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GeoGraphy

EVERYDAY LIFE

Summer 2015

For you, the world

International association and knowledge exchange

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Participants in the upcoming International Geographical Union Regional Conference (IGU Moscow 2015) share their expectations for the event.

Memory

Honouring our fallen soldiers

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On the 70th anniversary of Allied victory in Europe, we remember the courageous service of those from the LMSU Faculty of Geography who gave their lives in World War II.

Leadership

“Language, history and geography as constituents of national identity”

This August, Moscow will host the 2015 International Geographical Union (IGU) Regional Conference. It is being coordinated by representatives from Lomonosov Moscow State University (LMSU), the Russian Geographical Society, the Russian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Geography, and the National Committee of Russian Geographers. We recently interviewed prof. acad. Nikolay Kasimov — president of the Faculty of Geography of LMSU, first vice-president of Russian Geographical Society — about conference preparations as well as current developments in geographical research and education in Russia.

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Interview

IGU 2015

In anticipation of the International Geographical Union Regional Conference “Geography, Culture and Society for Our Future Earth” (IGU Moscow 2015), we met with Sergey Chalov — Secretary General of IGU 2015 LOC and deputy dean for international relations in the Faculty of Geography at LMSU — to discuss preparations for the event.

— What does it mean for Russia, and particularly the domestic scientific community, to hold the IGU regional conference in Moscow?

— The most prominent analogy is the 2018 FIFA World Cup. We all know what an honour it is to hold that in Russia, and how important for the development of Russian football. The IGU Regional Conference is similar for the sciences — especially geography and cognate disciplines. It’s a highly significant and widely respected event.

High-level scientific conferences attract a lot of international attention in related fields. We have to make sure the level of organisation for the event corresponds with its importance. It’s a question of prestige for LMSU, for Moscow and for Russia as a whole.

— Aside from questions of prestige, why isthis conference important for the sciences in Russia?

— Unfortunately, our scientific community has developed in relative isolation due to language barriers and historical contingencies. There is clearly a need for more interaction with scholars from other countries, for exchange of research findings at worldwide forums and for publication in academic journals with global reach.

The IGU regional conference is an excellent chance for Russian researchers to participate in scientific exchange, present the results of their work and initiate collaborative projects at the international level. Major projects often germinate at venues of this kind. In 2011, for example, as our faculty began a study in Mongolia, I attended an International Union of Geodesy and Geophysics conference in Melbourne. A presentation by German scholars on their Mongolian research sparked discussions that led to our faculty’s German-Russian collaborative study of the Lake Baikal basin — a vital line of international cooperation. For many Russian scholars, especially those in the early stages of their careers, IGU conferences are pathways to engagement with scientific communities around the world.

— What makes IGU regional conference unique in comparison with other prominent events in the geographical sciences?

— First, the IGU is one of the oldest scientific associations in the world and has a very rich history. The first congress under its auspices took place in 1871. Regional conferences nowhave broad and diverse programmes.

Second, IGU conferences are known for interdisciplinarity rather than narrow focus. They reflect the essence of geography, which is perceived in a variety of ways: physical dimensions predominate in Russia, for example, while there is a more socio-economic orientation in Europe. Regional conferences bring a wide range of experts together. There is unique atmosphere in which you’ll find people who are studying the earth and working to solve global problems from many different angles.

— How many people do you expect to attend the event, and what fields of study will be represented?

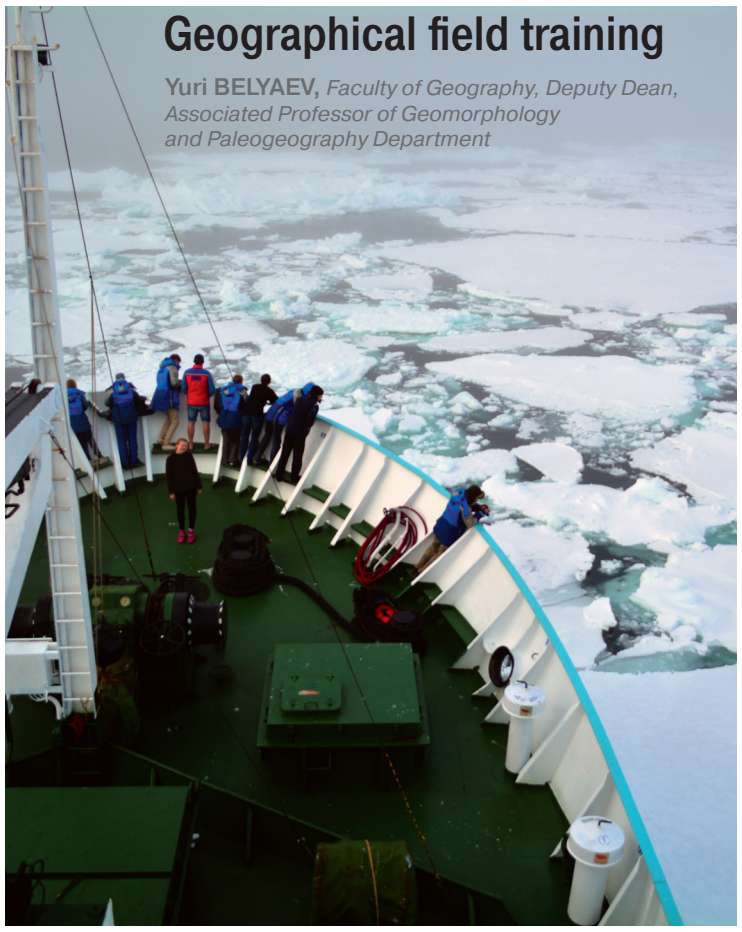
— There were 1,700 participants at the last regional conference, which took place in Krakow. We don’t expect that many to attend, but in the beginning of July we had about 1,200 confirmed registrations in the system — about 40 percent of whom are from Russia. Global representation is quite broad. The Russian Foreign Ministry is facilitating visa procurement for conference registrants, which is important since the normal process is relatively complicated. We would be even more grateful if the Foreign Ministry issued a circular about the simplified visa regime to 180 countries. They’re not all represented, of course, but people temporarily living abroad may have difficulty securing a visa from the local consulate and then have to return to their own country to complete the process.

