specialization and time and again prove your professionalism in another field.

ANTON BATURIN ('01)

*Solicitor
Wilson Associates, International
Lawyers
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*

My years at MGIMO were simply wonderful, I lived in a boardinghouse and, in the fullest sense of the word; I enjoyed my student years. I will never forget how much fun we had spending time together, singing songs to a guitar, and accompanying ourselves on basin and pan ‘drums’; discussions over various historical epochs and the destiny of our country and the world; the luxurious feasts we enjoyed on "fat days" and how we then lived on Chinese noodles at the end of the month, when our money was running out.

The study itself was fascinating and, what is the most valuable for me in a fundamental sense, was the field of international trade law, which I am now currently practicing. The lectures on Roman law by Professor Vitaliy Kabatov I have absolutely committed to memory, and the information I obtained from the foreign civil and commercial law course and the foreign civil processes course, were of particular use to me.

I can't praise the German language department of MGIMO enough! In Luxembourg, where I now live and work, the Germans and Luxembourgers say that I speak without an accent and they are always surprised when they find out that I learnt German in Russia.

In my final years of study I also began to practice law, I had the chance to work in a number of large law firms in Moscow. Then I trained abroad, later continuing my training in London, where I received the qualification of Solicitor of the Supreme Courts of England and Wales.

However fate blew me to Luxembourg. Once here I joined the local bar association, for which I was required to master Luxembourg law, and also learn French and Luxembourgish, which is one of the country's three official languages. Learning this language was greatly helped by my

knowledge of German, as they are closely related languages. The profession of a lawyer in this country was closed to me for a long time: foreigners could not practice law without passing language exams. After our firm won the court case in the European Court of Justice, coincidentally also located in Luxembourg, lawyers gained such a fantastic opportunity. Multilingualism is a common requirement for employees in Luxembourg and for a lawyer – it is a great advantage to speak several languages, because Luxembourg is a multicultural country, more than 40% of the population are foreign passport holders. Nevertheless, the profession remains rather conservative, lawyers still wear robes for meetings in the Luxembourg court.

At the moment I practice international commercial law, I manage M&A deals, and handle project financing and investment funds. In addition, I have been a member of the board of directors of the Luxembourg-Russian Chamber of Commerce for many years. We organize a variety of events to promote the development of trade, economics, and cultural relations between our two countries. Many joint conferences, seminars and meetings are held in conjunction with the Russian Embassy in Luxembourg and the Luxembourg Chamber of Commerce, and we actively participate in trade missions. Currently, I lead the legal and tax working group of our chamber. We organize annual legal conferences dedicated to the development of legislation and law enforcement practices



of the two countries. By the way, our alma mater has implemented an interesting project; for several years now we have conducted a competition among MGIMO students for the best research on the theme of "Development of trade, economics and cultural relations between Russia and Luxembourg". The prize is a trip to Luxembourg, a small monetary award and participation in one of the events held by our chamber. ☑

YANN FREDERIC WEIBEL-ZIMMER ('12)

*Internal Audit Manager
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*

For the overwhelming majority of French students, who like myself, turned their focus "to the East," MGIMO is one of those iconic institutions that many young people dream of applying to. MGIMO is more than just an institution of higher learning – whose name, by the way, the French can hardly pronounce, even after graduation – it is a University with a past and present filled with the ciphers of the ages with all their most incredible paradoxes.

I will always remember some of my lecturers; enthusiastic, dynamic and ambitious. Just one example is Alexei Svishchev. I will always recall the close friendships that I was fortunate enough to establish, that even led me to the shores of Lake Baikal... I also cannot forget Alexander Miller, father of the founder of the double diploma course run between ICN in Nancy, France and MGIMO. I am ever grateful to him for his persistent efforts to make us ‘Global Decision Makers’ of tomorrow.

In Luxembourg, I work in an international division of a company specializing in the production and sale of alcoholic beverages, I hold the post of Internal Audit Manager. I have to communicate and cooperate with a variety



of people, as I often travel for business to countries where we have subsidiaries. Among other duties, I am responsible for monitoring financial and business processes, preventing fraud, as well as formulating specific proposals for managers of these enterprises.

I could be meeting and liaising with the financial director of a small company in Argentina, and the CEO, who manages hundreds or even thousands of employees in Russia or in Europe. I'm not afraid to say that I have mastered this process; in fact it's even a kind of art. Thanks to my experience and knowledge, obtained while studying at MGIMO, I was able to develop the skills necessary for this profession: it is primarily a diplomatic approach and the desire to always find a consensus. ☑

EVGENIYA WEIBEL-ZIMMER ('13)

*Consultant
Head of Industrial Practice
Essential Values Executive
Company
Grand Duchy of Luxembourg*

At times it is said that MGIMO is a "family business". In my case, it really is. My parents, as well as my older brother, are all graduates of our University. My father's foreign travel to

Europe and North Africa back in Soviet times, as well as his excellent French, which he learned at MGIMO, all fascinated me and undoubtedly left me inclined to follow in his footsteps.

During my degree, I always tried to participate in the international aspects of student life as much as possible. Among my numerous unforgettable experiences I can recount the following: a trip to Geneva in order to become acquainted with the activities of international economic organizations; the joint organization of the first marketing business cases tournament, in collaboration with the owner of the company "Raketa", French Count Jacques Von Pellet ; and role-play games at MGIMO summer camp in Italy...

Another highlight for me were my studies and internships in France within the framework of my double Master's degree, in International Management. This degree is obtained through the partnership between MGIMO and the ICN Business School in Nancy, which played a key

MGIMO has become for me a "window to Europe" and has confirmed its status as a quality guarantor of both applied and linguistic knowledge

role not only in my professional choices, but also it was through this course that I met my future husband Yann Weibel-Zimmer. A year and a half of constant travel from Russia to France and back led to a painful romantic "trap", from which we found a way out of by getting married. We settled in Luxembourg and for four years we have been building our careers and a family... In June 2016, we had a son, Leonid.

Why Luxembourg? This small state, comparable in size to Moscow, is one of the most dynamic international labor markets in Europe, which is exclusively open to foreign specialists. There was also a pleasant coincidence waiting for me: at the time of moving here in 2014, the Russian Ambassador to Luxembourg was Mark Entin, who a couple of years ago, assisted me in

passing the European law exam at MGIMO.

