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The First Russia-China Legal Forum: Internationalization of Legal Science and Education within the Framework of Russian-Chinese Cooperation

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Abstract: On 28 November 2024, the First Russia-China Legal Forum was hosted by Kutafin Moscow State Law University (MSAL), marking a significant milestone in the collaboration between the educational and legal communities of Russia and China. The Forum was held under the auspices of 25th International Scientific and Practical Conference “Kutafin Readings” in partnership with 9 leading universities of China, Beijing Office of China Window Consulting Group, Commission on Financial Legislation of the Moscow Branch of the Association of Lawyers of Russia, bringing together prominent legal scholars, practitioners, and government officials from both countries. With the increasing geopolitical and economic interdependence between Russia and China, the need for a robust legal framework to facilitate bilateral educational efforts, trade and investment relationships, and technological advancements has become more pressing. The Forum served as a platform for discussing the legal challenges and opportunities arising from this partnership.

Keywords: China; Russia; legal education; legal framework; collaboration; harmonization; AI integration; bilateral efforts

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I. Introduction

The First Russia-China Legal Forum aimed to foster dialogue and cooperation in various areas of law, including legal education, international arbitration, alternative dispute resolution (ADR), intellectual property rights, and cross-border transactions.¹ With the increasing geopolitical and economic interdependence between Russia and China, the need for a robust legal framework to facilitate bilateral training programs, trade and investment relationships has become more pressing.

¹ The Forum program is available on the official website of Kutafin University. Available at: <https://msal.ru/upload/iblock/f7c/gzwmzguhu5uowy8qa47zp6zso2cc2t3q.pdf> [Accessed 16.03.2025]. (In Russ.).

The event featured a series of keynote speeches and reports, strategic panels, and networking sections. Notable speakers included **Liu Xiaohong**, President and Professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law, **Zheng Gaojian**, President of Gansu University of Political Science and Law, **Pavel Ustyuzhanin**, Executive Secretary of the Russian Panel of the Russian-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Member of the International Cooperation Committee of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP), **Jiang Siyuan**, Secretary-General of the Center for Exchange and Cooperation at the Legal Services Commission for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), **Pavel Troshchinsky**, Head of the Center for Political Research and Forecasting at the Institute of China and Contemporary Asia of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IKSA RAN), **Nikita Molchakov**, Dean of the International Law Faculty at the Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO) of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, **Wang Zhihua**, Chairman of the Research Center for Russian Law at the China University and Secretary-General of the Comparative Law Association of China, **Igor Pozdnyakov**, Education Advisor, Representative of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation in the People's Republic of China, **Long Changhai**, Professor at Inner Mongolia University, **Elvira Radnaeva**, Director of the Institute of Law and Economics at Buryat State University named after Dorzhi Banzarov, **Wei Puzan**, LL.M., China University of Political Science and Law and postgraduate student at Saint Petersburg State University. All the keynote speakers of the panel provided insightful perspectives on the evolving legal landscape in both countries. The discussions highlighted the importance of harmonizing legal standards and practices to enhance mutual understanding and cooperation.²

Thus, in the report entitled "Challenges and Responses of Digital Technology to Legal Education" **Liu Xiaohong**, President and Professor at Shanghai University of Political Science and Law,

² Leading educational institutions and academic schools were represented at the Forum. Thus, review of MGIMO University scholarship participation is available at: <https://clck.ru/3HhxxT> [Accessed 16.03.2025]. (In Russ.).

focused on challenges that digital technology poses to legal education and options educational institutions have to respond effectively. The rapid advancement of technology necessitates urgent revisions to legal curricula that are expected to include emerging fields like data privacy, cybersecurity, the ethics of AI technologies application, etc. Traditional teaching methods are also evolving, with a shift towards online courses and interactive platforms that enhance flexibility and resource availability for students.

