

MJ

#2/2018

The Trianon Dialogue in Versailles

Aleksandar Vučić

“Serbia is a genuine friend
of the Russian people”

Patrick Pouyanné

“We need a renaissance
of courage in our leaders”

Paul de La Morinerie

MGIMO's French connection

**MGIMO –
Sciences Po**
25 years
of Excellence

“The relationship between France and Russia has something unique. It arises from the attraction and mutual recognition of two peoples enamored of absolute, beauty and truth”

Jacques Chirac





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A number of anniversaries were celebrated at MGIMO: School of International Relations has turned 75, School of International Economy – 60, Journalism School – 50



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Konstantin Palace is the state residence of the Russian President just outside St. Petersburg. It is often referred to as 'Russian Versailles'. And it is no coincidence that V. Putin chose this venue for negotiations with his French counterpart



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MGIMO's exchange agreement with Sciences Po and Business School of Nancy opened doors for international students to Russia and France



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Anton Tokovinin (left) is in charge of MGIMO's Proxenos Chorus. Boris Belozеров is a member of two clubs – of the popular Russian TV game show "What? Where? When?" and of "World Energy Policy" club



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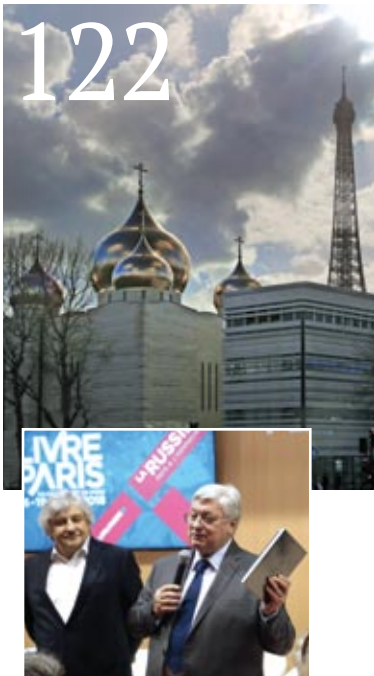
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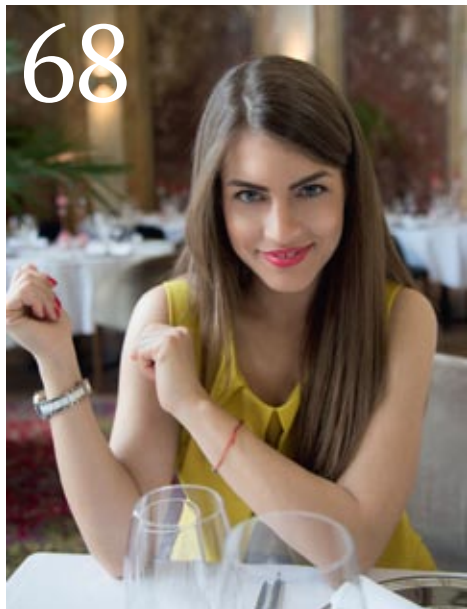
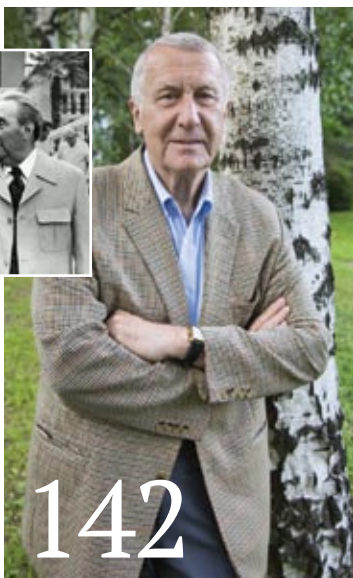
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As President Chirac said, 'the relationship between France and Russia has something unique. It arises from the attraction and mutual recognition of two peoples enamored of absolute, beauty and truth.' MGIMO graduates – both Russians and French, who live in France, share this understanding. The MGIMO Alumni association comprises folks of all walks of life. How do they do?

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For MGIMO, the year 2018 was marked by the activities of the Trianon Dialogue, an initiative aimed at connecting Russian and French civil societies. The initiative emerged from a meeting between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron that took place at the Trianon Palace in Versailles.

The Palace, a residence of French kings, has played an important role in our bilateral relations. Realizing the symbolism of the venue, President Macron suggested Versailles for a meeting with President Putin in May 2017. He probably sought to correct the historical mistake made by Louis XIV in 1698. While on a tour of Holland, Russian czar Peter the Great requested a visit to Versailles, but Louis XIV politely declined to invite him as he did not want "to be inconvenienced" by the czar's visit.

Vladimir Putin reciprocated Macron's courtesy in May 2018, when the French President came to attend the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum and the Football World Cup. President Putin welcomed his French counterpart in the Konstantin Palace, the President's countryside residence on the coast of the Gulf of Finland. This palace is known as Russian Versailles. It was commissioned by Peter the Great in the early 18th century as an official imperial residence to outshine the famous palace in France.

This amazing story illustrates how nations should cultivate relations. Despite the relentless pressure of sanctions that the West has been imposing on Russia since 2014 for the Crimea's "return home," the Russian and French leaders have spearheaded a rapprochement of the two countries' civil societies.

MGIMO is playing an important role in promoting this initiative; the Russian leadership empowered MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov to co-chair this civil society forum; Ambassador Pierre Morel co-chaired it on the French side.

Read in this issue about the Trianon Dialogue's multifaceted activities, carried out with support from MGIMO, as well as about other international trends backed and promoted by our university.

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Editor-in-Chief

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Photo by Igor Lileev

GOLF IN MGIMO

The third MGIMO Rector Golf Cup was devoted to the 10th anniversary of golf at the University



Mikhail Kuzovlev (Economic Relations, 1989)
First Vice-Chairman of the Board
VEB.RF

Since 2015 MGIMO students have been training and participating in tournaments on the championship golf-course, “Nakhabino”. Currently, MGIMO’s team is in the lead of the All-Russia Golf Championships for students, which have been held for three years under the sponsorship of the Russian Golf Association and the Russian Student Sports Union. And that was how the idea of holding MGIMO Rector Golf Cup emerged. Now the Cup is popular, not only with MGIMO students and graduates, but also with Civil Service employees, businessmen and foreign diplomats.



As the **University’s Rector, Anatoly Torkunov**, put it: “Our Cup unites MGIMO graduates of different years who are keen on playing golf. The tournament is also very important for the professional development of the University’s students, as it gives them an opportunity to communicate with representatives of our Diplomatic Corps who are regularly invited to this tournament”.





75TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE IR SCHOOL

International Relations, oldest MGIMO School

The School’s Head, professor Yuri Bulatov (‘72), started off the official ceremony. He congratulated all those present on the jubilee and reminisced about the School’s outstanding alumni who are now the pride of the alma mater. “Our School became a donor for other MGIMO Schools, namely the International Law

School and the School of International Journalism,” he remarked. “Many students transferred there and are now an honor to these Schools. Seventy-five years is a period of time sufficient for strong traditions to establish and dynasties to be founded. In the 2000s we saw the first wave of graduates whose parents and grandparents both graduated from our

School. We’ve calculated that in four years we will have a wave of graduates whose great grandparents are our graduates.”

The guest of honor, Alexander Grushko, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia (‘75) expressed his congratulations. He read out a congratulatory address from Sergey Lavrov (‘72), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, in which the minister emphasized: “The School creates a talent pipeline for Russian Foreign Service, its graduates render

Torkunov: “The School has a great number of achievements, but one thing is crystal clear: we have to keep going. We endeavour to succeed at the highest level in this highly competitive environment. And I am convinced that we will do so”

commendable service at the head office and foreign representative offices, ranging from minor to key positions.”

Anatoly Torkunov (‘72), Rector of MGIMO and also, offered his congratulations to all those for whom the School of International Relations is an integral part of life. Having described the School as “the core of the University,” he recalled the time of its formation, the hard post-war years and paid tribute to its founders who made invaluable contribution to the establishment of the University at large, not only the School of International Relations; he also reminded the listeners about the students who were the first to be admitted to the University after its foundation, many of them war veterans. “It is a great pleasure to welcome Nikolay Ivanovich Lebedev, who was the Dean of the School of International Relations at the time when Yuri Bulatov

and I studied here, and then Lebedev later headed the University,” he said.

Torkunov pointed out that “the School has a great number of achievements, but one thing is crystal clear: we have to keep going. When I was the Dean of the School of International Relations in late 1980s, there were only two schools of international relations – ours and the one at the RUDN University, well, and one more at Kiev University. Nowadays such a school is a part of 70 universities, and we have to face tough competition. I am



Bessmertnykh: “MGIMO opened the doors to life for outstanding politicians and diplomats whose names went down in history. It is home to so many iconic thinkers!”

positive that the School will continue setting the pace in terms of introducing all sorts of innovations related to development and extension of programs and will make every effort to boost MGIMO international ratings. No doubt, it is of utmost importance for MGIMO to remain truly international in all respects.



Top foreign educators are joining our renowned Russian professors in their work at the University. It is critical because we are living in an open world, and we should have the opportunity to discuss and to be aware of different viewpoints, in order to progress. We endeavour to succeed at the highest level in this highly competitive environment. And I am convinced that we will do so”.



Alexander Bessmertnykh – the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the USSR (1991), who was the first alumnus of the School to hold this position, emphasized that “MGIMO opened the doors to life for outstanding politicians and diplomats whose names went down in history. There is no other university which is home to so many iconic thinkers!”



THE JOURNALISM SCHOOL
HAS TURNED 50

A relatively new school – that of International Journalism – appeared at MGIMO in 1968. Now it celebrates its 50th anniversary!

Last September a major football event was held at the University’s stadium to celebrate the anniversary. On a sunny Saturday

day everyone joined in to take part in festivities, including veterans, represented by Ambassador Yan Burlyay (‘70) and the Vice Dean Yuri Kobaladze

(‘72), and art stars, with the minister of culture of Greater Moscow Region Narmin Shiraliev among them. Make-up artists painted the faces of all

the fans with the insignia of the School of International Journalism, the jubilee number ‘50’, or the flag of the country whose language a person studied at MGIMO. Students offered a great choice of souvenirs: from fan ribbons and badges to ‘jubilee sit upons’ with the fest logo and the text ‘Congratulations!’ in 53 foreign languages taught at MGIMO (well, indeed, any student/graduate, especially those who studied oriental languages, will tell you that their bottom does play a principal role in studies!). However, the game itself was in the focus of everybody’s attention. The alumni team proved that it could not only survive afield for two halves, but

Make-up artists painted the faces of all the fans with the insignia of the School, the jubilee number ‘50’, or the flag of the country whose language a person studied at MGIMO

also shoot and even score! Ivan Fedoseev was rock solid at the goal, he got a prize for that: a pumpkin of extraordinary beauty grown by the Head of the Department of International Journalism Nikita Shevtsov. Alexander Skvortsov scored the first goal and he was the one who made the score 3:3, which resulted in the penalty shootout. Muhammad Timurziev, a Master’s student in his first year of studies, excelled as always, and led the other players of the student team. The latter were better at penalty kicks and won the match with the aggregate score of 6:5. The Dean of the School of International Journalism Yaroslav Skvortsov presented the winning team with the trophy. But, of course, the overall winner was the School at large, and celebrations of the School’s anniversary went on! 🍷





In five days after the jubilee match all those related to the School of International Journalism gathered together like a big family to raise a toast to the past fifty years and to eagerly anticipate the upcoming fifty ones.



degree course ‘New Media and Strategic Communications’).
The Dean of the School, Yaroslav Skvortsov (’89), read aloud a congratulatory address of Sergey Lavrov (’72), the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. In particular, the address specified the following: “Over half a century of fruitful activity the School has forged its own traditions and become a talent pipeline in the field of international information. We are proud that a number of its alumni rightly form a part of the ‘gold reserve’ of national journalism”.

Analoty Torkunov, MGIMO Rector, addressed the alumni and friends of the School. He recalled how half a century ago Yaroslav Shavrov, the first Dean of the School of International Journalism, enlisted freshmen from other Schools, first and foremost the School of International Relations; the Rector also welcomed Professor Yan Burlay, Ambassador, a representative of the first class of graduates of the School of International Journalism (by the way, his grandson completed a Bachelor’s program at the School of International Journalism in 2018 and was enrolled on a Master’s



After that Rustam Abiev, a graduate of the School of International Journalism, and assistant to the Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation Vladimir Medinsky (himself a graduate of 1993), read aloud a congratulatory address of the latter. In particular, the address stated the following: “The School of International Journalism of MGIMO has always been a generally acknowledged brand. Being a hive of student activity and a place of work of leading Russian specialists in the field, the School provides for continuity of generations and encourages artistic freedom”.
The guests of the event enjoyed a foot-tapping and at the same time very emotional, kind and cordial performance

Vladimir Medinsky: “MGIMO’s School of International Journalism has always been a generally acknowledged brand. Being a hive of student activity and a place of work of leading Russian specialists in the field, the School provides for continuity of generations and encourages artistic freedom”

of a Russian pop-star Valery Meladze. The guests had a unique opportunity to ask the singer to perform their favourite songs from his repertoire. For instance, a traditional Georgian song ‘Tbiliso’ was performed especially for the Vice-Dean Yuri Kobaladze, a Georgian by origin.
The celebration culminated at the concert and a banquet after it. Toasts to success of the School of International Journalism and the health and well-being of its academic staff, students and friends were proposed until late at night... ☑





MEO: 60TH ANNIVERSARY

The anniversary was celebrated in the context of an ongoing reform of MGIMO's economic school. "The Rector entrusted me with a challenging task," says Oleg Pichkov, Dean of the School of International Economic Relations (MEO) and a MGIMO graduate. "We had to find a delicate balance in preserving the School's best practices and introducing new elements that would meet the demands of the time and the needs of both employers and our students."

On the occasion of the School's 60th anniversary, Alexander Pankin, Deputy Foreign Minister of Russia and a MGIMO graduate ('85), gave



The strategic agreement on cooperation between MGIMO and Rosbank is signed by MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov and Chairman of Rosbank Management Board I. Polyakov (MEO, '01)



Pankin praised the achievements of the School's graduates and the high quality of professional training in international economic relations offered by MEO

a congratulatory speech. He praised the achievements of the School's graduates and the high quality of professional training in international economic relations offered by the School. MEO

Pichkov: "We have to find a delicate balance in preserving the School's best practices and introducing new elements that would meet the demands of the time and the needs of both employers and students"

received congratulations from virtually all countries and regions of the world. Congratulatory cables were sent by the UN Secretariat, State Duma (Russian parliament's lower chamber), Russian Foreign Ministry, Federal Tax Service, as well as by the colleagues from other economic schools and departments in Russia and the CIS.

The anniversary featured a landmark event, the signing of a strategic agreement on cooperation between MGIMO and Rosbank, one of Russia's biggest commercial banks. The agreement was signed by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and Chairman of Rosbank Management Board, and a MEO graduate, Ilya Polyakov. 📄



FROM ZIONISM TO INNOVATIONS

MGIMO has held a course on the History and Modernity of the State of Israel. The Ambassador of Israel to Russia, Harry Koren, told MJ about this successful project and how it will develop.

The Embassy of Israel in Moscow and MGIMO have a good record of cooperation. The recent projects include an event held at MGIMO to mark twenty five years since Israel and Russia restored diplomatic relations.

As a new Ambassador, who started working in Russia only a year earlier, Harry Koren was looking for interesting cooperation projects and found out that Russian universities offered no academic courses on modern Israel. “Actually, all courses taught in Moscow and Saint Petersburg cover only the ancient history of Judaism, whereas we would like Russian students to explore modern Israel. So I suggested such a course to MGIMO’s Rector Anatoly Torkunov when I met him on the sidelines of the Saint Petersburg Economic Forum. My suggestion was met with understanding and interest, and I appreciate it. The course on the History and Modernity of the State of Israel proved to be so successful that we decided to continue it.”

MJ: What academic competence do you think this course, essentially, helps to develop?

It helps to understand the phenomenon of the rebirth of the State of Israel and trace it from the late-nineteenth-century movement for the return to the Jewish homeland back to Israel’s becoming a modern and innovative state, a pioneer in the sphere of high technology. Just forty years ago Israel was mainly an agrarian state exporting oranges. Today Israel’s per capita income has outpaced the European average, overtaking such countries as Italy and Spain. I like the concise description of our country’s evolution: “From Zionism to innovation.”

MJ: This course seems to be practical rather than purely academic. It gives students an insight into Israel’s success story, doesn’t it?

You are absolutely right. I would like this course to teach students about the workings of Israel’s economy, its economic miracle and its secrets, as well as, such important issues as the establishment of the State of Israel, diversity of its society, national security and others.

MJ: So what is the secret of Israel’s economic miracle?

The secret lies in Israeli people’s peculiar strategic thinking which primarily implies

Just forty years ago Israel was mainly an agrarian state. Today it is a modern and innovative state. I like the concise description of our country’s evolution: “From Zionism to innovation.”

flexibility. To put it simply, we think two or three steps ahead rather than just one. When people use the term “strategic thinking,” they usually mean the matters of security, defense and diplomacy. However, these can be effectively addressed only in a prosperous economy. Israel’s economy is small but very successful. So I would be happy if Russian students in the course could look at Israel’s success story as a good model for Russia to follow. I want them to think about the following question: how can Russia retain its huge energy potential and at the same time modernize its economy making it knowledge-based and driven by human intellect, the country having no shortage of brains? We are grateful to MGIMO for the support.

MGIMO is one of Russia’s leading academic institutions and the main university training diplomats. I have never checked it myself, but MGIMO graduates are sure to outnumber other graduates among diplomats, not to mention that the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs is a MGIMO graduate too.

We are aware of the high quality of MGIMO’s education in oriental studies. Both in the Soviet times and now, MGIMO has always produced many good Arabists. It is not surprising: your country has always paid far greater attention to the Arab world and its 22 states that surround one non-Arab country, i.e. Israel.

MJ: Can the competences developed by this course help a student find an interesting job?

As far as I know, a MGIMO graduate can count on a job in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or internship in an international company. A line on their CV saying that they did a course about Israel can put them in good standing in applying for a job to a company that operates in Israel or to our Embassy. We are looking for talented young people; a couple of years in our Embassy will give them experience and a good knowledge of the State of Israel. Such experience may prove even more useful for work at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 



PASCAL LOROT: FRIENDSHIP RANKING

For the first time Pascal Lorot, now the President of an independent think tank *Institut Choiseul* and founder of the project “100 French Economic Leaders of the Future” (Choiseul 100 France), found himself in Moscow in the Soviet times. At that time he headed a BNP office in the country. In the early 1990s, he advised Jacques Attali, the President of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Travelling extensively on business, he saw much of the Soviet Union and Russia. “I took a keen interest in the country, and really liked the people I met. Russia is a much more advanced and forward-looking country than is usually thought in the West. It has opened up to the world. Russia’s young people are highly educated and active. They are willing to shape the country’s future.” So Lorot did not hesitate much. “Seeing how many young people are involved in Russia’s economy in very different ways, I decided to create Russia’s top 100 and arrange for them to meet with the leaders of high French ranking. The goal of that meeting was to connect Russia’s young economic leaders with their French counterparts, broadly speaking, French and Russian civil societies. Our countries play an important role in Europe; in a sense, structuring the continent.”

The project was launched in France. Institut Choiseul found talented entrepreneurs, young top managers, visionaries seeing themselves as potential national leaders in charge of the country. At the very beginning, the ranking was topped by Emmanuel Macron, who was then an economic advisor to President Hollande. Later when Macron was elected President, his French top 100 ranking fellows were very encouraged by his success. “Over the last year, we have been working closely with L’Observatoire, a think tank affiliated to the Franco-Russian Chamber

The goal is to connect Russia’s young economic leaders with their French counterparts, broadly speaking, French and Russian civil societies. Our countries play an important role in Europe; in a sense, structuring the continent



of Commerce and Industry, and MGIMO to find the most talented young leaders of Russian economy. We have selected

one hundred, though, of course, there are many more of them. These young people participated in a big event that took place in

Moscow on 18-19 April.” On the first day, a gala dinner at the Metropol Hotel connected the Russian top 100 ranking with fifty guests from France, including participants of the French ranking led by Bris Rocher, President of the Yves Rocher Group and grandson of the company’s founder, and French officials. Russian political elite were among the honored guests. “That was an important networking event; it laid the groundwork for a friendship between the young people of France and Russia drawing on our past experience. On the one hand, our past is a lot to learn from too. On the other hand, we are looking forward to cooperation in future. On the second day, we held two round-table discussions in partnership with Sberbank and its CEO Herman Gref, one focusing on digital economy, the other, on smart cities. These helped our experts and leaders to define general areas and specific projects for potential cooperation. Like its French counterpart, this stage of the Russian project is called Choiseul 100 Russia. The second stage is planned for the Autumn, Russian participants are invited to France to take part in a similarly big event. “We aim at helping them to build up personal ties, which will translate into business projects geared towards future success. This will eventually help Russia and France to upgrade leadership on the continent.”





ANATOLY TORKUNOV: “OUR AIM IS TO MULTIPLY THE MGIMO IDENTITY”

Interview: Igor Drobyshev
Photos: Igor Lileev

Early in 2020, the current MGIMO Development Strategy will expire, so Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of the University, and his team are to develop a new one next year. The rector's vision for the new strategy pursues a complex duality – expanding the university's globally comprehensive nature whilst enhancing education quality, and preserving tradition along with developing the university's best features. ‘In other words, as MGIMO expands and grows in numbers, its identity should multiply, not blur. Besides, it is our evolving, and yet always distinct, MGIMO identity that attracts the best student talent in the country,’ he adds.

MJ: Introducing a new ‘Agricultural Attache’ program appears to be an example of this identity evolution, doesn't it?

Yes, this is one of the outcomes of this significant trend, which we have been working on for a while. Since last summer we have been collaborating with the Ministry of Agriculture and its head, Dmitry Patrushev, and also engaging with our trustees from the agricultural sector and regions. Together we have developed a range of new syllabi for foreign affairs experts, including ‘International Agricultural Markets and Foreign Economic Policy in the Agro-Industrial Complex’. It is a one-year program (two terms) and, indeed, will prepare ‘agricultural attaches’. It is supported by ‘Rosselkhozbank’ and works in partnership with the two best universities in the country – Timiryazev Agricultural Academy and Kuban State Agrarian University.

As you see, we are breaking into new professional spheres, forming networking clusters in many academic areas with a wide range of higher education institutions. As a result, in as short as two years, we have set up joint Master programs and MBA courses in sports diplomacy and sports management as well as international commodities and raw materials markets. Part of the modules for these programs will be provided by The University of Physical Education and The Mining Institute (Moscow State Mining University), respectively. Last autumn we had a second advance enrollment for an MBA ‘Digital Economics’ program, co-run with Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute. The first enrollment was last February and revealed a huge untapped demand for these kinds of programs.

MJ: What will the cornerstone of the Strategy be?

The University of International Relations has the broadest international focus of all Russian universities, graduating professionals with a unique set of professional skills, preparing them for the competitive global market and for work in the international political, legal, and information environments. At the

M GIMO has the broadest international focus of all Russian universities. At the same time we are constantly expanding the traditional boundaries of the term ‘international’, in line with our motto, ‘MGIMO goes beyond diplomacy!’

same time we are constantly expanding the traditional boundaries of the term ‘international’, in line with our motto, ‘MGIMO goes beyond diplomacy!’ As I said before, preserving unique academic standards in diplomatic training, we will keep entering new professional niches in the international arena, mastering applied subjects in economics, law, IT, state policing and corporate management.

A MGIMO graduate must be well above other graduates of the best Russian universities; he must be equipped with a unique set of skills. What can be more unique than, for example, providing language training in 53 languages?

Both federal and institutional academic standards for all Bachelor programs include two compulsory foreign languages. Master programs in ‘Diplomacy’ and ‘Oriental Studies’ also include two compulsory foreign languages.

MJ: MGIMO is not only entering new professional spheres but also expanding its presence globally – in educational markets in Russia and beyond.

MGIMO today comprises two campuses within the Moscow conurbation: in Vernadskogo Prospekt and Odintsovo in outer Moscow. There is also a small-scale educational facility in Geneva. There are plans to set up an autonomous department of MGIMO within the Far East Federal University in Vladivostok. Finally, this year we are opening two branches – in Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Baku (Azerbaijan) – both of which have a lot of potential.

Last year was a milestone for us, our University reached an important threshold, with almost 10,000 students enrolled in core full-time Bachelor and Master programs.

Opening the branches in Tashkent and Baku are also major benchmarks. In both cases there was an official request from heads of state. The Baku branch is part of the ‘Action Plan for Developing Key Areas of Russian and Azerbaijan Cooperation until 2024’, signed on 1 September 2018 in the presence of the two presidents.

As for Uzbekistan, the pace of collaboration is nothing short of impressive. At the end of last year we were officially notified that Uzbekistan had granted free use of a whole building in the centre of Tashkent to MGIMO. The branches will operate within the



MGIMO's Board of Trustees meeting, chaired by S. Lavrov, Russia's Minister of Foreign Affairs

free market with additional partial state funding to meet national demand, especially in the case with Uzbekistan. Both branches have a similar operating model – they are compact, focused mainly on Master programs, which usually underpin bilateral economic relations. These programs include ‘International Private, Commercial and Financial Law’, ‘International Finance and Risk Management’, and the business IT program ‘System Analysis and Socio-Economic Forecasting’.

MJ: Master programs are also in great demand at the main campus of MGIMO. Yes, for two consecutive years we have had equal numbers applying for our Bachelor and Master programs. This is a new trend for the University, which involves a serious upgrade of academic staff requirements – older students are more difficult to work with, they are more demanding and tend to be more direct and open in voicing their complaints. Today, MGIMO (jointly with Odintsovo branch) awards Master degrees for 73

As MGIMO expands and grows in numbers, its identity should multiply, not blur. Introducing a new ‘Agricultural Attache’ program appears to be an example of such identity evolution. It is our evolving MGIMO identity that attracts the best student talent in the country

programs in 15 academic fields. Almost thirty programs are officially co-run with our foreign partners, which award two, and sometimes even three, Master degrees at the same time. The dual-degree projects in collaboration with the

prestigious Fletcher Law School (USA) and Seoul National University are in the final stage. This year we are also starting several projects in partnership with British universities.

MJ: How is the digitization process going at MGIMO? In 2018, we upgraded our IT hardware and framework; this year we will be focusing primarily on digitizing the course delivery process. The tasks are wide-ranging – from introducing distance-learning courses to integrating and adapting our existing computer facilities to traditional course content in economics, management and social politics. Another direction in development is the Odintsovo campus which now runs programs in “IT in Business” both for Bachelor and Master degrees. Besides, our vocational training facility, MGIMO College, successfully runs the “Applied Information Science” module. Incidentally, a team of students on this program will be representing the College

in the ‘WorldSkills Russia’ section of the ‘Young Professionals’ championship, showcasing their key digital skills: web-design and development; network and system administration; and business software solutions. Another segment we pin much hope on is a Master program in ‘Artificial Intelligence’, created in conjunction with two business partners – ADV Group, represented by one of our trustees Dmitry Korobkov, and Microsoft. Microsoft provided all the necessary software solutions to our Master program unit

A jubilee year is a unique opportunity to promote and secure a new niche for our university, especially in the international arena. We would like the MGIMO’s 75th Anniversary to leave a long lasting tangible heritage

and a team of training instructors. These purely digital programs are run in parallel with innovative program at the ‘International Institute of Energy Policy’ (a MGIMO School) in economics and innovation management. It is important to mention that digitization and IT-based subjects trigger a change in teaching approaches too; for the first time in the Bachelor and Master program in ‘IT in Business’, we are introducing a project-based approach to graduate final assessment.

MJ: This year the university is celebrating its 75th Anniversary. A jubilee year is a unique opportunity to promote and secure a new niche for our university, especially in the international arena. What is special


about this jubilee is that it will take place throughout the whole year, which will make the celebration closer and dearer to everyone within the MGIMO community. The celebrations will be launched in May, when our overseas alumni come to the 5th MGIMO Alumni Forum in Tashkent. In June, the business alumni community will take part in the St. Petersburg World Economic Forum; in October our academic staff and alumni from R&D facilities and think-tanks will meet at the 12th RISA Convention; for art

involved in the jubilee activity; we are using the “crowd sourcing” model. There has been a call for entries for a personal success, long read competition for alumni, and the winning stories will be published in MGIMO Journal, on social networks, and on the Facebook Alumni Association website. An important groundbreaking concept to be introduced in the jubilee year will be ‘generational continuity’ or ‘mentoring’. We are planning to start a new initiative – Trustee-led lectures – and integrate them



Paris, France. At the meeting devoted to 25th anniversary of partnership between MGIMO and Sciences Po

and culture lovers, there will be a music festival in Gorky Park and a traditional art-exhibition; the main sport events will include MGIMO Open Olympic Games as well as MGIMO Football and Golf Cups. These events will culminate in a gala evening in Moscow on 23 October. There will be a very diverse representation of the MGIMO community

into the curriculum. 1990-2000 alumni who once were active members of student clubs and scientific societies will be invited to return to MGIMO in the jubilee year to share their experience and take part in their former club activities but at a new, modern stage of their life. We would like the 75th Anniversary to leave a long lasting tangible heritage. 

EXCLUSIVE

Interviews and photos by Igor Drobyshev

25 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

In 1994, Paris Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po) and MGIMO concluded an agreement on student exchange. This program turned out to be so vibrant and popular that in 2005 it evolved into a full-scale double-degree Master's program. This is a remarkable benchmark for this kind of partnership. The project eventually developed a whole new industry of effective Franco-Russian educational contracts. This year both universities are proudly marking 25th anniversary of this agreement.

VANESSA SCHERRER

*Vice President for International Affairs
Sciences Po,
Paris*

As Sciences Po’s Vice President responsible for international projects, Vanessa Sherrer welcomes dual degree students from MGIMO who come to study at Paris School of International Affairs (PSIA) Sciences Po. Under Vanessa Scherrer, PSIA has become of one of the world’s leading IR schools teaching 1500 students from all over the world. In accordance with the estimates of the QS rating agency, Sciences Po ranked fourth in the category ‘Politics and International Relations’ in 2017.

MJ: How do you evaluate the cooperation between MGIMO-University and Sciences Po over the past 25 years?

We are truly proud of our partnership with MGIMO. As far as my evaluation is concerned, I will probably express an original idea. The point is that at the beginning of this path, when we started cooperation in the 90s, we could not anticipate how things would develop. For both Sciences Po and MGIMO this was one of the first international programs of this kind. What is interesting is that owing to its original and new character, we were able to attract students from different countries. And today, half the dual degree students come from Russia or France, and the other half from other countries. Hence the conclusion: when joint efforts are made and everything possible is done for the program to succeed, it suddenly becomes popular internationally. Another point is that the program enabled us to attract absolutely brilliant students. And professors and lecturers who teach similar courses in Sciences Po and MGIMO-University have developed an important quality, namely mobility that helps them to become better acquainted with each other.

MJ: What assets has Sciences Po acquired as a result of its cooperation with MGIMO?
To begin with, our joint program with MGIMO and the Free University of Berlin were an impetus for us that led to a large-scale movement for the

internationalization of our university. Today a half of the students we teach are from foreign countries. The solid partnerships we have built with leading international universities are the pillars that underpin our growth on a world scale.

The educational community is always an “agent of change.” We must evolve, because we work with young people who are our future, people who by definition portend future trends

Another asset is the ties with MGIMO, I should say, and the fact that your university was chosen as our leading partner in Russia. Because of MGIMO, Sciences Po has become a more noticeable presence in Russia and ultimately in the world. When you choose a key education partner in a country, you certainly consider not only the quality of education, but also that institution’s authority in the domestic education market.

MJ: It is true that Russia has no other brand like that, a school for diplomats that has existed since the Soviet time.
In my opinion, our partnership with your university has made us well-

known in Russia. By the way, this is a general characteristic of our relations with other partners in China, the US and Europe. This “circle of partnership” is very important. Joint efforts are needed to develop together.

MJ: As a quarter century has passed since the beginning of the cooperation, it may be the right time to ask: Are we on the right track, or should something be changed?
The educational community is always an “agent of change,” so to say, an initiator of change. We must evolve, because we work with young people who are our future, people who by definition portend future trends. And the university is the place where this future takes shape. We have to change; the only thing we must never change is our aim, which is to look for the best possible opportunities for our students, to be at the forefront of the most advanced research, and to maintain the highest quality of education.

MJ: Does this mean that we are on the right track?
Yes, because a track that leads to a higher quality is always the right track. And if there is a need for changes to achieve this, we should be bold enough to make them. For example, Sciences Po takes great pride in its Bachelor’s program, the foundation of our higher education. With that in mind, in the recent years, we have profoundly reformed it and are satisfied with its new quality. My point is that we changed not because we wanted and decided to do so,



but because without doing so we would have risked remaining in the past.

MJ: To date, hundreds of MGIMO students have obtained a degree from Sciences Po. Does this make you feel satisfied?
Our dual degree students from Russia do very well in their studies, they possess a number of qualities that let us consider them brilliant students: they know foreign languages very well, they are good at analysis, and they are hard working. MGIMO students give us an element of cultural diversity and an alternative view of the world.

When you choose a key education partner in a country, you certainly consider institution’s authority in the domestic education market. In my opinion, our partnership with MGIMO has made us well-known in Russia

As for our exchange students, they often opt for courses taught in French, which is untypical of foreign students and this proves that there are high quality languages courses at MGIMO.

MJ: Recently, MGIMO has focused on the internationalization of education. We are already the most prominent Russian university in terms of internationalization: 20% of our students are foreigners. However, Sciences Po is not just an international, but, actually, a multicultural university. Could you share your experience with us? What are your ways of attracting students from all over the world?

As I have previously said, 50% of Sciences Po’s students are not French. We are a truly international university. As for the methods and approaches, I would like to name a few. First of all, today we have 470 student exchange agreements and a little over 40 agreements on dual degree programs with universities all over the world. These are genuine close partnerships of symmetric nature, that is to say, under these agreements, annually we dispatch and receive at least 1 student. These programs make us popular in different regions of the world. So, in the first place you should broaden the geography of your partnerships. Furthermore, when launching a dual degree program we carefully choose a partner university. Therefore, it is not by chance that we chose MGIMO 25 years ago; we were appealed by its considerable reputation and a solid historical foundation. In the same thorough way, we select partner universities across the world. For this is a matter of confidence. If a student of mine is given a credit point by a partner university, we need to be confident that the assessment is highly reliable on a par with that of Sciences Po. Thirdly, there should be an attractive offer of subjects that would be appealing to students from different parts of the world. Coming from different cultural

and educational backgrounds, they share one thing, in particular, the belief that the diploma that they would be awarded, will change their life and help them achieve high results. And to attract students, the choice of disciplines should be out of the ordinary. By the way, this point is related to the question about the need to change that you have previously asked. What is taught should always be adaptable and should be worthy of tomorrow’s leaders. So, the third way, not directly related to the process of internationalization, is readiness to meet high international educational standards. We should enter the market offering the best product not only in terms of education, but also research, and practice. Therefore, similarly to MGIMO, practitioners in the field teach at our university. Finally, a fourth important tool is a strategy of internationalization. Which depends on the political will of the head of the university, and his willingness to become an international player in this market. This is not even a tool, it is the leader’s philosophy that consists in the belief that the citizens of your country – students of your university (in our case the French) will benefit much more if they study in an international student environment, they will gain important multicultural experience without leaving their country.

MJ: MGIMO is twice as young as Sciences Po, which is one of the oldest and most prestigious universities of the world. However, MGIMO has an advantage at least in one area, I would say, a hallmark that makes us distinct. At MGIMO 53 languages are taught (vis-à-vis Sciences Po that teaches 25) and it was even listed in the Guinness Book of Records. This is our trademark. And what is the trademark, the peculiarity, of Sciences Po?

Yes, we are older than you. Sciences Po

was founded in 1872. Soon, we are going to mark a 150th anniversary. As far as I know, MGIMO will become 75 years old this year. And, I should say, your university is a world-class establishment, one of the few universities that offer instruction on so many languages. We appreciate this when your students come to us. Let me congratulate you on this accomplishment. We also do quite well in terms of foreign languages instruction, which is well known in the world. As regards Sciences Po’s trademark, it has not changed over these 150 years and remains the same. It is a high quality education, complemented with the greatest possible diversity. This quality is characteristic not only of the academic, but also the research sphere, and this creates opportunities that attract the best brains from the world. Diversity

I hope we will be together for another 25 years and will be able to celebrate a 50th anniversary. This is a worthy aim in and of itself

has already been mentioned in the context of internationalization, but there is also social diversity, which is also very important to us. We are so to say “agents of change” in this area in France, we offer a wide range of scholarships. Equally important is our educational, disciplinary diversity. That is, I would say that our major trademark is a combination of the quality of education and diversity on a wide scale, and I would add to this one more ingredient, practice. That is why, the founders of Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques – the name of Sciences Po 150 years ago – realized that the French elite could not exist in isolation, it needed the knowledge accumulated in other



countries and its practical application. And that is probably another trademark, which to me seems to be a blend of academic knowledge, scientific ideas, research and practical experience brought to the classroom.

MJ: What would you like to wish our alma-maters, MGIMO and Sciences Po? First of all, I hope we will be together for another 25 years and will be able to celebrate a 50th anniversary. This is a worthy aim in and of itself. But as I said, much will have to be done to adapt to new contexts. We will have to respond to the challenges of time and to work jointly

The very fact that our partnership remains strong and develops in the face of political difficulties in the world shows how important the role of academia and universities is in modern society

in strong academic partnership without paying attention to the political situation that may change. I think our partnership is a model for others to emulate. The very fact that it may remain strong and develop in the face of political difficulties in the world shows how important the role of academia and universities is in modern society. We are not only the “agents of change,” but are also facilitators of dialogue. And the fact that academic relations may be stable and capable of developing over the quarter century is of great importance. I have a wish that in 25 years we may repeat what we say today: our relations is a good way of maintaining dialogue between our universities, countries and youths - the best representatives of whom will become our leaders in another quarter century. 🇫🇷

PASCAL CAUCHY

Attaché for Academic Collaboration
French Embassy in Russia

In 1992, Pascal Cauchy’s daughter was born; at the time he was working at the French Embassy in Moscow. The next year saw the conflict between Russian deputies and Boris Yeltsin, which resulted in tanks firing at the House of Parliament. “It was horrible,” Cauchy recalls, “the country was in a state of severe depression. And under the circumstances, it was even more surprising that a delegation from Sciences Po visited MGIMO as early as 1994 and concluded an agreement on student exchange. Back then no one could imagine that the agreement would last for a quarter of a century! Nowadays I have something to be proud of: my daughter is 26, and the partnership between Sciences Po and MGIMO, which I helped conceive, is 25!”



MJ: Why did Sciences Po opt for MGIMO?

In the early 1990s, Sciences Po was among the first French academic institutions to implement the policy of internationalization. It was a coincidence that MGIMO got interested in international cooperation at the same time. All in all, there appeared common ground for cooperation. Besides, Sciences Po and MGIMO have a lot in common – they conduct academic research in the same fields, both institutions are known to be talent pipelines for political elite and Foreign Service.

In 1994, a delegation from Sciences Po led by its president Alain Lancelot came to MGIMO. We were aware of the difficult situation in Russian education at that time – for instance, about the fact that scholars and lecturers had to resign from Moscow State University and Russian Academy of Sciences because of low salaries. But we also knew that MGIMO took in those talented professionals, which was important to us.

You know, we were in a state of some kind of euphoria, there was so much enthusiasm, so many expectations; it seemed that we were creating something new, though we didn’t know exactly what. The French were discovering Russia, and via MGIMO we learnt about its system of education, as only several years before foreigners were barred from your university. Russians were also keen on learning more about us. I remember one French language teacher who confessed that he had never met a Frenchman before...

MJ: And how did you get things rolling?

In September 1994, Katy Rousselet, a political scientist and specialist on Russia, started to work at MGIMO; together with her Russian colleagues she developed the primary cooperation scheme, a basis for future partnership.

There was a financial side to the matter, of course. MGIMO did not have resources to allocate for student exchange. That is why the Embassy got involved and established a scholarship program: it was important to us to create conditions for Russian students to live and study in France without being on a tight budget.

MJ: This program turned out to be so vibrant and popular that in 2005 it



Our program started to attract students from all over the world. In other words, the degree has acquired an international status! Such a unique commodity is very rare on the global education market

evolved into a full-scale double-degree Master’s program. What’s your opinion about it?

To me, this double-degree is a benchmark for this kind of partnership. Today many universities offer such program – some are more successful, though they last for only five years on average, some are less successful. Why is our program a model

one? First of all, this is a true double education program, which opens up excellent opportunities for students both in Russia and in France. Secondly, with time it gained a very important competitive edge, as it started to attract students from all over the world. In other words, the degree has acquired an international status! Such a unique commodity is very rare on the global education market. I would call our program an engine, with similar programs lining up behind it. By the way, in the near future we are going to launch another breakthrough project – a partnership between alumni associations and endowments of Sciences Po and MGIMO. When I look at today’s students, I understand that our 25th anniversary is so special and so dear only to the hearts of people of my generation, to those who pioneered this project and pulled it off. For younger generations it’s not a big deal. It’s so commonplace – to come and study where you want. And this is good. 🇫🇷



**PAUL
DE LA MORINIERY**
(MGIMO Business School,
Nancy, 2016)
*Development manager
CMS Advocates
Paris*

**EKATERINA
SMIRNOVA**
(MGIMO, 2014 – Sciences Po, 2017)
*Digital Communications Manager
Christian Dior Parfums
Paris*

Photos by Igor Drobyshev

ITINERARY: MGIMO – SCIENCES PO – NANCY



EKATERINA:

My father would tell me: “You have a way with words, and you should capitalize on it.” That’s why in 2010, I entered the Department of Public Relations of the School of International Journalism, MGIMO.

As early as in the first year of studies I was inspired by classes of Elena Smolskaya – a woman with a European way of thinking, a real professional with profound knowledge of the field of communications, advertising and the media. In her classes, together with fundamental knowledge that is integral to an MGIMO education at large, she tried to pass on practical skills. She kept on warning us: do not idealize your profession; you have to be ready for anything, and she was right.

The French language was definitely my favourite subject. I have loved France since childhood, and brilliant French teachers helped shape this love into a very specific life-changing decision – to enroll on a Master’s program in a French university to have the opportunity to work in France later on.