As for professional affiliations, registered participants are mainly based at research universities worldwide. Section representatives are globally recognised experts in their respective fields.

The conference has strong support from a variety of high-level organisations. The planning committee, chaired by President of the Russian Geographical Society Sergey Shoygu, includes representatives from the Russian Ministry of National resources and environment, the Federal Agency for Water Resources, Roscartography and several departments in the Moscow City Government.

P. 3

Field season



Geographical field training

Yuri BELYAEV, *Faculty of Geography, Deputy Dean, Associated Professor of Geomorphology and Paleogeography Department*

Field training season 2015 was very fascinating. However, as always. The network of Research Training Centers (RTC) and Research Training Stations of our faculty covers all the variety of landscape conditions - from Khibiny mountain range to Central Russia and the Caucasian highlands. Currently, the Faculty has five Research Training Centers and one Research Training Station: Kirovsk RTC (founded in 1948); Krasnovidovo RTC (founded in 1945); Satino RTC (founded in 1968); Elbrus RTC (founded in 1969); Arkhangelsk (founded in 1992); Tregubovo RTC (founded in 1999).

Geography field trainings of first and second-year student`s is given in Table. 1. Field training in the first-year curriculum is integrated within mandatory theoretical courses making a kind of dual “theory–field training” courses in topography and geodesy, geomorphology, soil science, biogeography, hydrology, climatology, and landscape science. This multidisciplinary field training program requires two months of residential fieldwork, which is broken up into a series of 6–10 field training courses. The main goal of multidisciplinary field training in the first-year curriculum is to support theoretical courses and broaden learners’ understanding of interlinks between the different branches of Physical Geography. Field training emphasizes research methodology (e.g. in situ measurement, observation, recording) and prepares students for fieldwork through the elaboration of fieldwork rules. Residential field training completes the first-year curriculum and is held at Satino Research Training Centre (RTC). The Satino RTC is located 100 km south-west of Moscow in a diverse rural area, which contains useful combinations of natural and anthropogenic landscapes for study. Formerly covered by mixed forests of oak and fir, today about 50% is boreal mixed forest, 40% is agricultural, and 10% is occupied by settlements. The second-year curriculum use a variety of training modes – residential studies and fieldtrips, observation, and participation, which in various proportions depend on the specialty and size of the student group.

Field practice of third year students and MSc students as well as of graduate students is more diverse and often takes place in places and / or organizations which are connected with their research papers, graduation papers, dissertations. This involves summer work in the student’s specialty in an academic, commercial, governmental, or other institution. This could be a tourist agency, geological expedition, or meteorological service of an airport. For students of Physical Geography, internship usually involves fieldwork.

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Leadership

Dmitry KORYUHIN, *third-year student in the Faculty of Geography of Lomonosov Moscow State University, Department of Economic and Social Geography of Russia*

“Language, history and geography as constituents of national identity”

Nikolay S. Kasimov

President of the LMSU Faculty of Geography since 2 April 2015; dean of the LMSU Geography Department from 1990 to 2015; head of the Landscape Geochemistry and Soil Geography Department of the LMSU Faculty of Geography; professor of geography; full-member of the Russian Academy of Sciences.
Nikolay Kasimov has been part of the LMSU Faculty of Geography for his entire academic career. He graduated from the faculty in 1968, continuing on to defend his candidate of sciences dissertation (on the landscape geochemistry of fault zones) in 1972 and his doctoral dissertation (on the paleogeochemistry of steppe and desert landscapes) in 1984. The Russian government has awarded him for outstanding work on science textbooks for secondary schools (2012), a nationwide system for environmental education (2000) and natural resource atlases (2004) and development of educational system in tourism curriculum (2015).
Prof. Kasimov’s scientific work combines organisational and methodological aspects. He is first vice-president of the Russian Geographical Society and a chairman of the Public Council for Russia’s Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment. He is also chief editor of the journals: Moscow University Bulletin (Geography); Geography, Environment, Sustainability, as well as a member of the editorial board for many others. He has authored over 300 scientific publications, 8 monographs and numerous textbooks. He is also a frequent honorary guest at geographical conferences and congresses.

