

Final Report

for Student Research on Sustainability 2015
in National Sustainable Energy Policy
at the Saint-Petersburg State University in Russia
under the University Alliance for Sustainability framework

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Research working title: The Concept of Energy Sustainability in National Mid- and Long-term Energy Strategy of the Russian Federation: Discourse Analysis focusing on Environmental NGOs' Perception

The research stay at the Saint Petersburg State University has allowed me most importantly to interview 14 experts in the field of energy politics in Russia, among which 7 were from environmental NGOs. I have also got in touch with think tank experts and academic researchers in Russia and have a first insight into education in politology in Russia, as well as structures of governmental documents and data.

My primary contact person of the partner institution is Assistant Professor Alexander Nikiforov. We have met every two weeks during my research stay. He has provided very helpful suggestions to my research planning and implementation. He has tried to find experts for me to interview, introduced the structure of the Russian governmental website and documentation style, proposed me to track the governmental contract website to make sure which institutes were involved in the making of energy strategy. All in all, he has been my most important academic contact in Russia.

I have interviewed following experts from related institutions in Saint Petersburg and Moscow.

	Name	Institution	Title
1	Stanislav Babitch	State University of Economics Saint Petersburg	Professor in Energy Economics
2	Irina Mironova	Energy Research Institute, Russian Academy of Science	Docent, Researcher in Energy Economics
3	Liubov Volkova	State University of Economics Saint Petersburg	Docent, Researcher in Sustainability

4	Maxim Titov	Former employee IFC	Energy Efficiency Finance Project Manager
5	Olga Senova	Ecological Center	Director
6	Vladimir Chuprov	Green Peace	Director of Climate and Energy Program
7	Alexy Kokorin	WWF	Director of Climate and Energy Program
8	Ksenia Vakhrusheva	Bellona (Environmental Human Right Organisation)	Director of Renewable Energy Department
9	Alexander Kurdin	Analytical Center for the Government of the Russian Federation	Director of Energy Strategy Department
10	Jack Sharples	European University Saint Petersburg	Docent of Energy Economics
11	Leonid Grigoryev	Higher School of Economics of Moscow	Director of Global Economics Program, Board Director of WWF
12	Angelina Davydova	Russian-German Exchange	Journalist in Climate and Energy Policy
13	Irina Shmeleva	Institute of Sustainable Development	Director, also professor in Sustainability
14	Oleg Bodrov	Green World	Founder, Nuclear Expert and Physist

During my research stay, I was also visiting researcher for an international environmental NGO, Bellona, and the topic of my research is exactly the same. I have agreed to publish part of my research on the website of Bellona, and I work in their office. I have closely observed how an ENGO tries to make an impact and survive. I have attended all weekly staff meetings and reported my progress, too. In my spare time, I have given classes about climate change in German and English, as a themed foreign language class, at the Goethe Schule and a middle school in Pushkin district. Students were from 9 to 14 years old, and they were very interested in the topic. My colleagues, environmental lawyers and experts, were all very nice and offered me much help with contacting ENGOs and have given me much contractive comments and suggestions.

One of the most challenging part is to contact governmental officials for interviews. The closest I can get to is a closely related think tank for the Russian Government.

I have attended public events organized by Institute for Sustainability Development, together with my buddy, where I have met interesting people, including normally hardly approachable city officials. It is a very interesting way to listen to the debate on controversies in public discourse.

I have visited different offices of different institutions in Saint Petersburg and Moscow, talked to experts and people with so diverse political opinions, and I have even drove by Karabash, one of the most polluted town in the world. It is a small town with a population of about 12 thousand people located in the southern Urals, in the Chelyabinsk region, about 90 km from Chelyabinsk. This town is one of the largest copper smelting centers in Russia, known for its severe environmental situation.

From the first day on, I have a buddy, Ekaterina Avdeeva. Katja has helped me a lot in adapting to life in Russia. She has even invited me to her family new year's gathering to experience a typical Russian new year. I am very grateful for her help and look forward to meeting her in Germany, when she will be on Erasmus Exchange.

During my stay, the exchange rate has dropped from 1 Euro for 65 rubles to 1 Euro for 85 rubles. I can feel deeply how the volatile economy severely influence people's attitude on mid- and long-term planning. The hesitation of investment or support of renewable energy is understandable under Russian circumstances, not just in the recent year, but since the early 90s. I have also worked for Bellona to plea for the release of environmentalist against the pollution of Sochi Olympics. And none of the NGOs I have interviewed would organize any protest on environmental issues, while half of them face financial issues and almost all of them concerns about the notorious "foreign agent law", even though more than half of the interviewed NGOs were funded and organized locally. Climate and Energy policy stays low on the political agenda, and is almost nonexistent in the public media.

Sustainability is a complex topic and I think, stable economy is one of the most important index for sustainability, and the basis of improving other index. My research will further analyze interview materials and text from government paper, to figure out the different meaning of, as well as solutions for Sustainable Energy in the context of Russia, and why different actors are standing behind different meanings.

This research trip has influenced my future goals through inspiration of environmentalist in Russia:

Nuclear Expert has heard the calling while he was forbidden to publish the environmental impact assessment result, and turned to be an antinuclear expert; professor in sustainability got expelled from University and continue research while establish an academic NGO;

Persistent expert in energy efficiency finally convince local sweets business to upgrade their machine, and helped them to pay back the financing through energy savings, and he smiled at me and said, knowing that their competitiveness is stronger, while reducing CO2 emission, equivalent 500 soviet time outdated automobile per year, is the happiest thing and he is proud to have chosen not to work for traditional fossil energy sector;

Docent in sustainability living under a difficult salary level, much appointed unrelated classes and almost no time to conduct own research, still strongly believes that education is the most valuable work in the world, and believes that she can make a difference in mother Russia by influencing her students.

Such moments make me believe, that there is something called the passion for a better world, which is more important than money and it has a very profound impact on my future.