I am the Head of the Industrial Stream at the headhunting company Essential Values Executive Search, part of the Menway Group, where I am responsible for client- relations and the supervision of recruitment projects for top management positions. In my work, I really appreciate the sheer variety of the industries I recruit for: from metallurgy to FMCG, as well as the opportunity to use French, English and Russian everyday. MGIMO is rated highly among my Russian-speaking clients, and belonging to the alma mater allows me to maintain a wide network of contacts among fellow graduates who often become candidates for leadership positions.

I can safely say that MGIMO has become for me a "window to Europe" and has confirmed its status as a quality guarantor of both applied and linguistic knowledge: it is this rare alliance that is the key to a successful international career. ☑



KAROLINA KHATKEVICH ('08)

Artist, Grand Duchy of Luxembourg

I'm a second-generation MGIMO graduate. My father comes from a renowned family of diplomats, he worked at the embassies in Tanzania, Brussels, and the Ukraine. Also in Cyprus, which is actually where I was born. One of his last postings was to Thessaloniki in Greece.

MGIMO is definitely a second home for me, I love the University's atmosphere and the staff who work there. I entered the institute to continue my family tradition, although from childhood I felt a very strong artistic call-

ing. I started drawing from an early age and, in parallel with studying at MGIMO within the International Management Faculty, I attended classes at an art school, specializing in watercolors.

The first foreign language I was allocated was French, and I am grateful to our French department, strict and demanding, they were really passionate about their field. Only now, after the course of time can I fully appreciate what a gift it was – living and working in Luxembourg, I speak French fluently, and my management knowledge helps me organize exhibitions.

After my Bachelor degree, I decided to continue my studies with a joint Franco-Russian Master's degree. A high level of knowledge and previous assessment allowed me to enroll in the second group of graduates without exams. Our course comprised of one year of study in Moscow, and then three months at the Business School of Nancy.

The main advantage being that we received two diplomas, which were easily recognized in Luxembourg. This can be a serious problem – many foreigners arrive and subsequently can not find employment, because their national diplomas are not recognized.

Another sign of fate was that Nancy, where I had studied for my Master's degree, was near Luxembourg. One way or another I came to the Duchy for an excursion. I liked it here so much that I thought: I'd like to be based here and paint local landscapes and organize exhibitions in such a beautiful fairy-tale place. This all later came to pass.

However as that all came later, there is more before this point. After graduating from MGIMO I went onto further tertiary education and enrolled in the Surikov Institute of Art. For several years I worked in Moscow's largest architectural bureaus, and then in 2015, circumstances brought me to Luxembourg, and my dream came true.

I am engaged with several activities here. Firstly, I conduct "Art Therapy" master classes – I teach both adults and children to paint with oils and watercolor. In the classroom they express themselves, discuss their problems and at the end they comment: now we are revitalized, thank you...

I also hold exhibitions within the context of cultural exchange. In 2016, during the year of



Russian culture in Greece, we celebrated the 1000th anniversary of the presence of Russian monasticism on Athos, and my father suggested I organize an exhibition dedicated to Russian painting. Firstly, with the help of the Russian Cultural Center in Greece, we opened the exhibition in Thessaloniki, and then it toured to Luxembourg, Brussels, and concluded in Zurich.

The structured knowledge base and management skills I obtained at MGIMO assisted me in implementing this complex organizational plan. In an effort to intensify cultural exchange, I work to contribute to the strengthening of relations between countries and their citizens.

In Luxembourg, I also realize myself as an artist, paint landscape paintings, and my artworks sell: in Europe there are very few realist-style painters with good skills in their craft.

An artist in Luxembourg will never be unem-

ployed. From time to time, the authorities give grants for projects that are of interest to the Ministry of Culture. I have already been invited to participate in a project, in which by the year 2022 they plan to proclaim one of the cities of the Duchy as its cultural capital. The project promotes the design of street graffiti for this city.

Finally, I am actively involved in the recently established MGIMO Alumni Club, which is conducting its activities in the Benelux area. The Club was founded by Mikhail Lebedev and Yevgeny Sklyarov, and by the way the latter, was the class monitor in my class at MGIMO. On October 14, 2017 a gala dinner was held, which brought together many graduates. The Alumni Club is most likely to be based in Luxembourg, because the registration of such organizations here only requires a minimal amount of bureaucracy. ☑

King of Saudi Arabia visits MGIMO



In October, a solemn ceremony took place, awarding an Honorary Doctor Diploma to the King of Saudi Arabia, the Keeper of the Two Shrines, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. The ceremony was opened by the Russian Minister for Education and Science, Olga Vasilieva, who stressed that it is such a great honor to welcome His

The Rector noted that at MGIMO the study of the Arabic language began 200 years ago – within the walls of the Lazarevsky School, the grandparent-institution of MGIMO



Majesty to MGIMO, which is known all over the world for the highest level of education, and knowledge of Middle Eastern languages and culture. The Minister remarked upon the important role of Saudi Arabia – the motherland of Islam – for Muslims around the world and also discussed new opportunities for interaction



between our countries, including in the fields of science and education. The MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov stressed that Russia and Saudi Arabia play a significant role in strengthening the stability of the Near and Middle East and the entire Eurasian continent. The Rector noted that at MGIMO the study of the Arabic language began 200 years ago – within the walls of the Lazarevsky School, the grandparent-institution of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. Today in the University's Scientific Library there is a unique collection of Arabic books and manuscripts, and studying the culture of the Near and Middle East has a worthy place as one of the most important disciplines of future international experts. The Rector commented that the Scientific Council, recognizing the outstanding achievements of the King of Saudi Arabia, and his great contribution to strengthening international peace and cooperation between our countries, had decided to award him the title of Honorary Doctor of MGIMO.

The King thanked MGIMO for "conferring the title, which I am pleased to receive from your renowned university, famous for its glorious history as a powerful beacon of science and education"

The distinguished guest thanked MGIMO for "conferring the title, which I am pleased to receive from your renowned university, famous for its glorious history as a powerful beacon of science and education." His Majesty also stated that the Kingdom has a particular regard to the upbringing of the younger generation, who will go on to participate in the creation of world progress and confront the challenges of our time.



King of Saudi Arabia Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud urged the universities and scientific institutions of our states and friendly countries to extend the bridges of interaction and cooperation in the name of strengthening a meaningful dialogue for the development of a scientific and research base in the name of our nations and the world.

Aleksandar Vučić – Honorary Doctor of the MGIMO



The President of Serbia, Aleksandar Vučić, visited MGIMO, where he met with the leadership of the University, gave a lecture and answered numerous questions.