Sciences Po was an obvious choice for me, as it is the best école in France in my field (“grand école” is the term used to describe the most prestigious French universities). I knew that MGIMO had a joint double-degree MA program with Sciences Po. But it didn’t offer a Master’s degree in communications, which I wanted, so I decided to opt for a more difficult and risky path, by entering into the university as a regular student.

When I arrived in Paris and began my studies, I didn’t experience any stress and easily fitted into the study process and the international environment. But the concept of learning in Sciences Po proved to be entirely different from the one we have here, at least in the Master’s program. At Sciences Po, we were required to present their own analysis of the situation, not only master the factual material. Lecturers did not test your basic knowledge; rather, they proceeded from the premise that you know it and that there was no sense in testing it. Instead, they wanted you to show your analytical potential, an ability to engage in self-reflection on the basis of the material studied.

PAUL:

I have had an interest – even a passion – in Russia since childhood. I would read history books about Russia and its relations with France. I would even ask adults what they knew about Russia, but they had never been there, so they could not tell me anything. So I decided to see Russia with my own eyes. I started surfing the Internet, looking for a study program that would help me go there.



I liked the double degree program offered by the Business School in Nancy. It actually was a triple degree program because it included three universities: the one in Nancy, the University of Bologna and MGIMO in Moscow. At first, I was not considering going to Italy, but if I could get to Russia this way, then I wouldn’t mind going to Bologna as well!



EKATERINA:

I decided to specialize in digital technologies in the field of communications. The underlying reason was quite simple. Thanks to meetings with leading specialists, directors general of international enterprises and department heads who regularly delivered lectures or gave seminars at Sciences Po, I understood that this specialization was now at its height.

Having done my first internship at the PR Department of Christian Dior Parfums, I realized that PR per se was of no interest to me. By the way, I managed to get that placement without much effort, though I'm not French. But this seems to be an exception to the rule, as Dior is the principal fashion house in France, and the French are very particular about their national heritage. I wrote a motivation letter and applied online sending it together with my CV, and after three interviews I was taken on. The head of Global Communications Department, my immediate superior with whom I've been working up to now, is an open-minded man who values talent and qualification and pays little regard to nationality; besides, by that time I had become fluent in three languages and was learning a fourth. He wanted to have an 'international' element at the department. The reputation of Sciences Po helped as well.



PAUL:

At MGIMO, the most important course for me, which I also took in Nancy and Bologna, was definitely Marketing, taught by Professor Aleksandr Svistchev. However, strange as it may seem, International Relations turned out to be the most interesting course for me. I had never studied the subject before, but I had always been interested in international affairs, getting information through French media and having a good idea about France's stance on many issues. Our media, however, does not give any insight into Russia's point of view, strategies and real interests. Classes at MGIMO helped me to understand the motives that drive Russia to make decisions on the international stage, and to promote its point of view through the efforts of Russian diplomacy.

The main objective of going to Russia was to talk to Russian people and get to know their culture. During my preparation for the trip, I was a bit worried, to be honest. When you are a foreigner, it is always hard to talk to locals. I was ready for Russians to be a little cool towards their new acquaintance. Here, unlike back home in France, you can't kiss somebody at the first meeting. When Russians start trusting you though, they are very easy to talk to. I was also pleasantly surprised with the pattern of teacher-student relationships at MGIMO. One professor in Nancy would say that these relationships at MGIMO were "vertical", but it is not true. I personally had cooperative relationships with teachers and we could discuss any topic both in and out of class.

Going to Crimea made a strong impression on me. One of the MGIMO teachers organized a trip for foreign students in which we spent almost five days there. We visited the magnificent Livadia Palace, where Stalin, Roosevelt and Churchill signed the Yalta agreement; enjoyed the amazing scenery; and, of course, talked to the locals. I was stunned that life there was so peaceful because our media says that there is a full-scale war in Crimea. I hardly even saw the police there.



Classes at MGIMO helped me to understand the motives that drive Russia to make decisions on the international stage



“EKATERINA:

Upon the recommendation of my first training supervisor, I was offered the second internship at the international department of Christian Dior Parfums, where there was less PR and more strategy. My task consisted of coordination of different markets (there are almost forty of them, including the Russian one) and in adjustment of the strategy developed in Paris to each of these markets. To have an employee speaking another language and having a different perspective is advantageous at such a department. It was during this internship that I understood that I would like to minimize the communications component in my future work and focus on development and implementation of global strategies in the digital sphere.

I have been working for Dior for half a year now, doing what I’ve wanted to, that is developing international digital projects related to promotion of the company image.



MGIMO opened the door to a high-quality French education for me; Sciences Po opened the door to France



“**PAUL:**

In September 2016, after an internship with the Dechert law firm in Paris, I returned to MGIMO to defend my thesis, which was titled “Is Marketing Essential for Law Firms?” The presentation lasted for about 20 minutes, and at first I was rather stressed out about speaking in front of the examiners. But then I took it easy and everything went fine. After that, we had a party on a boat on the Moscow River to celebrate our graduation.



“**EKATERINA:**

What is so particular about the work of a digital specialist in well-established French companies with a long history, such as Dior? They have a lot of codes, image rules, which are to be scrupulously observed by the communication department. If, for instance, Adidas has an up and running cooperation with young rappers, break dancers, sportsmen, a lot of projects with street art, our work is much more complex: in order to do a digital project at Dior, you are to cherry-pick all the elements that meet the company image. And the task of applying cutting-edge approaches while observing the honored rules specified for the brand is a real challenge.

Firstly, I am thankful to MGIMO for my French language and basic professional qualification which I built on during my studies at Sciences Po; secondly, I appreciate the fact that MGIMO opened the door to a high-quality French education for me; not everyone has such a chance. Due to long-standing relations between MGIMO and Sciences Po, the administration of the latter knew that I came from a good, reputable institution. And Sciences Po opened the door to France for me. Now both countries are my home, and I’m very happy about that because I love both Russia and France. I feel Russian and French at the same time. And my dream is to live and work in both countries in the future. [E]



PATRICK POUYANNÉ: “WE NEED A RENAISSANCE OF COURAGE IN OUR LEADERS”

Interview by Igor Drobyshev
Photos by Total's Press Department,
Igor Drobyshev,
Igor Lileev

One day when Patrick Pouyanné was still a student, he read the famous address given by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn at Harvard University in 1978. What really struck him in this speech is the passage where the Russian writer discusses what he calls “a decline in courage” in the West, a phenomenon he witnessed during his four years spent in the “free world” after he was exiled from the USSR. He goes on to say that this “decline in courage” is particularly noticeable in leaders and intellectuals, i.e. those who he says have a “determining influence on public life.”

At the time, Patrick Pouyanné never dreamed that decades later he would feel the need to reread this passage from Solzhenitsyn's address. And yet he found himself in that very situation in October 2014 when, after deliberating for several hours, the company's board of directors chose him to succeed Christophe de Margerie, the head of Total, after the latter was killed in a plane crash.



MJ: The details of that tragic event must be seared into your memory. What happened?
I remember that it was midnight on a Monday, I was in my room and I was getting ready for bed when the telephone rang. A colleague, choking back tears, told me that Christophe had been in a serious accident in Moscow. And she added: "Please get to the office as quickly as you can. The situation is serious."
At two in the morning, Thierry Desmarest, who was the Honorary Chair of Total, arrived at the head office. We discussed the crisis and decided to wait for the official word from the Russian government about

the plane crash. After that, we all went home to sleep for a few hours. I came back to the office early that morning because I couldn't sleep. Around ten, Thierry Desmarest called to ask: "Are you prepared to take on this role? Don't answer right away, take some time to think on it."

My father had a saying that he taught me when I was a child: "If you want it, you can do it!"



Honestly, I wasn't completely surprised by the idea. I knew I was on the list of potential candidates who might one day take over for Christophe. Around lunchtime, I told the chair that I would accept his offer, and I added: "If you're offering it to me, it's because you think I'm capable. So I'll trust your judgment."

MJ: When did the ideas in Solzhenitsyn's speech come to mind?
It was when I started to reflect on the responsibility I had just taken on. My father had a saying that he taught me when I was a child: "If you want it, you can do it!" Ever since, it has been my personal motto and it has guided me throughout my life. Plus, I always encourage my colleagues to do the same: if you really want something, you'll

find a way to do it. Not the "Yes, we can" that Obama used as his presidential campaign slogan, but rather: "Yes, I can". That's probably the reason why Solzhenitsyn's words about Western leaders made such an impression on me at the time. I found his address and reread the passage. I'd like to quote it, if I may: "The decline in courage, at times attaining what could be termed a lack of manhood, is ironically emphasized by occasional outbursts and inflexibility on the part of those same functionaries when dealing with weak governments and with countries that lack support, or with doomed currents which clearly cannot offer resistance. But they get tongue-tied and paralyzed when they deal with powerful governments and threatening forces, with aggressors and international terrorists."

I had the good fortune to be raised with good values like honesty, hard work, common sense, the pursuit of excellence and the greater good

MJ: Solzhenitsyn's critique fits with your personal motto, but it doesn't really mesh with Obama's slogan...
Solzhenitsyn's words are first and foremost a warning. He is cautioning us about the lack of courage we are all confronted with, one that runs the risk of becoming a personal and professional failing, if you

happen to be the head of a company. When they asked me to lead Total, rather than asking myself if I was ready to step up, I immediately thought about the crisis our company and everyone who worked there found themselves in. You don't think about yourself, you put it all on the line for the company and the only question you ask is: "How can I do my best to shoulder this responsibility?"
MJ: Were you able to put Solzhenitsyn's words into practice in the four years you have been the head of Total?
I hope so. I borrowed a few ideas from him and used them as the foundation for my guiding principles. First, to be a good leader, it's not enough to believe in yourself, you also have to believe in the

future and your values, and you have to be willing to go to the mat for them. Solzhenitsyn embodied this type of courage better than anyone. As a prisoner in the gulag, he bravely described all the atrocities he witnessed by scribbling his ideas on tiny scraps of paper. Whenever there was a risk that they might fall into the wrong hands, he destroyed them after memorising their contents. Solzhenitsyn's courage came from the fact that he wasn't motivated by his own interests, but by something much more important – his duty to the Truth. He was inspired by this duty to the Truth when he gave his speech at Harvard, a speech that caused a furore in the West. Can you have courage if you have no personal values? I don't think so. The French language itself is proof that the concepts of "values" and "courage" are

company? We set a 20-year goal and re-committed to our common Total values: "safety, respect for each other, pioneer spirit, stand together and performance minded".

MJ: What is your vision?

Our company has a long-term vision spanning 20 years. We set ourselves the goal of becoming the "responsible energy leader". Another principle, which draws on Solzhenitsyn's ideas, is that those who truly believe in their values will not hesitate when the time comes to take decisions. Solzhenitsyn denounces those who are hesitant to act or express their opinion. To be a good leader you must be brave: say what you mean and take action, then stay the course and stand your ground. In doing so, you must be personally committed, not fearing risks or trying to hide behind others. When you take decisions in trying

the venture. I'm thinking of personal risks especially. In his Harvard address, Solzhenitsyn condemned the cowardice of those who have "occasional outbursts and inflexibility" and take seemingly "courageous" decisions, yet... these are for others, never for themselves, decisions whose consequences they will not have to endure personally. You have to be personally invested in what you do. There is no such thing as courage by proxy. As long as I live, I will never forget the 45 excruciating minutes I spent in the control room at the Carling plant when I had to explain to my colleagues why we had to stop the steamcracker – which was seen as the heart of the plant – and reduce the workforce. That was one of the hardest moments of my career. More recently, at a time of justifiable



In the control room at the Total's Carling plant

inextricably linked. There is a reason that the words "valiant" and "valorous" – synonyms of courageous – have the same root as "value"!

MJ: What are the values you are willing to fight for?

I had the good fortune to be raised with good values like honesty, hard work, common sense, the pursuit of excellence and the greater good. Right away I asked myself: where do you want to take the

times, you always run a risk: success is never guaranteed, and courage isn't always rewarded. When I took the decision in 2017 to make Total the first international energy corporation to sign a contract with Iran, that was a big risk. President Trump's decisions concerning Iran forced us to withdraw that contract. The line between daring and recklessness is not always easy to discern... Certain decisions require you to be willing to lose something in

I always encourage my colleagues: if you really want something, you'll find a way to do it

emotions that I too share, I decided to keep my word and not cancel my trip to Saudi Arabia when most business leaders were boycotting the Riyadh conference in reaction to the assassination of the journalist Khashoggi. In doing so I was motivated by my convictions: Total has never been in favour of the sanctions and isolating measures taken against Russia, Iran and Qatar, nor do we support boycotts, as these only punish populations and contribute nothing to progress, especially when it comes to respect for human rights. By contrast, the presence of Western companies can play a major role in this work. We believe that it is better to maintain frank, open dialogue with these partner countries, articulating our values and acting in a way that is consistent with them and with our commitment to human rights. The third idea I took away from Solzhenitsyn's speech is that one person's



courage alone is not enough to transform society. And Solzhenitsyn was not alone. He had assistants (the "invisibles"), incredibly courageous people who risked their own lives to help him hide the manuscript of his book, The Gulag Archipelago. You must also know how to inspire courage in others, literally "encouraging" your troops. Here, leaders lead by example because there is an undeniable phenomenon where people imitate their leaders: if the boss takes courageous decisions, it creates a ripple effect, encouraging others to be more daring. As a leader, you have to be conscious of the risk of isolation. So you need a system of look-outs who can ask you questions and an alert network both inside and outside the company. You must know how to listen, be willing to engage in discussion and recognise that you might be wrong.

I prefer to come to an understanding with my partners under mutually beneficial conditions. That is probably why Total is seen as a desirable partner throughout the world and a force for good in France

MJ: Since Solzhenitsyn gave his speech forty years ago, the world has become unrecognisable...

Today, just like 40 years ago when he gave the speech at Harvard – and perhaps even more so –, we cannot help but recognise the "decline in courage" and worry about the consequences, especially the rise

in populism. In the absence of courage, extremes have rushed in to fill the void, with radical attitudes and programs that advocate for upending the status quo. That is happening throughout the world, a world that becomes a little more fractured every day. To paraphrase the title of Goya's famous painting, "The Sleep of Reason Produces Monsters", I would make the claim that the sleep of courage produces monsters. Now more than ever, we need a renaissance of courage in our leaders – political, economic and intellectual. But we also need this rediscovered courage to resonate with the courage of those whom Solzhenitsyn termed the "Invisibles". That is why in the speeches I give to my colleagues at Total I refer to his ideas from time to time.

MJ: You play an active role in the Trianon Dialogue as a member of the



coordination council for the French delegation. The theme for 2019 is education. What role has the education you received growing up played in your career?

I spent my youth far from Paris, much of it in the South-western part of France in the town of Saint Jean de Luz. In secondary school, I was part of a cohort of students who were gifted in mathematics. Thanks to my maths skills, I was accepted into the best école supérieure institution in France – École Polytechnique and when I graduated, I was ranked as one of the top ten students of my class. With these credentials, I was able to continue my studies and earn my degree from École des Mines in Paris. As I said before, though, it was the lessons I learned from my parents that played a decisive role in my career. This despite the fact that they were both local civil servants. I also began my career as a civil servant, and I worked for the government for seven years.

MJ: In the energy sector?

No, I worked on technological and economic risks in Northern France:

To be a good leader, it's not enough to believe in yourself, you also have to believe in the future and your values, and you have to be willing to go to the mat for them

I monitored pollution emitted by industrial businesses in Dunkirk. In the late 80s and early 90s, steel and chemical plants did not take this issue very seriously. And from time to time that would result in scandals when toxic substances were found to be released into the atmosphere. I was responsible for negotiating with the directors of the companies responsible.

MJ: And were you able to get through to them? For capitalists, it's all about the bottom line, isn't it?

French law did it for me. It is very strict. You must abide by the law if you want to

avoid problems. It's true that sometimes I had to remonstrate with them, up to and including threatening them with financial penalties, but usually reason convinced them. That is how I developed the negotiating skills that have served me so well since then. I also learned to identify priorities and share them with others. That is why, even today when I am directing my colleagues at Total, I make sure that they understand the priorities and (most importantly!) that they respect them. For instance, when I was named CEO of the company, oil prices had dropped considerably, and I had to tell my colleagues: "Our top priority is cutting costs". Today, prices are higher, so we have slightly different priorities.

MJ: Is it your mathematical mind that helps you identify them?

I think so. At school I loved physics and maths. They taught me how to analyse. When you go to solve a maths problem, you have to read the problem carefully: every word means something very specific. At school I was taught to think rationally. And that skill has proved very useful in my

professional life, when you are constantly analysing everything. But life is so nuanced that you quickly find that there is more to it than just rational aspects, that emotional aspects are very important as well.

MJ: In Russia, the people who run major oil and gas companies are influential figures. We call them oligarchs, a term that became popular in the 90s.

There are no oligarchs in France. And I'm no oligarch, just a manager who became the CEO of the company. When it comes to influence, yes, I have a certain amount of influence at my company and in the energy sector, as Total is one of the largest companies not just in France, but also worldwide. We operate in areas like the Middle East and Africa. That is why politicians in France listen to me, especially when it comes to geopolitical issues. I don't know if you'd call that "influence" but at any rate, I don't use my status to influence political decisions. To put it simply, Total is a company that does business, and we try to be the best we can be. That being said, I may be mistaken, and I may exert a certain influence over French officials without realising it.

MJ: And in the countries where you operate?

In certain African countries where oil is an important part of the economy, for instance Angola (Total produces 50% of the oil there) we naturally have privileged relations with the government. But I would say that the inverse is true as well: Angola is just as important to Total as Total is to Angola. I recently met with that country's president and we talked of important matters. They want us to make greater investments in their economy.

MJ: And what would be the benefit for you?

We are ready to invest, of course, but we strive to make sure that these investments will be profitable.

MJ: And you're willing to twist their arm if need be?

No, not at all! We strive to strike a fair balance in our relations, we want it to be a win-win. Otherwise, you are doomed to failure. When my colleagues come back from a negotiation saying, "We really came out ahead on this contract!" I know it won't last long.

MJ: Why?

Because as it unfolds, the government of the country involved quickly realises that the contract will not bring in all the benefits they were expecting, and so they will ask to renegotiate the terms. I prefer to come to an understanding with my partners under mutually beneficial conditions so that we can produce a contract that lasts. That is probably why Total is seen as a desirable partner throughout the world and a force for good in France.

MJ: So that makes you the top diplomat for French business?



I would never call myself a diplomat. During my time in Paris (and I should note that I started working in government fairly young, at the age of thirty), I acquired the skills I needed to communicate with politicians. I worked as a technical advisor to the Prime Minister for the Environment and Industry. I was then chosen to lead the cabinet for the Minister of Technology and

Information. I travelled all over the world. I met with many ministers and heads of State, and I learned to speak their language and understand the nature of political priorities.

MJ: How would you define them?

My priorities are obvious: increase profits so I can help the company I am responsible for grow. A politician, on the other hand, does not think in business terms. They have other goals and a different vision. Their biggest concern is improving people's well-being: they need those votes in the next elections.

MJ: What would you say about the phenomenon of Donald Trump, then, seeing as he's both a politician and a businessman?

It's probably a case of personal ambition. I don't know what made him want to go into politics, I don't know what motivated



convince voters that his presidency isn't just a business venture for him, that it is built on ideas he truly believes in.

MJ: You succeeded Christophe de Margerie, a remarkable man and businessperson. Did you know him well?

Yes, very well. I met him about twenty years ago, when I was director of Total Exploration Production Qatar. In 2002 he offered me the job of vice president for finance at the exploration production division, a position that would determine the course of the rest of my career. He moved me into the office next to his and he would often stop by my office to chat. I worked with him for 12 years, until the tragic accident. You see, he and I were very different people, but we got on well and we were able to understand each other.

MJ: What did you learn from him?
Christophe was renowned and beloved throughout the world for a trait that no one else had. He was able to put himself in the other person's shoes and understand where they were coming from. Thanks to this gift, thanks to his capacity for empathy, he got on well with all types of people: from company employees to heads of State and

CEOs of major corporations. Being a savvy businessman, he put this gift to work for his company.

I would like to think that Christophe helped me develop this trait as well. Because getting on well with other leaders is probably a leader's most important task. I'm not in this position to build mathematical models or do important economic calculations, but rather to solve problems that can only be solved through cordial relations with the leaders of countries or other companies.

MJ: So Christophe was grooming you to be his successor?

All I know is that the board of directors chose one of the candidates that Christophe had selected and trained over many years. It so happens that at Total, preparing for your



Speaking at a Trianon Dialogue meeting



succession is the CEO's most important task. That is why I have already identified three or four people who could become potential successors.

MJ: What are the main lessons you have learned over the past four years?

There are so many. To start, I would say that it is impossible to imagine what it's like to lead a company like Total until you experience it. My wife wasn't so pleased when she heard my name had been put forward. She told me: "Your life will completely change, and you'll disappear from our lives". And she was partly right about that. My life belongs to Total. The best word to describe it is "focus": from the minute I open my eyes in the morning until the minute I close them at night, I cannot lose my focus for a single second.

MJ: Do you have time to work out in the morning?

No, but I try to get a morning walk in before I head to the office. From then on it's meeting after meeting: starting at 8 am and

We need a renaissance of courage in our leaders – political, economic and intellectual

continuing through to business dinners at 10 pm. When you're the head of a major corporation, a lot of people want to meet with you. Another lesson I learned is the following: I didn't realise at first that my colleagues were behaving differently to me. They saw me differently, as the "big boss". When they came to see me in my office, I treated them the same as always, as though nothing had changed. In the beginning, this attitude led me to make a lot of mistakes. Finally I realised that I was all alone, with no one above me. Before, when I asked my colleagues for their advice, they didn't hesitate to give their opinions. But now, when it's their boss asking for their advice, instead of

speaking freely, they try to guess what I'm thinking. I often tell them: "Don't try to guess what I'm thinking, tell me what you're thinking." And when you're leading a company like this one, you take on a "new dimension", you become a public figure, making you a media target. And you cannot escape them, because the public wants your opinion. I quickly realised that anything I said could end up on the front page of a French newspaper, so I had to tread carefully and never lose my focus.

MJ: I can imagine how proud your parents are of you, especially your father who set you on this path, giving you your personal motto: "If you want it, you can do it!"
Never in their wildest dreams would they have imagined that one day their son would be the CEO of one of the largest companies in France. My parents keep up with my career by reading the newspaper, and then they call to tell me what they read about me. They are very proud of me, of course. ☑



San Francisco, 1944. Yakov Lomakin is speaking to workers at the shipyards calling for the opening of the Second Front

RED CONSUL

A year ago, Russia's government filed lawsuits in the US Courts against the United States concerning the illegal seizure of Russian Federation's diplomatic property. The United States closed Russia's Consulate General in San Francisco, the Trade Mission in Washington, D.C. and its office in New York City.

However, this is not the first major crisis around our consulates in the USA. The most high-profile scandal which resulted in the consulates being closed down, albeit by the Soviet side, broke out in 1948. It was triggered by what became known as the Oksana Kasenkina case. It was the then Soviet Consul General in New York Yakov Lomakin who had to handle that situation. As it happens, he had been in charge of the Consulate General of the USSR in San Francisco several years before, in 1942-1944.

The events that led to the "Oksana Kasenkina case" started unfolding in the summer of 1948. The Soviet government's ban in June on cargo transit to West Berlin via the Soviet occupation zone in Germany ended up in the "Berlin Blockade." The political situation deteriorated dramatically, with people starting to talk about a new war soon. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR began reducing the number of Soviet citizens working in the USA. Instructions came from Moscow to close down the Soviet school in New York. All the teachers and pupils were to go back home by the beginning year. However, on July 31, Oksana Kasenkina, 52, a chemistry teacher suddenly vanished.

The erratic behavior of the teacher enabled the State Department to make a lot of fuss around the so-called "Kasenkina case." Only after the State Department declassified the documents of that period 50 years later, did it become clear what the case was all about.

The situation developed as follows: several days before the steamship Pobeda, which was to take Kasenkina home, was due to depart, she was taking a stroll in the park, where a person she was not acquainted with, a certain Alexander Korzhinsky, addressed her in Russian. He was an emigrant from Russia, and by coincidence, also a professional chemist. On learning that the woman did not want to go back to the USSR, he recommended that she go to the editorial offices of the "New Russian Word" newspaper. The newspaper's editor Vladimir Zenzinov took Kasenkina in his car to a farm which belonged to the Tolstoy Foundation, where she was granted sanctuary. However, she did not like it there: she had to work in the kitchen and at the canteen, serving the farm workers. Convinced monarchy supporters, the people at the farm were suspicious of the Soviet teacher. Feeling increasingly uncomfortable, after only a week's stay there, Oksana Kasenkina wrote a letter to Yakov Lomakin, the Soviet Consul General, concealing it from her "benefactors," and asked one of the hands at the farm to mail it.

Yakov Lomakin received her long incoherent letter, in which she was complaining of being lonely and speaking of suicide. Oksana Kasenkina asked him to rescue her, pledging her commitment to "the cause of the [Communist] party," professing her love of the Fatherland and profound hatred of the world of capitalism. It was necessary that Lomakin go to the farm.



Yakov Lomakin

When the consular car arrived at the farm, Oksana Kasenkina came out to meet the diplomats, with her luggage in hand. However, following the instructions of Countess Alexandra Tolstoy, President of the Foundation, about a dozen men surrounded the diplomats and their car. Countess Tolstoy asked Oksana Kasenkina to come back into the house, locked the door, and together with her assistant Marta Knutson tried to persuade the teacher not to leave with the

Yakov Lomakin received Kasenkina's long incoherent letter, in which she was complaining of being lonely and speaking of suicide. She asked him to rescue her. It was necessary that Lomakin go to the farm where she was held

Soviet diplomats. Realizing that Oksana Kasenkina was firm in her decision, Alexandra told her employees to let Oksana go.

At the Consulate, Lomakin called a press conference without delay, at which the teacher assured a group of American reporters that she had ended up at the farm against her will. Consul Lomakin, in turn, showed the letter he had received from her, read parts of it and submitted a photocopy to the FBI for the forensic experts to analyze, to make sure that there were no reasons to suspect a kidnapping.

However, at the same time, these newspapers published a statement by Karl Mundt, a member of the so-called House Committee on Un-American Activities (HUAC) demanding that Kasenkina be

subpoenaed, so that she could testify about “the spying activities of Soviet diplomats against the United States.” The hysteria in the press and on the radio gradually began to gain momentum.

Even though Yakov Lomakin’s actions were impeccably appropriate, the media started accusing him of kidnapping Oksana Kasenkina, dismissing her letter as a fake. Journalists and an aggressive mob inflamed by the publications in the media besieged the consulate day and night. Five days later a disaster happened: Oksana Kasenkina fell out of a third floor window onto the concrete surface of the fenced yard of the consulate. She was taken to hospital. Consul Lomakin allowed the police, who were suspecting a suicide attempt, to inspect her room at the Consulate. They found a sealed letter in her handbag, which was taken for forensic analysis. The letter, written in June, had a Moscow address on it. Oksana Kasenkina was writing to her loved and dear ones that she was looking forward to seeing them soon and dreaming of “strolling in the meadows around Moscow.”

On August 19, the State Department took a decision to revoke the Consul General’s exequatur, thereby declaring him persona non grata, on the grounds that he had kidnapped a woman who had been seeking political asylum in the USA and had been holding her

A young guy who used to tend to the animals in his native village came up with a proposal to use the wool shed by animals, which would make production much cheaper. For his ingenuity in identifying additional raw material resources for the wool industry, he received an award of the Ministry of Textile Industry

in captivity against her will. The decision came into force after it was signed by President Truman. Revocation of a high-ranking diplomat’s exequatur is not a frequent occurrence, and it is always perceived as a blow to the sending country’s prestige. In response, the government of the USSR immediately shut down its Consulates in New York and San Francisco, which in accordance with established rules and practices, meant that the US Consulates in Leningrad and Vladivostok would have to be closed down, too. Consular relations between the USSR and the USA were severed for 24 long years and only resumed in 1972.

Yakov Lomakin was born on November 4, 1904, in a village of Tambov province. At 8, he started working together with his parents on the compound of squire Gousev. The landowner soon took notice

of the clever boy and started lending him books from his library. In 1916, Yakov left village school and started working as an apprentice at a cobbler’s shop. During the revolutionary turmoil of 1917-1918, Yakov was the only breadwinner in a family with two younger children, his brother and sister.

In 1918 once his father returned from the fronts of the Civil War, Yakov went to Moscow in search of work, hoping also to continue his education there. Lomakin joined a crew of workers that were refurbishing and redecorating apartments in the center of Moscow. The owner of one of the apartments, Mikhail Malinovsky, a prominent gynecologist, who would later become a member of the Academy of Medical Sciences, took notice of the handsome young man. One day they got to talking, and the older man was pleasantly surprised by how much the young man had read and how perceptive and subtle he was. He allowed the young man to use his extensive library, and Yakov’s choice of books showed to the professor how versatile his interests were.

The crew finished redecorating the Professor’s apartment, but their contacts continued, with Professor Malinovsky more than once inviting Yakov for dinner. Reminiscing of those years, Yakov Lomakin often recounted that he got his first appreciation of table



Lomakin is engaged in refurbishing and redecorating apartments in Moscow



Yakov Lomakin, a student at Moscow Textile Institute

manners at the family meals at Professor Malinovsky’s. This later did him a good service in his diplomatic career.

In 1925, Yakov started working at the “Liberated Labor” textile factory and enrolled at an evening high school for workers. In 1929, his efficiency at the workplace and his active volunteer work earned him a promotion to “SoyuzZagotSherst”, a public joint stock company purchasing wool from producers. At this company, a young man who used to tend to the animals in his native village was able to capitalize on his livestock-breeding skills and his perceptive faculties. He came up with a proposal to use the wool shed by animals, which would make production much cheaper. He set forth his proposals in a booklet entitled “Collecting the wool shed by livestock.” The young worker received an award of the People’s Commissariat (Ministry) of Textile Industry for his ingenuity in identifying additional raw material resources for the wool industry. In 1930, Yakov Lomakin enrolled at Moscow Textile Institute. He pursued two majors simultaneously, presenting and defending with honors his graduation thesis in 1935, and receiving the qualification of “engineer-economist.” His graduation thesis impressed the Qualifying Commission so favorably that it was suggested that he take a post-graduate course.

In his student years at the Textile Institute, Yakov Lomakin was enthusiastically contributing reports and satirical articles to the Institute newspaper “Textile Institute Student.” His articles did not go unnoticed, and in 1937, he was invited to join the Editorial

Board of the sectoral newspaper “Consumer Goods Industry” and put in charge of the Department of Wool, Silk and Knitted Fabrics Industry. In October 1938, Yakov Lomakin was transferred to the TASS Information Agency and shortly afterwards, he started attending English language lessons for correspondents. In the spring of 1939, Yakov Lomakin was appointed editor of the TASS branch in New York.

He had the good fortune to take part right away in covering the 1939 to 1940 New York World’s Fair, which was organized around “The World of Tomorrow” theme. From then on, events were developing rapidly. In September 1939, the Second World War began. In May 1941, a month before Hitler’s Nazi Germany attacked

The State Department took a decision to revoke the Lomakin’s exequatur, thereby declaring him persona non grata, on the grounds that he had kidnapped a woman who had allegedly been seeking political asylum in the USA

the Soviet Union, Yakov Lomakin was appointed Vice Consul in New York. In February 1942, he was promoted to Consul General in San Francisco. The new posting gave him the autonomy that his determined and independent temperament required. He was working round the clock in order to achieve the fundamental goal of consolidating the Allied Powers during the Second World War. Following the signing of the lend-lease protocols, the Soviet leadership was attaching special importance to the work of the San Francisco Consulate, since the Atlantic was blocked by the Nazi submarines, and the Pacific Ocean became the main route of supplies from the United States to the Soviet Union.

Notably, Consul General Yakov Lomakin only became a diplomat in 1944, as he was originally sent to the USA by the TASS Information Agency. He only received diplomatic status two years later.



Relief”, the “Russian-American Society,” the “National Committee for Medical Aid to the Soviet Union” and others were among the most active organizations, with the greatest membership. Committees of “The Russian War Relief” were quickly created in over forty major American cities. The “Russian American Society” was publishing a bulletin “For Victory” in English and in Russian with the latest reports from the fronts. Among the sponsors of these non-profit organizations there were Senators, members of Franklin Roosevelt’s administration, prominent lawyers, bankers, diplomats, scientists, leaders of America’s major labor unions and cultural figures, including those of Russian descent. For instance, Sergey Rachmaninov, who left Russia in 1917 and was by no means a Soviet power admirer, gave several concerts after Germany attacked the USSR, donating all the revenues to the Foundation providing aid to

Consul General Yakov Lomakin became a diplomat in 1944, as he was originally sent to the USA by the TASS Information Agency. He only received diplomatic status two years later

the Red Army. Learning of the composer’s death on March 28th 1943, Yakov Lomakin ordered a memorial service for the great composer at the Orthodox Church of San Francisco. It was an unconventional step for a Soviet diplomat at the time.

Yakov Lomakin spoke to various audiences in the cities on the Western coast of the United States calling for the opening of the Second Front: workers at the shipyards, businessmen, artists and intellectuals. He proved to be a persuasive and eloquent speaker,

who could easily speak impromptu. He was

outgoing and cordial, which enabled him to get friendly with many outstanding people opposing fascism and Nazism, such as Charlie Chaplin, Olivia de Haviland, Martha Graham, Yehudi Menuhin, Jascha Heifetz, Leopold Stokowski, Heinrich and Thomas Mann, Lion Feuchtwanger, as well as, businessmen, shipyards and media owners.

On May 18 1942, Yakov Lomakin spoke at a “Russian War Relief” rally, which assembled about ten thousand people and was attended by US Admirals and Generals, and San Francisco’s mayor Angelo Rossi. The star attraction of the rally was Charlie Chaplin, who demanded in his intervention that the US administration open the Second

Front. At his request, a telegram to this effect was sent to President Roosevelt. Yehudi Menuhin, the outstanding violinist, performed at the rally. John Garfield recited “A Red Army Soldier’s Letter” in English, while actress Olivia de Haviland recited Konstantin Simonov’s poem “Wait for Me” in English.

The Second Front was opened on June 6, 1944, with Allied Forces landing in Normandy. In July, Yakov Lomakin was recalled to Moscow. The voyage across the Pacific ocean lasted thirteen days and was dangerous, but they safely arrived in Vladivostok. From there on, they continued their journey to Moscow by train. In Moscow they had nowhere to live. Before Lomakin’s first foreign posting, the family had been living at the hostel of the Textile Institute. That is why at first they were provided with accommodation at the “Moskva” hotel before a room was assigned to them in a house built in the early 19th century as a rental house. However in the spring of 1946, Yakov Lomakin received a new posting and left for New York with his family.

In the less than two years since his departure from America, the country had changed greatly. The last American-Soviet friendship rally, at which participants spoke about “the eternal friendship” and a “new world,” was held on November 16, 1944, at the Madison Square Garden. Edward Stettinius, US Undersecretary of State, who had been in charge of administering the lend-lease program, spoke at the rally. Other speakers included Lord Halifax, British Ambassador, Joseph Davis, a former US Ambassador to the USSR, Henry Kaiser, an American industrialist, and Andrei Gromyko, Soviet Ambassador to the USA. In 1945, the House of Representatives created a standing Committee to investigate un-American activities, which became known as the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC for short. Ten Hollywood movie directors, some of whom were members of the US



Consul General Lomakin at a reception in New York

In 1945, the House of Representatives created a standing Committee to investigate un-American activities. Ten Hollywood movie directors, some of whom were members of the US Communist Party, became the first victims of the witch hunt that was launched. All the organizations that had organized relief for the Red Army were closed, their leaders and members blacklisted and persecuted

Communist Party, became the first victims of the witch hunt that was launched. Soon the names of Charlie Chaplin, Paul Robeson, Orson Wells, Lillian Hellman, Arthur Miller, Pete Seeger and many others were added to the list. All the organizations that had organized relief for the Red Army were closed, their leaders and members blacklisted and persecuted.

Thus, the atmosphere was extremely hostile. Besides, it so happened that Andrei Gromyko’s family was already living in the small apartment on the premises of the Consulate designated for the Lomakins. Search was underway for an appropriate accommodation



Opening the Second Front in Europe was the top priority at the time. This demand was supported in the United States by numerous non-profit organizations that were raising money to support the Red Army. “The Russian War



Yakov Lomakin is speaking at the UN

for Ambassador Gromyko’s family. So, the Lomakins had to stay at a hotel for some time, like in Moscow. The Consulate General was located on West 61th Street, in a prestigious neighborhood of the West Side. It was a good building on which we had a long-term lease, whereas the USSR’s Permanent Mission to the UN could not boast such a good building. What was most inconvenient about its premises was that there was no space for diplomatic receptions there.

It was Yakov Lomakin who was instrumental in solving the problem. He was good at winning influential people’s trust and was a good negotiator. He kept aloof from American Communist from American Communists and their fellow-travelers. Gregarious and hospitable as he was, he preferred the company of Wall Street financiers, industrialists from Pittsburgh, Detroit and Cleveland, and other representatives of our big business who, on their part, flocked to his cocktail parties and dinners in the Consulate. Multimillionaires and financiers Bernard Baruch and Nelson Rockefeller were among them, bankers Leroy Lincoln and Peter Grimm. By the way, thanks to these connections the Soviet government managed to buy for the Mission an elegant mansion at 680 Park Avenue, next to the mansions of Leroy Lincoln, Bernard Baruch and the Rockefellers, for US\$ 500 thousand, which would seem a ridiculous price today. The mansion was built in 1910 and belonged to Percy Rivington Pyne, a prominent financier. A grand reception devoted to the October Bolshevik Revolution anniversary was held at the mansion on November 6, 1947, which brought together bankers, Bishops, and diplomats from different countries. They were received by leading officials of the USSR Vyacheslav Molotov and Andrei Vyshinsky, who arrived from Moscow to take part in the UN General Assembly Session.

After the war ended, the euphoria of victory got the heads of many Russian emigrants in the USA spinning. They wanted

Thanks to Lomakin's connections the Soviet government managed to buy for the Mission an elegant mansion at Park Avenue for US\$ 500 thousand, which would seem a ridiculous price today

to return home and applied to the Consulate for repatriation. A decision on each applicant was taken in Moscow, and the term for a formal response was not specified. Many applicants had to wait for years. Yakov Lomakin did his best to help these people. It was in that period that many emigrants came back home: Sergei Konnenkov, a sculptor, Michael Fiveisky and Alexander Grechaninov, composers, Count Alexei Ignatiev and others. There was a large Armenian diaspora in the USA, with many Armenians also applying for repatriation. In 1946, the Soviet Parliament issued a Decree “On the procedure of granting USSR citizenship to Armenians returning to Soviet Armenia from abroad.” The repatriation formalities were taken care of by the USSR Consulate in New York. The Armenian National Committee of America (ANCA) held a banquet at the Waldorf Astoria New York in honor of Consul General Yakov Lomakin and his wife. Less than a year would pass – and the US authorities would terminate Yakov Lomakin’s work in the USA. Consular relations between the USSR and the USA due to the Kosenkina case would only be restored 24 years later.

A new Consulate at new premises on Green Street in San Francisco was inaugurated in 1973. In New York, a house was

Houston.

Little is known about Yakov Lomakin’s career and activities after September 1948. Contrary to the US media’s predictions that Lomakin would be punished for the failure of the “Kasenkina operation” (or, probably, thanks to them), he returned to the central office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was appointed Deputy Director of the Press Department.

From 1953 to 1956, Yakov Lomakin was posted in Beijing as Counsellor Minister at the USSR Embassy. In 1956 he was recalled from China and appointed Counsellor at the Department of International Organizations at the Foreign Ministry. However, Lomakin’s dynamic personality kept him working. In his leisure time he was writing a treatise “On people lacking self-consistency” and a monograph about “The US media”. However, illness prevented Yakov Lomakin from completing both undertakings. He died on August 16, 1958, and was buried at the Novodevichy Cemetery. He was only 53.

In his book “Parting with Illusions” Vladimir Pozner, a well-known TV anchor, who lived in the US in the 40s, writes, “The

bought on 91st Street in 1975 to house the USSR’s Consulate General. Work to rebuild and refurbish the house built in the early 20th century began, only to be suspended when President Carter took a decision to ban the Consulate’s opening due to Soviet troops being sent to Afghanistan. The Consulate-General did not start functioning in the building until 1995. Three years earlier, the Consulate in Seattle was reopened, and in 2003 – one in

last year in America, 1948, was very hard. Dad had lost not only the job, but also any hope to get another one. For a Soviet citizen with a Communist outlook, who did not stop short of candidly expressing his political convictions, there was no room in that America, and he soon came to realize this. He was dreaming of going back to the Soviet Union with his family and more than once talked about it with the Soviet Consul General in New York, but the latter gave him evasive and vague answers, which was driving Father crazy. Later, when we lived in Germany, the familiar story played out again, the only difference being that it was the USSR’s Ambassador to the GDR rather than the Consul General in New York that was giving him evasive replies. Father was in despair. Today I understand that all of us in the family owe our lives to these two people. Had we come to the Soviet Union a little earlier, no doubt, Father would have been shot, Mother and I would have ended up in the GULAG, with my younger brother sent to an



Charlie Chaplin, who demanded that the US administration open the Second Front, signs a telegram to President Roosevelt

orphanage for the children of the “enemies of the people.” Both the Consul General in New York and the Ambassador in Berlin had known all along what was going on in the USSR. However, neither of them could tell my Father about it. Besides, Father, probably, wouldn’t have believed them. That’s why they were doing everything they could to delay his departure. I will be grateful to both of them as long as I live, and I would like everyone to know their names: Yakov Lomakin and Georgy Pushkin.”

SERBIA

Texts and photos by Igor Drobyshev

SERBIA

Last year Russia and Serbia marked the 180th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. Our friendship has gone through the test of time.