— Very soon, the IGU Regional Conference “Geography, Culture and Society for Our Future Earth” will take place at our university. Can you tell us more about the event?

— IGU regional conferences are held annually between congresses, which occur every four years and host presidential elections. At the 2012 congress, in Cologne, Vladimir Kolosov became the first president from Russia. Regional conferences are known for showcasing new achievements in geography from around the world. The 2013 conference was in Kyoto, and last year’s was in Krakow. In Moscow there will be a rich assortment of events, covering manifold geographical disciplines from physical to social to cultural (see www.igu2015.ru for details).

— Will the conference shed light on potential roles for geography, as an interdisciplinary science, in processes that substantively impact the planet’s future?

— In keeping with the “Future Earth” initiative, this year’s conference will promote international collaboration in pursuit of shared objectives — including the study of climate change, pollution and natural-resource depletion. Addressing these issues through interdisciplinary research has the potential to strongly influence the planet’s future.

— The programme focuses on global climate change and vegetative cover as well as spatial economics, population mobility and other topics.

— Yes, it addresses many complex issues. Along with geographers, there will be people from a variety of fields — including biology, physics and chemistry — who are studying these processes. The geographical sciences are inclusive enough to unite these studies, covering an extensive range of issues and approaches. However, the relatively low participation of Russian scholars in world initiatives — for example, the International Geosphere-Biosphere Programme “Global Change”— has impeded scientific progress in our country.

— How are the geographical sciences in Russia distinct from those in other parts of the world?

— Geography in Russia and many other post-Soviet countries is oriented more toward the physical sciences and productive use of natural resources — with significantly less emphasis on social sciences for many years.There was no electoral geography in Soviet Union until 1989. Economic and social geographers faced an especially urgent need for change in response to new priorities. Other differences — such as those associated with background data or research methods — exist between most countries.

— What are some of the major trends that have emerged in Russian geographical sciences over the past decade?

— Among the most prominent is a longstanding “ecologisation” of geography, in keeping with global trends. Its originscan be traced approximately to the UN Conference on the Human Environment, which took place in Stockholm in 1972. Heightened awareness of environmental problems during the 1970s led to new policies and technologies for optimising environmental conditions. As a geochemist, I’ve seen evidence of this in data for Europe as a whole: levels of contamination peaked in the late 1960s to early 1970s and then gradually declined. Ecologisation has influenced many geographical fields. In our country, the government established a Ministry of Ecology in 1988 to develop official environmental standards. Ecology is now an essential part of the geography exam that Russian students have to pass before enrolling in post-secondary education.

Another trend that comes to mind is the “humanisation” of geography, with social problems becoming a primary focus of attention. This extremely important process has yet to gain full momentum in Russia.

Geoinformatics innovationis a major trend as well, especially new ways of studying the earth and its atmosphere from space.

— Are there any significant obstacles to the development of geographical sciences in Russia today?

— There are many obstacles, but the most immediate is lack of funding for scientific research and for education in general. Resources should coincide with project relevance and help Russian scholars engage with global scientific communities.Today we can join international or national projects, but the latter are in short supply. Improving this situation requires serious attention to issues that were not integral to the development of our education system. For instance, publication in leading peer-reviewed journals is crucial today. This was also important for Soviet researchers, of course, but it played a much smaller role in performance evaluation and university rankings. Excelling within the present framework requires years of work focused precisely on this objective. Such challenges are not limited to funding. The core issue is that research and education have “aged” toward obsolescence. There is an urgent need for scholars prepared to function successfully in today’s international context.

— How about Russian primary and secondary education?

— The situation is disappointing, especially in geography. First, recent changes have been very ill advised; if these standards are upheld, geography will play a marginal role in the education of children and teens. Thus, we may face a serious reduction in the number of people who go on to pursue geographical studies and careers.

Teacher preparation is another important challenge. There are currently about 45,000 primary and secondary schools in Russia. Given this extraordinarily large system, there’s a pressing need to expand the pool of qualified teachers.

Underestimation of geography’s importance to society undermines its position in education today. In my view, three factors in particular constitute national identity: language, history and territory. Geography addresses each of these topics in relation to many others, with emphasis on territory. An education system that neglects this multifaceted spatial inquiry leaves students and society at a disadvantage.

In Russian schools, the number of exams is incommensurate with today’s requirements. First there are exams in literature, history, geography, and thenentrance exams for higher education: mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, etcetera. Passing five or six exams isn’t so much to expect of students. This is how Soviet and Russian education worked until recently, with evident results.