Introducing the distinguished guest, the Rector of the university, Anatoly Torkunov, stressed that the relations between Russia and Serbia had always been based on the principles of mutual understanding and were very warm. "Your visit to Russia and MGIMO has a special character and significance. This is a gift to very many who love Serbia and are engaged in the country", the rector said, adding that in 2018 the two countries would be celebrating the 180th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

To the accompaniment of the Gaudeamus anthem and the applause of participants, A. Torkunov announced the unanimous decision of the Academic

"Your visit to Russia and MGIMO has a special character and significance. This is a gift to very many who love Serbia and are engaged in the country", the Rector Torkunov said

Council of the University to award A. Vucic the title of Honorary Doctor of MGIMO for his great contribution to building peace, cooperation and Russian-Serbian friendship and handed the guest a mantle and a diploma.

The President of Serbia noted that, "It is a great honor and pleasure for me to address the students, teachers and expert community of MGIMO which, according to the opinion of many, is the most elite tertiary educational institution in Russia."

President Vučić's doctoral lecture dealt with state sovereignty and the independence of fundamental decision-making. A. Vučić made especial mention of the support that his country provided to Russia, and also summed up the results of his meeting with V. Putin the day before.



On "Doing business in Russia" in Moscow President of Serbia noted that, "It is a great honor and pleasure for me to address the students, teachers and expert community of MGIMO which, according to the opinion of many, is the most elite educational institution in Russia."

According to the prominent guest lecturer, although Serbia is now following the path of European development, Russia nevertheless remains one of its key partners in all spheres of cooperation. Vučić particularly emphasized the fact that Serbia is the only European country that does not support the introduction of sanctions against Russia and opposes joining NATO.

"Serbia is the only country that wants to have its own army and maintain neutrality – we do not want to participate in any military alliance," the President said.

Vučić also touched upon the economic development of the region, relations with border states, accession to the European Union and the settlement of the Kosovo problem.



Trianon Dialogue in Moscow

In December, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, chaired by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, hosted a meeting of the Russian part of the Coordination Council of the Trianon Dialogue Forum, co-chaired by the MGIMO Rector, Academician Anatoly Torkunov.

The agreement to create a new platform for bilateral civil society interaction – the *Trianon Dialogue* forum – was reached on May 29, 2017 in Versailles during the talks between Russian President Vladimir Putin and French President Emmanuel Macron. The Trianon Dialogue is a framework platform for relations, both within civil society and throughout the professional communities involved in the development of bilateral relations, focused on achieving maximum presence in all spheres of bilateral public relations. The Coordinating Council consists of 16 authoritative representatives of various spheres of society from each of the two countries. France, in particular, is represented by such luminaries with long-standing ties with MGIMO as Patrick Puyane



(head of Total), Toma Gomar (director of the IFRI) and Marie-Pierre Ray (professor at the Sorbonne, historian). The Russian council members include important businessmen such as MGIMO graduates Vladimir Potanin, Boris Titov and Dmitry Korobkov, heads of state corporations, education, culture, theater, sports figures.

ed to establish a digital platform combining the functions of an internet portal and a social network. The platform features current information, discussion forums, text, audio and video content dedicated to bilateral relations in all their diversity. The central theme of the Trianon Dialogue in 2018 is *City of the Future*: the



The key event of the Trianon Dialogue in 2018 will be the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, to be attended by the Presidents of Russia and France. Last January, within the framework of the Gaidar Forum (the annual international conference in the field of economics, named after Russian liberal economist and politician Yegor Gaidar), the Trianon Dialogue expert panel discussion was held. The panel discussion was the first in a series of events on the subject of urbanism under this year's main theme: *City of the Future*. The co-chairs of the Trianon Dialogue were moderated by the Rector of MGIMO, A. Torkunov, and Ambassador P. Morel. The panel discussion was attended by numerous state and public figures, experts and business representatives from both Russia and France. Issues around Russian-French education cooperation discussed by the panel included: strengthening the international standings of universities in both countries;

The key event of the Trianon Dialogue in 2018 will be the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, to be attended by the Presidents of Russia and France

As the co-chairmen of the Trianon Dialogue, the Presidents of France and Russia appointed the Rector of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, A. Torkunov, and representing France, Ambassador P. Morel (French Ambassador to Russia in 1992-1996). Ambassador Alexander Orlov (Russian Ambassador to France in 2008-2017) and Chairman of the National Commission for Public Debate, Christian Leiri, have been appointed as the Dialogue's Executive Secretaries. The unique information and technical channel of the Trianon Dialogue is intend-



problems of urbanization will make it possible to affect the social, economic, transport, ethnopolitical and environmental aspects of life in modern megacities, small towns and the specifics of 'mono-cities.' For the following periods, education is designated as the central topic of discussion (*'University of the Future'*) as well as the digital economy and the protection of children's health.

the role of universities in civil society, best practices and new cooperation formats in the globalized educational environment. As Torkunov said, "We can describe the dialogue as being 'open source'. The *Trianon Dialogue*" has set a goal for this year of conducting the widest possible revision of the partnership and twinning arrangements between the cities and regions of Russia and France."

MGIMO at the Economic Forum in St. Petersburg



ance at the Forum to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin. Traditionally, a significant part of the speakers and forum participants are MGIMO graduates, friends and partners. Among them: Deputy Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Forum, MGIMO graduate, and member of the Board of Trustees and the Supervisory Board of MGIMO, Sergey Prikhodko; Governor of the Moscow Region and member of the Board of Trustees of MGIMO, Andrey Vorobyov; Igor Sechin, Chairman of the Board of the largest Russian oil company, Rosneft, and member of the MGIMO Board of Trustees; general director of the State Corporation Rostek, a member of the Board of Trustees and the Supervisory Board of MGIMO, Sergei Chemezov; Director General of the Information Agency "TASS", graduate of MGIMO Sergey Mikhailov; chairman of the board of the petrochemical company SIBUR Holding, graduate and member of the Board of Trustees of MGIMO Dmitry Konov and others.

In June, the MGIMO delegation headed by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov has traditionally taken part in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. The forum has been held annually since 1997 and is dedicated to discussing the key economic issues facing Russia and the world as a whole. In 2017, the forum was held under the slogan "In Search of a New Balance in the Global Economy". The headliner of the forum was India, which opened a separate pavilion "India House – Make in India", within which investment projects were presented in the fields of heavy engineering, mining, oil/gas industry and pharmaceuticals. Despite the Western sanctions against Russia, the Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi, the Moldovan President Igor Dodon and the then incumbent Austrian Chancellor Christian Kern were in attend-



The Rector of MGIMO actively participated in a number of events at the forum. Together with Valery Salygin, Director of the International Institute of Energy Diplomacy, he took part on the energy panel, where the head of Rosneft, Igor Sechin, gave a presentation. According to senior executive Sechin, Russian oil production is stable and, as there is adequate market demand for new supply, Russia can make a significant contribution to meeting the demand. "Rosneft guarantees the reliability of deliveries to its customers both in Russia and abroad," Igor Sechin said. MGIMO Rector Torkunov signed a number of partnership agreements at the forum, such as an agreement with the largest exhibition company, Roskongress, on the hosting of large international forums, where the university will train volunteers for specific functions and select foreign and Russian participants.