ALEKSANDAR VUČIĆ: “MY DREAM IS TO BECOME A YOUTH COACH”

Interviewed by: Igor Drobyshev
Photos by Igor Drobyshev, press service
of the Executive Office of the Serbian President

President Aleksandar Vučić of Serbia was the first foreign leader to meet with President Vladimir Putin only a day after Putin took office in May, 2018. We are in Aleksandar Vučić’s office at the presidential palace in Belgrade. Of course, the first question is about the meeting with President Putin. Was it symbolic that Vučić was the first leader Putin met with after the election? “Yes, it means that Russia respects us and values our relations. It is an honor not only for me personally, but for my country as well, – says Vučić. – I spent two days in Moscow, on the Victory Day I took part in the march of the Immortal Regiment, I was walking Red Square next to President Putin, and that filled the hearts of most Serbs with pride.”

MJ: The march of the Immortal Regiment is an important tradition. Anyone can join it and walk the streets with portraits of family members who fought against Nazi Germany. You also carried a small photo, didn’t you?
Yes, a photo of my grandfather, Anđelko. He was killed by Croatian Nazis during the war. My father never got to meet him, but he was named after him. My grandfather was not the only one killed; Nazis killed my other relatives, both from the Vučić family and the Kunovacs, my mother’s family.

I was very proud to carry Anđelko’s portrait, walking alongside so many people, all filled with patriotism. It is very hard for me to describe my feelings at that point, but I found great joy in it.

MJ: Thanks to you, your grandfather got a chance to come back and join the ranks if only for some time... That is what the march of the Immortal Regiment is all about.
Yes. President Putin said one very important thing in his speech. He said that

that march showed we hadn’t forgotten those tragic events of the past, and that meant we would not let anyone commit such atrocities once again. That is a very important message for future generations.

MJ: You are quite tall, you really stood out among other people who joined the march.
That’s true. I used to play basketball a lot when I was younger... But you know, my height wasn’t really of much help during the march. Very soon I realized how many

people wanted to at least touch President Putin, to take a picture with him. And since a lot of people didn’t really know who I was, they kept pushing me away. It was actually quite difficult even for the bodyguards of Israel’s Prime Minister Netanyahu. But I was happy to step back, because people were so eager to see President Putin, and I thought, please, go ahead, it is your right to see your president. President Putin’s security tried to get me back closer to him, but to no avail. I think by the end of the march I was somewhere in the fifteenth row!

MJ: Let’s continue talking about the war... Serbia was affected almost as much as the USSR. Russia’s wounds are still bleeding. We still live and work for two, for we do not have enough people to fulfil all of our plans. Do the Serbs share the feeling that the wounds have not healed?
The Soviet people suffered more than anyone else in that war. But in the Balkans, in the south-eastern part of the continent, it was Serbia that suffered the most. The Serbs were one of the few people who opposed both the Fascists and the Nazis. Our country lost more than one million people during World War II. And we still haven’t recovered. If we hadn’t lost so many people in the 20th century (let us not forget those who died during the Balkan Wars in the 90s), there would be fifteen or sixteen million Serbs today. There are only seven million in Serbia, plus 1.2 million in Bosnia and 200,000 in Montenegro. It is not just a scar or a wound on the body of our nation, it was an extremely severe blow to us from an economic standpoint.

MJ: How come you became a politician and not a basketball player?
I really wanted to be a basketball player. I played for the Partizan basketball team, but I’ve always cheered for Crvena Zvezda. It was just that Partizan’s training base was closer to my home, and I trained with Partizan’s players. But I quit – at some point I realized I was not talented enough to achieve any major success.

MJ: You had very strong basketball teams back in the times of Yugoslavia. Let me tell you something, if we take all the medals that Yugoslavian and Serbian national teams have won, it will be more than the USSR and Russia have had taken together. We are currently ranked second, only the Americans are stronger. Maybe that’s what helped me realize I couldn’t compete at such high standards. But my dream is to become a youth coach. I hope it will come true one day.

MJ: For a politician, it is very important to have a strong character, as if

hardened in many battles. Putin said that he learnt on the streets of Leningrad that if a fight is inevitable, you hit first. What did you learn on the streets of Belgrade?
I was in a hundred of little street fights, and I learnt this – do your best to avoid a fight, but if it is inevitable, fight till the end.

I’m glad and proud that now, when Russia is going through a hard time, Serbia acts as a genuine friend of the Russian people by refusing to join sanctions

MJ: When was the last time you avoided a fight without losing face?
Three years ago, in Srebrenica. I came there to pay tribute to the victims of the tragic events that took place 20 years ago (ethnic cleansing in the early 90s – MJ). I was attacked, people threw stones and bottles at me, but I didn’t duck my head, though it was a completely normal thing to do, given the circumstances. I told myself, I will go through it. I should keep my head high to save face of the Serbian people. Back in Belgrade, I addressed the Bosnians and other Balkan people, “Lets make a better future together”.

MJ: You had moments in your life, when you came within a hair breadth of losing it. For example, in 1999, you barely made it out alive during the NATO bombing. What was your first impulse when you realized you had been granted a second chance?
Fortunately, I was not hurt back then, though I saw so many dead people. That was a real tragedy. I came to realize that we should value human life and fight for peace and stability. When the leaders of other countries sometimes criticize Serbia, I may get carried away by emotions, and I want to tell them all I think about them, but I check



such impulses and try to be rational. At the end of the day, words can be forgiven. What is really important is to preserve peoples' lives, their future. We have committed ourselves to our future; we are really invested and want to improve significantly our strained relations with the Albanians and the Croats. We want to forget the past. But every time we call for discussing our future, they start recalling the past. They have this paradigm in which Serbia is to be blamed for everything. But we convicted dozens of Serbs of crimes they committed across former Yugoslavia. And do you happen to know how many people were convicted of crimes against the Serbs? No one. Not a single Croatian or Bosnian. And I've asked many times, why so? And the answer is always the same: it won't happen, they are our heroes. And we even have eyewitnesses of those crimes.

On the Victory Day I took part in the march on Red Square, walking next to President Putin, and that filled the hearts of most Serbs with pride

However, it has turned out to be insufficient both for the Hague Tribunal and for the court in Sarajevo. And I can tell you that it will always be like that, because everyone simply ignores the tears the Serbs cry. We are a small country located in the most beautiful part of the world, but it is also the most complex too – from political, economic, ethnic and geostrategic standpoints. This place is like a crossroads,

and here we stand unable to go anywhere, all we can do is fight for our people, protect them, preserve our sovereignty and independence. So, we do what we can.

MJ: Serbia has said many times that it would not join anti-Russian sanctions under any circumstances. At the same time, Serbia seeks to join the EU and these sanctions are part of its policies. How do you manage to tread that fine line?

You know, at first no one believed we would be so unrelenting about it. Even in Russia, there were a lot of articles that said, "Vučić will join NATO" or "Vučić will introduce sanctions against Russia." I know, I read them! Now they say, "This guy keeps his promises." Yes, I openly and honestly tell both the EU officials in Brussels and the Russian media, and your journal, that Serbia will not support sanctions against

Russia. Why would we do that? Russia has helped us hundreds of times at the UN Security Council and never did anything that could harm Serbia. In 1999, when Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov turned his plane around over the Atlantic (as a sign of protest against NATO airstrikes on Belgrade – MJ), it meant a lot to us, even though at the time we expected Russia to do even more. But it was Yeltsin's time then. Now it's easier for the Serbs; we know we can count on Russia's support.

I quit basketball, having realized that I couldn't compete at high standards. But my dream is to become a youth coach. I hope it will come true one day

I'm glad and proud that now, when Russia is going through a hard time, Serbia acts as a genuine friend of the Russian people by refusing to introduce sanctions. This is the stance that Serbia will be maintaining in the future.

MJ: But the EU policy is based on solidarity, isn't it?

What about EU solidarity with Serbia on Kosovo? We have our own interests, and my job is to promote them. This is why I do what I do. This is why we don't intend to join NATO, and that's what I said at the NATO headquarters. This is, by the way, what allows us to be firm and resolute in our political stance: I can go to Brussels and say openly and out loud that we don't plan to join NATO or any other military alliance. It's not in our people's interests.

MJ: Kosovo is a tragic wound in the hearts of the Serbian people. Do you think Serbia will be able to find a solution?

I'm not sure. We are doing everything in our power to work out a compromise. This is what I said during our meeting with President Putin. But we don't see any



A. Vučić delivers his lecture of Honorary Doctor of MGIMO



President of Serbia at the meeting with MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov

As a president, you have to make unpopular decisions that people don't like. Why would they need a president otherwise?



intention of others meeting us halfway – not from the Albanians and not from the countries that officially recognized Kosovo as an independent state. There are many questions they can't answer. For example, why should the Albanians, who have Albania as their nation state, have Kosovo as their second sovereign state? The Albanians talk about the right to self-determination, but they haven't even held a formal referendum! And since there is no explanation for this, the West, not caring about the international law, found a brilliant solution and declared it sui generis, "of its own kind, unique." What about Crimea, you ask? There was a referendum there. No, says the West, that was aggression! We're very grateful to Russia, China and other countries that tried to stand in the way of Kosovo's independence. What's next? We'll see. But it will never be a case of us losing everything and them gaining everything.

I was in a hundred of little street fights, and I learnt this – do your best to avoid a fight, but if it is inevitable, fight till the end

MJ: What's the hardest thing about being the president of Serbia? You have to make unpopular decisions that people don't like. Why would they need a president otherwise? Anyone would become one in that case.

MJ: In late 2017, you addressed a huge student audience at MGIMO. What kind of advice would you give to those who want to succeed in the political arena like you did? First of all, I want to say that I was amazed at how well-informed MGIMO students

are, and I said so in Russian to Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov. I think they know more about Serbia and Southeast Europe than many of our politicians! I was simply delighted! Please, pass my deep admiration to the professors who teach them. As for the advice, it's simple: work hard, believe in yourself, and once again – work hard! Then you'll succeed. You'll be able to do anything.

MJ: I met with some MGIMO alumni in Serbia, and they really want to set up an MGIMO association there to stay in touch and help each other out. I promised them I would take that idea to the Russian embassy, since His Excellency, the Ambassador, also graduated from our university, and to you. Can they count on your support, should they need it? Of course. I had a chance to tell them that. I pledge my full support. We'll do whatever needs to be done. ☑

DUSICA DJURIC ‘13)

Adviser,
Administration of President of Serbia
Belgrade

Dusica finished her master’s at MGIMO in 2013 and started working for the Serbian government before later working in the office of President Aleksandar Vučić.

In university, I always felt great support from other people. I will never forget how our Spanish teacher, Alla Zenkovich, stuck up for me in a lesson during a discussion about Kosovo and NATO aggression against Serbia in 1999. One pro-Western student accused Serbs of all the horrors of the Balkan wars

without any evidence. I can speak calmly about this now, being a diplomat, but at that time, my emotions simply kicked in. Zenkovich told the student, “If you had lived through what Dusica experienced during the NATO bombings, you would have a different point of view.” She had the right to say so, because

she had also survived something similar. She had been awarded the Cuban Order of Courage when she was in occupied Baghdad with her husband, a Cuban diplomat, during the war in the Persian Gulf. She was not simply a professional who spoke perfect Spanish – she treated us like her children and taught us how to behave, how to dress, and how to create our own distinct style. She herself was flawless in this way. Her favourite colour

I chose to enter MGIMO because in Serbia Russian education is considered to be the best. I remember that we had a physics teacher in school that gave us exercises from a Russian textbook

was green, because in Cuba this is the colour of freedom. We knew that if she wore a green colour, she was in a good mood. Zenkovich was a translator and personal friend of former Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez; she also worked with former Ecuadorean president Rafael Correa and other Latin American diplomats that came to Moscow. That is why her stories and professional experiences that she shared were invaluable for me. I told everyone in Serbia about this woman! Specifically, I am thankful to her for not letting me be insulted on that heated exchanged over Kosovo. By the way, an incident



like this only happened once. During all my years that I studied at MGIMO, I felt that everyone there loved Serbia.

Specifically because of Russia, Serbs feel different these days. The spirit of the nation is strong and the country is strong. We have MiGs and other weapons that allow our leaders to defend our country and not give anyone the opportunity to blackmail us. President Vučić is a pragmatic politician and a leader who understands Serbia's place in the region, in Europe and in the world.

I entered MGIMO because Serbia considers Russian education to be the best. I remember that we had a physics teacher in school that gave us exercises

During all my years that I studied at MGIMO, I felt that everyone there loved Serbia. I always felt great support from other people. Because of Russia, Serbs feel different these days. The spirit of the nation is strong and the country is strong


from a Russian textbook. I entered MGIMO in 2007, and I immediately liked several particularities of the MGIMO system. Firstly, the small language groups allow teachers to devote time to each student. Secondly, MGIMO is an international school where you can speak with people from different countries, learn about their points of view and compare different opinions. Finally, the professors are fabulous. Among them are well-known diplomats, like Yuri Dubinin.

He had a particular approach that removed any distance between us – we were all equal, like colleagues. Dubinin taught diplomacy and introduced us to

international negotiations. He spoke with us in the language of diplomats and was always analysing practical cases, such as the Ukrainian situation and the need for an agreement with Russia after the dissolution of the USSR. This issue was near and dear to him, as he had worked as a diplomat in Kiev on questions regarding the splitting up of weapons, the Black Sea fleet, and the legal succession of property.

In MGIMO I was the chair of the Serbian Association. When I was in my second year, I wondered why there was no Serbian community in MGIMO's International Students Association, even though Serbs and Russians are so close both culturally and historically. I received support in the International Students Association and created our own association. The activity of associations can be evaluated by the number of events taking place. The most exciting one was the day of national cuisine, when we offered Serbian dishes. We participated in the MGIMO Olympics, where our basketball players consistently showed great results, as well as in student concerts.

I joined the Serbian government's protocol service after MGIMO. The prime minister during that period was Ivica Dačić, and his first deputy was Aleksandar Vučić. The first year there I studied the subtleties of protocols, and I later started to work with the prime minister, who during this time became Vučić. At first I organised his meetings with ambassadors and foreign delegations, and later I accompanied him on trips to different cities, and I even went to Moscow with him. Therefore, when he became president, he offered me a job in his office. I still work with him now.

The president gives his employees every chance to prove themselves, and he expects their full effort on everything in return. He has taught me a lot; first of all, I mustn't procrastinate or neglect my duties. This degree of responsibility is making me a true professional, and it will come in handy in the future. 





Left to right: Drljević Vukašin, Aleksandar Todorovich, Nikola Bradas

ALEKSANDAR TODOROVICH

(International Relations, 2017)

Master’s student

University of Glasgow, Scotland

I spent the last year of high school in Nizhny Novgorod as an exchange student. I lived with a Russian family and I studied Russian. I fell in love with the Russian lifestyle so much that I decided to look for a scholarship in order to enter a Russian university.

I was lucky to find some information on the Internet about a scholarship for Serbian students who choose to attend MGIMO. It was really hard to get this scholarship because they usually go to the children of diplomats, and I come from an ordinary Serbian family. However, thanks to my stubbornness, strong will and habit of trusting my instincts, I eventually managed to get the money I needed.

I can say with confidence that I was one of the most successful MGIMO students from Serbia. Not only did I study well, but I was also an active member of the Student Union and the International Students Association; I took part in almost every major event at the university. Almost everyone at MGIMO knew me – or, at least when talking about the Serbian students, I would be the first one mentioned. I am proud of it!

I did my pre-graduation internship at the Embassy of Serbia in Moscow, where they advised me to write my thesis about Kosovo’s place in international relations. I asked around different departments, but most teachers refused to be my thesis advisor, believing that I would not succeed because the topic was too ambitious. I have to say they were almost right.

Looking for a thesis advisor took a while, and I had lost hope when I happened upon Ivan Popov, an expert on Spain who was our Diplomacy Practice teacher in my third year. We were quite friendly, and I complained to him about my situation. He immediately said that Spain did not recognise Kosovo and he was willing to help me! So we started working on the thesis.



Not only did I study well, but I was also an active member of the Student Union and the International Students Association. Almost everyone at MGIMO knew me – or, at least when talking about the Serbian students, I would be the first one mentioned. I am proud of it!

Then came the day of my thesis defence. I knew that the topic would cause a stir and there would be many detailed questions, so I came prepared. I was sure I could answer any question because I had spent my whole life in Serbia, and I knew much more on the subject than my challengers. In the end, I got the highest grade in the whole group. Two teachers and the head of the committee (a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia) even came up to me saying that they thought highly of my research and asking permission to use my conclusions in their work.

MGIMO taught me never to give up, and I realized that in order to be a good diplomat you need to not only think on

your feet and be charming, but you also need to be stubborn. Today, I actively work with an array of diplomatic organisations. I work on developing international projects for youth and I consult with exchange students about intercultural communication. Last year, I moderated the European Youth Event at the European Parliament in Strasbourg. It is considered the largest political event for EU and EU-candidate youth, with more than 10,000 participants.

Recently I've been accepted to a master's program at the University of Glasgow (Scotland), where I will study there on the Erasmus Mundus scholarship, which I was granted by the European Commission thanks to recommendations from MGIMO teachers

Recently I've been accepted to a master's program at the University of Glasgow (Scotland), where I will study there on the Erasmus Mundus scholarship, which I was granted by the European Commission thanks to recommendations from MGIMO teachers who know me well



who know me well. My program is called Central and East European, Russian and Eurasian Studies. I am very thankful to MGIMO for the impetus that allowed me to succeed and reach important heights. I will never forget where it all started and where I learned my most important life lessons. 🇷🇺

MILICA KOSUTIC

(MGIMO's European Studies Institute, 2013)
Independent Attorney at law in cooperation with Deloitte Belgrade

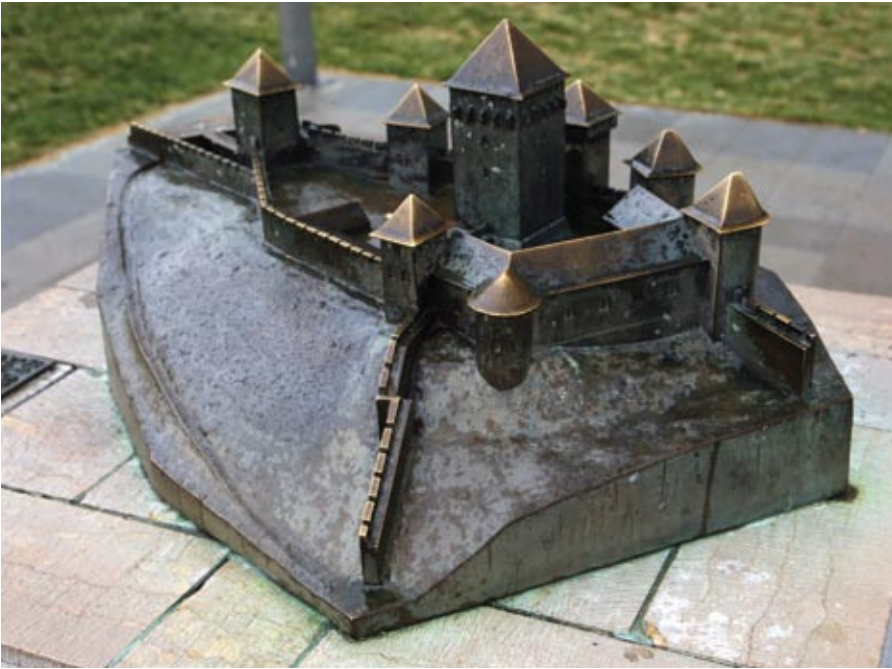
When I was a child, I liked watching TV series about lawsuits, I liked how the lawyers live and work. I dreamt about becoming one of them. Having received a Bachelor's degree at the School of Law at the University of Novi Sad in 2011, I decided to continue my education in Russia. Why not in Western countries? First of all, my mother graduated from the Faculty of Journalism at Moscow State University and believes that Russian education is the best. Secondly, I was raised in the spirit of brotherhood between Serbian and Russian peoples. I chose MGIMO because it's one of the most famous universities in the world which trains experts in international relations. I joined the Master's program of the European Studies Institute in International and EU Law.

I lived in the dormitory where in addition to Serbians there were citizens from the former Republic of Yugoslavia, namely, Croats, Bosnians, Macedonians, Montenegrins, Slovenians. Together we cooked, went to the restaurants, had fun. Despite the fact that the Balkan wars of 1990s left their mark on the relations between our countries, they mostly affected our parents, and we didn't have any inter-ethnic tensions.

In addition to International and EU Law, I also studied at the Human Rights



Protection program which was launched that year according to the auspices of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. It was really difficult to combine the two, but there was an additional incentive: the program was free to those who wanted to try it.



Soon after I developed an interest in corporate law and after graduation I wanted to work as an attorney at a legal firm that provides legal assistance to big corporations working in Serbia. At university I paid special attention to the antitrust law that deals with offenses and abuses concerning competition. In Russia it's the Federal Antimonopoly Service's jurisdiction, while in the European Union the European Commission is in charge of that. In Serbia there is also a Commission for Protection of Competition. That's why my Master's thesis was on an related topic – on corporate raid and its impact on human rights, such as when one company buys another one, the rights are very often violated, and people get sacked. Nobody had written anything about this topic at that time. Therefore, it was quite difficult to gather the materials and analyse them. However, my MGIMO scientific supervisor Tamara Shashikhina helped me a lot, I am very grateful to her.

I would also like to give special thanks to the MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov, who allowed me, based on my academic achievements, to study in the second year free of charge. It was an exception, because as a rule foreigners don't have such privileges.

I would like to give special thanks to the MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov, who allowed me, based on my academic achievements, to study in the second year free of charge. It was an exception, because as a rule foreigners don't have such privileges

After I returned to Belgrade in 2013, I passed the state exam that gave me the right to work in the judicial system, as well as the qualifying exam necessary to get the status of an attorney. I got a job because, first of all, they needed an

employee with this specialization, and, secondly, because of my good Russian: it turned out that in Serbia there are few lawyers who can communicate with numerous Russian clients in their native language. Last year I decided to make a step forward in my career and join the local Deloitte team. I mainly deal with corporate law/ merges and acquisitions, commercial law, bank and finance law, as well as, with antitrust law.

I am grateful to MGIMO not only because of the knowledge that I have received, but also for the eventful life, for many good people whom I met there. I was lucky to have wonderful group mates with whom I still keep in touch. I always call them, and some of them even came to my wedding. 🍷

DRLJEVIĆ VUKAŠIN

(International Journalism, 2014)
Procurement and Business Development Manager, Petrol Group

I decided to enter MGIMO because I really wanted to study public relations (PR). I discovered that this was the best subject to learn at MGIMO, the institution that basically created this field in Russia.

Studying in MGIMO was difficult. I often heard that the School of International Journalism was easier than other departments, but these people apparently do not imagine the number of hours, days and weeks that students spend on learning languages and different projects. I by no means regret my decision; after all, MGIMO was and remains a brand and a sign of quality that, when mentioned, people nod knowingly and feel envious, dreaming of belonging to this private club. Indeed, this is the way MGIMO is.

The lessons of Elena Zaburdayeva, deputy dean of the School of



International Journalism, had the greatest effect on my understanding of PR. These were often practical cases. Once, she took us to a press conference for the renowned pianist Denis Matsuev, and on the way to the Tchaikovsky concert hall, she said that it was us who had to organise the event on-site. She entrusted students to find experienced PR specialists who could not only give a lecture but also supervise the development of compulsory individual projects. Deadlines were strict and there was not enough time, but by scrambling through this time crunch, I learned more about PR than from many lectures.

I liked the historic disciplines as well, for example the history of Russian literature and the history of Russian journalism. I also remember lectures by Vladimir Medinsky, who was appointed Russia’s Minister of Culture four days after his last lecture in our course. And, I would particularly like to acknowledge the French department, which has Russia’s best teachers on the subject. The main thing I am thankful to MGIMO for is foreign languages, of course. I use them every day at work.

Unfortunately, finding a job as a journalist or PR specialist in Serbia was rather difficult. I sent my CV and had some interviews some time ago, but I eventually decided to try a different field and found myself in the company Petrol LPG, a subsidiary of Slovenia’s national oil-and-gas corporation. I started working there as a procurement and business development manager. This is highly dynamic work in which I do not use templates; every day I learn something new and grow professionally.

It is surprising how many MGIMO graduates work in oil companies in many different positions. It happens that I’ll be in negotiations for many hours with a partner, and later I’ll learn that they also graduated from MGIMO! Compromises and agreements immediately become more likely. 🇷🇺

NIKOLA BRADAS

(International Relations, 2014)
Co-founder and Executive Director, Technocracy Associates

I learned about MGIMO by accident during a trip to Moscow in 2008. Our guide, when talking about international politics, mentioned MGIMO and told me about the institution. I was interested and I felt that this university was the ideal place where I could study to be a professional in the field of international relations. My decision to enter MGIMO was also connected to my youthful rebellion and to my aspiration to change the world.

I believe that the knowledge I gained from MGIMO, which expanded my horizons and enriched my understanding of the world, helps me in my business, which introduces new financial technologies into new management models

Being a Croatian Serb, i.e. belonging to an ethnic minority, I was particularly interested in questions about how governments handled interethnic relations in places that had had internal conflicts in the 1990s (the former Yugoslavia, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia). I aimed to understand the sources of conflicts and possible solutions to them, as well as the influence of these internal problems on the formation of foreign policy.

At MGIMO, I studied social sciences within which I searched for greater understanding of mechanisms at the foundation of those processes that result in a nation prospering, and all of its citizens enjoying freedom, while others become a “prison of nations”. Learning about international relations helped me to understand the sources of

geopolitical problems that have led to the development of modern history.

I believe that there are two people who have influenced my personality more than others. I would first like to express my great thanks to Vladimir Shishkin, who used to be the dean of the department of international students and who helped me enter MGIMO’s preparatory department, where I was able to learn Russian. I would also like to say thank you to Irina, an employee of the dean’s office at the School of International Relations, who was responsible for international students. She convinced me to abandon my “rebellion” and to start behaving like a real diplomat. This coming of age was possibly one of the most important moments during my time at MGIMO.

After finishing university, I returned to Belgrade and worked in a consulting business for four years. Thanks to the knowledge I received at MGIMO, I was quite successful in conducting business analytics and carrying out special projects connected to large-scale investments in the Western Balkans. This was a result of the mutual assistance I had at the beginning of my career with several colleagues with whom I had studied at MGIMO. At the end of 2017, together with another MGIMO graduate, I co-founded the company Technocracy Associates, which introduces new financial technologies, supports start-ups and offers professional assistance to corporations and government structures that aim to form new management models based on solutions like Big Data and data analysis, blockchain, artificial intelligence and cloud technologies.

I believe that the knowledge I gained from MGIMO, which expanded my horizons and enriched my understanding of the world, helps me in this business. Aside from that, the variety of subjects I studied helped me to develop leadership qualities, which have allowed me to work confidently and professionally with corporations and state institutions. I can say with confidence that thanks to MGIMO, my dream to change the world that originated in my youth is starting to become a reality. 🇷🇺





ALEXANDR CHEPURIN ('75)
*Russian Ambassador to Serbia
Belgrade*

Serbia is a European country which hasn't joined Western sanctions against Russia. "Serbians are our major supporters. There aren't many countries in the world where we have been working for so long in such an intensive and fruitful way as in Serbia. Serbians are sincerely happy about Russian successes, and they love both Russia and its president Vladimir Putin, because they understand: the stronger we are, the easier it will be for them", says Alexander Chepurin.

MJ: Do they perceive the operation in Syria and reunification of Crimea as Russian successes?
The majority of the Serbians stick to the following logic: Crimea is a Russian territory, and it reunited with Russia. Speaking frankly, many didn't know that it was part of Ukraine after the opening of the USSR.

The West uses the EU membership as a carrot, but Serbians firmly oppose accession to NATO. While the American pressure increases, Belgrade doesn't intend to give in

MJ: Is Kosovo a "Serbian Crimea"?
Yes, it's Serbian territory. It's the cradle of Serbians and a sacred place for Serbia. Kosovo also should return to the legal framework and state boundaries of Serbia in conformity with international law.

MJ: What's the situation like today?
There is a UN Security Council Resolution 1244 adopted on 10 June 1990, stating that Kosovo is a part of Serbia. This is the only international legal document. But de facto Kosovo, a pseudo (para) state, self-proclaimed in 2008, exists on its own, a quasi border, or an "administrative boundary line", separates it from the main territory of Serbia.

MJ: What is the Russian official position on the issue of Kosovo?
There are three points to mention. First of all, we don't recognize Kosovo as a sovereign state, we firmly adhere to the UNSC Resolution 1244. Only Belgrade and



Pristina can agree on the status and on the degree of autonomy of the Kosovar province. Secondly, this decision should be made without impudent pressure of the Western countries on Belgrade. Thirdly, we will be ready to provide all assistance in the search for compromise and a definitive settlement. Russia supports the aspiration of Serbia to find a solution within the framework of the national constitution and the UNSC Resolution. We are ready to back those compromises, which the people of Serbia, a friendly nation to us, would consider acceptable. It’s for Serbia to show initiative and to determine its position. Russia’s role consists in possible assistance at the request of the Serbian side. It’s noteworthy that more and more countries consider going back on their decision to recognize Kosovo. The first countries to do so were Suriname, Sao Tome and Principe, Liberia.

MJ: Are Serbians our only like-minded Europeans?

Russians and Serbians have a lot in common. Serbians are the biggest nation in the Balkans and this nation is divided. They were the core of Yugoslavia. The ethnic Serbs live both in Serbia and in neighboring countries: in Bosnia and Herzegovina (in Republika Srpska), Montenegro, Croatia, Macedonia, Slovenia. In a sense, Yugoslavia, which collapsed in 1991, suffered the fate of the USSR. Russian-Serbian relations are built at spiritual and emotional level, as we are close because of our ancestors and faith, as well as, at a pragmatic level, as our understanding of the world and our interests are quite similar. Russia welcomes the military neutrality of Serbia, its reluctance to accede to NATO, as well as, its firm decision not to join the EU and American sanctions against Russia. It’s not a whim of a leader. It’s the position of the overwhelming majority of Serbians. Any leader, who acts otherwise, will not stay in power here. The majority of the population is pro-Russian, and we have managed to enhance these sentiments.

MJ: But on the other hand, Serbia seeks to accede to the EU, and the entire union has imposed sanctions against Russia.

The accession negotiations have been in process for many years. Many associate EU membership with higher living standards, which is not guaranteed, though.

MJ: But Serbia hasn’t acceded yet. How long will this process take?

It will happen no sooner than in 2025, and it’s an optimistic forecast. What will become of the EU by then? Serbians definitely don’t want accession to the EU to worsen the relations with Russia. We are not sure that the EU will still

Russia welcomes Serbia’s firm decision not to join American sanctions against Russia. It’s the position of the overwhelming majority of Serbians. Any leader, who acts otherwise, will not stay in power here

exist then. Now such doubts are only increasing. Moreover, Serbians firmly oppose accession to NATO, and the issue of Kosovo remains contested. While the American pressure increases, Belgrade doesn’t intend to give in to the Western demands. There are more questions than answers. The West uses the EU membership as a carrot to make Belgrade more tractable.

MJ: How did your career develop after you graduated from MGIMO and before you were appointed Ambassador in Serbia?

The first foreign language that I studied at the Institute was French, the second one was Italian. I specialized in France, but I began my diplomatic career at the consulate in Genoa (Italy). I learnt a lot.

There were only three of us, everyday around three hundred people came to get a visa, that’s why you can’t but learn all of the peculiarities of the job. Now these procedures are automated, back then they were rudimentary. Working in a port has its peculiarities; it made the tasks very diverse. Every day several of our ships, both tourist and cargo, entered Genoa. The captains came to the Consulate to present their reports while we visited the ships.

MJ: Who was your main teacher in the profession?

When I returned to Moscow in the late 1970s, I started working in the First European Department, which was back then the leading department of the Ministry. It was headed by Anatoly Adamishin. I have been working under his leadership for many years. Adamishin was a superstar of the Soviet diplomacy. Behind his back we called him “Adamo”. (Salvatore Adamo was very popular in the Soviet Union at that time).

MJ: How did he teach you?

When there was a high level visit, we prepared analytical papers, which were used as drafts for Anatoly Gromyko and Leonid Brezhnev. Adamishin rewrote them himself. We typed them, read them through, then gave the papers back to him... An important element of this school was making the transcripts of conversations between the senior officials. It’s an art whose aim is to make the transcript even better than the actual conversation. It’s about seeing minor things, which can be omitted, making the conversation smoother without shifting away from the essence. In the department I was also in charge of the Vatican. I went to Rome several times with Ambassador at Large Yuri Karlov. Both the Vatican and Russia wanted to establish official relations in some format, and at the beginning some steps were made. But then the negotiations lost momentum: some objections from our church arose. I remember when at the meeting with Cardinal Casaroli (Vatican



Secretary of State) Mr. Karlov informed him with regret that without “additional consultations” the diplomatic relations will not be established this year and suggested revisiting this issue in a year, but Casaroli without any embarrassment exclaimed: “Don’t worry about that. What can a year might mean to us? We use centuries to measure time, so it’s okay”. Well, we established relations with the Vatican in two years, with Mr. Karlov as an Ambassador. I was sent as the Second Secretary to our Embassy in Rome. Shortly after that Mr. Adamishin became its head.

MJ: It was the beginning of perestroika, wasn’t it?

Yes, it was an interesting time! I remember when 100 thousand people took to the streets of Rome to meet Mikhail Gorbachev during his visit to Italy. In the Embassy, I was working in the economic group and I felt the reforms that were coming. It was lively and extremely interesting work. I was always looking for information, I met a lot of people, and then wrote reports to Moscow.

MJ: And then the USSR disappeared,

A peculiarity of the work in Serbia is a high intensity of bilateral political dialogue. I don’t know any other country where we have so many political meetings

and you came back from Italy to a different state, to Russia.

The new administration in the Ministry thought about the future, that’s why a human resources reform was initiated to make the MFA system more modern, just, transparent, appropriate to the foreign policy goals. I can say that in the five years that I worked for the HR Department (first as deputy Director and as first Deputy (for a year in each position), and then three and a half years as Director) we created the system, which hasn’t been changed thus far.

MJ: When did your ambassadorial career start?

In 1996 when I went as Ambassador to Copenhagen where I worked until 2000.

MJ: This is the entirety of Yeltsin’s second presidential term. I wonder what was the attitude towards Russia abroad in these turbulent years ?

One of the features of foreign policy was inertia. If we speak about the Western foreign policy, now its inertia consists in the reluctance to recognize that Russia has already taken a merited place in the world. At that time it was vice versa. Pro-American and very pragmatic Denmark was stuck in the time when the USSR still existed. According to protocol, at all ceremonies US representatives went first, then were Russian representatives, followed by Germany, Great Britain, etcetera. The Danes followed these rules and always put us at the very top of the rankings as a superpower. It’s the inert foreign policy mindset that allowed Russia to stay at the top of the hierarchy. On the other hand, I think that the Danes kept Russia on first place because it was not clear what would happen to Moscow. Maybe, they didn’t want to scare us and let us become an obedient disciple. Today,

despite the fact that Russia again is a superpower, not everybody wants us to be at the top of the hierarchy.

MJ: Did you come back home only under President Putin?
Yes, and under the new Minister Sergey Lavrov. I was in charge of relations with the CIS countries, then I became Director of the Department for Relations with Compatriots Abroad. In these years there wasn't much done in this area. The problem was that during the Soviet era those who left the country were considered enemies of the Soviet authorities, and the Soviet attitude towards them was very negative. It was mutual. Almost all emigrants were anti-Soviet. There were millions of such people. They were later joined by the Russians who stayed, not of their own will, in the former Soviet republics. The task was set in the following way: to create a structure that would be conducive to establishing respectful relations with diasporas and channels of interaction. In seven years, until November 2012 when I got seconded to Belgrade, we created a network of compatriot organizations around the world. There are coordinating councils in 96 countries. We founded an institute of regional conferences, world thematic conferences. Twice a year we held world congresses with participation of the Russian President. The World Compatriots Coordination Council was created, and included highly reputed people.

MJ: Are there many Russians in Serbia?
Here our diaspora is not the biggest, as it comprising several thousand people. The majority of Russian abroad live in the Ukraine, the Baltic states, Kazakhstan, Germany, the USA, Israel. In most cases our Serbian compatriots are the grandchildren of those who emigrated to Serbia after the revolution. The number of Russians who have come here during the past 20 to 25 years doesn't exceed two thousand people. These are mainly women who married Serbians. 99.9% of

them are friendly to us. In a country where people like Russians, there are a lot of opportunities for productive cooperation. Another peculiarity of the work in Serbia is high intensity of bilateral political dialogue. I don't know any other country where we have so many political meetings. In recent years Serbian President Alexander Vucic, who supports comprehensive development of relations with Russia, had about fifteen meetings with President Putin. The ministerial, business, cultural and scientific meetings are also held at a very high level. Almost all of our ministers have visited Serbia. That's why we have achieved such results.

Knowledge, efficiency, a responsible attitude, a sense of duty - these are the key characteristics of a young diplomat that are taught in MGIMO and which the diplomatic service develops

MJ: What's the structure of our economic cooperation with Serbia?
On our part, this is not only oil and gas, but equipment, including the equipment for energy sector, trolley buses, drugs, etcetera. We supply military and technology goods. We co-produce some of the military equipment. Our IT-companies like Yandex and Kaspersky are working more and more actively here. The Serbians are very talented people (think about Nikola Tesla, for example), they have a very strong mathematical school, in whose creation our emigrant professors incidentally took part. After the revolution Russian scientists and experts didn't go to France where the fate of a taxi driver was awaiting them, but to Serbia. Many key positions

in the University of Belgrade were held by Russian professors. NIS, the biggest Serbian company, together with PAO Gazpromneft, accounts for 14% of all budget revenues. Serbia supplies eco-friendly agricultural goods. The European Union hasn't brought GMOs here so far. Serbia is a country of plums, and its production is very high. Serbia is also the main exporter of raspberry and, of course, of rakija, slivovitz, dunja, kruškovača.

MJ: More than forty years have passed since you graduated from MGIMO. Does the education that you got there still help you?
I have warm memories about the years spent at MGIMO. It is, without a doubt, one of the best universities that gives advantages at the very start of one's career. MGIMO teaches work ethic, gives education, makes you understand that you need to develop throughout your life. The Institute taught me to do a little bit more than necessary. I always tell young diplomats: "If you do 105% of your task, you will be successful, because you will feel more confident. If you do 95% of your task, you can miss something, lose confidence and eventually you will find no satisfaction (will not savor your work) in your work and lose self-respect. Being reliable is very important, and if people can trust you, it's the basis for success". Knowledge, efficiency, a responsible attitude, a sense of duty - these are the key characteristics of a young diplomat that are taught in MGIMO and which the diplomatic service develops. Diplomacy requires you to be actively involved in the work and to think about it all the time. If your main priority is work, then you will succeed. Besides, it can be easily combined with caring about your family and health, with your interests such as sport or culture. What else is important? Never be satisfied with what has already been achieved, never be complacent. When you have done something, rejoice, but your next thought should be that you can do even better. 🇷🇺





VLADLEN ZELENIN (‘04)
Counsellor
Russian Embassy in Serbia
Belgrade

I entered MGIMO in 1999. That year was tragic for Serbia and life-changing for me. In spring, NATO bombed Belgrade; in summer, I enrolled in MGIMO and was assigned the Serbian language. Since then my life has been connected with the region, and I have had no regrets about it whatsoever! Why did I choose MGIMO? It was another twist of fate. I was born and raised in an “aviation family”. I mean we lived in

a settlement called Aviagorodok in Domodedovo, a location where people who were employed in the aviation industry lived. All streets there carried the names of prominent aviators and aircraft designers. Everything that surrounded me from childhood inspired romantic enthusiasm for flying. I even attended a course at Moscow State Aviation Technological University; however, one year there was enough to understand that I didn’t have

the passion for aviation. Luckily, I had an emergency landing field, so to speak; I was enrolled in a humanities class at school, where we studied in-depth literature, history and foreign languages. After consultation, the family decided that I should apply to the best humanities university in the country; for us, that was MGIMO. I spent the following year preparing for the entrance exams, and I got admitted! In March 2004, I did a pre-diploma internship with the Russian Foreign Ministry and went to the Balkans and Belgrade for the first time. I liked Serbia at first sight; eventually, I managed to test and improve my knowledge of the Serbian language and feel the spirit of the country. At the same time, I could feel that the situation in the region was volatile. Just a couple of days after my arrival in Belgrade, ethnic violence broke out in the Autonomous Province of Kosovo, leaving

I n MGIMO, I was assigned the Serbian language. Since then my life has been connected with the region, and I have had no regrets about it whatsoever!

many dead and wounded. The capital of Serbia was also seized by unrest. Later, when I entered the Russian Foreign Ministry’s department in charge of the Balkan region, my boss told me there was an opportunity to get posted to Croatia as a protocol assistant to the Ambassador. I should say that was the best possible scenario for a young diplomat: this job enables you to accompany the ambassador and acquire valuable experience. You get to observe the inner workings of the embassy. I was lucky to work under Ambassador Mikhail Konarovsky, who shared with me the knowledge he gained over many years of diplomatic experience.

One of the memorable moments I had in Croatia was participation in the preparation of the first and so far the only visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to this country. I worked with the President’s protocol department to coordinate events: I ensured the correct order of delegations, change of flags, among other things. My posting to Croatia turned out to be pretty long, I had worked in Zagreb for six years and a half. Eventually in 2014, I was offered a posting in Belgrade. Now I am a counsellor on political issues, with a focus on Serbia’s foreign policy. The scope of issues involves Serbia’s relations with third-party countries, its participation in international organisations and interaction

with Russia in international settings. Serbia is a small country and can’t pay equal attention to all aspects of the international agenda, which Serbs

P resent level of strategic partnership that exists between Russia and Serbia and the degree of mutual understanding render work very interesting and fruitful

themselves admit. So there are a number of issues which I elucidate to my counterparts in Serbia’s Foreign Ministry, having studied them thoroughly myself. For instance, at the beginning of my mission, I had to deal with the question of the code of conduct for outer space, not an issue of immediate interest to my Serbian counterparts. Still they showed interest in and understanding of my position. In conjunction with Serbian colleagues, we work on a host of foreign policy issues. We almost always concur in our approaches to issues. To a great extent, this testifies to the level of strategic partnership that exists between Russia and Serbia. This degree of mutual understanding renders work very interesting and fruitful. ☑





Standing are Mikhail Silantiev, Nikita Sukhodolov, Igor Khopryachkov
Sitting are Dmitry Karapotkin, Kira Kornilova, Denis Kruglov

**IGOR
KHOPRYACHKOV**
(‘15)

*Attaché
Embassy of the Russian
Federation in Serbia*

I decided to connect my life with Serbia in high school when my interest in history of this country sparked. That’s why it wasn’t by chance that I chose MGIMO where Serbian was taught. In 2009 I entered the School of International Relations. The university is still dear to me as it gave me an opportunity to meet and make friends with

interesting and extraordinary people. After receiving my Master’s degree, I got married (by the way, I met my wife, Masha, at MGIMO) and went to the Russian

At the embassy, «You never know» rule works: every day brings something new and exciting. This dynamism keeps you alert, which is necessary to solve the current tasks

Embassy in Serbia. The “You never know” rule applies in my case: every day brings something new and exciting. I may need to organize the visit of a delegation or the arrival of an interesting or important person. This dynamism keeps you alert which is necessary to solve the current tasks. Today, Russian-Serbian relations are dynamic. As a result, I am a part of history in the making. For example, on 22 February 2018, there was a solemn ceremony in the Church of Saint Sava in Belgrade in honor of its completion by Russian artists. Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, commemorated the momentous occasion with a speech. I remember looking at the mosaic dome and feeling that I had made the right choice. 