— Transitioning to postsecondary education, how would you describe LMSU’s role in the development of geography in Russia?

— Obscenely important (*laughing*). We have the largest staff, but quality is more important. The university has established rigorous geographical programmes that are well known in Russia. Their emphasis is on two related pursuits: research and education. Based on these priorities, the LMSU Faculty of Geography is a national leader from quantitative and qualitative perspectives.There are also leading geographical programmes at the Russian Academy of Sciences, Saint Petersburg State University, Kazan Federal University, Southern Federal University, Voronezh State University and other locations. About 50 Russian institutions offer higher education in geography.

The LMSU Faculty of Geography is responsible for coordinating geographical and environmental education in Russia. It is the source of many textbooks as well as government education standards developed in collaboration with representatives from other institutions. Education councils linked to LMSU and our faculty manage the complex standardisation process in its entirety.

— People often express uncertainty as to what, exactly, geographers do. Are there steps being taken to spread awareness about geography as a profession in Russia?

— We’ve been working to solve that problem for quite a while. Reaching out to the media — appearing on radio and television, for instance — has been helpful, but the situation changed most notably after recent developments in the Russian Geographical Society (RGS). It is now actively promoting geography through an enhanced public information component, which has included producing high-quality multimedia resources and establishing the My Planet television channel. Now it’s easier for geographers to coordinate with government and business leaders. As the RGS catalyses support in a variety of tangible ways, the atmosphere is improving for geographical research and education in Russia. For me, the most important sign of progress is an increasing number of students who take the geography exam; I hope this will continue.

Memory

Honours of our fallen soldiers

Mikhail E. LEVINTOV, *chief specialist in oil and gas at the All-Russia Research Institute on the Geology of Foreign Countries, graduate of the Lomonosov Moscow State University Geomorphology Department in 1970*

May and victory — these two words are inseparable in Russia today. Yet victory did not come automatically like springtime blossoms. It came through our Soviet forebears’ profound sacrifice. Now it is our duty to remember the millions of lives given to this cause, to prevent the “forgetting curve” from ever descending toward zero.

The heartrending list of geography department colleagues who did not return from the war numbers 59. On page nine of Memories of the Fallen (available on the geography department website in the section “Chronicle of the Front”), E. M. Nikolayev reports that five of our fallen soldiers received seven military honours.

Historical records on the website Deeds of the Nation (www.podvignaroda.ru) have significantly expanded our knowledge of the geography department’s fallen soldiers. It turns out that, in actuality, ten colleagues received 20 honours for their wartime service.
A summary appears in the table below:

Remembering those from the geography department who gave their lives to defend our homeland, we understand that they all deserve eternal gratitude. The honours they earned serve as vivid testimony to their sacrifice and heroism. Let us all be deserving of this legacy!

Names, ranks and positions	Honours
Ahmed M. ATSAMBA, Class of 1941, Submachine Gun Platoon Commander, 327th Guard Mountain Infantry Regiment, 128th Guard Mountain Infantry Division, 3rd Mountain Infantry Corps, 1st Guards Army, 4th Ukrainian Front, Guardsman, Junior Lieutenant	Order of the Red Star, Order of the Patriotic War (1st and 2nd class)
Leonid P. GARYAGA, Class of 1941, Lieutenant, Unit Navigator, 36th Mine-Torpedo Aviation Regiment, 5th Mine-Torpedo Aviation Division, Northern Fleet Air Force	Order of the Red Star
Prore (Pryure) M. GERSHKOVICH, 2nd-Year Student, Lieutenant, Army PartOrg, 51st Regiment, 52nd Infantry Regiment	Medal of Honour
Mikhail P. NADEZHDIN, 3rd-Year Student, 1st Moscow Proletarian Motorised Infantry Division, Western Front	Red Army Badge of Excellence
Vladimir M. NEKRICH, Class of 1941, Captain, Translator, Instructor, Army 40th Political Department for Op-erations Amid Opposing Forces and Civilians, Voronezh Front	Medal of Honour, Order of the Patriotic War (1st class)
Viktor P. POPOV, 3rd-Year Student, Captain, Senior Adjutant, 408th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, Brest Division, 2nd Belorussian Front	Medal of Honour, Order of the Red Star, Order of the Patriotic War (1st and 2nd class)
Aleksandr V. SAVELYEV, 2nd-Year Student, Junior Sergeant, Rangefinder, 48th Antiaircraft Division, 1,276th Antiaircraft Regiment	Medal of Honour
Aleksandr V. STANKEVICH, Class of 1941, Captain, Commander, 876th Howitzer Artillery Regiment, 5th Artillery Division, Reserve of the High Command, 2nd Belorussian Front	Order of the Patriotic War (2nd class), Order of the Red Banner, Order of Alexander Nevsky
Aleksey S.SUSKIN, Class of 1941, Guard Captain, Head of Engineering Services, 2nd Guards Army, 3rd Motorised Infantry Brigade, 38th Tank Corps, Leningrad Front	Order of the Red Star, Order of the Patriotic War (2nd class), Medal for the Defence of Stalingrad
Mikhail I. CHEKRACHEV, Lecturer, Senior Lieutenant, Commander, 2nd Battalion, 173rd Infantry Regiment, 90th Infantry Division, 19th Infantry Corps, Northwest Front	Order of the Red Star

Interview

IGU 2015

— Yet the official languages for the conference are English and French. Why is Russian not included?