MGIMO at World Policy Conference in Marrakesh

November 3rd-5th, the 10th Edition of the World Policy Conference unfolded in Marrakech, Morocco

The Founder and Chairman of the World Policy Conference, IFRI President Thierry de Montbrial, the Archbishop of Constantinople-New Rome and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew 1st and the Chairman the African Union Commission Moussa Faki Mahamat all gave welcome speeches to the audience.

This year, MGIMO organized a round table entitled «Russia in Twenty Years» which was moderated by Igor Yurgens, Chairman of the Management Board of the Institute of Contemporary Development (Russia) and comprised as speakers Alexander Dynkin, President of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (Russia), Donald Johnston, Chair of the McCall MacBain Foundation and Former Secretary-General of the OECD and Yaroslav Lissovolik, Chief Economist at the Eurasian Development Bank. MGIMO was represented at this session by its Vice-Rector for General Affairs Artem Malgin and

the Head of the Department of Diplomacy Alexander Panov.

As A. Malgin pointed out in his speech,



"Russia is marching ahead, and now it is propelled by an idea of digital economy. I guess it has moved the Russian economy and the whole Russian economic regulation mechanism towards something new. These technical changes will bring democracy. Here I paraphrase Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Shuvalov. Democracy in Russia is very much linked to economic reforms, and the economic reforms go first.

Then, we see growing pluralism within the Russian elite. The divergence is there, and the divergence is a source of change. It is much stronger between the ruling elite and those who pretend to be in opposition.

I believe in President Putin, he will bring

"Democracy in Russia is very much linked to economic reforms, and the economic reforms go first"



many changes. These changes already started. First of all, there was a strong reshuffle in regional administrations. More than a dozen governors were removed from their posts and newcomers appeared. Some of the opponents were completely unknown even in Russia.

President Putin has already proved many times that he has a very strong desire to change, to start a new policy and be an EU man. Do compare his first term in the years 2000 2005. It was the best period, with the most EU propelled Russian foreign policy. If we compare what we achieved by the year 2005 with the situation nowadays, it looks like it was a completely different country. It looks like it was a completely different president, but it is still the same person.

Talking about key foreign policy points and changes I would first dwell upon the Russian-led integrations. We will experience stronger and faster development here, thanks to smooth relations with the EU and I hope with the Ukraine, as well as to eventual changes in Belarus and a newcomer to the Russian led integration, Uzbekistan. This country is open and tremendously rich, both in terms of natural and intellectual resources. Under the Soviets, Uzbekistan was always the intellectual leader of the region. After the dissolution of the Soviet Union, it was overshadowed by Kazakhstan's growth and ambitions. However, those who know Uzbekistan well, understand that it has outstanding resources of initiatives and of modernity.



"Stopping the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is a key element in Russia's European policy, a key point for better relations with the EU, and it is also one of the key points regarding stable development in Russia itself"

An absolutely key point for the next term is appeasement with the Ukraine and modernisation of relations with this country. Crimea will stay as it stays no, but it should be open to the Ukraine. Three years have proved that 50 years of Soviet rule linked Crimea to the Ukraine. It was as linked as it was with Russia.

Crimea could be a starting point for better relations, because of its transportation dependence on the Ukraine, economic and social dependence etc. However, the conflict in Donbass should be unconditionally stopped. These territories have no choice but to stay within the Ukraine.

Stopping the conflict in Eastern Ukraine is a key element in Russia's European policy. It is a key point for better relations with the EU, and it is also one of the key points regarding stable development in Russia itself."

MGIMO in Uzbekistan

In October, at the behest of Uzbek Foreign Minister Abdulaziz Kamilov, a three-day visit by a MGIMO delegation took place in Tashkent. Rector Anatoly Torkunov led the MGIMO delegation to Uzbekistan. During the visit, Rector Torkunov and Minister Kamilov discussed the development of bilateral relations between Russia and Uzbekistan, including in the field of academic collaboration: specifically edu-



cation issues and the potential implementation of double diploma programs. While in Tashkent the MGIMO delegation visited the University of World Economy and Diplomacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, where MGIMO Rector Torkunov and his UWED equivalent, Rector Jumanov discussed possible directions for the further expansion of cooperation between universities, in particular it was decided to develop a road map for the creation of joint Master's and MBA programs. In the future, it is planned to establish a Higher School of MGIMO on the basis of UWED, which will

train specialists in the field of international relations. At the end of the meeting, a solemn ceremony was held, awarding the title of Honorary Doctor of the UWED

Anatoly Torkunov and Abdulaziz Jumanov decided to develop a road map for the creation of joint Master's and MBA programs

to Rector Anatoly Torkunov. After the ceremony Rector Torkunov addressed students and faculty members of the UWED, as well as a group of the MGIMO alumni association in Uzbekistan. Alexander Panov, Head of MGIMO's Diplomacy Department also gave a well-received speech. The following day, the MGIMO delegation met with the Minister of Higher and Secondary Special Education of Uzbekistan, Inom Majidov and the leadership team from the Foreign Languages Center at the Ministry of Defense of Uzbekistan.



Summer School in Monaco



Last July, the Summer School, jointly organized by the School of Business and International Competences, MGIMO University and the International University of Monaco, was held in Monaco and took two directions. They were International Marketing: Premium Services and Wealth Management and Private Banking. The collaborative agreement between MGIMO and the International University of Monaco was signed in 2016 during a visit to Monaco by MGIMO Vice Rector Artem Malgin, during which the areas of cooperation were discussed. The premiere joint project was the Summer School in 2017. Participants of the two-week module in Monaco gained not only a fantastic charge of positive emotions from a perfectly organized program, but also brand new knowledge in the financial and marketing aspects of business. ▣

RISA: Russia and ASEAN

In September, within the framework of the 11th Convention of the Russian International Studies Association, the recurring conference "Russia and ASEAN in the APR: the dynamics of interaction, regional processes and the global context" was held.