**DMITRY
KARAPOTKIN** (‘16)

*Attaché,
Chief of Protocol of the Russian
Embassy in Serbia*

When a MGIMO student, I came to Belgrade twice for the introductory and pre-graduation internship to see whether I am ready for the real diplomatic work and to gain a good reputation in the eyes of my future bosses. Maybe, I overdid it, as they entrusted me with the very “dangerous” post of the Chief of Protocol. With this position, you always need to be alert as your gaffes might have some consequences. In general, I like my job. When you work with protocol, you feel that you are in the middle of action. Sometimes you arrange the meeting of the Ambassador with the President of the country or with the Foreign Minister, the next day you accompany him in business trips or at official events, then you are in charge of the high-level official visit and even attend talks. These are priceless moments: I have something to tell my grandchildren about. Diplomats believe that working in protocol is a sort of “school of hard knocks”. After that a young diplomat will





Diplomats believe that working in protocol is a sort of “school of hard knocks”. After that a young diplomat will have nothing to fear

have nothing to fear. Nothing disciplines more than working with protocol, which doesn’t tolerate uncertainty and requires extreme accuracy. If you ask me to describe my work at the protocol section in three words, I will quote the motto of the Russian airborne forces: “Nobody but us”. For example, the visit of the Russian Federation Council Speaker Valentina Matvienko was almost over, she was to go to the airport, but at the last minute she decided to go to the main Serbian church, Church of Saint Savva, though it was not planned. While the motorcade was on the way to the church, we had to find somebody who would

welcome her there and tell her about the church. We managed to solve this problem by calling the senior priest whose number I got in my smartphone. In my career there have been dozens of such situations, when you need to understand just in several seconds what should be done and whom you should turn to.

The education that I received in MGIMO helps me a lot in my work. Thanks to the Serbian language I work in Belgrade. Occasionally I use French, my second foreign language, as well as English, my first foreign language, which is always needed. The languages are our everything!

Naturally, legal knowledge, the ability to properly read and interpret laws, as well as, international legal instruments, and clear thinking learnt during the years at university help a lot. Finally, a MGIMO graduate is primarily an expert with a solid background in international relations. This quality distinguishes us from graduates of other universities where the students are not specifically trained for the MFA. This is what we can and should be proud of. 🇷🇺

KIRA KORNILOVA (‘15)
Attaché at the Chancery of the Russian Embassy in Serbia Priština

I was happy to enter MGIMO, it was my dream! However, during the first meeting of freshmen when all of the students were divided into groups I was surprised to learn that I was going to study Albanian. “It’s terrible”, I thought. Albanian didn’t fall into the category of the languages of my dreams.

However, during the first class of Albanian, our teacher, Ekaterina Kapralova, sparked our interest in this little known country. It turned out to be a wonderful place, and Albanian is one of the most unusual European languages.

I remember when on the 1st September of the new academic year we didn’t go to the university but to Domodedovo airport from where our

group departed for sunny Albania to take free classes of Albanian for international students. Albania surprised us not only with its warm climate, but also with extraordinary cordiality and hospitality. If we asked

However, everything was arranged and we were looked forward to the arrival of next September. MGIMO is not only about foreign languages, there are a lot of subjects taught by the best professors in Russia.

for a long time, if it was outstanding Pavel Lyadov who led you into it! My academic achievements at university along with the knowledge of a rare language opened up the doors to the MFA. Two months after



The issue of settlement in Kosovo is still in the limelight of the international community and is regularly discussed at the UN Security Council. From my perspective, my presence in the region of conflict, which we repeatedly discussed during our classes, is pure luck for me as a young diplomat

people in the streets how to get to a certain place, they willingly showed us the way and even accompanied us so that we wouldn't get lost. At the same time on the eve of the trip I had lots of doubts: Albania wasn't considered to be a very safe country.

You will certainly remember the passion for and the peculiarities of the development of Siberia, which were discussed during the classes of ethno-political history of Russia, if you studied with Yuri Bulatov. You will remember the subtleties of the diplomatic protocol

my graduation I received my first secondment to the Russian Embassy in Albania. Now I am working at a very interesting location: the Chancery of the Russian Embassy in Serbia in Pristina. Twenty years after the armed conflict of 1998-1999 and ten years after Kosovo proclaimed itself the Republic of Kosovo, the issue of settlement is still relevant. It is still in the limelight of the international community and is regularly discussed at the UN Security Council. From my perspective, my presence in the region of conflict, which we repeatedly discussed during our classes, is pure luck for me as a young diplomat. ☑





**ANDREY
KHRIPUNOV** ('86)
*Russian Trade Representative
in Serbia*

Why did I choose MGIMO? My father graduated from this university; then he worked in Poland, where I had lived before I was 7. That’s why I knew what it’s like to be a diplomat. When I was in high school, I learnt about the existence of the UN, about the Sixth (Legal) Committee, and about international law. In the late 1970s, there were few international lawyers, and I wanted to serve my country in this capacity.

I entered the department of Public Law at the International Law School where I started learning English and Spanish.

I remember two teachers in particular who impressed me. One of them was Vitaly Kabatov, who had been a musician, but then had to change his profession because of a serious injury after being trapped in a burning tank during a war. Later, he became a well-known expert in international law, specializing in the Roman law.

After MGIMO I started working in an organization associated with the Ministry of Foreign Trade, namely, in the trade union called Foreign Parcel Trading company. Its main function was to send goods to our diplomats abroad as well as to the experts who provided technical assistance for the USSR-allied countries and who built their industrial facilities.

Unexpectedly, I became an expert in commercial law. Being counsel, I took on many cases and was in court almost every second day. I remember a case called

Foreign Parcel Trading company VS. Biysk Meat Factory. This factory sent substandard tushonka (canned stewed meat) to our specialists who worked in Mongolia, and so we decided to file a claim.

I need to confess that in the very beginning I was not extremely enthusiastic about this job because I specialized in the public law at MGIMO. However, later I grew interested in commercial law and in litigating such cases as well as preparing for them. I received useful skills and an insider’s view of the foreign trade union work.

Soon I was offered to go to our Trade

The EU doesn’t hide its discontent related to the special relations that have existed between Russia and Serbia. The Serbians are under enormous pressure, but they have enough strength and patience to withstand it

Representation in Belgrade. I took a crash course in Serbian, and in 1991 I started working in Serbia. After seven years of work in this country, I mastered the language so well that I could interpret during the negotiations.

This secondment was a priceless experience thanks to which I became an expert on Serbia. I witnessed the collapse of Yugoslavia, how the war in the Balkans started and spread, and how the Western sanctions affected the country.

Though there were no military actions in Belgrade itself, the war brought there a lot of challenges. Sometimes shelves in the shops were absolutely empty. Due to hyperinflation, we received our salaries in dollars, but it didn’t help much. I remember that you could exchange a 500 bln dinar bill for 1.5 dollars, but if you lingered for a day or two, it depreciated by half a dollar, being a subject to four or five denominations. The

government didn't manage to print the numbers on the bills with additional zeros.

The food shortages made us do the following: several families went to a village together, bought a 600 kg bull and carved it up. It provided enough meat for four families for two or three months.

In 1998 I returned to Moscow and, as deputy Director, I started improving the Legal Department of the Ministry of Economic Development. In three years, the number of people working there increased from five to seventy. For me, it was important to succeed as a manager. In 2002 I was sent to Belgrade in the capacity of the Trade Representative in order to restore and expand our presence in Serbia. In the 1990s, we supplied the area energy fertilizers; soon, large Russian companies began operating there. The relations were damaged due to NATO's aggression and the bombing of Belgrade in 1999.

As soon as the situation normalized, we began to export cars and equipment there again. In 2003 Lukoil started operating in Serbia, buying a big retail chain of petrol

stations and, by this way, participating in the privatization. In 2008 Gazpromneft started investing in the Serbian economy by purchasing NIS company, which had earlier been subsidized, and turned it into a successful business. Now its revenues make up 15% of the country's budget.

In late 2008 I returned to the Ministry of Economic Development, but this time as deputy Director of the Department of Europe. Four years later I once again was appointed Trade Representative to

We consider Serbia to be a foothold for getting access to the EU markets as this country has official status of an EU candidate country and is part of a free trade zone



Belgrade. The changes that happened in our economic relations with Serbia have been enormous. We are present not only in the energy sector. There is also a subsidiary (not a representation!) of Russian Railways, Metrowagonmash, which supplies rolling stocks for the railroads, just as the GAZ group supplies buses. Serbia is an innovative country; that's why the IT sector is booming: Yangex is becoming more active on the market, and we hope that very soon Kaspersky will follow.

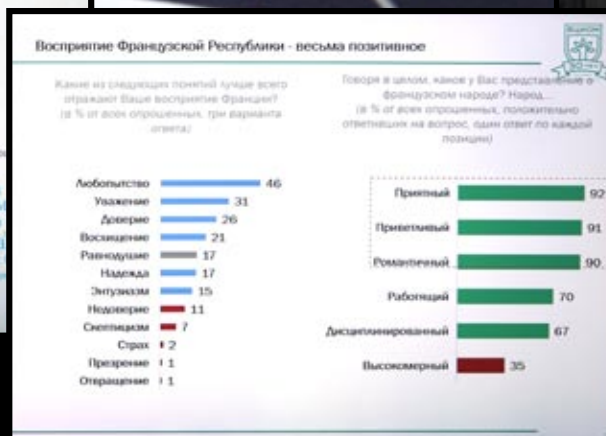
Now we are working on the next, more advanced stage of cooperation, which is the localization of production. Two years ago Russia initiated the creation of a Russian industrial zone here. In general, we consider Serbia to be a foothold for getting access to the EU markets as this country has official status of an EU candidate country and is part of a free trade agreement with Serbia, which allows, among other things, for the recognition of product certifications.

It's important that our companies, which are expanding in Serbia, are actively involved in social and humanitarian projects, sponsoring sport clubs and renovating cultural heritage sites. If Russian Railways renovate a road, they take care of a site, say, a school near this road in a small town, and renovate it at their own expense. Recently, Gazpromneft refurbished the dome mosaic of an Orthodox Church of Saint Sava, which is the biggest church in the Balkans, not just in Serbia.

The Serbians supply Russia with agricultural goods such as fruit and vegetables, and meat and dairy products without GMOs, which is wonderful. But the Serbians face a dilemma: they are in talks to join the WTO, but in this case the use of GMOs would be inevitable. They might manage to refuse the production of the genetically modified products, but they will have to permit its imports.

The EU doesn't hide its discontent related to the special relations that have existed between Russia and Serbia. The Serbians are under enormous pressure, but they have enough strength and patience to withstand it: they understand very clearly what they might gain by cooperating with Russia. ☑





Interviews and photos by Igor Drobyshev

TRIANON

The initiative of the Trianon Dialogue, which has emerged from a meeting between Presidents Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron, and aimed at connecting Russian and French civil societies, found its niche in the relations between Russia and France.





ANATOLY TORKUNOV: “THE TRIANON DIALOGUE FOUND ITS NICHE IN THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RUSSIA AND FRANCE”

MJ: Summing up the results of the first year of the Trianon Dialogue, initiated by Russia’s and France’s heads of state, what would be your main comment? First, we did not expect it to be such a major success. After all, it is no secret that the latest political context, including the events of last year, could have interfered with our plans. But, with the exception of some slight hitches, all our plans were implemented. Of course, the key event of the year was the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg which included a range

of Trianon-related events, in particular, the meeting between members of the Trianon Dialogue Coordinating Council and the two heads of state, President Putin and Emmanuel Macron. The latter must have been impressed during his visit. Among the highlights of the forum, I would single out ‘The City of the Future’ session held in March under the auspices of MIPIM, an international property market expo in Cannes; this became the leitmotif of the year. The event coincided with the discussion

panel initiative housed in the Russian Cultural Centre in Paris; the activities focused on the Russian-French relations and included the presentation of a bilingual publication – correspondence between Boris Yeltsin and two of France’s presidents, Jaques Chirac and Francois Mitterrand. Last October, within the framework of the Trianon Dialogue, MGIMO hosted the Russian Congress of French Teachers attended by teachers and heads of international program divisions from 150 Russian and French universities. The congress brought into focus the cooperation between Russia and France in the sphere of education. In November The Paris Peace Forum hosted two sessions of the Trianon Dialogue, where the model of ‘Civil Societies in Times of Crisis’ was the key event. MGIMO had a stand at the forum and, over the course of the hour-and-a-half discussion with the public, it presented the Russian experience of ‘civil’ and ‘academic’ diplomacy as well as the Trianon Dialogue itself.

MJ: From your perspective, how well was the main theme - ‘City of the Future’ - of the forum presented?

Russian and French urban planning experts extensively discussed it not only in Cannes but also at panel sessions of the Moscow Urban Planning Forum in July. Everybody agreed that the topic allows us to address the social, economic, transport, ethno-political, and environmental aspects of modern megalopolises, small towns, and mono-industry towns. Visitors to Moscow had a chance to see the changes that have taken place in the city over the last few years. According to Moscow government minister, Sergey Cheryomin, himself

a MGIMO alumnus, these innovative processes are taking place in many Russian towns. Last year Russia came 35th in the World Bank rankings of urban comfort, compared to its 120th

The key event of the year was the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg which included a range of Trianon-related events, in particular, the meeting between members of the Trianon Dialogue Coordinating Council and the two heads of state, President Putin and Emmanuel Macron

position six years ago. Today we have the ambitious plan to be 20th by 2020.

MJ: Would you say that The Trianon Dialogue found its niche in the relations between Russia and France? I think it did. Primarily because it does not compete with any other formats of cooperation between Russia and France. Besides, this forum essentially provides a framework both for dialogue between civil societies and professional collaboration; it aims to embrace all social spheres of bilateral relations and has minimal vertical hierarchy. Speaking about our immediate plans for the Trianon Dialogue, this year is the year of universities. Our French partners have come up with an initiative of a Russian-French Bilateral Year 2019 in the sphere of education and public outreach. The Coordinating Council convened on 27 November to approve the action plan for this year, paying particular attention to education and public outreach activities

as well as other relevant suggestions from the members of the Coordinating Council. One in particular is the idea to run a series of leadership meetings for young, aspiring economists and public servants from Russia and France.

MJ: Last November Paris hosted a large-scale reunion event for graduates of dual-degree Master’s programs run by MGIMO in conjunction with French universities. It celebrated 25 years of collaboration between MGIMO and Sciences Po. Yes, it was a milestone event for us. I was lucky to be collaborating with my

friend Pierre Morel, who in the early 90’s was working in Moscow as the French Ambassador to Russia. Together we launched the first cooperation initiative with Sciences Po in 1993, when the two universities signed a cooperation agreement for the first joint education program. The program turned out so popular that by 2005 it evolved into a fully-fledged dual-degree Master’s program co-run by MGIMO and Sciences Po. In the course of these 25 years, hundreds of students from both sides have graduated with this dual degree or taken part in other related exchange programs. To me this is a massive success. 🇷🇺



PIERRE MOREL: “THE TRIANON DIALOGUE HAS MADE CONSIDERABLE PROGRESS”

MJ: Mr. Ambassador, analysing the Trianon Dialogue’s first year what is the most important result? The Trianon Dialogue is a long-term

endeavour. It will take time to establish direct contacts between Russian and French civil societies, so we decided it would be imprudent to start out

with large-scale projects, which may eventually lose traction. The first plenary of our Coordination Council took place on the sidelines of the St Petersburg Economic Forum, which was attended by the French President. We had an opportunity to participate in all important events of the Forum, where we promoted the Trianon Dialogue; some of these events were even initiated by us.

At the beginning both sides were excited to use the opportunity to find out what the Russians and the French think about each other's countries. Two research centres conducted a joint in-depth study and found that our nations tend to have mutual respect and interest. This finding was confirmed by the results of a competition "Do you know Russia?" which was held among 18-25 year olds and proved to be pretty difficult. Out of five finalists, who were awarded tickets to football World Cup



matches, four had never been to our country!

MJ: In your opinion, has the Trianon Dialogue found its place

in the context of Franco-Russian relations?

As I have already said, it will take some time before the project reaches its full potential. However, it has already made considerable progress. We have developed new formats of joint events. Take, for example, the new twin version of our information platform dialogue-

An agreement on educational cooperation between MGIMO and Sciences Po has brought to life a whole new industry of effective Franco-Russian educational contracts

trianon.fr. We can already see that along with embassies, which maintain and develop bilateral relations, the Trianon Dialogue is playing an important role in

reaching out to new groups in our countries, encouraging initiative on the part of our citizens, helping their projects to be noticed and to find new partners in the other country. Discussions about "The City of the Future" revealed that we both share ideas and concerns about this all-encompassing subject. I am convinced that education, as a theme for our dialogue next year, will demonstrate this to the full.

MJ: 25 years ago you witnessed the signature of a landmark agreement on educational cooperation between MGIMO and Sciences Po.

Yes, I remember it very well. The project was prepared by a group of Sciences Po employees spearheaded by Director Alain Lancelot and in conjunction with MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov. The French Embassy fully supported the project, and even hosted the signing of the agreement, which took place at the enormous Louis XV table in the large salon of the Ambassador's residence. I assumed the duties of Ambassador in 1992 and could see how the MGIMO Rector embarked on a transformative overhaul of the institute, much in tune with the new times, in order to offer students new academic programs in economy, finance, journalism, and so on. These efforts didn't remain unnoticed: a dual degree, still unusual in post-Soviet Russia, soon started gaining traction among both applicants and enterprises in search of trained personnel. Every time I came to MGIMO, I had an opportunity to talk with young Russians studying French, brimming with youthful enthusiasm (and questions!) and soon enough with their French peers from Sciences Po too. Thus, there eventually developed a whole new industry of effective Franco-Russian educational contracts. Its undeniable success can be illustrated by the fact that last November about 300 French and Russian graduates of the joint program participated in the alumni reunion in Paris. 

SYLVIE BERMANN: “25 YEARS AGO, MGIMO AND SCIENCES PO SIGNED A FORWARD-LOOKING AGREEMENT”

French ambassador in Russia talks about educational aspects of the “Trianon Dialogue”

MJ: This year is the 25th anniversary of MGIMO's cooperation with French universities. It started in 1994 with the establishment of Sciences Po, the first Russian-French Master's program for international relations in Russia. Can you assess this achievement as an ambassador and a graduate of Sciences Po?

It is true that 25 years ago, Alan Lanslo, who was at that time the director of the Paris Institute of Political Science (Sciences Po), and Vice-Rector Ivan Tyulin signed this forward-looking agreement. In order to understand the significance of this project, you need to remember the time that this took place. The breakup of the Soviet Union allowed for the opening of a new page in Franco-Russian academic contacts. The most important thing was that two of these rather similar academic schools simultaneously voted in favour of internationalising their courses, which was an uncommon approach in 1994, even in France.

The success of this project is visible in its development, and it has been the result of constant work to update, adapt courses, constantly engage the teaching staff and generate enthusiasm amongst students. Since then, MGIMO and Sciences Po have followed similar paths; they have chosen to open up to the business world and internationalisation, and are now among the best international relations schools in the world.

MGIMO and Sciences Po choose a rather original way to mark their 25 years of cooperation. First, the meeting last year between Pascal Perrino, President of the Association of Sciences Po Graduates, and Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO, helped to foster cooperation between the associations of graduates of both



universities. This important element of cooperation is often not given enough attention, although the associations have expansive professional networks of graduates. Secondly, the National Assembly in Paris introduced a colloquium on

European questions, and Sciences Po held a meeting that discussed the scientific aspects of cooperation. This exclusively important work must be used by the coordination council of Trianon Dialogue and included in the Franco-Russian agenda.

MJ: The main idea of the forum last year was the “City of the Future”, which is seen as a “smart, comfortable city”. During the year you have been working as a French ambassador in Moscow, have you noticed anything in particular about this topic? How “comfortable” and “smart” is Moscow?

The changes going on in Moscow are impressive. They restored some buildings by narrowing some roads, just as Paris had done; they also created comfortable green zones and walking areas, especially in the centre of the city, where there were not enough before. The development of the city’s transportation infrastructure, the extension of metro lines and the construction of the Moscow Central Railway have made the city more practical for all of its citizens, especially for those who live far from the centre. Modern informational technologies simplify the lives of their users. I consider the absence of ads in public spaces to be a positive. Moscow has proven that it is possible, and I hope that other cities around the world will follow its example.

MJ: You have already worked as a diplomat in Moscow, and your time as a diplomat coincided with the exciting period of Perestroika. What do you remember about those years? Of course, life has changed a lot since the end of the Soviet period. The change that strikes me most is the appearance of Moscow, which has become enjoyable to live in. There are more parks and restaurants offering unbelievable gastronomic diversity – in a word, the city has become an international cultural capital. I really love Russian literature; one of my best memories of this time was visiting the country house of Pasternak in Peredelkino, where I, as a new diplomat, managed to rent a small home next door to visit on weekends. I was glad to return to this place once again and meet the son of the writer. Despite the difficulties

of that period, I have warm memories of my first stay in Russia. Perestroika was a fascinating period filled with bitter disputes about the future of the country, disputes that my acquaintances constantly had in kitchens everywhere.

MJ: You are a specialist on China, and you were the French ambassador to China. How did you become interested in this country?

I have been interested in this country for a very long time: it was the culture that attracted me. I had been to China several times for long periods. When I was finishing at Sciences Po in 1976-

The success of MGIMO - Sciences Po agreement has been the result of constant work to update, adapt courses, constantly engage the teaching staff and generate enthusiasm amongst students

77, I was living in China during the end of the cultural revolution, studying in the Institute of Foreign Languages in Beijing. For a year, I had been living among those known as gong nong bing (students-workers-peasants-soldiers). I immersed myself in the way that normal Chinese people lived at this time. I still have fond memories: I harvested rice from rice paddies in the people’s commune, and I welded in a factory. When the arrest of the Gang of Four was announced, I found myself on Tiananmen Square. In 1980-82, when I arrived in Beijing as a diplomat once again, I closely followed the reforms of Deng Xiaoping. Between 2011 and 2014, I was the French ambassador to China, and I returned to Beijing during the strengthening

of Xi Jinping’s government. There is a confrontation of two trends: one is connected with ancient China, while the other is modernity, and it cannot fail to fascinate. This is a huge country with a powerful culture like in Russia, but it is heading down a different path of development. China has changed radically and has become one of the world’s leading economies.

MJ: Russia has recently committed to turning to “the East” and becoming closer to China, not the least due to the deterioration of relations with the West. Are you not afraid that France and its partners in the EU are coming to a “point of no return”, at which a return to the former level of relations will become unrealistic?

It is perfectly clear that in recent years the Russian-Chinese partnership has seriously expanded. However, I don’t think that the logic of creating a block or alliance can be applied to the cooperation of Russia and China, and that Moscow’s interest in Beijing will lead Russia to permanently separating itself from Europe. From the moment I came to Moscow, I have constantly observed a tendency towards closer economic, cultural and demographic connections between Russia and Europe than between Russia and Asia, regardless of the difficulties of their political relations. I do not sense a clear departure from this basic tendency. I think that France and Europe are always ready to renew their partnership with Russia if Russia demonstrates an aspiration to overcome our differences when it comes to observing international rights. I am not sure that Russia could find such a balanced partnership anywhere else. President Macron, from the moment he took power, has expressed a desire for a greater dialogue and cooperation with Moscow. He confirmed this during his visit to St. Petersburg in May of last year. He also stressed that it is worthwhile to have a more detailed discussion about the framework of European security with the United States and Russia, and we are working on exactly this today. ☐



MJ: The museum block you are building in central Moscow will make the city more comfortable and “smarter”, won’t it?

We hope it does fit in with this concept. It is going to be a unique space for a person to be able to get various impressions, which can be compared to cognition. We have planned a lot of places meant for people of all sorts to feel good and comfortable: both for intellectuals, I would say, for introverts who seek solitude, I mean the depth of immersion, specific knowledge and impressions; and for more broadly thinking extroverts who seek a different relationship with art implying more movement and emotions. We are going to have as many exhibition projects both big and small, such

We always feel like we are a buffer zone for a constant exchange of prisoners in a crazy world, in which humanitarian efforts is the only remedy to make a difference

as lectures where one will have an opportunity to learn new things from the intellectuals, to participate in serious talks related to art (fine, music, choreographic and philosophical). A person’s understanding of art is becoming broader and more comprehensive, partly due to the fact that information is no longer exclusive. a young man will soon be so overwhelmed by information overload that it will become more of a burden, and the man will want and aspire to get impressions. Emotional development of a person is our key movement. We are trying to study ourselves, divide ourselves into separate worlds and microworlds, each of which can function on its own or join another to function in

**MARINA LOSHAK:
“WE ARE AMBASSADORS
FOR THE FRENCH ART”**

“We always feel like we are a buffer zone for a constant exchange of prisoners,” Marina Loshak, Head of Moscow’s Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, says about the role of culture in a crazy world in which we have lived for a long time already, and humanitarian efforts is the only remedy to make a difference. One of such initiatives is the “Trianon Dialogue”, designed to bring together Russian and French civil society actors. Marina Loshak, as a member of the Trianon Dialogue Coordination Council, likes the idea of a “smart city” which has become the main topic of the forum last year.



a different way. That is a great idea, but we do not know if our idyllic dreams will come true to the full. I favor idealism, which I believe is crucial to make progress: if you can dream big, it will be really great if half your dreams come true.

MJ: Back to the smart city, how do you

see Moscow as a smart city?
The word “smart” explains well: a smart person loves comfort and knows how to make use of it; a silly person does not know what comfort feels like. It seems to me, Moscow has a unique path to development. I believe, Moscow is lucky to have Sergei Sobyenin as its mayor since

he is a good listener and a man of action, which is very important. Speaking of the future, urban planners should think about ecology, electrocars, filling stations for them, people’s preferences who drive green cars, and rivers as a thruway. It is crucial to move unprofitable production out of the big center and to turn residential areas into more vibrant districts, so that different events could be held in all parts of the city, not only the center. The situation with big cities is quite clear, but about small cities and towns? There should be the right culture hubs there.
I love Moscow, since it is my space, and my biorhythms coincide with it. Every time I return to Moscow – I very often

We are a party to all dialogues irrespective of these foolish sanctions and grievances towards each other. What is remarkable is that the cultural community makes more steps towards each other than it did before

have to go on business trips – I feel that at last I am home, the place I belong. There are not so many big cities with such a strong energy to give you a chance – take it if you like, if not...be a Buddhist.

MJ: You often go to Paris, whose mayor – Ann Hidalgo – is as active as you are and has a development strategy. Did you notice anything that could be applied here in Moscow?
It’s hard to say. When I am in Paris, I always walk the same museum routes, gallery blocks. I love this city. It has a different energy. But Paris is not young by its life energy. It is in its fifties, which is a wonderful age, an age of intellect, experience, maturity and informed



existence! Moscow is very young! And I love this “green” period when you can make stupid mistakes, do something wrong, be light-minded. It is wonderful, isn’t it!

MJ: Speaking of cultural relations with France, do your plans coincide with the goals of the “Trianon Dialogue”?

France and French art make up a very important part of our museum identity since French collections is one of the most important and recognizable brands of our museum: I mean, impressionists and postimpressionists, whose works are essential to our collection, as well as the pool of French painters in general beginning from XVII century, which comprises the most important painters and their key works. We are rightfully French art ambassadors both at home and abroad. We organize exhibitions across the globe, promoting French art, work together with major French museums. Two years ago, we shocked France by organizing an exhibition, which included paintings by a well-known Moscow collector Sergei Shchukin. The event took place at the Louis Vuitton Fund, and was attended by a record number of people – 1.3 bln – for the first time in the entire history of exhibitions in Paris! We very soon plan to exhibit works by another great collector, Ivan Morozov. I do think it will be a fantastic success, too. This past success inspired us to create a Club of friends of the Pushkin Museum in Paris, which brought together friends and fans of the museum, including businesspeople and those who are ready to support French art on our territory. The geography of interaction and friendship with our French professional partners is very wide. We maintain very close cooperation with Musée d’Orsay. We have many exchanges with the Centre Pompidou, the Louvre Museum, the Art Museum of Paris, the Branly Museum on the embankment, Grand Palais and Petit Palais, and many other museums. Every year we exhibit many of our works at different French exhibitions. In mid-September Musée d’Orsay and the Musée

Picasso-Paris opened a very important exhibition devoted to Picasso’s Blue and Rose periods and gathered all his key works from museums all over the world. It is simply impossible to imagine this exhibition without such pieces of art as “Girl on a Ball”. We are always reluctant to give this masterpiece for exhibiting. However, as partners we gave the painting to maintain our traditional cooperation, which we find very significant. Now you can see it everywhere in Paris.

MJ: You are indeed actively engaged in dialogue with France...

We held it before the “Trianon Dialogue”, and will continue to do so afterwards. We are a party to all dialogues irrespective of these foolish sanctions and grievances towards each other. What is remarkable is that the cultural community – not only the museum one – makes more steps towards each other than it did before. In this sense, I am very optimistic about our future.

MJ: You have got another 5 years as Head of Moscow’s Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts. Supposing, you are offered to head the Louvre, how would you contribute based on the experience you got here, in the Pushkin Museum?

The Louvre is too big and complex for me, and I love museums – and cities as well – which are to a person’s capabilities. The Louvre is not even a city, it is rather a country with its own laws and rules. I belong to those people who can criticize only themselves and their own space. How would I contribute to the Louvre? This museum is very complex for me in terms of navigation, which is why if I ever became its head, I would first decide on navigation to make the museum more comfortable and cozy. The museum collections are huge and fantastic, and its potential is great! But let me say it again, I find it crucial to feel the scale of my existence in some space, to know the limits of my existence. Despite its grand size, Moscow does define these limits within my favourite spaces. 🇷🇺





**ALEKSEY MESHKOV:
“THE TRIANON DIALOGUE
OPENS A WINDOW
OF OPPORTUNITY”**

Politicians of both countries desire to “take a breath of fresh air”, according to Russia’s ambassador to France.

Last November, Aleksey Meshkov, Russia’s ambassador to France, celebrated one year since being appointed to the position. However, he prefers to count from President Vladimir Putin’s visit to France in May 2017 and the negotiations with Emmanuel Macron in Versailles. “This summit was the start of a gradual end to the crisis in Russian-French affairs and of the return of our relations to a normal course,” he said. “It hasn’t all been simple, over the period of a couple of months we had the full visit of President Macron to the economic forum in St Petersburg, where there was a bilateral summit, and his double visit during the World Cup. Indeed, the detractors in Europe, if you remember, generally called for a political boycott of attendance at the World Cup. The summit in Saint Petersburg added a real impetus to bilateral relations, this was very noticeable according to the sharply rising rhythm of consultations along the lines of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other departments.”

MJ: The Trianon Dialogue is picking up steam.
Yes, it received a full official framework in Saint Petersburg at the meeting of both coordinating councils of the forum with President Putin and President Macron. In other words, now there is a window of opportunity, and it is important for us to do everything to not let the international geopolitical

winds blow this window shut. From both sides, I feel that there is a desire to take a breath of fresh air from this unpleasant narrative that our “Anglo-Saxon colleagues” are trying to impose on us. As for the Trianon Dialogue, everyone in our embassy is sincerely glad that it is Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO, who is leading the Russian side. We will do our best to help him.

MJ: At the meeting of MGIMO graduates in Paris, there were not only Russian graduates working and living in Paris, but also the French alumni who graduated from the dual-master’s programs MGIMO-Sciences Po and other French universities.
By the way, I delivered a lecture to master’s students at Sciences Po not that long ago. I liked the European youth. They listened with interest and asked questions that really made sense.

The Trianon Dialogue is a window of opportunity, and it is important for us to do everything to not let the international geopolitical winds blow this window shut

MJ: When it was time to enter a university, why did you choose MGIMO?
I am a member of an MGIMO dynasty. My father graduated from the International Law department and my older sister studied International Economic Relations. Both my sons have graduated from MGIMO – my older son was in the political science department and my younger one was in the International Institute of Energy Politics. As you can see, each had their own interest in MGIMO and each consciously went into their profession.

MJ: You started your diplomatic career in Spain. What were the most memorable things about your time working there?
I arrived there in 1981 literally a few weeks after the renewal of diplomatic relations, and this period was a boom for Russian-Spanish relations in all areas. We built a foundation for Russian-Spanish cooperation.

Of course, I remember the heroic act of King Juan Carlos I on 23 February 1981. It practically undermined the coup, already carried out by a neo-Francoist group. These things cannot be forgotten, and the courage of these people warrants great respect.

MJ: Wasn't there an episode with Yuri Dubinin, the Soviet ambassador who the Spanish offered to hide from the Francoists?

I've heard this story twice. At first, Dubinin himself told me. During the coup, he visited a Spanish friend of his, who told him, "Don't worry, sit with us here quietly. My father was a Francoist minister, and it's unlikely they will search for you here." Fifteen years later, when this friend passed away, I heard this story from his son. "My brother and I were sleeping," he said, "and our father came to us, saying, 'I would like to say goodbye, as we have the Soviet ambassador here as our guest, and it's possible that we won't see each other again.'" So courageous was that man; he wasn't afraid and he didn't ask the Soviet ambassador to leave...

MJ: You worked as the ambassador to Italy for more than nine years.

This is a great part of my life. It featured the rapid development of our bilateral relations. There were many accomplishments. When I arrived in Italy, trade turnover was around \$9.5 billion, and it had increased to \$53.5 billion when I left. It was a period of intense growth in cultural exchanges, and eventful political contacts – there were approximately 40 summits between the Russian president and Italian prime minister. For me, the spiritual side of work has always been important. One of my fondest memories is the establishment of the first Orthodox Church in Rome. After 2,000 years of Christianity being in this city, this was the first Russian church, and in close vicinity to the Vatican. Many people took part in making it happen. Even I, as the ambassador, feel my contribution.

There were many different stories, and they were significant. One of these was connected to the participation of Russian sailors in saving Italians during the terrible earthquake of 1908 in the Messina Strait. Our ships were not far from the place and they were the first to help. They saved thousands of people, and afterwards the citizens of Messina named one of the streets in honour of the Russian sailors. However the story does not end here. Once, a person I knew came up to me during an event and said something unexpected. "I am thankful to the Russian sailors. If it weren't for their help then, I wouldn't have been born! The thing is that my grandfather, who was a small child back then, stood in

In general, if a person wants to be a diplomat, he must by nature be a builder. Building is far more interesting than destroying

a window opening on the third floor of a ruined home when the Russian sailors saw him. They managed to take him away from there." That is to say that in Italy, as well as in Spain, we were building a foundation for Russian-Italian cooperation, and building is far more interesting than destroying. In general, if a person wants to be a diplomat, he must by nature be a builder.

MJ: You have held the important post of deputy minister of foreign affairs twice in your career. The first time was in September 2001, and you started five days before the terrible terrorist attack in New York, which changed the world. Was this a difficult way to start?
Yes, it wasn't simple. After all, a week

after the terrorist attack, I accompanied the then minister Igor Ivanov to New York. Because of the terrorist attack, the UN General Assembly was moved to a later date, but the leadership of Russia took the decision that our delegation would arrive anyway and hold a series of meetings. Therefore, we were the first of the official foreign delegations to arrive in the United States immediately after these tragic events. However, the planes didn't fly there, and the airspace was closed! So we had to first land in Washington, where we met with the leadership of the US. President George W. Bush expressed his deep appreciation for President Putin, who, as we remember, was the first head of state to call him and offer help. We went to New York by bus. I will never forget the image. Above the place where not that many days ago stood the famous "twin towers" was a column of smoke. These were heavy impressions... The second time, I was appointed to the position of deputy minister in 2012 after returning from Italy. This was purely a European assignment, and I supervised two-thirds of the European countries and all of the European institutes. What did I gain during this period? You'll be surprised, but most importantly, it gave me more patience; after all, this was a very complicated time. After a year, things started happening in Ukraine, although the crisis had been coming for a while... President Putin's speech at the Munich Security Conference in 2007 was a warning from Russia that affairs were not headed in the right direction. The coup in Ukraine was simply used by our colleagues in the West, who tried to keep a unipolar world, as an excuse, which would have allowed them to legalize, so to speak, the attempts to isolate Russia. Of course, this was a rather difficult period of work, but on the other hand, it was connected with fascinating work in a team that was smoothly operating with the leadership of our Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov. 🇷🇺



Every March, two months prior to the Cannes Film Festival, this resort town on the French Riviera is occupied by real-estate moguls and other businessmen. The scale of the property-related trade show defies imagination as each and every country and many large cities have a pavilion of their own. The United States, however, is for some reason represented very modestly with the low-profile booths of a dozen US states located in remote corners of the otherwise impressive Palace of Festivals. The United Kingdom, on the contrary, has a huge area right on the coast. London alone has a pavilion as large as that of France, the host country, while Manchester boasts an impressive entrance to its premises with a long path leading directly to the beach.

A panel discussion on “Smart Cities” with the mayor of Paris, Ms. Anne Hidalgo, as its headliner has become one of the most anticipated events. The mayor launched a “Reinventing Paris” campaign a year ago announcing a tender on novel projects for twenty-three objects in the city.



Like other European cities, Paris is undergoing profound and rapid changes today. There are new public spaces; there are innovative forms of interaction, such as co-working and teleworking, and there is commercial innovation, including show-rooms for common use, fabrication laboratories available for anyone who wishes to produce something, and pop-up stores. New services are in demand as well, primarily in healthcare due to the ageing population. It is recommended that the participants involved in the tenders should by no means limit their imagination and creativity – the buildings they design and plan should be multi-purpose and smart, as in mutable. They should be eco-innovative, make good use of revolutionary technologies in energy production, consumption and utilization, as well as produce zero-waste and low-carbon technologies. The winners of the tender will be given a chance to purchase or lease a parcel of land to implement their projects. The initiative itself has already embraced nineteen cities and towns in France and has become known as the “Reinventing Cities” project. Mr. Raymond Johansen, the mayor of Oslo, spoke about the difficulties

accompanying the path to a “smart city”. One of the most acute is the lack of understanding of this task on the part of investors, who view the demands of the market as their priority. “The market is good when it serves the interest of people, rather than dictates its own rules,” the Mayor said. “For instance, a city needs more green space, which, however, contradicts the demands of the market. Besides, immigrants account for 32 per cent of the population in Oslo, so we need to somehow address the challenge of integrating them while taking into consideration their interests to the fullest possible extent. By

CANNES

A MGIMO delegation visited Cannes, France, in March 2018 to hold a “City of the Future” session of the Russia-France Trianon dialogue within the framework of the MIPIM-2018 real estate exhibition.



the way, there is something we take pride in: as of the end of 2017, one-third of all new cars sold were electric.”

The Trianon dialogue on the “City of the Future” kick-started at the Gaidar Forum in Moscow, ahead of the event at the Palace of Festivals. Participants looked into the issues related to mobility, architecture, town-planning, landscaping and introducing digital technologies in “cities of the future”. The mayor of Cannes Mr. David Lisnard pointed out that tourism accounts for

Sergei Cheryomin:
“An ambitious task that we set today is for Moscow to become No. 20 in the world by 2020 in the World Bank rating in terms of urban comfort”
about fifty per cent of Cote d’Azur GDP with this figure steadily growing. “We aim at turning Cote d’Azur into a universal

tourist showcase,” he added. It should be noted here that Mayor Lisnard, who is a strong proponent of democracy, is well-known for his temper if the security of his city’s residents is endangered. Last year, he prohibited Muslim women from wearing burkinis, traditional Muslim garb, at the beach. As both tourists and Cannes residents felt unease, the mayor reacted promptly without fearing criticism by multi-culturalists. The mayor of Strasbourg, Mr. Roland Ries, spoke about a whole array of interesting projects meant, on the one hand, to change the city environment



Mayors of Oslo, Milan and Paris in a heated discussion

and, on the other hand, to fit into it harmoniously. Take, for instance, a new residential eco-area, The Danube, in Strasbourg’s city center. It is, in fact, a pedestrian oasis surrounded by urban buildings. There is a square in the very heart of the area with nursing homes and an educational center located on its perimeter. Unexpected though it may be, that is a good example of successful urban integration since the area is in harmony with nearby business clusters, public facilities and tourist centers.

A new insular area named after Andre Malraux, a novelist, may also be of interest in Strasbourg. That is particularly



Sergei Cheryomin, Moscow Government Minister

true with regard to the library which is located in a reconstructed barn and is a point of attraction at the local university.

Mr. Sergei Cheryomin, Moscow Government Minister, Head of the Moscow Department for Foreign Economic Activity and International Relations, and an MGIMO alumnus, opened the Russian session of the meeting.

“France enjoys the fifth place in economic cooperation with Moscow,” he said. “There are 200 French companies with direct investments working in Moscow, and none of these withdrew

from the Moscow market in the complicated year of 2014 when anti-Russian sanctions were introduced.”

The city authorities have achieved significant success over the past six years to turn Moscow into a smart city. It

Good architecture is a living space where one would want to wander and draw a structure which one enjoys looking at

ranked first in the world in terms of traffic jams back in 2012; however, the capital is not even among top ten problem cities today. In recent years, Moscow has invested huge sums of money to develop its transport infrastructure, constructing new underground lines, local communication facilities, highways, flyovers, and expanding parking space. Now, Moscow is among the top three in parking. “One may park their car in the city center just using their smartphones,” adds Cheryomin proudly.

