

## **Report on the Activities of the Dutch-Russian Law Association (DRLA) in 2021**

Just like the previous year, 2021, too, was a year coloured by Covid-19. This meant that due to more or less strict measures no live events could take place nor travelling to and from Russia. Fortunately, at the moment of writing this report, things look brighter as far as Covid-19 is concerned but now sadly it is the war in Ukraine that is causing new obstacles for direct contacts between our Russian and Dutch members.

On 18 June 2021, the DRLA held its annual general meeting at which the financial report was discussed and approved. After the formal part, a symposium was held on Freedom of Information under Russian and Dutch Law. We had two speakers – Dr Rimma Antonova from the North-West Branch of the Russian State University of Justice in St. Petersburg who discussed the Russian Law on Freedom of Information and Mr Rens Groen, LL.M., a practicing Dutch lawyer and treasurer of the DRLA who talked about the Dutch Law on Freedom of Information. The symposium was moderated by Professor William Simons of Tartu, Estonia, a much-valued member of the DRLA. After the presentations questions were asked and a lively discussion about the principles of freedom of information took place.

A second – also online - symposium took place on 2 December 2021. Theme of the December symposium was ‘General Principles of Proper Administration and the Scope of Review of Legal Actions’ in Russia and the Netherlands. We had six speakers, two from Russia, including Professor Nikolai Peshin from Moscow State University (MGU), three from the Netherlands, including Professor Michiel Scheltema, the former government commissioner for Administrative Law Reform, and one from the USA, Justice Thomas Hoya, a former administrative judge from Washington DC. At the end of the seminar, Professor Justice Geert Corstens, former President of the Supreme Court of the Netherlands, presented a virtual copy of the Russian translation of his book “De rechtsstaat moet je leren” (Суды и верховенство права: взгляд из Нидерландов) to Dr Wim Timmermans, chair of the DRLA. This symposium, too, was moderated by Professor William Simons.

Apart from the above symposia, the DRLA Executive Board members Rens Groen and Wim Timmermans participated in the founding meeting of the Russia & Eastern Europe Knowledge Alliance (REKA), a network alliance of know-how on Russia, founded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, the Clingendael Institute, a think tank based in The Hague, as well as Raam op Rusland (‘Window at Russia’), an institute affiliated with Leiden University. The founding meeting was held in The Hague on 14 September 2021. Wim Timmermans gave a presentation on the development of Russian civil law and Rens Groen highlighted the role of the DRLA. REKA’s website can be accessed at the following address: [rekanetwork.org](http://rekanetwork.org).

On an individual basis, several members of the DRLA participated (online) in conferences in Russia.

On May 12, 2021, the III International Historical and Legal Congress “Legal Traditions of Russian Statehood” was held on the occasion of the 300th anniversary of the Russian Empire. Ruth van der Pol, co-founder of the DRLA, expressed his greetings to the participants of the Congress in Russian. Ferdinand Feldbrugge, professor emeritus of East European Law and Russian Studies at Leiden University,

read a paper on “Lessons from the History of Russian Law”. The event was organized by the Institute of Legislation and Comparative Law under the Government of the Russian Federation in collaboration with the Russian Academy of Sciences (RAS), the Department of Historical and Philological Sciences RAS, the Institute of Russian History RAS, the Russian Historical Society and the History of the Fatherland Foundation.

On 25 February 2021, William Simons gave a presentation on “Protection of the interests of Russian companies abroad: Selected Issues” (“Защита интересов российских компаний за рубежом: Эскизы”) for the IIth International Academic Conference of the Russian Academy of Economics and the State Service under the President of the Russian Federation, Siberian Institute of Management, “Contemporaneous Trends of Economic Development: Russia and the World after the Pandemic”

On 3 October 2021, William Simons gave a presentation on “Taxes and Arbitration” («Налоги и арбитраж») at the platform of exchange of experience in the field of international taxation of the BEPS Academy (beps.academy)

On 29 November 2021, William Simons talked about his personal memories of Dr Stanislav Antonovich Khokhlov under the title: “Stanislav Antovich Khokhlov. Memories of a Remarkable Person.” (“Станислав Антонович Хохлов. Воспоминания о замечательном человеке”). The occasion was an academic conference of the Moscow Research Centre of Private Law under the title: “Genesis and Development of Russian Contract Law” («Генезис и развитие российского договорного права»), devoted to the octogenarian date of birth of an outstanding legal scholar, one of the founders of the Research Centre, and the first rector of the Russian School of private law Stanislav Antonovich Khokhlov.

In the week of 12-15 October 2021, the All-Russian Academy of Foreign Trade (VAVT) in Moscow held its VIII<sup>th</sup> M.G. Rozenberg Student Concourse for international commercial arbitration, in which teams from various Russian and foreign universities participated. On 12 October, Wim Timmermans acted as chair of an arbitral panel hearing pleadings by students from VAVT (claimants) and the North-West Branch of the Russian State University of the Judiciary (respondents).

On 14 September 2021, Wim Timmermans gave a presentation on ‘Arbitration: Discovery or Production of Documents’ at the Conference ‘Contemporary Tendencies in the Practice of the Settlement of International Commercial Disputes’ (Современные тенденции в практике разрешения международных коммерческих споров), also at the VAVT in Moscow.

The Executive Board of the DRLA,  
Leiden, 8 June 2022