The participants of the conference discussed a whole range of issues related to current development trends. Also dis-



cussed was the local and global context in which the regional integration processes of ASEAN member countries are now working under. Speakers drew the attention of the audience to a number of new trends in the political, economic and social spheres of the countries within South-East Asia. As a result of the addresses, there was a lively discussion about the current parameters of Russia's presence in the region, and the possibilities for further conceptualizing the partnership dialogue between Russia and ASEAN. [1]



ASEAN Forum in Vladivostok

MGIMO on an annual basis participates in the University Forum "Russia-ASEAN" which is held in Vladivostok, at the Far East Federal University (FEFU) as part of the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF). The Forum has become a platform for dialogue partnership between Russia and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

In September 2017, the University Forum was held by FEFU and MGIMO with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Russian Ministry of Education and Science. The Forum coordination was taken care of by the ASEAN Center at MGIMO, in cooperation with the General Secretariat of the ASEAN countries. Discussing promising issues of cooperation in the spheres of economy, education, science and culture were representatives from many different organizations; the government and business, academic and scientific communities, experts and prominent public figures of Russia and ASEAN countries. Noteworthy

attendees of the Forum included: Olga Vasilyeva, Minister of Education and Science of the Russian Federation; Yuri Trutnev, Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation – Plenipotentiary Representative of the President of Russia in the Far Eastern Federal District; Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO; Igor Morgulov, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation; Azer Talibov, Deputy Minister of Economic Development of the Russian Federation,

as well as prominent representatives from the Russian business world.

During the discussions, the Forum participants discussed the problems surrounding creating special economic zones, the mutual perception of Russia and the ASEAN countries, the strategic partnership with the Philippines – this was inspired by President Duterte's recent visit to Russia– and the diverse opportunities for university cooperation with the business community. [2]



Within the schedule of events for the Week was the scientific conference "The 50th Anniversary of ASEAN: problems and development prospects". The participants discussed a whole range of issues related to current trends in the development of the Association. Director of the ASEAN Center at MGIMO, Vladimir Sumskey, delivered a fascinating speech at the conference. The



Joseph Conrad. The film depicts the life of a Dutchman and his family in colonial Malaysia during the 19th century. The film screening attendees included students studying Malay and other South-East Asian languages.

MGIMO was also visited by Carlos Sorreta, the Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Russia. He addressed the students with a lecture on "Philippine Presidency in ASEAN in 2017: the core outcomes". He outlined future prospects

ASEAN Week at MGIMO

Last December, ASEAN Week was held at MGIMO. The week-long event was timed to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of the Association. It was organized by the South-East Asian Studies Club, in cooperation with the ASEAN Center at MGIMO.

second part of the conference consisted of three parallel youth sections. Students from MGIMO and other Moscow universities took part in the discussions. Speakers drew attention to the problems of regional integration in South-East Asia and highlighted a number of new trends in the political and socio-economic life throughout the member countries of the Association. They also covered such issues as: development levels of the digital economy in Southeast Asian countries, prospects for Russian business in the region, outcomes of the recent 2017 ASEAN and APEC summits, as well as the emerging issue of the Rohingya people, an ethnic group currently being persecuted in Myanmar, and finally, the issue of territorial disputes in the South China Sea.

A film screening of the adventure drama "Hanyut" ('Drifting') by Malaysian director U-Wei Haji Saari also took place. The film is based on the novel "The Caprice of Olmeyer", written by famous British writer



A business game in case-study format was also held, which simulated a meeting of the ASEAN Defense Ministers – ADMM Plus – with dialogue partners. The subject of the case was maritime security in the South China Sea. The game was dynamic, and each of the participants tried to reach the goals set, according to the position of the country they represented.

for the development of ASEAN and summarized the results of the Association's summit in Manila for the audience. The Embassy of the Republic of the Philippines also gifted the ASEAN Center at MGIMO's library a set of books by Filipino authors in both Tagalog and English. After the lecture there was a film screening of the Filipino film "Sonata".

The closing event of the Week was a wonderful cultural evening in which Russian students took an active part; along with students from Thailand, Indonesia and Vietnam studying in Russia. They were able to test their knowledge of both the South-East Asian region and the ASEAN organization with a quiz, watch traditional dances from South-East Asia, enjoy a presentation of Indonesian martial arts and even listen to the region's pop music. Guests of the illuminating evening were also able to taste delicious dishes of both Thai and Vietnamese cuisine. [3]

MGIMO in international ratings

In November, the international agency Quacquarelli-Symonds (QS) published its fifth anniversary issue of the ranking of tertiary education institutions of the BRICS countries, the QS BRICS University Rankings. The ranking, evaluating universities in Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, was first published in 2013. The 2017 ranking saw MGIMO going up four positions to rank 40 out of more than 9,000 universities across these five countries.

MGIMO strengthened its position on such indicators as the ratio of students to teachers (11th place across BRICS), the proportion of foreign students (20th place), the proportion of foreign teachers (77th place) and the reputation among employers (26th place).

At the QS-Apple conference, which was held from November 22 to 24 in

MGIMO became the first university in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, Centra

Taichung (Taiwan), MGIMO received a “5-star” QS certificate. MGIMO thus became the first university in Russia, Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and the BRICS countries to receive five QS stars. MGIMO’s strongest quality factor, according to the QS analysts, is its relationship with employers and its graduate employment rate, where the university scored the highest possible number of points. A total of 62 universities in the world have five-star QS certificates, including Harvard, Oxford, Yale, Princeton and Stanford, the University of Pennsylvania and Cornell University,

all of which are in the world’s top 5 to top 20 international QS rankings. MGIMO is also among the world’s best universities in the QS university employment ranking. During the prepa-



ration of the 2018 QS GER rating, QS specialists analyzed over 30,000 employer polls, the resumés of over 30,000 of the most successful university graduates, approx.. 130,000 contacts between employers and students online and on campus (at career days, lectures, master classes etc.) and around 200,000 internship agreements between universities and employers. This year, data from 600 universities around the world were studied in detail. This year, MGIMO was placed in the 201-250 range in the global QS GER rating, retaining its place in the top



The University strengthened its position on such indicators as the ratio of students to teachers, the proportion of foreign students, the proportion of foreign teachers and the reputation among employers



three best universities in Russia (after the traditionally lauded universities Lomonosov Moscow State University and St. Petersburg State University), demonstrating high results in individual performance indicators. In particular, our University took first place in Russia for graduate employment in the first six months after graduation, the third place in terms of graduates’ professional achievements, and fourth place in employer surveys, while at the same time improving MGIMO’s standing in Russia with regard to its existing connections with employers. 7