There is a most state-of-the-art video surveillance system in Moscow. One hundred and thirty thousand cameras



have been installed in schools, at the entrances of residential buildings and courtyards, which has helped significantly to reduce the incidence of crime. An intellectual (“smart”) transport system enables the city to collect useful road data information. Moscow was the first in the world to launch high-speed wi-fi in its underground, and is now system-wide.

“Due to these achievements of Moscow, Russia ranked thirty-fifth in the World Bank rating in terms of urban comfort last year. Six years before, however, it ranked 120. An ambitious task that we set today is for Moscow to become No. 20 in the world by 2020,” concluded the Minister.

The head of the “Asadov” Architectural Bureau, Mr. Andrey Asadov, spoke about a nation-wide initiative “Living Cities” under which Russian architects create





models and various elements of a “city of the future.” According to Mr. Asadov, places we live in are the most natural environment to show and develop their abilities: “We are doing our best to create a living space where one would want to wander and draw. There is an opinion that good architecture means drawing a structure which one enjoys looking at. A new qualitative environment sets a new benchmark for development; its residents

The new millennium generation, they, unlike their parents, easily transcend the limitations of the habitual patterns. They tend to possess less but use more

start viewing things from a different angle”. Mr. Evgeny Yurasov, a representative of “Restavracia N” company, told the audience about a responsible development concept the company had worked out for one of its recent projects in downtown Moscow – Knightsbridge Private Park, a residential area. “A key feature of the project is that we intentionally make use of only seventy five per cent of technical and economic

characteristics that we have access to. We aim at “inscribing” our project into the existing environment that formed in the area throughout its history, at using its hidden reserves rather than just exhausting the capacities Moscow has given us.” Ms. Anastasia Smirnova, a partner at SVESMI Architectural Bureau, pointed out that an interesting project may quite often appear in a seemingly hopeless place:

“Moscow is gradually starting to take interest in redesigning the environment, in rethinking and reconsidering it. My company at the moment is involved into the reconstruction of a dull office building created in the early 80s. Together with a group of sociologists and economists,

Moscow is starting to take interest in redesigning and rethinking the environment to satisfy the demand for innovative housing

we are conducting thorough research in order to understand which combination of functions may satisfy the demand for innovative housing. What kind of people should live here? If we talk about the new millennium generation, they, according to a variety of surveys, unlike their parents, easily transcend the limitations of the habitual patterns which made their ancestors feel so safe and sound. The new generation tends to possess less but use more. It is no coincidence that it is this generation that the new projects related to new patterns of urban existence are meant for. First and foremost, I mean the concept of a shared economy, which implies that people seek to pay for something together, a savings over individual purchases.”





PARIS

Second leg of the Trianon week takes place in Paris. MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov participates.

MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov's visit to the "Salon du Livre" Book Fair was supposed to become the main highlight of the three-day-stay of the MGIMO delegation in Paris. France's President Mr. Emmanuel Macron, who had previously announced his intention to take part in St. Petersburg Economic Forum in May to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin within the Trianon dialogue framework, was expected to visit Russia's booth there. Thus,

Théâtre du Châtelet has made a significant contribution into creative work of Russian emigrants in the 20th century – from Sergei Diaghilev to Rudolf Nureyev

it was possible that a brief meeting between France's President and the co-chairman of the Trianon dialogue organizing committee would take place to synchronize watches with each other, so to say. That, however, was to happen at the opening ceremony of the Russian booth in the evening. Prior to the event the Rector had had a number of meetings; for instance, Torkunov attended the Théâtre du Châtelet to become the first guest at a unique and at that point closed to the public space created by Russian artists

with the guidance of Mr. Ilya Khrzhanovsky, the film director.

The Théâtre du Châtelet is a theatre and opera house located in a square that bears the same name in the very heart of Paris. The construction took place on the spot of a demolished prison in the middle of the 19th century. Notably, it was here that the first performances of the well-known Russian Seasons by Sergei Diaghilev, the legendary Russian impresario, took place in 1909. Later

the Parisians witnessed the premier of the Afternoon of the Faun choreographed by Vaslav Nijinsky, whom also danced the main part.

The theatre was under reconstruction, so the Rector enjoyed an exclusive tour of the premises that were being restored, the historic hall and backstage. However, it was even more fascinating to dive into the absolutely unique world of "DAU", an epic film, which is considered to be a mysterious and one of the most awaited cultural projects. A tremendous way has been covered from creating a script dedicated to Lev Landau, an outstanding Soviet physicist, to an unprecedented socio and anthropological experiment that offers a thorough and candid reflection on human psyche, freedom and art.

The world release of the film was scheduled for early 2019 in Berlin, London

It was fascinating to dive into the absolutely unique world of "DAU", an epic film, which is considered to be a mysterious and one of the most awaited cultural projects

and Paris. Meanwhile, Ilya Khrzhanovsky's studio was finalizing mural paintings in some of the theatre's administrative facilities to express its gratitude for hospitality. These wall paintings depicted the theatre's significant contribution into creative work of Russian emigrants in the 20th century – from Sergei Diaghilev to Rudolf Nureyev. So far the theatre has introduced more than twenty Russian ballets to the European public; it has been a haven for the Russian vanguard in Paris for many years.

The meeting with Mr. Ilya Khrzhanovsky appeared on Rector Anatoly Torkunov's agenda due to an unexpected initiative of the project's masterminds. It was then that

the suggestion to donate this new artistic space to Paris should be included into the Trianon dialogue program of cultural events.

Mr. Anatoly Torkunov, MGIMO Rector and co-chairman of the Trianon dialogue organizing committee, Mr. Pierre Morel, co-chairman from France's party, Mr. Alexei Meshkov, Russia's Ambassador to France, Mr. Vladimir Grigoriev, Deputy Head of the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications, Mr. Valery Fedotov, Director General of the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre VCIOM, Mr. Alexander Orlov, Executive Secretary of the Trianon Dialogue Organizing Committee – all came to see the Russian booth at the "Salon du Livre" Book Fair. France's Ambassador to Russia Mme. Sylvie Bermann and the former assistant on international relations to President Boris Yeltsin Mr. Dmitry Ryurikov joined them there.

The opening ceremony of the display "Russia – the Guest of Honor" had provided for a variety of events. The main event, unfortunately, was cancelled as France's President Emmanuel Macron posted a tweet expressing France's solidarity with the United Kingdom on the Skripal poisoning, just a few hours before the opening ceremony.

Ambassador Meshkov, who told the press repeatedly how "deeply he regretted the fact," still decided to stay silent on the subject in his opening speech.

Mr. Vladimir Grigoriev recalled that Russia had already been the guest of honor at the Book Fair twelve years ago. "At that time France had another president, who was fond of Russian literature, knew it well, had a nice feel of it and even attempted translating it." It was, naturally, Jacques Chirac, whom Mr. Grigoriev had in mind, and whom translated the whole of "Eugene Onegin" into French in his younger days.

Rector Torkunov informed those present that the Trianon dialogue – a new way of having a dialogue between civil societies launched on President Macron and President Putin's initiative – had been implementing quite a few projects in the realm of culture, adding that the compilation of correspondence between

Russia’s President Boris Yeltsin and France’s Presidents Mitterand and Chirac in the 90s had been the first book to be published bearing the logo of the Trianon dialogue. Rector Torkunov invited all those interested in attending the ceremony of launching the book in the Russian Orthodox Spiritual and Cultural Center.

As Ambassador Morel pointed out, it was President Mitterand’s firm belief that NATO expansion should be discussed with Russia. In no way has France ever ignored Russia’s position. On the contrary, it has always considered Russia to be its partner

The announcement of the names of five French citizens – the winners of the “Do you know Russia?” quiz – followed on the Trianon dialogue on-line platform. Each of them received an opportunity to visit the FIFA World Cup in Russia as a prize.

* * *

As those directly involved with the correspondence between the leaders of the two states participated in the event, the launch of the abovementioned book set the tone for a conversation on Russian-French relations, which was held in the Russian Orthodox Spiritual and Cultural Center, the one on Quai Branly.

Ambassador Meshkov opened the discussion. “When I started reading the book, he said, I was surprised to see that it is as relevant as ever. For instance, Yeltsin wrote to Mitterand on August 6, 1992: “We have once and for all put an end to the epoch of confrontation and proceeded in practice to establishing a new international order based on our shared commitment to democratic values.” And so





it was! And what have we got eventually?! Sadly, nothing else but degradation... So, on the one hand, this book is good evidence of missed opportunities. On the other hand, this book is evidence of progress since it is due to Russia and France's efforts to create a reliable international security system that General de Gaulle's idea of a Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals has transformed into the idea of creating a new space from the Atlantic to Vladivostok."

Anatoly Torkunov noted that his counterpart – co-chairman of the Trianon dialogue organizing committee Ambassador Pierre Morel – was directly involved into

discussed with Russia. In no way has France ever ignored Russia's position. On the contrary, it has always considered Russia to be its partner, urged to listen to Russia's voice, involve it in both economic and political matters."

Dmitry Ryurikov, a person very closely related to correspondence between the presidents, recounted an episode when NATO expansion to the east was mentioned during President Yeltsin's conversation with some experts. "I recall one of them saying: "Indeed, there is no document on the West's promise not to bring NATO closer to our borders. Nevertheless, there

is the concept of a "gentlemen's agreement" in international law meaning an oral understanding that should be as efficient as a written one." A short and noteworthy reply by President Yeltsin followed: "Well, since that was a gentlemen's agreement, those that do not abide by it are most likely not gentlemen".

French Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1988-1993 Roland Dumas told those present about the preparatory work performed upon President Mitterand's request in order to receive President Boris Yeltsin during his official visit in 1992. "President Mitterand had given me carte-blanche, so I arranged accommodation for the Russian delegation in the Palace of Versailles! I even managed to make some of the premises in the palace open for a few days. Later I called President Yeltsin's people to see if everything was alright for him. I was told he was very pleased but wondered whether that was the way Mikhail Gorbachev had been received. I said it was not. Yeltsin liked the answer a lot!"

The Palace of Versailles has always had a special role in relations between the two countries. The very fact, one of the speakers noted, that President Macron realized the importance of the symbol and suggested it as a venue for his first meeting with Vladimir Putin receiving him like a Tsar speaks for itself. President Macron probably wanted to make up for a historical faux pas committed a long time ago by Louis XIV of France. The story in question goes back to 1698 when Peter the Great's Grand Embassy, stationed in Holland at that time, raised the question of visiting Versailles by the Tsar. Louis XIV declined politely as he did not want to "deprive himself of comfort."

The participants completed the Trianon week by attending a reception in Ambassador Meshkov's residence in rue de Grenelle. French cinema star Fanny Ardant also attended, which became a total surprise for everyone. As it befits a star, Mme. Fanny Ardant was "on a pedestal" from the very beginning, enjoying a glass of wine aloof. Accepting compliments from admirers of her talent, she remained totally untouched by the dishes served. Those were exquisite specialties of Russian cuisine! The kholodets was especially good. 🍷



the events of that time. "I was lucky as in 1993 Pierre Morel and I were those that put forward an initiative to create and sign the first Russian-French Master's degree program between MGIMO and Sciences Po. Twenty five years on we continued our activities, this time by means of the Trianon dialogue launched to facilitate intercourse between our citizens, our youth primarily, to the fullest possible extent."

Ambassador Morel pointed out there was no confrontation between Russia and France in the 90s. "Indeed, there were some differences with regard to determining the common stances on the European continent. However, it was President Mitterand's firm belief that NATO expansion should be

At a reception in Ambassador Meshkov's residence in rue de Grenelle, French cinema star Fanny Ardant became a total surprise for everyone. Meanwhile guests enjoyed exquisite specialties of Russian cuisine. The kholodets was especially good

Konstantin Palace in Strelna is located on the southern coastline of the Gulf of Finland. It is the state residence of the Russian President just outside St.Petersburg. It is often referred to as ‘Russian Versailles’. Peter the Great started its construction in the early 18th century with a view to making it an official imperial residence that would surpass the world-renowned Versailles.

It is no coincidence that the Russian head of state chose this venue for negotiations with his French counterpart; a year ago the latter met with Vladimir Putin in Versailles, where in Le Trianon Palace the two leaders worked

their monitors and were sleeping in their headphones; reporters were wandering around, under the vaulted ceilings of the Palace, bombarding the security guards with questions. In response, the guards advised them to keep calm and eat their sandwiches; they must have been informed



Konstantin Palace in Strelna is the state residence of the Russian President just outside St.Petersburg. It is often referred to as ‘Russian Versailles’

out the ‘Trianon Dialogue’ initiative that would foster closer ties between Russian and French civil societies. A few hours before the negotiations in Konstantin Palace the media filled the ground floor rooms; the TV crew had set up



TRIANON AND KONSTANTIN

The highlight of the Economic Forum in St.Petersburg in May was the visit of the French head of state, Emmanuel Macron. His busy two-day schedule there was taken up by discussions with Vladimir Putin.

that after the Great October Revolution the Palace was used, for quite a while, as a mental asylum. Then, from the main arch onto a balcony half the size of a football pitch came the Russian head of state with the Macrons, accompanied by two translators. Putin and his guests spent a while, with their backs to the reporters, admiring the picturesque surroundings and discussing something. The bright May sun, infinite blue sky, the French president’s tan, his wife’s slim tanned legs – all created a Mediterranean holiday mood, as if these people were in a Cote d’Azur paradise, and not near Piskarevsky cemetery or Nevsky Pyatachok (the Neva Bridgehead) which once saw hell on earth.

Putin and the Macrons spent a while, admiring the picturesque surroundings. The bright May sun, infinite blue sky, the French president’s tan, his wife’s slim tanned legs – all created a Mediterranean holiday mood

‘When in 1966 General de Gaulle wanted to visit Russia,’ Macron said later at the press-conference, ‘he chose St.Petersburg for his speech about the heroic resistance of the besieged Soviet soldiers and local people who were surrounded by the German army. Tomorrow I am going to visit Piskarevsky cemetery to pay tribute to the victims of the siege of Leningrad.’ However, a consistent sanctioning policy of the EU against Russia stands in the way of converting this sentiment into an effective partnership. Vladimir Putin made an implicit reference to the situation when, without the fear of embarrassing Macron, he suddenly praised ... Finland: ‘Well done for Finland – a company there



Macron several times addressed Putin as ‘Mon cher Vladimir!’, by which point the complex but intriguing ‘chemistry’ between the two leaders became apparent

invested six billion Euros into the Russian economy, while the whole of France – fifteen thousand. Is this normal?!’ The hall, filled with business people, burst with laughter. At the same time, Putin added, that at last year end the turnover of goods between the two countries grew by 16.5%, despite the sanctions. In the next six months it grew by another 25%. There are about 500 French companies operating in the Russian market. They are actively involved in Yamal LNG, a liquid natural gas extraction project, as well as in other major schemes. Russian Rosatom meets 25% of France’s demand for uranium fuel. a feature of Russian-French relations, said Putin, is ‘a mutual interest and affection displayed by both our nations throughout history, and the resulting close cultural interweaving. For example, in 2018 we are holding joint celebrations commemorating the 200th anniversary of the famous French and, also truly Russian, choreographer Marius Petipa.’



Trianon Dialogue, despite the pessimism of some sceptics, not only survived but secured comprehensive support from its ‘founding fathers’

Macron developed the ballet theme, but with elegant subtlety. ‘Dear Vladimir,’ he said to Putin, ‘we know how much you love judo.’ Then, placing the remark in the political context, he continued, ‘we know that you highly appreciate flexibility based on one’s own force control, willpower and respect for the opponent. Let us follow the same principles on the international scene.’ Vladimir Putin picked up this cue, making an implicit but unmistakable reference to the sanctions: ‘The whole world plays football, following judo rules, for some reason. As a result, what a pretty state of football we have here!’ His French counterpart was not



daunted in the least, addressing Putin several times as ‘Mon cher Vladimir!’, by which point the complex but intriguing ‘chemistry’ between the two leaders became apparent. At the session of the Trianon Dialogue Coordinating Council, co-chaired by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and Ambassador Pierre Morel, Director of Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM) Valery Fyodorov presented findings of the recent public mood survey to his colleagues. He offered an analysis of Russia’s reception of France and the French nation. Chairman CEO of ‘ADV Group’, Dmitry Korobkov, pitched a digital platform, created as part of the Dialogue initiative, its greater and more diverse digital and media potential for better cross-national dialogue. The French side was represented, among others, by President of Total Patrick Pouyanné, who stressed the need for regular meetings between young leaders of Russia and France. The session was followed by an award ceremony – French students, winners of the quiz on knowledge of Russia, held under the auspices of the Trianon Dialogue, were awarded with prizes and tickets for the World Cup. Trianon Dialogue, despite the pessimism of some sceptics, not only survived but secured comprehensive support from its ‘founding fathers’ and precipitated a return of the former relationship between Russia and France. That is a crucial achievement of the St.Petersburg Forum.



GRAND COUNCIL IN VERSAILLES

Text by Igor Drobyshev
Photo by Igor Drobyshev, Igor Lileev,
Russia's Foreign Ministry

During his Great Embassy, Peter I visited Reims, France where he was shown the Reims Gospel used for the coronation of French monarchs. There was one problem with the Gospel; the ancient parchment had been written in a language not known to the French. It could be used to take an oath on it, but it could not be read. Peter took the Gospel and unexpectedly started reading it without difficulty. The Gospel, written in Cyrillic, was brought to France in the 11th century by the youngest daughter of Yaroslav the Wise, who married his daughter to King Henry I of France. Boris Titov, Russian business ombudsman, shared this historical fact with the Russian and French members of the Trianon Dialogue Coordination Council. He regarded it as an amazing testament to our common history. The Coordination Council met in Versailles on November 27 and heard this story when they discussed the Trianon Dialogue plans for 2019.





On the eve of the meeting, the hosts organised a reception for the Russian delegation at the Grand Trianon, the palace where back in May 2017 President Putin and President Macron agreed to establish the Trianon Dialogue. At the reception, Co-Chairmen of the Dialogue Ambassador Pierre Morel and MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov

At the exhibition devoted to Alexander Solzhenitsyn, original manuscripts of The Gulag Archipelago and his other works were displayed

shared a long, distinguished dining table with Chairman and CEO of Total, Patrick Jean Pouyanné; Director of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, Marina Loshak; Deputy Head of the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Grigoryev; ADB President, Dmitry Korobkov; businessman Robert Paranyants; political expert, Fyodor Lukyanov; Executive Secretaries of the Dialogue, Alexander Orlov and Nicolas Chibaeff; and dozens of French and Russian



guests including a member of the National Assembly, Caroline Janvier. At the beginning of the reception Anatoly Torkunov said, “It is a dream. I could have never imagined having the honor and opportunity to be invited to dinner at the

was accompanied by a presentation of Russian wines given by Pavel Titov, President of the Russian Wine House, Abrau Durso and son of Boris Titov, Presidential Commissioner for Entrepreneurs’ Rights and member of the Russian part of the Trianon Dialogue.

and Sciences Po. The participants were officially welcomed by Caroline Janvier, Head of the Franco-Russian Friendship Group and a member of the National Assembly. The opening ceremony was marked by the speeches of the Trianon



A reception was organised for the Russian delegation at the Grand Trianon, the palace where back in May 2017 President Putin and President Macron agreed to establish the Trianon Dialogue



Grand Trianon and enjoy a lavish banquet in the company of these remarkable and outstanding people.” He proposed a toast to the Trianon Dialogue, “a long-standing and successful initiative conducive to the strengthening of our historical ties and friendship.” The dinner, where many guests drank toasts to the success of the Trianon initiative,

The following day the French National Assembly (Palais Bourbon) hosted a reunion of graduates of MGIMO’s Franco-Russian double master’s degree programs. The reunion celebrated the 25th anniversary of the agreement signed between MGIMO

Dialogue’s Co-Chairmen Ambassador, Pierre Morel; MGIMO’s Rector Anatoly Torkunov; France’s Ambassador to Russia, Sylvie Bermann; Russia’s Ambassador to France, Alexey Meshkov; President of the Sciences Po Alumni Association, Pascal Perrineau, among others. A special address on French-



Russian dialogue was given by Jean-Pierre Chevènement, French President’s special envoy for relations with Russia.

One of the highlights of the visit was the exhibition ‘Alexander Solzhenitsyn: a Writer in Conflict with His Age’ organised by a renowned researcher of the writer’s works, Georges Nivat, in order to celebrate the centennial of Solzhenitsyn’s birth.

The exhibition was displayed at the town hall of the 5th arrondissement of Paris, the former premises of the Tribunal situated in the famous Latin Quarter. The exhibits included items most intimately connected with the writer’s work: original manuscripts of The Gulag Archipelago,



One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich and others, as well as photos taken by the writer in exile.

Georges Nivat did not attend the famous Harvard speech given by Solzhenitsyn in 1978, but he remembers what shock waves Solzhenitsyn’s criticism sent through the Western world. “Six months after the speech people still resented it: we had supported him, and many other dissidents, helped him to leave the USSR, and he showed such ingratitude and all of a sudden started attacking the West.”

Rector Anatoly Torkunov studied the exhibits with great interest and finally told Georges Nivat that he had also taken part

The French National Assembly (Palais Bourbon) hosted a reunion of graduates of MGIMO’s Franco-Russian double master’s degree programs

in the celebration of Solzhenitsyn’s 100th anniversary. “Several MGIMO students and professors – I was one of them – were invited by Russia-K TV channel to recite excerpts from The Red Wheel. The project



Anatoly Torkunov: “Our dialogue should be innovative. That’s why we started by launching a platform providing an opportunity for civil societies and professional communities to engage in a new-format dialogue and contact each other directly”

proved to be very interesting; the TV audience met it with enthusiasm.”

The main goal of the delegation’s visit to Paris was to participate in a meeting of the Trianon Dialogue Coordination Council. Russia’s Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian, took part in it too.

As the meeting at the Grand Trianon was about to start, the bus with the Russian delegation was still on the way from Paris to Versailles. The participants eventually had to run along the uncomfortable cobbles

and push their way through a crowd of newsmen with bulky TV equipment. This logistical mishap turned out to be a blessing in disguise. In the confusion, members of the Council hastily took vacant seats instead of those assigned to them thus ignoring the boardroom seating arrangement, with French members facing the Russian ones. For example, a French film producer found himself between the academic, Alexander Chubaryan, and Director of the Pushkin State Museum, Marina Loshak; Boris Titov felt the elbow of the French big business, in Pouyanné.

The meeting was arranged to discuss what had been achieved in the year since the establishment of the Trianon Dialogue, as well as plans for the next year. Le Drian





At Sciences Po, graduates of MGIMO’s Franco-Russian double master’s degree program celebrated the 25th anniversary of the agreement signed between MGIMO and Sciences Po



emphasised the regular political dialogue, in particular at the highest level, as an important achievement.

Concurring, Sergey Lavrov, however, noted that “a genuine coordination of efforts in tackling such threats as terrorism and organised crime has been hindered by an unprecedented crisis of confidence in relations between Russia and the Euro-Atlantic region... We would regret it, if our relations fell prey to the massive anti-Russian campaign orchestrated outside Europe but supported by Europeans.”

Patrick Pouyanné, CEO of Total, talked about a summit of Russian start-ups presenting themselves to big business of France, seeking promotion in this country

The Minister said that in this context “the Trianon Dialogue should promote a positive and forward-looking, bilateral agenda primarily through wider interpersonal contacts. The more extensive the contacts are between Russian and French people, the more objective their understanding is of how our societies live and what preoccupies them. Mr. Jean-Yves Le Drian and I would like the Trianon Dialogue to put a premium on engaging the youth in mutually enriching joint activities... The Trianon Dialogue has the potential to become the core element effectively cementing interaction between the two societies.”

When the ministers left, the members engaged in an earnest discussion of the challenges facing the Trianon Dialogue, the most important being engaging the youth. That concern was almost unanimously shared by those who were present.

“We are all over 50 here,” Fyodor Lukyanov said pointing out a serious problem, i.e.

a generational gap in the perception of historical events. “These events were part of our life, some of us even participated in them, whereas younger people did not live through them but have to live in the world shaped by those events. By the way, next year will mark 30 years since the Berlin Wall fell, the event that changed our lives. Our world was born then. But then Russia and Europe started drifting far apart. It may sound counter-intuitive but our generation’s experience of the Cold War and confrontation was unifying in a sense; we had a common project of a kind. Those who were born later did not; they are developing in absolutely different worlds. There is a widening gap of understanding between them. Their assessment of historical events differs considerably, French and Russian adolescents start their lives with very different backgrounds.”

This opinion was supported by Alexander Orlov, Executive Secretary of the Dialogue, who was more outspoken and talked about history classes at school. “Many Russian

be our information platform, which we hope will become truly interactive.”

An important issue was raised by Dmitry Korobkov, President of ADB, a company that designed a unique web portal, the world’s only intercountry platform for digital interaction between civil societies: “Our platform helps to create a community that

could exchange different information using lateral ties; in particular, it concerns young people who prefer the Internet to TV. This product is functional, was launched simultaneously in the two countries and already has some traffic. However, to make it fully functional next year, we will need to focus on



participants of the Paris Peace Forum were embarrassed when the French leaders did not say a single word about Russia’s participation in World War I; Russia’s losses were the biggest, amounting to over 3 million people. That was not a deliberate omission, just ignorance of history. I know it first-hand, my children go to a French school, and I am aware of how Russia’s history is taught there. This should change. One important driver of this change should

Yellow jacket protesters flooded Paris. The sound of sirens, angry chants and the crack of stun grenades echoed throughout the Champs-Élysées

two things. To start with, we will need hundreds of volunteers, role models and opinion makers that could transform this platform into an interesting and viable environment, attracting the youth. They should come from cultural, scientific, student and business communities rather than state affiliated ones.”

The scientific and educational dimension of the platform was emphasised by Claudie Haigneré, politician, and former astronaut who visited two space stations, Mir and ISS. “It is important to engage young people in France and Russia in an exchange of ideas; for example, we can launch contests like “Letter to the Intellect of the Future” for French teenagers, select a hundred of the best letters, award the winners, publish a collection of letters or hold conferences with presentations.”

This idea was further developed by Vladimir Grigoryev, Deputy Head of the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications of the Russian Federation: “We will try to integrate Russian creative writing contests with



Speaking at a meeting of the Trianon Dialogue Coordination Council. Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and his French counterpart, Jean-Yves Le Drian emphasised the regular political dialogue, in particular at the highest level, as an important achievement. They also stressed that “by no means should we seek to replace the existing mechanisms of cooperation between Russia and France.”



French ones. We have a systematic approach to identifying young talents that could produce serious literary projects in the future. In addition, I would like to support Dmitry Korobkov: the platform should offer content tailored for young people and embracing histories of Russia and France, their nature, geography; it should also include book and film collections, e.g. 100 Best Books, 100 Best Films, as well as virtual museum tours, and all this should be made available for universities at a fair rate.”

Oleg Belozyorov, President of the Russian Railways, spoke about specific personnel training projects carried out together with French partners: “Our young employees study in France; French employees come

to Moscow, participate in exchange programs for personal and professional development offered to railway companies by the Corporate University of Russian Railways and Russian University of Transport. We want them to speak a common language, use the same technologies and be willing to cooperate in future.”

This part of the discussion was summed up by Vladimir Yakunin, a well-known public figure: “We know very little about today’s youth. We should hear about their interests and problems from them. I suggest that we set up a youth working group.”

Ambassador Pierre Morel introduced a new topic in a typically French manner: “I thank Boris Titov for Krasnodar wines

from Anapa that were served at the dinner.”

Boris Titov, in turn, used the opportunity to emphasise that our cultures have a lot in common, even in winemaking. “We are proud to say that the French winemaking tradition has been carefully studied in Russia. It is known that the Russian production of champagne, or rather, sparkling wine was developed by the best French experts from Champagne, France. But today Russia is also advancing in food production; we have a booming public catering market: there are a lot of start-ups in the restaurant business. The Trianon Dialogue could consider launching a gastronomy summit with Russia and France acting as equal partners.”

The discussion quite often reverted to start-ups. Besides Boris Titov, cooperation between Russian start-ups and big French enterprises was mentioned by Patrick Jean Pouyanné, CEO of Total. In particular, he talked about a summit of start-ups and big enterprises where small-size companies could take turns presenting themselves to big business. The idea proved interesting to 30 Russian start-ups that would like to seek promotion in France using the potential of big business.

Before closing the meeting, Anatoly Torkunov summed up the session: “The idea to set up a working group ensuring a dialogue between the youth looks promising. Arranging a meeting of young entrepreneurs and start-up businesses can

As both Co-Chairmen of the Council put it, a year after the launch, the Trianon Dialogue became “a model for bilateral relations”

be rewarding. Attending the Saint Petersburg and Sochi economic forums, I very often meet successful young businessmen seeking partnerships with foreign peers.”

Anatoly Torkunov also shared the Dialogue’s plans for this year, talking

about numerous events in different areas. As Co-Chairman of the Council, he also underlined that “by no means should we seek to replace the existing mechanisms of cooperation between Russia and France; they are operational enough. I agree with Foreign Ministers Sergey Lavrov and Jean-Yves Le Drian that our dialogue should be innovative. That’s why we started by launching a platform providing an opportunity for civil societies and professional communities to engage in a new-format dialogue and contact each other directly.”

According to a French member of the Council, a year after the launch, the Trianon Dialogue “became a model for bilateral relations.”

DMITRIY RYURIKOV: “I WAS A FOREIGN POLICY AIDE TO BORIS YELTSIN”

There is one question that every person with the surname “Ryurikov” is to be always ready for. As a rule, Dmitriy Ryurikov replies with a joke, saying that the time to speak about his affiliation with the Rurik dynasty, which was succeeded by the House of Romanov (the royal house of Russia) in early 17th century, hasn’t come yet. In fact, the history of his family name is as follows. In the 18th century, there lived a student Ivan who studied at a seminary in Nizhny Novgorod. The archimandrite gave the seminarians the task to write a composition about the reign of the Rurik dynasty, and Ivan wrote the best composition. As the legend goes, the archimandrite said: “I grant you the right to use the surname Ryurikov, from now on you will be called Ivan Ryurikov.” Since then several generations of priests bearing this surname gave guidance to the congregation of Nizhny Novgorod County. One of the last descendants of that Ryurikov, namely Dmitriy Ryurikov, a MGIMO graduate of 1969, and not a duke, happened to be an assistant to Boris Yeltsin, who was at the helm of Russia in the 1990s.

“Sometimes I find myself in interesting situations because of my surname,” he says. “In 2006,

when I was an ambassador of Russia to Uzbekistan, Prince Dimitri Romanov, who lived in Denmark at that time, visited Tashkent with a humanitarian mission bringing hearing aids to war veterans. When we met each other, I offered my hand and said: “Dmitriy Ryurikov, Ambassador of Russia.” He replied with a broad smile: “Prince Dimitri Romanov.”

In 1964, when I entered the elitist MGIMO, which was an educational institution only for those with a “clean” biography, my “royal” surname was not a hindrance. On the contrary, it was quite popular with intelligentsia. At that time my father was the editor-in-chief of emblematic highbrow publications, such as the journal “Inostrannaya Literatura” and the newspaper “Literaturnaya Gazeta.”

Why did I decide to become a diplomat? a MGIMO diploma was considered to be a benchmark for a good education; in addition, diplomacy was a time-honored profession, which combined exciting work, status and decent salary.

I had to study English and Persian languages at MGIMO. The third one was optional, and I chose French. I liked the

Persian language, but it was a challenge to me – a different world, a different culture. Apart from grammar, we learnt poems by heart, as Persian poetry is the pinnacle of its culture.

When I graduated from university, Persian grew in demand – our country developed relations with Iran and trade flourished.

Sometimes I find myself in interesting situations because of my last name. But in 1964, when I entered MGIMO, which was an educational institution only for those with a “clean” biography, my “royal” surname was not a hindrance

I was looking forward to a posting within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and my enthusiasm for the work in part stemmed from the fact that my thesis on Iranian-American relations was credited as a topical one at the university. Iran was our

important neighbor, but Americans greatly affected Teheran’s policy. That’s why we were closely cooperating with our Iranian partners to prevent further military or other involvement of the USA within the country.

I first came to Iran in 1969 immediately after a short internship at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I took a train and arrived in Isfahan, Iran’s second city, where I worked as a secretary and translator in the newly reopened consulate general of the USSR. Of course, to learn a language in a classroom is one thing; to speak it in the actual country, is quite another. I eventually got used to the Tehrani and Isfahani accents.

One part of consular work, namely issuing of visas, took place only in Tehran. However, there was quite a lot of work related to protecting the interests of Soviet citizens. At that time, Isfahan was becoming a building ground for iron and steel works – a major object of Soviet-Iranian cooperation. The consular district was a large one; it included other cities, provinces, and other points of cooperation, such as mines, geological groups, schools, etc., where Soviet citizens were employed. We were to render assistance; that’s why, apart from translating, I had to go to the scenes of incidents and tackle legal matters.

The knowledge of the country, its people, and language that I acquired during that



December, 1980. President of Afghanistan B. Karmal and the Soviet leader L. Brezhnev in the Crimea



President of the United States B. Clinton visits the Kremlin

four-year posting to Iran helped me greatly when there arose a situation regarding top-level relations. It was in 1973 when the Soviet First Deputy Premier, Alexey Kosygin, invited the Prime Minister of Iran, Amir-Abbas Hoveyda, to make a stop in Moscow on his way from London to Tehran so as to discuss cooperation. Everything was agreed on the go, an interpreter was needed, and it so happened that at that time I was the only person at the Ministry

of Foreign Affairs who could do the job. Interpreting a two-hour conversation of the two leaders at Sheremetyevo Airport was my first experience of top-level work. After that I got the status of a state (not a ministerial!) interpreter of the Persian language (Farsi), and on such state visits, I was invited to interpret. Later on, during my stay at Afghanistan, I had to deal with a similar language, Dari.

I arrived in Kabul in 1976, three years

before the introduction of Soviet troops there. I was working as Second Secretary at the Embassy, and, apart from other work, interpreted at the top level. I remember working as an interpreter when President Daoud came to Moscow on a couple of visits to meet Soviet leaders, such as Brezhnev, Kosygin, Podgorny, and Gromyko.

There are a number of contradictory opinions concerning the reasons for introduction of our troops to Afghanistan. It's a complex topic. I see the situation in the following way. The April Revolution of 1978 and the overthrow of President Daoud were by no means engineered by the Soviet Union. We had nothing to do with it. The April events were of an essentially internal nature. They stemmed from the conflict between the authorities, young officers and the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan, which was almost Communist. The conflict ensued after the assassination of one of the PDPA leaders, Mir Akbar Haibar, a highly respected

The April Revolution of 1978 in Afghanistan and the overthrow of President Daoud were by no means engineered by the Soviet Union. We had nothing to do with it. The April events were of an essentially internal nature

senior party member. The event provoked demonstrations, which resulted in the arrest of PDPA leaders. It led to the outbreak of mutiny in the army; the troops advanced, toppled Daoud, and the PDPA, which was our ideological ally, took over.

I heard our military advisors shout over the phone that they would not interfere in the situation. However, the course of events couldn't be stopped. When clashes broke out between pro-government and

rebel forces, missiles and bullets whined and whiffed near the embassy. I saw how an ATGM was targeted at the embassy but luckily didn't reach the goal - it exploded nearby having hit a tree branch. The crash was thunderous; it made us fall on the floor; thanks God, our families were in a shelter...

Why did we send in forces? At a certain stage, American diplomats led by Zbigniew Brzezinski decided to capitalize on the situation of civil war in order to make Soviet leaders take a decision on the introduction of troops to protect the southern borders of the USSR. In 1998 Brzezinski gave an interview to "Le Nouvel Observateur" in which he stated the following: "In 1979, I wrote a note to the President in which I explained to him that in my opinion it would be an excellent idea to draw the Russians into the Afghan trap. We had the opportunity of giving to the USSR its Vietnam War, which we could use to our own ends later on." The second memo was written by Brzezinski early next year, and its message was as follows: now that the Soviets brought troops into Afghanistan, we are to send aid to the Afghan opposition - the Mujahideen.

Indeed, in the summer of 1979, I got the impression that the events would unfold under this very scenario. My suspicions were fuelled when, together with other diplomats, I was invited to the British Embassy, where we were shown a documentary on the failures of the British in Afghanistan in the late 19th century. The key message of the film was the following: the British lion failed in Afghanistan, let's see whether the Russian bear would succeed.

When I returned to Moscow in 1986, I understood that I wanted to do something different, that the Orient alone was not enough for me anymore, and I got a job in the Legal (contractual) Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I was responsible for humanitarian legal issues, but also dealt with legal issues in military conflicts, laws and customs of war. This branch of law regulates actions of governments in case of interstate and domestic conflicts (revolutions and civil

unrest). The work was interesting and very useful. At that time international relations pivoted on law, unlike these days when law is neglected and is in a state of grave crisis.

I learnt about the August Coup in Moscow when I was on holiday. I immediately returned and at the end of August was appointed to the position of a foreign policy aide to Boris Yeltsin



At negotiations between Russia's President B. Yeltsin and Belarusian leader A. Lukashenko

It is utterly regrettable, as the world order established after the war resulted from enormous sacrifice of the Soviet people first and foremost, and was maintained largely due to the power and resources of the USSR as well.

I am often asked how I became an assistant to president Yeltsin. It happened in the following way. In February 1991 I was transferred from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR to that of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic to the

position of the head of the International Law Department. I learnt about the August Coup in Moscow when I was on holiday. I immediately returned and at the end of August was appointed to the position of an foreign policy aide to Boris Yeltsin.

Why was I chosen? I don't know who made that fortuitous decision, but my version is as follows. There weren't many experienced diplomats in the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs at that time. As a head of department, I attended different events in which authorities of the constituent republics participated and where there were documents signed which I partly prepared. I think that I simply got noticed during those meetings, and when the need to send somebody to that position in the president's office arose I happened to be the best candidate.

I was responsible for preparation of materials for the President before meetings within the framework of bilateral relations. I prepared them upon receiving information from different departments and entities, but there were some occasions during meetings when immediate action was required in order to brief the President or invite somebody to him for consultation.

I worked with Yeltsin from 1991 to 1997 - six years, a long period. Its stages were remarkable in their own way. The

first stage was characterized by a gradual awakening of the Russian government to foreign policy realities. During the second stage, which started soon after, Russian policy-makers realized that the collapse of the USSR and formation of Russia, the political, ideological and economic changes did not result in any major revision of the way our country was treated by the West at large and the USA in particular. The policy of the West changed only in its form and style, but remained the same in essence – it was still a well thought-out, targeted policy manifesting itself in further

Nowadays, it is quite obvious that we made a tragic mistake in our assessment of actions of the West that we wanted to have as a strategic partner. The truth dawned upon President Yeltsin as well



extension of NATO to the East as well as in encouragement of states bordering Russia (except the former Soviet republics) to join the alliance. There might have been some people in a state of euphoria over the supposed end of our confrontation with the West, but realities were different. Nowadays, it is quite obvious (though back then it was unspeakable) that we made a tragic mistake in our assessment of actions of the country that we wanted to have as a strategic partner. The truth dawned upon President Yeltsin as well. For instance, in 1995, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of victory in World War

II, we felt a definitely ambiguous attitude on the part of the USA. We were “pressed” for a period of two or three weeks, via an unofficial channel, to sign a Russia-NATO agreement with the threat of President Clinton’s withdrawal from participation in the celebration of Victory Day in Moscow if it wasn’t signed. The contents of the agreement were unacceptable to the Russian party. a number of people in Moscow worked on the issue, before it was finally taken off the table. We simply asked the Americans: “Why do we need to sign it? Let Clinton come and that’d be it.” It worked – the topic wasn’t

discussed any more. The Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security between NATO and the Russian Federation was signed later, in 1997, when Yevgeny Primakov was the Minister of Foreign Affairs; by that time, the document was in a form that was acceptable to us. We disliked the way Americans started to answer important questions. For example, when we asked them: “Why do you push NATO infrastructure closer to our borders? There isn’t anything in our relations that disturbs you, is there?”, we got the answer: “Do not worry, we are not against you, we like you.” The ambiguity grew to such an extent that even NATO allies saw that something was wrong. If we consider Western leaders of that time, Yeltsin had good relations with Helmut Kohl, as well as François Mitterrand and Jacques Chirac. His relations with Bill Clinton were also quite good. But I noticed one detail which concerned me personally. During informal meetings or lunches with Americans, I was often asked to leave the room in order to clarify an issue. Later, when I was no longer working at the Kremlin, I came across the memoirs of Strobe Talbott, US Deputy Secretary of State, from which I learnt that it was at those moments when Ryurikov was absent that Americans raised tough questions. Talbott expressly wrote the following: when we needed, we found some excuse to send Ryurik away. I can’t boast of the frequency of contacts with Boris Yeltsin or close relations with him, but during all those six years it was easy and comfortable to work with him, and there wasn’t anything negative about it. By the time he resigned in 2000, I hadn’t been working at the Kremlin for three years already. I got the impression that he was tired of illnesses, and, probably, realized his tragedy. What did the tragedy consist in? He might have understood Russia’s realities and the scope of the things that had happened as well as his own role and opportunities. Having left the Kremlin, I worked for two years as an advisor to Yegor Stroyev, the chair of the Federation Council, the upper

house of the Federal Assembly of Russia. Then I returned to the Foreign Office and was sent as Russia’s ambassador to Uzbekistan. I tried to promote economic cooperation in a number of fields, which remained after the breakup of the USSR and to restore the rapport that was lost. Another challenge was to ensure that the new interpretation of national history and culture of Uzbekistan did not contain any anti-Russian element. It was quite difficult as many aspects of Soviet life ceased to exist. The Soviet Union used to be a multi-industry transcontinental corporation with the headquarters in Moscow; all its activities were based on well-coordinated plans. When the Union collapsed all these connections were lost and new businessmen in CIS countries had to establish relations with their partners from different parts of the former USSR anew together with learning the particulars of their business itself. All this was happening against the background of dynamic penetration of American and European business which was quite open about its goals. Afterwards I was offered the position of ambassador in Copenhagen. It was another interesting change in life. Denmark is historically very closely linked to Russia. Relations are multiple, including those between the royal dynasties. The mother of Nicholas II of Russia was Princess Dagmar of Denmark, who became Empress Dowager Maria Feodorovna after the death of her husband Alexander III of Russia in 1894. In early 1919 she managed to flee from the Bolsheviks and left Crimea on an English cruiser. In 2006 I had a chance to participate in the project of reburial of her remains. First, a ceremony was held on Danish territory: that day was made a holiday in Copenhagen. The sarcophagus was carried along the streets; then it was loaded onto a naval ship and headed for Saint Petersburg, where the Empress was finally reburied in Saints Peter and Paul Cathedral. Prince Dimitri Romanov, who I had met during his humanitarian mission in Uzbekistan, was also working on this



The USSR used to be a multi-industry transcontinental corporation with the headquarters in Moscow; all its activities were based on well-coordinated plans. When the Union collapsed all these connections were lost. In Uzbekistan, I tried to restore that lost rapport

project. When I came as an ambassador to Denmark, I found out that he was living with his spouse in Copenhagen as an ordinary Danish pensioner. We became friends. When my term was over, and we were getting ready to go back to Russia, he asked my wife to work on his fund - the Romanov Fund for Russia. Sadly, he died in 2016, and now we are working on the fund’s projects together with his widow, who has embraced Russian ethos and mentality in a remarkable way and is now the keeper of the information of his family. The fund has two lines of work – traditional charitable medical assistance to those in need and preservation of cultural and historical memory. This is the work I draw true satisfaction from. ■

Texts and photos by Igor Drobyshev

FRANCE

As President Chirac said, 'the relationship between France and Russia has something unique. It arises from the attraction and mutual recognition of two peoples enamored of absolute, beauty and truth.'

