**The Dutch-Russian Law Association – Steering Group Meeting**

**Date**: 16-07-2025

**Time**: 11:00–12:00 Amsterdam time

**Location**: Online via MS Teams

**Chair**: Ernst van Gassen

Invited:

* Ernst van Gassen (treasurer and co-chair)
* Ruth van der Pol (Advisory Board member)
* Liudmila van der Pol
* Rimma Antonova
* Wim Timmermans
* Roustam Vakhitov

Present:

* Ernst van Gassen
* Rimma Antonova
* Roustam Vakhitov

**Agenda:**

**1. Opening and welcome**

* Opening remarks by the chair
* Short round of introductions for all participants
* Objectives of the meeting: establishing coordination, planning forward strategy, and confirming key next steps

**2. Attendance**

* List of participants

**3. Administrative updates (background for new participants)**

3.1. Move to GoDutch from ING (pending integration feature)

* The board has decided to switch to Go Dutch for expense and subscription payments.
* The move will take place after Go Dutch enables payment link integration, which is expected in Q3 of 2025.

3.2. ConsultantPlus subscription (pending decision)

* The board has been considering a subscription to ConsultantPlus (a Russian legal reference system).
* If the decision is made to proceed, the subscription may be arranged via William’s Russian bank account. Potentially a YuMoney card?
* Clarification is needed regarding costs, license limits, and how this service would integrate into DRLA activities.

**4. Status of key initiatives**

4.1. Digital lecture series & content development

* Prof. Feldbrugge and Prof. Wim Timmermans have declined participation in public lecture series.
* Alternatives being explored:
  + Exploring cooperation with OpenEdu.ru (a Russian initiative for educational content). This would entail translation of Russian university lectures, with focus on copyright-free or openly licensed material

4.2. Knowledge base

* A key ambition of the original DRLA board was to establish a digital knowledge base.
* Next step: identify contributors and define technical requirements for publication (e.g. licensing under Creative Commons).
* Ernst reached out to the librarian of the East European Law Department at Universiteit Leiden to explore possibilities of cooperation.

4.3. AI-based translation pilots

* Ernst has successfully piloted AI translation of Dutch legal texts to English (Wetboek van Burgerlijke Rechtsvordering).
  + Ernst reached out to ms. Julia Kroes to ask her we can use her translation of Book 4 Rv as a basis to translate other parts of Wetboek van Burgerlijke Rechtsvordering to Russian. She, however, has decided not to reply to my messages so far.
* Next step: assess feasibility of extending this project to other laws, particularly where source material is rights-free.
  + Discuss: There seem to be copyright free translations available, on which AI can be trained. Is there a need for Russian laws to be translated to English/Dutch and visa versa?
  + Plus: who would be willing to check the translations?

**5. Website reconstruction & digital policy**

* Should the current DRLA website be taken offline and marked as “under reconstruction”?
* Discuss new website goals:
  + Remove politically sensitive legacy content
  + Add multilingual interface (English default, official messages to be translated to Dutch and Russian using standard tools)
  + Highlight neutral, academic collaboration focus
  + Add a forum where members can discuss things? Separate subdomain? (community.thedrla.org)
* Web admin role and development timeline to be discussed and assigned

**6. Content strategy & lecture planning**

6.1. Lecture themes (initial focus areas)

* Legal history (Dutch and Russian)
* Legal culture and civil law norms
* Judicial ethics
* Civil procedure
* Note: topics such as Criminal and Administrative Law will be avoided for now due to sensitivity.

6.2. Collaboration & external speakers

* Legal professionals from outside the Netherlands and Russia may be invited on a case-by-case basis
* A due diligence check (e.g. sanction lists) will be conducted beforehand
* Suggestion: Rimma could oversee this aspect, given her familiarity with current restrictions

6.3. Role of advisory board in content review

* The proposal is to involve the Advisory Council in a consultative capacity when it comes to approving lecture topics
* Final decisions and responsibility rest with the Executive Board
* Purpose: reduce workload and increase transparency, while safeguarding DRLA’s neutral stance

**7. Outreach and institutional collaboration**

* Status of outreach to other legal associations:
  + German-Russian Lawyers Association e.V. (contact initiated by Heleen, went quiet afterwards)
  + Anglo-Russian Law Association (not contacted)
  + Others (to be checked)
* Goal: explore academic and educational partnerships without political entanglements
* Option: mutual publication of non-political academic content, translated and circulated

**8. Planning the general annual meeting**

* Agreement to hold a broader annual meeting to present these plans
* Ernst: I do think we should move forward with all and any plans that can be acted upon, to prevent further intertia
* Discussion points:
  + Format: Online (via MS Teams)
  + Agenda items
  + Final date (proposed options between late August and mid-September)
  + Organising team and communications

**9. Other business**

* Suggestions and input from participants
* Brief roundtable: what should be prioritised for Q3 and Q4 2025?

**10. Closing**

* Recap of action points and assignments
* Confirmation of next Steering Group meeting
* Adjournment