"Fletcher Seasons" at MGIMO

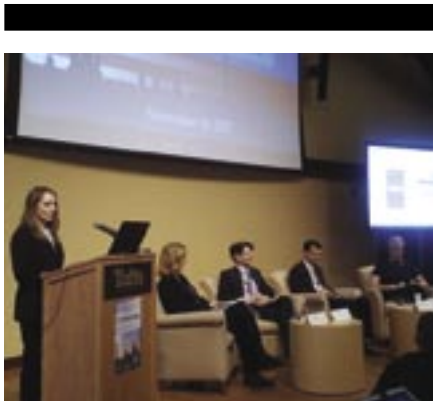
A delegation from MGIMO, visited the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University. The delegation consisted of the Vice-Rector for Masters and International Programs, Andrei Baikov and the Head of the Department of International Law, Alexander Vylegzhanin. The Fletcher School was established in 1933 by Harvard and Tufts



University, it is the oldest academic center in the United States, which provides training for Master degree students in international relations, diplomacy and international law. The visit took place for the launch of the cooperation program, which provides, in addition to traditional exchanges, online courses using video technology on the theme of the current state and prospects for Russian-American relations. Alongside this impressive agenda is a series of joint scientific publications and thematic seminars about the international legal regime in regards to the Arctic and other common territory, information security and cyber-security. The new project complements the long-standing ties between the two universities: MGIMO students annually participate in the global student Forum held in Boston at the Fletcher School, and in both the 2014-15 and in the 2015-16 academic

years, the former director of the Harriman Institute at Columbia University, Professor Robert Legvold of the Fletcher School, conducted a course on Russian-American relations for MGIMO students.. The goal of the course, which was conducted in a video-conference format, was not only to expand the knowledge of the students about the current state and de-

The visit took place for the launch of the cooperation program, which provides, in addition to traditional exchanges, online courses on the theme of the current state and prospects for Russian-American relations



velopment trends of Russian-American relations, but also to deepen the understanding of the opposing party’s views on international processes. A delegation from MGIMO visited Boston in November as part of the strategic partnership program. The main element of the trip was the first joint conference on Russian-American relations, which brought together leading experts from Russia and the United States. At the opening ceremony, which was attended by more than 200 people, the Dean of the Fletcher School, Admiral James Stavridis and First Deputy Permanent Representative of Russia to the United Nations, Pyotr Ilyichev delivered speeches. The participants discussed the problems of transforming the international order and restructuring global governance, issues of information security and cyber-security, as well as the situation in priority importance regions for both Russia and the United States. In this regard, special sessions were devoted to the issues of Europe, the Middle East and the situation on the Korean peninsula. Representatives of MGIMO also discussed with the leadership of the Fletcher School the prospects of inter-university cooperation, including the launch of two new diplomas in 2019 for further training in the areas of "International Relations" and "Jurisprudence", under the profile of "International Economic Law". 8

MGIMO at the Jessup Competition in D.C.

Last April, the 58th Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition was held in Washington, where 127 teams from 65 countries took part. This year was again marked by another record in the history of the Competition – national and international rounds brought together



a massive 650 student teams from around the world. 2017 was an extremely successful year for MGIMO: after going to the first round play-offs amongst the best 32 teams, with four wins after rounds with Belgium, China, USA and Cyprus teams, and at 17th place overall, our students defeated participants from Sofia University, Bulgaria at the next stage of the competition, then in the next stage won against a team from the traditionally strong Singapore Management University, and so reached the quarter-finals, only then losing to the representatives from India, National University of Law in Orissa. Of the other four Russian student teams, the team of the Higher School of Economics only reached the first round playoffs stage. Having achieved this, the MGIMO team consolidated 2015's success, where they reached the quarter-finals for the first time

in the history of MGIMO participation. At the end of the competition MGIMO took the fifth place. At the competition, MGIMO was represented by Faculty of International Law students. The Jessup Competition is the largest in terms of the number of participants and one of the most prestigious contests for students

The final of the Jessup contest in 2018 became one of the most interesting and intense in the history of Russian rounds of law faculties from around the world. During the contest, students place themselves in the roles of state representatives in a dispute before the International Court of Justice, which raises topical issues of international law. In particular, 2017's dispute concerned the current international legal problems in regards to the distribution of natural resources, the protection of cultural heritage, the return of cultural objects and compensation for the creation of migrant flows.

In February of this year MGIMO students appeared in the finals of the national stage of the Philip C. Jessup International Law Competition, which was traditionally held at the University. The final of the contest in 2018 became one of the most interesting and intense in the history of Russian rounds. Students MGIMO and Moscow State Law University defended the positions of fictional states on contemporary problems of nuclear disarmament and international arbitration. During the two-hour round, judges William Burke-White, Professor of the University of Pennsylvania, Anastasia Kushleiko, Regional Counsel for the International Committee of the Red Cross on legal issues in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Geir Ulfstein, Professor of International Law at the University of Oslo, tested their knowledge of international law and the ability to apply theoretical knowledge in practice. Following the results of the meeting and after a long deliberation, the judges awarded the title of national champion to the team of the Moscow State Law University, recognizing that deciding on the winner was not easy. The title of the Best Speaker of the round went to the participant of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Anastasia Sheindlina. The achievements of the team members were also acknowledged at the oral presentations – Alexey Nikitin took first place, and Anastasiya Sheindlina and Alexander Kirilov took 14th and 15th places in a group of 150 contest speakers. The MGIMO team will continue the contest as part of the delegation from Russia at the international stage of the contest, which will be held in April in Washington. The Philip C. Jessup Competition, the world's largest competition for law students, is being held in Russia for the sixteenth time. Annually more than 2000 students of 700 legal tertiary education establishments from 90 countries participate in it. In Russia, the championship has been held since 2002. Annually, the competition gathers participants from 50 different Russian universities.