MGIMO graduates – both Russians and French, who live in France, share this understanding. The MGIMO Alumni Club here comprises folks of all walks of life. How do they do?





OLGA SCHETININA-BELOT ('95)

Chair of MGIMO Alumni Club in France

Paris

Olga Schetinina-Belot, partner and Board member of ESL & Network, found herself in France in the early 2000s. “I met my would-be husband, one of the leading French lawyers, and relocated to Paris. First, I enrolled at HEC Paris (Higher School of Commerce) for a MBA program. It was a real challenge because I learned English and Spanish at MGIMO. Yet what are the strengths of the University? After graduation you are capable of brushing up on any European language on your own. I am deeply grateful to my Spanish tutors at university who equipped us with the language learning methodology and taught us how to actually learn a foreign language.”

However for Olga, France was also a new and foreign country. She was drawn not only to the Russian diaspora but to people who had a 'kindred spirit': MGIMO alumni.

“The idea of setting up a French branch of the Alumni Club came from nostalgia, if I may put it this way. I share a strong belief that there is deep connection among all MGIMO alumni, regardless of the generation. Besides, I was inspired by the HEC Alumni Association: I admired the spirit that the graduates shared. HEC in France is like a code word, its alumni affiliation easily opens up many doors, leading to very interesting and most importantly, useful connections. The school is characterized by its very strong alumni solidarity in business. Regardless of the level or position of the person I turned to, I would always get help and support from them.

Another reason why I wanted to find and unite MGIMO alumni in France was the desire to introduce French people to our Russian alma mater. Not many people in France have a good idea

of MGIMO. The only exceptions are a small group of international experts specializing in Russia studies and graduates of some higher education partners of MGIMO, such as, Sciences Po, HEC and the ICN Business School in Nancy”.

It was 2003, Olga had just graduated from the MBA school and came across MGIMO alumni profiles on the web. Next year the first member coordination meeting of the Club already took place. “There were thirty people. Then we had many meetings to which I invited interesting personalities – and not just MGIMO alumni.”

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Once I learnt that His Grace Innokentiy, at the time Archbishop of Korsun (now – Metropolitan of Vilna and Lithuania), is a MGIMO graduate of 1975! I asked him to give a talk for the Club members, and this was a historic meeting for me. At this Club event, he shared with me his idea of building a church in Paris.”

Thus, Olga joined the committee looking for a site for the church. To Olga the project was “a fine example of MGIMO alumni collaboration. Besides me and His Grace Innokentiy, the project also involved Alexandre

Orlov (a 1971 International Economic Relations graduate) who was Russia's Ambassador to France at the time. What a fortuitous coincidence! Perhaps, if we had been in Russia then, it would not have been felt as acutely as here abroad, like it is our little victory for the good of all the Russians who live here and come to this parish. I believe, MGIMO Alumni Association could set up an award, say, “Our Joint Project”, to promote such good practice. I would like to use this opportunity and thank the University Rector Anatoly Torkunov who not only congratulated us in person on launching the Club but also marked how symbolic this initiative was, coinciding with the University's 60th Anniversary.”

Today the Club has about three hundred members living in France, including representatives of the Russian Federation's diplomatic mission (Embassy, Trade Mission, UNESCO Permanent Mission, Permanent Delegation of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg), as well as, MGIMO alumni working in private and state sectors, banks, public and international organizations. There are also lecturers, researchers, translators, journalists and literary figures. The Club's main activity is arranging alumni events where we invite either prominent alumni or public figures, political and business personalities.

Being fully integrated into French society helps Olga in her position as Chair of the Club.

“After completing the HEC program I was only applying to French companies although there was an opportunity to get a job in a French branch of a foreign company. Eventually I chose a small consulting company dealing in a field which, at the time, was absolutely alien to me –



strategic insight and influence. This was a gruelling experience, requiring maximum effort and dedication in order to get adapted and settle in. This is what helped my full integration within the French system. Today my work relies on contacts in the government, president administration, ministries, international organisations, but there is also more to it. My main task is to promote the interests of our clients at this high level, and it requires awareness and understanding of many subtleties, among other things, which can be a challenge for many French people, let alone foreigners.”

Olga discovered that this level of political and economic community in France (with the exception of those in direct professional contact with Russia) has no idea of MGIMO – “one of the best higher education institutions in Russia, the alma mater of many prominent business and political figures of Russia and almost all our diplomats! I feel that MGIMO deserves to be known throughout the world and widely recognized. To achieve this aim we must come more into the spotlight. It is great to realize that we are, perhaps, the only truly mixed international MGIMO club: we happen to have as many French members as Russian-born alumni. It would be good to bring these two halves together. My cherished dream is to create a single online alumni networking platform.”

The Club offers great emotional support to Olga as she lives and works in France. “Getting in touch with MGIMO alumni, old and new, is like a phone call home. Each time you feel some irrational, yet deep and very emotional, connection. Through my Club activity I found some real friends, which is the most important thing. Besides, it also represents a connection with my alma mater which was a crucial stage in my life. Finally, it is yet another connecting thread with Russia which I could never stay away from for too long.”

STANISLAS DE SAINT HIPPOLYTE (‘2000)

Editor-in-Chief
CNews, Paris

I have Russian ancestry: my grandparents emigrated to Paris during the Russian 1917 revolution. My grandmother was descended from the Trubetskoy family, she was a princess, and my grandfather came from a French family that emigrated to Russia during the French revolution. They met and got married in France because the major class differences

made it impossible in Russia. My father, though born and brought up in France, started to speak Russian before he spoke French. As for me, having a French mother I was brought up as a Frenchman, and did not speak Russian until my adolescent years when I realised how important Russia is for my family. I was in the last year at Sciences Po



I have Russian ancestry, but I did not speak Russian until my adolescent years when I realised how important Russia is for my family

University when I found out about the student exchange program with the University of International Relations. After graduation, in August 1999, I arrived in Russia and became a witness to historic events. In August Vladimir Putin was made head of Government and in September Moscow suffered from a series of horrific terrorist attacks. In a few months Boris Yeltsin resigned, naming Putin as his successor, who then was elected President of Russia.



Like all overseas students at MGIMO, I was to spend one year there of the two-year International Relations Master's program. There were ten of us on the program: two French graduates of Sciences Po, an American, and several students from former Soviet Republics. Studying was a challenge, all classes were very intense and in Russian which, at the time, I was not very fluent in. Besides IR, I distinctly remember a course in conflict management, and my Russian classes. We had a very intelligent lecturer. She managed to use my interest in Russian songs to help me improve my Russian. I began to learn popular bard songs – by Vysotsky, Okudzhava, Dolsky – which are usually sung around a fire in Russia; this also helped greatly in making contacts with Russians. What was the main benefit of studying at MGIMO? I think it was the fact that

I got a better understanding of Russian diplomacy, that is to say, the theory behind it; and also the mentality of Russian diplomats and the motivation behind Russia's political moves, especially its actions during international crises. I used to disagree with Russia's foreign policies and considerations, but now, at least, I understand them. It has at its core the integrity of its borders as well as memory of the terrible wars of the 20th century which must not be repeated. What

is also important is the feeling of national pride, the fact of being Russian. Thanks to these insights I have a certain advantage over other French journalists. For example, they have no idea why Vladimir Putin is so popular in Russia. They jump to immediate conclusions, such as allegedly rigged elections. They fail to understand the true reason: people vote for Putin not only because they want him as their president, but because they love him. I witnessed the 90s chaos in Russia. I also witnessed the gradual restoration of order, the growing economy and recovered pride. I saw oligarchs, who were at the steering wheel in the 90s and were hated by the population, being removed from power by Putin in a matter of months. It was remarkable! I remember how those 'nouveau riches', dreading prosecution, hurriedly left for London to form an opposition to Putin. They were

very vociferous, accusing Russia of having no democracy. But I, on the contrary, understood they were wrong. Another important benefit was making friends with my coursemates. I had a curious encounter in Washington where I was working as a *France 24* correspondent in the White House. As I remember, I was covering the American-Arab summit when I suddenly ran into Josh Baker, the American who I was with while doing my Master's at MGIMO. He had become a diplomat specialising in The Middle East and was involved in that summit. We stood on the lawn before the White House hugging each other – a Frenchman and an American brought together by MGIMO University. Using the opportunity, I interviewed him and got a couple of important insights from this useful contact. I have very warm memories of that meeting! I was still at Sciences Po when I decided to become an international journalist and did a few internships in some French mass media companies. In Moscow I did an internship in *France-Presse*. The journalists that I met there advised me to go to a school of journalism so, coming back to Paris, I enrolled at 'Centre de formation des journalistes' (CFJ), graduating in 2002. Of course, I wanted to return to Russia to make my reports from there. I was lucky to go on a number of interesting assignments, including to Birobidzhan, Khabarovsk. In 2017 I was in St.Petersburg, covering the 100th Anniversary of the October Revolution. In the period between 2006 and 2015 I worked at *France 24* which, in a way, is an analogue of the Russian *RT* in that it broadcasts for a foreign audience. As I said, it is for *France 24* that I covered political life in Washington for 5 years. It has been three years since I became Editor-in-Chief of *CNews* channel which mainly covers domestic news. It is very interesting and highly responsible work. There are four news channels in France, ours comes second after *BFM* in its influence. So I have to live up to the standard! 🇷🇺





NADEZDA YUSYUZ

(MGIMO - SCIENCES PO, '11)

Vice President
Sovereign Advisory Department
Lazard
Paris

In the early 2000s, I lived in Tiraspol (Transnistria, a state formation on the territory of the former USSR). I had an aspiration to move ahead, to find an interesting path in life. And as I had a mathematical mindset (I even took first places in math competitions), I opted for economics. I wanted to enter one of the best universities, namely MGIMO, and decided

to give it a try. It is important that I wasn't afraid to take up that challenge, went straight ahead; and having passed the exams, I got enrolled! Apart from English I had to learn French from scratch. I remember not being able to pronounce the correct French consonant "r" for quite some time, and I often visited my Moscow relatives to listen to tapes recorded by native speakers (I didn't have

my own tape-recorder back then) and to drink tea. Our French language department specialists taught me French at the top-class level, I understood that later, in France. As a rule, foreigners learn a language while living in the country where this language is spoken, but we didn't have to go anywhere. When I visited MGIMO some time ago, I came over to my teachers to thank them once again for everything they did for me. When I was a senior I had to make a choice concerning my future career. MGIMO graduates do not get a field-specific education – they get a very sound base, a thorough understanding of

I remember not being able to pronounce the correct French consonant "r" for quite some time, and I often visited my Moscow relatives to listen to tapes recorded by native speakers (I didn't have my own tape-recorder back then) and to drink tea

processes taking place in various spheres, but not a speciality, per se. That's why if after completing a Bachelor's degree a graduate has no idea where to go next, the best option is to do a Master's degree. And so I decided to take on another challenge and go to study abroad. I got the impression that the best Master's degree course was the one of MGIMO – Sciences Po, but competition was tough. I wrote a motivation letter, attached my dossier with marks in different subjects and applied for the course "Finance and Strategy". Soon I learnt that I was enrolled! The first year of the course was in Moscow; during it I learnt a lot of new things: we studied world politics, and

I had to read a lot of articles and books on international processes. I wasn't used to absorbing so much information on such various subjects; at the School of International Economic Relations we had more specific disciplines, but such an immersion into the problematics of world politics broadened my horizons. Then I went to Paris. The fundamental difference between the year in Moscow and the year in Paris was in the scope of practical classes. MGIMO gives you a sound theoretical base, but a considerable advantage of the French system is that after a year of studies a student can take a gap year in order to work somewhere. Internships give students an opportunity to understand what they want to do next and enhances their motivation. After one or two internships students, return to complete their degree. My first internship was at the bank Societe Generale, at the department of credit and operational risks. I got first-hand experience of working for a slow heavyweight, learnt its "mentality" and the French corporate culture when people gather not less than three times a day around the coffee-machine to discuss all the news. I understood that communication is integral to the French mindset. All in all, it was a standard nine-to-six workday with a one-hour-and-a-half break for lunch. To tell the truth, I was lacking in work. The work itself was quite monotonous and tedious, and I wanted to learn more. Besides it struck me as odd that an intern was supposed to do the same job as an employee who was about to retire. Indeed, the latter has a huge corporate memory: the whole history of communications with this or that client at his/her fingertips, but a young employee without this knowledge can do the same task. All in all I decided that I needed more experience, and my resume happened to come into the hands of my future boss at the investment bank Lazard. It turned out that Sovereign Advisory Department, which had some projects with Kazakhstan at that time, was looking for a Russian speaking employee, and I was offered an

internship. I think that the information about my education in the resume played a major role, as large banks first and foremost pay attention to the leading French universities, such as Sciences Po, HEC, etc. I had more work at Lazard, it became more varied, and I felt more responsibility. You are highly unlikely to come across such an attitude here – "if you are an intern, do the paperwork". Lazard is not that big, that's why they put trust in young specialists more, and if you pull the given tasks off, you get trusted even more. All in all, in 2012 I started my internship there, and next year signed an employment agreement. Lazard is an investment bank which specializes in mergers and acquisitions

consulting, it is historically a leader in this market. It is an old bank founded in 1848 with two principal executive offices in Paris and New York. I am occupied in Sovereign Advisory. We work with ministries and central banks, as well as government entities, state-run companies and sovereign funds. We are not limited geographically and operate worldwide, though we tend to have more transactions with developing states. Over these six years I worked my way from an intern to a vice president, i.e. I am a mid-tier executive now. To become a partner I need to advance further. To what extent has the education received at MGIMO and Sciences Po been useful to me? MGIMO gave me a sound academic foundation, made me broad-



MGIMO gave me a sound academic foundation, made me broad-minded and opened up my horizons; Sciences Po taught me freedom and made me more daring in my research

minded and opened up my horizons; Sciences Po taught me freedom and made me more daring in my research. This is an advantage of a double-degree program – it gives students an opportunity to view things from two different perspectives. Moreover, MGIMO is an excellent language training institution. Once I even calculated the share of language classes and got an amazing 40% of total classes given. But most importantly, had I not made the decision to study at MGIMO, this door to France would never have opened to me. ☑

VLADIMIR FEDOROVSKY: 'PARISIAN SNOW HELPED ME'



Vladimir Fedorovsky ('72) is known as 'the most published French author of Russian descent'. This statement is somewhat contradictory. France affectionately guards its cultural Pantheon, so only a born Frenchman can be allowed to become the 'creme de la creme'. But Fedorovsky earned this right, just like the Russian tsar who, after the seige of Paris, entered it on the shoulders of Napoleon's army. Fedorovsky's seige, however, was more profound and long-lasting. He remained a Soviet diplomat based in France for two terms, a whole decade! At the end of the 80s, when the Soviet theme was all the rage in the West, he was considered the 'voice of perestroika'; given a free hand by those close to the Soviet Politburo, he could easily call the head of the Elysee or his ministers – just to check up on their

health and, using the opportunity, to inform of the latest foreign-policy initiatives of the USSR which at the time were in ample supply. Today Fedorovsky is known as the 'voice of Russia'. Largely due to his extended professional networks and award-winning literary ratings, he appears to be the only Russian who has the ear of the French political and cultural elite. The things he says are not part of the European mainstream media – he offers a pro-Russian perspective on events, for instance, in the Crimea or Syria. But first of all, Fedorovsky is a writer – it was his university dream which came true only in France.

MJ: How did you make it possible?
I will start with a little background information. After the August putsch in 1991 and dissolution of the Soviet Union, I left the Foreign Ministry. I could have made quite a career there but I had this teenage dream of becoming a famous writer. So I left for France. Being already known here, I was not left on the sidelines; I remember immediately being assigned to write a feature article for *Le Figaro*, and that is how my new life began, that of a writer. But it was not all from scratch.



I had previously published a detective story, 'Secret Story of a Coup' (Histoire secrète d'un coup d'État), written in the wake of the Russian putsch events. My books, however, did not sell too well here: for one thing, the genre was not very popular – being a mixture of essay and novel; for another, they were too Russian as it were and, therefore, were not fully understood. For a long time I was better known in the political and journalistic circles than by the literary community. This had its implications – in France if a writer is not among the top 20, his living standards are rather poor. For example, Begbeder was popular in his day – and he is well beyond the top twenty cohort. People who knew me could not even understand this reckless venture, saying



V.Fedorovsky with E.Cresson, France's Prime Minister (1991–1992)

Parisian snow helped my breakthrough. Because of it the whole of France was caught up in traffic and was in their cars listening to me talking on the program! I ended up selling a million copies!

'with your connections you could find yourself in the new Russia, become a millionaire, and you – lo and behold – choose to come here to write books which, to make matters worse, do not sell well.'

MJ: How did the breakthrough come about?
Parisian snow helped me. It was the winter of 2000 and there was a heavy blizzard one day... I had just finished my 'St.Petersburg Novel' and, since my runs were generally small, the book was to have only 5 thousand copies. So, there I was, feeling blue on a snowy day. Suddenly I felt an urge to call an old friend of mine, the journalist Jaques Pradel, and tell him about the book; but he would



August, 1991. V.Fedorovsky with J.Chirac in Moscow

not answer... When perestroika was in the limelight, I could call President Mitterrand or his advisor Hubert Vedrine, and they would always answer my calls... And now I am a writer, in other words, a nobody. So I call a second time – no answer. The French do not call a third time, but I am pressed by an urgent need, so I dial again, and – suddenly I hear his voice! 'Hey, Jacques,' – I say, 'I have a presentation of my new book – will you come?' – 'When?' – 'Tomorrow.' – 'No, I can't, see the blizzard?' By the way, I was to have a guest on my show tomorrow, but he won't be coming because of

the snow. You can come instead!' Jacques was on *Radio Europe* hosting one of those programs that define the fate of a book in France. Of course, I came. We drank coffee, I spent three hours telling stories – not just about the book, but everything – I have the gift of the gab. It became a program which made history, because the same day my publisher called me and said: 'Our book run has gone up to 30,000!' As it turned out, because of the snow the whole of France was caught up in traffic and was in their cars listening to me talking on the program!



I ended up selling a million copies! I could open doors to any publisher. Now I have over forty books, I have just finished my forty-third one called ‘Manipulations’ included in my collection, ‘Le Roman Vrai’ (‘A Real Novel’). It came out on 7 November via Flammarion.

MJ: What do you write about? What is your theme?
I have two. First, I like telling about the ‘dark alleys’ of human life, remember Bunin’s ‘Dark Alleys’? The second theme is 20th century history shrouded in mystery. I have novels about Rasputin, tsars, perestroika – I like telling about the Russian myth. Now it is rather prescient as we have entered a dreadful period in history, much worse than the Cold War. While in those days there was a gap between propaganda and real politics, today we are witnessing a terrible trend (this mainly relates to the West, much

Today the West is experiencing a terrible thing – people lie and then believe their own lies. In recent years there has been a huge gap between Russian reality and its perception by the French elite. But one must not live in an imaginary world. In this situation I see it as my duty to convey to the general public the truth about Russia

less so to Russia) – when people lie and then believe their own lies.

MJ: Today it is called the time of post-truth.
Yes, that’s true. Why is it so daunting? In France everyone is obsessed with their career, taking great pains to make it. That is why, fearing dismissal, they are too scared to disagree with their boss, in other words, they are ready to suck up to him. The same is happening in big politics. In recent years there has been a major gap between Russian reality and its perception by the French elite. But one must not live in an imaginary world. In this situation I see it as my duty to convey to the general public the truth about Russia. I took a stance for restoring relations with Russia, spelling out why it is necessary, and did that at the very top level. My position makes me one of the few Russians in France who has access to

the quality press, and I can tell them what no one else can. Of course, I have to follow certain rules, but I also am brutally honest sometimes. And I have their ear. Vedrine once told me: ‘You know, you did change a few things here.’ I know I contributed to the transformation in perception of Russia that is taking place here, in particular to the diversion away from demonizing Russia, because the French are tired of it. a vast majority are for re-establishing normal relations with Russia.

MJ: Your University professors would be delighted at your efficiency, after all they were training you for foreign service, ‘a fighter on the battlefield of diplomacy’.
Heavens no! I avoided it as best I could. I lived in a world of my own, an intellectual, keeping to myself. Not a dissident, though, I was just bored. After all, I wanted to be a writer.

MJ: What about a foreign affairs expert? Is it not why you went to the University of International Relations?
Diplomatic service for me at the time was only a means of travelling. I did not want to be cooped up in the Soviet Union, I dreamt of going abroad, earning good money, making a good Foreign Office career. But I did not aspire to be a ‘fighter’ of any sort. The University offered a unique education and reasonable freedom. I liked reading the French press, have access to books by Freud, Berdyaev, which were not available in Moscow libraries; I enjoyed having open discussions of readings with my fellow-students. The intellectual level was very high at the University, this is demonstrated by its alumni – Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov and Rector Anatoly Torkunov, who were my coursemates. Their level stood out right from the very start.

MJ: You write books in French. Who do you credit for such a good command of the language?
As a matter of fact, my first foreign language was Arabic, and French was second, but taught on the first language program. Arabic was taught by outstanding professors. We studied the Quran, which in France is not even

M GIMO offered a truly unique education. The intellectual level was very high there, this is demonstrated by its alumni – Sergey Lavrov and Anatoly Torkunov, my coursemates. Their level stood out right from the very start

included in the higher education curriculum; I know it because I taught here myself.

MJ: When did you find yourself in France?
It took a while. While still at university I got married, had a daughter, which was a turning point in my life. I became a good student, which helped me land a job at The Ministry of Foreign Affairs after graduation in 1972. I was immediately assigned to work in some godforsaken country – Mauritania, the worst of all the foreign locations. But I was delighted! This was a unique place where the desert meets the ocean. I found myself in a kingdom of freedom there.



MJ: In the Soviet Embassy?

Yes, why are you surprised? There were only five of us, and we were part of the white community of only two hundred people – diplomats who were leading a colonial lifestyle. We lived at villas, went to the seaside, danced at Western-style parties thrown by the EC Ambassador Ladoux. I was friends with Mitterrand's son, Jean-Christophe, France Press correspondent. My best friend was a Spanish Charge d'Affaires of Franco, who had no diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union. Our Ambassador turned a blind eye to this fact; he was a great man, quite a character, Mirzo Rakhmatov, former Deputy Chairman of Tajikistan's Parliament, then the Supreme Soviet of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic. He used to be in close working contact with the Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev, so he had only one boss who he referred to as 'Lenya'. I remember I had to translate for him for the first time at one of the receptions. It was boiling hot, up to 50 degrees, everyone is open-collared, except Rakhmatov who is wearing a white ambassadorial service jacket and all the medals and insignia, including the Order of Lenin and four Orders of the Red Banner of Labour – for record cotton harvests! So, a German official comes up to him and asks: 'Your Excellency, how many kilos does all this beauty make up?' Rakhmatov replies: 'Five! For all the war years. One kilo for 1941, one – for '42, one – for '43, one – for '44, and for 1945 – the year of our victory over Hitler – two kilos!' This relocation – from a Soviet islet of freedom, however artificial, known as MGIMO, to the real world bustling with Western aesthetics and freedom - transformed me. The four years that I spent in Mauritania gave me a solid grounding to become a real professional in the future. But most importantly, it was there that I had a stroke of luck for the first time. The fortuitous meeting was with Alexey Shvedov, head of the First African Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who came from Moscow on business. I translated for him from Arabic, and was doing it in a peculiar fashion – I was shouting. And the more I shouted the more attentive he listened to me. And then he asked: 'Are you bored

with Mauritania yet? You know, I'd like to recommend you as a translator from Arabic for Leonid Brezhnev, because he has hearing problems and you shout.' That is how I became a high-level interpreter. Not immediately, though; at first, I translated for the head of the Ministry, Andrey Gromyko. Then I was allowed to interpret at the Kremlin summit – the first meeting was between Brezhnev and the Algerian leader Houari Boumédiène. I spent three years in Shvedov's department, he was a unique man who created a whole school of African studies and trained many

I became the Embassy's press-aide, or unofficially, 'advisor on perestroika marketing'. I had infinite possibilities, I was the channel for communication between Gorbachev and Mitterrand; I came to the Elysee Palace every time I got a telegram with new propositions

ambassadors. He taught me many things, too – how to write, prioritise, work with people. I developed my own official writing style, clear and simple. Shvedov liked to promote young professionals, and that played a defining role in my life. I always had my eyes set on France and when Brezhnev once asked where I would like to go I shared this dream of mine. Well, I just said it and left it at that, but Shvedov, who was nearby, remembered it. And when in 1978 there was a vacancy for a cultural attache in Paris he must have facilitated my appointment.

MJ: How did you find Paris, after Mauritania?
I went crazy! I broke loose, plunging myself

into cultural diplomacy, going to theatres, attending exhibitions, art salons, and with time became quite influential. I made connections with all the promoters and agents in the city and if, say, Brezhnev's daughter was visiting Paris and wanted a cultural program, I did everything at the highest level. There was not a single celebrity or political party leader whom I did not take to the embassy reception dedicated to the 1917 October Revolution. The whole world was my friends! Chagall, Dali, Picasso, Madame Kandinsky ...

MJ: Whose company did you find the most interesting?
Dali, Graham Greene. I once heard that he was living in the south of France, in Antibes, and decided to meet him. I was not officially delegated to do that, just curious, so I called him and he invited me over. We had a litre bottle of whisky between the two of us and became friends.

MJ: So you just called and came over, as simple as that?
You see, at the time there was not a single person in France who would turn down a Soviet 'attaché culturel'. When the Bolshoi Theatre was on tour in Paris, the French went crazy, and I was the only person capable of arranging a meeting with Soviet ballet-dancers. I was so active that ... Let me tell you a curious anecdote. Many years later, when I was already an established writer and was signing my new book at a literary salon, a man came up to me. He bought ten copies, which I profusely thanked him for and said in jest: 'Who are they all for? Wife and lady-friends?' (My books are popular with women.) And he said: 'My name is Dural I am a retired intelligence colonel. Years ago, when you only just arrived here, I used to keep watch on you.' 'How interesting', I replied. – 'So tell me more.' – 'My wife still remembers the time I did not come home at night because of you. But that's not the worst of it! You bankrupted the French state!' – 'How come?!' – 'Well, you went to posh restaurants day in day out – with Dali, Chagall and all, and this was an outrageous expense for us; after all, I had to be there

too, wining and dining, while watching you. We paid a fortune for the restaurant administration to allow us to bug your table. But you were inexhaustible, not leaving till very late. So I couldn't keep up any more and went to my boss.' – 'And what did you tell him?' – 'I said: "We have to stop it, he is not a professional spy." "And what is he then?" - the boss asked. "He is having fun with the French elite, Bolshoi Theatre ballet-girls." –



"What," – the boss asked with a tinge of envy in his voice, "with these 'hirondelles' (fr. 'swallow, tootsie-wootsie')?". 'We also bribed Dali's secretary,' Dural added, 'to find out what you were talking to him about. All in all, we spent three months keeping a close tab on you until we realized that you were just having fun.' And then fate took me to the place that was to initiate the Soviet perestroika. After my return from Paris in 1982, I became Assistant to the Deputy-head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Petrovsky, who was affiliated with the future 'architect of perestroika', Alexandre Yakovlev, a close associate

of Mikhail Gorbachev. And when I had an offer to come back to Paris, I gladly accepted. Petrovsky and Yakovlev decided to use my connections: I became the press advisor, press-aide, or unofficially 'advisor on perestroika marketing'. I had infinite possibilities: on one side I was under the protection of Yakovlev, who in 1985 joined the highest-ranking party authority – Politburo; on the other side

when there was an anti-democratic putsch in Moscow, Gorbachev was blocked in the Crimea, and Boris Yeltsin in Moscow. I spent all the three days in the besieged parliament, giving interviews to Western TV channels. At some point I heard that Mitterrand had expressed support for the putschists. I had known him personally ever since he (then still the Socialist Party leader) came to Mauritania to visit his son. And I addressed

I had the support of Petrovsky who was in charge of French affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I was the channel for communication between Gorbachev and Mitterrand, I came to the Elysee Palace every time I got a telegram with some new propositions. At the same time I was giving many interviews, was always on the TV screen, and became a popular media figure. Most importantly, I did not have to be authorised for my actions, I was given absolute creative freedom.

MJ: And then it all ended one day...
Yes, the Soviet Union collapsed... It was like this. In 1990 I came back to Moscow. And

him through the French channel camera: 'You know, Mr.President, you taught us a lot about freedom. And now we are facing tanks and it is the question of freedom that is at stake. Why are you betraying us now? Not you and not now!' The whole of France was astounded. When in November of 1991 I came to Paris, Mitterrand invited me to breakfast. 'You know,' he said, 'that was a good speech back then, well done.'

MJ: It has been fifty years since you first started at the University; are you satisfied with your life?
Absolutely. I wanted to become a famous writer and I became one. ☑

ALEXANDRE TUROV ('84)

Trade Commissioner for Russia in France

Paris

When, in 1979, I was admitted to MGIMO, I requested Serbo-Croatian as the first foreign language, and that is what I got (it later split into Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian), while English was second. As for my major in Economics, I have very fond memories of Nikolai Liventsev, who headed the Economics Department. He

was a top-rate specialist, one of the old-school academics, a man of principle, strict, even hardline sometimes, who would never overstep the line and be too informal with students. He used to tell us that there is no such thing as a minor detail: the more specific and articulate you are in formulating a problem, the sooner you will get the result. After MGIMO I found myself in

a foreign trade company 'Khimvolokno'. Now I understand that it is my student experiences of those years that later made me a professional trade commissioner. Starting as an economist, I was promoted to merchandise specialist after a year's probation period. The knowledge that I gained in the merchandising class in the Economics Department stood me in good stead in this position. Assistant Professor Sebko taught us the basics of the profession. I will never forget the story he told us about his time in one of the Soviet Republics in Middle Asia when his older,



It was clear from the very beginning that the real reason for a sharp cooling of relations with the West was not the Crimea. It was Russia's growing economic strength, the country gained a position on foreign markets and was actively competing with the West

more experienced colleagues decided to play a joke on him, a young specialist at the time. Showing him goat's fur, they said: 'Look how good this fur is, it's top quality astrakhan!' In his turn, Sebko, having been a diligent student of merchandising, looked at the fur and said: 'Well, if that's the quality of your astrakhan here, I am impounding the warehouse until you have checked the quality of all the fur here!' My work at 'Khimvolokno' gave me immense hands-on experience. Just imagine, there were only two of us in charge of polyester thread procurement, for the production of women's tights, with a total turnover of 250 million dollars! Now, of course, many export companies cannot match these sales volumes, but we are

beginning to catch up with the Soviet levels of export sales. I see how actively we are promoting industrial exports, including increasing levels of Russian goods exported to France; their quality is excellent, on a par with the world's best, and the price is rather acceptable. After the antidemocratic putsch failed in August 1991 in Moscow and the Soviet Union collapsed, Russia entered a new lifecycle. However, in economic terms, the reforms that we had been fighting for had negative implications for us. We were thrust into market conditions while all savings devalued. I set up a small publishing company but it did not match the scale of my ambitions. The financial crisis of 1998, when the bank where we had our business account went under, was the last drop. So I decided to return to civil service. This was an auspicious period as it coincided with the political changes in the Russian government: in 1999 Vladimir Putin became head of government. For professional improvement, I enrolled in the Diplomatic Academy. I had French as a foreign language which I really struggled with. And to top it all, I had an offer from other language tutors: 'You know Serbo-Croatian, don't you? Take up Czech too, otherwise with no demand our good tutor will have to leave.' I had to oblige, which I never regretted. After two busy years of studies, I realized I would no longer be able to go into business again – my mentality had changed. So when there was a vacancy at the Ministry for Anti-monopoly Policy and Support of Entrepreneurship I jumped at the chance. I was appointed Deputy Head of Department and posted to the anti-monopoly agency in France. In 2004 I was offered work in the Russian government, which was a real challenge. In the position of the Advisor to Department of Economy and Finance I was involved in drafting a law on business competition, enhancing liability norms for anti-monopoly law infringement, reforming the energy sphere to boost competition and restrict monopolistic activity in the petrochemical market, and export support. Public service was

a great school in terms of professional responsibility, whereby a tiniest detail, like a letter or a comma, matters. After all, if you are drafting a government resolution you have to know all relevant legislation to avoid any contradictions or discrepancies between it and the new legal act. And it is your signature on the final draft because everyone has to know who drafted a resolution or decree – at the final stage they all are signed by the head of government. And the price for your mistake will be high – dozens of billions of dollars! And yet, I had an ambition to return to

gained a position on foreign markets and was actively competing with the West. The sanctions war entered the political sphere, this fact alone contradicts the principles of free competition and all anti-monopoly laws. But these challenges did nothing but stimulate the development of national business! At the same time, however, they are ruining international trade cooperation as our long-term partners unilaterally back away from their international commitments which have been previously upheld at all times and during all types of regimes. Unfortunately, the whole



my original activity of a foreign affairs expert and apply the knowledge gained at MGIMO. So, when the position of a deputy head of the trade mission in Slovakia suddenly came up, I took it. The work in Bratislava went so well that in a few years I moved to the Czech Republic as head of the trade mission, where my knowledge of Czech from the Diplomatic Academy came in really useful. However, this period of my service coincided with a sharp cooling of relations with the West due to Russia's reclaiming the Crimea. But it was clear from the very beginning that the real reason was not the Crimea. It was Russia's growing economic strength – we now had our national business, financial resources, the country

system of international law is falling apart. In this context the effort of the French president to restore normal relations with Russia is nothing short of valiant. It developed into the Trianon Dialogue initiative aimed at bringing the two civil societies closer. It brings back a personal memory. When Emmanuel Macron decided to enter politics, by protocol we sent him an official letter, signed by our minister and me, wishing him the best of luck and expressing confidence that his political career will take him to the top of the political Olympus. I still keep Macron's official reply thanking us for support. I think we were right in choosing to foster further cooperation with the French Republic. ☑

EMMANUELLE MOREAU

(MGIMO - SCIENCES PO, '10)

Editorial manager

Corporate Communications Department

Naval Group

Paris

My interest in Russia goes back to childhood. I remember when I was about nine years old and went to school in Brest (Bretagne), we were asked to choose a foreign language. I opted for Russian. It was taught by a woman who had lived for a while in the Soviet Union. I had been studying Russian for 10 years, and then one day I decided to see the country. Soon I found a MGIMO - Sciences Po double master's degree program

that involved studying for a year in Moscow and Paris.

When I came to Moscow in the summer of 2008, I felt somewhat overwhelmed at first, but I rather liked that feeling. I fell in love with Moscow and its Red Square, as a child I had seen it in pictures. I liked the atmosphere, the vibes of the big city and its daily hustle and bustle.

Our academic program had 20 students, mainly from France, Germany, Great Britain

and the Czech Republic. We studied at the Department of International Relations and did courses in international security, macroeconomics, border security, world politics, etc.

MGIMO differed substantially from a French university in its approach to teaching. I was surprised to learn that students wrote papers at home rather than in class. In France, we usually have a lot of quizzes in class. Russian students are trained to think fast dealing with questions and problems whereas in France students are taught to structure their thinking and writing. You should learn to defend your work rather than be able to find a quick solution.

We had one professor who taught us border security classes; I liked him. He was knowledgeable, emotional, open to any arguments, including most critical ones; he

I fell in love with Moscow and its Red Square, as a child I had seen it in pictures. I liked the atmosphere, the vibes of the big city and its daily hustle and bustle

encouraged students to speak out. It was very interesting; discussions provided educational experience enriched by students' different cultural backgrounds. For example, we had one North Korean student and were always curious about him. His country being closed to westerners, we were intrigued to hear what he would say.

At first, I thought about UNESCO as my graduation research problem. When I had enrolled in the program I was thinking of a career in diplomacy. But I changed my mind in the process as I took an interest in an absolutely different sphere, namely Russia's luxury industry. I set out to research the role of luxury in the modern Russian cultural values hierarchy using French brands as case studies. So my graduation thesis was entitled "Chanel's and Vuitton's Marketing Strategies in Russia".

My finding was that Russian society sees luxury absolutely differently to how it is taken in France. In France luxury used to be associated with the king, court, nobility, but the French Revolution did away with it. The same happened in Russia after the 1917 Revolution, but in modern Russia luxury is about status and power; a status symbol should be conspicuous whereas in France showing off wealth is inappropriate, one's status and background can be inferred from the quality of the fabric one wears even if it does not carry any designer label.

Having completed my degree in Moscow, I returned home. Paris seems rather small as compared to Moscow. Everything is small here, underground, cars, houses. And people are relaxed.

The French master's offered me a choice between international relations and finance. I opted for finance, strategy and marketing, planning to set up my own clothing retail company in the future. Choosing finance after research in luxury was rather reckless on my part. It was very difficult, but I coped, got all credits and defended my graduation thesis.

However, my dream of setting up a company was never meant to come true. I was busy sending CVs to different companies when all of a sudden I got an answer from the French Navy. It was a challenge but there was a certain logic in that decision: my father is a naval officer; I grew up in Bretagne and always liked being at sea. So I accepted. My Sciences Po diploma came in handy enabling me to get promoted to an officer after a short training course. Later I did a course in communications and public relations.

In 2010, I was assigned to *Mistral* as a logistics officer. I served for a year, sailed the Indian Ocean, acquired a lot of professional skills. When I returned, I got a job on the project of construction of two *Mistral* class ships - *Vladivostok* and *Sebastopol* - commissioned by Russia. This time my MGIMO diploma proved useful; the shipbuilding company wanted a French employee knowing Russian. For over two years, I was in charge of relations with Russia's representatives on *Mistral* crews. But relations between our countries



Thanks to the Franco-Russian master's degree program I met new friends and we are still very close. Last year I was in Saint Petersburg for a wedding of one of my Russian friends

soured, and the contract was cancelled. So I decided to switch to another line of work in the same company and moved to

the Communications Department. As an editorial manager, I am in charge of the production of the company's magazines and websites.

Thanks to the Franco-Russian master's degree program I met new friends and we are still very close. In Moscow, our group's foreign and Russian students lived in different halls of residence, but we often met for birthday parties, picnics, i.e. *shashlyki* in Russian; in general, we had a very good time. Some of my friends live in Paris now, others are in different countries of the world. Sometimes we travel together, and last year I was in Saint Petersburg for a wedding of one of my Russian friends. ☑

ALEXANDR MELNIK ('81)

Teacher&writer

In 1976, when I entered the MGIMO School of International Journalism, I had to study French. I had never thought about France and knew little about it. Now I am a quite famous French teacher and writer, the author of many publications in the French media as well as books in French. This language has become for me a tool for understanding life, for everyday communication, and for professional and literary expression. The language for a person who writes is his homeland.

If I have managed to achieve something in life, it's all thanks to the people around and their inspiring qualities. In this regard I remember Viktor Anfilov, my dean. He fought in the war; this made him a person with a strong moral backbone. The dean picked the students who liked studying and helped them. I was among these students. By the end of my studies, I had to go for an internship; I chose the Ministry for Foreign Affairs over media. At that time diplomacy was almost the only window on the world. Moreover, I was lucky as I got a chance to go to Paris of all places.

In 1981 Stepan Chernovenko was the Soviet ambassador in France. In the Embassy he was a Louis XIV, the Sun King, as everything revolved around him and

everybody was afraid of him. At that time, the most important event in France was the upcoming elections. I constantly read the news, watched TV, analyzed the reaction of the French both from those whom I met in my official capacity and from those in the streets and cafés. When the Ambassador asked me, a mere intern, who I thought was going to win the race, I said: "I think it will be François Mitterand". He was surprised: all of his staff assured him that Giscard d'Éstaing would be re-elected!

Mr. Mitterand won, and I returned to Paris - the ambassador asked the MFA to send me there after my graduation from MGIMO. I had worked in the Embassy for almost six years, including as the aide to the Ambassador. I was there at the

The French has become for me a tool for understanding life, for everyday communication, and for professional and literary expression



beginning of perestroika. I remember the furore that was reigning in Paris when, in October 1985, Gorbachev came there on his first official visit. At that time I served as the chief of protocol under the new ambassador, Yuliy Vorontsov, who was a wonderful person and a bright diplomat.

After returning from my secondment in 1986, I worked in the press-centre of the MFA Department of Information, where for five years I was in charge of the French media accredited in Moscow. Working in Moscow during glasnost and perestroika was considered to be the pinnacle of the career for a first-rank journalists. For me, as a diplomat of the last years of the USSR, the press-centre was a new window through which to experience freedom. I started writing and issuing publications in France; I travelled a lot. I even had an internship in Le Figaro, which was considered unusual at the time: a Soviet diplomat with a Soviet passport was an intern in the most anti-Soviet French newspaper!

A flourishing of new ideas, the geopolitical revolution, the possibility of direct contacts created an excitement in me knowing that I was not just a Soviet diplomat, but a free person. That's why when I was offered a new secondment in Paris, I hesitated. I wondered if I should to continue my career as diplomat and become an ambassador. I thought that possibility was highly unlikely. Personal freedom and the possibility to do what I want and not what I am told to do were more important to me.