— English is generally recognised as the lingua franca for international events. The organizing committee can't change this worldwide state of affairs. Inclusion of French is based more on tradition. It retains official status for many institutions, including LMSU. We accept abstracts written in French, but presentations are typically in English.

Russian isn't one of the official languages so as to avoid changing the conference's global identity and accessibility. Our colleagues should understand that if we made the working language Russian in even a few sections, it wouldn't be authentically international in scope. Most attendees from other countries wouldn't be able to partake in those discussions. Providing extra translation services for certain sessions is outdated, as it makes large-scale events a lot more cumbersome.

— Why do Russian citizens make up only 40 percent of registrants? Are there special conditions for them?

— Yes, it's actually less expensive. Russian Geographical Society gave a special grant to lower the registration fee for Russian participants from $400 to $100, but for many that's still very high. The language barrier also plays a role: people often call the organisational committee to ask for help filling out the registration form in English. Finding an economical place to stay in Moscow is another challenge. For scholars based inRussia's Far East, it may be easier to attend the next regional conference in China.

— What are some of the most pressing issues in the conference programme?

— There are many urgent topics on the agenda. Climate change, for instance, has been the focus of groundbreaking papers in recent years. Related events include a plenary lecture by prof. Gordon McBean, who is president of the International Council for Science and a Nobel laureate for collaborative work on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

IGUmoscow2015

Another important concern is global conflict. In this case we've had to be especially circumspect. Issues of this kind, including those associated with territory, can generate fervent and sharply divergent points of view. The conference shouldn't be a platform for rancorous political disputes, so we carefully monitored abstracts to facilitate respectful dialog.

Much of the programme is dedicated to arctic studies. This, one might say, pertains to Russian national interests, covering environmental processes, sustainability, territorial organisation and other topics.

The conference programme generally reflects present trends in geography and corresponding fields. Half a century ago, scholars focused more on utilisation of natural resources; since then, conservation and sustainable development are more actively promoted. Forecasting and mitigating natural disasters — including those induced by human activity — are also top priorities. Every year brings new cases: the 2013 flooding in Amur Oblast, for example, was a powerful impetus for water-related research in Russia's Far East.

— Can you brief us on some of the Russian and international experts who will participate in the conference?

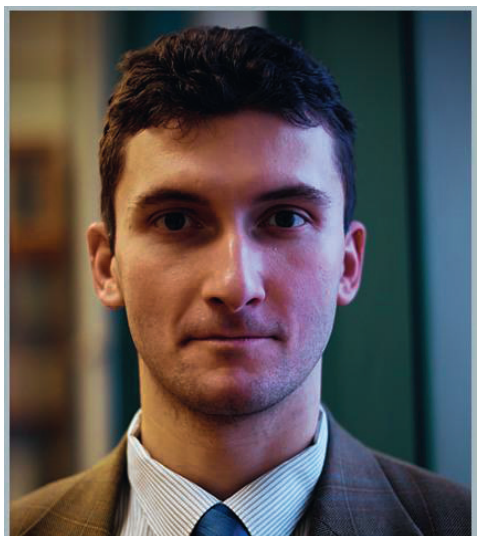
— Quite a lot of acclaimed scientists are planning to attend. There will be Russian participants from major research institutions throughout the country. The famous polar explorer Artur Chilingarov, for one, also serves as deputy chairman of the IGU Moscow 2015 organisational committee.

In addition Gordon McBean, international participants include John O'Loughlin, an expert on climate change and geopolitics; Alexander Murphy, well-known for his work in political and cultural geography of Europe and the Middle East; Georg Gartner, an eminent cartographer; and Salomon Kronenberg, who is currently working with Russian scientists on a long-term study of the Caspian Sea.

— Will there be a programme for young scholars at the conference?

— Yes. Each of the five days will have several events for early-career attendees. They can also take part in a special dinner and orienteering games on the LMSU campus. There will be a special area for social interaction and activities coordinated by a younger committee. Of course, young scholars can also join any event in the main programme at the same level as more experienced colleagues.

— Haverecent geopolitical issues made conference preparations more difficult?



— As evident in the number of registrants, we haven't faced major problems. The Foreign Ministry supported simplification of visa procedure through special request for all Consulates of Russian Federation abroad. We expect representatives from more than 50 countries.

— What are your personal expectations for the event?

