

## **NEU-SoIR launches Russian Studies Center**

The New Era University School of International Relations has officially launched its Russian Studies Center on June 4, 2021, via Google Meet. The Russian Studies Center (RSC) aims to foster a better understanding of Russia from its geography and history to language and culture, science and technology and international relations.

Among those present in the launching were Russian Ambassador to the Philippines His Excellency Marat Pavlov. In his speech, Ambassador Pavlov said that *“For a long time, due to low dynamics of political and economic ties with Russia, only enthusiasts study the Russian language in the Philippines but in the same time disregard also the Filipino language in Russia. It’s pleasant to know that the situation is changing. And we are witnessing that there is a tendency to institutionalize not only the study the Russian language but Russia itself with its rich culture and history. We believe that the opening of Russian Studies Center under the New Era University will be demanded among the Filipino students and will contribute to professional growth as unique specialists with knowledge of Russian and of Russia.”*

RSC adviser and Philippine Ambassador to Russia, H.E. Carlos Sorreta was also present. In his speech, Ambassador Sorreta said, *“The establishment of the Russian Studies Center, under the School of International Relations of the New Era University comes at a time when the Philippine Government has decided to close this strategic gap and broaden the frontiers of our foreign policy. Doing this is no easy task for building this relation burdened by history and politics. The Russian Studies Center is well placed to help the Republic in achieving this*

*task. As part of the New Era University, an institution with a global view, world-wide reach, and a profound pioneering spirit, the Russian Studies Center will play an important role in creating a better understanding of Russia, its people and its politics, its history and place in our world. It is in this context that I would like to offer my hearty congratulations for the launching of the website of the Russian Studies Center.”*

Other members of the RSC Board of Advisors, Dr. Viktor Sumsky, Senior expert at MGIMO’s ASEAN Centre, and Dr. Ekaterina Koldunova, Acting Director of MGIMO’s ASEAN Center, also left messages for the attendees of the event.

Dr. Koldunova in her speech noted that *“Only learning more about each other can give us a better image of our relations in the future, including those of mutually beneficial projects, cultural, scientific and technological interconnections and the areas of economic complementarity. Launching the Russian Studies Center under the School of International Relations at the New Era University marks an important step in this direction. The enthusiasm of its founders, their genuine wish to “open” to its potential learners a true Russia – the biggest (and probably the most diverse) country in the world – is remarkable.”*

Dr. Sumsky, for his part, expressed gratitude for being tapped as one of RSC advisers. Among his initial advises was to *“Look around where you are, in Manila, in the Philippines, know people who are interested in Russian, knowledgeable about Russian to share the task of learning... look for partners, likeminded partners.”*

Engagements with the members of the RSC-BOA started in 2016, about two years before the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between the New Era University and the Moscow Institute of International Relations (MGIMO). These included speaking engagements in conferences in Vladivostok, Russia, conduct of roundtable discussions/forums at NEU, and tv interviews at Net 25. The eventual signing of the MOU in Moscow in May 2018 was organized by Ambassador Sorreta.

As for the Russian embassy, NEU also had a fruitful relationship with the former ambassador H.E. Igor Khovaev, and looks forward for an equally or even deeper cooperation with its new Chief of Mission, H.E. Ambassador Pavlov.

Eagle Broadcasting Chairman Atty. Theoben Jerdan Orosa, who is also a member of New Era University's Board of Trustees, also graced the virtual event along with several University officials.

With the launching of RSC, NEU looks forward to not just enriching students' academic understanding of Russia, but also to foster and establish more academic cooperation with Russian universities and institutions and to extend the hand of friendship with our counterparts and co-advocates of peace, prosperity and development.