However, my wife pressured me into taking up a diplomatic post in France. After five years, I couldn't stand it anymore and handed in my notice to Ambassador Yuri Ryzhov with whom I had been working as Press Attaché. He didn't appear surprised and said something I remembered forever: "You know, you seem to have taken the right decision. I don't see you either in diplomacy, or in Russia".

So, in October 1995, I found myself in Paris. I was free, poor, jobless, homeless and without any documents. On top of that, my wife filed for divorce. But I couldn't act otherwise. It was a moral imperative, my challenge. I had to go



through this period of great challenges so that by facing them a new Alexandr Melnik would emerge, the one who wanted to be free in all the senses: intellectually, professionally, and financially.

Soon after I launched one of the first tourist agencies in Paris which worked with rich Russians; at the same time, I started editing a thin periodical called *Newsletters about Russia*. Around this same time, a friend put in a good word for me in

I have achieved my goal - I made it possible for these Russian and European students to experience first-hand, a globalized world

the department of Slavic languages of the University of Caen Normandy. As I didn't know how to teach Russian, the subject was broadened to include Russian civilization (culture, history, literature). I had always wanted to teach.

One thing that demotivated me the most was that there were few students in the class and even they were falling asleep. At some point I had enough of that and asked them: "Sorry to wake you up, but why have

you, the citizens of a democratic country where nobody imposes you anything, chosen the lectures on a subject you have no interest in?" The answer surprised me: "Yes, we are not very interested in Russia. But we hate the USA, the American materialism, imperialism, lifestyle. For us Russia embodies an alternative way".

That's how I accidentally found the core nerve of the French mindset: the negative motivation, fueled by leftist sentiments growing in the country, where anti-Americanism is traditionally a powerful driving force and where there is an instinctive affection for Russia. Here our country is perceived as a counterbalance to America.

Five years later I realized that the Russian topic is too narrow for me. To go beyond it, I joined the ICN Business School in Nancy. Here I broadened my subject, gradually making the world the focus of my interdisciplinary research. In other words, I started teaching geopolitics. I also learnt about the international connections of the ICN, which has partnerships with 60 countries. However, Russia was not one of them. I wondered, why not establish a partnership with MGIMO, my alma mater? But I hadn't had any contacts with the institute for twenty years! I found Vladimir Shitov, the dean of the School of International Business and Business Administration, which had a similar curriculum to that of the ICN Business School. Our discussions led to the creation of the MGIMO-ICN double degree program in international management.

We synchronized the MGIMO and ICN syllabi for the graduates to get full degrees of both universities, which would serve as a legal basis for their employment in Russia, France, European countries and in the world. As a person who went through an extremely difficult process of obtaining French documents, I knew very well how important this legal basis is. The first fifteen students graduated from the MGIMO-ICN double degree program in 2006. I have achieved my goal - I made it possible for these Russian and European students to experience first-hand, a globalized world. 🌐



GALINA SUBBOTINA
(SCIENCES PO – MGIMO, ‘10)

*Vice-President
Royal Bank of Scotland / NatWest Paris*

A wonderful thing happened in 2002 – I was admitted on the PR program at the Journalism Department of the University of International Relations! However, then it was followed by a period of disappointments (as I thought at the time). I used to study German at school and wanted to continue at the University but received French as a foreign language, and it was completely from scratch. I was so keen to get rid of it

that I turned to the Dean for help but he refused to let me switch the language. So I went on an improvised strike – didn't buy a dictionary the whole of the first term. Luckily, the first term was devoted only to phonetics and basic grammar, so there was no need for the dictionary. Otherwise I would have been in trouble - the University's French Department is well-known for its severe approach. So I got through the first end of term exams. Then a miracle happened. a musical 'Notre Dame de Paris' was staged in Moscow and I fell in love with the music. I wanted to understand the lyrics in the French version, so I bought a dictionary.

In my fifth year I interned at the Agency of Political and Economic Communications, which ran projects for government institutions in the areas of domestic and foreign policy. I sometimes interviewed experts and at one point I realized that

I was asking questions the answers to which I knew myself. So I thought my brain is capable of doing something grander, beyond solely PR.

Suddenly I remembered that the University ran a dual-degree Russian-French Master program with Sciences Po and applied for "International Business: Finance and Strategy". It was then that I realized how lucky I was to have been given French in my first year at university!

The first year of the program was in Moscow. It was very intense, especially given the focus on international politics, political science and international relations while I was only a PR specialist.

The second year, however, in Paris, was dedicated to finance. When it was nearing the end I started looking for a job in my area - PR in finance. I visited all the PR agencies specializing in the field but was rejected



I was so keen to get rid of the French that I went on an improvised strike – didn't buy a dictionary. Then a miracle happened. a musical 'Notre Dame de Paris' was staged in Moscow and I fell in love with the music. I wanted to understand the lyrics in the French version, so I bought a dictionary

everywhere. The reason must have been my French. I had a good grasp of the language but not of colloquial French that a PR agent needs. Shortly before my departure for Moscow I was offered internship in a major French company 'Veolia Environnement'. This was my meal ticket to the world of finance. Instead of PR, I was immediately plunged into project finance, which included financial modelling and business

planning with substantial legal support for renewable energy projects; we sought financing for wind and solar power plants.

My next internship was at the Royal Bank of Scotland, one of the leading investment banks, which introduced me to the world of banking. I mainly worked with clients from transport, energy, and infrastructure sectors. After the internship I was on the payroll. It has been seven years since then and I am still working at RBS (last year it was rebranded as NatWest) – first as an analyst, then promoted to an associate, and two years ago I was appointed Vice-President. At this level, I am in charge of customer relationship management. I have full knowledge of the levels of their business with the bank – how many liabilities, loans, lines of credit and their refinancing dates. I also know what bank products they are

bank, the main transactions are carried out in the UK, but the bank has branches in eleven European countries, with the French branch being among the leading ones. Our team has a good track record, always bringing profit. As for the whole RBS group, it was only last year that it broke even.

Working “under the crown” has its advantages – you will be bailed out in the event of a crisis. But crises have adverse effects on banks. When I was only starting work here, the Parisian office had about two hundred people, now there are fifteen. I stayed on, surviving three periods of redundancies in the bank and am among the longest working employees, a kind of veteran.

I see it as my victory when we sign up a major client and carry out an important structured transaction because I have to

forming two divisions – service (Accor Hotels) and property (AccorInvest). In order to get the new company off the ground they had to restructure the capital. разработать новую структуру капитала. We offered them optimal options for the new capital structure, and together with some other banks, were involved in the project financing deal. I will never forget being seven months pregnant and working until 11 pm, developing a rationale for our involvement in the project to submit it to the management. I am glad that I was heard and the project was successfully implemented.

The Sciences Po – MGIMO program gave a start to my career in France. Furthermore, I gained valuable knowledge in the sphere of finance, the degree from Sciences Po opens many doors here. The French society



using and what we can offer them.

Now my client portfolio includes major international French listed companies; for example, a big retail chain “Casino”, large exclusive holding companies like “LVMH”, “Kering”, as well as industrial groups “Saint Gobain” and “Veolia”.

RBS’s main shareholder is the UK government and the Crown. As it is a British

work really hard on these projects. This usually happens about twice a year. One of the most recent major transactions involved a big French hotel chain “Accor Hotels” (the first in Europe and sixth in the world) which has twenty-five brands (Ibis, Mercure, Pullman, Swissotel and others).

Not so long ago this hotelier launched a major company restructuring project,

The Sciences Po – MGIMO program gave a start to my career in France. Furthermore, I gained valuable knowledge in the sphere of finance, the degree from Sciences Po opens many doors here. But had it not been for MGIMO, I would not have enrolled on this program. MGIMO opened the door to Europe for me

and business are rather stratified, and without a degree from a leading university my chances for a good start would have been lower. I definitely wouldn’t have made it this high. Of course, had it not been for MGIMO, I would not have enrolled on this dual-degree Master program. The degree from our University opened the door to Europe for me. 🇫🇷



ERIC LELONG
(‘96)

Owner,
Bakery Briocherie Lelong
Tours, France

The well-known legend (in its Russian interpretation) has it that Queen Marie Antoinette upon learning that the peasants had no bread sniffed: “Let them eat cake”. But few are aware that in fact she said brioche, not cake.

Brioche is a pastry of French origin made of yeast dough. Brioches appeared thanks to Louis XIV of France. The king adored cakes and pastry. But when he was an elderly man his doctors prohibited him from eating sweets. And royal bakers created for him a special sort of bread which contained all the ingredients of a cake but in well-balanced proportions, which helped create a unique flavour and spongy, almost weightless, dough which melted in one’s mouth. As Eric Lelong, the proprietor of Briocherie Lelong, puts it: “This fusion of flavours is true alchemy!”

In 1907 Paul Lelong, Eric’s great grandfather, set up a bakery, which was closed during the war, as Rene Lelong, Eric’s grandfather, hated the idea of feeding German invaders. And only as late as the 1970s did the bakery started to produce exclusively brioches. This novelty was introduced by Serge Lelong, Eric’s father, who moved to the USA in the 1980s to expand the family business. Serge rented some premises for cake shops in New York.

Eric recalls: “I lived in that city for seven years, studied at school, explored its unusual life. In fact, I moved to New York from a French village, and the city opened my eyes to the world. There was such a diversity of cultures, traditions and languages there! I enjoyed keeping company with immigrants from different countries, began to study world history, geography and got interested in Russia, especially when I learnt that my grandmother was friends with a personal



aide-de-camp of Nicholas II of Russia, who often came to Paris. My great grandfather invested in Russian bonds – my family still keeps a couple of those bond certificates. With time my desire to go to study in Russia took shape.”

The dream came true by chance. In 1988 our bakery was visited by a delegation of deputies from Mossovet (Moscow City’s legislative body), who came to New York to familiarize themselves with the practices of small and medium enterprises. The guests liked the taste of brioches and suggested that Lelong Senior should come to Moscow to open a bakery in the Arbat, in the same way as MacDonald’s was about to do at that time with their first fast-food restaurant at Pushkinskaya Square.

“At first we agreed, but then we encountered certain difficulties: Soviet Law was not tailored for small business. So we abandoned that project, but I stayed in Moscow. It was in late 1990. I rented a room in a prestigious block of flats in Aleksey Tolstoy Street; the flat belonged to an ex-member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and I had come to know him via getting acquainted with his grandson by chance.

At that time I wanted to enter a Moscow university, but I didn’t know which one. I chose MGIMO out of all academic institutions because my top priority was to get a first-class education and to learn the Russian language.”



Brioches appeared thanks to Louis XIV of France. The king adored cakes and pastry. But when he was an elderly man his doctors prohibited him from eating sweets

Lelong signed a contract with MGIMO in November 1990 and became a freshman. “Following the advice of Ivan Tyulin, the First Vice-Rector of MGIMO, I opted for International Law School. It was the time of the Soviet Union: the textbooks were quite old, but the lecturers were the best; for instance, Vitaly Kabatov, a hero, WWII veteran, who taught Roman law. At the same time I was actively studying Russian, and in a year was fluent in it. As a man from a capitalist state I did not feel uncomfortable about the fact that MGIMO was, as it used to be said, an ideological academic institution; I enjoyed the

intellectual atmosphere of the university. a MGIMO student ID card meant a lot, and as a foreigner I felt at ease at those hard times and knew that I would get help if needed.” Eric Lelong graduated from MGIMO in 1996 having defended a thesis on the Constitution of the Fifth Republic, and became one of the first Frenchman to have graduated from MGIMO. “Knowledge that I acquired at MGIMO helped me understand laws, I learnt to read them, including Russian ones. But by and large

I was well-versed in comparative legal studies; I knew how legal systems of different countries correlated.” Having returned to France, Eric thought of setting up his own business. He had been interested in golf since childhood, and this hobby prompted him to think about establishing a company dealing with modernization of golf carts. His company specializes in adjustment of electric carts to suit various fields of application. “We buy the base and modify it so as to make it fit for any kind of activity.” However, Eric considers bakery to be his main business. He hopes to return to Russia one day; not for nothing did he get his education there. “I appreciate those five years of studies and intellectually rich life at MGIMO, he says. - Apart from knowledge per se, it enriched me spiritually. You are unlikely to find this in American universities, and if Russia lags behind the US and France in some spheres, in terms of this it is surely ahead of them.”

YURI VIROBYAN ('76)

Yuri Virobyan – a MGIMO graduate, now in charge of supplying gas to France as president of Gazprom Marketing & Trading France. The company sells gas on a daily basis to customers on the French market (except for household consumption), including town-halls, schools, hotels, restaurants, big plants and factories. The “Gazprom” Champs Elysees office occupies one floor in a luxury building with a magnificent view of the Arc de Triomphe from the office balcony. However, when in the early 80s this young MGIMO graduate was fulfilling the

formalities for his first posting abroad in France, he only had a fifty-fifty chance of approval. “I had help from a wonderful person, says Virobyan, the CEO of “Soyuzgazexport” exporting company Yuri Baranovskiy, who became my first mentor.” As I called on him before leaving for France, I remember him saying this: “You are going to an excellent country where you’ll get to know the meaning of the European culture! You are still young, so do not restrain yourself, live a full life – visit museums, go to restaurants, to the cinema and to shops. Spend your money without regret, for one day you will be telling your grandchildren about those three or four years you spent there!” Indeed, I must say I was lucky in having many such mentors. They have shared

their knowledge, human warmth and wisdom with me for the whole of my professional career. I entered MGIMO in 1970 and was assigned Arabic as main foreign language though I would have preferred to learn English. When I complained to the Dean, he said, “The country needs professionals fluent in Arabic!” Later it turned out that the Ministry of Defense had a shortage of military interpreters, therefore, all the boys who had completed a secondary school intensive French course were assembled in the Arabic group. Ours was an efficient group of 19 boys who all studied well – more for fun’s sake than for career purposes. We would often compete with each other; it was a matter of principle to be at the top of your class.

We all studied well in MGIMO – more for fun’s sake than for career purposes. We would often compete with each other; it was a matter of principle to be at the top of your class

As we completed our fourth year of study, we were approached by some MoD officials with a proposal to either volunteer for a one-year posting abroad or serve two years upon graduation. We were sent to different parts of the Arab world. I personally was posted to the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen, a country no longer in existence. The country then was at war with North Yemen and Saudi Arabia. We arrived twelve months after the British had left South Yemen, and were housed in the British officers’ former billets. The living conditions were good, with comfortable rooms and a big hall for playing billiards. The local people were friendly: they perceived the USSR



as having come to assist in building socialism. The job was not without some risk, though. The two colonels for whom I served as interpreter were concerned about my safety and used to seat me at the back of their jeep to give me a better chance of staying alive in case of an explosion. That was tough schooling, but, upon return, we resumed our academic studies as mature adults. Upon graduation, I found myself employed in the gas sector. Here is how it came about. I had been sending letters of application to key foreign trade organizations and soon received a positive

In 1978, I was given a job in a newly-formed structure “Soyuzgazexport”, which dealt with the rapidly growing gas industry which needed some young personnel. It appears that for over 40 years, I have been involved in the export of natural gas

answer from “Soyuzneftexport,” a Soviet-era oil exporter. I was given a job in a newly-formed structure dealing with the rapidly growing gas industry which needed some young personnel. My new employer was named “Soyuzgazexport.” It appears that for over 40 years, since 1978, I have been involved in the export of natural gas. Then followed the above-mentioned posting to the Soviet trade mission in Paris where my boss was Konstantin Bakhtov whom I also consider to be one of my mentors. Bakhtov was a living legend, known as the man who organized the evacuation of the mission personnel from France during World War II. He was a tough man and a hard-driving executive, but

most importantly, he would stand firmly behind each of the employees who might need his support.

Initially we were not on the best of terms. Once he summoned me to his office and said, “One of our partner companies that you personally deal with had an anti-Soviet – biased newspaper article published, which is politically unacceptable to us. It is inadmissible behavior for a partner company. Your task will be to visit them and insist on a retraction.”

Yet the company officials told me that there would be no retraction, as the article in question did not reflect the company’s attitude and they had never said anything inappropriate concerning the USSR.

As to the passage in it that caused our displeasure, it was not an exact quotation of their words, but an interpretation by the journalist.

As I reported the situation back to Bakhtov, he said, “I see you have failed to fulfill your assignment. You are free for the moment, but I must decide what I should do about you.” One week passed, quite uneventfully. Suddenly, on the day of our regular staff meeting the events took a turn for the worse. After everyone had reported on their particular area of responsibility, Bakhtov addressed the meeting with these words: “I would now like Virobyan to report to us how he fulfilled the task assigned to him.”

Everyone saw that he meant to reprimand me publically there and then. So I rose to sum up the situation, concluding: “We have no legal grounds to insist on a retraction by our partner company. They are not in a position to control that “antisovetchick” of a journalist, and neither are we. What’s more, we have excellent partner relations with this company, they have been buying our gas for 15 years now.”

In dead silence, Bakhtov said: “Thank you, you may sit down.” After that incident, there was a complete turnaround in our relations. The trade representative was a tough executive but when faced with well-founded and logical reasoning he would accept it and show respect for his opponent.

To put a final touch to the portrait of my boss, I cannot help but mention one more, this time an amusing episode, which happened soon after President Gorbachev introduced his “dry law” prohibiting the production and sale of alcoholic drinks. The matter was that our mission shop in Paris had stocked a supply of affordably priced excellent French wines (twice below the current city prices!); after all, we used to purchase large consignments of wine for the shop at a considerable diplomatic discount.

Together with other colleagues I had been buying goods for the shop, my personal responsibility being the purchase of furs and perfume, a job much aided by a MGIMO course of commodity research and merchandizing. The course covered a wide range of goods and products, including a study of furs. I remember one exercise in which the students were supposed to determine what animal a particular skin belonged to and the price it might fetch at this or that market.

However, back to the amusing episode I meant to describe. One day Bakhtov summons the shop manager and myself to his office and says these words: “Find one more person to form a commission to supervise the destruction of alcoholic drinks. The bottles must be broken, their contents poured down the drain and the proceedings recorded in an official report to be signed by the three of you.” He then

looks at us while we stare back at him with wide-open eyes, and adds, “Choosing you was no accident, I trust you, you see.” The message was clear enough. So on our proceedings record we showed that all the bottles had been broken, but then, on the quiet, gave away the bottles to the mission employees while swearing them to secrecy. As to the Trade Representative, he was quite pleased how the task had been completed.

I returned to Moscow in 1988, at the peak of the Soviet “perestroika.” During the attempted anti-democracy coup of 1991, I was among those who went to defend the Russian parliament. This is how

The Gazprom’s position in the French market is quite stable, as our gas has a competitive edge over the American liquefied one. No politician could ever make a French private company buy gas more expensively

I happened to be there. Through word of mouth, I and my deputy (I was then one of “Soyuzgazexport” executives) learned that people were gathering in front of the parliament building, so we decided to join them. We asked the head of the company to excuse us for the rest of the working day for, we said, “We are going to defend the Russian parliament!” His answer was: “Who authorized you to go?” We insisted we wanted to save the democracy, to which we heard the following: “That’s beside the point, if you leave before the working day is over you will be disciplined.”

We went anyway, and the three of us (my wife insisted on joining), and stayed there the whole night. Someone brought some food, but the whole situation was far from clear. From time to time, we would hear of tanks coming close and of someone having



been killed, the atmosphere was generally tense.

When ultimately the democratic forces prevailed, the leaders addressed the crowd from the parliament’s balcony thanking everyone and asking to give the names of those employers who had tried to impede the exercise of civil duty by their employees. The leaders’ words were broadcast on television. On the next day, our boss praised us as “heroes of Russia,” though we had no intention to name anyone.

The country entered a new, tumultuous, period of its development. In 1992 some of my former trade mission colleagues (also MGIMO graduates), then working in a joint Soviet-French company offered me a post of that company representative in France. Upon arrival, though, I found that things proved to be much different from what I had expected. For several years, my efforts produced more loss than profit, which depressed me a lot. I was ready to try almost anything. After all, MGIMO training was sufficient to attempt any kind of business.

Once again, I relied on the skills and knowledge received in the commodity research and merchandizing classroom in MGIMO, where among other commodities we also focused on alcohol. I decided to start a business exporting “Royal” alcohol from Belgium to Russia, but soon gave it up as a bad idea. The matter was, I had been told by someone that in Russia “babushkas” were selling in makeshift street markets some suspicious-looking stuff in bottles labelled “Royal.” People might get poisoned, and I would be held accountable and sent to prison. So I switched on to cigarettes, but failed just as miserably. This time I got a phone call from Moscow with information that a container of cigarettes I shipped to Russia had been sold on to other people, but later was arrested by the authorities, whereas those “other people” who turned out to be real bandits now were going to contact me in France in order to “settle the score.”

For a change, I thought I might try exporting metals and textiles from Russia. a funny thing happened with textiles, though. One American customer wanted us

to visit a factory outside Moscow where we had placed an important order for him. After a welcoming dinner at a local restaurant, we were taken to the factory only to discover that despite our order for a supply of black cloth, we were being offered green one instead. Worse, rather than packaging the material in bolts as required, they were folding it. We protested to the factory manager saying the order was not ours. He insisted it was, but then let it slip that an Italian customer had said the black cloth was no longer fashionable but the green one was. As to folding the cloth for shipment, it was easier than rolling it in bolts. We produced the contract, but he waved it aside just telling us to take what was available.

Those years in MGIMO were an excellent school of life for me. The key lesson was that there was a way out of any situation. Moreover, one must trust people, the way my colleagues trusted me as their fellow-graduate of MGIMO, our alma mater!

Later I learned how the Russian economy was then functioning. Buyers would arrive with briefcases full of cash, walk straight into a workshop, point a finger and say: “Just pack this for me”. This means our order must have been snatched by someone before us.

When I called the American customer to explain the situation, he said our company was black-listed from now on and he would never do business with us again. As to the cloth the factory sold us, he said it was of a seasonal kind, and he had no need for it then. He offered to buy it from us for 20 percent of the price we actually paid. We lost a lot of money as a result. After that I turned to the petrochemical sector, familiar

to me from my time at “Soyuzgazexport”. This time luck was on my side and my business expanded. Those years were an excellent school of life for me. The key lesson was that there was a way out of any situation. Moreover, one must trust people, the way my colleagues trusted me as their fellow-graduate of MGIMO, our alma mater!

Later, in 2003, when “Soyuzgazexport” was replaced by “Gazprom”, and the latter wanted to take a closer look at the French gas market, some Gazprom officials offered me a job of opening and heading its office in Paris. For three years, the office had functioned as a representative one engaged in the local market research, before it became clear that the market was getting more competitive offering us an opportunity to sell gas to the end user. Since 2007, therefore, we, as part of Gazprom, have been selling gas to France.

Business is going well, even despite the sanctions against Russia. Yet the sanctions do force us to adjust our policy. Thus in order to minimize the risks we try to find a way to implement some of our projects in Russia. We are in search of enterprises in Russia for Gazprom to invest into production of more expensive, value-added products for export to Europe. Gazprom expands cooperation with China, India and Japan. After all, French companies appear to be even more seriously hit by sanctions than ours. Indeed, many Russian market-oriented French enterprisers are out of business now. For example, I had never known before that France previously exported large amounts of apples to Russia, but now many producers have to chop down their orchards as the Russian market is closed for them.

Our position in the French market is quite stable, as our gas has a competitive edge over the American liquefied one. No politician could ever make a French private company buy gas more expensively. We, for our part, keep telling our French partners the following: “You would like to ensure Europe’s energy security through a steady supply of gas, wouldn’t you? It is precisely for that purpose that we are constructing the Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline which will cut down the number of transit countries while optimizing transportation costs.”



ALEXANDER KUZNETSOV: “IF IN DOUBT, ACT IN THE INTEREST OF THE STATE”

Alexander Kuznetsov (74), Russian Ambassador to UNESCO, came to France for the first time when he was transferred from the Soviet Embassy in Washington in 1990. At first the job was not easy for him. At MGIMO he studied only Spanish and lacked the practice of spoken French. But on the very first day the Ambassador Yuri Dubinin put him in charge of a new Soviet-French treaty, which was to lay the foundation for the relations between the USSR and France. “We worked on the treaty from morning till night for several weeks,” recalls Kuznetsov. “When the talks were over, I suddenly felt that I was in my element in the Embassy.”

Kuznetsov next came to France in 1995 as the deputy Russian Ambassador to UNESCO. He worked there for five years, becoming a diplomat who specialized in education, science and culture. The third posting to Paris happened in 2016 when he returned to become the head of the Russian mission to UNESCO. “As my grandmother liked to say, the circle was closed”, Kuznetsov smiles. Thanks to my previous experience in UNESCO, I knew the organisation quite well. I met a lot of colleagues whom I had known for more than ten years. I know many UNESCO partners in Russia, including the ones in the regions. They are our main support in developing cooperation with UNESCO in education, science and culture as well as in enhancing what the Russian diplomats of the 19th century called “the charm of the Russian name.”

The previous year saw an extraordinary intensification of Russian-French relations, thanks to the Trianon Dialogue, launched by the presidents of Russia and France. “UNESCO is an international organization, and strictly speaking the development of bilateral Russian-French relations is not the responsibility of the mission. This is a prerogative of our embassy in Paris. However, it’s hard to draw a clear line, as UNESCO being the main humanitarian forum of the UN system serves as one of the most important international platforms for spreading the Russian language and culture, including within France. We try to maintain this tradition. With the support of UNESCO friends and partners, we organise in our country or in the HQ of the organisation numerous exhibitions, concerts, presentations, and so forth. Sometimes they become remarkable

events not only for UNESCO, but in the cultural life in Paris. For instances, the recent concert of the famous Igor Moiseyev Ensemble or the wonderful performance of multinational student group from Moscow People’s Friendship University.”

Alexander Kuznetsov has had quite a diverse career: he is not only a diplomat, but also a political scientist. He believes that the most fruitful period in his career

UNESCO is the main humanitarian forum of the UN system, which serves as one of the most important international platforms for spreading the Russian language and culture, including within France

was the one when he worked in Madrid in 2005-2012 in the capacity of Russian Ambassador: “It was a very opportune moment for developing Russian-Spanish relations. We had a very close political dialogue at the highest level, the turnover was increasing with economic cooperation expanding. Moreover, we organised for the first time a Year of Russia in Spain and a Year of Spain in Russia. It meant hundreds of various events in both countries.

I had my own priorities. One of them was developing cooperation between universities. I was constantly visiting Spanish universities, talking to rectors and professors, giving lectures for the students. As a result a few agreements of cooperation

were signed with our universities, a meeting of Russian and Spanish rectors with participation of the heads of states took place. By the way, MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov was among them. The agreements that were signed between MGIMO and Spanish universities in these years are still in place.”

In 2001 Kuznetsov became the Director of the Foreign Policy Planning Department. “It was an extremely interesting work under the immediate guidance of the Minister for Foreign Affairs Igor Ivanov at first, and then under Sergey Lavrov. Later, it allowed me to see the bigger picture of Russian foreign policy rather than just a partial one.”

After the posting in Spain, Kuznetsov was offered to lead the MFA Department of History and Records. “At first I didn’t quite understand what this job was about. I imagined myself being an old keeper of records. In fact, it is an extremely fascinating job. Our department managed to put into practice quite a lot of projects. I want to specifically mention two books: the collection of documents entitled Russian MFA in the years of WWI published on the occasion of 100 Anniversary of the beginning of this war. The second one is Lev Urusov’s Diaries. 1914-1917. Duke Urusov was a diplomat, and he wrote his diaries during WWI and the 1917 revolution. He was one of the creators of the Olympic movement in Russia, one of the first Russian tennis champions as well as a member of the International Olympic Committee till his death. I found his diaries in the archives when I was writing my thesis. It’s surprising that no researcher had studied them before me. So, we introduced a new interesting source to the scientific world.”

In Alexander Kuznetsov’s career there were a lot of crises. “In such situations it’s for the Ambassador to take a decision, because he is responsible for everything and for everyone. In these cases I always remembered the advice of Yuri Dubinin: if in doubt, take a principled position, that is, act in accordance with the only right criterion - in the interest of our state. That’s why the most valuable experience for me is the ability to take responsibility.”

TATIANA DOVGALENKO ('96)

Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to UNESCO Paris

I came up with the idea of becoming a diplomat at the age of 10. I remember hearing this word from my mother when we lived in Urgench, Uzbekistan (my father got a place there upon graduation from university). My mother was talking to her friend in the courtyard in front of our house; they were discussing

the study options for the friend's daughter who was in high school at that time. When my mum mentioned MGIMO, I asked what kind of university it was. And she replied: "Future diplomats get trained there." Then she explained to me in plain language what that profession was about. I immediately made a statement: "I'm going to be a diplomat."

When I was in high school, my parents understood that I meant it, and they didn't try to talk me out of it. I arrived in Moscow, applied to the university, passed exams and got enrolled!

It was easy to study. Now I regret only one thing, namely that I didn't study another language, Spanish (I studied

French and English); "those in the know" talked me out of it, saying that the third year of studies was the most difficult, and that I might not pull it off. And how wrong I was to take their advice!

My first assignment from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to Paris. I worked in the culture group, mastered the basics of independent work, negotiating and high-level interpreting, and got insight into operation of international organizations: during the second half of my assignment, I worked on tasks in the economic sphere and attended OECD. Communication with Russian and French cultural figures enriched me immensely. I got acquainted with the Russian cultural sphere within France thanks to my connections with representatives of the Russian emigres.

The second assignment was to our permanent mission to the OSCE in Vienna. I arrived there in 2005. That was an excellent experience of multilateral diplomacy. At first, I dealt with the so-called frozen conflicts on the territory of the CIS. Then I started working on the program and budget of this Organization, which took up a lion's share of my time. The dossier seems to be technical only at first glance. In fact, through money you can see a lot, including the Organization's priorities and goals that it is aiming to achieve. The Advisory Committee on Management and Finance did not only sharpen my negotiation skills (sometimes I had to persuade the colleagues to look at things from our perspective), but it also taught me to remain on friendly terms with people with whom I argued in public.

At the head office of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation I had a home base, as it were – the Department of European Cooperation (DEC). I worked there in between all my assignments abroad. The DEC supervises Russia's relations with the EU, NATO, OSCE and the Council of Europe. In other words, the Department is always at the cutting edge and at the core of Russian foreign policy.

Despite the fact that in 2014 the EU officially froze interaction mechanisms because of sanctions against Russia (and





we had as many as 18 dialogues in different fields, including transport, power industry, and agriculture), the scope of work didn't narrow. In terms of preparation of materials we dealt with a larger number of statements to the press, interviews, articles, and public addresses.

In December 2016 I came to Paris to occupy the position of Russia's Deputy Permanent Representative to UNESCO. I had never dealt with UN topics closely, but always considered polyvalence and ability to work in different fields to be an indispensable quality of a career diplomat, and this is what I like about my profession. Besides, the work in UNESCO quite seamlessly integrated with my previous work experience in an international organization and development of humanitarian relations. I am speaking not only about the culture group in Paris, but also about the establishment of the so-called fourth Common Space of Russia-EU partnership. By the way, European Studies Institute at MGIMO is one of its flagship projects.


UNESCO comprises 195 member-states. It is the whole world sitting at one round table, such a multilingual and multiethnic family

The UNESCO brand is well-known worldwide due to its World Cultural and Natural Heritage Sites, though the agenda of this Organization is much broader. Together with the promotion of cultural, educational and scientific cooperation, it includes such interesting and important topics as freedom of the press, safety of journalists, Internet governance, bioethics, artificial intelligence, hydrology, biodiversity and studies of the World's Oceans.

UNESCO comprises 195 member-states. It is the whole world sitting at

one round table, such a multilingual and multiethnic family.

Cooperation in the humanitarian field does indeed get politicized because of the complicated international situation. But UNESCO still manages to promote a truly unifying agenda. It is of note, for instance, that one and the same list of co-sponsors of the resolution to name the year 2019 the International Year of the Periodic Table of Elements, which we proposed, included both the USA and Syria.

Sometimes I recall Urgench, the city where I first heard about MGIMO; the city of my childhood, probably, the best city in the world for me. I liked the cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city best of all – I used to play with children from Tatar, Jewish, Korean, Uzbek and other backgrounds. And, by the way, I made my first speech at the school English-speaking club about the ancient Uzbek city of Khiva, a museum city in the open air, and the first site in Uzbekistan to be inscribed in the World Heritage List of UNESCO. 



Alexey Kovalenko-Narochnitsky and Dmitry Knyazhinsky

ALEXEY KOVALENKO-NAROCHNITSKY ('2000)

Russia's Senior Advisor
Permanent Delegation to UNESCO
Paris

I come from a family of MGIMO alumni and am very proud of it. My grandfather, Alexey Narochnitsky, Fellow of the Russian Academy of Science, lectured at MGIMO between 1944 and 1946; he gave a 'History of Foreign Policy' course to would-be experts in the new, post-war world. I have very fond memories of my student years. But the program was very intense, especially given the heavy workload in languages, with English and French as my first and second foreign languages, respectively. I still remember how delighted I was when, in my third year, I was able to understand the talk given by President of France Jaques Chirac at MGIMO in the original, without any translation. Thanks to our French language tutors!

In the 90's, the spirit of commerce in Russia quickly replaced the old, idealistic Soviet values. Without a doubt, it was our parents as well as lecturers who had to bear the burden of that period. Years later I realized that MGIMO conditions allowed us students then to grow up and develop in a calm, enjoyable environment of outstanding intellectuals. Torkunov, our Rector, and Tulin, our Dean, literally saved the University from the decline that seriously affected many Russian academic institutions at the time. Contrary to the prevailing tendency of the time to deny the importance of fundamental academic knowledge, they strengthened and modernized the university, at the same time retaining the best and most qualified academic staff. I was lucky to be taught by many great experts who were dedicated to their subjects. The knowledge I gained came in very useful when I was plunged into the difficult realities of Russian

-American relations during my work at the RF Foreign Ministry Department for North America and later, when I was posted to the US. My first mission, however, happened to be in Scotland, a fascinating place that has a kindred spirit with Russia, where I was working in the Russian General Consulate in Edinburgh. Besides standard consular activity, I was

involved in promoting friendly relations and economic cooperation between the Russian regions and this vital part of Great Britain. In particular, I remember finding and awarding Scottish WWII veterans who took part in the Arctic Convoys. Sailing from Scotland, they delivered arms, raw materials and food supplies to the northern ports of the Soviet Union. For years the Soviet, and then Russian,



government has been awarding medals to British convoy veterans, and I was honoured to be involved in organizing several ceremonies. In 2006-2009, I was transferred from Edinburgh to the Russian Embassy in London, I was vice consul in the visa department. We were the first Russian institution based abroad to introduce the visa centre system, which enhanced the application processing capacity of consulates and embassies. I remember giving a bottle of 'Soviet Champagne' to a surprised English tourist who happened to be the 100th visa applicant for 2007. Returning to the Department for North America, I witnessed, and contributed to reset of Russian-American relations after years of crisis. Many people remember the episode when Hilary Clinton presented Sergey Lavrov with a big red button as a symbol of American aspiration for such a reset. However, for some reason the

I am grateful to my French language tutors for the unforgettable moments of delight when, in my third year at university, I was able to understand the talk given by President of France Jaques Chirac in the original, without any translation.

English inscription on the button read as 'overload'. Perhaps, that is why the sides did not achieve complete trust in end. And yet, the next few years, up until almost 2012, there was a massive boost in bilateral relations practically in every sphere. Soon, I was posted to the west coast of the US to work at the RF General Consulate in San Francisco. It was there that I fully realized how deep



the connections are between our two nations. There is a 19th century Russian fortress, Fort Ross, 80 km away from San Francisco. In 2012 our General Consulate was involved in organizing celebrations dedicated to the 200th Anniversary of the Fortress. One of the initiatives included the launch of 'Dialogue Fort Ross' Forum, one of the few active top-level discussion frameworks for business, science, and culture dignitaries. Work in the Russian Permanent Delegation to UNESCO in Paris is different from the previous activity in the bilateral domain, and is much better for that. Our Permanent Representative aims to involve Russia in all UNESCO activities and initiatives. However, success in this mission hinges on our everyday activity – processing huge volumes of paperwork, effectively liaising with all our agencies, and constant networking and building partnerships with friendly states. MGIMO gave us very solid grounding, first of all in terms of excellent language skills and vast general and cross-cultural knowledge, which enabled us to analyse complex problems from both broad and specific perspectives. ☑

DMITRY KNYAZHINSKY ('80)

Russia's Senior Counsellor,
Russia's Permanent Delegation to UNESCO

I grew up in a family of international relations scholars. My parents also studied at the School of International Relations at MGIMO. My father specialized in Western European integration; my mother was an orientalist, an Indianist. Most friends of the family were MGIMO graduates too; they were journalists, diplomats, academics, so my choice of university was predetermined. I was admitted to MGIMO in 1975 and was taught by the professors who used to teach my parents. I was aiming for a career at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, although my parents advised against this saying “this is a very different environment, an atmosphere of bureaucracy”. But I was enthralled by the romanticism of travel. I graduated from MGIMO in 1980 and

was offered a position at the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR. For the first 10 years, I tried different tracks of diplomatic service. As a junior diplomat, I accompanied delegations on short-term trips to sessions of the General Assembly and other organs of the UN, and to different negotiations. Because I had an inclination for the humanities, I enjoyed participation in forums where states strive to jointly find a solution to common global problems, in particular, in the areas of environmental protection, climate, and biodiversity.

These are the problems I set out to address in 1990 when I started working for the Permanent Mission of the Russian

Because I had an inclination for the humanities, I enjoyed participation in forums where states strive to jointly find a solution to common global problems

Federation to the UN Office and other international organizations in Nairobi. I worked for 3 years there, exploring Kenya, a wonderful country, and satisfied my curiosity about Africa. On returning, I went to work for the Department for Humanitarian Cooperation and Human Rights. The early 1990s, a time shortly after the collapse of the Soviet Union, was a difficult period. But we lived in a state of euphoria of a kind, in the hope of building a new democratic Russia, developing an equal partnership with the world. Many of those who had been in the Foreign Ministry became businessmen, but I was not really attracted by such prospects.

At that time the Ministry launched a new track, in particular, international cooperation on the problems of migration and refugees, which I engaged in with



great enthusiasm. On several occasions, I met with my former groupmate, Vladimir Kalamanov, the then head of the Federal Migration Service of Russia.

In 1999, I was sent to the Permanent Mission of Russia to the UN in New York as Counsellor for 4 years where I was lucky to work under incumbent Russian Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov. While working at the Permanent Delegation, I would often recall the simulation “The UN Model” that we had at MGIMO, and that helped me in my work for this vital international

organization, especially when dealing with the social and humanitarian agenda of the Third Committee.

In 2004, I came back to my department and started to work as the director of the Department of Migration. But changes were just around the corner: Kalamanov was appointed Permanent Representative to UNESCO, and in 2006 I arrived in Paris in the capacity of a Senior Counsellor, leader of the group with a responsibility for cultural issues of the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation

to UNESCO, which was effectively a conclusion to my 15 year service in the area of migration.

I’m in my second stint in Paris; on returning here in 2016, I have been dealing with questions of protection of world heritage, both cultural and natural. On a number of occasions, I have taken part in the meetings of the World Heritage Committee held in many different countries.

The Permanent Delegation actively promotes the inclusion of Russian sites to the UNESCO World Heritage List. Recently, two such sites were added to

While working New York, I would often recall the simulation “The UN Model” that we had at MGIMO, and that helped me in my work for this vital international organization

the List, namely, the Landscapes of Dauria, a sanctuary, and the Assumption Cathedral and Monastery of the town-island of Sviyazhsk, an ancient site of Slavonic culture. a nomination proposal is being drafted for the Sites of Ancient Pskov. But to make nomination proposals is not an end in itself. The ultimate goal to maintain the heritage that is already on the List. Our Permanent Delegation is an important link in the cooperation between Russian and UNESCO in implementing our international commitments under the 1972 World Heritage Convention. 





Dmitry Darchenkov and Anna Chirkova

DMITRY DARCHENKOV (‘93)

*Counsellor
Russia's Permanent Delegation to
UNESCO
Paris*

In high school, I became truly fascinated with Japan, absorbed by the books written by popular international journalists, in particular, “A Sakura Twig” by Vsevolod Ovchinnikov and “The Fifteenth Stone of Ryoanji” by Vladimir Tsvetov. However, at the School of International Relations, where I was admitted, I did not study Japanese; I was to learn Burmese and English. But I was very lucky; the teachers of languages and orientalists that taught Cultural Studies were very good, and I became enchanted with the mystery of the Orient and the

I was very lucky, the teachers of languages and orientalists that taught Cultural Studies were very good, and I became enchanted with the mystery of the Orient and the secrets of Burma

secrets of Burma. As a fifth-year student, I went there for an internship, and these 9 months changed me completely. I travelled extensively through the country. On graduation from MGIMO in 1993, I was not invited to work for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The country simply did not need a graduate specializing in Burmese at that difficult time in our country’s history. That is why I did a PhD, and upon defending the thesis, ended up in show business. I worked at casting agencies, as a producer at Gorky Film Studio, where

I learned to develop business plans for films. I did quite well. The skills developed while studying at MGIMO helped me to delve deeply into any topic and follow through with my plans. Such qualities as self-organization and discipline proved a useful asset at that time. In 1999, when the Eastern track of Russian foreign policy was revived, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs started to look for a Burma expert, and they remembered me. I was immediately sent to the Embassy, this time in Myanmar.

I did not forget the language, thanks to my teachers. I dealt with everything, bilateral and, especially, multilateral issues. The experience gained in this area proved very useful for work in UNESCO later. Five years later, I came back to Moscow and went on to work on the Indian track. The subject matter was well-known to me, because India and Myanmar are neighbouring countries. In 2006, I was sent to South Korea. This is a different facet of Asia. Whereas Myanmar is the least developed country of the region, South




Korea is one of its most developed. There I dealt with multilateral diplomacy and foreign policy. So I was able to learn about this part of Asia, but in 2009 I was again in Myanmar; there was a vacancy for the position of the Deputy Ambassador.

Interestingly, the accession of Crimea did not have a direct bearing on our relations with Myanmar. Myanmar itself has always been under US sanctions because of its military regime. Although



in 2012 the country set itself on the path of democratization, sanctions are still in force.