— This year, my main interest is in successful planning and execution. I hope our guests find the conference truly valuable, inquiring about the organisational process and saying "thank you" in Russian. I also hope there will be plenty of time for interaction with friends and colleagues with whom I'll be holding sessions on joint projects.

Developing international ties is of great importance in the sciences today; without cooperation across borders there are extremely limited possibilities for new research. Above all, I hope this year's regional conference will help establish connections between participants that bolster understanding and peace in the world.

This interviewis by
Evgeniya FROLOVA,
deputy director of CTO Congress

Participants feedbacks

International relations and new knowledge

The regional conference's participants of the International geographical union (IGU 2015) which will be held at MSU on August 17-21th, told about why they go to Moscow. Scientists and the beginning researchers from different continents shared their expectations from the forthcoming event

Genghe Gao (China)
Professor of Henan University of Economics and Law

For the first time I heard that the IGU Conference 2015 will be held in Moscow at the last event in Poland, I read more about this on the website of the conference and decided to take part. My main goal is exchange of scientific and professional experience with foreign colleagues. The greatest interest in the program for me is the migration issues. I would like to get acquainted with scientific results of working groups of experts studying this area.

Jelena Milanković (Serbia)
Graduate student of the Faculty of Mathematics and Natural studies, University of Novi Sad

As for me, particular significance of the IGU conference is in bringing together graduate students and students of different disciplines and research areas from all over the world. Young scientists have opportunity to present their works, to show their professional skills and to share with each other scientific knowledge. Certainly, a lot of creative solutions will be found there. I'm going to present a research paper that I prepared during my studies. In addition, taking part in this conference is a great opportunity to expand my professional knowledge, make new friends and professional acquaintances. I am interested in scientific program and the speakers themselves, so I will try to embrace the most of it. I have very positive expectations; I am satisfied with the work of organizing committee and friendly staff, with whom I communicated during registration.

Michael Sascha Henninger (Germany),
Head of Physical Geography Department, Kaiserslautern University of Technology

Every year I try to take part in the regional conferences of the IGU. I'm particularly happy that this year the conference will be held in Moscow, in a beautiful city that I wanted to visit for a long time. Regarding the scientific program, I'm keen on everything that relates to physical geography. I am interested in issues of climate, meteorology and, of course, city climate and urban planning, because I am an expert in these areas.

Dmitry Martyanov
(Russia, St. Petersburg) geography teacher SBEI "Center Dynamics"

My interest in the conference is purely professional. I graduated from the Faculty of Geography, and then started teaching in schools and began my studies in graduate school at the Department of economic geography. I am especially glad that the conference takes place in Russia this year. The lack of Russian-language version of the conference website is the only inconvenience to me, although it seems fair, considering the international status of the event. IGU conference is too important an event to be missed. I'm interested in everything that concerns the problems of World development and social relations: social and economic aspects of regional development and the development of individual countries, ethnic and cultural diversity of population, development of modern cities, global and regional problems and ways of their solution. I learned about the conference by chance. A friend, who organizes scientific congresses, sent me a link to the group of the IGU conference on the social networks. At the moment I am immersed in work on my scientific report. I am sure it will help me to broaden my knowledge on the profile topic. Besides, participation in the conference is a great opportunity to meet young scientists and professionals in their field from all around the world.

Beatriz Barbi de Oliveira Santos (Brazil),
the aviation routes strategic planning analyst of the Azul LinhasAéreas Brasileiras company, the master of the Campinas State University

I was informed about the IGU conference in Moscow by my scientific adviser. University's colleagues recommended me to take part in it. The decision was made quickly, so the IGU Conference is one of the most important events in the world of geography which covering all aspects of researches and uniting thousands of participants from around the world. The venue became a decisive factor for me. Moscow is the city with rich culture and I wished to visit it for a long time. I highly appreciated the level of organization: the handy web site, easy procedure of registration and payment. Up to me the participation in the IGU 2015 is an opportunity of growth and an exchange of knowledge. Moreover it's an excellent chance to share own researches! In the scientific program I am interested in issues associated with the natural disasters, climatic changes and the geographical information systems (GIS) technologies. These are subjects on which the theoretical part of my master's thesis is based. First of all, I'd like to hear the Professor Gordon McBean among all experts.

Svetlana Budnik (Ukraine),
Professor of Zhitomir National Agroecological University

I was informed about the forthcoming conference concerning the problem of erosive, fluvial and estuarial processes by the Inter-University scientific coordination council (MSU). I was attracted by the diversity of the scientific program. All Conference themes worthy of attention that's why I plan to visit as much reports as possible. I hope to have an opportunity to speak with colleagues from many countries and different scientific interests, to learn more about new geographical researches and to acquire new knowledge.

Essentials

IGU History

The history of the International Geographical Union (IGU) — as is well known — spans many decades, but its congresses emerged even earlier. The first congress took place in Antwerp in 1871, and the IGU was founded in Brussels in 1922.