Educators and faculties cannot neglect the rise of artificial intelligence since AI technologies are transforming legal services, requiring legal education to integrate AI tools while fostering critical thinking about their implications. To prepare students for these changes, legal education should strengthen AI-related content and promote interdisciplinary collaboration with fields such as computer science. Enhancing students' technological skills, including data analysis and programming, is essential for addressing contemporary legal issues. Furthermore, international cooperation and exchanges among law schools can facilitate knowledge sharing and best practices application in tackling these challenges. The digital age offers both demands and opportunities for legal education, allowing us to cultivate talent suited for this new era. By continuously updating our educational approaches and embracing technological advancements, we can drive innovation within the legal field.

II. Forum Architecture

The First Russia-China Legal Forum was designed to facilitate meaningful dialogue and collaboration between legal experts, academics, and practitioners from both countries. Five key areas currently generating the greatest interest and concern among educators, students and representatives of science and law were determined in order to create an interactive and engaging environment that promoted knowledge sharing, collaboration, and the exploration of strategic legal initiatives between Russia and China.

II.1. Strategic Panel 1: Internationalization of Legal Science and Education

Participants of Strategic Panel 1 “Internationalization of Legal Science and Education” focused on the internationalization of legal education and research opportunities, exploring how legal institutions can adapt to global trends and collaborate under the auspices of research projects. The Panel emphasized the importance of transforming legal education to meet contemporary challenges and the need for innovative practices that align with international standards.

The Panel participants moderated by **Maria Mazhorina**, Vice Rector for Strategic and International Development at Kutafin University, discussed issues of contemporary models and best practices for transforming legal education, new scientific legal directions and forms of academic collaboration between Russian and Chinese universities, innovative jurisprudence, network interaction among universities in the field of legal education.

Jiang Siyuan, Secretary-General of the Exchange and Cooperation Center at the Legal Services Commission for the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (China), discussed perspectives for creation of a platform for providing legal services and the promotion of economic cooperation. Jiang Siyuan encouraged further uniting of experts and scholars both domestically and internationally, promoting exchanges and cooperation among various fields and industries, and acquiring genuine knowledge. She expressed expectations that “through in-depth discussions, everyone will not only discover new ideas but also deepen mutual understanding and strengthen friendships, thereby laying a more solid foundation for future exchanges and cooperation”.

One of the brightest speakers of the Panel **Qiang Yu**, Lecturer at the Institute of Law and Development of the Higher School of Economics-Skolkovo and College of Humanities and Law of Shandong University of Science and Technology, in his report “LegalTech and Legal Education in China”, argued that legal technology (LegalTech) encompassed tools enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of the legal system. However, legal education has not sufficiently adapted to the technical advancements. Chinese universities are biased towards research-based LegalTech professionals and experience a shortage of applied

professionals, resulting in a disconnect between academic training and practical legal needs. Therefore, LegalTech programs should be offered to undergraduates in all universities that provide legal education. In China, despite the presence of established LegalTech, there are limited educational offerings in this area, highlighting the urgent need for significant reforms to integrate legal technology into undergraduate curricula and address the shortage of qualified LegalTech professionals.

Various innovative approaches to legal education that have emerged in recent years need careful consideration. Their emergence encourages discussion of successful models adopted by universities worldwide, particularly in the context of integrating practical skills with theoretical knowledge, and how these models can be implemented in different educational systems. Emerging areas of legal research and the potential for collaborative projects between Russian and Chinese institutions also contribute to discussions. They highlighted the significance of cross-border partnerships in enhancing the quality of legal scholarship and education, fostering a deeper understanding of legal systems of both countries. Innovative jurisprudence encourages participants to examine the latest trends in jurisprudence, focusing on the challenges posed by technological advancements, changing societal values, facing the impact of artificial intelligence on legal practices, the need for regulatory adaptations, and the role of legal scholars in addressing these challenges.

Meanwhile, the issues of network interaction emphasized the importance of networking and collaboration among universities to enhance legal education. It encourages dialogue on creating platforms for knowledge exchange, joint research initiatives, and shared resources that can strengthen the legal academic community on an international scale.

To sum up, the Panel on the internationalization of legal science and education was pivotal in shaping the future of legal education. By addressing contemporary models, fostering international collaboration, and exploring innovative jurisprudential trends, the Panel aimed to provide valuable insights and practical recommendations for legal educators and researchers, giving them the opportunity to share experiences, challenges, and best practices, ultimately contributing to the evolution and harmonization of legal education.

