

# RUSSIA IS A GREAT EDUCATIONAL POWER

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Russian universities present a wide range of educational institutions. There exist the classical universities that have deep historical roots, but there are very few of such universities. And then there are institutions of higher education that have become universities during the last two decades and they tend to remain largely specialised. Take, for instance, the University of Oil and Gas, or the Mining University (which, by the way, is not the only one having this name), and there are also universities of engineering and road transport. All of these educational institutions are called universities namely for one key reason. That is, according to the existing Russian law 'On education', the hierarchy of insti-

tutes of higher education is spelled out as follows: institutes, academies and universities. It is only natural that almost all institutes of higher education are striving to become universities. In order to achieve this objective, they have undertaken to develop new supplementary programs, including those in the humanitarian sphere.

**Russia has inherited a modern educational system from the Soviet Union. In the USSR, under the circumstances of the scientific-technical revolution, the share of the intelligentsia continually grew and the prestige of higher education also constantly increased.** People who didn't have a higher education dreamt that their children would be able to obtain it. This stereotype, in the finest sense of this word, contained strong meaning and continued developing until now.

In the post-Soviet period, under the circumstances of the country's transition to a market economy, the amount of spaces in institutions of higher education markedly increased, mainly due to the appearance of educational opportunities with non-governmental institutions, including those operating in the sphere of higher education. At the same time, it is unfortunately the case that **vocational education at a lower level has suffered badly, primarily with respect to vocational-technical education.** Thus, in effect, this system no longer exists today. Specialised secondary educational institutions tried to implement a transformation into ones that could provide some degree, if only partially, of higher education. To which extent they have managed to achieve this is a question that requires separate analysis.

**Modernisation is possible only under those conditions, whereby our universities will provide its students with a high-quality education that will allow the human capital of our country to compete with specialists from other countries** and where this will lead to finding breakthrough directions with respect to scientific-technical, humanitarian and social progress. On the other hand, along with continuing scientific-technical progress and informational revolution arises particular demands with respect to the

quality of life of employees. It is for this reason that the number of students studying at the higher education level should not be reduced based on the fact that the country needs to resolve some new tasks. The educational system must provide an opportunity to obtain a higher education for everyone interested in pursuing this end.

**Russia needs to develop engineering schools that are oriented towards innovative breakthrough industries.** We most certainly should not neglect the fundamental sciences. Fundamental knowledge is called such due to the fact that it allows any person to undergo retraining in accordance with the demands of real production. Demand changes much faster than degrees can be obtained. The winning candidates are the ones who stand firm on a fundamental basis. By the way, life under market conditions has demonstrated that the most successful specialists in the fundamental education of separate economic sectors are graduates of the Physics Department of MSU, the Moscow Engineering and Physics Institute, and the Institute of Physics and Technology.

The USSR was a world leader in terms of the creation of engineers. **Today, it is unreal to re-create the Soviet system of education, which produced, first of all, engineers, and there is even no need to do so.** Today, many of the creations designed by Soviet engineers, do not exist at all. But Russia still has Baikonur and other space-launch complexes. Just as before, we still want to be a leading space power. And specialists express fears to the effect that there will be a lack of properly specialised engineers in the future.

**Russia is a great educational power,** just as Great Britain, Germany and France. It is great not because it is large, but because all fields of higher education are represented in the country, including both those that provide immediate benefits and those, that may bring results at a later point. **The status of a great educational power is one of our competitive advantages, and one of the resources in the development of our country. ■**

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