The union developed an organisational structure during its early years that remains in place to this day. It consists of three main divisions:

- the general assembly — the highest governing body, made up of elected delegates from each member country who meet during congresses;
- the executive committee, with a president, eight vice presidents, a general secretary and a treasurer;
- commissions and study groups that work continuously between congresses.

The IGU has members from 87 countries participating in 34 commissions and 4 study groups. Official languages are English and French.

There have been 32 IGU congresses, which take place every four years. Members of the general assembly vote to determine congress locations. The USSR became part of the IGU in 1956 and hosted its first congress in 1976.

This year, Russian geographers will hold the IGU Regional Conference at Lomonosov Moscow State University. Its timing coincides with the 170th anniversary of the Russian Geographical Society.

IGU Moscow 2015 will focus on five main themes: urban environment, polar studies, climate change, global conflicts, and regional sustainability. The programme is rooted in principles of diversity and interdisciplinary exchange. It will feature a variety of meetings, including plenary sessions, lectures, panel discussions, workshops and other events. There will also be opportunities to share ideas on IGU projects and the role of geographers in international initiatives such as Future Earth. Geographical education and integration of young scholars will be central to each of the conference themes. The programme will feature a day for young scholars as well as sessions on "Academic Geography for Secondary Schools" and "Teaching Geography in the University." IGU Moscow will also include the 2015 International Geographical Olympiad.