II.2. Strategic Panel 2: Legal Aspects of Consulting Based on the Experience of Russia and China

As the subject of Strategic Panel implies, it was aimed at discussing the key issues of mediation perspectives in Russia and China, cooperation between law firms in both countries, multicultural aspects of legal cooperation and integration in providing legal services.

Lana Arzumanova, moderator of the Panel and Chairman of the Commission on Financial Legislation at the Moscow Branch of the Association of Lawyers of Russia, highlighted that educational tracks are structured based on the needs of employers, allowing universities to adopt a client-centric approach in response to market demands. Some Russian consulting companies are already providing support for Chinese businesses operating in Russia. In turn, educational institutions are actively collaborating with Chinese partners.

Strategic Panel 2, focusing on the intricate legal frameworks governing consulting practices in Russia and China, explored how those frameworks evolved in light of both countries' unique cultural and legal contexts. The Panel title itself emphasized a comparative approach, suggesting that insights can be drawn from the experiences of both countries to enhance legal consulting practices.

Mediation is a vital alternative dispute resolution mechanism that is gaining traction in both Russia and China. This panel likely addresses the current state of mediation practices in these countries, identifying key characteristics that define their mediation processes. It also explores future developments, considering how cultural attitudes towards conflict resolution and legal reform could shape the evolution of mediation practices.

Legal cooperation between Russia and China is inherently multicultural, influenced by the diverse legal traditions and cultural values of each country. This panel likely examines how these multicultural dimensions impact legal consulting practices, emphasizing the need for cultural competence among legal professionals. It may also discuss the importance of understanding each other's legal systems and cultural contexts to facilitate effective collaboration.

Speaking on “Sociocultural Features of Building Trusting Relationships in China”, **Ilya Buturlin**, Investment Manager at *Family Office* in Singapore, financial advisor, Associate Professor at Financial University and Member of the Commission on Financial Legislation at the Moscow Branch of the Association of Lawyers of Russia, focused on differences in the area of communication and providing feedback, attitude to hierarchy and leadership, managing time and attitude to schedule, trust and relationship building.

Gan Haosung, a first-year graduate student at the Department of Theory of Law and State, Faculty of Law, Lomonosov Moscow State University, devoted the report to the issues of collaboration between law firms in Russia and China. Consulting plays a key role in business, helping to make informed decisions and solve complex problems, but it faces a number of legal risks. The main risks of consulting are related to the leakage of confidential information, violation of intellectual rights, non-compliance with advertising and insufficient consumer protection. Minimizing these risks requires carefully drafted contracts, confidentiality, compliance with advertising requirements and regular audits.

Peri Izmaylova, Associate Professor at the Department of Public Law of GAUGN, Associate Professor at the Department of Fundamental Jurisprudence and International Law of the G.B. Mirzoev Russian Academy of National Economy and Public Administration, analyzed the role of negotiation skills with Chinese counterparts. In her opinion, the ability to negotiate with Chinese counterparties requires a deep understanding of cultural characteristics, respect for traditions and flexibility in approaches. With China's economy continuing to gain momentum, knowing and applying negotiation skills will be an important competitive advantage for international companies. Properly designed and developed negotiation skills also create the basis for long-term, stable mutually beneficial relations.

Fatima Konova, professional mediator at the Mediation Center of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP), Arbitrator at the Arbitration Center of the RSPP, compared the status and application of mediation in Russia and China. Unlike Russia, in China, mediation is included in the system of state executive power,

and the activities of mediators are voluntary-compulsory, paid and encouraged by the state. Despite the existing differences in the legal regulation of the institution of mediation in both countries, one thing remains the same — it is strategically important to regulate emerging conflicts in a peaceful way, establishing mechanisms for reconciliation, intercultural dialogue and the formation of trust between different peoples and states.

Anton Naku, legal advisor, Head of International Project Support Practice at CLS Law Firm, Associate Professor at the Department of Integrative Law and Human Rights at MGIMO University, told about experience and perspectives of collaboration between Law Firms in Russia and China.