In 2016, I came to Paris. I deal with an interesting issue, in particular, administrative and budgetary activities of UNESCO; I study everything that is connected with the financial and personnel policy of the Organization. Looking into financial programs and administration processes is like watching the life of the organization unfold before your eyes. This can be fascinating at times, because like in a communal flat, there are its own intrigues and dramatic relations. 

Looking into UNESCO's financial programs and administration processes is like watching the life of a communal flat, with its own intrigues and dramatic relations

ANNA CHIRKOVA
(‘11)
*Third Secretary
Russia's Permanent Delegation
to UNESCO
Paris*

My parents kept telling me since my childhood that I was to study at MGIMO. They were quite successful in selling me this idea: I became committed to entering this university,

got enrolled in the undergraduate program and had individual classes with teachers. I remember the ineffable feelings when, after the entrance exams, I listened to someone from the credentials committee reading the names of successful candidates aloud and heard my name amongst them!

However, it was only the beginning of a fascinating and arduous way to knowledge. The unparalleled university experience transformed me completely. There is a lot to recall that happened to me at MGIMO: successes and failures, interesting lectures and exiting seminars, first loves and intimate friendship. There were disappointments of course, there is no escaping these, but no doubt the positive moments far outnumbered the latter.

One of the main strengths of our university is language training. I majored in English, took up French as my second language and Greek as the third one.

MGIMO is a true talent pool of experts in international relations. I enjoyed studying many subjects in the field of international relations, and sometimes I didn't even expect that this or that topic could be so captivating. For instance, the disarmament issue or the courses of I. Ahtamzyan, who was my scientific supervisor later on when I worked on my Bachelor's and Master's theses.

I remember that when I was trying to get enrolled in a Master's course I didn't expect to learn anything new there, frankly speaking, and was even thinking of changing my specialization, but as a result I eagerly spent long nights over the piles of compulsory articles on political science.

The negotiations model related to the Afghan agenda held at the Institute for U.S. and Canadian Studies also stuck in my memory. My fellow students and I assumed the roles of representatives of Pakistan, and the transformation was so complete that the time flew by unnoticed, and that experience became



one of the most memorable moments of my studies.

MGIMO gave me a unique knowledge base, and most importantly, taught me to gain knowledge quickly and efficiently, as well as, to cope with difficulties. All this came in handy when I started working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. My first long-term posting was to Madagascar, a “mysterious country.” I had to get used to working in entirely new conditions and tackle diverse tasks. I was mainly dealing with cooperation in cultural, humanitarian fields and with protocol issues – the spheres I had underestimated during my studies.

M GIMO gave me a unique knowledge base, and most importantly, taught me to gain knowledge quickly and efficiently, as well as, to cope with difficulties

In three years’ time I returned to Moscow and was appointed to the Commission of the Russian Federation for UNESCO. This time I was to deal with scientific cooperation rather than cultural issues. I had been working in this sphere since then, now at the Permanent Delegation of the Russian Federation to UNESCO in Paris. Almost every day I see that the field of cultural and humanitarian cooperation subject to the UNESCO mandate is a crucial sphere of international relations, although rather underestimated.

My official duties give me an opportunity to meet famous scholars, cultural figures, heads of federal ministries and subjects of the Russian Federation quite often. I do appreciate this experience, and love my job for this reason as well. ☑





ILYA POLYAKOV: “MGIMO ALUMNI ARE ON THE SAME WAVELENGTH”

Last May Ilya Polyakov ('01) was appointed Chairman of Rosbank Management Board, one of the eleven TBTF banks of Russia. Rosbank is almost wholly owned by Societe Generale, an international financial group headquartered in Paris. The French group has a long history of activity in Russia, going as far back as the 19th century. The 1917 Revolution caused a long disruption to their activity but already in 1973 Societe Generale was among the first to return to Russia.

If viewed relative to human life, Ilya Polyakov's eighteen year history at Societe Generale is equally persistent. Graduating from MGIMO, he came as a trainee to the Parisian office of the group and since then has not worked a single day in another organization. “I am very loyal to the company”, he says.

Quite fortuitously, Ilya took the top post in Russia during a year of renewed rapidly developing relations between Russia and France. Official visits of heads of state stimulated broad cooperation, including a range of prospects even in the conservative banking sphere. Of equal importance was The Trianon Dialogue initiative introduced by the two heads of state. “We broadly support the idea of The Trianon Dialogue”, says Polyakov, “and are currently discussing with the MGIMO administration opportunities for cooperation within the Trianon format.”

Paris hosted an important event last November – a MGIMO–Sciences Po alumni meeting between graduates of the dual Master program, which also included other universities in France. Ilya was among the participants.

“In 2001 I took part in an exchange program between MGIMO and HEC. In the fifth year at the Faculty of International Economic Relations I was among several students who went to Paris for six months. It was one of the first exchange programs of its kind”.

Ilya had a good opportunity to compare the economic education in France and Russia. “Both systems have their strong points. At MGIMO, especially in the senior years when the students focus on their major, they cover a wide range of subjects related to macroeconomics and geopolitics, which gives them a very broad perspective. The knowledge they gain ranges from, say, the structure and functions of the IMF to the history of world currencies. I can rightly say this knowledge still helps me, especially now, when the impact of geopolitics on specific business-decisions and deals is so obvious. In this respect, I believe, MGIMO has a very strong advantage that can hardly be outranked by any other university in Europe.”

HEC is a business school where students have a very subject-focused, profession-specific education based on business case studies. That is why, Polyakov thinks, the optimal strategy would be



Coming from the same alma mater has an additional benefit of comfortable, relaxed cooperation because people are, in a way, on the same wavelength, sharing the same views and principles

to get a Bachelor's degree at MGIMO or another good Russian university and then spend the last year or two on an exchange program or doing a Masters at a European university. “This is the most solid combination which not only has the benefit of the best Russian and European education but also gives exposure to, and full immersion in, two cultures.

The advantage of exchange programs is that one gets to meet people from different countries, thus gaining an understanding of the way they think. This helps in practical situations, for instance,

to understand the logic of your opposing party during negotiations because you have known it since your student years.”

French logic and decision-making is very different from Russian patterns of thought. “They often take very long to come to a decision, placing great value on consensus. This has its advantages as

with problems for a foreigner. “Back in 2001, I could not even fathom that Societe Generale would develop such close ties with Russia. After all, in terms of market presence, today Russia is the second largest market after France by number of employees. Back then I was simply interested in a career in the head office of

BSGV (“Bank Societe Generale Vostok”). It was a bonus for me, the bank was interested in Russia, it had joint projects and I was progressing rather quickly up the ladder. With time, I was put in charge of the Russian arm of the business. Societe Generale at the time was working with Russia’s major companies. For example,



very often it leads to weighted balanced solutions with a wide spectrum of views. On the other hand, such an approach is very time-consuming; there is even a saying “French decision-making,” that is to say, delaying a decision. The Russian approach is very different: a quick decision and there you go. Such a way is often effective but a quick decision has the potential danger of some points being overlooked. It is wiser to combine the two approaches: reacting quickly whilst also taking into account multiple perspectives.”

The program gave Ilya a good start. “The exchange program included an internship which, for me, was at Societe Generale. After completing the internship I was offered a job there and have been with the group ever since.”

A conservative view holds that career progression in a French bank is fraught

MGIMO students cover a wide range of subjects, which gives them a very broad perspective. In this respect, I believe, MGIMO has a very strong advantage and can hardly be outranked by any other university in Europe

one of the largest international financial organizations, keeping my links with the motherland at the same time, because the group had a Russian presence through

we became one of the leading banks that first consulted and then financed “Gazprom” and its partners undertaking the “Nord Stream 1” project. We also worked a lot with “Nornikel”, world’s largest producer of nickel and palladium, raising syndicated loans, issuing Eurobonds, consulting on ratings.”

Incidentally, one of “Nornikel’s” owners is “Interros Holding” linked with a MGIMO alumni Vladimir Potanin. At the same time, he used to own Rosbank which was later bought by Societe Generale. It created an interesting precedent: one MGIMO alumni, so to say, “inherited” bank management from another, Potanin, whom incidentally, graduated from the same faculty, only twenty years earlier. MGIMO alumni of different generations always have a lot in common.

“I agree, although this has no bearing on key decision-making. Coming from

the same alma mater has an additional benefit of comfortable, relaxed cooperation because people are, in a way, on the same wavelength, sharing the same views and principles instilled in them during student years.”

Shortly afterwards, the management board of Societe Generale’ Russian Block was restructured and its new head, Didier Hauguel, who is now Chairman of Rosbank Board of Directors, began to reshuffle his team. It was his idea that Ilya should go to Russia and become Deputy CEO of Rosbank’s Corporate Block.

“At the age of 33 I headed the whole of the group’s Corporate Block in Russia. There were many objectives, including raising efficiency, enhancing synergy between local Rosbank and global Societe Generale teams. Our customer relationship management aimed to turn a customer’s visit to Rosbank into a proper Societe Generale experience, with access to all the group’s products. Consequently, by 2016 I was promoted to First Deputy Chairman CEO, my responsibilities were expanded to include, apart from the corporate sector, our corporate and investment banking business.”

In the meantime, 2014 was marked by a crisis in relations between Russia and the West. Sanctions followed, worsening the investment climate. “The situation was rather complex. Many banks withdrew from the Russian finance market or sharply reduced their activity. Not everyone could adapt to the new conditions, pressure from the investors who were against cooperation with Russia. The weakening of the ruble that year reduced the capital equity of many banks which resulted in their inability to credit clients and termination of contracts. On our part, we did not reduce the level of funding for our customers, at the same time being fully aware of risks and keeping in regular contact with the head office in Paris. It was then that our joint management decision-making proved that Societe Generale has serious plans for Russia, with a long-

term strategy, a balanced business model and assessment of geopolitical risks and their possible implications. We never fail to fulfill our obligations, which is what our customers value. Our customers’ confidence, on the other hand, helps us in our activity.”

Polyakov has a feeling that at last not only France but the whole of Europe is slowly realizing the need for a more independent policy, which is in their

The advantage of exchange programs is that one gets to meet people from different countries, thus gaining an understanding of the way they think. This helps in practical situations, for instance, to understand the logic of your opposing party during negotiations

own interests. This approach leads to much closer ties with Russia. Emmanuel Macron, an energetic young leader, clearly aspires to become a more influential political figure on the world arena, compared to the former president. De-facto, he took upon himself the role to unite Europe in its relations with Russia. “I think, last year it was demonstrated very clearly. His participation in the Economic Forum in St. Petersburg, where he was the only European leader of that standing, was a decisive strategic move. This was topped up by his two visits for the World Cup, which I am sure he enjoyed very much.

We hope that this emotional and political warming up through such initiatives as The Trianon Dialogue will precipitate certain outcomes, i.e. stimulate turnover of goods between our countries, new business projects which

French companies will be implementing in Russia. This can only be to our advantage because many of them are likely to work with our bank.”

Last May Ilya Polyakov was made Chairman of Rosbank Board of Directors. What goal was he set? “We developed the bank’s development strategy until 2020. It has specific financial parameter which we are to attain. We will keep developing further in order to enhance our position as the largest international bank in Russia and one of the leading private banks in the country.

Finally, we must boost Rosbanks development by strengthening our teams, improving transparency, and facilitating change. Today banks are increasingly turning into high-tech companies. More and more of our clients have replaced using local branches with online and mobile banking, and they expect more advanced solutions from us. Consequently, developing the digital element is one of our key growth strategies.

Cryptocurrency is not among our plans. We believe that it is too volatile and is not legally regulated, that is why a serious major bank with considerable savings should not yet engage with it. Having said that, the blockchain technology that is at the core of this currency has some prospects. We have several big projects where we would like to test it.”

“Rosbank” is a respected Russian brand, recognized from the late ‘90s. Societe Generale is rather lucky in this sense. “We never cease analyzing how to merge this historic Russian brand with its international dimension, which provides us with additional stability, power and expertise, making our position in the Russian market unique, in a way. We want to be a Russian bank at an international level. This status implies the most important attributes of the banking reputation, above all: stability and reliability. Last year Forbes called us the most reliable bank in Russia following a survey of 100 Russian banks.”

TEAM-MANAGER SAVIN

Ten years ago a student of the School of International Journalism at MGIMO, Evgeniy Savin, by chance got a job working for Guus Hiddink, the then Dutch coach of the Russian football team. Evgeniy considered it to be a temporary sideline. Nowadays Savin is an important sports official working simultaneously in two football structures: he is the head of Marketing and Communications Department of the Russian Premier League and, most importantly, the team manager of the Russian national football team.

“I had never thought that my future would be related to football. Back then I was working on my thesis on corporate social responsibility and was looking forward to working for an energy company. But then the financial crisis of 2008 erupted, and the position I was aiming at was no longer on offer.

For quite some time my life seemed stuck in limbo, and then at the end of 2009 I got a job offer to head the international department of the Russian Premier League. It did sound cool, but to tell the truth there was no such department at that time, it had (yet) to be created. It was a challenge that I took and have never had any regrets about it. I’ve worked with great European and Russian football coaches – Guus Hiddink, Dick Advocaat, Fabio Capello, Leonid Slutsky and Stanislav Cherchesov.

Hiddink turned out to be a shrewd psychologist, he always knew for sure which player to motivate with a joke, and who would benefit from a tougher approach. I remember our team playing with Spain in the European Championship and losing 1:4. When after the game we arrived at the hotel I thought we would get a tongue-lashing, as there were two games remaining – with Sweden and Greece – and something was to be done, because we badly needed victories in both. But Guus said: “Thank you for the game, guys! Good job! Forget everything, you have a day off – go where you want, do whatever you want. You know, a day off. And then we’ll set about getting ready for the games with the Swedes and Greeks”. It was quite unexpected, as the team in such circumstances is usually left on the base and made to slave away. But Hiddink used a psychological trick – he let the players go away and relax, and thus “reset” their psyche. What’s more, he hadn’t planned

it beforehand; it was an on-the-spot decision. As a result, we defeated the Swedes, the Greeks and the Dutch!

Dick Advocaat, another Dutch coach, was probably less flexible, and more of an

he himself suggested. He told me once: “You know, I am like a race horse which is running in blinkers, seeing only the aim ahead and dashing to it.” Indeed, he chose 14 people he liked, and banked on



Advocat unbuttoned the jacket and everybody saw a football jersey of the Russian national team. It was such a boost of Russian patriotism from a Dutchman!

introvert; that’s why he didn’t establish such a close connection with the players. However, it didn’t prevent him from being a super professional. His nickname is “The Little General”. As for me, I’ve always thought of him in terms of the metaphor

them all the time. Many asked him: “Why do you bet on the same players?” But he stood his ground, and although this presented obstacles at times, the approach yielded good results.

He motivated the team in a different way. Once before an important qualifying match he came to a meeting with the team in a buttoned-up jacket. Having finished his instructions, which I translated to the team players, he came out with the following: “Guys, I’ve got something to tell you. Tonight about 30 million out of 140 million Russians will tune in to watch you play, your wives and children among them...” And then he unbuttons the jacket and everybody sees a football jersey of the Russian national team. He points to the coat of arms and says: “You, we’ll be in this jacket. I’d give

anything to play in it myself!” It was such a boost of Russian patriotism from a Dutchman! And rightly so, as he was the coach of the national team.

Up to Advocaat’s departure I worked as an assistant interpreter. It was not until Fabio Capello’s arrival that the idea to appoint me to the position of the team manager emerged. Once he and the Director General of the Russian Football Union told me: “You are a promising young man, we believe that you’ll pull it off.” I still think that back then I was too young for that position. Even now I’m the youngest if compared to my counterparts – other national team managers – though I’m 32 already.

That appointment was a serious challenge, especially considering the fact that I had to work with such a distinguished coach as Capello, a world-class professional. He is less tough, but much more forceful in terms of character. He is a figure of the same caliber as Hiddink and Advocaat, but belonging to another prominent school of football, the Italian one, where the focus is on tactics and iron discipline in everything. Everything is to run like clockwork. Capello took a close look at every detail of the team’s functioning, be it diet, logistics or accommodation.

Fabio is a very complex person. He got interested in everything: Russian history, culture, fine art in particular, – he liked Kandinsky best of all. He frequented the Bolshoi Theatre, was on friendly terms with Gergiev, a prominent Russian conductor, and appreciated that. But he distanced himself from the team players. If Guus and Dick could easily approach the players and have a friendly chat with them, Fabio developed a markedly professional relationship. The footballers were even a bit afraid of him at first.

Once he lambasted the team for a situation I don’t want to elaborate on, here. But, he gathered the players and said: “As a coach I took so many titles that none of you will ever get close to!” Indeed he had every right to say so. “I know how to build a team, and we don’t need any black sheep here. Those who think



“MGIMO gives you a competitive advantage – the educational and cultural basis which helps you feel at ease in any environment”

that they are to blame for this situation should stand up...” A couple of players voluntarily admitted their guilt, another one was made to. But it was that speech of his that impressed me. He made everyone understand that he was dead serious. The

team had to face a tough challenge – to get to the championship, which we hadn’t entered since 2002. And we delivered!

After that a period of Russian coaches began. Leonid Slutsky, a great professional and a very warm-hearted man with a good sense of humour, was the first of them. He relied heavily on personal relationships with the players, and he wanted to learn almost everything about each of them. Having been appointed the head coach of the team in August 2015, first and foremost he drew up a schedule of half-hour individual talks with each player whom he didn’t know. He invited them to talk about quite intimate topics such as family, pets, hobbies; he discussed posh cars with one of them, the history of WWII with another. To put it in other

words, he wanted to find out what made each of them tick.

Moreover he hired a psychophysiological who prepared special tests for the team. For instance, in one test, a player sees four different colours on the screen, which appear at random. And he has to spontaneously select the colours he likes in order of preference. Tests of this type help develop a psychophysiological portrait of the player for the coach. It is important because top-class sport abounds in moments of utmost psychological tension, and only the people with high tolerance for stress can excel in a critical situation. For example, a player can be physically ready for the challenge, work miracles during training sessions, but when the squad takes the field, and he sees that the stadium is jam-packed with fans, with the flag waving, the hymn playing.... Some are immensely motivated by all this, but others get strained, and then they are of no help to the coach.

Cherchesov appears to be quite different from Slutsky: he is like a hard cop in comparison with a soft cop, so to speak. But, on the other hand, he sends us all funny pics and anecdotes via WhatsApp... He looks fearsome only because he is very self-confident, and one hundred percent knows the ropes. Indeed, he found himself in a challenging situation; leading the national team at the World Cup on home soil is a mega responsibility!

Cherchesov is a professional with huge international experience, the only Russian specialist who managed to make champions out of a team in another country, the Polish club “Legia”, which was popular but hadn’t won any title for quite some time. It took Cherchesov only one year to make them champions and to win the national cup.

I saw first-hand how tough he could be. Once we ended up losing to Qatar, not the strongest team by any means. We struggled with no luck. He gave the squad an earful in the locker room I had never seen before from any of head coaches – he even hurled something into a wall. But he drove it home to everybody: professionals cannot show mediocre results, he wouldn’t have it.

The World Cup in Russia kicked off, and the first game with Saudi Arabia yielded a stunning result of 5:1! But the main thing was that we defeated the Spanish team and made it to the quarterfinals – it was the best result for the team in its history!

No doubt, I got invaluable experience as the team manager. I was in charge of several blocks. First – equipment and football clothing – everything required for training was to be purchased. Second – logistics – I had to book flights (we charter flights only) and accommodation – everything was to be impeccable. The



commercial factor is also important – team sponsors are to be satisfied. They pay a pretty penny and are to get certain services for that: product placement, promo videos, photo shoots, etc. Furthermore, we control the food – we have our own chef.

My key principle at work is that there are no problems which can’t be solved. Modern communication tools are of great help: I tackle 80% of all team-related issues online via WhatsApp. I have

a special chat with players, with staff, with transport men. There is no need to be in an/the office all the time.

The hardest part about my job is to think ahead, to minimize failures which are always possible: with 25 people in the team something is always happening to somebody. I remember a footballer arriving at the airport to fly to the Emirates for a game and forgetting his passport somewhere. Most importantly, he didn’t know where he had left it. We didn’t find the old passport, but having mobilized out connections we managed to get a new one in a day or two.

The education that I received at MGIMO helps me a lot in my work. I need English every day, no correspondence is possible without it – be it with FIFA or foreign partners of the Russian Premier League. MGIMO gives you a competitive advantage – the educational and cultural basis which helps you feel at ease in any environment. When you can keep the conversation with a foreign coach, say, Hiddink or Advocaat, on any historical or cultural topic it does make an impression”. 🇷🇺

Photo: Anna Pishikina, Darya Ageyeva

ANTON AND HIS PROXENY

Anton Tokovinin was about three years old when his parents took him to Aida at the Cairo Opera House. He listened, fascinated, to the two-and-half-hour performance only to say afterwards, “Mother, I want to wave a stick like that man.” Now Anton is twenty four and in charge of MGIMO’s Proxenos Chorus.



“My parents say I started singing before I had learnt to speak. My brother was keen on the music of the 70s, and I would often hear the sounds of the Beatles coming from his room. When I was 18 months old, I started humming those tunes to myself surprising my parents with the accuracy of my singing. They like recalling how at the age of two I would surprise passers-by, singing “Yellow Submarine”. So Mom enrolled me in a choir.” He first sang in a music school, then in the boys’ choir of the Danilov and Novospassky Monasteries. Later when his father diplomat was again posted abroad, he sang in the choir gallery of a Russian church there. When Anton returned to Russia and entered MGIMO, he set out to make his childhood dream come true and establish a chorus of his own.

There were no embassies in Ancient Greece, diplomatic relations were conducted by proxeni, special communities of people who offered hospitality and help to guests from other city states. Thus, proxyeny came to be considered the forerunner of modern diplomacy

It was very frightening to start the ball rolling, “I thought it would be next to impossible without the conductor’s experience and instruction. I was extremely lucky though, first and foremost I was lucky to meet the right people, namely those seven MGIMO students who came to our first rehearsal. One of them, Kate, later became my wife and main support. She was the person who truly believed in me and did not let me give up in the initial stages.” Considering the name for the chorus, Anton wanted to avoid anything hackneyed, for example Melody or Cantilena; he wanted a connection with diplomacy. “There were no embassies in Ancient Greece, though city states did maintain diplomatic relations. They were conducted by proxeni, special communities of people who offered hospitality and help to guests from other city





states. Thus, proxy came to be considered the forerunner of modern diplomacy. Hence the name of the chorus, Proxenos. Anton Tokovinin taught himself the art of conducting relying on his experience as a singer and learning from the leaders of the choirs where he sang. “Gradually I understood what I want from the chorus and how I can relay my vision to amateur singers. I developed professionally along with the chorus.” At the beginning the chorus performed only

“In broad terms, my goal is self-fulfilment. Leading the chorus provided me with leadership experience, which is sure to be of use in the future”

sacred music; soon however, they expanded their repertoire to romances, music from films, classic Russian songs, Western sacred music, French barocco, American jazz, gospel and English choral music. The ultimate goal of the chorus consisting of foreign affairs experts is cultural diplomacy, building bridges between nations. For instance, their trip to Belgium was dedicated to the 300th anniversary of Peter the Great’s visit to Belgium and Holland. “Besides, I’m really proud that we had an

opportunity to perform at the Russian Cultural Centre in Brussels. We sang to a packed house: the audience included Russia’s Permanent Representative to NATO and other diplomats, prominent people of Belgian society. Many people simply came to listen to their fellow countrymen. As luck would have it that concert was attended by Yelena Dolinskaya, professor of the Moscow Conservatory. Some time later she told me about her impressions of the concert, “We

It is not an easy job to lead a group of people: “You should find an approach to everyone. But at the end of the day, it is rewarding: if we compare a chorus to an orchestra, I admire a chorus, because synching works at the level of heartbeats”

are in the auditorium, a youthful looking conductor appears on stage, followed by similarly young chorus. Well, now it is going to be some amateurish performance, I thought.” When the performance was over, she found us to apologize for underestimating us at first: she was

impressed that we were up to the mark. Now we are friends.” However, Anton is not considering music as his future career. “My grandfather, father and elder brother all graduated from MGIMO; it offered me a range of opportunities. MGIMO graduates can be whatever they want: diplomats, experts in finances, legal advisers or even journalists. In broad terms, my goal is self-fulfilment. Leading the chorus provided me with leadership experience, which is sure to be of use in the future.” Tokovinin says it is not an easy job to lead a group of people: “You should find an approach to everyone. But at the end of the day, it is rewarding: if we compare a chorus to an orchestra, I admire a chorus, because synching works at the level of heartbeats. Chorus singing depends on correct breathing. Absolutely different people, having different pitches should join in in harmony. Chorus singing works miracles joining chorus.”



ORDER OF THE CRYSTAL OWL

Interview: Maria Slonova

“The captaincy in ‘What? Where? When?’” he said, “is not so much about knowledge as about team work, people management, the ability to fine-tune and control their communications within the team, and the ability to get results from them. Roughly speaking, I have the same goals in the MEP Club. Moreover, club activities and academic events that we hold benefit the game.

“I remember one of the Russian championships for ‘What? Where? When?’ (after all, we don’t only play on

The captaincy in ‘What? Where? When?’ game show is not so much about knowledge as about team work, people management. But my activities and academic events that we hold at MGIMO benefit the game

TV), the teams were given a list with the names of mollusks and years of construction of some facilities. The task was to name the company to which the facilities belonged. I was one of the two contestants who correctly answered the question. I remembered a story about how the company Shell named its first tankers after mollusks at the beginning of the 20th century. It was the right answer.

Boris Belozerov, a student in the International Institute of Energy Politics (MIEP), is a member of two clubs. Among fans of the popular Russian game show “What? Where? When?” he is known as the captain of the MGIMO team. Last year, he joined the elite club of masters, becoming a holder of the Crystal Owl prize. Yet his role as the chairman of the student academic club “World Energy Policy” (MEP), which he heads in MIEP, is also important to him.



I understood that entering MIEP was the right decision.

I entered MGIMO there in 2014. I remember when the MEP Club gave a presentation in front of us first-year students, I became interested in the topic of alternative sources of energy. I joined the group that did that and everything worked like magic! I immediately started working on different projects. I took part in a study for the company Transneft. We learned about volumes of oil that were imported by Eastern Europe and that transited through the Druzhba oil pipeline. The goal of this study was to improve the company’s trade policy by way of planning of fuel transfers more thoroughly. Believe it or not, Transneft actually uses our research! I know this because I had an internship there, and the research proved useful to me as well.

The most interesting research, however, was a project for geothermal energy in Crimea. Our team searched for places with the best conditions for developing underground geothermal sources.

Another interesting topic for us is oil, so every year we organize the OPEC model conference. In these three days, the most active students from MGIMO and other leading universities conduct an analysis of the global oil markets, model negotiations within the OPEC framework, and also establish inter-university connections. Compared to the previous year, now we have more foreign participants, with delegations arriving from Bahrain, Venezuela and Iran. This shows that there is a growing interest in us from abroad.

Another extremely important topic is exploring the resources of the Arctic; after all, there are huge, just unbelievable amounts of hydrocarbons there, and little by little we are starting to develop them. We have a unique fleet of ice-breakers and technologies of working in permafrost conditions that Rosneft can boast of, and this is our major competitive damage. Yet the Arctic is a fragile part of the natural world, and developing it requires constant and very deep ecological expertise to prevent oil spills.

We are also dealing with the issue of energy efficiency, which, of course, is

closely related to sustainable development because this contributes to its success. By the way, the research on this topic is supported by the Ministry of Energy of the Russian Federation. For example, two years ago, the ministry announced a competition for projects on energy efficiency. We developed a project for higher energy efficiency in the Moscow Metro. We suggested installing special energy-generating panels there. The idea was that passengers, when entering the metro, would step on these panels, which would enable the production of additional electrical energy, and consequently decrease energy consumption in the metro. During Russian Energy Week, organized by the Ministry of Energy, we presented this project as part of Youth Day, and we received a lot of positive feedback. At the

latest Energy Week, which focused on developing high-tech energy in Russia over the next ten years, our club presented a new project. Of course, the topic was again energy efficiency, but this time on a local scale. Despite Russia in general being fine in terms of energy security, there are places located in inaccessible areas where they cannot connect to power transmission lines. For such areas, we proposed miniature hydroelectric stations that we can install on small rivers. We got the idea from the Norwegians, who actually have such miniature stations.

Last year, the MEP Club joined Yes Europe, a European youth energy association. It has been around for three years and has united student clubs dedicated to studying energy issues and to promoting ideas in this sector. Firstly,



Working with foreign organizations and companies, the MEP Club members have actual practice in what they are taught, which is international energy cooperation

this gave us access to a wider database; secondly, to a database of contacts with the help of which we can share ideas and experience with other clubs; and thirdly, it can help us to invite foreign guests, such as students and experts, to our events. Finally, this corresponds to the purpose of the MEP Club, which is that students must receive practical skills. If they are already working with foreign organisations, clubs and companies as students, they have actual practice in what they are taught, which is international energy cooperation.”

MGIMO CAMPUS IN UZBEKISTAN



Tashkent held the first Russian-Uzbek educational forum devoted to New Human Resources for New Economies. The MGIMO delegation led by Rector Anatoly Torkunov participated in the Forum and other events organised as part of the official visit of the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, to Uzbekistan. In the presence of the Presidents of the two countries, MGIMO and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy signed an agreement establishing a MGIMO branch campus in Uzbekistan.

The plenary session of the Forum was opened by Deputy Prime Minister

In the presence of the Presidents V. Putin and S. Mirziyoyev, MGIMO and the University of World Economy and Diplomacy signed an agreement establishing a MGIMO branch campus in Uzbekistan


of Uzbekistan, Aziz Abdukhakimov. The session featured talks by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov, as well as by heads of Uzbek and Russian higher education institutions. On the sidelines of the Forum, MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and Rector of Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of the Uzbek Language and Literature, Shuhrat Sirozhiddinov, signed a protocol to the previously concluded agreement. The protocol covered the issues of student exchange programs, internships, and development of the joint master's program for simultaneous translators. 

TASHKENT TO HOLD INTERNATIONAL FORUM OF MGIMO ALUMNI



M GIMO World Alumni Forum's agenda will be geared to economic and investment cooperation. The meeting also addressed the practical aspects of the launch and operation of a MGIMO branch in Tashkent, which is expected to begin its work in September

Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan and Rector of the University of World Economy Diplomacy, Abduzhabar Abduvakhitov, welcomed a MGIMO delegation led by Vice-Rector Artyom Malgin in Tashkent. They discussed arrangements for the 5th MGIMO World Alumni Forum which is to be held in May 2019. The Forum's agenda will be geared to economic and investment cooperation. Another question discussed at the meeting addressed the practical aspects of the launch and operation of a MGIMO branch campus in Tashkent.

The Tashkent branch of MGIMO is expected to begin its work in September; it will offer training in two fields, Business Informatics (bachelor and master programs) and Jurisprudence (a master program). 



Tashkent. Members of Uzbekistan MGIMO Alumni association meet the University's delegation

RECTOR A. TORKUNOV IN BAKU

MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov participated in the Baku Humanitarian Forum at the invitation of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan and MGIMO graduate Ilham Aliyev. President Aliyev met with Torkunov on the sidelines of the Forum; they discussed practical questions relating to the opening of MGIMO’s branch campus in Azerbaijan. The central theme of the Forum was «Shaping a New World and a New Humanity: Creativity and Human Development». President Aliyev gave a welcome speech to the attendees. The opening session also featured the



President Aliyev and Rector Torkunov discussed on the sidelines of the Forum practical questions relating to the opening of MGIMO’s branch campus in Azerbaijan

speeches delivered by Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Olga Golodets, Assistant UN Secretary-General for Humanitarian Partnerships with the Middle East and Central Asia, Rashid Khalikov, Director General of ISESCO, Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri, and others. The plenary session of the Forum, devoted to education and science in the context of human capital development, was moderated by leading academics from a number of countries. Torkunov had numerous friendly meetings with MGIMO graduates working in the Foreign Ministry of Azerbaijan and other government agencies. 



MIROSLAV LAJČÁK BECOMES HONORARY DOCTOR OF MGIMO




Miroslav Lajčák: “MGIMO is my alma mater. I graduated from MGIMO 31 years ago, and since then I have been using knowledge and expertise the I acquired here”

Following the awarding ceremony, Mr. Lajčák delivered a traditional doctoral lecture. “It is a great honour and pleasure for me to be awarded

Miroslav Lajčák, the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of Slovakia and a graduate of MGIMO University (1987), was awarded the title of Honorary Doctor of the University. Introducing the guest to the audience, MGIMO Rector, Anatoly Torkunov, noted that it was a special pleasure to welcome Mr. Lajčák “not only because he heads the Foreign Ministry of Slovakia, a good partner of the Russian Federation, but also because he is a graduate of




our university. That is why we are particularly happy to extend our warmest welcome.” Mr. Lajčák has a remarkable record as a successful diplomat, politician and statesman. “Among our graduates there have been foreign ministers of course, but none of our graduates has risen to the President of the UN General Assembly, except Mr. Lajčák,” added the Rector.

an Honorary Doctor of MGIMO, all the more so because MGIMO is my alma mater,” he added. “I graduated from MGIMO 31 years ago, and since then I have been using knowledge and expertise the I acquired here.” The honoured guest stressed the role of multilateralism in international relations and the importance of the institutions that had helped to stabilise the planet after World War II. 

MGIMO LAUNCHES DOUBLE PhD PROGRAM WITH UNIVERSITY OF READING

MGIMO and the University of Reading signed an agreement launching a double PhD program. Pro-Vice Chancellor of the University of Reading, Vincenzo Raimo, and Vice-Dean of Henley Business School, Yelena Kalyuzhnova, were greeted by

MGIMO Rector, Anatoly Torkunov, Vice-Rectors Andrey Baykov, Evgeny Kozhokin, Artem Malgin, Director of the School of Business, Angelika Mirzoyeva, and others. The parties discussed the existing formats of cooperation at the bachelor, master and MBA programs as well as potential for

joint research projects in the future. They also signed an agreement on a double PhD program enabling PhD students and applicants to defend a thesis at MGIMO and the University of Reading and be awarded a PhD from each institution. 



MGIMO AT EASTERN ECONOMIC FORUM

MGIMO participated in the Eastern Economic Forum held by the Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok. MGIMO Vice-Rector Artyom Malgin addressed the attendees of the Conference on the Historical and Modern Aspects of Russian-Japanese Relations; the conference was timed to mark the

160th anniversary of the establishment of consular relations between Russia and Japan. Artyom Malgin spoke about the rich traditions of MGIMO's school of oriental studies, as well as new research conducted by MGIMO. The MGIMO delegation also attended the 7th APEC Conference on Cooperation

in Higher Education held as part of the Forum. The discussion was moderated by Victoria Panova, Vice-Rector of the Far Eastern Federal University and a MIGMO graduate. The participants of the discussion praised MGIMO's great contribution in developing the educational and research cluster in the Far East and thus to fostering ties with APEC countries. The session on cooperation between state and business also featured a speech by Vice-Rector Malgin. 



GUINEAN PRESIDENT ALPHA CONDÉ NAMED HONORARY DOCTOR OF MGIMO




Alpha Condé, president of the Republic of Guinea, made a visit to MGIMO. He met with the university administration and gave a doctoral lecture to students, including members of MGIMO's African Club, and lecturers as well.

Vice-Rector Artyom Malgin presented the guest, saying, "This person has dedicated his entire life and political career to his country, and it is thanks to his efforts that Guinea has taken its rightful place in the family of African nations." Malgin completed the mission given to him by the Academic Council of MGIMO by naming President Condé an honorary doctor, and he gave the president a gown and diploma to the applause of the auditorium.



President Condé dedicated his doctoral lecture to the position of Africa in the modern world, discussing the major challenges facing the African continent and Guinea in particular, such as, energy, agriculture, national education and healthcare. President Condé praised the support shown to Guinea by the Soviet Union and the continued support of Russia, and he recounted his meeting with Russian president Vladimir Putin.

According to President Condé, Africa today is a continent that is developing at the highest pace and that possesses an abundance of natural resources, and its young, active population is ready to do away with the existing stereotypes about the backwardness of African countries. "There is a different Africa," he emphasised. "This Africa is asserting itself more and more every year." 

PRESIDENT OF ZIMBABWE AT MGIMO

President Emmerson Mnangagwa of the Republic of Zimbabwe visited MGIMO. When presenting the president, Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO, noted the friendly nature of relations between our countries,

established back in the Soviet Union. Rector Torkunov announced the decision by the Academic Council of MGIMO to award an honorary doctorate degree to President Mnangagwa for his contribution to the development of Africa and to the strengthening of international cooperation.

President Mnangagwa gave a lecture to MGIMO students, in which he discussed the current stage of Zimbabwe's socio-economic development and global economic challenges, as well as, the results of the presidential elections and government reforms. President Mnangagwa in particular focused on the



possible directions of cooperation with Russia, emphasising Harare's interest in strengthening bilateral relations and cultural connections between our nations. 



SOUTH AFRICA’S FOREIGN MINISTER GAVE A LECTURE AT MGIMO



Lindiwe Sisulu, Minister of International Relations and Cooperation of the Republic of South Africa, visited MGIMO. She was received by Vice-Rector Artyom Malgin. The two parties discussed questions regarding the expansion of educational cooperation and focus areas for the BRICS Network University.

Speaking to students and teachers, Minister Sisulu declared that it was her honour to speak in front of future diplomats. She spoke about meeting with Sergey Lavrov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, and the session of the South Africa-Russia Intergovernmental Committee on Trade and Economic Cooperation. The Minister dedicated her lecture to Africa’s position in the modern world and in global politics, as well as to relevant

questions regarding the international agenda in the context of electing South Africa to be a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council in 2019-2020 and the results of the BRICS summit in Johannesburg last year. She gave special attention to ensuring sustainable development and settling political and military conflicts in Africa, as well as, the key role of South Africa and regional associations in resolving these conflicts.



GAMBIAN AMBASSADOR AT MGIMO



Vice-Rector Andrey Baykov welcomed Ambassador Jainaba Bah of the Republic of The Gambia and her embassy staff for discussion. He told the guests about the history and present of the university, the fields of study and training programs at MGIMO, cooperation with African universities and joint dual-degree

master’s programs. He mentioned the deeply rooted traditions of African studies within the walls of the university, the teaching and learning of African languages (Amharic, Afrikaans and Swahili), the existence of the African Club and the university’s work with the embassies of African governments, which have traditionally participated in Africa Days at

MGIMO and in topical conferences. Ambassador Bah spoke about Gambia’s embassy’s contact with the leaders of Russia’s Ministry of Education and Science regarding questions of expanding the educational possibilities for Gambian citizens in Russia, as well as, about educational programs at Banjul University.



D. SASSOU NGUESSO, HONORARY DOCTOR OF MGIMO

The President of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso was awarded a diploma of the Honorary Doctor of MGIMO. The guest of honor was received by the University management, he also gave a doctoral lecture to students and faculty members. Introducing the guest of honor, MGIMO’s Vice-Rector Artem Malgin pointed out that 'today is a special day as we welcome a person who witnessed and participated in many events that students read about in textbooks.' Malgin announced the decision of the University’s Academic Council to award D. Sassou Nguesso the title of «Honorary Doctor of the Moscow State Institute of International Relations» in recognition of his great contribution to the expansion of relations between Russia and the Republic of Congo.



A. Malgin gave the guest the gown and diploma of honorary doctor and invited him to deliver a traditional doctoral lecture. D. Sassou Nguesso expressed his gratitude for the warm welcome. It is a pleasure, he noted, to say that educational cooperation between Russia and the Republic of Congo is developing. "The education, which our students received in Russia, has greatly contributed to the development of our country. I hope that



our cooperation with MGIMO will continue». The guest also spoke about Congo's diplomatic service, he emphasized that the Soviet diplomacy was 'a shield and leverage for progress of countries such as the Republic of Congo.' D. Sassou Nguesso dwelt upon the Brazzaville Protocol, the events that preceded its signing, as well as on eradication of apartheid, he shared his hope for peace on the African continent.

ANTOINE SOMDA ON THE NON-PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS



Antoine Somda, Burkina-Faso’s ambassador to Russia, spoke to the students in the Russian-American WMD Non-proliferation, Nuclear Policy and Global Security master’s program. Ambassador Mohamed Keita of Guinea, Ambassador Seko Intchasso of Guinea-Bissau and Ambassador Jeanne d’Arc Mujawamariya of Rwanda, who is also her country’s former education minister, also

attended Ambassador Somda’s lecture. An expert on the legal issues of atomic energy, Ambassador Somda graduated from the University of Ouagadougou law school and the Russian university RUDN as a specialist in law. He worked as a permanent representative of Burkina-Faso at the United Nations in New York, and he has taken part in sessions of the UN General Assembly, UN Security Council and IAEA. Ambassador Somda, who is fluent in Russian, spoke on the topic “The Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and International Security”. The ambassador discussed the existing regime of international nuclear control, the actions of the IAEA and the problems of nuclear disarmament. He noted that denuclearisation is an utopian idea and nations will only develop their nuclear technology rather than destroy it. There are governments that are not parties to agreements on the non-proliferation of

nuclear weapons, including South Sudan in Africa. Of particular concern are non-state actors such as terrorist groups, as well as, permanent military conflicts. In these conditions, the goal of the international community has to be the strengthening



of the regime of WMD non-proliferation. According to the ambassador, the basic principle of the IAEA can be characterised by the Russian proverb of “trust, but verify”.



TRIANON ROOSTER



On the sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum Presidents Putin and Macron had a series of meetings within the framework of the Trianon Dialogue. At a business meeting President Putin received a gift, a miniature blue Gallic rooster from Pierre Gattaz, President of the Movement of the Enterprises of France. The French consider the Gallic rooster an unofficial national symbol: epitomising bravery, obstinacy and boldness. The moderator of the meeting, Alexander Shokhin, President of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, noted that the Russian and French flags have the same colors (white, blue and red), although placed in a different sequence, “Next time, Mr. Gattaz, please have the rooster painted in the white, blue and red colors.” (By the way, many French participants of the Forum had red and blue roosters pinned to the lapels. None had a white one.) “Besides the rooster, we can have a double-headed eagle as well,” Putin remarked, meaning the Russian national emblem. “A double-headed rooster would be a fair compromise,” Alexander Shokhin added, picking up on the President’s joke. [1]



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