Field season

P. 1

Geographical field training

Field practice, department	Area	Contents
First- year students		
Multidisciplinary geographical field training	Satino RTC, Kaluga Oblast.	Multidisciplinary geographical field training includes 7 separate trainings of different durations that extend corresponding curricula courses: Topography and basics of Geodesy, Geomorphology and Geology, Fundamentals of soil science, Geobotany and Biogeography, Hydrology, Meteorology and Landscape Science
Second- year students		
Department of Physical Geography and Landscape Studies	Meshchyorsky National Park- landscapes of plains	Routes transect studies and key studies of morphological structure, functional and dynamic organization of landscapes. Creation of landscapes maps and profiles
	The Elbrus RTC- landscapes of mountains	Similarly to plain field training, but considering the specific of mountain conditions – fixation of boundaries and description of the high-altitude zones structure, mudflow and avalanche geosystems, exposure differences of different mountain ridges and landscape successions in areas of polychronal deglaciation and others. Medium-scale mapping and profiling.
Department of Cryolithology and Glaciology	The Elbrus RTC	Routes in the area of field training - Elbrus, along the valley of the Baksan River and its tributaries, on the slopes of Elbrus Mountain on the abs. altitudes 2300 - 3500 - 3700 - 3950 m. The study of snow cover and its structure in the pits, studies of cryogenic landforms and inspection of mudflows activity and others.
	Permafrost Laboratory of the Institute of Permafrost. Melnikova SB RAS; Norilsk, Krasnoyarsk Krai: Research and Production Association «Foundation»	The study of tundra and forest tundra permafrost landscape diversity. Studying of tundra vegetation as an indicator of permafrost conditions. Drilling wells and outcrop description of permafrost, ground ice and paleocryogenic formations. Thermometric observations in wells arranged in permafrost, within different vegetation and soil cover. Field measurements of seasonal thawing soil depth in different landscape and lithological conditions. Field routes and descriptions of heaving mounds, polygonal vein systems, depressions-ridge relief in areas of tersokarst, hasyreev (alases), solifluction slopes and other forms of permafrost genesis. Examination of the foundations facilities constructed and operated on the permafrost. Assessment of engineering and cryogenic processes intensity on the economic development of the territories, including the pipeline systems in permafrost.
Department of Geomorphology and Paleogeography	White Sea Biological RTC	Introduction and holding echo sounding and seismic profiling; sampling of bottom sediments; familiarization with the results of the diving and television shooting seabed materials and results of side-scan sonar. Surveying work. Instrumental leveling of terraces. Detection of disjunctive dissection of morphostructural plan of set territory coast. Measurements of fracture and elements dip and strike of the bedrock. Geomorphological mapping at different scales.
	Khibiny Mountains, Kirovsk RTC	The geological structure studies of the multi-center intrusive massifs of the Kola Peninsula. Measurements of fracture and elements dip and strike of the bedrock. Description and testing of key sections of unconsolidated sediments in the region. The study of the geomorphological structure and processes of modern low-mountain ranges and denudation plain background. Geomorphological mapping at different scales.
Department of Biogeography	Sub-tropics: West Caucasus, Utrish RTC	Familiarization with the morphological features of zenosoforming representatives of flowering plants biological families. The study of biodiversity, vegetation and animal population of the Xerophyte Mediterranean forests type of the Northwest Caucasus.
	Taiga: Northern East-European Plain, Arkhangelsk RTC	Flora and vegetation, fauna and animal population studies. The study of spatial distribution of rare and endangered species of birds and mammals. Development of ecological routes content and other.
Department of Cartography and Geoinformation	Solovetsky Biological RTC	Familiarization with field methods of interpretation of snapshots of different resolutions, seasons and times. Studying how to work with field devices. Conducting field interpretation. Creation of maps and cartography materials.
	White Sea Biological RTC; Biological Station Kartesh of Zoological Institute RAS	Getting practical skills for creating geodetic base maps and field mapping
Department of Economic and Social Geography of Russia	Shuysky district, Ivanovo Oblast	Working in the city`s and district`s administrations. Visiting the leading industrial enterprises of the city and district. Conducting a sociological survey in the countryside and in the cities, and others.
	Bus route Moscow - Yaroslavl - Rybinsk - Poshekhonye - Cherepovets - Sheksna - Vologda - Ferapontovo - Belozersk - Vytegra - Medvezhyegorsk - Petrozavodsk - Lodeynoye Pole - Tikhvin - Kingisepp - St. Petersburg - Vyborg - Moscow	The study of the relations between the diversity of natural landscapes and related forms of territorial organization of society. A study of socio-economic development problems of the region - the city - Municipal District.
Social and Economic geography of the Foreign Countries	USA	To acquire competency of the field social and economic work in the foreign country's framework
Geography of World Economy	Czech Republic	To study the Czech Republic in the economic and social space of the European Union
	Nizhny Novgorod and suburbs	To study the features of the region development of practice: use of natural, cultural and historical resources, traditional and new branches, development of social infrastructure, etc.
Land Hydrology	Middle Oka river, Tregubovo RTC	1. To organize the hydrological post and realize the water-measuring supervision; 2. To measure the depth and carry out a map of waterway in isobaths and horizontals; 3. To define the maximum spring flood flow on the tags of high waters; 4. To choose the position of hydrologic section and river discharger measurement; 5. To analyze the ripple-wake and sediment suspensions; 6. To analyze the hydrobiological condition of a length of river, express assessment of water quality; 7. The hydrographic inspection and description of a length of river and its valley.
	Krasnovidovskaya RTC	To organize the comprehensive efforts on the surface water body; the chemical analysis of water tests; the hydrobiological supervision and analyse the operation of hydraulic engineering constructions
	Kyrgyzstan, Chon-Kyzyl-Syy RTC	The field hydrological and hydrochemical works on the mountain water objects territories
Oceanology	The Gelendzhik and Sevastopol RTC	To acquire competency of work with oceanology devices and the equipment from the mooring, on small watercrafts and on the forwarding vessel. To acquire competency of modern ways of primary data processing supervision, including use of personal computers, and methods of the preliminary analysis of forwarding materials. Acquaintance with the regional features of structure and dynamics of coastal waters of the Black Sea.
Meteorology and Climatology	Khibiny Mountaains	To study the radiation streams of the terrestrial surface and transparency of the atmosphere, synoptic processes over the Kola Peninsula, temperatures of the ground layer of air (a vertical profile and temporary variability), microclimatic features of hillsides, etc.
World Physical Geography and Geoecology	National park Smolensk Poozerye – Smolensk – The Western Berezina geostation	To study the main geoenvironmental problems of the East European Plain central part flat regions and ways of their decisions, development of skills of studying of modern landscapes, etc.
	Khibiny Mountaains RTC	To study the main geoenvironmental problems of northern territories and the ways of their decisions, development of modern landscapes studying skills of northern territories, etc.
Nature management and Geoecology	Krasnovidovskaya RTC	Works on the water area of the Mozhaisk reservoir: studying of a thermal termika of a large reservoir, distribution of the dissolved oxygen on a vertical and on the areas of a reservoir, sampling for laboratory analyses, determination of transparency of water, a mineralization and pH. Carrying out laboratory hydrochemical analyses.
	Sevastopol branch of MSU	Acquaintance with features of environmental management and geoecological situation of the Black Sea coast, studying of anthropogenous impact on landscapes and a state of environment in the conditions of the submediterranean climate, development of methods of field studying of environmental management and anthropogenous changes of landscapes
	Khibiny Mountaains RTC	To study the main types of environmental management and development of methods of field geoecological researches in the course of studying the environment changes brought about by mining and metallurgical industry, nuclear power; and problems of land reclamation
Recreational Geography and International Tourism	Turkey	To study the experience of the tourist companies in this direction, definition of the most popular tourist routes, areas and the centers, in the analysis of formation of a national tourist's product and methods of its promotion in the world tourist market. Acquaintance to work of various enterprises of the tourism industry on the concrete direction in actual market conditions.
Landscape Geochemistry and Soil Geography	Moscow region, RTC of Soil faculty of MSU; the National Park the Stone steppe (The Voronezh region, the Settlement of Novobobrovka (The Crimea, Russian Federation, branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University in Sevastopol)	To study the zone features of soil formation, the main types of landscapes and their components, identification geochemical features of the soils located in various physiographic conditions; obtaining skills of field diagnostics of soils and methods of chemical analysis researches
	Arkhangelsk RTC, Ustiyansky region	To study the soil cover features of the studying area and development the field large-scale mapping methods

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