The cooperation between Russian and Chinese law firms is pivotal for enhancing cross-border legal services. This part of the panel probably highlights successful case studies and shared experiences that illustrate the benefits of such collaborations. It may also delve into the challenges faced, such as differing legal systems and regulatory environments, and propose strategies for overcoming these obstacles to foster greater cooperation.

The integration of legal services is crucial for creating a seamless experience for clients operating in both Russia and China. This part of the panel may investigate how legal firms can align their services to meet the needs of a globalized market. It could also address the technological advancements and regulatory changes that are driving the integration of legal services, paving the way for more efficient and accessible legal consulting.

To sum up, Strategic Panel 2 offered a comprehensive examination of the legal aspects of consulting through the lens of Russia and China. By addressing key questions related to mediation, cooperation between law firms, multicultural considerations, and service integration, the Panel aimed to provide valuable insights that could enhance the effectiveness of legal consulting in both countries. This collaborative approach not only fosters a deeper understanding of each country's legal landscape but also promotes a more integrated and culturally sensitive practice of law.

II.3. Strategic Panel 3: Legal Regulation of Cross-Border Private Relations and International Business within the Framework of Russian-Chinese Cooperation

Strategic Panel 3 moderated by **Beniamin Shakhnazarov**, Professor at the Department of International Private Law and the Department of Intellectual Property, Head of the Center for Legal Support of Foreign Economic Activity, Import Substitution, and Industrial Development at Kutafin University (MSAL), addressed the complex legal landscape that governs cross-border private relationships and international business, particularly in the context of Russian-Chinese cooperation. More than a dozen of expert speakers focused on regulatory frameworks that facilitate or challenge business and legal interactions between the two countries. Discussions inevitably focused on the issues of contract law principles applicable in international contexts, the importance of clarity in contract drafting and the potential challenges posed by differing legal traditions and restricting measures. Participants also dwelled on the legal implications of cross-border non-profit relationships, such as family law and inheritance issues.

Thus, **Vera Aleinikova**, Leading Researcher at the Family Law and Inheritance Law Department of the S.S. Alekseev Research Center for Private Law under the President of the Russian Federation, spoke about the legal regulation of cross-border personal and property relations of spouses. The Family Code of the Russian Federation reflects the approach contained in the unified conflict-of-law rules of treaties and conventions to which the Russian Federation is a party. The conflict-of-law connections chosen by the Russian legislator when determining the applicable law for the personal and property relations of spouses mirror modern trends in international family law regulation.

Vsevolod Vasilyev, Senior Lawyer at the Law Firm “YuST Isakov, Afanasyev, Ivanov”, analyzed the bankruptcy institution in China, emphasizing that a distinctive feature of the procedural bankruptcy legislation of the People’s Republic of China, and particularly the Chinese Enterprise Bankruptcy Law, is the ability to appeal court decisions only through supervisory proceedings without judicial hearings. In this context, the application of the law in a specific provincial court (an inter-

mediate court and a provincial supreme court as a “cassation” instance) plays an important role. Therefore, the experience of representatives in the court that will hear the bankruptcy case remains a crucial factor in choosing them.

Anna Draganova (Prikhodko), Director of the International Cooperation Center at Kutafin University (MSAL), discussed the prospects of international payments in cryptocurrency and digital financial assets. The unprecedented advantages of using digital financial assets for international business and economic transactions are evident (direct payments between parties without intermediaries, absence of exchange rate risks and differences in national currency rates, reduced volatility risks, the growing speed of the digital financial market’s development, and the increasing share of smart contracts). However, it is important to note that legal certainty of such transactions is still in its early stages and it will require detailed legislative development in the near future.

Elena Nakhova, Associate Professor at the Department of Arbitration Process, Advocacy, and Notarization at the Saratov State Law Academy, dedicated her presentation to the use of electronic evidence in the civil procedural legislation of the Russian Federation and the People’s Republic of China. The speaker emphasized that, despite significant advancements (file recognition technologies, speech recognition technologies, evidence recognition, and other AI perceptual technologies), there is a need to enhance the digital procedural framework and its specific aspect — legislative consolidation of electronic evidence as an independent means of proof within the current procedural legislation of Russia and China.