... in Riga

In March, the preliminary stage of the Willem C. Vis Moot Competition in law was held in Riga, Latvia. The team from the International Law Faculty of MGIMO won an honorable second place, and student Dmitry Zinchenko was recognized as best speaker of the contest. In Boston, USA, the final oral hearings of the Foreign Direct Investment's competition of Investment Arbitration Moot (FDI Moot) were held, in November. This saw MGIMO's International law Faculty team successfully enter the Top 10 at the international competition on investment arbitration. The FDI Moot competition is held annually, in English, and involves a mock arbitration between a foreign investor and an investing state. There are two stages: the preparation of written memoranda for the plaintiff and the defendant on the presented problem and then the verbal defense



of the position in front of the arbitrators – who are recognized professionals in the field of international investment law. More than 50 student teams from various universities across Europe, Asia, North and South America, as well as Australia took part in the competition. The MGIMO team proved itself with excellent results both as a consequence of the

evaluation of written memoranda and their performance at oral hearings, and thus they entered the Top 10 overall, ahead of any other Russian teams participating in the competition, as well as the prominent team from the Harvard Law School. Throughout the oral rounds, MGIMO students achieved a convincing victory over the team from the University of Ottawa in Canada, which was subsequently recognized as the best overall team in the competition this year, alongside teams from universities in China and Spain. Student participation in international legal competitions is carried out thanks to the support of Alisher Usmanov, Deputy Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, and graduate of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations.

... and in Amsterdam

In November, the final stage of the prestigious international tax competition 'Young Tax Professional of the Year 2017', hosted annually by the consulting company Ernst & Young, was held in Amsterdam, the Netherlands. The winner of the International Final of the competition and now the bearer of the title 'Young Tax Professional of the Year 2017' is Natalya Averina. She is a first-year Master's student from the International Law Faculty of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations, in the field of International Financial Law. Serious preparation at the Department of Administrative and Financial Law and at the Faculty of English Language helped the obviously brilliant Natalya to win.



This woman became the first-ever Russian to win, in the entire history of the contest. The winner will be able to acquire direct experience in the Ernst & Young offices in London, New York and Hong Kong, as part of a 30-day tour around the offices of the global network, and will also have the opportunity to work with the world's leading tax experts. The winners of the national stages of the contest, from 21 countries across the world, became the participants of the international final stage. The international finale consisted of several parts: each participant received a case task covering various multiple aspects of international taxation, while the objective of the participants was to assess the taxation as well as business risks that a theoretical client company might have in this situation.

Megagrant of the Russian government for MGIMO



The project, funded by a grant of 60 million rubles (USD \$1 million) envisages the establishment of a permanent Laboratory for the Analysis of International Processes at MGIMO

American William Wohlforth, an outstanding researcher in contemporary international relations theory, the history of the Cold War and American foreign policy. The infrastructure of the laboratory will allow the research team to systematically analyze and forecast international processes

MGIMO has won the prestigious grant of the Government of Russia to support scientific research under the auspices of leading scientists for the first time. The MGIMO application was the only political science project to receive a grant.

MGIMO has been awarded a grant to implement its project *Transformation of the system of international relations in the context of a change in the technological order*. The project aims to generate important new research into how to analyze and accurately forecast national security threats against the Russian Federation arising from the key international challenges of the 21st Century, notably including growing conflict, deepening regional instability and a paradigm shift in the technological order.

The project, funded by a grant of 90 million rubles (USD \$1.5 million) envisages the establishment of a permanent Laboratory



for the Analysis of International Processes at MGIMO. The study is to last three years (2018-2020) with the possibility of extension if significant results are achieved. The laboratory will be headed by US

with the aid of advanced data processing technology. MGIMO and Wohlforth already have a fruitful long-term cooperation: the professor regularly gives lectures and heads scientific seminars at MGIMO. ■

A century of the Russian Revolution



MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov. The word "Great" is not a tribute to history, but a fact. The revolution radically affected the social and political practices of most of the states on our planet. The construction of a new world in which particular respect was given to people engaged with labor and the need to protect their social interests forced the capitalist countries to pay attention to the improvement of the situation of workers and various strata of the population, the development of social security, the expansion of the horizon of civil rights and, in the long run, to address the social orientation of the state itself. The

In 2017, one of the key priorities of the Russian Historical Society (RHO) and the Foundation "History of the Motherland" was the theme of the revolutionary events that took place a hundred years ago. Over 2017, hundreds of historical and educational events dedicated to the events of 1917 have been held in this country and abroad. The main task RHO set for itself, as the largest association of professional historians, was a comprehensive analysis of revolutionary events and their consequences, in order to protect society from the recurrence of such terrible tremors.

At the end of last year, a joint meeting of the Russian Academy of Sciences and the RHO took place – "Centennial of the Great Russian Revolution of 1917: scientific results", during which scientists tried to give a multilateral and objective assessment of the importance of October 1917. The conclusion of scientists is that the revolution cannot be regarded as an absolute evil.

"For Russia, revolutionary events of last century are an essential and integral part of national history, which for decades determined the economic, scientific and cultural development of the Russian state," said RHO co-chairman,



"For Russia, revolutionary events of last century are an essential and integral part of national history, which for decades determined the economic, scientific and cultural development of the Russian state," said MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov

revolution gave a powerful impetus to the national liberation movement in the colonial countries and the awakening of national self-consciousness in all former colonies and semi-colonies." The scientists see the main global significance of October 17th is the fact that the revolution "has tempered the appetites of world politics, promoting its general democratization in the '60s and '70s". MGIMO Rector Torkunov said; "The emergence of the principles of self-determination and de-colonization, the peaceful settlement of international disputes and the rejection of war, in many respects is also a merit of Soviet diplomacy," he added, "Which, as we know, became the product of a state that arose as a result of the October Revolution of 1917." ■

International Summer Schools in Odintsovo



In July, the International Summer School was held at the Odintsovo MGIMO campus. Over six weeks, 42 students and 7 representatives of leading energy companies and government agencies from 22 countries received intensive training in the modules Empirical study of Russian politics, Russian energy policy & international energy cooperation.

Leading professors and experts from MGIMO, the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and organizations including the Moscow Carnegie Center, Gazprom and the Federal Antimonopoly Service taught at the summer school.

Students of the school actively communicated with their fellow students from Russia and abroad by participating in various meetings and discussions. For example, the international student conference Russia's Position in World Politics: Foreign Strategy Challenges and Prospects was held in the framework of the training module Russia's Foreign Policy: Current Challenges, attended by summer school students,



students from the Odintsovo campus and forty students from the Dutch universities of Leiden and Amsterdam, representing the Dutch Association of UN Students. The conference discussions provided an in-depth analysis of modern international relations and the world economy, as well as the current state of the European Union, the United States, China, Russia, India and the most 'sensitive', volatile regions of the world. The summer school also offered a rich,

Over six weeks, students received intensive training in the modules Empirical study of Russian politics, Russian energy policy & international energy cooperation

fascinating cultural program: attending students took part on unforgettable excursions to the Cathedral of Christ the Savior, Arkhangelskoye Palace, the museums of the Kremlin and other Moscow sights; took an evening yacht cruise on the Moscow River, and visited plays in both the Bolshoi Theater and the State Kremlin Palace. The students toured around the TV studios of Russia Today, where they met with the channel's creators and channel hosts, and could see the process of preparing and conducting a live broadcast. The foreign students were free to use the magnificent sports infrastructure of the campus, which has 12 world-class gyms, including a swimming pool. The school participants highly appreciated the



infrastructure of the MGIMO campus in Odintsovo, noting that they had received rather comprehensive information about the real situation in the country, about foreign policy and Russia's development prospects. They also expressed their readiness to actively participate in international events held by MGIMO in online conferences and discussions, establishing cooperation relations between Odintsovo branch and the participating summer school students' home universities.

