

## ASSOCIATION OF LEADING UNIVERSITIES AT A GLANCE

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**Association of federal universities, national research universities, Lomonosov Moscow State University and Saint-Petersburg State university** (Association of leading universities), ALU, is a Russian non-governmental non-profit organization established in 2010 to facilitate public expertise of legislative and other governmental and private initiatives in the area of HE and Science, as well as a collective representation of its members, a coordinating body for their joint educational, scientific, public, international and other activities and a think-tank for sharing experience.

As **top goal**, ALU strives to improve the overall quality of higher education, research and innovation in Russia. According to this goal, ALU profile consists of key activities as below:

- ✓ Expertise of national and international projects of HE and R&D modernization
- ✓ Integrating and sharing resources
- ✓ Creating common informational space for ALU members and partners
- ✓ Enhancing interaction and networking of ALU members and partners
- ✓ Promoting international cooperation and internationalization of ALU members
- ✓ Improving domestic legislative environment of HE and R&D
- ✓ Introducing world's best practices of HEI management to ALU members

Association's **social mission** is to contribute to the dynamic growth and development of Russia's scientific and technological sector and to provide highly qualified staff for its demands.

Association's **general mission** is seen as accumulating and sharing global positive experience in education, training, R&D and innovations.

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### ALU IN BRIEF

The Association was established as a response to the challenge of raising competition on both domestic and global education markets as well as a new tool to achieve the ambitious goal declared by the Russian President as that at least 5 Russian universities should get into Top-100 of world's major university rankings by 2020.

Unlike traditional national rectors' unions or associations of specific field-focused universities, ALU incorporates a very special group of Russian universities that top domestic rankings, show outstanding score in education and research and belong to one of four groups:

- Lomonosov Moscow State University and Saint-Petersburg State University - two national majors that gained their unique status, great academic and financial

autonomy including the right to award own diplomas by a special governmental order.

- Federal Universities – major regional hubs that appeared by merger of several regional universities and institutes. All 10 Federal Universities are members of ALU.
- National Research Universities – research-oriented universities that obtained this status (and additional funding accordingly) for 10 years in a tough competitive race during a recent national contest. All 29 National Research Universities are members of ALU.
- A group of five universities that formally do not belong to any of the abovementioned groups, but were invited to join the Association by a solid vote of ALU General Assemblies in 2013 and 2015 for showing overall top-score and outstanding quality of education and research: Moscow State Institute of International Relations (University), the Russian Presidential Academy of National Economy and Public Administration (RANEPA), Saint-Petersburg Electrotechnical University (LETI), People’s Friendship University of Russia and Financial University under the Government of the Russian Federation.

These universities concentrate the best of the teaching staff and the most authoritative scientific schools. ALU member universities are the most attractive for students among others. There are 772, 033 students studying at these universities, 27 197 among them are Doctorate students.

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## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

Association’s organizational structure includes:

**General Assembly** is the top collegial governing body that consist of all members’ representatives, since ALU has institutional membership instead of personal.

**The Council** is Association’s collegial elective operating body comprised of representatives of 9 members: Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Boris Yeltsin Ural Federal University, Higher School of Economics, Lobachevsky State University of Nizhni Novgorod, Lomonosov Moscow State University, Lomonosov Northern (Arctic) Federal University, National Mineral Resources University, Saint-Petersburg State University, Tomsk Polytechnic Univesity.

**ALU Chairman** is the leader of the Association and its sole executive and representative body. The Chairman is elected by the General Assembly from the Council members. The Association is chaired by member of ALU Council, rector of Saint-Petersburg University, professor, Dr. Nikolay Kropachev.

The **Secretary Office** of Association carries out the everyday work. Senior vice-rector of Saint-Petersburg University Dr. Ilya Dementiev is the Head of Secretary Office.

## RECENT ACTIVITIES

Recently ALU's activities were mainly focused on providing **high-quality expertise** to different initiatives including state projects. Among them are two major state-driven ones:

*First* project was drafting of new federal law "On education" – basic legislative act that governs overall issues of education in Russia. ALU was among very few other Russian non-governmental organizations invited by the Government to take part in performing this vital task. ALU experts presented their proposals on the draft law during the hearings at the State Duma (Federal Parliament), at the Civic Chamber of the Russian Federation as well as at the Ministry of Higher Education and Science. Most amendments proposed by ALU to the draft law were accepted and appeared in the final version of the federal law adopted on December 29<sup>th</sup> 2012.

As the follow-up of this project, ALU experts were invited to governmental working groups to establish the necessary regulations for the basic law implementation.

*Second* one was a throughout monitoring and evaluation of education and research quality as well as financial health and general efficiency of Russian HEIs for the purpose of further system revitalization. This project has been launched in 2012 by the Russian Ministry of Higher education and science and ALU experts were deeply involved in the criteria elaboration and monitoring approbation. In 2012 the Association played a key role of a public supervisor of this government-driven sanation process, as ALU experts were asked to evaluate the final reports. Now ALU experts are taking part in monitoring process and evaluation of education and research quality of Russian.

Beyond these two major projects, during 2012-2016 years more than two dozens of expert working groups were created within the Association to review and respond to various initiatives and projects in the field of higher education steering and development that cover legislative, infrastructural, educational, scientific and other issues.

Now ALU can be considered as a recognized expert pool and a core source of top-quality public expertise of both state-driven and private initiatives in the area of Russian higher education and science.

During 2012-2016 years ALU has carried out **about 30 projects** aimed to improve internal networking and cooperation between its members. Those projects included co-organized and co-hosted events, think-tank seminars and students' contests.

**International cooperation** and promotion of members is another focus of the Association, yet less developed than expertise and internal networking but bearing a great potential.

ALU's international cooperation pursues **two goals**:

- ✓ Promoting ALU members to the tops of international university rankings through creation of new mechanisms and platforms for internationalization and introducing best world's practices
- ✓ Evolving ALU to a source of "soft power" to promote Russian Higher education and Science worldwide

Together with the Embassy of Russia in Paris and Campus-France ALU co-organized a presentation of Russian Higher education to the international officers of French universities that took place on June 7, 2012 in Paris.

In September 2012 ALU Council member Viktor Koksharov co-chaired the Assembly of rectors of leading German and Russian universities that was held within the III International Students Forum organized by the Russian Federal Agency for international cooperation ("Rosstrudnichestvo").

In December 12, 2013 ALU hosted the delegation of German Rectors' Conference (HRK), German Centre for Research and Innovation, Moscow (DWIH) and German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD). The meeting of Russian and German universities' leaders became a tradition. Rectors and vice-rectors meet annually to discuss the current changes in Russian and German systems of education, share best practices in university management and implementation of educational and scientific projects.

Meetings between ALU Chairman and German Academic Exchange Service leaders resulted in signing (March, 2013) the **Framework agreement on cooperation between ALU and DAAD** which creates a new mechanism for enhancing cooperation between our members. In 2015 the text of the **Agreement of intent on Joint German-Russian Programme for PhD students and young researches «Abram Joffe»** was successfully finalized.

In autumn 2014 the Russian and Korean Rectors' Forum under the authority of ALU was held at Far Eastern Federal University in Vladivostok. The Forum helped to strengthen the existing relations and expanding further international cooperation in the field of education and science in Russia and South Korea. Not only rectors of leading Russian and Korean universities took part in Forum, but also students interested in establishing the international contacts and developing the educational and research activities. The Forum has also become a tradition and the representatives of ALU member universities keep on taking part in annual Russian and Korean Rectors' Forum held in the frames of Forum «Dialogue Russia-Republic of Korea».

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## CONTACTS

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