Boris Romanov, Project Manager and Lawyer at the “S & K Vertikal” law firm, shared his experience in optimal constructions of arbitration and prorogation clauses in agreements with Chinese counterparts.

In conclusion, Strategic Panel 3 provided a comprehensive examination of the legal regulation of cross-border private relations and international business in the framework of Russian-Chinese cooperation. By addressing critical issues such as contract law, investment relationships, dispute resolution, the Panel participants aimed to enhance un-

derstanding and facilitate better legal practices in cross-border dealings. They not only highlighted the existing challenges but also sought to identify pathways for more effective legal cooperation between the two countries, fostering a more sustainable international business environment.

II.4. Strategic Panel 4: Digital Transformation in the Law of Russia and China in the Context of Scientific and Technological Development

Strategic Panel 4 delved into the intersection of law and digital transformation in Russia and China, highlighting how advancements in technology influence legal frameworks and practices. **Aleksey Minbaleev**, Doctor of Law, Head of the Department of IT Law and Digital Technologies at Kutafin University (MSAL) and moderator of the Section, set the tone for the entire discussion by analyzing the development of legislation on quantum communications in Russia and China.

Moreover, the very subject of the Panel implied a forward-looking perspective on how both countries are adapting to rapid technological changes, with a focus on legal implications. The key issues considered by the Panel participants included: legal regimes of digital spaces (platforms, metaverses, online games), cybersecurity, strategies employed by Russia and China for protecting personal data and national security, digital trade and e-commerce, opportunities and risks for Russian and Chinese businesses in the digital economy, protection of intellectual property, safeguarding innovations, digitalization of public services and e-government, legal regulation of artificial intelligence, and legal aspects of regulating neurotechnologies.

Wei Depeng, a lecturer at the Faculty of Law of Shenyang Normal University and a lawyer, dedicated his presentation to the issues of civil law regulation of artificial intelligence in China and Russia. As an innovation, artificial intelligence can have a significant impact on the legal relationships among civil law subjects and on intellectual property rights. Chinese and Russian legislators and researchers need to strengthen communication to develop the framework of theoretical

research and judicial practice in the field of legal regulation of artificial intelligence. “We learn from each other to maximize the prevention of adverse consequences of artificial intelligence for humans and collaboratively build a system for the legal regulation of artificial intelligence”, stated **Wei Depeng**.

Meng Gaocheng, a doctoral student at the Law Institute of RUDN University, analyzed the question of whether a new generation of human rights will be created in the digital age. Due to the lack of any legally grounded guidance on digital human rights, fragmentation and disunity are inevitable. It is urgent to unify digital legislation at all levels based on a rethinking of fundamental constitutional rights.

To sum up, Strategic Panel 4 provided a comprehensive examination of how digital transformation is reshaping the legal landscapes in Russia and China. By addressing critical topics such as digital spaces, cybersecurity, e-commerce, intellectual property protection, e-government, AI regulation, and human rights, the speakers highlighted the importance of adapting legal frameworks to meet the challenges and opportunities of the digital era. Thus, collaborative exploration not only encourages the innovative responses of both countries but also suggests pathways for future legal cooperation in the context of scientific and technological development.

II.5. Strategic Panel 5: Strategic Vectors of Joint Russian-Chinese Legal Research

Strategic Panel 5 focused on the collaborative legal research efforts between Russia and China in the context of addressing shared challenges and opportunities, demonstrating a forward-thinking approach to legal cooperation, emphasizing the importance of strategic vectors in shaping the future of legal frameworks in both countries

Issues of primary concern suggested by the organizers and **Vyacheslav Agafonov** and **Anna Draganova (Prikhodko)**, moderators of the Section, included issues of legal regulation of environmental protection and rational use of natural resources; climate security; ensuring technological sovereignty in the fields of medicine and pharmaceuticals; models of Eurasian integration and new strategic partnerships between Russia and China/

To justify relevance of the topics, we will refer to the most interesting reports made by the participants within the framework of the Section.

