



DUTCH RUSSIAN LAW ASSOCIATION

Report of Activities in 2020

Introduction

The current year 2020 will be remembered as an *annus horribilis* due to the COVID-19 virus. Unfortunately, also the DRLA's activities grinded to a halt. Incoming visits of delegations of Russian lawyers had to be cancelled.

However, this does not mean that DRLA was in hibernation. The board met on a regular basis. Meetings were held with potentially interested parties, including the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Russian Embassy. Also, meetings took place with members of the Advisory Board with a view to discuss future policy of the DRLA.

Internal meetings

The board – consisting of Maria Voskobitova, Ekaterina Nikonova, and Wim Timmermans met physically on a quarterly basis in The Hague with a view to discuss various issues, including the plan with regard to the development of a Russian law course. As mentioned earlier, the execution of the plans of the DRLA received a serious set-back due to the corona virus crisis.

Also, a few meetings were held with members of the advisory board with a view to discuss future plans and to strengthen the DRLA's intention to extend its links with various Russian academic institutions.

Furthermore, meetings were also held with potentially new board members, when two of the members announced their withdrawal from the executive board.

External meetings

In July 2020, Maria Voskobitova of the executive board participated in an online seminar organized by the NRCH and informed the participants of the DRLA.

In August 2020, Wim Timmermans held a phone call with Ms Monique van Ravensteijn of Amnesty International to inform one another of the various activities and plans with a view to exploring the possibilities of cooperation.

On 6 October 2020, a meeting took place with a representative of the Russian Embassy, who is charged with contacts with international organisations. It was a very pleasant meeting during which we explored the possibilities of funding of the activities of our Russian partners.

On 11 November 2020, Professor Wladimiroff and Wim Timmermans had an online meeting with Ms Ingrid de Beer of the Dutch MFA. We presented ourselves and our DRLA and also explored possible projects that could be eligible for funding by the MFA of The Netherlands.

Contacts with Russian partners

In 2020, a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the Russian State University of Justice. The MoU envisages cooperation between both parties in particular with regard to:

- educational and scientific activities;
- improvement of training and personal development of judges, court officials, advocates and other persons working in the judicial system;
- exchange of relevant scientific information, books and articles, materials of law-enforcement practices, educational and training technologies as well as organizational experiences;
- organisation of joint scientific and practical conferences, seminars, master classes, web-seminars, round tables, and similar platforms of exchange of information.

Russian delegations visiting The Netherlands

A visit was planned for a delegation of the Oleg Kutafin Moscow State Law University for March or April 2020. The delegation would consist of 5 law professors who would visit the Ministry of Justice, procuracy, courts, law firms, and law faculties. Unfortunately, due to the Covid-19 crisis, the visit had to be cancelled. The board is certain that the visit will happen in 2021.

Visits by other delegations had not been scheduled for 2020.

Membership fee

The present executive board reduced the membership fee to Euro 50 per year for Dutch lawyers and to Euro 25 for Dutch students and Russian lawyers.

DRLA's website

During the present, the website of DRLA was maintained by Ms Nikonova and on a regular basis updated with news regarding DRLA and its members.

Russian law course

Following the discussion at the general meeting in December 2020, the executive board DRLA has concluded that a general course on Russian law would certainly meet a demand from Russian studies students, law students, as well other persons with an interest in Russian law. Therefore, the DRLA is seeking to join forces with the Russian studies department of Leiden University with a view to offer a one semester course on Russian law. The course will be provided by various lecturers with merits regarding Russian law. Contacts with the Russian studies program have been established and will be used for the further elaboration of the course.

Individual members' participation in conferences, symposiums, etc. in Russia

Several members of DRLA participated in conferences, seminars, and symposiums organized by Russian institutions.

Wim Timmermans participated in:

- conference organized by the MGU Law Faculty on “Public Procurement under the Corona Virus” (June 2020);
- chair of two arbitral panel in a moot arbitration organized by the Law faculty of the All-Russian Academy of Foreign Trade (October 2020);
- conference devoted to the 90th birthday of the law Professor Makovskii A.L., organized by the Centre of Private Law (30 November 2020).

Ruth van der Pol, an appeal court judge, participated in the following conferences:

- Judge Pawel Cyran and Judge Ruth van der Pol participated online in a conference organized by the North-West Branch of The Russian State University of Justice on 14 September 2020.
- conference organized by the North-West Branch of The Russian State University of Justice on 9 October 2020. Judge Ruth van der Pol made a presentation about the role of the president of the court in The Netherlands.

Mischa Wladimiroff wrote the case to be debated at the Moot Court competition in Gdynia, Poland. In January 2020 Judge Fons Orié and Mischa Wladimiroff valued the pleadings by the international teams, including a team from St. Petersburg.

Articles in Russian publications

The following members published articles on Russian law:

Ruth van der Pol en Liudmila van der Pol, “Enkele opmerkingen over totstandkoming en uitleg van overeenkomsten in Rusland”, *Sluitertijd. Reflecties op het werk van Jaap Hijma*, 2020.

Symposium of 18 December 2020

Finally, the executive board organized the annual general meeting which was followed by a symposium dedicated to the impact of international law on domestic law – in particular with regard to the recent amendments to the Russian Constitution (*viz.* Article 15, subsection 4).