The modules also include an integral extracurricular component aimed at acquainting participants with Russia, its life, traditions and culture

Several suggested considering the possibility of holding a module on the culture and history of Russia.

Three ten-day summer modules were organized at MGIMO. The first module, for business and international relations lecturers from American universities, was held as part of a joint course offered by the MGIMO School of Business and International Competences and the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE). The module was devoted to issues of international law; energy sector cooperations, energy diplomacy and politics in Russia and CIS countries; new sources of energy, and developments in the Arctic region.

The second and third modules, held at the Odintsovo MGIMO campus, were entitled Russia's Foreign Policy: Current Challenges. In addition to the foreign policy agenda discussed at the lectures and round tables, attending students received training in global security, international cooperation and Russian public-private partnership practice. The summer modules also include an integral extracurricular component aimed at acquainting participants with Russia, its life, traditions and culture.

Henley students in MGIMO summer program

Within the collaborative framework between the School of Business and International Competences, MGIMO and the Henley Business School, University of Reading, Great Britain, last summer the MBA students of this UK school received a one-week training internship on “Doing business in Russia” in Moscow.

The collaboration between MGIMO and Henley Business School already has two years of fruitful work. As such, MGIMOs second-year master's students completing "Branch Marketing of Goods and Services" and "International Finance" modules, will have the opportunity to go to Henley for the second year to study.

During the summer program, 28 participants – representatives from Finland, Ireland, South Africa, Italy, Poland and the Czech Republic – visited offices of large corporations such as SAP, Deltacredit Bank, Pioneer Group and Amec Foster Wheeler to familiarize themselves with the experience of doing business in Russia. The participants worked together to solve cases developed by the company's employees, and also took part in the presentation

of the MGIMO Business Incubator. At the Russian Council on International Affairs, a lecture was given for students by the leading political scientists of this center. They also met with British Ambassador Laurie Bristow at his residence, where they attended a lecture on the economic climate in Russia, and they were able to

ask questions directly to the head of the British diplomatic mission. The two final days of the internship were devoted to the work on the final group projects, the presentation of which took place on the last day of the visit. In addition to the educational module, a rich cultural program was also prepared for



MBA students of the UK school received a one-week training internship on “Doing business in Russia” in Moscow

students. The guests visited museums at the Moscow Kremlin in the Red Square and became participants in a treasure hunt and excursions along the Moscow River. The MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov



welcomed the Dean of the Henley School of Business, Professor John Bord. During their meeting, a wide range of opportunities for cooperation between MGIMO and the Henley Business School was discussed. The parties agreed to launch the MBA program of the Double Diploma between MGIMO and Henley Business School, and discussed the further development of the double Master programs and even the prospects for launching joint PhD programs and a double Bachelor degree. Professor John Bord noted the high level of preparation and the conduct of the MBA International Study tour program, organized by the MGIMO Business School. Professor Bord mused upon on the most promising areas of cooperation between MGIMO and Henley Business School; the areas of finance, art management and management in the sports industry.

Upon completion of the internship, certificates were handed out to the participants.

In December, the Dean of the Faculty of International Economic Relations Oleg Pichkov and the scientific Supervisor of the Master's program "Branch Marketing of Goods and Services" Olga Atasheva, visited Henley Business School. This MGIMO delegation met with the Dean, John Bord and Deputy Dean Elena Kalyuzhnova. They discussed further issues of expand-

organization of internships for students and lecturers were also discussed. During the visit, an agreement was reached to launch a new practical-oriented program in the spring of


The MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and the Dean of the Henley School of Business, Professor John Bord agreed to launch the MBA program of the Dual Degree Diploma



MGIMO – HENLEY BUSINESS SCHOOL Dual degree BA program "Financial Economy"

The new program is launched at MGIMO Odintsovo this year. It is designed for applicants who have a good mathematical and linguistic background, for those who are interested in economy and finance, who want to get educational experience not only in Russia, but also abroad. The unique feature of the program is a two countries schedule - the first two years are spent in Russia, the last two are taken in the UK. At the end of four years of BA study, students receive two diplomas – MGIMO and Henley Business School.

ing cooperation within the framework of joint training of Bachelor, Masters and Post-graduate students in such specialties as economics, and finance. Questions of sharing experience and

2018, within which professors and a group of 30 students from the Henley Masters program will visit the "Business Incubator" of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations. 

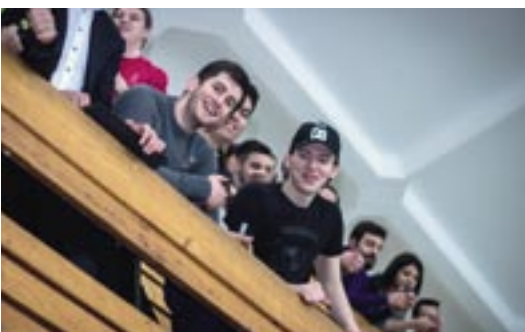


Carles Puyol at MGIMO

MGIMO Volunteer Center welcomed Carles Puyol warmly, they treated him with cheesecakes and meat pies. He liked them but did not eat much. It's all because of his professional stamina, as he had to play a football match with two teams of MGIMO students and volunteers. Puyol opened a FIFA volunteer program in Russia. And now he is pleased with it. "I'm sure that the 2018 championship in Russia will be held with great success for your country and your people," said the football player.

Carles knows firsthand how great is the role of volunteers: "We depend on them, whether everything will go well and smoothly or not", he said. "Finally, the volunteers create the image of the country. The fans of other national teams see them first, when they come to the championships."

On the field of MGIMO sports center, the great Barcelonian proved to be in excellent form, he was running around the field and was not cutting any slack to young players. And all that time a friendly cheer was coming from the stands: "Puy-ol, Puy-ol!"



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