Vyacheslav Eliseev, Professor at the Department of Environmental and Natural Resource Law at Kutafin University (MSAL), compared the peculiarities of the legal framework for food security in the People's Republic of China with Russian doctrinal approaches. Using the example of the emergency management system related to food (Chapter VII of the PRC Law), the speaker demonstrated that similar measures are not specified in Russian legislation regarding food, which further confirms the higher effectiveness of the measures outlined in the special legislation concerning food security. The comparison of food security legislation in China and Russia highlights the advantages and disadvantages of the respective laws and allows for the adoption of best legislative practices.

Ksenia Korobko, Head of the Department of Civil Law Disciplines at Syktyvkar State University named after Pitirim Sorokin, spoke about a comparative legal study on the application of traditional Chinese medicine methods. Currently, there is virtually no legal regulation of relationships in the field of traditional medicine, including traditional Chinese medicine, in the Russian Federation. Clinics positioning themselves as traditional Chinese medicine clinics are medical organizations that have licenses for the practice of reflexology. Methods of traditional Chinese medicine are utilized in the form of cosmetic and spa services, or specialists with professional training in traditional medicine work as consultants in cooperation with Russian doctors. A potential solution to the existing situation is a possible adoption of a Federal Law "On Non-Conventional Medicine in the Russian Federation", which would include folk and traditional medicine, aimed at ensuring the quality, safety, and accessibility of paid medical services in the field of non-conventional medicine and creating a uniform approach to the legal regulation of the relationships under consideration at the federal level.

Natalia Savelieva, Junior Researcher at the Schmidt Institute of Physics of the Earth of the Russian Academy of Sciences, discussed the legal aspects of the International Scientific Lunar Station — a joint

project of Russia and China. The speaker highlighted three areas of legal research aimed at improving the legal framework of the project: 1. enhancing the international legal regime for the exploration and use of celestial bodies through the evolutionary development of the existing system of space treaties; 2. conducting a comparative legal analysis of the national legislation of the project participants to identify potential conflicts and ways for harmonization with existing norms of international space law; 3. developing regimes and mechanisms to protect megascience projects from unilateral sanctions that have been misused by countries of the so-called “Western coalition” in recent years. Such a global, human-centered project requires more detailed legal research. Over time, the project could provide a powerful impetus for the development of international space law as a whole, as well as national legislation in the field of space exploration and utilization.

Thus, Strategic Panel 5 provided a vital examination of the strategic vectors guiding joint Russian-Chinese legal research. By addressing critical issues such as environmental protection, climate security, technological sovereignty, and Eurasian integration, the panel underscores the importance of legal cooperation in navigating complex global challenges. This collaborative approach not only highlights the potential for shared learning and innovation but also sets the stage for more effective legal frameworks that can respond to the pressing needs of both nations and their regions.

III. Conclusion

Overall, the First Russia-China Legal Forum was a resounding success, laying the groundwork for future collaboration between the legal communities of the two countries. With more than 500 online- and offline-participants, it celebrated the success of mutual efforts of expert communities of China and Russia. The insights gained during the event will undoubtedly contribute to the development of a more integrated legal framework, facilitating greater economic cooperation and enhancing the rule of law in both jurisdictions.

As the relationship between Russia and China continues to evolve, initiatives like this Forum will play a crucial role in addressing

educational and legal challenges and opportunities that arise in an increasingly interconnected world. The organizers expressed their commitment to making the Forum an annual event, further solidifying the ties between educators and legal professionals of both countries.

The First Russia-China Legal Forum not only displayed the importance of legal cooperation in a globalized economy but also highlighted the potential for collaborative efforts to address common legal challenges. The discussions and connections made during this event will undoubtedly pave the way for a more robust mutually beneficial partnership between Russia and China in the years to come.

In addition to the substantive legal discussions, the forum offered ample opportunities for networking and collaboration. Forum participants were able to connect with peers, share experiences, and explore potential partnerships in research and practice.

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